

7 Steps to Web Sites that Sell

Contributed by Charlie Cook
Thursday, 08 December 2005

Your web site is like a fight of stairs into your business. Once you've got prospects to your home page - your online front door - you want to move them to action. If you miss a step or two, prospects will fall and won't make it in the door to your business.

{mosbotwordcount}

Your web site is like a fight of stairs into your business. Once you've got prospects to your home page - your online front door - you want to move them to action. If you miss a step or two, prospects will fall and won't make it in the door to your business. If you put the last step first and your first step last, prospects won't find the steps you want them to take.

{bot_wrgoogle}There is a hierarchy of information and elements you need to present to prospects to make it easy for them to become customers and clients. This is not what most small business owners provide on their web sites. Most sites lead with a boring description of services and credentials. This tends to push prospects away.

Before you build your web site or start to fix a site that isn't attracting as many clients as you'd like, take a minute to clarify the objectives of your site. Marketing objectives for web sites for most independent professionals and small business owners should be:

a. Lead Generation - Build your list of qualified prospects who are interested in your products and services but not quite ready to make a purchase. First time visitors to the site need to be able to quickly identify if they are in the right place and determine whether you can help them. Make it easy for prospects to qualify themselves.

b. Establish Credibility- If people found your site by searching the web, you have a lot of work to do to prove that you can help them and deliver on what the site promises.

c. Sell Your Products and Services - Of course you will want to include information about your products and services, but if you rush this step, you'll lose prospects before you've created the context that will move them to a purchase.

PUTTING YOUR STEPS IN SEQUENCE Now that you know what you want your web site to do, define the key elements that should be on your home page. Put these in the correct sequence and more prospects will do what you want. You'll generate more leads and more sales. Here's how.

1. FEATURE YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE - At the top of your home page include a one sentence marketing message that describes what you actually do and the problems you solve. For example, "Helping service professionals and small business owners attract more clients" or "Helping you create the ultimate personalized trip to Britain".

2. COLLECT LEADS - Place the sign-up for your free newsletter, ebook, or catalogue at the top of your web page. The right hand top corner is the optimal position. Above the sign-up form don't just say "Enter your email here for complimentary information". Make an offer, one that will motivate your prospects to give you their contact information. For example, "Sign Up for Britain's best travel secrets." As an incentive on my site I offer a free marketing guide to motivate people to subscribe to my newsletter, with the result that 12-15% of site visitors sign up for my ezine.

3. USE QUALIFYING QUESTIONS - Don't start with a description of your services or products. Below your marketing message, lead with qualifying questions, that will help prospects understand the problems you solve, engage your visitors' attention and create a perception of need.

For example, if you sell ergonomic chairs, you could ask, "Does your back ache at the end of a day at your desk?" Or if you sell customized travel services to Britain you could ask, "Are you interested in a customized, hassle f*ree va*cation in the British Isles?"

4. BUILD CREDIBILITY - One-way to do this is to include testimonials from satisfied clients. People will read your marketing copy with a grain - or a whole shaker - of salt. When people read what others say about the amazing results you achieve, they are much more likely to believe your claims. Limit your testimonials to ones that are easy to believe, even if you did help someone make ten million dollars.

The second part of establishing your credibility is to demonstrate the value of your expertise by providing prospects with helpful ideas. If you're in the computer repair and maintenance business you might include tips on identifying software conflicts and keeping computers from crashing.

People like to do business with people they know and trust so use your site to bring your company and personality to life. Include links to your articles, case studies and /or product demonstrations. Add a photo of yourself or your employees to personalize your site and move prospects to thinking of you as a person.

5. SHOW PROSPECTS THE RESULTS YOU ARE SELLING - Include thumbnails of products and services people can click on in a side navigation bar on most of your site's pages. Whatever you sell make sure to feature both visual and verbal testimonials along with information and images of your products and services.

On your individual service or product pages provide examples of clients and customers using your services or products. For ebooks, include tables of contents and sample chapters. If you sell log homes, include pictures of happy customers in their homes. If you sell information, feature client testimonials.

6. TELL PROSPECTS WHAT TO DO - If you want people to sign up for your newsletter, tell them to. To get people to read the articles on your site, tell them to. To increase the number of people who view the pages describing your products and services, include thumbnail images of your products and tell them to click on the image for further information. If there is a particular sequence of steps you want prospects to take, tell them what they are.

7. MAKE IT EASY FOR PROSPECTS - Place your contact information, including email address and phone number in an obvious location on every page, particularly the home page. Include a link to a contact form or place it at the bottom of your home page, or both.

In your form, ask a few key questions to help prospects clarify what it is they want to achieve and get their phone number so you can follow up. Their responses will help you prioritize who to contact and help you focus on your most profitable prospects.

Show prospects who are ready to engage your services or buy your products how to do so. Coaches will want to include a coaching inquiry form. People who sell greeting cards, should include a quick link to so people can place their orders.

Use the blueprint above to construct a web site that sells. Build steps that will lead prospects into your web site and motivate them to give you their name, email address and phone number or to contact you about your services or to buy your products. Build steps that will move them from prospects to clients and customers.

-

© In Mind Communications, LLC. All rights reserved.

About The Author

The author, Marketing Coach, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners attract more clients and increase their earnings with the 5 Principles of Highly Effective Marketing. Sign up to receive the Free Marketing Guide and the 'More Business' newsletter, full of practical tips you can use at <http://www.charliecook.net>

ccook@charliecook.net