

Helen Graves

Grand Poohbah of Website Strategy

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A Penny Saved Is Not Always a Penny Earned

Why These 5 Tips Will Save You Money on Your Website

The best way to make money with your website is to see it as an investment, not just a business expense.

Done right, a website can serve as your virtual sales team – tirelessly working to collect leads, pre-screen potential clients and earn you money while you're off leading a teleseminar, on vacation in Hawaii or taking a well-deserved nap!

Done wrong, your website can end up like the bright child who never quite lives up to your expectations - looking good (hopefully), yet never earning its keep.

Because the simple fact that you have a website does not guarantee you'll generate either clients or income from it.

A poorly executed site is like tossing your money down the drain.

A little preparation before you embark on creating or renovating your site will make every penny you invest come back to you in spades.

If you want to escape the dashed hopes and broken dreams of an under-performing site, the first step is to make sure you've laid a strong foundation for your project with these 5 tips:

#1 – Give Your Website the Respect It Deserves

You may be at a point in your business where you feel you don't have the budget to spend on a "professional" website.

The temptation might be to cut costs by attempting to do it yourself. Or by using price as the defining criteria in your selection of copywriters and designers.

This is definitely one of those ventures where *not* skimping at the outset will actually save you money in the end.

I'm not advising that you raid your retirement savings to finance your website project, but I am suggesting that there's a reason why a Volvo is more expensive than a Volkswagen.

Quality costs money. It's a business axiom.

Unless you're experienced at HTML and writing marketing copy, a do-it-yourself website may save you money in the short-term, but it's not going to get you the results you want.

And when choosing your service providers, price can certainly be one of your decision-making factors, but so should expertise, professionalism, flexibility and reliability.

#2 – Don't Underestimate the Importance of the Copy

Because the Web is a visual environment, most everybody is quite clear they want an eye-catching site.

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But the point of your website is to get visitors to take action.

What people often fail to understand is that beautiful design and fancy graphics may catch the eye, but they won't go beyond the surface and do the actual "selling."

Your copy has to do that.

Marketing copywriting is different from other types of writing. And website copywriting is an even more exacting sub-specialty.

To develop a website that converts leads and generates income takes more than being a "good writer." You've got to understand internet marketing principles and know how to apply them to the written word.

You can invest the time and money (rough estimate- at least 6 weeks and \$1000 dollars) in online marketing copywriting courses and hone your skills.

But do you think Donald Trump takes the time to learn how to do all the various skills that are involved in running his successful real estate empire?

No. He leverages someone else's expertise. His skill comes in knowing when to hire someone to get the job done for him.

Usually, the most cost-effective solution for having a site that provokes your visitor into action is to invest in a professional copywriter.

That way you can spend your time working with clients, not mastering a brand new learning curve.

#3 – Be VERY Clear Who Your Audience Is

I'm willing to bet that most of you would speak very differently to, say, your grandmother than you would to your best friend on a "girls' night out."

So, a website written for your grandmother will look and sound very different than one aimed at your girlfriends.

Marketing is really just a series of simple conversations that allow your potential client to feel comfortable so they want to do business with you.

Your website is another setting for building this relationship.

To create a website (or any marketing material, for that matter) that effectively engages a potential client in this conversation, you have to know who they are.

What is the unifying thread that holds them together as a group?

I know, I know. You don't want to limit yourself by narrowing down your audience. (Believe me, I work on this with my clients all the time. And I struggled with it myself at the beginning.)

All I can say is, if you want your website to be as simple, as client-capturing, and as profitable as possible, you absolutely must have a clear focus for WHO you're talking to -your Core Audience, and WHAT you're offering them -your Core Solution.

(The same holds true for your business as a whole.)

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#4 – Put Some Thought into Your Free Give Away

Getting your visitor's contact information so you can continue the marketing conversation is one of the top 3 critical tasks of your site.

When people sign up through your Opt In box, they are taking the first step along the path to hiring you.

But people are becoming more and more selective about what they will allow into their email boxes. So just asking them to sign up for your newsletter won't grow your list very quickly.

The best way to do that is with an appealing "freebie" in exchange for their precious name and email.

Taking the time to develop a high quality freebie is well worth the effort. This actually serves two purposes.

First, an enticing give away with useful information (and you want to make sure the title communicates that really well) will get them to give you their name in the first place.

Second, when they find the contents of your give away to be truly valuable (not just a fluff piece), they'll want more.

And that's the whole point.

You don't have to slave away, creating an elaborate 50-page report or a labor intensive video course. You can actually offer something as simple as a Top 10 list (it is free, after all).

Just make absolutely sure that the information contained in your article, report, video or audio is right on the mark in helping your prospect solve their

problem or achieve their goal. (Here's where being really clear about who your audience is comes in handy again.)

#5 – Decide Ahead of Time What the Objective Is for Each Page

A lackluster website gives information; a client-capturing website makes a request.

The best way to motivate your visitor to take action is to be clear about what you want them to do.

The overall objective for your site will be 3-fold: enhancing your credibility, lead generation, and product or program sales.

But each page needs to have a focused objective as well. And part of that focused objective is a very clear Call to Action.

You get to create the "bread crumb trail" you'd like them to follow in your site. Decide on the pathway that makes sense and will further the "conversation" you're having with them.

So for example, your Home Page is going to introduce them to you and the results you offer. But where do you want them to go from there?

Do you want them to call you, to sign up for your newsletter, to go to your Services page, to request a price quote?

Decide what's next and then make it clear so they're not wandering aimlessly.

(You can see examples of how I used a Call to Action on my site: www.helengraves.com -at the bottom of each page.)



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There isn't one "right" path for every website. And people being people, not everyone will do what you want them to anyway.

But when you offer direction, it puts people at ease and let's them say "yes" or "no" instead of "Now what?"

Helen Graves shows solo entrepreneurs how to speak from the heart and turn their marketing into a series of simple conversations so they can grow their business the easy way.

Besides writing captivating website copy that prompts visitors into action, she also shares how to create genuine connection with your marketing and turn potential clients into paying clients. Tune into her complimentary mini audio seminar, "Simplify Your Marketing in 6 Easy Steps," at www.helengraves.com