

## What Makes a Web Site Effective?

An effective web site is one that successfully accomplishes its purpose: To get your visitors to read your content; sign up for your newsletter; download your free ebook; come back to your site; and of course, purchase your product(s). To generate sales, your web site must target your audience, be user friendly and professional looking.

Here are some tips on how to make your web site effective and boost online sales:

**Target your audience.**

Your web site must be focused and appropriate for your target audience. If you target the wrong audience, they won't buy. Don't try to sell to everyone. Speak their language. Use colors and images that are appropriate for your audience and topic.

**Convey a clear message.**

Express the topic of your web site clearly with headlines and images. Provide benefits and provide a headline at the top of every page. Carefully select your images to best represent your theme and support your sales message.

**User friendly.**

Your web site must be easy to read and navigate, and your pages must load fast.

**Easy to read.**

Use easy-to-read text with plenty of white space but avoid large open spaces. They can be as distracting as too many graphic images. Use fonts that are appropriate for your subject matter and for your audience. Use text colors that contrast but do not clash with your background. Dark text on a light colored background works well for text-based web sites.

**Easy navigation.**

Easy navigation is essential to keeping prospective buyers at your site. Make it easy for your visitors to find what they're looking for. Use consistent, logical navigation links. Provide plenty of links on your home page, giving visitors an overview of your web site's content and choices. Provide links to your home page and main sections (such as order form, contact page, products, and articles) on every page. Visitors may not visit your pages in the sequence you would like them to. Provide a site map (table of contents) if your site has more than twenty pages. Make sure all links are working.

**Use images without sacrificing speed.**

A slow web site will cost you sales. Optimize your images. Keep images and graphics as small as possible in file size. If large images are necessary to illustrate your products, display smaller images (thumbnails), and provide links to the larger versions (which will open on a new page).

**Professional-looking.**

Use only quality images. Use clipart sparingly. The important thing is to use graphics that support your sales message. Don't clutter your web site with graphics that have nothing to do with the content. Avoid animated graphics.

**Be consistent.**

Keep the look, layout, banner, navigation, typefaces, and colors consistent on all your pages.

**Be unique.**

Be original; stand out from your competition with custom design. Design original graphics to obtain a unique look.

A user-friendly, quality web site will inspire confidence and your prospects will feel more comfortable buying from you. A shoddy-looking web site will have the opposite affect. Put some thought into combining layout, graphics, text and colors into a unique design. It will pay off in sales and profits.

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## About the Author

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