

10 Things E-Commerce Site Can Learn from Webby Award Design

Dec

The 21st Annual Webby Awards are approaching, so what makes a winning e-commerce site?



(http://www.businessstechpro.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/10-things-your-172_ad90fd092f06b53c1264818bb77fa0ea120d299f.png) The Webby Awards (http://webbyawards.com/winners/2016/) recognize the achievements of organizations or individuals who integrate excellent design and functionality into their websites. Since today is the final deadline for the 21st Annual Webby Awards (https://entries.webbyawards.com/#/enter) in 2017, it can be quite educational to see what has been deemed as success in 2016. Creating a dynamic e-commerce web page that sets out to attract attention and persuade visitors is ideal to engage them in the desired way, whether it is buying products or rendering services.

So what do all 378 Webby Winners from 2016 share in common? Besides the fact that they are all leaders in their respective industries, they also have nailed the key concepts for online design you will find below. When your e-commerce website first loads after a potential customer has clicked on a link or sought you out via a search engine inquiry that leads to your online store, these are the qualities that Webby Winners tend to share:

Prominent Logo and Branding

Have you ever followed a link to a website, only to wonder if you had the right one? If that happens, you probably hit that 'Back' button in your browser just as fast as you landed on the page. Just like with a brick-and-mortar location, if your branding and logo are not clearly visible within the first few seconds of visitors arriving, your bounce rate may increase dramatically due mostly to the fact that people just will not know who you are.

Large, Striking Image(s)

This large image will be introducing your entire e-commerce website to a potential customer, so it should not only be attention-grabbing but relate directly to what your store is all about. For example, if you are selling car parts, a beautiful HD image of a car you would sell parts for would do quite well. Many e-commerce stores have opted to either make this picture the entire background or include a few of them in a slider or rotating widget. However you display your primary imagery, it needs to be very relevant to what you are trying to sell and be of high quality to show professionalism and legitimacy for your brand.

Brief and Effective Message

This message should be displayed prominently on your homepage and get to the heart of what you do with clear, concise language. No need to beat around the bush or use superfluous words to impress people; an honest, direct message as to what your organization represents will provide them with the best understanding of who you are and what you offer. Try to limit your direct message to a single phrase no more than seven or eight words in length, and place it where it will be seen immediately.

Interactivity

Having an interactive e-commerce website can be employed in a variety of different methods, ranging from having information about certain items pop up when the pointer rolls over it to a transforming page as a user scrolls up and down the page. Interactivity is a clever way to hide useful information you would want visitors to see without cluttering the page, revealing it at the appropriate time and maintaining a clean overall look to the page. Including clickable videos is another great way to get visitors to engage with your content and explore further.

Call to Action Button

After reading your homepage's message, visitors need to know what to do next, and a simple direction will keep them from simply losing interest in the page. Some may say "Enter" to be redirected to the actual product/service category pages, while others may say "See what's new" to show off a new product. This button should be in a prominent spot to be easily seen, but naturally follow your message as an enticement to click on the button and further explore your other web pages.

Scalability

Recent studies suggest that close to 90% of people like to look things up on their mobile devices these days, including online shopping. Whether or not your e-commerce storefront is readily available via a smartphone or tablet can very well make or break you in the marketplace.

Usability & Navigation

Creating an easy-to-use toolbar with uncomplicated drop-down menus and thoughtfully-crafted categories can prompt potential customers to stay or bounce. Making your products easy to find as few steps as possible is key to gaining conversions, as visitors tend to prefer a hassle-free experience above most other things. Use logic when creating your other web pages such as "About Us," product pages, deals, and more while also keeping your item filters as simple to understand as possible. Organizing your products by type, brand name, or size can go a long way in simplifying a customer's search for what they want.

Cards

Small boxes, or "cards," filled with content such as product images, product descriptions, deals, and more can decorate your page, providing a mosaic of content that makes your page feel very robust. Cards are a great way to display featured products or deals that you would like customers to scroll through, perhaps finding other items they might like along the way. The size of cards can vary depending on your design, with larger cards containing more valuable content.

Prominent Social Buttons

Interconnectivity has become just as important as having an easily navigable website, and that means connecting your website to all the major social media platforms that are appropriate for your organization. For example, if you have brilliant "How-To" videos featuring some of your products, adding a button for your YouTube channel with a small roll-over message that says "Check out our How-To videos here" can be a persuasive way to give people a demonstration of your products. Following your organization on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram could also give your customers access to exclusive deals only offered via social media.

Sign In/Up

Email marketing is still one of the most useful tools in converting customers to buy, so capturing email addresses is not only encouraged, but should also be made easy. By giving customers as easy means to sign up (or in if they already have an account), you have an opportunity to market more efficiently to them beyond their mere visitation to your website. Email coupons, special events, or offer exclusive deals to subscribers only for better rates of conversion.

Employing these simple yet effective elements of design can significantly improve your conversion rates over time while giving your website a fresh and professional look. When used correctly, these tools can be quite efficient, but some inherent issues may crop up if you get carried away in your implementation. Some things to watch out for including the following:

Slow Loading Time

While adding interactivity such as moving images, rollover text, and video can make your e-commerce website more dynamic, it can also make each page data heavy and cause slower load times. Those precious extra seconds can cause impatience among more fickle customers, causing them to leave if the page takes more than a "one Mississippi." Choose interactive features carefully to enhance your customers' experiences, not hinder them.

Overly Busy Pages

It is understandable that you would want to inform your customers as thoroughly as possible on your web pages, particularly your Homepage. However, populating the page with too much text and too many images, cards, and links can not only bog the load time down, but they also make the page unattractive and difficult to comprehend. Give your content plenty of breathing room, so customers can absorb your information more naturally without getting overwhelmed by complexity.

Too Many Submenus

Strategically hiding information can be a very efficient use of space, but having them all over the place and with too many layers deep can lead to confusion and text overlapping, which is hard to read at best. Be logical in your placement of submenus and drop-downs, so they do not interfere with one another while also consolidating you information into easily navigable sections.

Not Enough Contrast

When choosing images and text, make sure that they do not wash each other out nor distract attention away from another. For example, applying white text to a light-colored image background can make the text difficult to read. Choose text/image combinations that compliment one another, such as white or red text against a dark background.

Too Many Pop-Ups

While the pop-up message has been making a comeback with offering deals or acquiring email addresses, there is still a sentiment among the "ad-blocker" crowd that they are annoying. Choosing the appropriate times to introduce a pop-up is key to making them useful. For instance, instead of having a pop-up when a visitor first opens the Homepage, implement one at checkout after the customer has already invested their time and money in clicking boxes and filling out forms. Offering special deals on their next purchase as a 'thank you' for their business via their email sounds better than the earlier attempt.

Revealing Your Analytics

While not so common anymore, posting your real website analytics for all to see can appear amateur and unnecessary, particularly if your numbers are not initially high. Some companies in the past have posted a site visitor or follower counter, which can, in fact, hurt your reputation early on if you are trying to build your brand up. Even if you get a thousand unique visitors an hour, save your web page real estate with beautiful imagery of your products or information about your services that customers will find more useful.

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