Geewiz!

What's Holding up the Internet?

The internet, e-commerce, web marketing, and this incredible new media called the web and e-commerce was created in 1996. Now, as we approach nearly 10 years down the track, should we be questioning why this wonderful media is still not the most dominant, widespread use for commercial transactions.

Certainly, the use of the web has made information gathering incredibly easy, and the most predominant use of the web is to gather information about products, services, or organisations, or to do some research on ideas, generally in a time saving role, at little or low-cost to gather the information.

This incredible access to information has suddenly levelled the playing fields between those that had the power of knowledge and those that didn't.

But, then we should ask, if a buying decision is about making an 'informed buying decision between people', then if the internet is a source of information, why hasn't it grown dramatically in transactions online, confidence in payments online, and even the development of Eftpos online so that customers, once they gather the information, can make their purchase and organise delivery, and perhaps dare I say it, kill off the distribution channel called 'retail stores'?

Of course, it would be a major leap to say let's kill off the retail stores, as it will probably never happen in our lifetimes, mainly because people want the interaction from the social side of walking amongst other people to look at purchases, talking to a knowledgeable person, and perhaps even having a good laugh or a bit of social fun whilst making a purchase.

Probably the greatest strategy mistake was in the early '90s when people like the major credit card companies, Visa, Mastercard, and the banks failed to acknowledge the concept of the internet so that they could say that "your payment is safely protected by Visa". Instead, we have "your payment is protected by Verisign" and other such personalised brands which have nowhere near the brand recognition, and who knows who they are anyway?

The security of payment details by credit card is still the major stumbling block to successful e-commerce, and if you have a site that accepts e-commerce solutions and as well "let me invoice you and you can pay be direct credit later on", you'll find that there is a significant increase in business when you allow people to be invoiced as well as credit card payments.

On your e-commerce transaction website, if you have a guarantee of safety, you clearly identify the credit cards and payment methods you will accept, and offer an invoicing option then you will certainly make it easy for the customers to make their buying decision, and also grow your sales base.

Add to that one further dimension, and that is a "click here and talk to a real person about your purchase" on the website, and the use of internet and telephone calling and the viewphone, will be significant steps forward in creating a retail purchase environment because people still like to do business with people.

The impact of this new technology use, that will allow people to interact, interface, ask questions, and feel safe because they've seen somebody, will take the e-commerce and e-marketing forward another giant leap.

Also of importance to the customer is the warranty, the guarantee, and the promise of response if something goes wrong. You need to have a response promise on your website, not only for communication but also if something goes wrong.

It will soon become a mandatory, legislative law that all suppliers on the web will have to identify a physical street address, so you might as well get it in now before you are required to do so.

With the age of personalisation, people want to have the surety of knowing that there is a physical address, it doesn't matter if it's your home, a home office, or an unusual location, because the whole world of business is now being done from all sorts of different locations and people tend to be very sure of the organisation once they understand where it is based.

Just like in retail, we don't go back to retail stores that we don't enjoy; we don't tell our friends about good experiences we only relate the bad experiences; it is fast becoming identical on the internet and the web that we don't go back to places we don't trust, we don't tell our friends about websites we're not comfortable with, and we can make all of those decisions in a few seconds flat while we're examining your website.

So in summary, if we want to expand the use of the internet as an information through to purchase medium, we have to bring people and the confidence of dealing with a person into the technology.

Enjoy your web hunting!

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