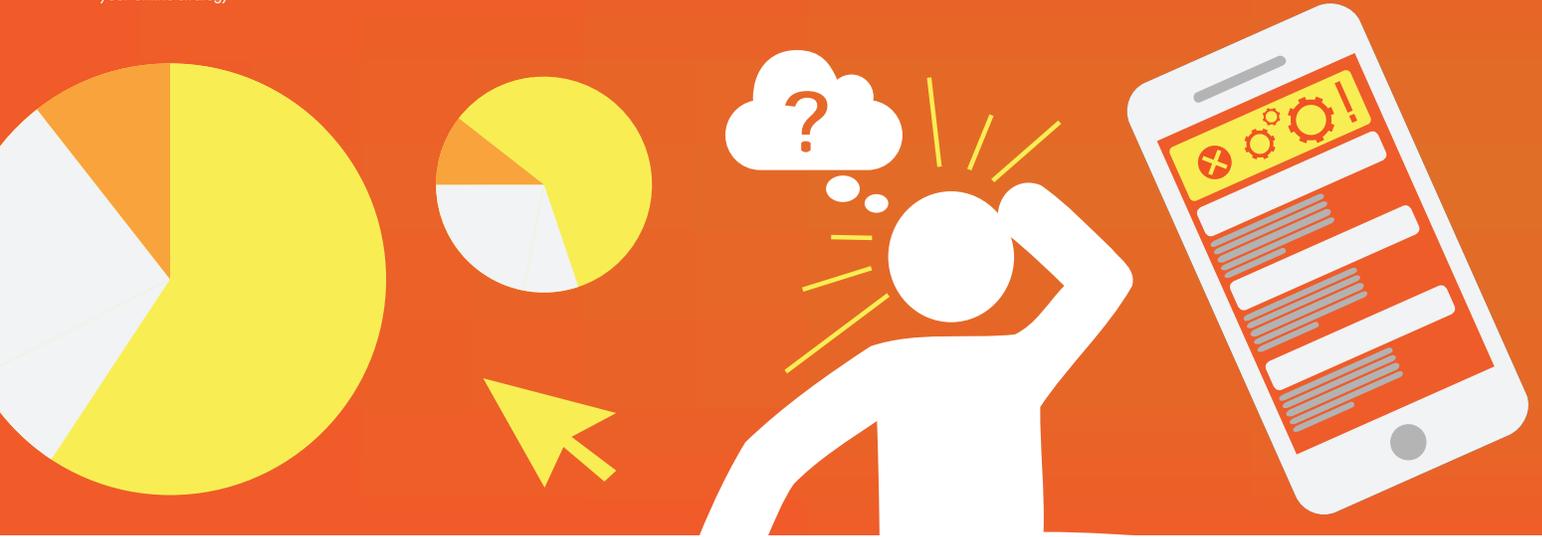




WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR WEBSITE



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WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR WEBSITE

20 COMMON MISTAKES AND HOW TO FIX THEM

Have you created a website for your business, but are not receiving the results you had hoped for? Whether the shortfall is in the realm of performance, design or the technical aspect of the site, this guide can help you to identify the common mistakes you may be making. We will cover common issues with content, design, management, marketing and security, as well as how to fix them. Let's get started, first and foremost, with content.

MISTAKES WITH CONTENT

MISTAKE #1:

UNFOCUSED CONTENT ❌

One of the biggest pitfalls right off the bat is a lack of meaningful content. The saying goes that content is KING, and this comes from the fact that the quality of a website's content, is the most important factor in achieving high conversion rates. When people go to your site, they expect to see relevant information, right up front. Customers should not have to dig through page after page of artistic screens just to find a services tab, or to discover the price on a standard product. To ensure that your site is providing strong content that will engage your users, it is important to consider the following tips:

TIPS ✓**MISTAKE #1:**
UNFOCUSED CONTENT

•Create a content strategy that is in alignment with your branding and company goals. Each piece of content should be a part of the bigger puzzle that moves your visitors through the sales funnel.

