



## **Do you feel like your website's homepage is cluttered and confusing?**

Homepages in need of a helping hand can exhibit several symptoms, including:

- You "just don't like it"
- It hasn't been updated in months (or years!)
- It sounds like you do everything for everybody
- You can look at your own and your biggest competitor's homepages side-by-side, cover up the logos, and have a hard time determining which company is which
- Customers or partners have outright told you it's a mess
- Your bounce rate in Google Analytics is high and getting higher (this means people look at your homepage and "bounce" off your site without looking at any other pages)

An effective homepage flows from your business having a sound marketing strategy – knowing your ideal target markets, your unique value propositions and your core marketing messages – all organized around the challenges you address and the problems you solve for those target markets.

Your homepage must help you:

- Get found
- Build trust
- Educate your target market
- Inform your target market
- Nurture visitors (especially repeat visitors) toward a purchase
- Help convert visitors to customers

And it needs to do it all (or at least the Get Found and Build Trust parts) in about three seconds on a mobile device with a 4-6-inch screen. In short, your homepage is your most active, 24 X 7 X 365 sales channel.

Your homepage might be your busiest employee – It has more jobs to do than nearly anyone in your business (except maybe you). But done right, it's also one of your most valuable assets.

So, this clean-up thing will be easy, right?

If you're not sure about this advice here's a challenge – go visit 3-5 websites that you find clear, compelling and worthy of your time that also reflect across all areas of your life – professional, personal, in any aspect. Assess them all against the criteria listed below. Do they pass? I bet they do, or at least they pass most of them.



An effective homepage includes:

1. Your promise to the market, demonstrating that you understand and empathize with your target customers' challenges and can solve them – it ain't about you.
2. A sub-promise to the market that demonstrates you are the solution – your unique value stated through reviews, testimonials, credibility badges, or videos demonstrating your expertise
3. A call to action (CTA) encouraging visitors to sign up for your list, download your latest eBook or checklist, subscribe to a video series, get in touch, request a quote or "Buy Here Now". If you've done a great job showing you're the solution, you must ask for the sale (or next step in the customer journey); that's what an effective CTA does.
4. Contact details – Don't bury how to reach you. Make it easy and convenient to get in touch with a real person via email, phone, address, on-site chat, etc.
5. Clear and compelling visual branding that echoes your personality as a company and brand. If you use humor as a company, use it here. If you're very serious and demonstrate extremely high levels of technical competence, make sure your homepage reflects that personality.
6. Video. Smartphones, time-compressed visitors and broadband have all conspired to make it incumbent upon you to get in front of the camera. It doesn't have to be Super Bowl Ad-worthy video production, but take 30 to 60 seconds to show people that you understand them and that you're a great company to do business with.
7. Updates. It's important to continually publish compelling content – keep at least a couple of featured blog posts fresh and link to them on your homepage.
8. Easy navigation. If you address multiple target markets, make it clear and easy for the various segments to navigate the homepage and site, assuring each reader that you can solve their problem.
9. Core products and services front and center on the homepage. This will reiterate for your customers that you have the solutions they're searching for.
10. A large, comprehensive menu in the footer of your homepage will make navigating your site easier for your visitors and will reinforce that you are a comprehensive problem solver for them. And think about it – when your visitors make it all the way to the bottom of your homepage, they have already done some self-qualification as a good potential customer, so don't scrimp on the overall site because think the homepage is all you need.

Remember, progress is often better than perfection. You don't have to hit a homerun every time at the plate, but get moving forward on improving your homepage (and website overall), and you will see your sales volume and conversion rate improve.

Courtesy of Mark Z Fortune of [www.fortunemarketinginc.com](http://www.fortunemarketinginc.com)