

How to Boost Sales From Your Retail Store Website - and Increase In-store Traffic - By Remembering Three Simple Words

The "Call to Action"

One of the most important elements of most retail store websites is the "call to action", or "CTA". A call to action is any element that directs an online visitor to perform a desired action. In addition, an effective call to action element should be measurable to that you know what is working on your website and what is not working.

Examples of Calls to Action

Call to action elements on a retail store website can have a number of forms. A call to action element can be a button or link that triggers a sales video; a link or button that encourages a visitor to click "Next", "Learn more", "Continue"; or the ultimate online directive to "Buy Now". One of the most effective call to action elements is a web form that is combined with some form of compelling offer.

How the Call to Action Helps Online Visitors

A call to action element on a website attempts to interrupt the online visitors' behavior long enough to suggest an action that you want them to perform. You're not trying to impose some form of creepy "mind control" on the your website visitors. Rather, the goal is to ever-so-subtly guide online visitors to make a decision that efficiently leads them closer to making a purchasing decision while they are still at the website.

How the Call to Action Helps the Retailer

Call to action elements on a website serve to gently guide online visitors to make a decision that leads to a "conversion", or purchase decision. These elements also help the retailer understand what offers on the website are being perceived as valuable to online website visitors and which offers are not. A call to action that is not producing desired responses can occur for a number of reasons - some of which may not be obvious to the retail merchant without the use of website analytical tools.

Frequency of Calls to Action on the Home Page

The homepage of a website in particular should have as many call to action elements as possible without overwhelming the aesthetics and overall design of the site. We recommend a bare minimum of three call to action elements and all three should be present at or "above the fold" (an imaginary

horizontal line in the center of the computer screen). A visitor should NEVER, EVER be required to scroll down a page to view the most important call to action elements on a page.

One of the most effective ways to present a call to action is to display it in a "popup" window. Our design team uses Advanced DHTML Pro software to produce extremely effective windows that slide out from the edge of the screen (or wherever we want them to appear) in order to grab the online visitor's attention. Such "popups" are generally unblockable, but are utilized carefully so as not to frustrate or annoy the website visitor. The goal is to use this form of call to action element intelligently to deliver value to the customer.

Summary

The most successful - and productive - websites that seen or developed for our clients are those that include multiple calls to action intended to guide online visitors to take desired actions. These actions, when designed properly, increase greatly the number of conversions at at retail store website. These conversions can then be leveraged to drive more traffic to the brick-and-mortar store.



This article was written by Mel Cooper, President of MELCOOPER Consulting, Inc. MELCOOPER is an online marketing and web design consultancy based in Montgomery, Alabama USA. Copyright 2009 MELCOOPER.

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