

Attracting Visitors - Getting Your Website Seen - Attracting Customer Enquiries

by Neil Ford of www.elymt.co.uk – “Improving Website Performance”

“A website is only as good as the visitors it attracts - who do ‘something’.”

If you are pretty much OK with this sentence, what we need to do is break it down and check out whether the website or web pages you might be thinking about has all of the following covered.

“ . . . only as good as the visitors it attracts . . . ”

There is a huge misconception, (and I may be over-egging it here, but I hope you will get my drift), that once a well-designed website has been launched it is only a matter of time before the world-and-his-wife will be demanding your goods and services. It is as simple as that!

Well, as the more worldly-wise have sussed, this is quite definitely not the case! So what are some of the pointers a site owner or manager maybe needs to think about to attract visitors, and very importantly, encourage them to ‘do something’.

First off, however good, bad or indifferent the site, or pages are, have a good look at the advertising opportunities you have connected with your business and make sure that the site address is prominent on all of them!

The obvious places are business cards, invoices, letterheads, brochures, signboards, vehicles and any media advertisements – that address should be under the nose of every customer, and potential customer.

(A recent survey indicated that 34% of us use information we have seen off-line to search for further information on-line!)

Having ‘pushed’ the site address, now let’s have a look at what is on the site. Is there enough blurb about your organisation and you? Are there good examples of what you do or offer? Have you provided some ‘plain-English’ advice, technical support or guidance for potential customers to help them with their understanding or decision making? If it is appropriate, have you included good quality photos and information about key personnel – this is proved to improve customer confidence, particularly if they are likely to meet you at some stage.

Finally, have you provided a Contact Form and lots of links and opportunities for potential customers to get in touch, possibly just to ask a question or check something out?

At this point I have not mentioned where your website appears in search engine listings! The reason for this is that if you have done all of the things above effectively, and you have a small business or are self-employed, you are probably getting too many enquiries!!!

However, I suggested that you might have a website in mind whilst reading this article and I would ask if it is being visited. If it is not attracting the number of visitors you would like, are there some of the earlier suggestions missing? If so, they are not that difficult to put right.

Before I look at the importance of getting your site or web pages high in the search engine lists, I would like to share the following recent survey results:

27% of people rarely or never look at more than one page of search results!

29% of people think that the placement of a business or service on the search results page reflects its importance.

51% of people expect the leading businesses in a given field to be at the top of the search results page.

And finally:

63% of people normally find websites via a search engine.

Based on these findings, if we accept them as true, it would appear that there are some major benefits in having a high position in the search engine lists other than just being there to be found!! One of them quite simply being STATUS!!

On the search engine optimisation front achieving good results is not quite so straightforward as the fixes suggested above because there are so many elements that can be adjusted to achieve lasting improvements and it is not as simple as saying, “Do this, and that will happen.” However, if you broadly accept the messages in the survey findings above, optimising your web pages for the search engines is critical if you want a wide audience - even if it is a local one!

Optimisation does not mean “rebuild” – or it shouldn’t. Search engine optimisation is about taking what you have, if you are happy with it, and adjusting, and tweaking the content and features to encourage the search engine to ‘like’ a particularly page, group of pages, even a whole site. I find it is best to ‘start small’. By this I mean that I encourage my clients to identify what one thing they want visitors to see, that is - which page, which information – and then work on that. It may be just one or two pages that we work on. However, once we start to see a search engine and a customer reaction we can look at which pages we want to move on to.

The other key factor with search engine optimisation is that when it is carried out ethically, using industry recommended practices, website owners will generally find that improvements in search engine status tend to remain in place – with only minor fluctuations.

Neil Ford

www.elymt.co.uk

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Survey references from: Hitwise; Digital Strategy Consulting