

Tweaking Your Website for Better Marketing in 2013: The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

As the Internet matures, high quality content is taking its rightful place in search engine optimization (SEO) driving traffic to well managed websites that give users useful, reliable information that is easy to read and navigate.

As 2013 begins, it's time for small business owners to grab all the SEO/marketing goodies great websites offer.

Whether you're just building your website or you already have one, a few tweaks here and there can make all the difference in helping search engines, inquiring minds, and customers find you.

Seven Seconds and Gone

You have only seven seconds to impress a visitor, so your website's design and content must immediately show that your business solves the searcher's problem or fulfills a need. If in seven seconds you don't establish credibility and trustworthiness, the back button renders the rest of your site useless.

My list of the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly in web design highlights simple issues that enhance or destroy your marketing opportunities. While this is only a start, addressing each will improve your site for 2013.

The Good

Content or copy that:

- **Quickly answers searcher's WIIFM** - what's in it for me – solving problems, answering needs or desires
- **Is easily skimmed**
 - uses lots of white space
 - intriguing, compelling subheadings
 - concise direct language
 - presented in "F" pattern (see side bar)
- **Is easy to navigate** with clickable links to internal content, clear contact methods

- **Is 300 words or fewer** on any given page (exception – FAQ pages)
- **Presents most important information "above the fold"** (what the user is most likely to see on their screen)
- **Sells customer benefits** not business's features
- **Is SEO optimized** with naturally integrated key words and phrases
- **Includes only** blogs, newsletters, and articles with **high quality information** targeted to your buyer's profile(s)

THE "F" PATTERN

Research shows that web users' eyes scan a page in the pattern of the letter F. Good websites use this knowledge to place:

- *Important information across the top of the page*
 - *A menu or key information down the left side*
 - *Essential links or information a third of the way down and across the page*
-

-more below-

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The Bad

Content or copy that:

- Doesn't say what service or product you provide
- Uses jargon
- Requires endless scrolling
- Hits the searcher/reader with a page of unbroken text
- Is untargeted; written for anyone and everyone
- Overuses key words or phrases in clunky sentences
- Has light text on dark backgrounds (tough to read on mobile)
- Is missing local tags – losing valuable local SEO opportunities
- Has outdated information

The Ugly

- Misspellings, poor grammar, incorrect punctuation (credibility killer)
- Visual clutter including:
 - flashing advertisements or content
 - underlined words that aren't links
 - multiple text sizes, colors, font styles
 - messy overall design structure with unorganized information
- Center justified text (other than headlines)
- Blogs without current content (just remove them if you don't use them)

Your website can and should be your marketing BFF (best friend forever). And like any good relationship, it matures and grows.

Tweaking your website to enhance the good, eliminate the bad, and gussy up the ugly matures your site and rewards you with great SEO, satisfied searchers, and happy customers.

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