

## Episode 7

# Building an Effective Website That Engages and Converts Visitors

00:29

Well, hello, and welcome to my weekly marketing, where we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. And today, I want to talk about something that I've spent many years doing for other people, and that is building effective websites. You may already have a website, or you may have no website or you may send people to your Facebook page. No judgment here. I know you're doing the best you can. Either way, I think you'll learn something today, and I promise I'm not going to get too techie. The great thing now is that you can build a website or have someone else build it for you without it getting too complicated. So no coding required.

01:05

Before we jump into designing a website or changing your existing site, I want to make it clear who we build a website for. It's really two groups of people. First of all, obviously your customers, specifically your ideal customer, this is the customer you want to focus on and really being able to relate to. If you're wondering who that is. I'll put a link in the show notes for a worksheet to help you figure out who your ideal customer is.

01:30

The second group of people you want to pay attention to when you're designing your website are the search engines. Google gets about 92% of search engine traffic. So that's the search engine to focus on. Search engines need to be able to read your website to give the best search results to their users. So if you do it well, focus on your customers first and goal second.

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Next I say there's always six layers to an effective website. The first layer is SEO and copy and metadata. So it all sounds like it's a lot but hear me out here. This is what the search engine actually reads. So if you want to be found on the internet, and you do it's crucial to get this right. So when I built and launched my very first website, I was so nervous because I thought as soon as it was live orders would start rolling in. Well, they didn't. Yours won't either, because it takes time for the search engines to crawl your site and find it. Generally you need to drive people to your site rather than relying on the search engines. It's not likely somebody will land on your site just through a Google search this early in the game. You've probably heard the term SEO which means Search Engine Optimization. That's the next thing to pay attention to.

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Search terms are the fuel for the search engines. So decide what keywords and phrases your target customer will likely search for to solve any that they have. And carefully integrate these on your page. Where in your main headlines, your h1 tags, your sub heads or your h2 tags, the URL name, the name of the page, your page description. Organically in the text or the copy as it's called in marketing, especially in the top paragraphs. And on the images. There's a little box usually that says all text you want to put the keywords in there as well.

03:18

Now if you're wondering where to find those terms, I'd recommend Uber Suggest, which has a free version. I'll link to that in my show notes too. Search engines look at more than just keywords when deciding your PageRank though, so they look at how often your site is updated, how quickly your pages load, the number of visitors, the number of links that you have within your site and going to other sites. But getting the keywords right is a good first step in putting your content together.

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Another good tool to have for your SEO is called the Moz toolbar. That's moz toolbar, and I'll add a link to that in the show notes too. It's a free Google Chrome extension. That will allow you to see your domain authority. Your domain authority, or eta is a number from one to 100. And almost nobody has 100 Except maybe Google themselves. It's a way to get a quick assessment of how your site's doing. It becomes important because you want to rank higher than your competitors. So if your site rank is 35, for example, and your competitors 21, you're doing pretty well. If you're doing worse than your competition, then that's a problem because they're going to show up ahead of you in search results. If that's the case, then I recommend going back to Uber Suggest and they could do a free evaluation of your site and show you where you're having issues. You can certainly hire a copywriter to write the text for your site, but if you do, make sure that they pay attention to SEO on their writing, some copywriters do, some do not. So it will save you headaches down the road if you can just make sure that whoever writes the copy for your site includes key words in the text.

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The number two thing that I recommend people pay attention to, is site structure navigation. So we talked about the importance of having your keywords in your URL, but it's also important to have your URLs make logical sense. So the URL is the little web address at the top of the page. So it's www.mysite.com for example. So for a good URL would be something like HTTPS, colon slash slash my site.com/clothing/tops/green shirt number 1234. The HTTPS is important because it means this is a secure site. The s in the HTTPS stands for secure, which indicates that the site is using something called the Secure Sockets Layer.

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Many browsers won't open a page that's not on a secure site. And when you reserve a domain, they will typically include an SSL certification in that so that you can make sure that on your site,

it does read HTTPS. The search engines view navigation similarly to how they view URLs, it has to make organized sense. The thing to remember is that search engines give your top level pages more weight than pages further down in your navigation. So your pages should be given an order of importance such as level one which are your main level pages such as your homepage, your about page, Bb, if you have a shop page, or whatever your main pages are.

06:28

Level two is your next level down and level three is further down yet. Its hierarchy is important not only for the search engines, but also for the visitors and that's why Google pays attention to it. So if you sell products on your site then you should divide them into logical order. Like if you sell home decor, that can be a top level page, then something like rugs would be on level two page and then Area box rugs would be level three, and individual products would be level four.

6:56

So the next area to pay attention to is marketing. This is the area that I feel most sites miss the boat. If you have an online business, your website is your business. So getting the marketing right is really key to making sure your customer stays instead of clicking away, never to return.

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Make sure to include a place to capture their email address. And you could do that with a free download or coupon or it gives them an incentive to do that. The most effective way to do that is with a pop up on the homepage and I know people hate the pop ups but they really work and they're really effective at getting people to leave an email address and sometimes if I'm really interested in what a website is offering, I looked for ways to get added to their email list. On your homepage, I'd recommend focusing on the top part of it referred to as above the fold. In this area you'll want to make sure four things are crystal clear on the top of your homepage.

