

MAKING YOUR



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By Marlene Murphy

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Q: What is the most common misperception people have about SEO as it relates to their own site?

MURPHY: When I speak with clients about creating a new site, one of their main requirements or goals is to be "in the top ten results of Google and preferably #1". They have the notion that some web developer out there can do that for them. But

common sense suggests that when you're competing against millions of other jewelers in a global community for the top ten spots, you must have something unique to position your site in front of Blue Nile, Zales, and other e-commerce giants. Jewelers with a brick and mortar business have a distinct advantage because they can drive focus away from a global or national rivalry to their own region where there is less competition and where achieving higher ranking is more attainable via proper SEO.

Q: Many modern jewelry sites are designed with minimum or no text at all appearing on the landing page, called the Home Page. The effect is meant to be sleek and high end because the visitor just sees jewelry (if it is a jewelry site). But is that a good option?

MURPHY: A sleek home page is effective if you have tremendous brand recognition, like Tiffany or Cartier. They don't need good search engine rank-

ings to drive customers to their site. Google and other search engines are looking for original text content containing the right mix of targeted keywords and key phrases written in a readable format. Search engines are also looking for an "outline" format in the coding (remember creating an outline in school – Main Headings, Sub-Headings and relevant text underneath?). Pages with nothing but images don't give Google any content to offer up to people searching for products or information.

Q: What are other ways to engage and hook the visitor to ones' site?

MURPHY: Product slide shows, short videos and interactive applications combined with engaging original text and links create a rich shopping experience for your customer straight through to checkout.

Q: Tell us a bit more about the visual appeal of a good website . . . What are things a site owner should have on their site including but not limited to the home page?

MURPHY: Mobile internet browsing is now so pervasive that website design has undergone a radical change in response to that user behavior. We used to tailor design layouts to the standard 17 - 20 inch computer monitor – now shoppers routinely view websites on iPhones. In office or at home, huge computer monitors are becoming the norm; 24 inch monitors are not considered large now. Today's websites must respond visually to every visitor's viewport, whatever size it may be. Fonts now need to be large enough to be legible on a mobile device after they are downsized to fit the screen. There also needs to be enough space between lines and around links because mobile devices don't have mouse capability. Actions are performed by touch; if the user has fat fingers or the print is small, navigating a site can become frustrating to impossible. Color palette plays a key role in readability and visual appeal. Studies point to the subliminal but powerful impact that color produces.

Q: Are there any strict no-no's that one should eliminate or not place on their site at all?

MURPHY: My number 1 no-no is music or sound effects! It's cute the first time you listen but quickly be-

comes irritating after hearing it more than once. You must consider that a visitor may be surfing the internet while at work and they can't afford music blaring from their cubicle. iPhone addresses this issue in their operating system by requiring the user to initiate the sound by clicking a button or a link.

Q: What are latest and most powerful tools in the widget, function and app category for use in a jewelry website?

MURPHY: Google Translate and payment calculators are great examples of useful widgets. Important functions for jewelers would be the automatic updating of Kitco prices, currency exchange rates and online inventories. Applications refer to specially designed programs built for mobile devices, like Kayak, or those created by the airlines to check flight status, or schedules.

Q: If a jeweler only wants people to come into their store---because they are 'not ready to sell online yet' is there any reason they should invest in a website at all?

MURPHY: The information super highway as we say has made businesses without websites appear suspect of not being legitimate. Even if a retailer doesn't want to conduct online sales, they should provide an e-Look Book that showcases the services and jewelry collections available in the actual store. Marketing studies reveal that shoppers routinely narrow down their choices from a business' online catalog before driving to the store to view the actual merchandise. Remember that a properly built website can efficiently transition from Look Book to a fully functioning e-Commerce site anytime later. As your business evolves, so can your website.



Murphy's rich experience in the tech culture began in 1981 with the dawn of corporate reliance upon computer technology. She played a pivotal role in implementing and integrating computer programming for the automotive industry. Sharp and intuitive, she developed computer training programs, and computer applications for myriad departments. Her decades of expertise include developing Visual Basic for Applications, SQL, and the Microsoft Suite of Office Products like MSAccess, MSWord, MSEXcel, MSPowerPoint, Classic ASP and ColdFusion. She's been a custom web developer since 2000 and a specialist developer for the jewelry trade since 2009.

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