7 WAYS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR FITNESS WEBSITE TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

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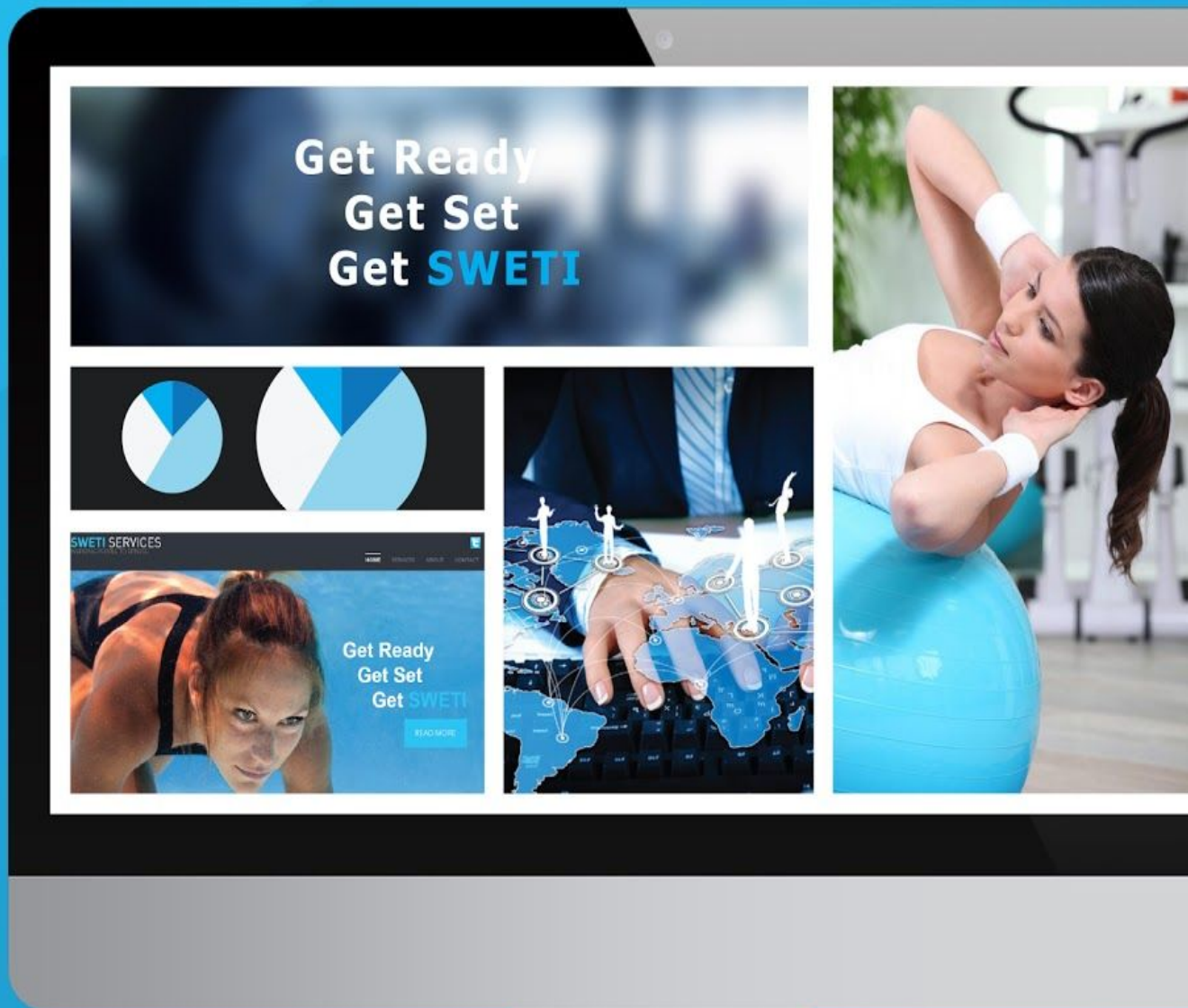
Introduction

We are excited to help you optimize your website for fitness! A well-designed website is critical to a fitness business's online strategy. A website is an essential part of your online marketing strategy. Whether you're looking to build your first website or if your existing site just isn't getting the traffic or leads you were hoping for, you may wonder what it really takes to have a great website for you fitness business. Although having a great website alone is not a guarantee of success, it is usually one of the first steps towards getting customers in the door. Many fitness businesses have not invested enough time in their website or had the site built by a designer who did not have experience in fitness. Oftentimes it is having an impact on the business's sales without the owner even knowing it. Your website has to appeal to both existing customers and potential customers. A website should not be solely your online presence, but also needs to deliver on attracting visitors, educating them (in 1 to 2 minutes) on your business, and convincing them to make a purchase. If they do not make a purchase, you want them to contact someone for more information. Based upon our experience, after launching an improved site, a fitness business can oftentimes see a 10-25% increase in conversions. Ready to learn more? We certainly hope so and are ready to share!

