

Compelling Content

Many web owners ask me to review their web sites to get my opinion. I am flattered and I will do my best to critique them. More often I find that the design is OK, but the content is weak.

How Can Your Web Site Be Better

The first thing that I usually encounter is “Welcome to our web site...” followed by “This is who we are...” and “This is what we do...”. Time for a nap isn’t it? I say put this in the back. It isn’t exciting and it is making me want to click somewhere else.



Your home page should draw the user in to find out more. Above all you should stop talking about yourself and start talking about what is important to your customers. What is important to them?

Can your product or service save them money? Will it ease a discomfort or frustration?

The practice of writing about your business should be taken on personally. I know it is work and I get a lot of web owners who complain to me that they can not write. They should seek professional help. I mean hire a creative writer to help...

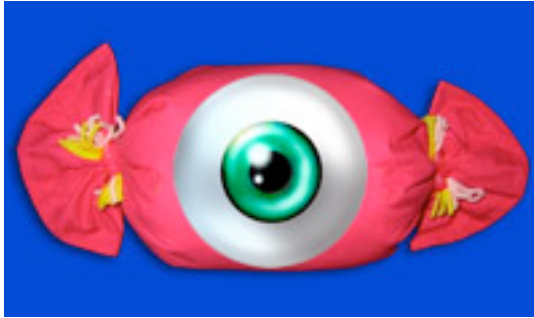
Don’t miss the opportunity to write about your industry. This is a way to sharpen your wit. It is a way to help you understand how to position your company away from your competition. Writing keeps you in touch with your industry and it allows others to view you as an expert. You are an expert aren’t you?

The Eyes Have It

Photos on web pages and print media play an important role. They help balance the page with text and give the reader some eye candy. Photos help deliver the message of your writing. If you are talking about how your product or service will save the customer money, show a picture of some money!

I always joke with clients about the use of clip art, like the girl answering the phone on the contact page. They always ask “Who is that”? And I say “It’s your new receptionist”! And they say, “I wish”! The point is that the photo is pleasing

and is playing a psychological role. It says, “This is a friendly company and I should feel at ease about contacting them”.



Whether they are real photos or clip photos they help build confidence. Humans relate to humans and I will add that Humans relate to animals too. It's in the eyes. Eyes stir emotion a lot more than an object.

It's crazy, but even eyes by themselves illicit a response. Like the photo I picked

for this section.

If you are selling products, a photo of a person holding the product is better than just a photo of the product by itself. If you are selling a service, show a photo of someone smiling about the wonderful service they are getting.

What to Write

If you need some inspiration here are a few things to think about. What are you talking about with your clients currently? I bet there are some issues you could address, but never thought of them as content before. It is! A lot of my topics come from conversations I have with my customers. Nothing personal of course!



Subscribe to industry magazines or visit web sites that have topics related to your industry. Read and regurgitate with your own voice. Now you sound like an expert! Not only that, but by keeping up with your industry topics you may see opportunities to position your products or services better.

This leads us to the next thing about writing compelling content and that is getting readers to do something. Traditionally this is termed the “Call to Action”. Easy to forget about, but very important. You got the reader's attention now make them do something. Make a limited time offer or reward them for taking action. Get free movie theater tickets when you make an appointment. No purchase necessary... See what I mean?

You might even want to write with a cliff hanger in mind. In order for the reader to find out more they need to click or do something.

Another avenue to think about is coming up with a “Top 10 List”. For example, “The Top 10 Ways to Save Money on Car Insurance”. Or conduct an interview with an author or prominent figure in your locality. These people are always promoting and you might be able to catch a little of their influence in the process. Try doing a survey with people around you.

Content is King

Your home page could be composed of a couple of teasers to get visitors to click further. These are just brief statements with a link to continue reading. That is why your first sentence in anything you write should state what you are writing about.

Remember that your visitors are looking for answers. Those answers may not be easily summed up in just a few sentences. So, make it easy for them to get the answer for the questions that they have. This means organizing your content. Perhaps by organizing your content in categories.



This is important for search engine optimization as well because with content comes the opportunity to link with keywords between pages. The world wide web was born on this very principle of cross referencing information with links.

Consider building an archive of articles. Content can always be re-used and in different ways. The more content you have, the more you are seen as a resource which makes you compelling for visitors to come back again.

Position yourself as an expert by building more content pages. You can start any time, but you need to start. The longer you wait the more you will get passed by. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Call Site Mechanix if you would like to hire a creative writer. We have several resources that we don't mind sharing.

Don't get frustrated, it is a challenge for me as well and I know I have to keep on top of it.

Posted on May 24th, 2008 by Karl Knelson