Is your Website Ready for 2015?

“In preparation for the new year I want to really take a look at our business website and see if it needs some up-dating” is a statement that came from the group of small business CEOs that I referenced in my last column. “That sounds like a good new year’s resolution”, I said and I will give you some suggestions.

So my challenge to business readers is have you considered taking some time over the next few weeks to look at your business website and see if it is ready for 2015? Does it need a make-over?

I suggest that that there are some key items to look at to keep customers from clicking over to your competitor. I learned some of these from Rieva Lesonsky who is CEO of GrowBiz Media, a media and custom content company focusing on small business and entrepreneurship. As you look at your site, does it have these key features that I think are a must for your business in 2015?

**Responsive design:** What does your website look like on a smartphone or tablet? Research shows that 57 percent of mobile users will abandon your website if it takes more than 3 seconds to load. How much of your homepage does the viewer see on various smartphones? Are buttons easily clickable? Have your Web designer go over your site to make sure each page loads quickly and that the mobile design is simple enough?

Wondering if a mobile-friendly website is really all that important? In a 2014 mobile behavior report from Salesforce, 85 percent of respondents say mobile devices are a central part of everyday life. Also, as our business economy becomes more able to deal with security issues, I read that mobile technology will play a big part in that fix.

**Shareable content:** If you’re still waiting for your business to benefit from the viral nature of social media, maybe you’re not giving your customers anything worthy to share with their friends (and fellow shoppers). Make sure your content is useful, entertaining and visually enticing. Did you know online video now accounts for 50 percent of all mobile traffic? When embedding video, make sure it’s easily viewed on a mobile device.

**Clear contacts:** Don’t forget your contact information! There’s nothing more frustrating to a customer with a question then having to hunt down your business’s contact information on your website. Customers doing some research may not mind filling out a form, sending in an email and waiting for a response. But if you’ve got a customer ready
to buy who just needs a quick question answered, you’d better have a phone number or online chat form easily available so they can talk right away.

As the new year approaches, look at your business website and see if it needs some revision.

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