TIP 1: Measuring Performance

Before we discuss best practices for the design of your site we want to discuss measuring your site's overall performance and why metrics matter. Do you have a way to capture metrics from your site such as how many visitors you are receiving per week? Do you utilize metrics from your website week over week to measure the performance of your marketing campaigns? A well-designed website will make it easy for you to know the numbers by integrating tools such as Google Analytics and Facebook Pixels to track click-through rates. When you send an email blast out to customers can you see the click-throughs on your site analytics? Are people clicking through from your social media posts to your site or from a facebook ad you recently ran? Do you know how many leads you have received from your website each month? Do you know what your bounce rate is? If you cannot answer many of these questions getting in front of the metrics surrounding your website is a good first step in improving your businesses sales and your website performance. A fact-based approach cuts through individual opinions on whether or not a marketing campaign or a

site is working (or not working). Convinced that metrics are important? Now let's talk design and usability!
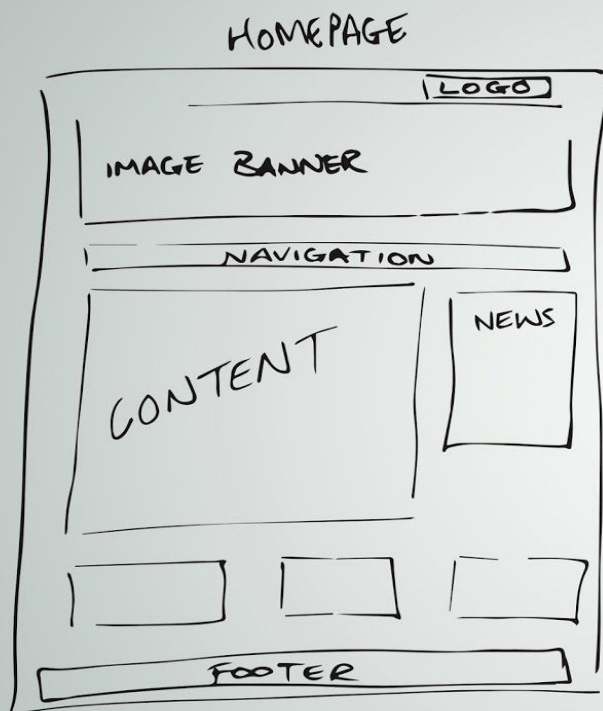
TIP2: Site Design and Usability

First Impressions

Your website represents who you are as a business and what you offer. When people see it for the first time they're thinking:

- What type of fitness business is this? What type of workouts or products do they provide?
- Is this company professional? (a poorly designed website immediately says "no")
- What types of people attend classes at this studio/gym or use this product?
- Is this site credible and the business somewhere I would trust with my fitness?
- Is this the right place for me personally?
- Where is this business located or where can I purchase the product?
- If a gym or studio, what is the class schedule? Does it fit MY schedule?

• What is the pricing model? If a studio, is this a pay per class or a membership? If a product, how much does it cost and where can it be purchased?

You need to make sure all of these questions are answered when designing your website. Design may not be the most important factor in a website overall and oftentimes businesses put too much emphasis on how a site looks instead of "how" and "if" it works. Design is critical towards making a good first impression, but usability is just as important. Here are some key design tips:

Branding and Messaging

There are some basic questions you need to ask yourself regarding the content of your website
Will people know what I do within seconds?

- Will they understand what page they're on and what it's about?
- Will they know what to do next?
- What type of classes/products/information does this fitness website sell?
- Why should they buy/workout/learn here instead of somewhere else?

Ideally, you want your visitors to know the answers to these questions. It should be readily apparent what your site is about, what they can do there and why they should take action. On your homepage and most important pages, consider these helpful tips in delivering the right message:

Make sure to include clear call-to-actions and next steps. Include links in your copy, such as next step links and calls-to-action wherever appropriate. Include a little direction and you'll be glad you did!

Site Navigation

If people cannot find what they are looking for on your website they will give up and go elsewhere assuming that every other aspect of your business is just as disorganized as your website. Some things to consider:

- Include key branding and calls-to-action on your website slider image. Think these through!

- Keep the structure of your primary navigation simple, keep the guesswork out of navigation

- Use widely-used navigational structures such as a menu at the top of your page.

- Realize that if a user cannot see an item such as something on a sub-menu, *from their perspective it does not exist*. So don't just assume that because something is on your website that people will know where to find it. It is your job to make sure they do!

- Embed navigation or links via images and call-to-action links/buttons in the details of your pages. For example, even though you have a "View Schedule" or "Buy Now" link in your menu, having additional links further down on the page will increase conversion rates.

- Include navigation in the footer of your site if your site scrolls.

- Keep your navigation no more than two levels deep.

A simple rule of a properly-designed navigation structure is to not require visitors to have to think about where they need to go and how to get there. Make it easy for them and you will see your conversion rates soar!!!

Videos and Flash

Videos can be highly effective and can grab someone's attention but it can also distract people from staying on your site or from making a buying decision if too long or poorly done. Keep videos short and to the point, under 2 minutes. Ensure the video's work across a variety of browsers and mobile devices. Never have a video auto-play as most people find it annoying and will leave the site to never return. Flash at this point should not be used on a website as it is not compatible with iPhones/Apple.