07:54

Number one, what you do, that's all. Number two, who is it for? Number three, how can you solve your customers' problems? And number four, what do you want them to do next? So it can be just your logo and what it is you do for a living or what your business does and then what you how you can help your customer. And then it could be just a button that says, call, it can be download, it can be to go to this next page, whatever it is you want to make sure you give them a call to action. Also you don't want to have a ton of content on your homepage. So I'm talking about below the fold or after you scroll down the page. Just introduce people to what you sell, why they'll need it and then direct traffic to the other pages. Your homepage is a top level summary of what you offer. Trying to do too much on this page will overwhelm people and they'll click away.

08:48

Our fourth layer to website, is called user experience or sometimes called UX. If you've ever been to a website and couldn't find the information that you're looking for, you know how frustrating it is. And it gets to you kind of left in frustration. Being able to find things is one of the six main factors considered in a good user experience.

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Your website needs to be number one, useful. It should relate to all the needs of your company and the website visitor. Number two, findable. Quite simply your visitors should be able to find what they're looking for and it needs to make logical sense when you visit a site. Number three is desirable. Your images and design should create an emotional connection with your visitor. Number four is easy to use. It should be easy for anyone to use, especially your target customer. Number five is credible. You must let visitors know that you can be trusted. That can be done by showing logos for example of clients, maybe reviews from clients or places where you've been published for example. And finally your website needs to be accessible. That's especially important for people with visual disabilities. For example, adding things like alt text to the images is what people who are visually impaired really rely on to read the images.

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The next layer of your website that you need to pay attention to is graphic design. Now graphic design may seem like the easy part of web design but there's a lot more to it than meets the eye right? Design is really the tip of the marketing iceberg. It should reflect your brand, your customer and have its roots in psychology and consumer behavior. It's kind of a tall order, right? For instance, what type of images appeal to your target customer. What colors perform the best, what appeals to them, what causes them to click away. The goal of a good design is to affect the visitor's state of mind and lead them to buy because we buy an emotion right, not logic.

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Then there's something else, loading times depending on the type of connection your visitor has: that beautiful photo or video you may want at the top of your site, because your site loads very slowly. And that can have a real impact on your SEO, as well as if people are loading it on a mobile device. They may just click away and give up in frustration. Speaking of mobile design, these days most sites are mobile responsive so they will display differently on a phone than they will on a desktop computer. They're typically the same site, but they're slightly edited so that they look good on a phone and on a computer. And that's something that can be worked out when you are building your site. 92% of Internet users access the internet using a mobile phone. And although that number may vary depending on your business, it is important to be ready for mobile. And that number is projected to increase exponentially. So having a mobile friendly site is really important. And because the screen size is different, the types should be larger and more responsive on different screen sizes. And since wireless mobile isn't typically as fast as broadband or something that you would have in your home, it needs to load quickly even when the phone has limited service.

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So now the second thing I want to talk about today is if you're just starting out with your site, there's a few more things to consider. First off, if you don't have a site at all, I can't stress how important it is to have one. Yes, I know they're expensive to build but these days, everybody needs a website. Sometimes small business owners have a page on Facebook that they use as a website. I would say that works temporarily, but not long term. There's a saying in marketing

that goes: don't build on rented land, and things can happen. You know what Facebook can go away tomorrow. There's just no guarantee and you don't want to lose your business. If it's just built on social media.

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It's possible to build your own site with platforms such as Squarespace or Wix or Weebly. They can help you easily with that. Platforms like Squarespace have a disadvantage in that you don't really actually own the site. They own it. You do own the content. But if they shut down for any reason, you're kind of in the same boat as if you built it on Facebook, you will lose your website. They also charge additional charges for extra things like landing pages or additional pages that you'll need to put on your site. However, if you're in a hurry to get a site down and have no tech knowledge, they're a great option. And if you have a site on Squarespace, and it's working for you, then you go girl, no problem.

13:24

My preference is WordPress. And here's why. It's open source and widely used. In fact, it's the most popular platform out there and Google loves it because it's easy to update. It's mobile responsive, and it's SEO friendly. Like I said, I like WordPress and there are a few reasons why. First of all, it's entirely your site. If you want to change your look of the site, you don't need to just completely rebuild it. All you need is to upload a new theme and it's done. Second WordPress gives you a lot of freedom and control of how your site looks. You can also add WordPress plugins which are little snippets of code that you can add to your site to do specific tasks without having to manually coded or hire a developer to do it. If you decide to go with WordPress, did you have to buy a domain name and then find a web host? I use Blogger Bluehost but there are many others out there. Before you choose a host check the reviews to make sure that they don't have a lot of downtime or a lot of issues with them. On WordPress I also recommend a site building tool called Elementor. Again, I'll put a link to that in the show notes. Elementor allows you to drag and drop text and images into your pages and even comes with several templates. So you don't really have to design the whole site. They have a free plan as well.

14:38

There are other website platforms out there such as Drupal, but these are for larger sites and WordPress is more than adequate for a small business. So there you have a big overview of how to get your website up and ready to start making you money. I do know I just gave you a ton of information though, so they help you out. I'm offering a free successful website complete checklist for you to download. This checklist will help you whether you have an existing website or if you're putting together a new one. It's one I developed for my website clients so it's tried and true. Visit the show notes at my weekly marketing.com forward slash eight to download the checklist. As always, thank you so much for joining me today. I know there's a lot of podcasts out there. So I'm so thankful you chose this one. If you like what you heard today, please subscribe and tell others. Bye for now.