

Is your website boring?

Most organizations have a website these days, whether it is a simple brochure or something a great deal more complex.

But is it 'entertaining'? (Entertainment: something affording pleasure, diversion, or amusement).

Does it 'engage' them? (Engage: the act or state of interlocking).



If it's not entertaining and engaging then people will tend to leave and if they leave they don't buy or fill in the form or call.

If it's an ecommerce site, of course, it's prime purpose is to sell merchandise and too many diversions will detract from that purpose, so you have to be pretty sure that anything you add will not.

The same is true of lead generation sites, but [whereas in a well designed ecommerce store](#) the merchandise tells the tale, in a lead generation site it's information that people are looking for. And, don't forget that it is about the information.

It's also about the benefits that the organization gets. Recent research from econsultancy shows the following benefits being reported by companies who have focused on improving online customer engagement:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Improved customer loyalty | 43% |
| Increased revenue | 43% |
| Enhanced public image | 28% |
| Reduced marketing costs | 24% |
| Bigger market share | 16% |
| Reduced customer service costs | 16% |
| Increased profits | 14% |
| Improved employee satisfaction | 9% |
| Improved business predictability | 8% |

These companies also reported that in surveys of customers whom they describes as engaged they saw the following results:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Recommends product, service or brand | 59% |
| Converts more readily | 45% |
| Purchases regularly | 36% |
| Participates in online communities or support groups | 32% |
| Provides feedback regularly | 27% |
| Is less focused on price | 23% |
| Participates in innovation and design | 11% |
| Is more tolerant of mistakes | 7% |

So, on the basis that keeping customers entertained and engaged is good for business, what sorts of things can you do to provide useful information in an entertaining and engaging way?

Perhaps the most basic thing is good design and simple navigation. They always come top of the list of things that people want and they really do dislike bad design and complicated navigation. People buy with their eyes and they are impatient – perhaps even more so on the web than anywhere else.

Good design may be 'in the eye of the beholder' but bad design is pretty much universally recognized. Have a look at these sites to see if you agree:

<http://www.havenworks.com>

<http://www.fabricland.co.uk>

<http://users.hunterlink.net.au/~mbbjsj/index.htm>



On the other hand bad navigation is pretty much clear to everyone; try these:

<http://www.teacherxpress.com>

<http://www.juliegarwood.com> (if you can be bothered to wait for it to load)

<http://www.cuh2a.com> (if you can be bothered to wait for it to load)

OK I hear you say so what can we do? Please!!

Video testimonials

How about a video testimonial rather than the written ones? People buy from people and believe people and if they see and hear the customer giving the testimonial rather than just see the written testimonial they are more likely to believe it.

Who better to explain the benefits of your service or product than your best customers? With Video Testimonials they talk directly to your prospects on your website, and because your customers are talking 'peer to peer', you can reduce the time involved in building that all so important trust. A client detailing how you succeeded in delivering on your promise is an influential factor for new customers. They are then far more likely to follow up their interest

Have a look at [Impress Interiors](#).

Powerpoint

You could just use a simple PowerPoint slideshow – yes it can be death by PowerPoint but it can also be a way to get detailed information across in a slightly

more interactive way and if people are engaged..... [Have a look at ours on web design.](#)

The other thing about PowerPoint is that many people are quite familiar with it and can produce good informational presentations, whereas not everyone is so good at copywriting for a web page or using a Content Management System. Having said that, do be careful not to overuse them.

Online chat

Online chat has been around for a while now. It's just the ability to allow you or your staff to interact with your site visitors, provide immediate online assistance, increase customer satisfaction and can contribute to profitability by converting existing site traffic into sales.



With online chat you can have the system request which department they wish to chat with or you can start chat with a specific department. You can print or email the full chat transcript to any email address. You can also get analysis of departmental as well as operator chat activity so you can find out more about what's not on or not being seen on your website and customers and prospects main questions.

[Innovantage has an example of live chat at the foot of the page.](#)

Poll or health check

We've probably all seen sites with simple polls but surveys are a classic method for finding out more. They are flexible, easy to implement, and offer a nearly limitless range of data with reliable results. The data gathered during an effective survey provides a real opportunity to obtain detailed insights because you can gather large amounts of feedback directly.

You can use surveys to understand what works and what doesn't on your website and what it takes to give visitors the best possible experience.

You can use surveys to persuade visitors that they need to contact you and use your expertise. [Have a look at Sykes Fairbairns' alignment health check.](#)

You can also use them to collect information from prospects prior to meeting them. [Have a look at Tryscore's Business Health Check.](#)

RSS feeds

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds contain frequently updated information, such as news headlines and blog posts. They are a way of transmitting and updating news in an automatically.



You can publish RSS feeds from your site. [Here, for example, is the feed from The Fizzblog.](#)

You can also use RSS feeds to provide useful information on your site. [You can see the Ecommerce Times feed in the right rail of our site here.](#)

There are many more things you can do with a site, even if it's not ecommerce to make it more useful and interesting to visitors – so why not think about how you can improve your site?