5 Simple Tips to Improve Your School Website

06 December 2021 | Helen Jackson

School marketing 101: improving your website experience

You've probably heard on the grapevine that **your website is a silent salesperson**. And what you've heard is true, it's the most important salesperson because it's active 24/7. Parents, both current and prospective, can access your website any time of day, and you need it to give them the information they're looking for.

Your website experience should be smooth, clear and user-friendly. After all, you need to stand out from others in your catchment area, so how can you improve your website and make sure it positions your school as a strong contender for parent choice?

#1 Strip back your menu items

Clutter on a web page is chaos to sift through. You don't want to make it difficult for users to find what they're looking for. Clearly label menu and sub-menu items, make it your mission to trim and update the content on your site — keep only the important information.

Speak in plain and simple language that's easy for everyone to understand and stay away from jargon and acronyms. Write your content as if you're talking to another human because that's what you're doing!

#2 Make sure it's responsive

According to Statista, over 90% of the global internet population use a mobile device to go online, so you need to make sure your website is accessible regardless of the device used — you need a responsive design. Whether parents are browsing on their tablet, desktop computer or phone — your website needs to look great and work just as well for everyone.

#3 Your site should load quickly

Did you know that we're pretty impatient when it comes to website loading time? 53% of mobile users will hesitate a mere three seconds before pressing 'back' on their browser. Having a high bounce rate (users coming straight off your site without visiting another page) can negatively affect your search engine rankings, not to mention the frustration it causes users.

If users are consistently bouncing from your website, this is an indication to Google that your site cannot provide the answers it thought you could. Not good. How can you change it?

First, you'll want to check your current site speed — this tool will give you some suggestions on improving the speed. They could be pretty technical changes, so you'll want to pass these changes over to whoever manages your website development work.

#4 Be consistent, always

From your tone of voice to contact details, you need to make sure that you're consistent with all elements of your school website. There should be no room for confusion.

A consistent tone of voice helps your readers become familiar with your school, which leads to building trust. Consistency should include things like your contact information — you need to make it clear how parents can contact you on every page; you also need to make sure you're consistent with logo use. You're trying to build a recognisable school brand, so make sure this is consistent across all channels — email, social media, print and more.

#5 Focus your attention on your homepage

The homepage is where most website visitors tend to either land on or gravitate towards. It's the platform from where you can explore other areas of the site, so it's crucial it showcases your school in the best light possible.
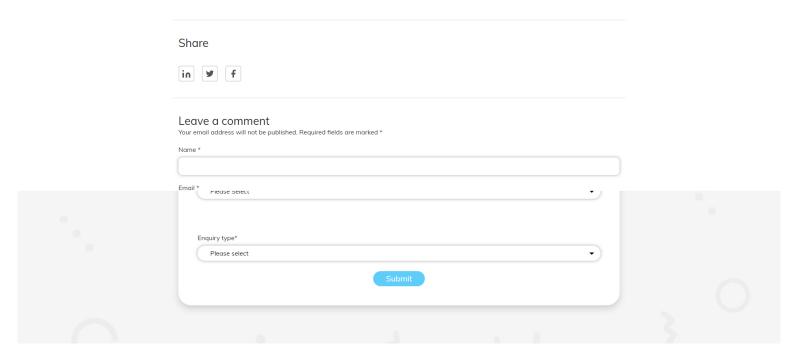
If you've got an incredible maths department, or your latest Ofsted score was excellent — whatever you're most proud of, make it known to your website visitors. To do this, you can include a changeable homepage banner to make use of the space your visitors immediately see on your site.
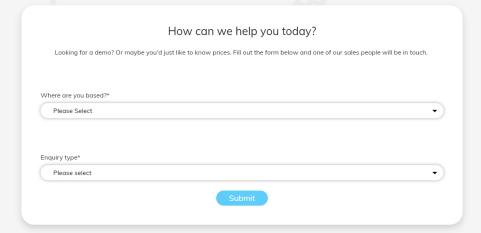
To sum up

Your website has an important job — to engage prospective parents and to communicate with current parents effectively. It should give them the information they're looking for within seconds, that's why it should play a pivotal role in your school marketing strategy.

Without a great user experience, you risk alienating your market. A great website could be the difference between a parent choosing your school or going to a different one. You should present your school as a professional business would and with Covid-19 forcing use to embrace the digital world, now is the time to review and upgrade your school website.

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