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www.beyondroi.com

Tis' The Season To Be Shopping ...

Online!

December 2004

The holiday season is soon upon us and millions of credit card holders with eager mice gearing up to find and order the perfect gifts right from the comfort of their homes and offices. With a large portion of 2004's projected \$9.1 billion dollars in online sales throughout the United States expected to come from holiday sales website owners are preparing net wide for what is anticipated to be a potentially lucrative sales season. Are you prepared to capitalize on the influx of holiday shoppers?

Capturing More Christmas Sales

One of the main attractions to shopping online is the ability to shop for and purchase items quickly and easily. Forget about hassling with babysitters, traffic and long lines when you can kick back and shop from the comfort of your own home! Each visitor that hits your site is valuable. They have found you because your website offers the product(s) they are seeking. The easier you make it for your visitors to browse, decide and buy the better. There are some very simple tips that can help you retain your visitors longer and help you convert more holiday shoppers into buyers.

Catching the Phone Shoppers

While more and more people are turning to the Internet for the convenience of shopping, there are still those that are leery about utilizing confidential information such as credit card numbers on the net. Every sale counts so make sure your visitors are aware that you do take orders via the phone. Keep your phone number clearly displayed within the immediate line of vision with a call to action such as "Call Now!" A great place to locate your phone number is directly above the portion of your webpage that has your products displayed. If you offer multiple products on your webpages, which might prevent your visitor from losing sight of your phone number while scrolling down utilize your phone number and call to action as a line to separate product displays towards the center of your page. This strategy ensures that your phone order shoppers will always have your number immediately available once they have made the decision to buy. If you do not currently include a phone order option, now would be a good time to gauge how many phone sales you may be missing out on. Many newly established and home business' websites do not have a designated telephone to accept phone orders due to initial start up budgets, but there are some cost effective ways around this. Services such as Telcan.net allow you to

reserve an 800 number, which will redirect to any phone number you specify so that even companies on an extremely tight budget can offer phone ordering as an option to capture additional sales this holiday season.

Comparison Shopper Retention

Comparison shopping is on the rise. If you are amongst the many that offer competitive prices on your products by all means make sure your visitors know it! A great way to keep the attention of your comparison shoppers is to include the retail or your competitors' price, if applicable, directly beneath your own. This will help reinforce that your prices fare well in comparison to your competition or traditional retail shops and reduce the urge to continue searching for a better deal.

Product Descriptions

While product descriptions are always encouraged to add content to a website they also play a roll in instilling shopper confidence. The depth of information you include in your product descriptions can be a direct reflection of how your web business may, or may not, operate after a shopper makes a purchase. While they server as product info for your shoppers they can also reflect the depth of knowledge you have about the products. The more knowledgeable you appear to be about the products you offer the more confident your shoppers will feel about your ability to serve them after the sale. Product descriptions do not need to contain a lot of adjectives and hype. Just the cold hard facts outlining what the product offers.

Special Offers and Sales

Many websites will offer a variety of special deals on various products and/or special shipping rates during the holiday season. If you are one who does offer specials during the holiday season make sure that you have this clearly visible on all pages of your website so that your shoppers always have this in the back of their mind should they choose to browse for additional items aside the one they entered your website for. You can also instill an air of urgency as well by including the exact dates your special is going to cover, as well as a call to action, such as, "Free Shipping on ALL Orders from Dec. 1 – Dec.12 Only! Order Now!".

Timing is of the Essence

In order to maximize sales this holiday season, you must close each sale with a sense of urgency. If you do not add some urgency on why shoppers should act now, they might wait a day or two. Then when they get back on line they might not find your site or do a search that links them to your competitor. A few ways of fabricating importance of buy now, not tomorrow, not next week are by adding to your site a limited quantity and a limited time to act sign. A posting of the quantity of items left below each item places importance on the time left to order. Another option is a time clock; it can be added to the site portraying the time left to place an order, so that it is received in time for the

holidays. The time clock can also be replaced with a calendar, which also builds a visual sense of urgency.

Ready, Set, Shop!

Don't let the holiday season pass you by this year without catching some valuable additional sales! A nip, a tuck and a few website adjustments could ultimately be all it takes for your shoppers to decide to purchase from you, or your competition. It won't be long before holiday shoppers are out and about the net!