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March 20, 2006

10 Reasons People Don't Buy From You

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March 20, 2006

By: Peter Fogel

As a copywriter I often get complaints from new clients as to why their Web sites are not selling their widgets or services effectively. So before I write the copy, I do a critique for them. It amazes me that they're sometimes not doing the simple things that could energize their sales and presence online. Here are 10 reasons you're leaving money on the proverbial table:

1. You don't make people feel safe when they order. Yes, the Web has been around awhile. You'd think that people would feel comfortable ordering online. But with so much identity theft, customers remain wary. You need to remind people that they are ordering through a secure server on your site. Tell them that you won't sell their e-mail address and that all their information will be kept confidential.
2. Your ad copy is unattractive. By this, I mean you make the mistake (as some e-marketers do) of listing features instead of benefits. A car that goes zero to 60 in eight seconds is a feature. The fact that you can merge into traffic swiftly and safely is a benefit. If your headline is too general, it will not attract your target audience. Also, list any testimonials from customers who love your product or service. And some marketers forget to place any guarantees included in their ad (not you, of course).
3. You don't remind people to come back and visit. It might be hard to believe, but even with your compelling copy and graphically friendly Web site, people usually don't buy the first time they visit. It's a numbers game. The more times they visit, the greater the chance they will buy. The most effective way is to give them a free subscription to your e-zine. You want to build your house list for optimal results and keep your product or service in front of them.
4. You don't let folks know anything about your business. Prospects feel more comfortable once they know whom they're buying from. Here's a no-brainer: Publish a section called "About Us" on your Web site. Include your business history, profile of employees, contact information, etc. Let people get to know you, which then lets them feel comfortable buying from you.
5. You don't give people as many ordering options as possible. Give them every possible way to order from you. Yes, accept credit cards, checks, money orders and other forms of electronic payments. Take orders by phone, e-mail, Web site, fax, mail, pigeons with notes attached. Make it easy to get their order.



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6. Your Web site doesn't look professional. You have about three seconds to capture a prospect's attention. As info product guru Fred Gleeck says, "a confused mind takes no action." Have your own domain name. Ensure your site is easy to navigate. Graphics should relate to the theme of your site. And they should "attract — NOT distract."

7. You don't let people read your ad before they get your freebie. Folks are suspicious. They want to know WHY you're giving them a freebie. When you use free stuff to lure people to your Web site, include it below your ad copy or on another Web page. If you list the freebie above your ad, they may never look to see what you're selling.

8. You don't attract the target audience that would buy your product or service. A poor ad will get you more sales from a targeted audience than great copy to the wrong audience. Don't sell meat to a vegetarian. A simple way to know what your customers want is to survey your existing customers to see what attracted them to buy. This information helps improve your target marketing and advertising.

9. You don't test and improve your ad copy. Many people write ad copy and never change it. Test, test and test some more. You have to do this continually to improve your copy to get the highest response rate. Yes, it's more expensive offline to do that, but don't you agree? There's no excuse online.

10. You don't give people any urgency to buy NOW! People are inherently lazy and overwhelmed with work, play, the wife and kids, etc. Many potential customers are interested in your product, but they put off buying it till later and eventually forget about it. "Woo" or "court" them. Get them to buy now with: a freebie; a discount; "quantities are limited" disclaimer; or a deadline.

If you do use a deadline, stick to it. In the Old West if a gunslinger said, "Get out of town by noon ... or I'll plug you full of lead," he meant noon. Not five after noon. If you waver on a deadline, you'll lose credibility.

Perhaps you've seen these strategies used over and over. They work. Next time you begin a project on your site, use this list to see what you might be doing wrong — and make it right — the first time out. With pay-per-click advertising and your e-zine, once you get them to your site, it's your job to get them to buy ... or CLICK — they're gone!



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