

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE Leave a Website?

EXIT

Attracting a potential customer is hard enough. Grabbing their interest and retaining them is even more difficult. It's important to design your site so that user frustration is kept to a minimum, thereby maximizing customer retention. Below are some examples of what not to do when designing your website.

1. Bad Navigation

Nothing frustrates a website visitor more than a website that's hard to navigate. Complex or inconsistent navigation can cause users to feel helpless, confused, or angry—certainly not the emotions you want potential customers to be feeling.

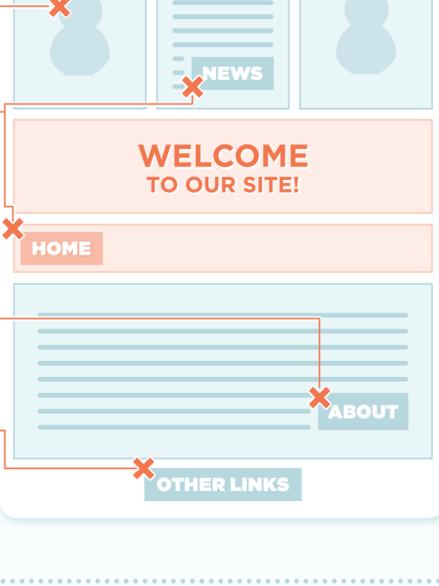
WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't provide visual elements that aren't clear in defining where the user is and what they're supposed to do next.

Don't scatter your main navigation links around your site.

Don't bury your main navigation links in body text.

Don't make your link text hard to understand. "Other links" is generally not a good choice for link text.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Your website navigation should be logical, intuitive and easy to understand.

✓ Try grouping navigation elements in a central area. For larger websites try adding a sitemap.

2. Too Many Ads

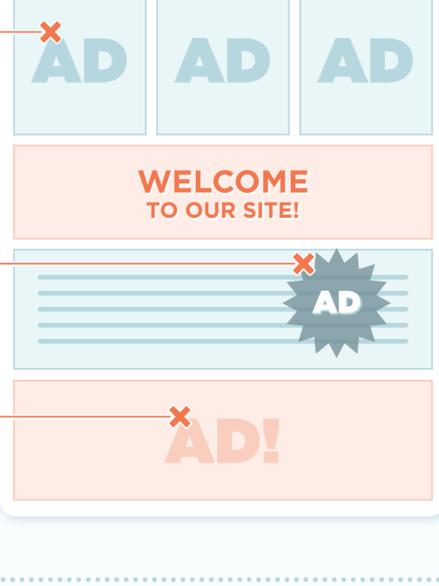
Suffocating your visitor with ads that pop, flash, and fill the entire browser will only serve to enrage them.

WHAT NOT TO DO

As a general rule, ads shouldn't be the first thing that your visitor sees.

Don't be obtrusive with your pop-up ads. Try not to cover up the content that attracted your visitors in the first place.

Avoid ads that take up more real estate than your content.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Running ads on your website can be a perfectly legitimate way to monetize. However, in order to maximize your retention rate (and lower your bounce rate) be tasteful and discreet in your approach to displaying ads.

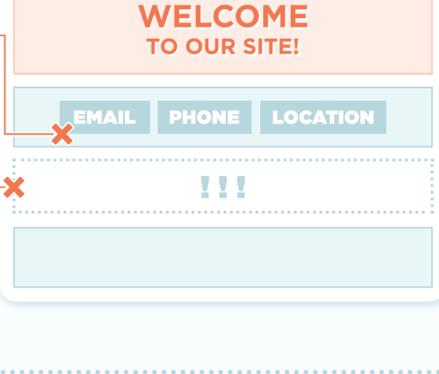
3. Bad Content Structure

Bad content structure can destroy your conversion and retention rates. Make your content (especially your contact info) easy to find. It's estimated that as many as 50% of sales are lost because potential customers can't find what they're looking for.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't complicate things by distributing your content across multiple pages that could easily be communicated on one page.

Don't forget to include introductory content.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Don't have visitors fish around for the content they're looking for.

✓ Group similar content in a clear, concise manner.

✓ Consider using bold headings in addition to highlighting certain keywords that visitors may be searching for.

4. Obtrusive Use of Audio & Video

Most people value their ability to choose what content to absorb. Having video or audio that loads automatically can potentially drive visitors away.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Avoid using videos that automatically stream and intrude on the visitors browsing experience.

Avoid loud or obnoxious music that plays in the background.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Give users the option of viewing video or audio content—don't force them. If you do choose to play a video automatically, make sure there are clear exits.

