Reboot Your Website
How to Get Your Neglected Site Back on Track

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Grab Them By the Eyeballs

You have a split second to make an impression and engage visitors so they'll spend time looking at your offer.

For your website to be successful, you need to attract and retain your site visitors. You have a split second to make an impression, and engage them so they'll spend time looking at your offer.

If visitors arrive at your site and it's disorganized, hard to read or looks like it hasn't been updated in months, they'll click away and find a more reliable source of information.

This report will give you the basic tasks you should commit to doing on a regular basis so your site looks trustworthy and professional.

Design is part of this equation, too. A polished, consistent site makes a great first impression and builds trust. We'll talk about design decisions you can make that will give your site an advantage.

Is Anybody Home?

With the easy availability of content management systems like WordPress, Joomla and Drupal, website maintenance is now in the hands of the website owner. We no longer have to rely on outside companies to keep our sites updated. These systems make website maintenance relatively simple so even someone with no programming background can add pages, images, audio and video.

Maintaining a site is like maintaining a home.

But with great power comes great responsibility, right?

Just because it's simple, doesn't mean it takes care of itself. Maintaining a site is like maintaining a home. You have to mow the lawn every week, and occasionally you need to trim the hedges. A few times a year you might plant flowers, or re-seed the lawn. If you don't do these things, the landscaping becomes overgrown, and it looks like no one cares.

A Manageable Maintenance To-Do List

Make website maintenance a part of your weekly schedule and you won't find yourself so far behind.

It happens so easily: you put off taking care of your website, the tasks build up, and before you know it, there's a mountain of maintenance work to be done, and you can't find the time to tackle it.

The trick is to keep up with maintenance tasks while they're still minor. Make website maintenance a part of your weekly schedule and you won't find yourself so far behind.

Ongoing tasks:

- Update site content frequently. If you have a blog, commit to posting high-quality information at least once a week. Don't start a blog unless you can stick to this frequency over the long haul.

- If you don't have a blog, make sure your site information is updated

and new content, photos, podcasts or videos are added at least once a week. Search engines favor sites whose content is updated frequently and they rank them higher in search results.

- If you have a blog and allow comments, be sure to respond to any comments you receive. Social media is supposed to be a conversation: don't let your readers or followers feel like they're talking to dead air.

- Check to be sure all links on your site are working. Google Webmaster Tools, which is a free service, will generate a report of which pages on your site have broken links. Fixing any broken links is an important monthly job that will maintain your site in working order.

- Make it a habit to regularly submit information using any forms you have on your site. Make sure they're working as they should: are the names registering, and are the follow-up emails still accurate? Do all the links in the emails work?

Design Basics for a Trustworthy Site

Does your site look polished, professional and easy to navigate?

Attracting and retaining site visitors isn't all about maintenance. It's also about your site's appearance in the first few seconds after a visitor arrives.

- Does your site look professional?

- Does it have a cohesive, polished style that's used consistently throughout?

- Will the visitor understand how to navigate your site to find the information they want?

Design helps with all of the above. Make good design decisions now and implement them consistently over time to build trustworthiness and authority.

Design techniques to attract visitors and build trust:

- Use conventions like a site name in the upper left corner, a horizontal navigation bar, and an email optin form in the upper right. Visitors expect to find these items in these locations. Don't make them re-learn how to navigate a website by placing them in unexpected spots.

- Decide on a single action you'd like the visitor to take on each page. Don't make them decipher what you want them to do.

- Pick two main colors and use them to brand your website. Apply them consistently throughout. This doesn't include black text, or a white background. Learn more about picking colors here.

- Speaking of backgrounds, avoid white type on a dark background. It's very hard to read, and makes visitors want to navigate away. Instead, stick to dark type on a light ground.

- Pick two main typefaces to represent your brand, and use them consistently in all your materials. <u>Learn more about choosing typefaces here.</u>

- <u>Get more information on taking your website from boring to "Wow!" here.</u>

- Finally, don't redesign every week! Make good design decisions early on, then apply them consistently over time so your site looks reliable and trustworthy.

Keep Those Visitors on Your Pages:
# Format Them for Maximum Readability

You want your site to engage visitors so they'll stick around, read more, contact you and become long-term customers, right?

You can accomplish this by consistently publishing great content: blog posts; articles; podcasts, videos and special reports.

To make that content engaging and readable, try these techniques:

- Spend time creating compelling headlines. Nowadays, content is shared using social media. Your headline will become a tweet, a Facebook post or a link on Google+. People will decide whether or not to click and read your information based on the strength of your headline, so make sure it grabs attention and piques interest.

Clear formatting makes your site easier to scan and will draw people in so they read your information.
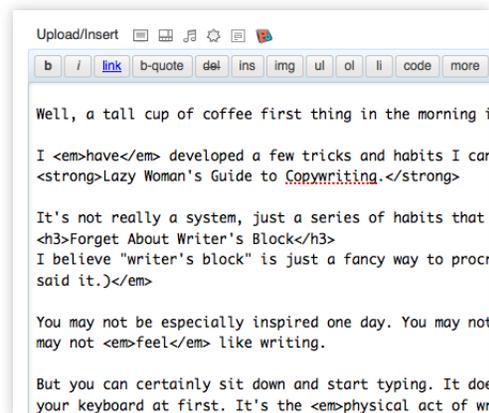
- Use short paragraphs. It's easier for people reading on screen to scan through your text if it's broken into bite-sized chunks.

- Sprinkle your pages with plenty of subheads. Well-written subheads help guide your reader through your text. They should be just as compelling as your headlines so they create intrigue and build curiosity. <u>For more on writing for the web, visit this page.</u>

You *can* get your site back on track! Follow the advice in this report, and make website maintenance a weekly task in your business. Use good design to attract and retain visitors. Your site will become a trustworthy source of information that converts web surfers into repeat customers.