

Small Business Owners: Create an Easy Trail That Leads to More Sales

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It's something I hear quite a bit. Half complaint and half frustrated rant, many small business owners tell me they simply can't compete with the big boys. Even online they find their sites at the bottom of the rankings and, if they do rank well in the engines, their conversions are low.

The bad news is, this immediately tells me there are most probably some very common mistakes being made on their sites. The good news is, these errors can almost always be corrected so the site produces better results.

Once fixed, you'll find you've created an easy trail for customers to follow that leads directly to your door. Let's look at the top three.

#1 Poor Title & Description Tags

This is your prospect's first exposure to your site so it had better be good. Instead, all too often I see title tags that read something like:

Blue Suede Shoes | Red Suede Shoes | Green Suede Shoes

A list of keywords may have appeal to a search engine spider, but it does very little to let your prospect know why s/he should click to your site as opposed to the 1,459,327 others that pop up in the Google search results.

Instead of simply stuffing your title tag full of mere keyphrases, give it some human appeal.

Buy Blue Suede Shoes & Save 25% | Free Shipping on Blue, Red & Green Suede Shoes

Several important things have happened here.

1. You've included a call-to-action using the word "buy."
2. You've differentiated yourself by including a discount amount and the benefit of free shipping.
3. And you now have a title tag that actually says something valuable to a human being rather than a mere (boring) list of keyphrases.

The same applies to your description tag. Continue with the topic you used in your title tag (savings and free shipping) and go into more detail when you write the description tag. Answer your customer's burning question, "Why should I click on your listing instead of all these others?"

#2 Unrelated Page Copy

There's a flow... or at least there should be... when a prospect enters your site from a banner ad, a search engine listing, an email, etc. The headline and page copy need to be consistent with the title and description tag, the banner ad, email text, etc. If it isn't the customer gets confused and leaves.

If your title tag reads "Buy Blue Suede Shoes & Save 25% | Free Shipping..." then your page needs to clearly communicate the details of this. Likewise, a local veterinarian wouldn't want to place a banner ad on a pet supply website that read "New patients save \$20 on first annual

exam" and lead visitors to a website page that says nothing about this offer. From whichever trigger (traffic generator) the prospects comes, follow up with the information in your page copy.

#3 Unclear Call-to-Action

Once on your site, don't be shy about letting visitors know what to do next and how to purchase. As the old marketing saying goes, "If you don't ask for the sale, you won't get it." Service-based businesses need to have obvious and easily located contact us forms. Ecommerce sites should employ clear sales funnels that explicitly direct customers through the shopping cart and payment process.

Draw a map. Where are your visitors coming from? And once on your site, where do you want them to go? Now outline what needs to happen to get them from point A to point B. Chances are, when you use a human-friendly, informative title and description tag, clear and enticing page copy and input an easy-to-follow sales funnel, you'll see conversions increase dramatically.

Are you looking to revamp or [build a small business website](#) but aren't sure where to start? Karon's book *Effective Websites for Small Businesses* helps you work with professionals to make it happen. Learn more at <http://www.EffectiveWebsitesForSmallBusinesses.com>.