

St George Consultants Ltd

Online Sales and Marketing Solutions

12-Step Web Site Audit

“88% of online consumers use the internet to research or purchase goods and services...”

-DecisionAnalyst.com

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12-Step Web Site Audit

Introduction

Whether you are looking to give your web site a complete overhaul or just a few tweaks - a web site audit will provide you with valuable information on the key areas that need your attention.

By following our 12-Step Web Site Audit you can easily determine what action needs to be taken to keep your web site performing optimally and ahead of your competition.

When completing the Web Site Audit try to place yourself in your customers' shoes, so you see your site through their eyes. Alternatively give the audit to a third party to complete to get an external view. This is similar to any quality control process – other people tend to identify aspects that you either miss or take for granted as clear and understandable.

The more work required on your site the more it becomes necessary for an external review for impartial perspectives on what to keep and what needs to go.

When giving the Web Site Audit to an external third party you will need to be clear on the purpose of the web site and bear in mind that there may be some questions that they can not answer.

Important points before you get started:

1. The 12-Step Web Site Audit has been designed as part of a planning process for your web site.
2. Leave any questions that don't apply. If a question does apply but you're not sure of the answer make this clear so it can be reviewed at a later date.
3. Remember a web site is never perfect, as the Internet and competitive environment evolves so rapidly. Once your site is where you want it to be, schedule regular audits to take into account new tools, technology and accepted practices to ensure your site remains competitive.

12-Step Web Site Audit

1. Purpose

What is the purpose of your web site?

Write the 3 main goals of your web site i.e. what action do you want visitors to take?

Who is your site aimed at?

Describe your target audience

How is your site marketed?

Describe the approach to marketing your site i.e. SEO, link building, Press Releases, PPC etc

Who are your 3 main competitors?

List your 3 main competitors, including their web site addresses:

2. Accessibility

Is the loading time of your web site acceptable?

Check at different operating speeds:

Cable: _____

Broadband: _____

Dial-up: _____

Does your web site work as expected on multiple browser formats?

i.e. Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera etc

Does your web site support different platforms i.e. Mac and PC?

Yes / No

Do all the graphics, Flash, Java and Videos load correctly?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does data from any databases display correctly and quickly?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does your web site fit the guidelines for disabled users?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is your web site HTML and XML compliant?

Yes / No

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If not, what needs doing:

Is your web site CSS compliant?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

If you have a flash intro is there the option to 'skip this' stage?

Yes / No

Is there a prompt to download plugins to support Flash content?

If not, what needs doing:

Does the site appear correctly at a 800 x 600 resolution?

Yes / No

What about other resolutions?

If not, what needs doing:

Do your pictures have alt tags?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are 'back' buttons always operational?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

3. Usability

Is the site navigation clear and easy to use?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is the site navigation in the same position on each page?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How many clicks does it take to reach the information a visitor may be searching for?

Is there a clear Call to Action if one is required?

Are there distractions on the page that stop visitors from browsing or completing the desired action/s?

Do you have a site map/index?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

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Is there a search function for visitors to use – are the results ‘user friendly’?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have labels on your links?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do all the links work?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How does your site usability compare with your top 3 competitors?

4. Appearance

Is your web site consistent with your overall brand?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How many colours are used on your web site? (aim for maximum of 3)

Is the appearance of your web site consistent with the message your web site is providing and the audience targeted?

Think about design, colours, complexity etc

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is the web site easy to read in terms of font type and size?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do sounds/audio/video files have obvious and easy to use control buttons?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

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Are the pictures appropriate and do they all load correctly?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is there any overlapping type?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do pages fit on the screen without the need for horizontal scrolling?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How does your site appearance compare with your top 3 competitors?

5. Content

Is the main purpose of the site explained on the landing page?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are there clear headings on each page?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are there any spelling or grammatical errors in the text?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is the content written using the target audience's 'language'?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is the content laid out in a logical manner?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How often is your web site content updated and is it consistent with your marketing message?

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Is the text easy to scan?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are there captions on the pictures?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is there an obvious and easy way to contact your organisation displayed on the web site, accessible from all pages?

i.e. a contact us page with names, telephone, mobile and fax numbers, email and street address?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is there an explanation of who you are and what your business does and is it accessible from all pages?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does your web site explain how to find your business and give the business operating hours?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is the volume of content suitable i.e. too much, too little, duplicate content etc

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Is your offer / product / service accurately described?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have any case studies to that add credibility your product / service published on your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have any customer testimonials published on your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have any press reviews published on your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does your business have any awards and are these displayed on your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have any 'As seen on/in' icons you can add to your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

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Is your expert status or USP explained prominently?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does your site explain why customers should buy from/visit you rather than your competitors?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How does your site content compare with your top 3 competitors?

6. Marketing

Is your marketing approach and message consistent with your offer/product/service both offline and online?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is your marketing message clear and easily seen?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you carry out marketing for your site and do you include links to your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are any supporting web sites consistent in their appearance and offer?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How does your marketing compare with your top 3 competitors?

7. Functionality

If you collect names, email addresses and other personal information from your visitors is your offer to get them to sign up compelling?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does your offer clearly state what they are signing up for and are the benefits for doing so clearly outlined?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have a privacy statement that explains how their personal information will be treated?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is your email marketing process ICANN compliant?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is there an easy way for visitors to ask questions about your services or web site functionality i.e. help desk

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

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Does your customer interaction functionality work correctly?

i.e. java scripts, flash, audio, video, submission forms, comments, forums, helpdesk/support, email, FAQ's etc

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How does your site functionality compare with your top 3 competitors?

8. E-Commerce

Does your web site accurately describe your product/s or service/s?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Does your web site make the buying process clear?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Is your buying process as simple as possible?

i.e. minimal steps with little information required from your customer?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are the Terms and Conditions of your product/service, including delivery, shipping and returns policy clearly laid out and easily accessible?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you use a secure server for customer transactions?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

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Is it clear why a customer should buy from you and not your competitors?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

What guarantee do you offer your customers, is compelling and clearly laid out?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

How does your site's buying process compare with your top 3 competitors?

9. Compliance

Do you have the appropriate disclaimers/privacy policies on your site and are they easily accessible?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you display a clearly marked copyright?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you clearly display your Terms of Service and Terms & Conditions for your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do you have FAQ's to help your customers use and understand your web site and products?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are there any industry compliance or regulations you need to follow and are these clearly shown on your web site?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

10. Optimisation

Are your site pages title tags keyword specific?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do your site pages meta tags include 'keywords' and 'description' that are keyword specific?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are your site's pages content sufficiently keyword rich without being 'overstuffed'?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Do the page headings include appropriate keywords?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are incoming links keyword/market appropriate?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

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Are out going links keyword/market appropriate and link to market related sites, preferably 'authority' sites?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

Are the site's internal links keyword/market appropriate?

Yes / No

If not, what needs doing:

11. Metrics

Does your site have comprehensive statistics that include:

- Origin and 'demographics' of traffic
- Keywords used to find your site
- Referral sites
- Pages visited
- Exit pages
- Visitor path within your site
- Conversion rates
- Site 'uptime'
- Advertising ROI
- Email open rates and click through rates
- Customer service metrics
- Customer feedback collation
- Split testing metrics (if applicable)
- Refund rates (if applicable)

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12. Administration

How easy is your site to update?

How reliable is your hosting service?

If managed externally, how reliable/responsive is your web site management company?

How often is your site reviewed / updated?

Do you have a systemised email correspondence process in place?

Do you have a systemised newsletter process in place?

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Any Other Comments or Considerations

What are the next steps?

Contact Information

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