

The Top Seven Ways to Tune Up your Website

Hopefully your business is booming, or perhaps it's a little slower than usual. Either way, it's always a good time to take stock of what's working for you, and what needs some attention - including your website!

Here are my suggestions for a great tune-up audit - take a fresh look at your site and your promotional strategy with these pointers:

1. **Is your site appealing to all your markets?**

Do you have different potential buyers for different aspects of your products or services? Is there content on your site that's designed for each of these? Have you considered whether your Web audience might be different from your traditional markets, and if so, whether you can exploit that? If you have a particular specialty or expertise that sets you apart from your competition, make it immediately clear from your home page.

2. **Does your content engage your visitors?**

Your site should be written from your visitors' point of view, not yours. Does your home page clearly recognize why the reader might be there - what's in it for them, and why they should care? What are the problems or issues that they might have, and how will you solve them?

Perhaps your visitor is budget-conscious. Prominent display of some current special offers or discounts might help persuade them to browse further.

3. **Do you make your case?**

If you claim that your products or services achieve results, do you have clear content on your site that substantiates this? Do you provide testimonials from happy customers? Third party endorsements are worth far more than your own promotional text, and they should be spread throughout your site, not relegated to a separate page that few visitors will go to.

Ask a few happy customers for some great quotes about your service - and perhaps for permission to include video or photographs of your work with their comments. Usually, people love to see their name on your site - and their words will really add credibility to your customer service statements.

4. **Do you position your expertise?**

One of the most effective ways to get exposure is to publish a blog, articles and white papers around your area of expertise. The content on your site will be picked up by the search engines, and you can also offer your articles to publications that your target markets read - always with a link back, or reference to your site, of course. You could include a discount offer in the byline of your articles as an additional incentive to bring visitors to your site.

5. **Do you ask for the business?**

Whatever the outcomes that you want from your site, you need to ask for them. Too many Web pages end suddenly, with no clear calls to action. Don't make your visitors have to work to decide what to do next - they won't! *Every page on your site should have a strategy* - use links in your text to invite the visitor to interact with you, or go to the next page, but make it easy and obvious.

6. **Do you have a diversified promotional strategy?**

Don't depend solely on free (or paid) search engines to get you traffic. Are you exploring other ways of promoting your Web presence - such as using your content and articles, participating in social media, posting on slide and video-sharing sites, regularly sending updates to your mailing list, and ensuring that your traditional marketing is fully integrated with your online activities?

7. **Are you reviewing your traffic reports?**

Last, but really key - your website traffic reports will tell you what's working and what isn't. Without this information, you're really shooting in the dark - *what if you were to find that the majority of your hard-earned visitors never go beyond your home page?* Find out what's popular on your site, as well as the places that your visitors rarely go to. You may make some very valuable discoveries!

Of course, this is far from an exhaustive list, but it's a good start. I hope that your website passes the test!