

Your Essential Website Blueprint for More Clients, More Sales and More Profit!



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www.juliazaslow.com

Introduction

Is Your Website Working For You? bad website = bad business

By Julia Zaslow

Remember when you used to reach for your 3 inch thick phone book to find a doctor, plumber, or the phone number of the local pizza place in town?

My, how times have changed...

In today's digital age, the #1 way that people now search for professionals, service providers, or products is ONLINE.

That means that your website is the first introduction to you that people see when they are looking for services or products that you provide.

A good website will draw them in and immediately convert them to a lead or customer; a bad website will turn them away faster than you can blink an eye... and they're off to your competition.

(And if you don't have a website at all, you might as well not exist!)

So... you know you need a website and it's probably been a big thorn in your side that you don't have one (or you have one that you're ashamed of).

But where to start?

Would you believe me if I told you could have a professional looking, quality website up in as little as a week with the right tools and resources? And that you don't have to spend an arm and a leg to do it?

It's true, and not as hard as it seems at first blush. I'm going to tell you everything you need to know, but first, a quick introduction...

About Julia Zaslow internet marketing expert

In high school, I was a nerd. Seriously, I just loved learning and studying. I liked a lot of subjects, but particularly excelled in science and math.

When I got to college, I was excited about the prospect of branching out, so in my first year took 8 courses in 8 different subjects, including political science, art, dance, literature, ethics, logic, and more. I enjoyed all of of them, but was surprised to feel that something was missing. It turns out I really missed science and math!

So literally the week before classes started sophomore year, I was studying the course catalog and noticed a major that looked unbelievably exciting. It was called "Geology-Physics/Mathematics".

"What?" I can hear you asking. Yes, a full course load of geology, chemistry, math, and physics really TURNED ME ON.

Weird, I know.



Before I could start to doubt myself, lucky for me, I was assigned a fabulous female advisor who was a kick-butt seismologist. With her support, I stuck with it.

I specialized in seismology like her, and discovered that seismology actually involves very little field work (maybe the occasional trip to the country to place an array of seismometers or return months later to check why one's not working) and mostly a lot of long lonely hours in a windowless lab in front of a computer writing software programs to analyze waveform data. I became disenchanted.

About Julia Zaslow, Con't internet marketing expert

After a soul sucking post-college year analyzing wave form data in one of those windowless labs, I looked around for what was next. This was in 1997, the year that the internet exploded and every company in the world was looking for a webmaster to create their website or run their existing one.

It seemed to me that being a webmaster would be a great balance for me, allowing me to combine my technical abilities with design and creativity, which I also loved. Plus, working with a team would be a lot more social.

So I jumped on the train and became a webmaster. (By the way, this was a thrilling job title back in those days—it garnered a lot of respect and jokes about whips).

I was lucky to work for a high tech company that was actually making tons of dough and growing like gangbusters. Four years into it, I was managing a web team comprised of 7 people, had moved from IT to marketing, and had the more grown-up title of “Web Producer.”

Despite being in my 20s, however, the long hours, commute, and intense nature of this job just about killed me. I was worn out, so I abandoned ship in 2001.

After an interlude that included a whole bunch of things that had nothing to do with computer or the internet, I was looking for my next move when my best friend pointed out that I had been fascinated with nutrition since I was 14. I was that super annoying friend who was always reporting on what the latest book said you should eat/not eat and was continually trying the latest diet-du-jour. I'd

been a vegetarian, a raw foodie, a no-fried militant, a paleo, a chronic cleanser...

One day my friend asked me: “Have you ever thought of being a nutritionist?”

Amazingly, this had never occurred to me.

She was right. I was obsessed with nutrition and loved teaching (admonishing) others about their dietary habits.

In a weird coincidence, around that same time, a Bauman College marketing brochure landed on my kitchen table. I had never heard of the school, but it turns out they were located right there in Santa Cruz where I was living at the time. Their brochure advertised a two year nutrition consulting program that resonated with me immediately. I enrolled the next week.

Two happy years later, I left Bauman with a Nutrition Consultant certificate in hand and big dreams of a flourishing nutrition practice, busy with clients flowing in and out the door all day long.

I promptly went broke. (Or nearly so)

Had I ever launched a small service-based business, by myself, from scratch?

No.

Did I have any clue how to do it?

It turns out no.

I thought I did from my years in corporate marketing and involvement in founding a

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vineyard and winery, but in this venture, I was lost.

I did all the things you're told to do — set up a website, get business cards, find a space to see clients, etc — but still, the clients and income weren't coming in quickly enough.

I realized that although I wasn't giving up on my dream of my own nutrition practice, I also needed to earn some money, pronto.

So when an email landed in my inbox one day announcing that a well known nutrition and fitness expert was looking for a Wellness Coach, I applied immediately. Lucky for me, I got the job.

I came to work for this person believing that here was someone who had it all figured out. She had a successful business and I would learn everything I needed to know from her.

Isn't the truth always more interesting?

The truth was that she *did* have a great many things figured out, but... business was evolving and she found herself the same position that many business owners find themselves in eventually — they aren't satisfied with the current level of their business.

They're burnt out from too much work and an incommensurate amount of profit. So this expert was re-inventing her business and I was in the fortunate position of getting to be a part of the transformation.

Although I joined the team to coach clients in nutrition and lifestyle changes, it became clear that I had valuable skills from my years in web

design and marketing that were sorely needed. So over time, I gave up my coaching duties and transitioned into marketing and launch management.

Along the way, we got some things horribly wrong and some things fabulously right. We experimented, tweaked, and refined. We studied successful entrepreneurs and learned from some of the biggest names in internet marketing. We learned.

So that's how I've ended up back in the world of internet marketing. Today I live and breathe it. I coach and manage launches for doctors, nutritionists, wellness professionals, self-help gurus, authors, and entrepreneurs all over the country.

What I've realized is that there's not a business in the world that can afford to be ignorant about internet marketing. It's not just important — it's **mission-critical**.

The difference between businesses that are thriving in this economy versus those that are just surviving or worse, comes down to how well they are leveraging the key areas of internet marketing, including website design, email marketing, joint ventures, social media, and more.

My goal is to help you to leverage the power of internet marketing for more clients, more sales, and more profits.

Let's get started!

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Website Creation

a brief history

It used to be that for a small business to get a quality website that didn't look like a piece of dog doo-doo, you had to hire a professional graphic designer and a web developer (HTML coder) and spend thousands of dollars — \$4,000 to \$10,000 — at least.