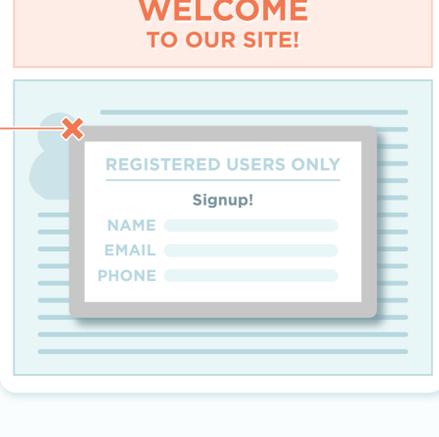
✓ Sometimes a simple paragraph can just as easily convey the content of a video. Test and see what works best for you.

5. The Registration Requirement

It's often the case that forcing visitors to register before they can view content is much like a physical barrier. Barriers, such as forced-registration, may ultimately cause the visitor to go elsewhere for what they're looking for.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Avoid excessive use of pop-ups that require visitors to register before they can see content.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Avoid putting up barriers between you and your visitors.

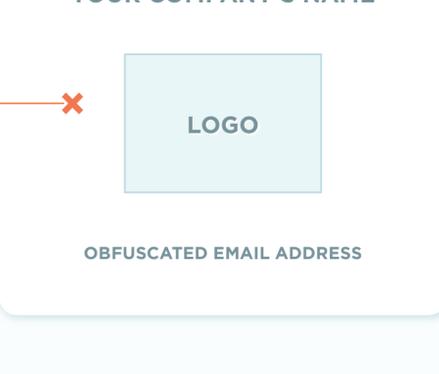
✓ If a visitor must register to interact with your site, try giving them a taste of what they're signing up for. Offer a preview or a demo.

6. Boring Content, Boring Design

A dull website that has no purpose or interactivity will never create a memorable experience for a visitor. Data suggests that 40% of visitors don't return to a website after having a negative experience.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't intentionally make your website as bland and useless as possible.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Minimalistic websites can be very effective and beautiful if done correctly. Always be sure that your site has utility and that your visitors have no trouble finding what they need.

✓ Consider ways to enhance interactivity with your visitors. Examples of good engagement catalysts are blogs, forums, and special features that are updated on a regular basis.

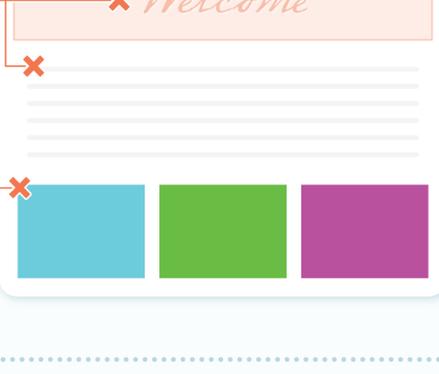
7. Poor Legibility

Bad typography choices, abrasive colors, and excessive typos all contribute to poor legibility—and ultimately a poor user experience.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't use typefaces that are unnecessarily elaborate, pixelated or have poor contrast.

For most kinds of websites, excessive use of bright, fluorescent colors can be distracting and abrasive.



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ If it's within your budget, hire a designer. The color palette, the typeface, and the general tone of your website can have an enormous impact on conversions and customer retention.

✓ If you don't have a referral for a good designer, check out [dribbble.com](#) and [99designs.com](#).

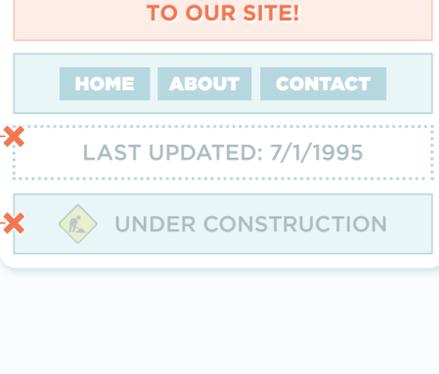
8. Lack of Frequency

You may have found the right balance of interactivity, design and content construction—those are all good things. But you also need to keep your site fresh with new content.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't forget to update content frequently.

Don't use the "under construction" cliché. Visitors have come to equate "under construction" with "this site is rarely updated, move along."



HOW TO FIX IT

✓ Keep your content current and fresh. Not only will this boost the interest level in your site, it will also contribute to higher rankings on search engines.

✓ Trying adding a blog to your site. Blogging is an easy way to keep your content fresh and update visitors with news and events.

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