

# Is Your Web Site Doing its Job?

by Chris Sivori, *RotoWorld™* Contributing Editor

The Internet can be a powerful marketing environment, but you can't just throw your web site up and hope the business pours in. On the contrary, there are a few basic things every web site should do well. Like a good employee, the company web site should be considered an essential member of the team. It represents you around the world, 24 hours a day. Given the proper care and support it will grow your business. Here are a few basic questions you need to ask to make sure your web site is doing its best.

## How easy is it to contact you?

It is a common mistake with many business web sites to make the contact information too hard to find. Put yourself in the customer's shoes: If I came across your site, how much time would it take me to find your telephone number? At the very least, your main telephone number needs to be prominently placed on the front page (home page) of your site. It's a good idea to have your essential contact information at the bottom of every page. That way any time a page is viewed or printed out, your contact info is visible. Many customers prefer email to the telephone. Add email contact links or build an email contact form into the page so you can be emailed directly from the site. If a customer wants to get in touch with you, don't make them work for it.

## What is your message?

Recent studies have shown that the average Internet user makes their first gut-level impressions about a web



site in less than 50 milliseconds. More importantly, these first impressions persist over subsequent visits. As science has now proven, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. There is very little time to get your message across. What message are you sending with your web site? Who is your audience and are you speaking to them in a way they can understand? Your web site's appearance should reflect what you do in an immediate and impactful way. It should speak directly to your target audience. Think visually, think obvious, and think in blinks. Here's the challenge: can you summarize what you do and how well you do it, within the blink of an eye?

## Are you inciting action?

Let's assume the customer or prospect wants to do business with you. You're the best at what you do, so why wouldn't

they? Tell the customer the next step they need to take to move forward. Tell them what you'll do in return. This can be as simple as inviting your customer to call your toll-free number for a free estimate or catalog. You can also offer free samples or introductory offers. Create what we call "possession utility". This is a fancy way of saying make it as easy and painless as possible for the customer to buy. Describe exactly what they need to do, what the process involves, and what they can expect from you. Allow orders to be made during off business hours on the web site or by email or telephone. Take advantage of that desire to buy by offering a money back guarantee or other incentives. Take the work and risk out of doing business with you.

In closing, the most important thing you can do with your company web site is to address the needs of the customer. Put yourself in their shoes. Try to understand what they need and what they want to know. Understand that they may have no experience or knowledge of who you are and what you do. Make your contact information easy to locate. Most visitors will spend less than 5 seconds viewing your site. If they can't find what they need they will go elsewhere. Make it easy to do business with you. Tell the customer what they need to do to move to the next step, describe the process and remove the risk. By taking care of these basics, you will help turn your website into an effective marketing tool.

Christopher Sivori is chief Web Designer for JSJ Productions, Inc. and Marketing Strategist for Duet Design ([www.duetdesign.com](http://www.duetdesign.com)). Problems, questions, or comments? Email Chris at: [csivori@duetdesign.com](mailto:csivori@duetdesign.com).