(You think that's bad? When I first worked as a webmaster for a fast growing internet startup in 1997, we spent \$25,000 on our first site redesign, and then another \$35,000 on the next one just 1.5 years later!)

Here's the good news. Things have changed since then, drastically. There are now powerful tools that allow for almost instantaneous website creation. In the hands of an experienced developer, you can have a simple,

clean and functional website up in a matter of *hours*.

"Area Man Consults Internet Whenever Possible."

"48 Hour Internet Outage Plunges Nation Into Productivity."

"Factual Error Found On Internet."

"Getting Mom Onto Internet a Sisyphean Ordeal."

- Headlines from The Onion fake news site

Definitions

Domain: A domain is your internet address, such as juliazaslow.com. This is what people type into their web browser to get to your website.

It used to be that you always had to include "www." in front of your domain name, but technically that is not part of the domain name (it's the name of a particular server on the domain) and nowadays it's assumed by default if you leave it out. I'll talk about registering your domain later if you don't already have one.

Not all domains end in .com (the domain suffix). You can register .net, .us, .co, and more. I always recommend choosing a .com name whenever possible, unless the domain you absolutely have to have (because it's your personal name or company name, for example), in which case you can check if the other domain suffixes are available.

Website: Your calling card on the internet. Where people come to learn about you and what products/services you offer. Your website is "hosted" on a server at an ISP, or web hosting company.

ISP: Internet Service Provider. The folks who connect you to the internet.

Hosting: Your website needs to "live" on a web server somewhere. A web server is both a physical computer (or distributed "cloud" of computers) and a piece of software that "serves" web pages to your browser. It's important to choose a reliable web hosting company that has good dependability (up time greater than 99.9%) and responsive customer service. More on web hosting later.

The Joys of WordPress

the new website platform

My favorite of these powerful new tools for easily building and managing a website? WordPress. Maybe you've heard of it before.

WordPress got it's start as a blogging platform, and that's still one of it's primary features and benefits, but it's much more than that. It's also a flexible, powerful and complete "web content management system."

What's a web content management system, you ask?

Basically, it's a flexible framework that separates the design of your website (logo, banner, masthead, colors, font styles, etc) from the content of your site (your articles, marketing copy, videos, etc). This means that you can easily change the "look and feel" of your site practically with the click of a button.

A web content management system is also a framework that makes is easy for non-technical users to update or change content, without knowing anything about the underlying HTML code. This is a nice feature, because if your job is anything other than a web developer, why should you be required to master web publishing software and HTML markup code just to update your bio?

(Aside: I would have killed for a web content management system when I was a webmaster. My team and I had to manage literally THOUSANDS of web pages, all by hand. At the time, the available options for professional web content management systems cost \$50,000 to \$100,000. Despite my best efforts, I couldn't convince even an enormously profitable internet company to pony up for it. Did I mention that WordPress is FREE?)

Here's the nitty gritty on WordPress...

You can host your WordPress site at wordpress.com, or you can host it privately with one of many hosting companies using your own domain. I recommend the latter, even though it takes a few more steps.

Why? Because if you host your site at wordpress.com, you don't have your own domain. For example, if I choose this option, my website address would be juliazaslow.wordpress.com. However, if I choose to install my WordPress site with another web host, I can have my own domain: www.juliazaslow.com.

I prefer the second choice for two reasons: 1) my own domain is simpler and better for marketing, and 2) I own my website 100% - no one can take it away from me.

A Quick Note About WordPress:

Although I do love WordPress, no software is without its quirks. WordPress is not perfect. But, because it is open-source software supported by an uber intelligent network of programmers around the world, it is constantly being updated, expanded and bugs fixed.

I believe it is truly the best low-cost solution for small to medium size businesses on the market today (and by the way, even some very large companies use WordPress, such as Sony, Ford, and the Wall Street Journal.

Choosing a Web Hosting Company where your website lives

You should choose a web hosting company based on the following criteria:

- Reliability
- Ease of use
- Customer support
- Price

There are a lot of web hosting companies in the market today in the \$10-\$20/month price range. Unless you've got a really high traffic e-commerce site, you don't need to spend any more than that.

The ones that I recommend you check out are HostGator and MediaTemple. There are other good hosts out there, and if you already have one you're happy with, by all means keep 'em (it can be a hassle to switch).

I recommend these particular two because a lot of big names in the internet marketing world have found them to be dependable and easy to work with. I have personally used MediaTemple for myself and many clients and been very happy with their user interface, uptime, and customer service. A friend of mine who is an experienced internet marketing expert swears by HostGator.

Another reason I like these hosts is that they support "1 Click" WordPress installation which makes it super easy to get your WordPress site up and running. No need to FTP your WordPress software up to the server and manually install. Just click a button, answer a few questions, and you're done.

If you're just starting out, it's important to pick your web host carefully, because it's not necessarily a cake walk to switch your domain

and your website if you're not happy. It's much easier to pick a good one right off the bat than to change horses mid-stream.

"If at first you don't succeed, call it version 1.0."

"A computer lets you make mistakes faster than any invention in human history, with the possible exception of handguns and tequila."

Recommended Web Hosting Companies:

MediaTemple

www.mediatemple.com

HostGator

www.hostgator.com

Others:

1and1 (be sure to order a Linux package, not NT)

www.1and1.com

Rackspace

High-end web host known for its dependability and uptime.

www.rackspace.com

Choosing a Domain Name

your website address, or URL

Do you know what domain you want?

Do you know how to pick a good domain?

If you already have your domain and are happy with it, then you can skip to the next section.

If not, here are some pointers on picking a good domain name:

First: do your keyword research, and if possible, choose a domain name that includes your final selection of keywords. (Not sure what keyword research is? Grab my soon-to-be-released product *Essential Keyword Research: An Easy How-To Guide*.)

For example, if you are a nutrition coach and your niche is weight loss for women over 40, then you might look for a domain such as “weightlossforwomenover40.com”

(I just made that up. Just for kicks, I looked up whether the domain was available. No go. It’s already registered. This will happen to you a lot if you’re searching for a name that isn’t super unique. Don’t fret. You can try the .co or .net alternatives, and there’s always the option of using yourname.com for which the competition is less fierce.)

Second: Check to see if the domain is available. See sidebar to the right.