•Your content should offer the solution your target audience is looking for when they search for your long and short-tail keywords.

•Your landing pages should focus on the solution you can offer the customer, not about your company.

•Content needs to be engaging, informative and authoritative. By writing truly useful information for your audience, you will build loyal customers.

•Don't keyword stuff your content to try to climb search result ranks, it is all about quality.

MISTAKE #2:
NO BLOG ✗

Is your site engaging customers through a blog? If you aren't sure what a blog is exactly, it is an online journal that can be easily updated regularly. It appears as a tab visitors can click on, it then has a long feed of posts you have made, listed by date.

With a blog, a company can consistently update their site's content and keep readers informed about the latest trends, sales, and specials. Blogs are a must for several reasons.

•They allow you to build an ongoing relationship with your customers by giving them a reason to keep coming back to your site. If you continuously post helpful information, you will become an authority in your industry. Guess who your customers will call when they need your solution? You! A blog also allows you to stay present in your customers mind.

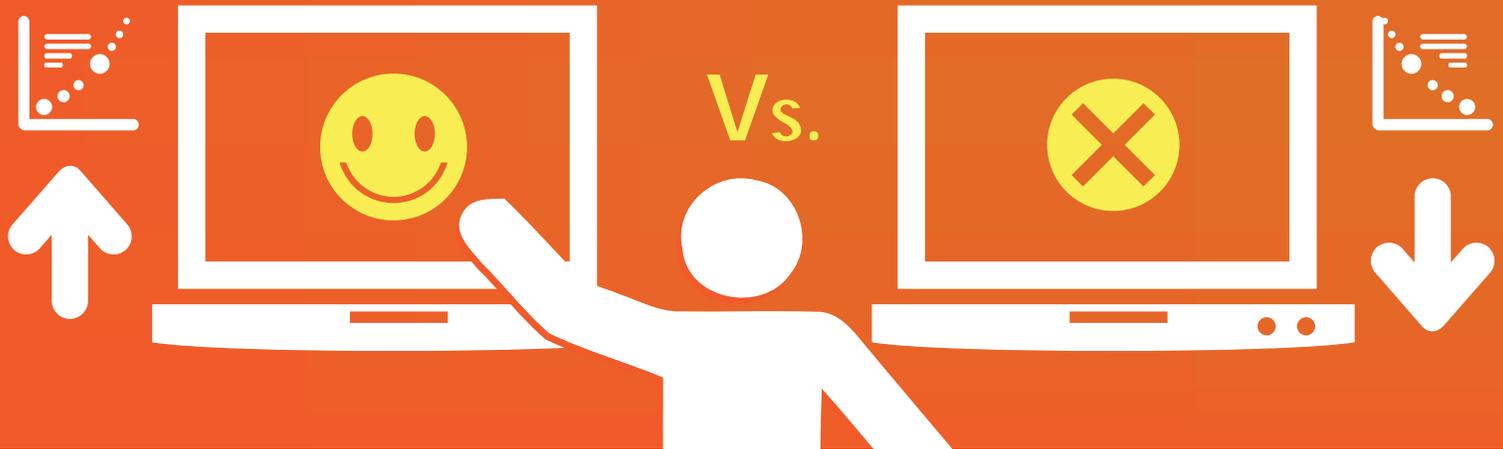
•Additionally, it gives you the opportunity to improve your SEO by writing about content relevant to your keywords. This builds the amount of quality content you are providing, which is key to coming up high in search result ranks.

•A blog also improves website traffic, as posts can be posted on social media channels, other websites and/or dispersed through email marketing campaigns to direct people back to your blog post, website and products or services.

Start a blog by talking with your web designer or web design template service about how to implement a blog into your site. From there, create a posting schedule, which should include posting 2-3 times per week on a regular basis. Designate who will be writing the blog posts, see the point below for some tips on this. Then, brainstorm blog topics which should include guides, answers to commonly searched keyword phrases in your industry, industry news recaps, product or service news, company news, and other content which will be valuable and relevant to your audience.

