How to Make Your Small Business Website Really, Really Effective

So, you've managed to attract potential customers to your website. Now, what do you want them to do?

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Most small business owners today know that they need a website. But what many fail to realize is that their websites need to be more effective.

A website is meant to attract consumers to your business. But what do those consumers do once they land on your website? Maybe they give you a call or pop into your bricks-and-mortar location some time. And, sure, that's all fine and dandy. But even better than that, *your website itself* can actually generate leads and sales for you with just a few simple tweaks.

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Ready to get more business from your small business website? Here's how to make it more effective.

Make it look good.

First, you need to make your website look good. A professional-looking website makes a great first impression, encourages users to stay on your website longer and presents your business as an industry leader. In fact, according to Adobe, 38 percent of people in one study said they would stop engaging with a website if the content/layout was

unattractive.

Look at the example below. The website on the left is cluttered and appears dated. But the website on the left is sleek and modern.

Image Source: Cope Sales and Marketing

Don’t worry though; you don’t have to spend a bunch of money on a web designer to give your small business site a makeover. If you run your site on WordPress, you can choose from thousands of free and for-fee themes that will give your website a professional look in an instant.

Make it easy to contact you.

Many small businesses simply list their address, phone number and email on their website. But, you’ve got to make it easy for your potential customers to contact you. Many would rather not pick up the phone and call you to ask a simple question. In fact, in a survey by BankMyCell, 75 percent of millennials surveyed said they avoided phone calls because they’re time-consuming.

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So, make it easy for them by adding a simple contact form to your website. With a contact form on your website, you’ll be able to generate more leads for your business by giving your website visitors a convenient way to get in touch.

Consumers also want to be able to get information before making a purchase – and when it’s convenient for them. So,

consider adding a chatbot to your website too. A chatbot will be available to answer users' questions 24/7, even when you're not around.

Add social proof.

To encourage your website visitors to pick your business over a competitor's, add social proof to your website. The term was coined by Robert Cialdini in his 1984 book, *Influence.* It describes a "psychological and social phenomenon wherein people copy the actions of others in an attempt to undertake behavior in a given situation." In other words, if you show off your happy customers and clients to the world, website visitors will be more likely to want to become your customers too.

Amazon does this well by showing customer reviews on all of

the products sold on its website.

Image Source: *Use Proof* blog

Aside from showing customer reviews, you can add social proof to your website in the form of case studies, testimonials, a display of the logos of your biggest clients, data about the number of your products sold/customers, user-generated content, media coverage and more.

Start a blog.

Another element that will make your small business website more effective is a blog. A blog not only helps attract more visitors to your website, but once they're there encourages them to become a customer.

Just remember, your business blog is not a diary to share your thoughts. You need to write content that educates and converts

your readers. For instance, if you have a small landscaping business and you start blogging about landscaping tips, your website visitors will be able to see that you know your stuff. If you can show that you're an expert in your industry, they'll be more likely to become paying customers.

Include a strong call to action.

A common mistake many small business websites make is not including a strong call to action. What, exactly, do you want customers to do? A call to action specifies that expectation and is designed to prompt an immediate response. Without one, your website visitors won't be encouraged to take action on your site; they'll look around, maybe make a mental note to call you sometime and move on to something else.

For an example, the Bark Box website includes not one but two call-to-action buttons on the home page that guide consumers through the buying journey. When a user clicks on the button, he or she is taken to a page to make a purchase.

Image Source: Bark Box

It doesn't matter what type of business you have, you can create a call-to-action that works for you. Your call-to-action could be a number of different phrases such as call now, book an appointment, get a quote and so on.

Related: 5 Psychological Principles of High Converting Websites

Over to you.

Your website shouldn’t exist just as an online listing for your small business. Rather, it should help you generate leads and increase sales. With these tips for how to make your small business website more effective, your website visitors won’t just be browsing, they’ll be turning into paying customers.

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