Third: If the domain you want is available (not registered), then grab it right away. I recommend that you register the domain with the web hosting company that you are currently using or plan to use. If you register it somewhere else, don’t worry, it’s not a huge

deal. Domains can be transferred, it just takes a little know-how. Your web or tech team can do this for you.

(Note: choose “Private Registration” for your domain. This means your name and personal information will not be available for anyone on the internet to see when they look up your domain. It cuts down on domain related spam, too.)

How to Look Up a Domain

Use the Domain Lookup Tool:
<http://whois.domaintools.com/>

Type in: yourdomain.com

For example: weightlossforlife.com

(Don’t type “www.” at the beginning)

If the .com domain you want is taken, you can search for yourdomain.co or .net. Those can be perfectly acceptable alternatives. I wouldn’t recommend registering .org, which is meant for non-profit organizations.

NOTE: If you find that the domain you want is NOT registered, then that means it’s available. I recommend that you register the domain with the web hosting company that you are using or plan to use for your website. This makes things easier, and it’s tidier to have your registrations and web hosting all in one place.

Getting WordPress Installed

do-it-yourself or hire a pro

WordPress is simple enough that if you're a techie type, you probably won't have much trouble getting it installed. You can get the software package and instructions from wordpress.org. You'll need to be familiar with such basic operations as FTP and know how to login to your hosting account to manage your domain settings and view your website file structure.

If, on the other hand, you don't have time to spend a couple of hours messing around with the software or your expertise is other than internet technical, you can hire a WordPress expert to do your installation for you. This same person will know how to customize your site's look and feel so it doesn't look just like the WordPress site next door.

For most businesses, I strongly recommend hiring a pro. They know the ins and outs of the software, are familiar with the quirks, and can get you up and running much more quickly than you could do it yourself. They also have access to dozens of different ready to install "themes" that will instantly make your site look unique and match your desired style. You could find these themes yourself by researching online, and you could almost definitely figure out how to install them, but it would probably take you many hours, if not a solid half day. Is this the most valuable use of your time?

Finding a WordPress Expert

To find a WordPress expert, try the following sites:

elance.com

odesk.com

freelance.com

Also try googling "WordPress web developer" or "WordPress designer" and see who you find.

When considering working with someone, always ask to see a recent portfolio of work and ask for 2-3 client references.

Customizing Your Site

how to create a clean, professional look

Now it's time to customize your site so it represents you, your brand, and doesn't look like every other Joe Schmoe who's got a WordPress blog out there.

The first step to customizing your site, as explained in the previous section, is to select a WordPress theme. But that's just the beginning. Not it's time to customize your colors, fonts, and insert your logo (if you have one -- more on that later) to create a truly unique website.

Colors:

It's tempting to go crazy with color, but resist the urge. You don't want people to be distracted by all the bling bling going on -- you want them to read your key message.

My advice? Pick just 2 colors (not including black/dark gray text and a white background). This will keep things looking clean and uncluttered. When choosing your colors, give consideration to your business personality and the products/services you provide, as well as what colors you personally like. But don't forget to think about your target audience too.

Are your customers/clients women who are coming to you for health concerns? Think about starting with green, blue, purple, or plum as your primary color and then choose a secondary color that compliments or contrasts with this.

Is your audience made up of high powered male business executives? Think about a rich mid-to-dark blue, red or dark gray.

Shapes and Graphic Styles:

Again, think about your target audience here, as well as your business personality.

The shapes and graphic styles used in your logo convey unspoken but powerful messages to your audience.

For example, if your logo is plum colored and includes a graphic illustration of an opening flower, that is obviously going to resonate with a female audience more than a male one, and speaks of a type of service that is feminine in nature -- nurturing, caring, and flexible.

If, on the other hand, your logo is dark gray and red and incorporates hard, rectangular shapes, that is generally going to speak more to a male audience. It conveys a sense of formality, power and strength -- generally more male qualities.

Fonts:

The same principle regarding colors applies here. Do more with less and your site will read as classy and sophisticated.

Choose one font for you headlines, and one for text. Pick fonts that have a fully family of styles and weights, such as light, regular, bold, semi-bold, italic, bold-italic. This gives you more flexibility without adding another font to the mix.

It used to be that I would always recommend a san-serif font for text and either a san-serif or serif font for headlines. However, with the nearly ubiquitous use of very high resolution screens in the past few years, this maxim no longer is necessary as serif fonts can easily be read by the human eye on most computer devices.

See the next pages for examples of these principles at play.

About Fonts

the serif distinction

There are two broad styles of fonts, serif and san serif. Which one, or combination, that your website uses will depend on the feeling and message you want to convey.

But first, what's the difference between serif and san serif?

Serif Fonts:	San Serif Fonts:
Baskerville	Arial
Cambria	Calibri
Georgia	Lucida Sans
Hoefler Text	Myriad Pro
Lucida Bright	Helvetica

Take a good look and it's probably clear from the above what the difference between serif and sans serif fonts are.

With serif fonts, you get those little lines at the end of the strokes. This is the more traditional style of font typically seen in print. With sans serif fonts (sans = "without" in French), there's no ornamentation, so the effect is more clean and modern. This clean look can be helpful when font size is small or screen resolution is poor, which is why I used to recommend that all body text be san serif. I still prefer it personally, but it's no longer strictly necessary. Pick the one that you prefer.

Again, serif fonts are more traditional, while san serif fonts convey a more modern feel. For the past decade, san serif fonts have predominated in web design; currently, there is a trend among bloggers in particular to return to using more serif fonts now that screen resolutions have become almost universally very good.

Try using one type for your headlines and the other for your body text. This is a nice way to mix it up.

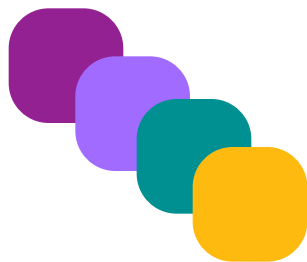
Colors

general rules

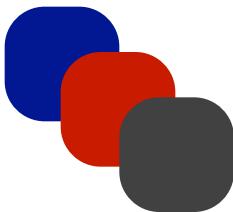
Colors have gender identification in most cultures and it's important to be aware of what colors appeal to different sexes. The following applies to Western culture only.