MISTAKE #3:
NOT HIRING COPYWRITERS ✗

The next big mistake is not hiring copywriters for the content on your site. Copywriters are professional writers who create content for websites, articles, blogs and other copy forms. While most



business owners with a website can write, they are typically not professional copywriters and/or don't have a whole lot of time to write with quality on a regular basis.

Outsourcing your writing helps because professional writers can focus on your content solely and they have the expertise to craft the content to engage your audience. Once you know the message you want to deliver, a copywriter can execute the delivery of the message right on target. Additionally, they can take into consideration SEO, proper grammar, spelling, tone and style, all while you manage your business. Look into having your website content written professionally by hiring an in house copywriter, or looking to freelancers via sites like Odesk or Elance

MISTAKE #4:
THE WEBSITE HAS NO PERSONALITY ❌

Personality is a presence that not only exists in people, but in companies. It is a way for your business to connect with your customer base on a more personal level. Does your site represent the personality of your business? How does the site stand out? Is it bland, professional, creative, fun or innovative?? The personality of your site is expressed through the color palate

you use, the location of your graphics, the general choice in content layout and more.

Think about Apple for example, they have a simple and innovative personality that is consistent across all marketing channels and all products. Developing your company's personality should be part of the branding strategy and needs to be in alignment with the company goals and offerings. It also needs to be consistent and expressed through the website. Your company personality will differentiate your website from your competitors and help build recognition with customers.

MISTAKE #5:
BAD FIRST IMPRESSIONS ❌

When making a first impression, you generally have about 15 seconds when working with a visual medium like a website. That means in the first 15 seconds of visiting your page, your clientele has already decided if they like your site, if it's professional enough for them, and if they are going to do business with you. So, what have you done to make your customers feel like your site is a good investment?

Ensure the first impression is a good one by checking if your website ticks the following boxes:

TIPS ✓ MISTAKE #5

BAD FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- Offer the solution to visitors front and center.
- Make content relevant to the main keywords you target.
- Ensure easily scan able content with bolded subheadings and short paragraphs.
- Ensure a fast load time of the website.
- Design an organized layout which is easy on the eyes.
- Design for easy navigation with menus, customer support and a search bar.
- Make sure call to action are present throughout the landing page.

MISTAKE #6: TOO MUCH CONTENT ❌

Another problem that your site may be experiencing is having too much content. You don't want to flood your readers with information. After all, in that 15 seconds mentioned earlier, you need to properly convey the main message of your site. If your site is buried in mission statements, graphics, or a mountain of product information, people will be overwhelmed and click "back" to find an easier solution. Remember, keep it simple, focused on the visitor and to-the-point.

MISTAKE #7: NO CALLS TO ACTION ❌

The next mistake is a common one- a website lacking proper calls to action. The difference between an informative website about your company, and one that is trying to sell a service or product, is the call to action. In other words, where are you asking for the sale? Is the process of buying your product easy? Who do customers talk to and how do they pay? Can they easily navigate the shopping cart? If a customer cannot figure out how to give you money, then they'll more than likely give up and give their earnings to a rival who spells it out for them.

It seems straight forward, but surprisingly, many websites do not clearly call the reader to take the action desired. To fix this problem, call your visitors to action clearly, directly and effectively using the following strategies:

- Identify what it is you want customers to do. (ex. fill out a form, purchase a product, sign up for a service)
- Craft your content to include a call to action after each paragraph, where appropriate. These are particularly effective after feature and benefit sections.
- Use short, direct statements like Call Now before it's too late!, Order Today to get Your New Product, Get Your Subscription Right Away!
- Include a sense of urgency.
- Include what's in it for them.

With these tips, you can effectively direct your customers to take action. This is helpful for them and you.

“TECHNOLOGY has now reached the point where mobile users OUTNUMBER desktop users. What this means is websites HAVE to be MOBILE-FRIENDLY”

MISTAKES WITH DESIGN

Next comes the area of your design. There are a few key areas that are commonly gone about wrong, which can cause major problems with the efficiency of your site.

