Website Content is Important

A group of SCORE mentors and small business CEOs were meeting this week on the topic of how to attract interest to your business website. The core of this meeting focused on writing good “content” that will attract interest and spur action.

One of the group members commented that we don’t buy only because we need things. We buy because we want them. This struck a chord with us because we all related to it. The observation was made that for some reason outside the realm of logical explanation, we have to have the iPhone 6 even though our iPhone 4 works just fine. We’ll pay $200 more for the designer version of the same pump. And when it does come down to purchasing the things we need -- like toilet paper and rice -- we don’t base our buying decisions on cost and quality alone; we tend to spend our money on goods that make us feel a certain way.

In Psychology Today, Dr. Peter Noel Murray does a great job of breaking down this attachment between brand power and emotion. He says "A nationally advertised brand has power in the marketplace because it creates an emotional connection to the consumer. A brand is nothing more than a mental representation of a product in the consumer’s mind. If the representation consists only of the product’s attributes, features, and other information, there are no emotional links to influence consumer preference and action. The richer the emotional content of a brand’s mental representation, the more likely the consumer will be a loyal user."

To elicit an emotional response, brands need to communicate a compelling “personality” through their packaging and the types of words and images they use to describe the brand, Murray says. And where do many (if not most) people first come into close contact with your brand? These days, it is usually your website. That’s why it’s so important to create website content that makes viewers feel good/excited/intrigued/you-name-the-positive-feeling about your brand.

Andrea Rowland helps craft compelling communications for today’s go-getters through her work as an editor at GoDaddy (one of SCORE’s resource partners). She gave some great hints about how to create engaging website content. Here are a few:

✔ Tell your story as an engaging personal narrative. This will add the personality your website needs to make visitors want to learn more -- to click through to your products and services page, fill out your contact form, and check out your linked social media profiles. You can tell your business’s unique story through thoughtful copy, inspiring images and dazzling design on your entire website,
✓ Tell your story in a few paragraphs sprinkled with trigger words that will invoke the type of feelings you hope to stir up. Add depth to your written story with photos and video. You can use the “About Us Page” as the go-to space for visitors to learn all about who you are and why they should care

✓ Focus on the benefits. A bulleted list of product features isn’t likely to make someone whip out their credit card. But a list of reasons why your product can save them time or money or improve some other aspect of their life, might. Keep the focus on end-user benefits in your website’s headlines, product descriptions and customer endorsements.

✓ Make ‘em want to DO something. When you have the opportunity to present something of value to your potential customers, make it sound like it's going to be worth their while.

✓ The calls to action on your site should identify problems and communicate the benefits of taking action, or offer visitors something they can't turn down. “Shave hundreds from your tax payment!” “Save a pet today!” “Start learning now!” Use your calls to action to let site visitors know what’s in it for them, especially on an emotional level, so they’ll take that next step.

✓ How does the word "submit" make you feel? Empowered? Curious? Ready to hand over your email address? Doubtful. If your aim is to compel website visitors to do something (click through, call, fill out a form, etc.) with a sense of urgency, “submit” is just about the worst call-to-action verb you could choose. Even if they don’t need what you’ve got to offer, an emotional journey through your website could make them want it a little bit more.

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