Planning Your New Website

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Related Categories: SEO, Websites, Conversion

So, you need a new website and are wondering where to start!

Most people will find a designer, tell them what colors they want and how they want their logo to look, maybe mention a few things that they want on the home page, and then leave it up to the designer to take it from there.

TERRIBLE IDEA.

Designers are usually not experienced in Conversion and SEO, and are not considering the following:

1) What layout will best convert visitors into customers?

If the designer thinks a soft shade of beige will be good for the "Buy Now" button, someone needs to take control! If you don't place information about your big sales event in a truly obvious position because you want a nice big header graphic instead, you are being led by the wrong factors. Time-consuming as it is, you really must think in terms of 'converting' users and the SEO-ability of your site as your guiding lights. Colors, logos, designs, frills, they all just support the conversion aspect of your site, they should not lead the planning of your site.

2) What content is most essential to not only SEO but conversion?

If an article, blurb or paragraph does not help to convert a visitor into a sale, burn it or bury it, unless you truly feel it is of SEO value. Drop it down to a submenu, or have it linked to from some interior page, but get it off your home page or sell pages. You only want stuff on these pivotal pages that pushes the user down your desired path to conversion (unless, like I said, it's there for SEO purposes and you're willing to keep it there for that reason).

3) What features are truly important to Conversion?

Having the ability to change the site's color scheme is groovy and all, but does it do a thing for your conversion or your SEO? Probably not. So why spend time, money and valuable website real-estate adding stuff like that? Think about what's truly going to help people along the path to conversion. For example, put the time and money into having a shipping calculator on your shopping cart page - making people go thru checkout just to find out how much shipping is will KILL sales by the droves.

Start your website planning from the SEO/Conversion perspective, not the design perspective. Do a 'wire-frame' of your site. It's like a stick-figure instead of a portrait. Draw it on a napkin if you have to, but give the designer a detailed plan of what you want and where you want it, and base it on SEO and Conversion.

Some examples for an e-commerce site:

- Phone number top right, large font.
- Shopping Cart button/icon large and bright-colored font, also at top right of the page (in the header).

- Any badges from BBB, SSL provider, etc that might help convey trustworthiness in your site.
- The Contact page listed at the end of your nav menu (far right) where people expect to find it.
- Clear indication of shipping charges, return policy, business hours, etc.

You must plan your website from this angle and then do the design around it.

Plus, doing it this way - less is left up to the designer who will, 9 times out of 10, not be thinking about your website's SEO and conversion rate. But at least you will!