

10 Common Website Mistakes

“First impressions count!”

Many company websites are ineffective at generating business because they have mistakes on the website, don't create the right professional impression or don't meet the requirements of the visitor and make it easy for them to convert to being a customer. All these mistakes are avoidable but unfortunately amongst many small businesses they are all very common.

1. No Strategy to Bring Prospects to Your Website - A shocking number of businesses design their websites with absolutely no plan for generating traffic.

2. Unfocused - Online if you try to appeal to a large segment of the market, you'll appeal to nobody in particular.

3. No Compelling Headlines - The trick to getting your visitors to read your online copy is to use dynamic, attention-getting headlines and sub-headlines. Throughout your copy you should continue to use **sub-headlines** as a way to break up your copy. Most web surfers are skim readers so the chances of having your full-fat copy read without the use of sub-headlines is remote.

4. Second-Class Content - Online or off, a prospect wants to know "What's in it for me?" Answer that question as quickly and as often as possible on most of your key pages. Also many small business sites feature text that is useless *and* boring, and it drives visitors away in droves. Get professional help to write engaging text.

5. Faulty Navigation - If a visitor lands on your site and has trouble navigating, he/she is just a mouse click away from a more inviting online destination. Good navigation on your website is a must if you want visitors to stick around long enough to be converted into customers.

6. Graphic Overload - Many web developers just can't resist the temptation to create "cool" animation and graphics which in tests have been shown to have a negative effect on the user experience. Try to avoid using Flash splash pages. Very few people will wait to watch the Flash intro splash presentation and a few won't even wait for it to load.

7. No Tools To Overcome Scepticism - It's not easy to make a sale to average consumers. They've been taught to be highly sceptical of anyone selling anything. On the Internet, that scepticism turns into downright cynicism. To help you "win them over," you should:

- Provide contact information on every page
- Include an "About Us" page.
- Include a photo of yourself (especially if you're a service provider)
- Include testimonials from customers
- Include endorsements from industry experts
- Provide a solid, "we take all the risk, you get all the reward" guarantee and offer a privacy policy.

8. Distracting Pop-Ups, Banners, - Using links, banners, and pop-ups for affiliate programs and other profit streams can distract a visitor and keep them from your main goal - buying a product from you.

9. Slow-Loading Site - Your visitor will give your site no more than 10 seconds (sometimes less) to appear. If it doesn't, they're gone and so is your opportunity to turn them into a satisfied customer.

10. No Metrics - You can't manage what you don't measure. Testing and measuring give you the information you need to make refinements that will improve your website's effectiveness.

Some of the things you should measure are:

- Conversion rate - how many visitors become paying customers?
- Visitor value - how much does a visitor spend?
- Opt-in signup rate - how many people are giving you contact info?
- Traffic stats - what is the number of visitors?
- Source of visitors - what traffic generators are bringing you prospects?
- Average visit time - how long does a visitor stay onsite?
- Most-viewed site pages - which pages are drawing eyes?