MISTAKE #8: POOR DESIGN ❌

The first of these is poor design. Nothing is worse for your business than when your website doesn't load or function properly. There are just too many websites that you are competing against which DO work properly, so you need to ensure your site does too. A poor design will cause the page to load slow, be hard to navigate and not get customers to take action. How do you avoid this? Hire a web designer who is experienced, has testimonials and a large work portfolio you can look at. Alternatively, you can use a website building service which provides a template to build from. While not very unique, these are proven to be effective and efficient.

MISTAKE #9: OVER DESIGN ❌

The next big mistake is overdesigning your website. This can include using a

background that is graphically amazing, but distracting from the content. Additionally, many people like to use slideshows, videos and images throughout their page. You have to find a balance between using rich media and graphics, and the efficiency of your site. Think in terms of quality, not quantity. Featuring 1 or 2 well representing photos of high resolution, is more effective than 5 or 10 photos filling up a page and bogging down your load speed. Remember, the main purpose to your website is conversion, not an artful masterpiece.

MISTAKE #10: NOT OPTIMIZING FOR MOBILE ❌

Lastly for design, this is a mistake that no business can afford to make. Technology has now reached the point where mobile users outnumber desktop users. What this means is websites HAVE to be mobile-friendly, or they will miss out on more than half of their traffic opportunities. Stats show that user will go elsewhere if a site is not optimized, so if your site is not mobile, it is time to convert it.

Google has also put a large emphasis on mobile friendliness and has many resources to help get websites up to speed. Test your site using this webpage, and find out more about converting your site here.



MISTAKES WITH MANAGEMENT

Now that we've discussed some of the content and design-related problems that can crop up when working with a site, let's go over the management issues that can arise.

MISTAKE #11: NOT KEEPING UP WITH WEB TRENDS ❌

Once you have a website up and running, it doesn't mean you can dust your hands off and walk away. The same way as the marketplace changes and people's interests shift, you too have to keep your site up to date with the latest marketing trends. Does your site's style match or exceed what is currently working for your business type? Have you kept your site's code updated to work with the latest browsers? While many developers will work hard to do an initial roll-out, continual management is just as important and lacking to do so properly can end up costing you in the long run.

Keep your eyes out for Google's latest updates to their algorithm for SEO rankings. Also, reading up on internet marketing blogs will keep you in the loop

for what's working and what's not.

MISTAKE #12: NOT BUILDING A CREDIBLE REPUTATION ❌

Secondly in regards to management, many need to better understand the importance of building and maintaining a credible reputation. You want clients to view your company as trustworthy, but this won't happen if there is no trace of your company online, or worse a bad one. Word of mouth is more powerful than what you say about your own products, so you need to get some public feedback.

Ask customers for testimonials and post them on your site. You can also create company profiles on different directories and encourage your customers to leave reviews. Do this in addition to building active profiles on multiple social media platforms. This will result in a reputation that helps you to earn your customer's trust. A few notes of advice, if you do happen to get bad feedback, learn from it and understand that once in a while it will happen. However, if it is happening often, you need to make some changes because a bad reputation will cost you as well.

“SEO is the practice of ENSURING that your site is optimized for the SEARCH ENGINE crawlers.”

MISTAKE #13:

PROPER ANALYSIS OF METRICS ❌

Third, how data-focused is your site? With the wide availability of analytic tools, you have the opportunity to dig deep into your website and actually see what's not working. From free tools like Google Analytics, to paid tools like Optimzely.com, you can view conversion rates, bounce rates, where customers are clicking using heat maps, A/B testing, metric dashboards and more. If you are not studying the data available on your website and consistently experimenting to increase conversions, you are missing out on a huge opportunity that your competition is using.

MISTAKE #14:

NO DESIGNATED IT PERSON ❌

The final problem with mismanagement is not having a dedicated IT Development head in charge of your site. If no one is assigned the task, then it simply won't get the focus required. Also, if you're giving the responsibility of your site to an employee already overloaded with their own work, then the site is probably going to be a back-burner item at best. For an effective, professional site, you are going to need someone who is dedicated to the development and upkeep of your content, full-time.

