

## Top 10 Things Every Site Should Include

While almost anyone can have a web site these days it's much harder to have a good website. From design aspects to readable content many sites fall flat. Below I've arranged a Top 10 list, because everyone loves a Top 10!

### **Include a detailed About Us page**

The About Us page is a good place for new visitors and target traffic to find out who you are, why they should read your content or buy your products, how valuable your site can be, and also general information about your company, web site, or you.

It's a good idea to include contact information or at least a clear link to your Contact Us page. Keep concise and accurate. People want to read about you but they don't want a novel. Add important information on this page and point them to other pages for more in depth coverage.

### **Include a Contact Us page**

Visitors (shoppers, target traffic) need an easy way to get in touch. Have a clearly marked link for contact information and include every avenue you receive communication through. Telephone and fax numbers (both local and 800), e-mail addresses, physical addresses, etc. all should appear on this page.

To help navigate further, clearly indicate which contacts go where (i.e. Admin, Tech, Sales, etc.) This will decrease frustration on both ends and allow better communication to flow. You want to show your visitors that you are competent and friendly, being easy to contact is one of the best ways to accomplish this goal.

### **Add a News, Press Release, Blog, and/or Articles Page**

These pages inform customers of current events, products, endorsements, and other company happenings all in one place. Make sure to maintain these pages with fresh content that is reader friendly so your target traffic is more likely to come back, bookmark your page, and they may even provide word-of-mouth advertising. Free advertising!

As a bonus, search engines love these types of pages. New, fresh, relevant content is the stuff of search engines (well, there's obviously more to it than just content). Each time a search engine spider crawls your site and find new content it ups your chances of ranking higher in the organic search listings. More free advertising!

### **A Relevant Page Title**

As uninteresting as this may sound your page title holds a lot of weight. If you're unfamiliar with a page title it is the name appearing in the blue bar across the top of the page. If your says something like "Untitled Document" I'm talking to you.

Page titles should be different for every page in your site. They should clearly and accurately describe your page, and you should try to use keywords in the page title.

Search engines display the title of your page on SERPs. The catchier and more accurate your title the better the chance you'll hit target traffic.

### **A Relevant Page Name**

Again, not so interesting as flashy designs or up-to-the-minute content, but it's a necessity to get your target traffic to your page to see or read the goods.

It's better to have straightforward page name showing in the URL than names with ? or other symbols and numbers. For example, a search engine will go to [www.yourdomain.com/aboutus.htm](http://www.yourdomain.com/aboutus.htm) it will only go to the ? in [www.yourdomain.com/aboutus?094837](http://www.yourdomain.com/aboutus?094837) . You want search engines to find your pages. You also want humans to be able to read your names. Keep it simple and clean.

### **Good Grammar, Correct Spelling, Complete Thoughts, Sentence Structure**

Everything you were supposed to learn in grade school, use it now. Not only should your site have relevant content - the more the better - people should be able to read your content. Choppy or runon sentences that seem to go nowhere cannot provide the type of readership concise, correct sentences can.

Misspellings, wrong word usage, bad grammar are all distractions. You do not want to distract your readers, you want to captivate them. Slang and derogatory language also distracts. If your site is a business site avoid slang and offensive language all together - unless that's your selling point. Jargon is different, just don't confuse readers more than necessary.

If you aren't in command of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc. or if you'd rather focus your efforts elsewhere, that's fine. It's a good idea to beg, plead, hire, or force someone else to take care of this part then as ignoring the problem won't make it go away though it may have that effect on site traffic.

### **Professional Design, Colors, and Images**

Design should be implemented with usability in mind. Not all visitors will be as web savvy as you'd like, create easy navigation and links to all your pages. A search bar for your site is also a good idea.

Colors should be inviting, not blinding. Use colors to emphasize your brand, product or content. Don't overpower the visitor with colors. Use colors to make text pop without being distracting or hard to read.

Images should be friendly and relevant to your site. Images of people work better than objects and clip art rarely has a positive effect. Make sure your images can load within a reasonable amount of time, you don't want to lose visitors because a single image caused an incredible amount of load time, or worse froze the visitors browser.

### **Make Sure ALL Links Are Working Links**

This should be a no-brainer, however it is always a good idea to check and double check your links. Fix any broken links A.S.A.P. Your reputation counts on it.

Think of any site you've been to with a broken link. Disappointing isn't it? You probably left or at least had a negative image about the company. Avoid this mistake and check, recheck, and check your links again.

**Use Your Log Files**

Log files offer a plethora of information on your web site, your visitors, what works and what doesn't. You can't afford to miss out on this information - if you can afford it you shouldn't anyway.

Best idea: Get a program that converts the lengthy text into readable documentation. It'll save you time and energy while getting you the information you desire. Log files will describe customer behavior, they will show you broken links, and you'll see where customers flow freely and where they abandon the site. The invaluable information is at your finger tips. Use it!

**SSL (Secure Socket Layer) Certificates**

These can be used on any site asking for sensitive information. Not every web site needs this, however if you plan to collect any visitor information it is a good idea to have some SSL pages. Though not every page need be SSL.

Pages requiring e-mail, names, telephone numbers, addresses, credit card information, social security information or any other information visitors may not readily be giving up online should be securely collected via SSL.

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