

Analysis, Capture Commerce Web Site

Client: Tom Shivers

Site: capturecommerce.com

Overall Look & Design

Problem: Non-visual - People today are visually oriented.

Solution: At least one good visual with each post. I would use about 3 on the home page. The right sidebar is a great place for visuals as well. Right now you do have one there.

Problem: Header is problematic.

1) Logo is crammed up in the left corner. It needs some space around it. Icon is leaning to the right, but the words "Capture Commerce" are not. "Capture Commerce" needs to be italicized to match icon, or icon needs to be made vertical to match words. Better font could be used as well. "Exploit Online Demand" is weak slogan. I like the brevity - a three-word slogan is perfect - but doesn't create visual image in my mind. Something simpler would be better - exploit has both a negative and positive connotation - and if it included the word "SEO," it would actually state what you do. :)

2) Header needs something besides your logo. A visual, a rotating quote - something.

Solution: Right now your web site is stark, beginning with your header. It's like walking into a room with white carpet and white walls with white furniture. A psychiatrist could have a field day with that. Your site is wearing a lab coat, if you like. Instead of it looking friendly, it looks insipid and clinical. Where is the personality? A web site has to

have a personality. If it were a room, I'd say it needs an interior decorator. Since it's a web site, I'd say it needs a designer's touch.

Problem: Sales pitch on home page is easily recognizable as just that - a sales pitch.

Solution: Would it not be possible to write something that is less sales-pitchy and more like an invitation to explore the site and discover ways to increase their web traffic and conversion rate? Like all the white, it's just not very inviting.

Problem: I love testimonials and quotes by customers. Right now, you have one quote on your home page, and that is by you. Not the strongest recommendation. :)

Solution: Three really good quotes by customers would really strengthen your home page. If you were to do rotating quotes in the header, you could use more. But they need to be relatively short, followed by the person's name, position and company.

Problem: Layout of home page is two long columns and very boring.

Solution: Footer could have been used to showcase or feature three of your best articles - just the beginning paragraphs, with a "Read more" link and a photo or graphic at the top of each. Home page just needs a lot more, better designed, with color and graphics. It is not being utilized the way it could be. I think I've made that point.

Problem: Organic SEO Page - At last, a graphic! But, small and timid - and the same one in the sidebar! Ai, yai, yai. Instead of all the sales pitches, how about some case studies? Case studies do the selling for you. Right now this site has one voice - yours - and it is selling, selling, selling. Has this approach worked? If so, then something better could work even better.

Solution: Okay, I found your case studies. There is a better way to display them so I didn't have to go looking for them. In your mind they're right there. In my mind, they aren't where they need to be - in the main menu. If I am thinking about using a service, the first thing I look for are testimonials and case studies. I want to see what others are saying, and I want to see some examples. We can talk about better ways of doing this, but that little mini-menu at the top of the sidebar on the Organic SEO page ain't working for me. There is a better way.

Problem: Case Studies are not inviting.

Solution: I would have the logo of each business, as well as a quote from each person I worked with. I would make that a matter of course, to get a recommendation from every customer I work with. I would name the client and the person I worked with. It is too easy to just make up recommendations. I kind of like the case study that uses the format "The Challenge," "The Campaign," "The Results" best because it gives my mind somewhere to hang my hat. Otherwise, I'm kind of floundering around trying to figure out what to read and what not to read. Again, the logos would help identify companies I want to learn about and those I don't.

Problem: Hate the bars in the mini menu in the right sidebar - repetitive and just not inviting at all.

Solution: Your site looks like way too much work - for me! I want something simple, easy to get through, visual, entertaining if possible, etc. All this needs to be simplified so that, I get the overall picture quickly. Then if I want to dig deeper in any one area, I can. But when you show me everything on the surface, I'm overwhelmed with all of it and just get discouraged and don't want to proceed any further. Let your search function do it's job, and have a drop-down menu of categories; but don't show every category, every sub-category, etc in the sidebar itself.

