

## Top 5 Tips for a Good Website

There are many things that can make your website stand out from the crowd and get noticed. These *Top 5 Tips for a Good Website* are just a few things that make a website attractive to me.

I am not an expert. Who I am *is* someone who does nearly everything via the internet - shopping, research, reading, writing, marketing and communication. The internet has allowed me to connect with people from all around the world. Imagine what it can do to help you connect with your target market or people who want to hear your message.

1. **Clarity.** Be clear on your home page. What's your website about?

- Is your site informational?
- Are you selling products?
- Are you providing services?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- What do you want them to do?

I recently received an email requesting feedback on a website for a piece of equipment for the healthcare industry. It was a beautiful site. The opening image was attractive. The tagline was good. I just couldn't figure out who the website was addressing - physicians or patients.

The site also wasn't clear on what it wanted me to do - buy the machine or read about it. If you want me to stay on your site, you have to say something or show me something that interests me, then tell me what you want me to do with it and how it's going to benefit me.

2. **Headlines and images.** People scan sites. They don't read them unless something interesting catches their eye. Give them a reason to stay by using compelling images and copy. My daughter taught me this by reviewing one of my websites. She said, "Mom, there's too much information. I don't even have the time to read a magazine." I immediately made my site scannable.

- Is your opening image relative to the purpose of your site?
- Does it show an attractive image?
- Is there one line that stands out that entices people to stay.

An example of how this works is how I shop. A large mall may have a lot of stores in it. If I go for a single purpose, I make a bee-line for a particular store, make the purchase and try to leave. Sometimes I get distracted and stop in another store.

What distracts me?

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SHINY. Shining earrings, bracelets & baubles always catch my attention.

I'm not talking diamonds here. I very rarely go into a fine jewelry store. What catches my eye is a pair of \$10.00 beaded earrings.

Ask Charlotte at the Nature's Barn. Charlotte sells bird seed and all things to do with birds. I don't like birds but I buy things at the Nature Barn. Why? Because Charlotte has a selection of beaded earrings that I can't resist.

I'm not saying that every website should have a pair of shiny, beaded earrings on its home page or even have a lot of flashy animation or music. Just have something there that is attractive to the people you want to reach.

For my husband, you could put a photo of John Deere tractor on the home page and it would stop him every time.

Get the point?

**3. Requests for action.** OK, so your home page is great. You have a great headline and attractive image that compels people to slow down and take a look at your site. What do you want people to do? Make it clear on your home page and ask them to do it.

- Check out our services!
- Come visit our store.
- Book online.
- Buy Now.

The exception to this may be blogs. Anyone who knows anything about blogs knows that blogs are there to read. They are also a useful tool to point people to your website and to sell products or services.

**4. Contact information.** Make sure your contact information is on each and every page - somewhere. Make it easy to contact you. I cannot say this enough. Make contacting you by email as simple as clicking a link.

- Name of business.
- Mailing address.
- Physical address.
- Phone number.
- Email address.
- Map if you want browsers to visit a physical store.

One of the things that frustrates me most when reviewing websites is when I have to copy and paste someone's email address or god forbid, type it into an email to reach someone. I want to just click on the email address and have the rest of the work done for me.

5. **Easy navigation.** Make sure all the links, buttons and navigation bars are consistent in type face, color and shape on all your pages. Make as many clickable links as possible, even images. Make it clear if text is a link and use the same font & style throughout your website. I expect underlined text to be a clickable link and sometimes text in a different color.

- Make images clickable.
- Make whole blocks of text a link.
- Make it easy to go "Home".

My husband helped teach me this. He uses the internet quite a lot. To put it delicately, he probably wouldn't be called a "power user".

If I want to see if a website is easy to use and navigate, I let John test it. He reviewed my site for a recently added notice that announced a women's health workshop that we are doing together.

During the review, he kept hovering the cursor around wanting to click on something. Twice he tried to click on an image. "

"This doesn't do anything," he said.

I immediately revised the notice to make the whole thing a clickable link to lead to the registration and information form for the workshop.

On another site that I reviewed, there were compelling images and headlines and not enough clickable links. Repeatedly I tried to click on the headlines that were a different color than the main text.

On the left of the home page, there were clickable links but I didn't understand that until I hovered the pointer over them. I was confused. I wanted to click on bolded headlines yet I didn't know I was supposed to click on the links to in the left side bar.

There's too many other websites out there for me to spend too much time learning how to navigate a site. People won't try to figure it out. They'll just move on.