

5 Tips to help freshen up your website in 2011



1. Go over your homepage with a fine tooth comb.

The copy on your website's homepage is possibly the most important aspect of your entire site. Not only is this the first official contact your customers will have with your company's brand but it's also the first element of your site that will be scanned by a search engine.

It is crucial to get the balance right between your website's keywording and how you approach your design and aesthetics.

Keep your keywords relevant to your brand and the voice you want to get across. Never integrate keywords that do not fit within the context of your site in order to gain readers through search engines. Search engines are now efficient enough to spot when this happens and will not rank sites that do.

After you have thought about the keywording and copy, it's time to think about the aesthetical way in which you're going to present it. Make sure you have the imagery and information that is most relevant to your customers positioned in the prime place on your site, or above the fold and keep it simple and clear.

Try this: *Need more space to say everything you want to? Use rotating homepage content – be it a newsfeed or a set of rotating articles with links and pictures that change on each refresh. If a person who lands on your website sees that it looks constantly updated then they are much more likely to return over and over again.*

Remember: With homepage copy, less is often more. You need to give your readers a taste of what your company is about and compell them to click elsewhere to find out more.

2. Don't rush it - Review your content carefully.

It has been seen over and over again, with many a website – the rush to go 'live' leaves a site with obviously rushed content.

It will save you a lot of time in the future agonising over low stagnant website traffic rates, if you just take some time out to go over your content carefully in the process of a revamp.

You must try to set aside some time to review every single one of your website's pages. Start with your homepage then work through each of your main category pages.

As far as the actual content itself, you will most probably be amazed how quickly a website can go out of date. The Internet changes in massive ways, second by second, and content will soon go static and become outdated very quickly.

Ensure there is fresh content up on the site on a regular basis. If a reader sees old content on a site on three consecutive visits, they are unlikely to return.

Try This: *Not sure what to do with your older content? Create an archived section in your site, you can still use this content and benefit from the keywording and traffic that it will help generate.*

Remember: Greater attention is given to what is said in your opening paragraphs, so leverage your keywording towards the top of the page.

3. Integrate your social media activities and share.

Making the steps to give your business a social presence is extremely important these days. If you don't have a social media account then you're not competing on the fastest growing marketing platform.

Obviously, once you have your social media account set up then you must update this regularly and continuously try and build an ongoing fan base.

One way to do this is to not hide yourself just on the social sites... make it just as obvious on your website that you have a social presence.

Ideally, use your homepage as a place to display all of your social media links. That way, as soon as you attract any new readers they will be fully aware that you are available socially as well. If you really want to boost these numbers, run a campaign or a giveaway and implement this on the very front of your website also.

Another useful tip when it comes to integrating social media is to make every article you post sharable. Shareability can be the make or break for some businesses.

It's quite easy to find facebook coding and twitter coding to implement into your HTML in order to display a small widget alongside each article. Once you have this coding, simply add it to your desired articles or maybe even create a widget that runs on every single page. If you do decide to work it into the design then you will only have to implement this once rather than constantly give maintenance to each page.

Try This: *Don't just share... count! You can add a counter to articles so that people can see how many times each piece has been shared. This is extremely useful as you can use this to determine which articles attract a better response than others.*

Remember: Keep at front of mind that social media requires a continuous effort. Don't start it, if you can't carry it on!

4. Get mobile. Set up a mobile compatible site for your customers.

Can your visitors easily view and navigate your website using a mobile device? Mobile web is growing at an astronomical rate and to keep up with the competition you will need to have a site that is easily readable on a mobile phone.

It's forecast that by 2013 there will be more than 1.7 billion mobile Internet users worldwide* ... a market that is not to be missed!

If yours is the type of business that wants or needs to be found on the Internet while your customer is on the go, then this is extremely important.

The first question you need to ask yourself is how you want to cater to this potential audience. You need to put a plan together of what your customers want from your website while on the move. Do they simply need contact information? Directions? Or something more dynamic, such as actual products or downloads?

Have a look at the competitors and see what they are offering. What do they offer on the landing page? How easy is the site to navigate. Do you get the desired results in less than three clicks?

Try This: *Familiarise yourself with the software available so you're not going in 'blind' then crawl your website and pull out all of the most important aspects.*

Remember: The idea with mobile technology is to simplify. Make a map of a simplified version of your site, base your mobile site on this, and don't be afraid to ask a professional for help!

*(Source: <http://www.theinternetvision.com>)

5. Be inspired. Compare your website with your competitors.

Doing as thy neighbour does – it's a tried and tested tactic, which actually often works quite well. Your competitors are guaranteed to be looking at you, so it's time to give them a taste of their own medicine.

Create a list of your top ten competitors and see how they manage their websites from the homepage. How can you be more efficient? What works best? How are they keeping their readers' attention and generating click-throughs and conversions. Do you feel compelled to click any particular areas? How are they using their content and their images?

Look closely also at how they use their social media to generate leads and sales. How often do they post and update? Is there anything you can learn from the content that they use to draw in a following of new readers?

The hardest part of all... what are they giving their customers that you aren't giving yours? Is this a matter of budget or technology? And how can you work your way around it?

Try this: *Put together a comparison chart of your competitor's websites and compare who is performing better across each area: design, social media, amount of content etc. Pick out the best points from each and compare how well you are performing in comparison.*

Remember: Don't be afraid to learn from your competitors as to what will help you revamp your website.

Need some more inspiration for your website?

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