

Your Website's First Impression

So far the lessons have focused on keywords for positioning and content. Let us now look at traffic generation. Does your site convey the “authority” on its topic? Does it get to the point of what you do, how you do it, and what you offer right away?

We want traffic! We want that traffic to stay on our page and use what it is we offer. Your web statistics will show where a viewer enters your website, where they exit, and how long they stay. You will be able to determine the success of your pages and layout by these statistics. The longer someone stays, the more pages they look at, and the deeper they go into your site, the more they like it.

Two things are very important in your web design:

- 1) The first impression you make, and
- 2) The navigation style you use.

First let us look at impressions of a website.

Factors that impact how well your website is received include:

- Placement and usage of graphics and ALT tags. It's important to use your logo early, preferably at the top of your website. No matter if you are Coca-Cola or Grandpas' Diner, the goal should be to create branding of your business once you are found. When the viewers think of local diners, Grandpas' Diner should come to mind. Branding will cause the viewer to bookmark your page. This is a good thing.
- Use of other graphics. If you use too many graphics you risk your page looking cartoonish and animated. Too few graphics makes the content hard to read without enough breaks and visual stimulations for balance and white space.
- Answer the “why me?” question right away with a heading that grabs the viewer's attention and makes them want to look deeper. **DO NOT** put “Welcome to our website” as your first heading. This is your first chance and only chance to make that good impression. “Grandpas' Diner – Voted #1 in Reno for 5 years running” would be a good heading. **Market your brand and brand your market.**
- Solves a problem with your product and advertising. After all, this is what you do, right? If not, then why are you in business? Of course you solve a problem or add to someone's well-being or feed an ego. You know what you offer. Avoid listing the features of your product or service and focus on the benefits. “Grandpas' Diner offers the best breakfast in town at the best price. You'll never leave Grandpas' Diner dissatisfied.” Grandpa knows his food and he knows his customer. Satisfaction guaranteed. Do we know what Grandpa sells? NO, not in detail. But we do know we're going to be satisfied with his food and not hungry when we leave.
- Keep important information “above the fold.” That is, at the top of the page before you have to scroll down to read further. Catch the viewer's attention early and they will scroll. If not, they will stroll away from your website.

So the challenge is to attract the eye, sell yourself and your business, and answer the “Why me?” early. Keep it simple; keep it direct.. That's the formula.

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