

Five Advanced Web Writing Secrets

By Jonathan Kranz

After months of work and weariness, your company website is designed, search-engine optimized and packed with rich, interesting content. The building blocks are all in place. Your next challenge is to tweak the structure you have to attract more of the business you want to get.

The following are five simple, yet powerful ways to squeeze even more value from the website you've invested in. Most can be accomplished with a simple text editor, such as *Contribute*; almost all of them exploit content you've already created. Yet they can all make a substantial contribution to your site's success.

1. Move out of the content ghettos

Yes, client testimonials can go a long way toward establishing your credibility. But your prospects won't go and read them if they're all cluttered on a separate page marked, "Testimonials." Instead of corralling them onto one page, spread them out among relevant pages where they'll have greater relevance. For example, you can reinforce your customer services page with a testimonial singing the praises of your service team. Or if you promise that your product saves time, drop the testimonial about how your client "cut time-to-market from six months to six weeks" right under the body copy about speed.

Same with case studies and reports. Instead of burying them in "Case Studies" and "Reports" content ghettos few are willing to visit, place them one by one in appropriate content areas. Offer the case study that highlights a successful compliance story in the section that shows how your software helps companies master regulations, for example. It's all about timing and reinforcement – you want to place your content where and when visitors are ready to read it.

2. Create descriptive navigation tabs

When thousands of corporate websites have navigation bars with the same labels – "Products," "Services," "About Us," etc. – there's no way a visitor can immediately distinguish one "Products" label from another.

Why not make them less generic and more descriptive, more germane to your specific business? Such as, "Excavation Tools" or "Conflict Resolution Services." Or "Data Mining Software" and "Distance Learning Applications." The space restrictions that constrained Web tabs years ago no longer apply. And the more visitors understand what lies ahead, the more likely they are to click-through.

3. Make your story their story

Take a second look at your "About Us" content. It might be a plodding tale that begins something like this:

Founded in Boise, Idaho in 1987, DistroPet began as a pet store supply warehouse serving retailers in...

Still awake? If your visitors are, it's because they've moved on to another page – or a different site. In addition to being boring, most “about us” stories also come across as narcissistic. The alternative? Position your company as a meaningful response to a challenge your customers share or an opportunity they'd like to embrace. For example:

Many pet store owners face frustrating limitations in their choice of products, often limited to what their regional distribution centers are willing to supply. These limitations give retailers less market flexibility – and may impose unnecessary costs.

That's why DistroPet opened in 1987 with an entirely different kind of inventory and distribution model. By applying the advantages of new data management technologies and overnight freight services, DistroPet gave, and continues to give, pet retailers a wider selection of product offerings at more competitive prices...

4. Create more descriptive lists

Some items, such as press releases, naturally lend themselves to bulleted lists. Unfortunately, too many of these lists consists of little more than titles with hyperlinks, like this:

- September 8, 2006: [BunkCo Announces New Product Release](#)

There's simply too little information there to encourage a visitor to read more. Instead, annotate your lists with just enough information to illuminate the content and whet the reader's appetite:

- September 8, 2006: BunkCo's new *LawnMagic* composting tool makes it easier for to turn dead leaves and grass clippings into rich new soil. [Read more....](#)

5. Make offers!

No one in her right mind would send out a direct mail that consisted only of a company description without an offer, an invitation to respond. Yet too many websites present mere information without a call to action. And without a call to action, even your most interested prospects have little idea what to do next. Worse, you're losing opportunities to draw prospects deeper into your sales funnel.

Consumer and e-business websites make offers all the time. B2B sites can do the same. No, you're not going to ask people to call up to purchase a multi-million dollar ERP system for their global network. But you can, and should, make offers that move prospects closer to you and your value proposition. Offer meaningful content, such as white papers, industry reports, how-to guides, instructional webinars and live seminars, like so:

How are today's leading manufacturing executives mastering complex supply-chain demands? We surveyed thirty Fortune 500 COOs and compiled their responses, with expert recommendations and comments, in our new guidebook, Securing the Supply Chain: Best practices for increasing speed and lowering costs. [Download your complimentary copy here.](#)

Caution: If you create an intermediary registration page to capture contact information, be aware that the more you demand, the greater the drop-out rate. Balance your need to collect information with your desire to build credibility and good will by getting your content into as many hands as possible. Consider eliminating the requests or simplifying them to just a name and/or e-mail address.

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