



7 Signs Your Website Needs a Facelift

How to Know When It's Time to Redesign Your Website

One in a Series of Whitepapers
Healthcare Marketing That *Clicks!*

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Health & Wellness Marketing

It wasn't long ago that healthcare brands relied on eye-catching signage, word of mouth and promotional sales strategies to attract new clients. With the onset of online marketing, those days are now long gone. With increased competition in the healthcare industry, brands need to differentiate now more than ever.

Customers need to be reached through multiple touch points. Your website is the most powerful of them. The question now becomes — does yours make the cut?



1. It's Not Optimized for Mobile

As of 2015, more than 50% of all Internet activity is taking place on phones and tablets. This figure will only grow as the first generation of digital-savvy consumers will rely increasingly on active shopping and researching online.

What is mobile optimization, anyway? Mobile optimization has to do with the way your website appears on different screens, resolutions and browsers. The same website that displays beautifully on a 13-inch laptop screen doesn't have the same functionality on a 3-inch phone. Some elements of your desktop site will have to be simplified and reconfigured for maximum usability on smaller devices, especially when you consider that traditional navigation uses a cursor and mobile browsing responds to touch.

If your website isn't mobile friendly, it will display exactly how you built it on a computer screen. On phones and tablets, it will look broken and mashed — the text will be too small and images may stretch or shrink until they're unidentifiable. Navigation built for traditional web is difficult to use on a mobile or touch screen. What does this all mean? It means the chances of a viewer getting past your home page are slim.

Mobile optimization can be the most costly part of a site update and the most confusing for non-developers to understand. But consider this: Building a website that isn't mobile optimized is like buying a car that starts only 50% of the time. A bad mobile experience can create feelings of frustration and make people less likely to engage with your company in the future. Don't give these potential customers up so easily — make sure your website is mobile friendly.

2. It's Not SEO Friendly

SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is the practice of building a website that ranks well with search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo! when a user searches for a related term. Human search behaviour is two-fold. If you have a large existing customer base and you benefit from word of mouth, users may be searching for your business by name. This circumstance applies especially if you're running other forms of advertising. It may seem like a direct-name search would rank you first but that's not always the case.

Sites like the Yellow Pages and Yelp are SEO configured and their links can bump you lower and lower on the first page of Google. This can be harmful. If consumers visit those sites first, you're no longer controlling your own message. Viewers are taking in information about your business from out-of-date posts on directory sites, or even potentially disgruntled customers.

The other half of this equation relates to customers who do not know you, but who are seeking out your product or service. If prospective customers are unable to find your website, they are likely to move on to the next available option, namely, your competitor. People who are searching for your product are of high value, because they are further along in the buying process and are seeking to satisfy a need that you can fulfill. Don't risk losing them.

The most common scenario is general search — people searching for a product category. For example, a search for "SEO Marketing Websites" returns just under 35 million results. The top five pages are all competing services, and chances are a user isn't going to scroll through five pages of hits to find you. Appearing on the first page of Google should be a primary concern when building your new website.

Google's algorithm uses over 100 factors in determining its search ranking: the loading speed of the page, number and quality of keywords, quantity and quality of inbound links and frequency of updates are all taken into consideration. A solid SEO strategy will take all of these factors into account when building the framework and content of a website that will give you the exposure you want and need.

3. It Doesn't Leave Room for Content

Content marketing — also known as inbound marketing — is one of the fastest-growing sectors of advertising. If you're thinking of a website rebuild, you need to account for space to publish a blog and provide news updates, whitepapers or some other kind of value-exchange content. Not only will this widen the search terms your website can use, but well-executed content can help position you as an industry leader while improving your SEO.

Anything can be content. You can post articles about your industry, write blog entries about what's happening in your business, give advice to your readers, upload photos, run contests and more. You don't have to post something new each week, but many specialists recommend no less than once per month. Just remember that content is about quality, not quantity.

Most of the copy on your website is going to be static — information that does not change, such as product descriptions and information about your company. Have your web developer incorporate a blog — using WordPress or something equivalent — that you can update with ease. The frequency with which you use this tool may vary, but developing a voice for your blog will ensure that marketing's hottest trend will be at your fingertips when you need it.

4. Out-of-Date Aesthetics

Tastes change quickly, especially on the Internet. In a recent survey of 2,000 consumers, 46% said they'd been turned off of a company because of a bad website. You could be cutting-edge in your field, but an out-of-date website can ruin that image and turn customers off. Great content and a functional design are important elements, but creating an environment that encourages users to spend time on your website is absolutely essential to efficacy.

There are a number of indicators that a website design is out of date, and the younger your target audience is, the more of them they'll notice. Flash intros, auto-play music or video, certain typefaces, animated .gifs, low resolution photos and out-of-date plug-ins are all dead giveaways.

5. No Ease of Navigation

Just because a potential customer has visited your website does not necessarily mean he/she is going to stay there. Your website's "stickiness," a term for the average amount of time spent on a website, depends on multiple factors. Your website's user-friendliness and ease of navigation are extremely crucial factors.

If your site isn't easy to navigate, users will find one that is. With access to an abundance of choices in the marketplace, customers won't waste time searching through the content of your website to find what they're looking for — they have better things to do.

Your website navigation system is your customers' road map. To be effective, the system has to be consistent throughout your website. In addition to consistency, minimal clicking is a desirable feature. Some visitors can become confused or impatient when clicking through a bunch of links to get to where they want to be. If left unresolved, you risk losing potential customers who will bounce off your site and head straight to your competition.

Creating a meaningful navigation system during the website design process will help develop the overall reformatting of the website and will ensure maximum stickiness.

6. It Hasn't Grown with Your Business

If your website is even five years old, there's a good chance you've added new services or stopped providing some that are still listed. Likely, your website hasn't kept pace.

There are several reasons this happens. The most common circumstance is when web developers create a one-off site for their clients and don't maintain relationships with them. But without a web team's specialized skill set, your website can't be updated. Before your website becomes static, make sure your developer walks you through the steps to make basic updates yourself or plan ahead to ensure he'll be available when you need him. Modernizing your website is crucial to demonstrating your growth as a business. Make sure your web team will be by your side.

7. It's Not Shareable

The effectiveness of social media for small business is often up for debate; and depending on your industry, you may not see the value in a lot of social platforms. Small business owners oftentimes doubt the power of social media because they assume it's a lot of work to establish a complete, multi-channel portfolio and/or they consider the upkeep too burdensome. In fact, choosing a few complementary social platforms can elevate your web presence and reach potential sales with almost no added investment — you can check out our blog for industry-specific tips. At the minimum, consider adding one or two feeds to your page to build long-term engagement.

Developing a content strategy is also important. If you're putting effort into maintaining a blog, even if you're only posting once a month, you must give readers the tools they need to share your work. In turn, this will direct more traffic to your site and grow your web presence organically. Equip your content with sharing links or buttons and it will enjoy a longer life outside your site, while spreading your message to others.

Consider what the biggest takeaways from your website are — what your audience engages with most — and put the tools in place to share your content in an easy location. If your barrier to entry is too high, your users will ultimately lose interest and become frustrated with your site.

Whitehead Agency Group has been turning outdated websites into modern marketing tools for over 20 years. Contact us today to see how we can help.