

Improving website performance

By Doug Henry, NetGrowth Consulting



It is now more important than ever that emphasis is placed on delivering websites which achieve the customer goals as well as organisational objectives. But not all websites achieve their desired objectives, here are some reasons why...

The website isn't marketed

You can have the best site ever designed, but if no one knows about it, it will not benefit you in any way.

Search engines work in a very specific way and many websites are poorly designed and are invisible to them. Are you using image based 'splash' pages, with little or no searchable text? Are you using frames (search engines can't follow framed content)? Are headings images instead of text? Are relevant page titles and descriptions used? Do you have a sitemap?

Use an internet marketing consultant who really understands Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and your business. As 93% of users only look at the first page of search results, your website will not be found when users search for your type of products or services if it is not properly optimised.

The website has been designed for style not strategy

Not only should your website look professional, but the design should take into account your unique selling points, core competencies, customer demographics, sales targets, operating costs and return on investment. Many website developers design sites that may look fantastic, but the design should never take priority over functionality. Is it easy to use? Does the design distract the user from the core information on the site? Is there too much use of flash, increasing download times and detracting from the text? All these factors can irritate the user, causing him to click away before doing what you want him to do.

Website replicates a marketing brochure

Your website should be used as a strategic asset to your business rather than just a replication of your existing marketing material. Content is king both for SEO purposes and to keep the visitor interested.

Re-creation of sales literature online doesn't work. Simply writing a sales pitch will not be enough. Site content must add value to the web, be fresh and answer a question or provide information. Your content should also be relevant and have sufficient keyword density to satisfy both the search engines and visitors to the site. Search engines will analyse your site to see if it offers answers to particular searches made through them. If it does, then for that set of keywords, you may be ranked (and ultimately get more traffic). If it doesn't, like the great majority of sites, yours will never be found.

There is no 'call to action'

Many websites forget to ask visitors to act. Whether the goal of a website is to sell products, gain subscribers or to provide information about the services of a business, there must be a call to action for visitors to the site. In order to have an effective call to action, you must first know precisely what it is that you want your visitors to do - then you build the website to lead them to that action. Important calls to action to register, contact, join, submit or buy should be placed in an obvious location. The user must be given frequent opportunities to do what you want them to do and be guided through the process.



Doug Henry, NetGrowth Consulting

Doug Henry was MD of Acrison International Nov 1993 - Nov 2008 and now runs NetGrowth Consulting (an Internet Marketing Consultancy) with his wife Sue.

T +44 (0)1565 740190
E doug@netgrowthconsulting.co.uk
www.netgrowthconsulting.co.uk

NetGrowth
Consulting

You can Google it, You can Yahoo it,
And NOW you can **PPMA** it!

Search engine optimisation improves your ranking on the Internet and we've done it for our members!



Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) ensures your website can be easily found by web search engines such as Google and Yahoo. The PPMA has created a series of 'landing pages' on its website which have been optimised. These pages will appear high in the search engine rankings when customers search for a type of machine. Categories currently optimised on the PPMA's website include cartoning, wrapping, filling, food processing, labelling, closing, inspection.

Members can include their information on the landing pages in the form of banners, and by linking to the landing pages, you will improve the ranking of your own site. This service aims to create more accurate sales enquiries for our members - contact david.chadd@ppma.co.uk T +44 (0)20 8773 8111