

WHY YOUR WEBSITE DOESN'T WORK...



...AND HOW YOU CAN FIX IT!

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Introduction to solving your website problems...

The financial world has finally come around to the fact that advisors need websites. It's why we have individual advisors signing up left and right for our help in creating one. It's also why we have IMO's, RIA's and other firms lining up for solutions on how to provide their advisors with websites.

But now that we've all acknowledged the need for a website, it's time to acknowledge the difference between simply having a website, and having an effective one. Your website is very often the first way that prospects meet you, and it's even more often the way that they decided whether they want to work with you or not.

If your website isn't giving visitors an impressive first impression, they won't be taking a second look. Luckily, there are a few ways to turn your website from one that just exists, into one that actually engages.

Read on as we diagnose and provide solutions for some of the most common problems with advisors' websites.



You don't have a clear path for visitors...

Think of your website as a vast collection of information, like you've handed a stack of papers to a prospect. We know that no one will read every paper, and right now they don't know which papers are most important.

Instead, your website should be guiding them to the information you want them to read. The success of your site depends on where people go and how they click. Use calls to action on each page to urge readers forward to the next piece of content they should read (rather than relying on them to go back to the menu bar and selecting a new page.)

Your homepage should give several call to action options so people can segment themselves into a content path best suited for them. This is often seen as rotating sliders, where the images on the homepage rotate from one to the next. Each one can highlight a different aspect of your firm, and if that aspect interests them, the visitor can click to go to a page featuring that and learn more.

Each piece of content should lead to the next, and next, and next until you've told a story compelling enough to earn their opt-in (which should be available on the right-hand side of every page... we'll get to that next).

Right now, taking the menu bar out of consideration, check to make sure you have a valid call to action, or clickable action to move people through the site from each page. This is especially important on your home page... It's the job of your homepage to **MAKE** people click or follow a path for more information rather than letting them choose their own journey.



Your menu bar is a mess...

Part of the “story” or journey of your website is giving users the menu options they need, and no more. Consider using About, Services, Events, In The News, Blog and Contact as some main ones to start. If you have a much longer list, determine whether you can combine those into one menu option, so that you can keep the options limited and not let it look cluttered. You also should have links within the menu options themselves. If someone just clicks the main menu option, it should go somewhere, even if it’s just the first sub menu page. A lot of people (especially older people) just click the main menu option, not the sub options below.

Your assets aren’t featured where they should be...

Contact info in upper right hand corner

When people come to a site, their eyes go from upper left, to upper right, and then down the right-hand side of the page. Most people take good advantage of the upper left with their logo, but consider including your contact information, or at least office locations (or just cities of your offices if you have multiple ones) in the upper right.

Opt-Ins on the Right-Side Bar

The right-hand side of your page needs to have a standing call to action, ideally it should have multiple calls to action. As you’ve just learned, it is one of the three spots that visitor’s eyes first travel. You should have a download, or opt in, or some call to action to take advantage of this space. Making this consistent on each page means that whatever content they are reading, if they decide to take the next step and opt-in to something, it’s right there for them, just begging for a click.

Marketing Assets Front and Center

Your marketing assets (credentials, news sources, tv and radio stations and other publications that have featured you (paid or unpaid)) should be displayed prominently on your website. These are incredibly powerful for your credibility and goal of positioning yourself as a thought leader. When someone sees that you've been featured on CBS News, or Business Week or in your local newspaper, it gives you a certain level of credibility. Additionally, make sure to have your BBB, National Ethics Association, and professional awards, memberships, or certifications prominently displayed on your website as well.

Social Links Available

Make sure to update your website with links to your company Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Also, allow for Subscribe to Our Newsletter, or Subscribe to Blog sign up areas. These are very easy ways to allow visitors to engage.

Your website is a dry, static, billboard...

Use Interactive Content

The biggest problem with most sites that lack interaction is that it is simply a billboard. It's there for people to see, and it's the same each and every time they go past. No one has a reason to look more than once. Include a blog updated with regular content, or regular market updates to spruce things up, and give people a reason to come back week after week.

Create In-the-News and Upcoming Events Pages

Showcase further credibility by providing PDF's or links to media events or publications you've been featured in. Also, add a page with past and upcoming events, giving visitors an easy way to see how they can connect with you next.

Use More Staff/Office Photos

Don't underestimate the anxiety that people have at the prospect of meeting strangers, or going to new places. Add to that the anxiety and memory of having been put through high pressure sales pitches - *and NOT being able to say no* – and coming into a financial advisor's office add ups to be a very intimidating thing for folks.

Your job is to overcome that anxiety, and show that there is nothing to fear and everything to gain by coming to your office. Make them want to come to your office to try out your coffee maker, or sit in your waiting room, or meet your staff.

Try to feature pictures of you in your offices, as well as your staff members. When they speak to someone on the phone, they should be able to put a face to the name. When they walk into the office, they should recognize where they are.



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