

5 Mistakes Home Builders Make With Their Web Sites



In order to find the path to home builder marketing success, you must first be able to identify mistakes. Here are the top five issues I have identified after viewing many web sites created by home builders and remodelers.

1. Nightmare Navigation

If visitors cannot navigate easily through a web site, view your information, see your homes / additions etc., frustration will inevitably ensue. If your web site is hard to use, most visitors will bail out and leave before you can blink an eye! That means they are probably going to your competitor's web site and you have lost a potential customer for good.

When I visited home builders' web sites the problems varied from broken navigation links to poorly created Flash animations, and they all had the same effect on me -- annoyance. On one web site, I actually had to look sideways to read the navigation bar.

The purpose of a home builder's web site is to help guests find what they want, not to make them struggle to locate what they should be able to find to with ease. So I put "nightmare navigation" at the top of my list when it comes to the most severe offense. It doesn't matter how many people find your web site if they can't find their way through it once they get there.

2. Your Web Site Can't Be Found

Web site design firms should take the blame for most poor search engine performance. Today's professional web site design firm should at least know the basics of search engine optimization / visibility. And I'm talking about the VERY basics here. Some of the web sites I visited had no keywords at all, and some had no page titles or picture tags that are so important in finding a site in Google and the other search engines.

Is this a big problem? Well, when you consider the difference between a web site with no page titles at all and a web site with keyword page titles on the entire site ... it can be make an enormous difference. It can put the former on page ten of Google and the latter on page one! That's a big difference in terms of home builder marketing success or failure.

3. Outdated and Amateurish Web sites

If a builder has an outdated web site, or one that looks like their cousin built it, the web site will make a bad impression on the company from the very beginning. Some of the telltale signs of an unprofessional web site are busy backgrounds & graphics; hit counters, "under construction" signs and tacky looking navigation bars. It's all about attention to quality, professionalism and detail. If a home builder isn't concerned with the details of his web site, then why should we believe he will be concerned with details of the homes he builds? In this case no web site is better than a bad web site.

4. Lacking Basic Information

When I visited many home builders' web sites the first thing I looked for was the very basic information. For instance, what types of homes do they build and where do they build them. Sometimes, it was like pulling teeth to find this information.

The home page should immediately offer the basic information about your business. It should not be buried three tiers down, or worse, not there at all! If you don't offer visitors what they need to know to make a decision right at the get-go, you will discourage them and they will go elsewhere. You can count on it!

How refreshing it was when I came across a home page that was very clear and concise -- "We specialize in building custom homes in the Knoxville area." That's all it takes!

5. No Project Photos or Bad Photos

When people look for a builder to entrust the construction of their home, it stands to reason that one of the first things they look for are pictures of homes or renovations they have already completed. However you would be shocked by the number of web sites I visited that either had no photos at all, or had inferior pictures that reflected badly on the builder.

Here yet again, it's a matter of giving attention to detail. I want to choose a builder that pays attention to the smallest details. How can I evaluate this with a lack of or poor quality photography?

To take your marketing program to a new level of success, your web site should reflect the quality, craftsmanship, professionalism that your business stands for. Settle for nothing less.



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