



So many key elements go into a successful and well performing website. First, visitors have to love the visual appeal long enough to stay engaged from one page to the next. The presentation must resonate with the visitor--speaking to them and utilizing those functions your visitor expects to easily connect with you and your products.

Products . . . now those are important aspects, so let's stop right here for a minute. You are online to present your brand to the public and to sell your inventory. Your inventory's navigation tab must be readily visible. And of course your collections must be organized in an intuitive and systematic way that makes what you sell easy for your visitor to find.

Too many click-throughs to find what they want, and guess what? They are out there and on to another site whose product line is easier to navigate.

Take a critical look at the way your website organizes each category of products that you sell. Depending on the expansiveness of your online products, there are several ways in which to intuitively organize your items so the visitor finds them in as few clicks as possible.

We caught up with jewelry trade website developer Marlene Murphy (www.jewelrywebsitedesigners.com) recently to get her take on this critical subject. You may want to check her comments against what appears on your site so that you'll be satisfied that your online inventory is conveniently organized for your customers. If it fails

the test however, you know what to do to increase the sales from your site and experience its best performance.

Q: What is the most oft occurring problem that site owners have with organizing their inventory online?

Marlene: Site owners have difficulty grasping the concept of Collections, Categories and Sub-Categories. For example, Collections could represent the designer or even the vendor of certain items you sell. However Collections could also represent a grouping of rings or bracelets. Depending on how one wants to set up their product line and how vast of a product line the site owner wants to display, Categories could also represent jewelry types, like rings, bracelets, earrings and so on.

Sub-categories separate the different varieties in a category. Under earrings for example, the sub-category could be diamond studs as one, with pearl earrings and colored stone earrings in another sub-cat. The merchant decides which organizational style makes more sense for range of goods they carry and especially so if they represent multiple vendors.

Q: How long do you think site visitors will stay on a site hunting for the product they want to buy?

Marlene: Millennials--which is probably your strongest demographic have a very short attention span and patience level. A quick method of checking the engagement of your visitors is by reviewing the bounce rate for various pages through your Google

Analytics. Review the time spent on each page before the visitor leaves. You can also track the visitor's path through this analysis platform.

The average page visit lasts under a minute. As users skim through web pages, they spend very little time --- and actually read about a quarter of that pages' text. So unless your site is populated with extraordinarily clear and focused writing, very little of your website's content will leave a lasting impression on your visitors. Good website content is broken into short paragraphs with key-word focused sub-headings. That way your visitor is more likely to absorb and retain your message.

While users normally rush through their site visit, the time they spend on individual page visits varies widely. Depending on if they've reached something of interest, visitors may bounce off quickly, while at other times they linger for far longer than a minute soaking in the information.

Q: As a developer, what are your recommendations for intuitive easy-to-access product organization on a jewelers website?

Marlene: Visitors should be provided with multiple paths or options to find what they're searching for. A prominently displayed search box helps visitors looking for a specific item, jewelry type or designer line. If the visitor has only a general idea of what they're seeking then sub-menus of collections, categories, and sub-cats of products works well. For example they may search for a more general term like diamond bracelet rather than more specifically 18K white gold diamond tennis bracelet.

Q: Besides organizing inventory in an easy-to-access way, what other elements should a site owner implement to up-sell to their customer once the person has found an item they want?

Marlene: To add a sense of urgency to complete the transaction, the site owner can offer a value-added item, such as jewelry cleaner, jewelry pouch, or even free-shipping. A discount on future purchases when the visitor completes the order "Today" is also a

potent incentive to complete the transaction now.

Q: Is there anything an e-merchant can do to increase the number of transactions from their site once a visitor / customer actually locates what they want?

Marlene: When a visitor lands on a page for a 10mm pearl strand for example, a scrolling banner under their selected item should offer "You May Also Like" complementary items, like pearl studs, or a pearl ring that matches or coordinates with the item the visitor just selected. This often results in several items placed in the shopping cart instead of just the one.

Another effective sales tool is to install a Wish List capability on your site. It encourages the visitor to build a list of things they like for future self-purchasing. They'll come back often afterward. But also importantly it creates a list of items that the person actually wants and will be able to quickly access even though they might have forgotten about the items. And he or she can share their Wish List with friends and family so gift giving opportunities are always going to be right.

Q: Any parting thoughts on what increases ease of product location on a jewelry site?

Marlene: Many sites I've seen have no clear "Call to Action". When a visitor enters the home page they may see examples of jewelry pieces with no direction as to where to go from there. Simple instructions, such as a clearly defined link like "Shop for Diamond Bracelets" or "View our Diamond Stud Earring Collection" will trigger the visitor's action to view and purchase your products. And that's the whole point of having a website isn't it?

Jewelers are focused on keeping their business moving forward. Sometimes the task of keeping their site's performance tip-top may not be as intuitive to them. If you'd like to have a brief chat with Marlene about this critical topic or any other aspect of your site just contact her at marlene@jewelrywebsitedesigners.com

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

