

3. Simple Navigation

Make site navigation easy and intuitive. While it may be artistic to make your index page all black and hide the link to continue, will the customer find it beneficial, or just confusing? If your customer cannot navigate your site quickly to find what they want, they will go elsewhere. Limit the choices and direct your customers through the sale process. A good trick is to have someone who is not familiar with your product do a test-run of your site before committing to a matrix (how your site navigates from one page to the next). You may feel you have mapped things out easily for the consumer, but you know your product inside and out. See if John Q. Public will find things as easily.

4. Consistency

Make sure the site is consistent in look, feel and design. Nothing is more jarring or disturbing to a customer than feeling as if they have just gone to another site, or a pop-up window jumps out at them during a transaction. Limit pop-ups and keep colors and themes constant throughout the site.

5. Content is (Still) king

Good content sells product. Ask yourself the following questions: Does your copy convey the message you wish to get across to your visitors? Is it compelling? Does it lead your visitor through the sale process? Have others review, critique and edit your copy to ensure it is delivering the intended message. Always double check your spelling and grammar.

6. Design It For Indexing

85% of all web users find what they are looking for at the top of search engines. It is rare that your customer will navigate beyond page one of a Google, Yahoo or other search engine. Don't let your site land on page 2 or beyond; make sure that your page is designed to maximize your placement. Focus on your keywords and keyword density, but don't sacrifice your message. Utilize meta tag keywords, descriptions and titles. Use your keywords when naming your pages.

7. Credibility Is Crucial

The most professionally designed site won't sell anything if customers don't trust it. The impersonal nature of the internet breeds a certain level of mistrust. For your website to be successful, you must overcome this tendency.

A clear privacy statement is one way to build your credibility. Every commercial website should have a privacy statement posted online. Provide a prominent link to your privacy statement from every page on the site, as well as from any location where you are asking your visitors for personal information.

Make sure a live-person is reachable. Have you ever hunted a website for a phone number, only to have difficulty locating it, or never finding it at all? Provide legitimate contact information online. Your contact information should include an email address, mailing address, phone number and a fax number if applicable. If you are unwilling or neglect to provide this information to your customers, it screams that you don't want to be contacted, or implies you may have something to hide.

8. Offer A Guarantee

Offer an ironclad, money-back guarantee. What better way to establish your customer's trust than to eliminate any risk for them? If the customer sees that you're so sure customers will love your product that you will assume the risk and expense should there is an off-chance a customer doesn't love it, they will immediately be more inclined to trust your business. This doesn't mean you will have to give away the farm. Make clear reference to warranties, time-limits on your guarantee, etc. Certain products cannot be restocked for resale, or reused, so make clear all exceptions, and explain why these products are exempt.

9. Make Payment Easy

Offer a variety of payment methods for your customer. If you don't currently take credit cards, consider starting immediately. You can set up a merchant account or

visit Mark's profile at



Mark Palazzo
Publisher of
"Will Work For Food"
425.931.3440

YourCreativeMark.com

use one of the many credit card clearing houses. Consider accepting checks online. Provide an address for those who prefer to pay by cash, check or money order. Make sure the payment process is clear, easy to access and intuitive to use. Eliminate as many steps as possible. Do not ask for any more information than is necessary to complete the transaction; nothing frightens a customer off faster than feeling that their privacy is being invaded.

10. Make it Secure

If you are accepting online payments or have a login/password section for returning customers, consider investing in a well-known and trusted SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) Certificate such as VeriSign. Customer data becomes encrypted during transactions, and not only protects your customer's personal information, but can help you further the trust between you and your customers.

For more information:

[Here is a link about online shoppers getting security savvy.](#)

Make it quick, make it easy, make it secure.

By offering what your customers need online better than your competition, site traffic and internet sale growth is sure to follow.

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Mark Palazzo
Publisher of
"Will Work For Food"
425.931.3440

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