And showcase something. Showcase what you think is most important, using the sidebar. But don't showcase everything, as you are doing now with the mini menu.

Problem: Conversion Rate Optimization - like the SEO page, too much. Here's what I have to choose from on that page: the main mini menu in the right sidebar; the "Conversion Rate Optimization" menu under it; "Related Articles;" "Conversion Rate Optimization Latest Blog Posts." Plus the sales pitch on the page itself. You have a very high opinion of your audience. No one, other than a grad student doing a paper on the subject, is going to spend that much time doing that much reading.

Solution: You need to be more selective, cut things down, offer less choices, incorporate better. Realize that people's time is limited, and you have five minutes to capture their imagination. If you do capture it, you may have twenty minutes to say something that will cause them to email you. If they spend that twenty minutes trying to figure out what to read from all the selections you have, you've lost them. Simple is always best.

Problem: Pay-per-click Management - same as above.

Solution: Simplify.

Problem: About Us - I like the fact that you have a picture of yourself, since it is really about you. I like the fact that you are being personal. I think your about us copy is way too long.

Solution: Think of this like a LinkedIn Profile page, only shorter: tell us who you are, where you went to school, where you've worked, what qualifies you as an expert. I know all this is important to you, but it's not important to us. Just give us the facts.

Problem: Articles - I like it. Could be more visual.

Solution: If you want to really sell it, have a headshot of each person next to their article. I would have several head shots of myself and use a different one on this page.

Problem: Blog - very cheesy intro. Like the quote - that's how the others should be, but who the heck is Tim Gowens? Include the company he works for, as well as his position. If I don't HAVE to include my email address, and can just skip it, what's the point? The blue arrows are over-kill and help to make it cheesy. "Packed with amazing internet marketing content" - cheesy. "As featured in..." logos - cheesy.

Solution: You want to go for classy, not cheesy. Your wanting my email address in order for me to go to your blog seems a bit spammy to me. I would take them straight to the blog without all this. Have a "Sign up for our newsletter" link like I do on my sites - it works great and is not perceived as being spammy - or cheesy. :)

Problem: Blog - Oh, dear - in the header, we have the slogan twice. Once is enough. In the menu bar, the search window is covering some of the menu items. I would keep the search function in the right sidebar. You see, you have the email address capture in the sidebar. You didn't need the cheesy thing. But I would do more with it - tell me why you want my email address. I'm glad it's powered by MailChimp, but is that important... to me?

Solutions: Glad to see the photos in the blogs, but they would be more effective on the left side rather than the right since Americans and English speaking people read from left to right. The photo is selling the article, so it is more important.

I would just do a "Continue reading..." - not restate the name of the article. They know which article it is.

I would do less articles on this page. That one infographic may just make it look long, but it's a long scroll for most people. Ten articles per page is usually enough.

Now, let me say that the white-on-white works better for a blog than for an entire web site, especially since you have so many photos with the blog articles, and the right sidebar has a little more stuff, although it could use a lot more. That's real estate, buddy. It's being wasted right now. If I have a guest author, I would definitely post their picture with the article rather than some cheese that i went out on the internet and found. People want to see the person that is speaking to them, not some idiot sitting at a computer, which they already know what that looks like. For your own articles, go out and find the photos; and if the writer of the article provides some photos, use them. But include their head shot at the top of the article under the headline. You don't need to repeat your own headshot because they already know what you look like.

I hope all this helps.

By the way: when I type in "Capture Commerce" in Google, it gives me some info about you in the right column. Also, under your listing in the main column, it gives some categories like "Contact Us," "Organic SEO," "SEO Checklist for Beginners," "SEO case studies," etc. How did you get it to do that? I have been working diligently on the Publisher and Author markups for my sites and articles, but I don't appear in the right column yet and I don't have those subheadings under my listing in the left column. Any insight?

Let me know when you'd like to get together to talk about this, if you would like to talk about it. If you'd rather just beat me up, I'll have my people meet with your people. :)

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September 12, 2013