Colors that primarily appeal to:

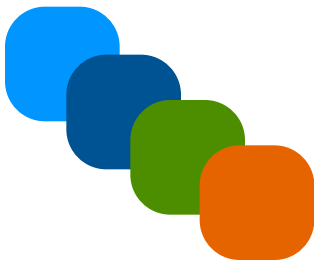
Women



Men



Both Sexes



Common Color Associations in Western Culture			
Red	Passion, Anger, Vigor, Love, Danger	Black	Fear, Secrecy, Formal, Luxury
Yellow	Knowledge, Energy, Joy, Intellect, Youth	Purple	Royalty, Wisdom, Spirituality, Imagination
Green	Fertility, Wealth, Healing, Success, Growth	Orange	Creativity, Invigoration, Unique, Stimulation
White	Purity, Healing, Perfection, Clean, Virtue	Gray	Balance, Sophistication, Neutrality, Uncommitted
Blue	Knowledge, Trust, Tranquility, Calm, Peace, Cool		

Use the above as a general guide only. The unexpected can often be powerful and rules are made to be broken.

Website Design Takeaways

key points

Keep these design principles in mind when directing your web and/or graphic designer:

- 🍪 Clutter = Bad
- 🍪 When in doubt, simplify and take away
- 🍪 Pick 2 colors in addition to black or dark gray for text, and white for your background color. Use your colors sparingly for headlines, subheadlines, links and navigation.
- 🍪 Choose colors that not only represent your company personality, but will also appeal to your target audience.
- 🍪 Pick 2 fonts: one for headlines, one for text. Pick font families that have multiple weights and styles (regular, bold, semibold, italic, bold italic) to give you more options within the your font constraints.
- 🍪 Avoid advertising on your site unless this is a key part of your business plan. Otherwise, it cheapens your message.
- 🍪 Don't cram your sidebar with too much stuff. Whittle down your offerings to the most important.
- 🍪 Make some hard decisions: What are the #1, #2 and #3 things you want your website visitor to do? Focus the elements of your home page on these actions only. Cut out anything extraneous that visually competes for attention. Too much choice is BAD and turns visitors away.

Essential Elements of Your Site

the basics

Your website should have, at bare minimum, the following pages:

- ☒ Home Page
- ☒ Products/Services
- ☒ Blog/Articles (even if you have just one article to start)
- ☒ About
- ☒ Contact
- ☒ Hours/Location (if physical business)

Home Page

Your home page needs these essential elements:

- ☒ Clear statement of who you serve and what transformation you provide
- ☒ Your logo/company name
- ☒ Your tagline
- ☒ Email opt-in box
- ☒ Navigation bar with links to all main pages/section of site

In the next section I'll illustrate how these elements should be organized.

Products/Services

What products and/or services do you offer? Describe them here, and always tell your visitor

exactly what they need to do to purchase the product/service they want. If you don't have a shopping cart set up yet, then give them a phone number or email address. No matter how low tech, be sure you offer them a way to make a purchase or engage your services. More on shopping carts and online ordering later.

Blog/Articles

Content marketing is king, and that's why as soon as possible, you need to start writing articles (in this context, I will use blog posts and articles interchangeably). Intimidated by this? Don't be. People don't want to read long tomes online. They want short, simple and sweet. This makes it easy for you. Write a one or two sentence intro to your relevant topic of choice, add some bullet points, and wrap it up with a concluding thought, or action for your visitor to take. It doesn't matter how short each article is. Just get going.

More on content marketing later.

About

Your "About" page should include an updated bio and a recent professional headshot. If you don't have a professional headshot yet or can't afford one, borrow a friend for an afternoon. Get your hair done, do your makeup (yes, men too — a little concealer and powder go a long way!), and go somewhere where there is bright diffuse light. Don't stand in the overhead sun so that unflattering shadows are created. And be sure to wear a color that compliments your skin and eyes. If you're not sure what that color is, think about the last time someone said "that looks really good on you." It's probably a flattering color for you.

Essential Elements of Your Site

the basics, continued

Contact

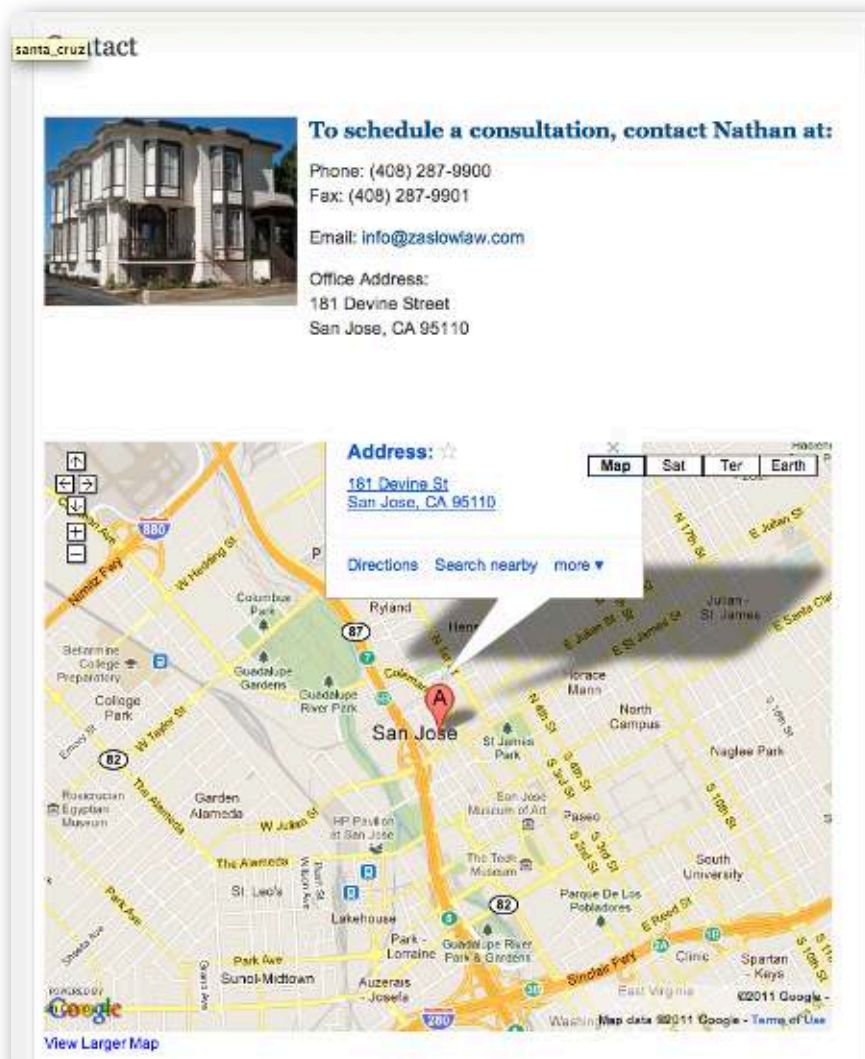
Include your company address, public customer email, and phone number.