MISTAKES WITH MARKETING

So, let's say you've designed a site that looks great and is continuously being optimized to convert more and more of the traffic you have. It's fast, easy to navigate, and you have someone dedicated to keeping it up. Now what?

If no one knows to go to your site, then they just won't. You need to tell people about your site and make them want to visit it. That's where marketing comes into play. Here are some common problems in the marketing arena and how to correct them.

MISTAKE #15:

POOR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION ❌

SEO is the practice of ensuring that your site is optimized for the search engine crawlers. This is extremely important, as you want your page to be at the top of an online search for your particular keywords. Think about it, how many times have you gone through more than one or two pages in your online results to pick a website? Not often.



How do you optimize your content for search engines? Search engines, particularly Google, want to provide the results which provide the highest quality content, first. To provide that value, you need to ensure:

- Your site needs relevant content that applies to your keywords.
- Your site must be optimized to be mobile-friendly.
- You need outbound links to credible sites.
- Off-site SEO which speaks to your credibility and quality content is very valuable. You want credible sites talking about you and linking to you.
- It is important to post content consistently and continuously.
- Images and rich media are powerful and should be included in moderation.
- All buttons/links/etc. need to be functioning properly.
- No duplicate content is allowed, or Google will blacklist your website.
- Scannable content with subheadings and small paragraphs helps readers to find the information they need.

- Social media links help to connect your marketing channels.

- Use long tail keywords to specifically target your audience so that the traffic you are directing, is truly interested in your products or services.

When ensuring all of these actions on your site, you can help improve your ranking to drive more of the right traffic to your site.

MISTAKE #16:

NO SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS ❌

Next, are you using social media? If not, you're already falling behind your competitors. These days, everyone is using social media to advertise their business. Whether it's through status updates, paid advertisements, or cleverly-subversive professional bloggers, companies take full advantage of social media to drive interest in their sites. It's a huge part of the new culture, and many Millennials are now completely tied into social media for their news, sports, and entertainment. So, why shouldn't you go after this source of marketing gold?

When trying to pick which social media outlet to use, explore the main players Facebook and Twitter, and then check out Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn

“INEVITABLY, there is a possibility of a SERVER CRASH, or down time, which takes your site DOWN with it.”

and GooglePlus. Different people are tied into different services, and many potential clients tend to work across the board, use three or four services to keep up on local events. If you saturate your brand on all the markets available to your audience, then your name is going to be forefront in their minds when they're making a product decision.

Once you have your social media profiles established, ensure you link to them from your website and blog. You want to interlink your multiple marketing channels. Encourage readers to share your blog posts and vice versa, use social media to direct traffic to your blog.

MISTAKE #17:

NO DIGITAL MARKETING ❌

Digital marketing can be any online marketing designed to drive interest to your site. Companies that have no digital marketing strategy, are missing out on the potential that this channel has to offer. There are many different forms of digital marketing including having advertisements on banners, PPC campaigns, sponsored posts on social media sites, sponsored links on search engines, a weekly newsletter, e-mail marketing campaign, or even hiring bloggers to post articles that help to

promote your product, independent of your site.

With so many options, a strategy helps to keep all the channels organized and measurable. Analytic tools can show a comprehensive analysis of how effective your strategy is at both delivering customers to your site and converting them to customers. Set up a plan and begin tracking what works and what doesn't. Through trial and error, you can develop the right mix of digital marketing methods which are best to best direct your traffic.

When it comes to trends for 2015 digital marketing, it is important to note that millennials hold the majority of spending power, so they should be a main focus of marketing. They have the power to influence friends and family to buy and are social media savvy, so it is important to become a brand worth talking about and "like"ing. Customers have also been found to research at least 4 sources before making a decision to buy, so examine the multiple channels that your business is found on. It is all about positioning yourself online to be credible and being widespread.

