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get the most out of your website and you'll avoid making rookie mistakes.

Sandi Smith Leyva • Jul. 11, 2016



No matter how web designs change over time or what tools come out to produce them, you can count on these ten hard truths. If you're willing to accept them, you'll get the most out of your website and you'll avoid making rookie mistakes.

1. Your webmaster is not a marketing strategist.

Your webmaster may be a really great tech person or a fantastic artist, but it's seldom

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tied with your marketing and sales cycle as well. If you have a face-to-face sale, how can you site support and shorten the cycle? Can you close leads online? Do you expect to? These are the questions to ask yourself and to discuss with your webmaster or marketing director.

3. Pretty does not equal profitable.

I've worked with hundreds of clients on their website. Just because it's pretty doesn't mean it will be effective. Many times, there's an inverse relationship.

4. Confused buyers don't buy.

The more content you have that is superfluous to your goals, the more confused and lost your buyer will be.

5. Lost leads and money down the drain.

If you want to get leads from your site, the first thing you need to do is make sure your leads don't go in spam. I can't tell you how many clients I've seen that get leads from their site but never get the form-generated emails because their spam filters are too tight.

6. It's about your client.

Your website design should appeal, first and foremost, to your client (not you). If your client is vastly different from you, that can be hard to swallow.

7. You have about two seconds.

If your visitor can't figure out what you sell or what the best thing about your firm is in two seconds, they're gone. Don't bury your best traits three clicks down; put them

front and center on the home page. And make sure we know you're a CPA firm and

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I apologize to all the positive people out there. When a prospect comes to you with a large problem, they are much more likely to act quickly to get out of their business "pain." Connect with that pain, let them know there's a solution, and let them know you're their only solution. That works best. No pain, no sale. The connecting to the pain is what requires the negative approach. "Are you suffering from unbalanced books?" works better than "Bookkeeping Services."

10. Never, ever let someone else register your domain for you.

I can't tell you how many horror stories I've lived through with lost passwords, inaccessible domains, and bankrupt webmasters that registered a domain for a client, and the client has no way to get in touch with them. Learn how to do this yourself. Insist on keeping your domain in your very own account and print and store the access credentials in a safe place. Make sure you mark your calendar at renewal time and pay attention to the email you get from ICANN.

And here's a bonus:

Bonus: Once you get your site live, do not cross it off your to-do list.

Unfortunately you have a brand new project and that's helping prospects find your site. Two ongoing to-do's include updating your site for fresh content and marketing it in a variety of ways so the optimum number of people find it.

Sandi Smith Leyva, CPA, CMA, MBA, and founder of Accountant's Accelerator, has helped thousands of accountants earn more, work less, and serve their clients better through her innovative coaching and training services.

Sandi was named one of the 2015 Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Accounting by

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Sandi is one of a handful of women in the world who has co-piloted a tiny six-seat, single-engine airplane over the oceans and around the world. Her book, *Following Amelia: A Modern Day 'Round-the-World Flight*, describes her death-defying adventure along with the two award-winning humanitarian trips she managed to fit in along the way.

Sandi has authored several books, CPE courses, and over 500 articles for clients such as Microsoft, Intuit, and the American Institute for CPAs. She writes [BizBoost News](#), a client newsletter for accountants with strategic business content. Her latest books include [Five Simple Steps to Get More Clients, More Profits and More Free Time for Accountants and QuickBooks ProAdvisors](#) and [P3: Pricing, Packaging and Positioning](#).

Sandi is a CPA and holds an MBA in IT from the University of Dallas. She also holds a MS in Applied Cognition and Neuroscience. In her spare time, she loves hiking, traveling to remote places, and empowering women from poverty to prosperity through her nonprofit.

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