When you apply for a merchant account (required when you set up your shopping cart so that people can buy from you online), they will require a phone number posted on your website. For a nominal montly fee, you can get an 800 or 888 number and voicemail from evoice.com, onebox.com, dial800.com or other service.

Hours/Location

In addition to the obvious info here, it's also a great idea to include a Google Maps link.

To do this, go to Google, type in your business address, and then look for the chain-link icon in the upper right. Click on this, and you'll get the code for both a text link and a miniature Google map that you can embed on your site. This makes it super easy for a visitor to click and instantly see your location on a map.



Here's an example of a good contact page. There's a picture of the office building, phone number, email, address, and an embedded Google Map.

People are lazy. Sometimes even looking up an address might be too much. Make it as EASY as possible for them and you'll be rewarded with more customers.

Website Examples

the good, the bad, and the ugly

One of my favorite websites is Copyblogger.com, a site dedicated to best practices in online marketing. Here you can see their home page and blog page. Note the spare use of color and the clean, simple layout. Your site need not be this spare yet still follow the basic principles. A good motto is: When in doubt, cut it out.



Copyblogger's home page. See how easy they make it to "get" them at a glance and make a quick decision about where to go next?

Copyblogger's blog page. Clean, clear, visually appealing. Easy on the eyes so you can focus on the content.



Website Examples

Alexis Martin Neely's website is another one that I like. Her primary color is orange (a bold color that embodies energy and jumps off the page) with small highlights of complimentary yellow/gold and green. Notice that there is plenty of whitespace so that the eyes are not overwhelmed. The most dominant, colorful section of the page is the top right corner where she wants to draw your eyes so you will "Join the evolution" and opt-in to her email list -- her primary goal.

Alexis Neely
Truth-Telling Lawyer™ & Evolutionary Strategist™

JOIN THE Eyes Wide OPEN EVOLUTION

ENTER YOUR NAME & EMAIL
Receive a FREE Audio CD, Book, and Inspiring Interviews with Evolutionary Entrepreneurs That Will Guide You to Build a Sustainable, Profitable Entrepreneurial Business Around YOUR Great Work.

First Name (required)
Email Address (required)
JOIN THE EVOLUTION HERE!

We will never share your information with anyone.

Home Meet Me Work With Me Wanna Partner With Me? Hear Me/Hire Me to Speak See Me on TV

Ready to Have a Sustainable Money-Making Business That Deeply Serves the World & Your Life?

The planet needs you to say yes.

You've stumbled onto this page because you are ready. You hear the call to something more.

You are ready to start living the integrated life you know is possible. The one where you are sharing [your Great Work](#) while having the time, energy and resources to enjoy the life you've always wanted – travel, adventure, personal growth, deep inner work, intimate connections, great, deeply nourishing food, amazing health and longevity ...

If this is what it means to you to have it all, I'm thrilled to assure you, it's so possible!

[Read more and I'll tell you how I know and what it means for you ...](#)

f t e g

NOV 16 2011
The Single Most Valuable Asset of Your Business, Bar None
by Alexis Martin Neely - Posted in [Business](#) |

Without a doubt, no matter what business you are in, the single most valuable asset of your business is the list of people you maintain contact with on a regular basis, at least by email, and possibly by mail as well.

If you do not have a list, the time to start building your list is now. And that does not mean gathering the email addresses of everyone you know in Outlook and sending out mass emails using your bcc: function.

[Click here to read the full post.](#) (1078 words, estimated 4:19 mins reading time)

NOV 15 2011
What Is Freedom, Really?
by Alexis Martin Neely - Posted in [Freedom](#), [Pursuit of Truth](#) |

I used to think freedom was \$40,000,000 in the bank. THEN, I would be free.

I used to think freedom was having my own show on television. THEN, I could say and do what I really wanted and I would be free.

I used to think freedom meant having a big team of people to support me so I didn't have to

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Website Examples

Here's a great medical site - OneMedical.com. Clean, organized, professional. They make it easy to learn about their practice, see pictures of and read about their doctors, and most important, make an appointment (their #1 goal for visitors to the site).



Website Examples

Here's a site targeted at women entrepreneurs - AliBrown.com. While it's not my favorite site, it's a good illustration of a successful site that uses a feminine color scheme to great advantage, and keeps to a two color palette. The sidebar on the right is

trending towards busy, but because it's balanced by a large chunk of clean whitespace with simple text and headlines in the main body area of the site, it works.

The Entrepreneurial GURU for women
— Business News Daily

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Women Entrepreneurs...Your Time is Now!

Women are starting more businesses than ever before, and for good reason: There's never been a better time to take control of your income, leverage low-cost technology, and create the freedom and life you've always wanted. The new economy is best suited for women who are ready to claim their success.

Meet **Ali Brown** — the voice for women's entrepreneurial success. Since starting her first business from scratch 11 years ago in her tiny NYC apartment, she's grown her enterprise into the millions and wants to show you how to grow a profitable business as well, no matter what level you want to take it to.

Learn From a Recognized Leader in Business

Over the past two years alone, Ali has received the honor of being ranked on the Inc. 500 list of fastest growing companies in the nation and named one of Ernst & Young's Winning Women Entrepreneurs, one of the Enterprising Women of the Year, one of Forbes' Women to Watch, and more. She was also featured in the season finale of **ABC's Secret Millionaire**, during which she lived in poverty, volunteered in some hard situations, and then gave away \$100,000 of her own money to some of her community's most deserving organizations.

So whether you're a new business owner or have been in business for years, a single gal or a home-based mom with a family, you're about to learn strategies and secrets from the woman named **"The Entrepreneurial Guru for Women"** by *Business News Daily*.

Get Started With Ali Today — Programs, Products, or Mentoring

Ali's simple and practical tips will help you **build your business, increase your revenues, gain more free time,**

As seen on ABC's **SECRET MILLIONAIRE**

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More Examples the good, the bad and the ugly

Here's an example of a cluttered site - WebMD.