What are some good ideas for digital marketing content? Consider the following tips:



 Visitors

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1) Keep it simple. This is an advertisement, not a book. You don't want to drown the consumer in product information; you're just trying to get your name in front of them.

2) Make it fun. Humorous ads tend to go over well online, and if people are happy when they read your adverts, they'll more than likely associate that good feeling with your brand.

3) Be honest. Don't sell yourself as something you're not. A recent trend in advertising is to cut away the frills and go straight for the direct sale. This has tested well with Millennials, who don't devote a lot of attention to any one thing, especially ads.

4) Make it catchy. You want your ad to stick in people's minds, so make sure you have a slogan, catch phrase, or something peppy to encourage people to repeat your ad long after they're done seeing it.

5) Keep it current. If you're going to use current sayings, trends, or memes (phrases or jokes that typically involve a fun saying or picture), you need to make sure they're actually still considered relevant. An outdated cultural reference is a quick way to point out the fact that you haven't updated your campaign, and that you're not as in tune with the web as you make yourself out to be.

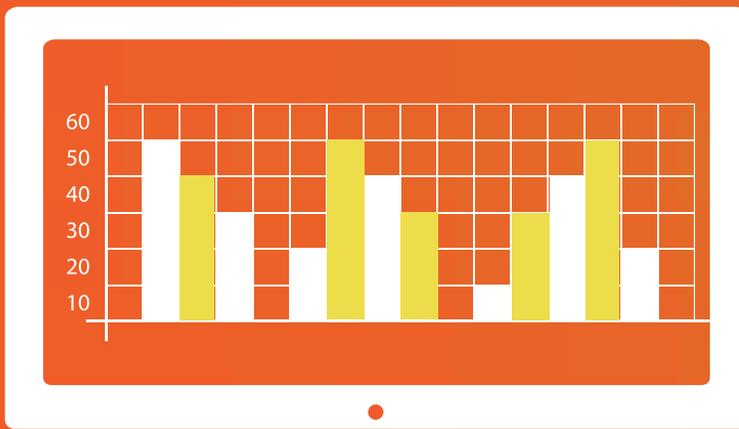
TECHNICAL MISTAKES

This article has hit on 4 key areas, but now we will look into the more technical side of your website and how to avoid some common pitfalls on the back side.

MISTAKE #18:

WEBHOSTING DOWN TIME

When you create a website, you have to choose your web hosting solution. Inevitably, there is a possibility of a server crash, or down time, which takes your site down with it. This can be detrimental to sales and credibility. If you're paying for remote hosting, then you've taken a huge weight off your shoulders, as keeping servers maintained can be tedious and expensive. However, having them go down can be even worse. When choosing a hosting provider, ensure they provide the security and reliability you need. Ask questions. What's their turn-around time on server issues? Do they have a backup? If your site goes down, is there a competent redirect? These are all things to consider that are usually assumed, but that can be costly if you run into issues.



Visitors

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MISTAKE #19:

DON'T BLOG ON A SEPARATE DOMAIN ❌

If you do have your blog up and running, make sure it is on the same domain as your website. If your blog redirects to another domain, this can not only look unprofessional, but hurt SEO and deter readers. The main benefit of a blog is to help support SEO efforts by posting fresh, quality content on a regular basis that is relevant to your targeted keywords. As a result, the domain is ranked higher on search results. If the blog is separated out on another domain, you lose that benefit.

MISTAKE #20:

SITE SECURITY ❌

Last but not least, how secure is your site? Even if you've followed every piece of advice in this article, all it can take to destroy customer confidence is an unsecured site and a bad experience with a stolen identity. If left unchecked, websites are notoriously easy to hack into, and if you're storing personal information from clients, then you need to make sure that any page in your site that takes client information is secure with SSL.

This is typically seen from the client's point of view as being done on an https site, as opposed to an http site. Other considerations include:

- How secure is your shopping cart?
- What about your methods of payment?

