



## **How to make your web site more effective**

You know that a high ranking is very important to get high quality targeted traffic to your Web site. The more targeted your visitors are, the more you'll sell on your site.

However, a high ranking alone is not enough. Many webmasters have the problem that their visitors don't buy something on their site even if the way the visitors reached the site indicates that they're interested in the products.

For that reason, we're going to tell you in this article what you can do to improve the effectiveness of your Web site.

### **PART 1: The first 3 critical points - Make a good first impression, or your visitors will leave immediately**

When Web surfers come to your site, it's very important that you make a good first impression. Before a Web surfer starts reading the copy text on your Web page, your page must pass these three critical points:

1. Your Web page must load quickly

Web surfers won't wait for slow loading Web pages. If your Web pages don't load as fast as is possible, a lot of Web surfers will go away before they have had a chance to take a look at your Web pages.

Don't forget that still the majority of Web surfers use a 28K/56K modem to surf the Internet. If your Web page is 120 KB big (including the images), then it takes 17 seconds to load the page. Would you wait so long?

2. Your Web site must look good

Make sure that your Web site has a professional layout. People don't want to purchase from a shady backyard business. It's very important that your Web pages look perfect. Hire a professional Web designer if necessary.

The same is valid for your link pages. If you want to exchange links with other sites, make sure that your link pages look attractive. A link on your link pages should be something other people want to have.

Make your link pages accessible from your other Web pages and use a great layout for your link pages.

### 3. Don't use automatically generated doorway pages

Automatically created doorway pages might bring some visitors to your site. However, they'll land on a Web page that was designed with search engines spiders in mind.

Automatically created doorway pages usually look ugly to human Web surfers. Often, they consist of nothing more than a list of buzz-words. You won't get good results with this method because human Web surfers will quickly close such a Web page.

If your Web site fails under one of these categories, Web surfers will leave your site before you even have the chance to tell them your marketing message.

## **PART 2: How to keep Web surfers on your site**

Last week, we told you which three critical points your Web site must pass before Web surfers even consider taking a look at your Web page. This week, we're telling you what you can do to keep these visitors on your site.

### 1. Come straight to the point

Your home page is the most important page on your site. It's the very first page of your site and the page that people see first when they come to your site. Therefore, it's important that your home page is interesting for your visitors.

Every visitor wants to get a prompt answer to the question "what's in it for me?". On the first paragraph of your home page, you should tell your visitors the following:

- what you do
- why people should stay on your site
- what's in for your visitors

If you don't answer these questions quickly enough, people will go away.

Of course, every home page owner is convinced that they have the best product on earth and that everybody should buy it. Unfortunately, visitors don't know that.

If you don't tell them the major benefits of your product, no one will take the time to dig into your site. Web surfers are a very impatient group.

## 2. Don't annoy your visitors with animations they cannot see

Some people use Flash animations or big pictures with a meaningless text such as "Welcome to the world of tomorrow" as their index page that redirects to their actual first page. Don't do that if you don't want to lose a big part of your visitors.

Flash intros take minutes to load on a slow modem connection so most Web surfers will go away before they even had a chance to see your actual home page.

In addition, Web pages containing only a Flash animation cannot be indexed by most search engines. If you use a Flash intro as your index page, chances are that your site will never show up on search engines.

## 3. Respect people's time

Until high-speed Internet access becomes widespread, don't use large bandwidth-clogging graphics.

As a rule of thumb, no single graphic should be larger than 30 KB to 50 KB, and no single page should have more than 200 KB of graphics.

If you must include a large, detailed image, provide your visitors a smaller, thumbnail version so they know if seeing the larger image is worth their time.

## 4. Test with different Web browsers

Not all Web surfers use Microsoft's Internet Explorer in version 6. It's important to test your Web site with different Web browsers.

Try to test your Web site with Internet Explorer version 5.0, Mozilla/Netscape and Opera.

## 5. Be consistent

Professional Web sites always have their navigational bar at the same side. They use a consistent style for headlines, headers and text. Don't use more than three different fonts in different sizes.

Try to avoid colored or textured backgrounds. They make text difficult to read. Of course, dancing buttons and blinking text don't belong to a professional Web site, either.

Once Web surfers have decided not to go away on their first impulse, you have to keep them with a good sales copy. That will be covered next month.

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