It's not a bad site esthetically speaking (there are FAR worse out there—you've seen them), but unless you're a huge conglomerate website that gets millions of visitors a month, you want to stay far away from creating a busy site like this.

There's just WAY too much going on here, including the distracting advertisements. (By the way, I don't recommend advertising for most business websites because I think it cheapens and actually takes away from your bottom line. Unless advertising is your core revenue-generating strategy, resist the urge. There's much more money to be made by selling products directly to your email list.)



More Examples the good, the bad and the ugly

Another cluttered site—Dr. Andrew Weil's. This might work for Dr. Weil since he is already famous, but for small businesses and solo health practitioners, this is just too

confusing for a site visitor. You want to keep your message strong, clear and focused, with your primary goal being to get the person to join your email list!

The screenshot displays the homepage of Dr. Andrew Weil's website, which is characterized by a highly cluttered and complex layout. At the top, there is a header with the Dr. Weil logo and tagline "Your Trusted Health Advisor™". Below this, a navigation bar contains numerous links categorized into tabs like "Vitamin Advisor", "Spontaneous Happiness", "Healthy Aging", "Dr. Weil's Optimum Health Plan", "Weil Juvenon", "Vitamin Packs", and "Marketplace". A secondary navigation bar includes links for "Home", "Ask Dr. Weil", "Health Centers", "Supplements & Herbs", "Balanced Living", and "Health Network".

The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a "Today's Features" section with a date of 11/22/2011, featuring a large image of hands holding a pill and a headline "Supplement May Help Treat MS". To the right of this is a "Today's Q&A" section titled "The Perils of Sleep Debt?" with a question and answer format, followed by a "Top 50 Q&A's" section. Below these are sections for "Health Centers" with a "Featured Article" on "Migraine Headaches" and a "Select a Health Center" dropdown menu. There is also a "Cooking & Recipes" section with a video player and a quote from Dr. Weil.

On the right side of the page, there are several advertisement banners. The top one is for "Dr. Weil's Vitamin Advisor" offering a free personalized plan. Below it are banners for "Dr. Weil on Healthy Aging", "Dr. Weil's Optimum Health Plan", "Dr. Weil's Spontaneous Happiness", and "Dr. Weil's Head-to-Toe Wellness Guide". At the bottom right, there is a "HEALTHFUL CONTENT" section with a link to "Free Health Emails from Dr. Weil".

The overall design is dense with text, images, and links, making it difficult for visitors to find specific information or navigate the site effectively.

Home Page Organizaton where things go

On the last page I mentioned how your essential home page elements:

Let's see how this works by looking at some examples.

Example #1 - triathlonexperts.com

Here's a website that has all of these ingredients nicely organized. It's clear who they are, who they serve, and what action they want you to take on their site:

The screenshot shows the homepage of **TRIATHLON EXPERTS**. The header features the logo and tagline "Triathlon Training Tactics for Self-Coached Athletes" with the subtext "Your Training Prescription is Ready". Headshots of Jay Zacharias and Miriam Zacharias are displayed. A navigation bar includes links for Home, About, Blog, Buy the book, Training Prescriptions, and Contact, along with the date November 20, 2011.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Left Column:** A video player titled "Frustrated with your finish times?" featuring a man speaking. Below the video is a text block asking "Don't want to suck in your next race? Is life sabotaging your training plans?" and an email opt-in form for a freebie.
- Right Column:** A section titled "A MUST-READ FOR TRIATHLETES!" offering a cheat sheet titled "27 Ways to Wreck Your Race... AND HOW TO AVOID THEM" with an associated email opt-in form. Below this is a "THANKS AGAIN FOR ALL YOUR HELP..." section featuring a glowing testimonial from Bud L., St. George.
- Bottom Right:** A Facebook widget titled "Find us on Facebook" showing the TriathlonExperts.com page and a list of people who like it.

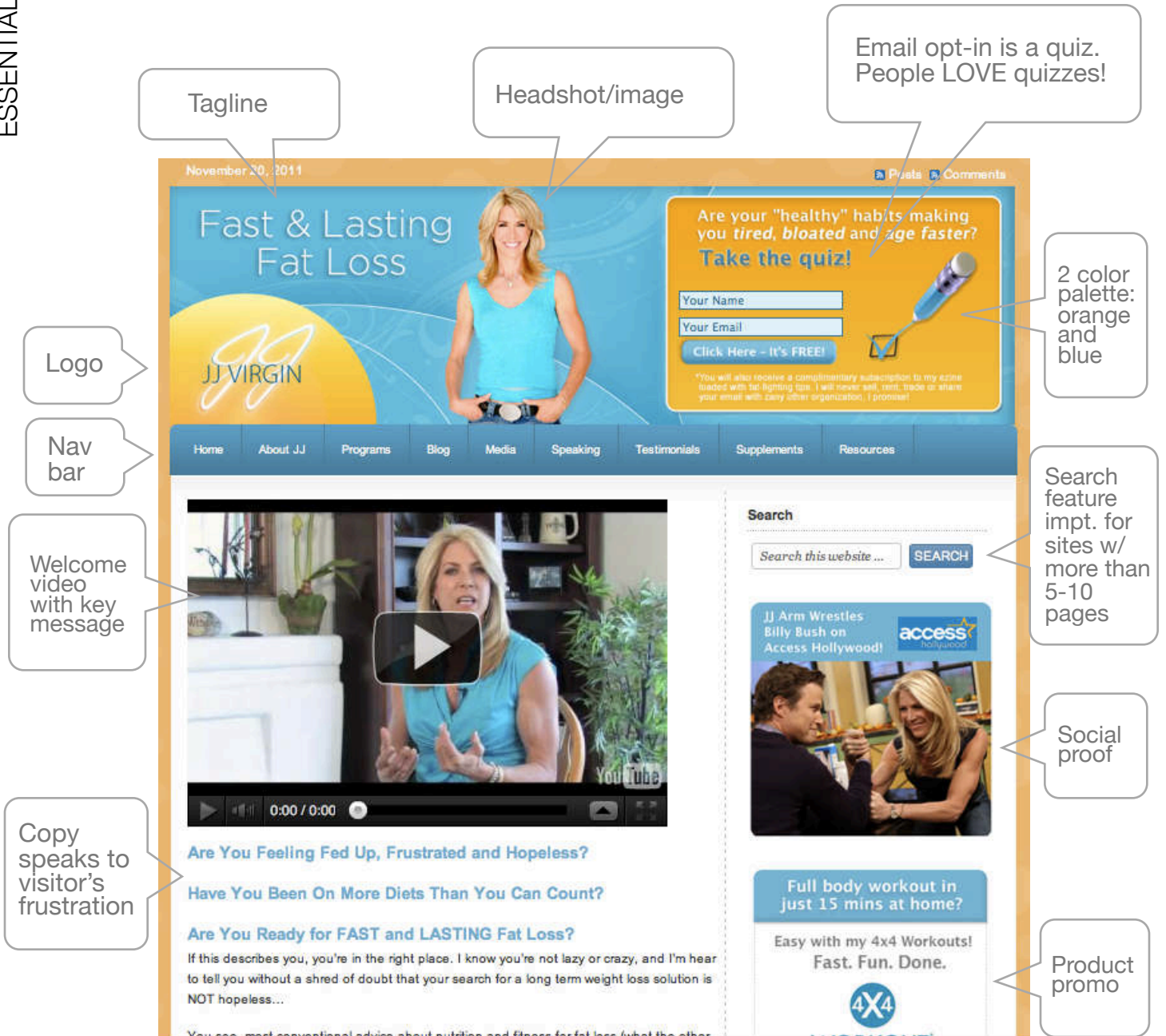
Callout boxes identify the following elements:

