

IS YOUR WEB DESIGNER A MARKETER? HE SHOULD BE!



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[This short eBook is 2 Pages]

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Inherent Differences Between Marketers and Programmers

As a computer science or graphic artist major in college, you will learn every aspect of web design and programming, including using graphic software and coding languages like C++, JAVA, Flash, HTML and more. However, what you will not learn is how to take those skills and use them to develop a true marketing website.

In the business world, busy executives could care less if a site has a complex backend. Today's consumer is being hit with thousands of advertisements daily and is only interested in getting what they need, when they need it. That is why companies are moving away from web designers and towards marketers with web skills, who know how to covert potential consumers into life-long customers.

Your website is an asset only if your profitability as a company increases because of its existence. That being said, it is not enough to spend six months developing a sophisticated website with backend technology if it is not in line with your end goal - to increase sales. You need to make sure your site does what your marketing team is doing; increasing revenues through sales or by generating and converting leads.

True Purpose of Your Website Layout

Each website on the web should have a specific goal. Whether that is to sell a product or simply provide more information to a potential customer will determine your online marketing strategy.

Marketing people think of two things when creating materials; their audience and getting their audience to think or do something specific. The latter is accomplished through the process of highlighting the benefits of what you are trying to sell. A potential customer is not impressed with the features of a product unless the benefits of purchasing that product outweigh the immediate and long-term costs involved. In other words, features don't sell, benefits do.

If we think of a website as a marketing tool or a multi-page virtual brochure, then these same marketing principles should apply to your site. Keeping your audience in mind, highlight the benefits of your product or service for them. Then lead them to think or do what it is you are trying to accomplish.

Benefits Versus Features

Marketers know the difference between a product's benefits and its features. One sells the product, the other does not. Do you know the difference?

Although the lines can sometimes be blurred, a product has both benefits and features. A product's features explain exactly what that product does. A product's benefits explains to the potential customer exactly how that product can make their life easier or better in some way; in essence filling a need.

Let us take an answering machine as an example. Some of this product's features may include telling the time of each call, recording up to 100 hours of voice messages and the ability to turn

answer on or off. Although these features seem to separate this product from others on the market, they will not sell the unit itself.

Some of the benefits of this product may include allowing the person to be out of the office and be able to dial in to get their messages, the ability to take messages like an assistant would in their absence and the ability to tell the person exactly when the caller left the message.

The basic idea behind selling benefits rather than features is to fill a customer's need. Put yourself in the consumer's shoes. Explain to them why they should buy your product and how it will benefit them. Your website should do just that. Think about your content and design from a potential customer's standpoint, concentrating on the benefits you can offer.

Minimal Effort = High Rewards

How many sites have you visited that were so complicated to navigate that you lost your patience and/or interest? With the progression of technological advancement in the past two years, it seems many websites are made for other web designers rather than customers. There has been numerous times a low-end website without flash and videos has captured my interest by simply giving me what I wanted, when I wanted it.

The Internet allows people and businesses to accomplish a few great things. First, by eliminating geographic boundaries you are able to market your products/services globally. Secondly, without time restraints you can sell to potential customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Finally, the Internet affords you the opportunity to promote and advertise your product's benefits to the potential customer in a cost-effective and timely manner.

I say cost-effective because if your website is producing results for your business, then it pays for itself many times over. Timely is mentioned because you are gaining the upper hand by allowing your visitors to decide for themselves when and where they will hear your pitch. In this situation, control is shifted away from the company to the consumer. You are no longer bombarding them with ads and solicitations. Therefore, if they are truly interested in what you are offering, they will go to your website first to hear what you have to say on their time. This increases your effectiveness.

This is why it is very important to convey the right message outlining all the potential benefits when you get the opportunity. Smart companies are accomplishing this through their website. With a small initial capital and time investment, these companies are reaping high rewards over and over again.

So I ask, is your web designer a marketer who can help you accomplish these important tasks? If not, he should be!

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