



## HOW TO CONVERT YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AND KEEP THEM COMING BACK

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Often, businesses ask the question, “Why is my website not as popular as my competitors’ and why are my potential customers not converting?”

After pondering that question, you should ask yourself:

1. Does my website effectively lead potential customers to an easily identified place to convert/purchase/take action?
2. Does my website provide anything of value to my potential customers for them to want to revisit and recommend the site to friends?

If the answer to these questions is no, you have answered your initial question.

The evolution of the website (HISTORY ALERT! – you can skip this section if history causes you to fall asleep at your computer): First the earth cooled. Then the dinosaurs came. Then came the internet.

There was a time when most businesses simply knew that they should be online but didn’t know why. As a result, their websites often resembled their glossy offline brochures. At that time, websites were visual representations of businesses but served no purpose in terms of functioning as a tool to generate more business. Those websites gave no consideration to usability rules (as most weren’t established yet) that would lead their potential customers to convert.

Then came the era when websites had to be flashy. The resulting situation was that users had no clue as to what the website was about, why it existed or what they were supposed to do.....resulting in little or no business. Users were often confused when they were presented with Flash navigation and things they could play with. Often, these things would divert the user’s attention away from the reason that they were on the site in the first place. In most cases, the entertainment value was short lived and the user would leave the site

without converting.

Thus the question exists: Why invest money (a lot of money in some cases) in a glossy representation that no one knows how to use and has no return on investment? If you build it, they won't necessarily come and if they do, they won't necessarily convert into customers.

### **The Importance of the Conversion:**

Conversions exist in many different forms. You may think of a conversion as a store where a user has to log in to purchase. In reality, any action you want to guide a user to complete could be considered a conversion. However, if your conversion is simply to capture data for email campaigns, it's suggested that you trade something of value such as a white paper or online community participation. Think of the kinds of websites that you find useful or make you want to take action. Even if your site is meant to be informational, a conversion should still be present.

During a website redevelopment, make sure your vendor thoroughly understands your business goals and can tailor points of conversion that align with those business goals. If the vendor doesn't ask detailed questions about your target audiences and conversions, they most likely base their site architecture and design on aesthetics and not functionality. The good news is that you can have both. When your vendor is designing the site architecture, make sure they are focusing not only on usability best practices but also on audience segmentation and pathways to conversions for those audiences. Remember that your website should lead your potential customers through a process to take action.

### **If the Site Does Not Provide Anything of Value:**

If your potential customer gets onto your website and sees boring, long content about your company history, no conversions, an annoying flash homepage, and nothing new since five years ago, they will make the assumption that your products or services are not worth the cost. After all, if your business has not taken the time to understand their potential customers, why would those potential customers invest in that business? Value can be perceived as anything useful to your audience. As a result, you should know your audience behaviors like the back of your hand. They may be interested in technical white papers, an online community to join or a quiz that helps them make a purchase decision. The perceived value should be different for your different audiences.

However, creating value for your website should not be a one-time effort. Rather, it should be a commitment. Users will revisit new and fresh content more often (not to mention search engines) and if they find the content useful, they will share it with others.

In conclusion, your website should function as a powerful business tool rather than a brochure. It should exist to lead customers to a conversion and should be interesting enough for users to want come back and share. Consider these points when going through your website and consult your web vendor as to what can be done to your website to make this happen. Ultimately, If users have stumbled on your website, they are researching or looking to take action. Make it easy for them!

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