

## GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT

What's in it for me? This is your users number one question. They want to know what you can offer them to make their lot better. Here we present 8 points to guide you in giving your customers what they want.

### **SPEED**

Give your users what they want and give it to them fast. There is no advantage in making them wait. Ensure your site is fast. Keep image sizes to a minimum and use reliable hosting services that locate their machines close to your target audience. Splash pages just keep your users another click away from the information you want to give them. If in doubt don't use them.

### **VALUE**

If a user has found your site on the Internet you need to deliver a reward; give them something they want. If you retail anti-fouling paint for boats you may want to provide some safety tips on how to use your products safely. If you provide business consultancy services you may want to provide some tips to greater business efficiency. If your users see you as offering value they will consider you when they want to buy.

### **ASSURANCES**

Some people still need a lot of assurance before they will provide information, let alone buy anything through a website. The sceptical users are not all amateurs either. There are many experienced users who take some convincing in regard to your commitment to deliver the goods. There is no point arguing about this, address their issues.

- Provide privacy statements
- Make Your Terms and Conditions easy to access
- Ensure that your contact details are accessible
- Use SSL for collecting sensitive information
- If you have a guarantee or warrantee explain it clearly
- Tell your users about your business processes and how you will react to an order, email or other contact
- Lastly, don't keep your users in the dark, if they feel that they are driving the relationship – which they are, they will feel more comfortable

### **ANIMATION AND SOUND:**

These features are very low on a user's list of requirements. Animations and sound impede the speed of the site. Sound effects can also be very embarrassing to users if they have visited your site in an office environment where other people can hear them. Users may feel guilty about accessing your site – even if it is for business and may just quickly hit the back button and never return to your site.

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Search Engine Optimisation & Website Marketing

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Page 1 of 3

The same with Flash, (Flash is the movie like animation that often preludes a site or controls a highly sophisticated navigation system). This is a brilliant technology, but it's rarely used in a setting where it adds value to the user experience. If you want to use Flash in your site make sure you know what advantage it is supposed to deliver to your user, then measure its value against that criteria.

### PRICES

If you are selling something let your users know how much it costs. Not providing prices just strikes you off the user's list of potential suppliers. Users don't always buy at the lowest price, users evaluate the total offer against their own criteria. You are much better off trying to address all of your user's criteria rather than depriving them of essential information.

### KEEP YOUR USERS IN CONTROL

Users don't like it when web developers change the way the web works for them. Here are a list of things people hate.

- Breaking the "Back Button" this is often done either deliberately by the developer or inadvertently by opening a new window without making it obvious to the user.
- Advertising is almost invisible to most users now. It no longer makes your site look big, it looks out of date.
- Unless security is an issue, let your users see the URL, many users use the URL to work out where they are in your site, so don't get in their way. Also, to make it easier for people that like to use this feature make sure that you use plain language file and directory names. Users may also want to direct other users to your pages, removing the URLs deprives you from reaching potential users.
- Ensure that all pages have good descriptive page names that will assist your users when bookmarking specific pages that interest them.
- Frames generally get the thumbs down with users; it makes information harder to re-locate and it makes bookmarks useless. Frames are not search engine friendly either. Keep away from them if you can.
- Hypertext links should be self explanatory. If you use a hypertext link to launch your user's email program make sure that this is obvious by using words like email customer service here or [customerservice@yourcompany.com.au](mailto:customerservice@yourcompany.com.au) Users find it very annoying to click on a person's name and get anything but a biography on the person. These links should never launch an email program. If a hyperlink is going to take the user to a PDF, Word document or other file format, tell them about it.
- Keep hypertext links in standard colours. If you set your own colour scheme and users can't easily identify which links they have used before, you run the

risk of confusing your user and having them go backwards and forwards through the same few pages.

- Pop up Windows often infuriate users and they will often turn people away from your site very quickly. Rightly or wrongly users identify pop-ups as advertisements, even if they are not closed immediately they will most likely be ignored.
- Bleeding Edge Technology is generally slow, requires third party plug-ins and takes your user away from their goals. Don't use it.

### **INFORMATION DELIVERY**

Scrolling text is hard to read and looks like an advertisement. Users are very practiced at ignoring what they perceive to be advertisements so don't bother with it.

Give your users access to old information. Do not try to pass it off as current, but providing an archive of information is very useful and builds credibility.

### **SERVICE**

At the end of the day your website is just a representation of your business, what your users want is for you to live up to the promises of your web site. Make sure you do what you say you will do. Follow up on all inquiries that come through your website as soon as possible and always thank people for taking the time to contact you.