Before you can let even one person in, you need to verify that the entire experience of using your site is secure, from start to finish. If not, it can not only erode customer confidence, but it can also potentially open you up to law suits. If you're not handling client information correctly, then you are putting them at risk. Ensure you have a clear security policy that customers can read to have confidence that their information is safe.

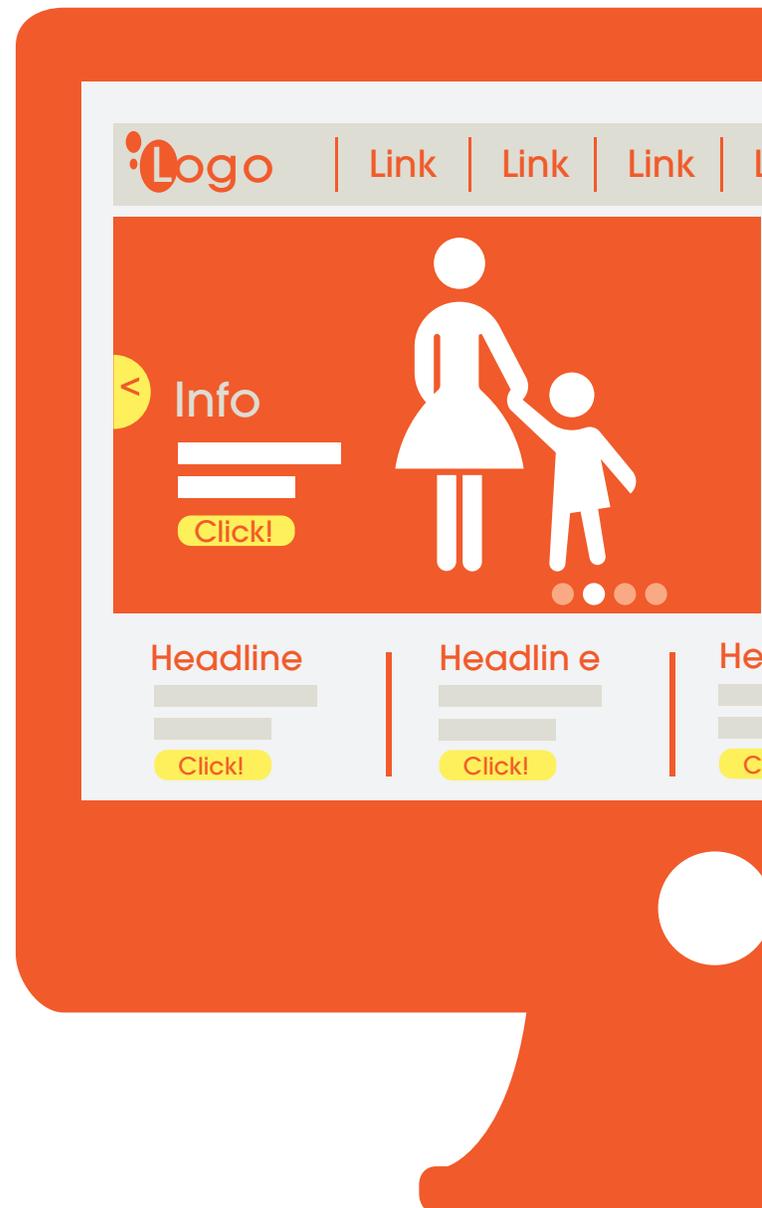


“Being **AWARE** of these **COMMON** mistakes and **TAKING** steps to prevent them, can **HELP** to get your **WEBSITE** in tip top shape and improve your **TRAFFIC** and conversions.”

CONCLUSION

Being aware of these common mistakes and taking steps to prevent them, can help to get your website in tip top shape and improve your traffic and conversions. If you would like to bring in outside agencies to outsource any aspect of the site, there are several options available to help. From website hosting, to building and design, you can find experts who will help to ensure you are on the right track. Additionally, you can get assistance with content creation, security and conversion rate optimization. Just ensure that each company you work with, understands your company goals so you can achieve them together.

Keep this guide on hand, and share it with others, to ensure that these common website mistakes are corrected and your website starts working for you!





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