The BreakThrough Business Solutions Website Checklist

There is a huge amount of information out on the internet about how to maximize your website, and a lot of recommendations involve spending a lot of money.

Here are some of our recommendations, from a customer/user perspective around how small businesses can maximize their website without having to spend thousands of dollars. If you are wanting to get the most out of your website – this is a great place to start and will help you to get thinking about how you can ensure your website connects better with your customers.

1. Is your website mobile responsive?

A mobile responsive website is a key tool for most businesses, especially those who sell product or services online, or those who rely heavily on customers finding them online such as trades and hospitality companies. David Brown, CEO of the major website company web.com says mobile-optimized websites are the key ingredient to connecting with customers and meeting their demand for an on-the-run information source[1].

The New Zealand Business Magazine also agrees that businesses must aim to have mobile optimized sites, as if your website is too difficult to read on a smartphone, your customers will go to your competitors[2].

2. Is the copy benefit driven?

Having a state-of-the-art website may be important to some customers, but one of the biggest, most crucial elements of every website is the copy (what is written on each page). Website copy should be benefit-driven and point out clearly to your customers what are the advantages and *benefits* of working with your company over your competitors.

ROI Marketing, one of New Zealand's leading Marketing companies believes that "it is usually copy that sells a product or service" so it is crucial that your copy connects and answers the question – 'what's in it for me?' [3]

Updating your website copy can cost you nothing other than some time. Take a look at your current website copy, and put your customer's hat on. As webmatters.co.nz puts it – remember that your customers have a problem that they are looking to solve, you have the solution, so make sure you emphasize how you can solve their problem – through your website[4].

3. Does your website use high quality, relevant pictures and video?

Pictures and videos often connect better with visitors to a website, and they are tools every business can use to better reach out to their customers and make sure that they are getting their message through to their prospective customers.

The business development director at Interlike NZ, social media and advertising gurus, told NZ Business Magazine that customers not only prefer videos and images over words, but videos are a "sure-fire means to reach target markets effectively"[5]. Videos have an amazing power to not only connect with customers, but can also be used to give testimonials, demonstrations, introductions and as a selling tool – to name a few.

Photos and videos on a website are especially important for businesses that sell visual products/services such as landscapers and hairdressers, or those who sell experiential products/services such as restaurants or travel brokers. Visual imagery helps customers to connect with what your company offers and help to sell the value that you provide.

4. Are your contact details easy to find? Even on a smart phone?

One of the most important features of any website, regardless of industry is ensuring that your contact details are easily found. How else are your customers meant to find you?

David Brown, web.com CEO told Business News Daily "your contact information should be visible, preferably at the top of the home page, so that visitors don't have to search for a phone number or address if they want to contact the business."[6]

If your contact details cannot be easily found, potential customers may quickly lose interest or become frustrated and switch to a competitor that is easier to reach. Website visitors have ever-decreasing attention spans so it is extremely crucial to make finding contact information as easy as possible!

5. Is there something you can give away?

Lastly, a great way to introduce a lead generation strategy while adding value to your customers is to give something away for free on your website. Graham McGregor, business writer for The NZ Herald recommends this strategy as a great way to look after your customers as well as a chance for you to take their details so that you can communicate with these interested potential clients in the future[7].

While giving something away can seem daunting at first, it doesn't necessarily mean you are giving away discounts or free product. Think about some free information you could offer website visitors in exchange for their email and name; this could be a free report, a free article to download, an audio recording, even a meeting or a free quote.

Giving your potential customers value, at no charge, helps to build an excellent relationship, and by they time they are ready to do business, as McGregor says, the chances of them choosing to do business with your company is dramatically increased.

Now's a great time to look at your website and make sure you are getting the most use out of it that you can. Review how your website is performing, and see where the gaps are.

We hope this checklist is helpful and if anything, gives you something to think about!

References:

1: http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2046-web-design-data.html

2: http://nzbusiness.co.nz/articles/marketing-state-mind

3: http://www.roimarketing.co.nz/articles/11-essential-steps-launching-website/#ixzz3X8uD68U4

4: http://www.webmatters.co.nz/2014/07/website-content-creation-guide/

5: http://www.nzbusiness.co.nz/articles/visual-attraction

6: http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2046-web-design-data.html

7: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11257693