- Logo and tagline
- Who this site is for
- Headshots
- Nav bar
- Welcome video with key message
- Email opt-in form with freebie repeated
- Email opt-in form with freebie repeated
- Glowing testimonial
- Facebook widget

Home Page Organization, continued

Here's another example of a well-organized website.

Example #2 - jjvirgin.com



You can't see it in this screenshot, but further down the page, you see her most recent blog article which provides "freshness" to the home page, and in the sidebar on the right, there is a testimonial from Suzanne Somers (credibility, social proof) and links to Facebook and Twitter (social media interaction).

Hiring a Graphic Designer

customizing your look & feel

Want a professional looking logo?

A more custom look and feel to your site?

Then you'll need to retain the services of a graphic designer.

To get the most out of your experience, and to keep costs as low as possible, do your research **BEFORE** engaging with the designer.

Look around and gather examples of color schemes that you like, other logos and websites that appeal to you, and any other specifics you can find that will help your designer narrow in quickly on a design that you will love. Words can be very helpful, so this is another place where your keyword research can come in handy.

Most designers include one or two round of revisions in their quote for a given project; if you require more than this because you were vague in your initial project description, costs may run up. So get as clear as you can from the outset.

Important Note:

A graphic designer is typically NOT the same person who will actually build your website. Unless you happen to find the rare person who does it all *well* (unusual), you will need a graphic designer and a web developer.

The web developer is the person who takes the finished designs from the graphic designer and "slices and dices" the image files, using the pieces to construct your website.

Graphic Design Costs

Logo	\$100-\$300
Masthead	\$300 - \$600
Home Page Design (including masthead & logo)	\$500 - \$1400
Complete Site Design (home page, logo, masthead, subpages)	\$1500 - \$4000

Where to Find a Graphic Designer

99designs.com - Launch a design contest and pick your favorite design from among dozens of choices. You can have logos, mastheads, custom WordPress themes, banners, and more, designed for you -- and you can provide input during the contest to ask designers to adjust their designs in any way you want. Reasonable prices and great variety. I highly recommend giving it a try.

elance.com - Put your project out for bids from many contractors. I suggest selecting a contractor who has good reviews, good communication skills (very important), and is not necessarily the lowest bid. Beware of middle men from large companies (often from India). Instead, look for an independent contractor who will be doing the work themselves and with whom you can communicate with directly. It will almost always be clear from the project bid if you are talking with a middle man or the actual developer.

Independent Designers - See a site you like? Ask who did it and contact them directly.

Your Email Opt-In strategies for building your list

What's the single most important asset of your business?

Your email list.

Why?

Because with an email list, you have the **awesome ability** to communicate directly with your potential and existing customers.

This gives you incredible power to essentially rake in money “on demand” whenever you send out an email promotion to your list. It's like having your own ATM.

Without an email list, you're at the mercy and whim of someone finding your site, browsing around, and then actually buying something. While this does happen (especially with a good site that has a high search engine ranking for targeted keywords), conversion rates are much lower than when you actively drive them to your site with a special offer.

(Remember, people are busy and distracted by the hundred other forces vying for their attention at any given moment.)

So you know you need to start building a list. How do you go about it?

First and foremost, make sure you have a **prominent** and **compelling** opt-in box on your site. You've seen examples of this in the preceding pages.

The meaning of “prominent” should be pretty clear. Your opt-in box should always be in the very top right of your home page, or in the upper right sidebar (column). A nifty trick is

to place your opt-in box directly below an interesting image, such as a person's face or a graphic. Eyeball tracking studies have shown that people LOVE images and will scan a page looking for them. As soon as they have looked at a particular image, they will look directly below the image to read a caption or other copy that is there. Capitalize on this fact to practically force visitors to read your opt-in copy.

The meaning of “compelling” is a bit trickier. A lot of people don't get this. They'll say “Sign up to my newsletter” or “Subscribe to my ezine.” Huh? Exactly why would I want to do that since I already get five hundred unwanted emails a day to my inbox? You have to give your visitor a VERY GOOD REASON to hand over their name and email address to you.

A very good reason means you're going to give them something that will help them solve a problem, such as losing weight, getting rid of their hot flashes, or giving them practical tips on how to get out from under the crushing debt they're in.

Your Email Opt-In, Con't strategies for building your list

Examples of compelling opt-ins:

For triathletes:

Get our cheat sheet “27 Ways to Wreck Your Race and How to AVOID Them”

For people who want to lose weight:

“5 Effortless Ways to Lose 5 Pounds of Fat in 21 days” FREE Report

or

“How to Lose 2 Inches of Belly Fat in 14 Days” Get Your Free Cheat Sheet Now

For people who want to make more money in their business:

FREE Report: “3 Easy Ways to Double Your Income in the Next 45 Days”

or

“How to Boost Your Bottom Line Instantly by Using Upsells and Cross-sells” FREE report

Starting to get the idea?

