## What to Do if Your Site Needs Surgery

Written by Ginny Grimsley
Monday, 11 June 2012 08:50

By: Joe Thomas of Left Brain  Digital

... So the guy stands there with his mouth agape and says,  "But Doc, why do you have to operate on my foot? The splinter is in my  finger!"

Why am I leading off with a punch line? Because it applies  to about 80 percent of people who can't figure out why their website doesn't  "work."

Pretend your website is the patient in my half-a-joke. Now  toss in a "web guru" as the doctor. There are two main reasons why you've gotten  surgery on a foot when a finger was the problem.

1. You didn't correctly explain the symptoms. If your product or book is not selling from your website, don't tell    the doctor you don't like the colors. Or that you need more Flying Thingies on    the page. Tell the doctor that your product is not selling from your website.

Some people consult with their sister-in-law, best friend    and lawn boy before seeking the help of a professional. Or, they guess at the    cause of the problem themselves. When they finally consult with a    professional, they tell him or her what they want: Use blue not red, make that picture bigger, add a joke of the day. For the right diagnosis, just tell the    doctor, "The site's not selling" and let him or her figure out why.

2. There are a lot of quack doctors out    there! Let's be honest, a surgeon makes his living performing    surgeries, and a web guru makes his living performing guru work on web sites. The moral? Without patients and web projects, the surgeon and the web guru go    on unemployment.

In all aspects of business, and especially Internet  marketing, some people may say whatever it takes to sell you on "surgery."  Proceed with caution! Before you hire someone to develop, design or "fix" your  site, get referrals. Ask people you trust for recommendations.

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Ask the "doctor" questions. If he or she can't take the time to explain every procedure, find someone who will. You need to understand the suggestions – and the reasons for them. Also, be warned there is no Standard Pricing Guide. My best advice is to avoid being sucked into the cheapest deal you can find, or being fooled by the "we are the best so we charge the most" designers.

If you're not getting the results you need from your site, ask yourself a few questions:

- How does your site stack up against your competition? We'll assume you already have a website ... Whether you're an author, manufacturer, business or blogger, you have competition. Surf around and take a LOOK at the other guy's site. How does his LOOK compare to yours? We're not talking about what the site says, just the overall aesthetics. Does yours look as good, or better?
- When visitors open your site, do they know what you're selling? Obviously, you know your product or service, but is it plainly visible to visitors? Is the information your visitors are looking for easy to find and understand? Are the "calls to action," such as "sign the petition," "read the blog" or "buy my cool book" easy to find?
- Did you check your ego at the door? Who is your site trying to please? Are you trying to impress yourself or your customers? Too often, websites get hung up on self importance. While it IS important to show your visitors that you're an expert, the product or service needs to be the focal point. If you're selling beans or bikinis, nobody really cares that you climbed Mount Everest in your pajamas last October.

Common sense is the most valuable tool at your disposable, but be smart enough to know what you don't know! Successful websites don't just appear. They're properly developed, cultivated and then regularly watered.

Developing a successful website is hard work; finding the right surgeon can be even harder.

About Joe Thomas

Joe Thomas is the founder and owner of Left Brain Digital ( www.leftbraindigital.com ), a web development company. He's an award-winning web designer/developer with more than 18 years of experience in print and web design and development. Thomas' work became a major influence in graphic and web design in the "Y2K" era of the Internet's dot-com explosion.

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