Bounce Rates

One of the indicators on how well a site is designed is the bounce rate on the site. It is the percentage of people who come to the site and view the home page without interacting with anything else on the site. Most sites have a bounce rate between 30 and 60%. Anything higher or lower can indicate a problem with the site.

Whew! These are just a FEW of the design tips we follow for fitness. Now it is time to talk social!

TIP3: Be Social and Make Content Shareable

Most fitness businesses grow via word of mouth and social media is THE ultimate word of mouth engine. Oftentimes people will "Like" a post, product, or blog entry, causing all of their friends to see what they like and even provide them with a link to find it themselves. Make it just as easy for people to share and socialize about your business and resources. Providing people with quality content that can be shared on social media with their friends will surely increase your sites traffic. Add a sharing widget or plugin to every page on your site. This will enable visitors to share your pages via all the major social networks. Tools like AddThis or ShareThis are easy to install and provide you with analytic tracking as well. There are also plugins that enable people to share your articles plus auto-publish content to your social networks like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Did you know there is a way to allow your potential customers to see which "friends" have liked your business? Utilize one of the Facebook plugins that give mini thumbnails of their friends who have "liked" you and let your existing customers be your best reference!

TIP 4: Use Testimonials

Is the woman in the picture above one of your customers? Potential customers like to see confirmation that you've made other customers successful with your business. Customer reviews are powerful ways to move prospects closer to the final buying stages. Provide <u>authentic</u> customer stories. Place real, short and powerful testimonials on your site. Some things to consider with testimonials:

• Include real names and titles and use pictures of the person along with their testimonial if possible (if they already have a picture on LinkedIn get permission to link their their LinkedIn picture. This adds authenticity. Not including a name makes a testimonial seem phony.

• Include testimonials on your home page.

• Place testimonials on relevant pages. For example, if you have a quote about results obtained from a personal trainer at your facility, place that on your personal training page.

• Include social plugins such as Yelp or Facebook that show other customers that "like" your business.

TIP 5: Increase Conversion Rates and Leads

Adding " buy now" and strategically placed "contact us" links allow you to capitalize on your client's impulsivity. In less than a minute, customers will start second-guessing and ask themselves, "do I really need to purchase this class or product?" Placing the Buy Now links right next to the pricing options allows them to make that choice before they have second thoughts or get distracted.

Strategically placed "buy now" links turn your website into a selling machine.

On your pricing page, include a "prospecting" message and contact form for up to the 50% of people who will want to ask more questions before making a purchase. If you do not have this on your pricing page or in other areas of your site where purchases can be made, you may be losing potential customers that could be easily converted with a simple phone call or email. We have seen up to a 30-50%% improvement in leads when this simple change is made to a site.

If a user is on your pricing or product pages they are one step closer towards making a purchase. It is extremely important to make this as simple as possible. There is a reason why the world's largest retailer Amazon uses one-click ordering.

Let's now discuss why viewing the class schedule online and being a registered user is important if you are a studio or gym.

TIP 6: Place a View Schedule or View Cart Link In Top Right Corner of Site

A "View Schedule" (or view cart if a product site) and a Login | Register link really pulls your website together, and nearly all major websites have them: Facebook, Amazon, Yahoo and many, many others. A Login | Register link makes your website appear more secure, which puts clients, and especially prospects, at ease when paying for a class online. If someone is skeptical, they may not follow through. A Login | Register Link reduces that fear and increases the amount of clients and prospects who follow through and make a purchase.

Why in the upper right hand corner? It is because users are trained to look there because it is a design pattern that most ecommerce sites use today. Does this mean that you do not put other calls to action throughout the site? Of course not! We Recommend putting buttons on the home page slider, "buy now" links next to items that can be purchased or anywhere else on the site that ties content to a purchase action.

TIP 7: Optimize Your Site for Mobile

Think that mobile is not that important? Well, think again. Did you know that 68% of visitors to a fitness website are using a mobile device? Are people calling you trying to get you to purchase a mobile application for your business or trying to give you a free mobile application if you purchase another service from them? These free mobile applications just reformat your existing site for a particular mobile device. Here is the secret they are not going to tell you! There are now hundreds of different types of devices and screen sizes. The best practice is to not use a native mobile application which will only work on 2 or 3 platforms. Native applications are very expensive to build and maintain. The answer is to have your site be "responsive" and use what is called HTML5. What is this? It allows the screen to be formatted to any device so your users will get the best experience possible based upon the type of device they are using. Is this 100% perfect? No, but as time goes on it is getting better as browsers and phones support responsive design. Google saw responsive design as being so important that they put out an announcement saying that sites that are not responsive will incur a penalty in their mobile search results. Wow!

Conclusion

Thank you for reading our eBook 7 Tips For Optimizing your Website for Fitness. We hope you enjoyed reading it and are ready and excited about growing your business! We have so much more we want to tell you to help improve your business. Our mission as a company is "*Inspiring people to fitness*" and we can only do that by making YOU successful. We are 100% focused on the fitness industry and are fanatical about studying AND improving what works and doesn't work in fitness. We would love to hear your feedback on our eBook. Send us an email at info@swetiservices.com.

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