People are in PAIN and it's your job to give them the PROMISE of a solution. The easier and quicker the solution, the better.

Even if you know that there isn't a chance in hell that someone is going to lose 100 pounds in the next 30 days (even though that's what they secretly hope), give them something tangible and believable that will get them inspired to **take action right now** with a simple exchange—their name and email for your helpful report that will tell them HOW to start.

Turn to the next page to see good opt-in examples.

Your Email Opt-In, Con't examples

ENTER YOUR NAME & EMAIL.

Receive a **FREE** Audio CD, Book, and Inspiring Interviews with Evolutionary Entrepreneurs That Will Guide You to Build a Sustainable, Profitable Entrepreneurial Business Around **YOUR** Great Work.

First Name (required)

Email Address (required)

JOIN THE EVOLUTION HERE!

We will never share your information with anyone.

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Get the Dr.Hyman.com Newsletter

TAP INTO YOUR BODY'S natural ability to heal itself with tips from Dr. Hyman's free weekly newsletter. Sign-up today and receive Dr. Hyman's free report that teaches you how to give yourself a biological tuneup and get 10% off your first visit to his Healthy Living Store. Each week Dr. Hyman will send to you key insights into how you can unlock the powerful biologic forces that each of us are born with.

First Name Last Name

Email or

jonnybowden.com

triathlonexperts.com

Free Gift for my Website Visitors:

"7 Nutrition Lies That Are Making You Sick & Fat"

Enter your email here

Claim Your Free Gift »

A MUST-READ FOR TRIATHLETES!

Get our cheat sheet, **"27 Ways to Wreck Your Race... AND HOW TO AVOID THEM"** and start receiving our regular ezine with smart training tips, too.*

Name

Email

*We promise to never sell, rent, trade, or share your email with any other organization.

Your Website Copy

the most important element

What's the **single most important element** of your website?

Most people think that the web is visual medium and so focus on fancy graphics and images, but the truth is the **WORDS on the page** are far more important than anything.

Pictures are nice, but words are what cause people to take an action - such as calling you up, giving you their email address, or buying your product. The words on your site are called "the copy". The copy is what gives credibility, persuades, and ultimately, gets results.

I've spent the last three and a half years immersed in writing web and email copy as a full time job, and I'm *still* learning. There's an art and a science to it and anyone who tells you that it's easy is lying. The best way to get good at it is to practice, practice, practice. But you can dramatically speed up your learning curve by keeping the following things in mind:

Identify your prospect's problem and step into their emotional world.

Think about what your ideal prospect is feeling right now. Are they frustrated with some aspect of their financial life, health, or relationship? Are they in pain? Do they desire something intensely?

What specifically do they want? To lose 20 pounds before their daughter's wedding, to make more money so they can take a nice vacation, to become a better speaker so they can be more successful and become famous?

Write down everything you can imagine your

prospect would say to you and try to use the actual words they would use. If possible, ask your prospects to fill out a survey, or contact some real live people in your target demographic and ask them personally. Use their exact words and phrases on your website and in your emails and you'll see a dramatic improvement in response because they'll feel that you "get" them.

Describe what is possible.

This is called "possibility thinking." Basically, you draw a clear emotional picture for your prospect about what could achieve and what their life would be like when their problems are solved.

Why haven't they achieved their goals?

Spell out why your prospect hasn't achieved their goals yet. Maybe they haven't had good information. Maybe they haven't had the right plan. Maybe they haven't had time because the way they were told to do it took too much time and effort.

Then, tell them how your product or service is different, and why it will work for them this time around. For example, maybe your weight loss plan is simpler than others, requires less change, and leads to results faster. Or maybe your step-by-step program means all they have to do is follow the plan without worrying about planning and figuring it all out for themselves, so it's much easier to do.

What should they do now?

Tell your prospect what step they should take to solve their problem. For example: "Sign up

Your Website Copy, con't

for my 4-week cleanse so you can start losing weight right away” or “Pick up the phone and call our office to schedule your free consultation now.”

Provide value.

People like to learn, not be sold to. Don't clutter your site with ads. Instead, provide your visitors with valuable information they're looking for to make their lives easier, help them lose weight, or achieve their goals faster —whatever it is that you are sharing.

Rather than writing a “sales” piece, think of writing an editorial style informational piece that teaches your prospect something interesting in your area of expertise (think of an article you'd find in a magazine). Then you can explain how your product or service can help.

You don't need to use any heavy-handed sales tactics. Just by being helpful and informative, you've made the indirect case for what you're selling.

Research Says...

Much research has been done on the benefit of using an editorial, informational style. In one Reader's Digest split test, 80% more people responded to an editorial style ad compared to a traditional ad. That's huge!

Emotional Writing

It turns out that buying is an emotional decision, not a rational one. People buy on

emotion and justify their decision with rational arguments.

When you understand this and incorporate it into your writing, you have the power to sway your prospects' minds in favor of your product or service.

Ever noticed how car commercials often show the car in a gorgeous natural setting, speeding around curves, arriving at a spectacular vista? That's because it's the **emotional experience** of power, vitality, and freedom that people desire - not the dry facts about engine size or horsepower. When asked, people will give those dry facts to justify their decision, but countless advertising tests have demonstrated without a doubt, those aren't the real reasons people buy.

One way you can tap into your prospects' emotional desires is to use emotional, rather than rational, words. Here are some examples:

<u>Rational</u>	<u>Emotional</u>
aid	help
donate	give
concerned	worried
learn	find out
I regret	I'm sorry
construct	build
humorous	funny
ill	sick
inform	tell
request	ask for
wealthy	rich

Recommended further reading

If you're serious about taking your website to the next level and mastering the principles of effective website design and copy, I recommend the following resources:

Web Copy That Sells by Maria Veloso

The Adweek Copywriting Handbook by Joseph Sugarman

Designing Web Usability by Jakob Nielsen

The Copywriter's Handbook by Robert W. Bly

Ogilvy on Advertising by David Ogilvy

Words that Sell by Richard Bayan

Phrases that Sell by Edward Wertz and Sally Germain

Parting Thoughts

I sincerely hope this website primer has been helpful to you.

Now, I'd love to get your feedback.

Was there something I didn't cover that you'd like to know? Was there something that could have been explained better?

Get in touch and let me know at:

juliazaslow.com/contact/

I wish you the best of luck and success. Now it's time to go on and get crackin' on your website!

Warmly,
Julia Zaslow