

Analysis, Neu Year Web Site

Client: Jesse Phillips

Site: neuyear.net

Overall Look & Design

Good clean look. I like it.

I also like the rotating – or sliding – banner. There is one misspelled word in it: moleskin.

And I like the logo, NeuYear.net

The navigation is very simple. The menu is barebones.

There are 57 pages with 114 links, none of which are broken. (Excellent.) The number of pages is somewhat deceptive. Only eleven or so are actual “web pages”, technically speaking; the rest are blog pages. My sitemap builder program could not find the checkout pages. I don’t know why that is, unless Shopify puts some kind of restriction on them.

Visitors/Traffic

There were 16,270 unique visitors over the past month (Dec. 10, 2012 to Jan. 9, 2013), and 78,401 unique visitors over the past year. (I like tracking “unique visitors” rather than just “visitors.” I think it gives a more accurate impression of the numbers of people coming to your site.) One month ago, the number of unique visitors was 8,696, and two

months ago, it was 4,850. The same period a year ago (Dec. 10, 2011 to Jan. 9, 2012) was 7,468.

Overall, 2012 was relatively flat - except for some spikes – until we get to the fourth quarter, when there was a significant upturn. One of those spikes was February 20, when there were 8,802 visits! I'm guessing that was when a campaign was rolled out. There was a lesser one on March 1, with 2,586 visits; and, again, on August 6, with 2,126 visits. Then, beginning in the last week of October, and continuing to the present, there has been a continual climb, with a spike on December 28 of 1,879 visits – I'm guessing another campaign.

Of those visitors, 23% were from search engines, 45% from referrals, 30% from direct traffic and 1% from campaigns. This is my first red flag. For an SEO-healthy site, search engine traffic should be around 75%. So, some SEO work is definitely needed. As far as referrals, the bulk of that seems to be coming from designmom.com Another heavy contributor is googleads.g.doubleclick.net

Shopify's numbers, which only cover the past 90 days, show a drastic downturn in search engine traffic, putting it at 12%, and direct traffic at 46%. So, based on both reports, some SEO work is definitely in order.

33% of your visitors are on mobile devices. That is unusually high, and a good thing – I think.

Your Adwords traffic in 2012 for your Calendar (that's the only designation given) was 7,961 visits, with \$229 in revenue; and for your Large Wall Calendar it was 3,803 visits, with \$374 in revenue. You might compare what you spent on Google Adwords to determine if this was an effective strategy; and, if not, how it could be changed. Based on the number of visitors compared to what they spent, I would say that it was not effective.

Keywords

An analysis of the keywords used by visitors coming to the site from search engines over the past year, as well as the rankings of those keywords on the top three search engines, reveals part of the problem. Here are the top eight search terms for the site:

#1 - neueyear - 1,167 unique visitors - 4:50 minutes av. time on site - #1 on top 3 search engines

#2 - neueyear calendar - 544 unique visitors - 2:43 minutes av. time on site - #1 on top 3 search engines

#3 - neu year calendar - 219 unique visitors - 3:01 minutes av. time on site - #1 on Google

#4 - neueyear.net - 213 unique visitors - 2:12 minutes av. time on site - #1 on top 3 search engines

#5 - neueyear 2013 calendar - 90 - 2:22 minutes av. time on site - most in the past 90 days - #1 on Google and Yahoo! - #14 on Bing

#6 - neu calendar - 68 - 16:56 minutes av. time on site - #4 on Google and Yahoo! - #2 on Bing

#7 - seize the year 2012 calendar - 75 - 5:54 minutes av. time on site - # 6 on Google, #2 on Yahoo! and #1 on Bing

#8 - <http://neueyear.net/> or neueyear.net - 25 + 16 - 5:35 minutes av. time on site - #1 on top 3 search engines

You'll notice that all of these search terms include the name of your company or the name of one of your products. That means that most people who are searching for you already know about you. The beauty of search engine traffic is that people who know nothing about you can end up on your web site. Anyone can rank high for their own name or product name if they are unique, as yours are. The trick is to rank high for generic industry names. That's how you dominate an industry.

Here are some terms for which I would like to see you get into the top 100 rankings over the next year:

large dry erase academic calendar - #1 on Google (This one did not come up in the Google Analytics study, but you are ranked #1 for it on Google; so I'm putting it here. It is worth maintaining.)

large dry erase business calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

large academic calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

large business calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

large dry erase calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

large planning calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

large dry erase planning calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

extra large wall calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

extra large planning calendar - not in top 100 on any search engine

Content

For 2012, here is how I would rank the top 20 pages on your site. My ranking is based on four things: number of visitors, how long they stayed on the page, bounce rate and how much value Google Analytics gives to the page.

#1 - /checkout/orders/show - 2,687 unique visitors (711 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:12:35 (!) minutes on page av. - 0.00% bounce rate - \$15.52 page value

#2 - /checkout/orders/apply_discount - 1,881 unique visitors (575 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:04:08 minutes on page av. - 67.50% bounce rate - \$13.97 page value

#3 - /checkout/carts/show - 3,687 unique visitors (1,064 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:02:41 minutes on page av. - 76.56% bounce rate (high) - \$11.41 page value

#4 - /checkout/orders/pay - 3,138 unique visitors (869 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:02:36 minutes on page av. - 60.78% bounce rate - \$14.04 page value

#5 - /products/2013-calendar-dryerase - 7,939 unique visitors (4,694 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:01:30 a minutes on page av. - 70.62% bounce rate - \$2.86 page value

#6 - /blogs/news/6337550-tweet-to-save-20 - 1,445 unique visitors (919 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:01:24 minutes on page av. - 46.67% - 21.28% - \$8.81 page value

#7 - /products/seize-the-year-2012-calendar - 38,402 unique visitors - 00:01:20 minutes on page av. - 83% bounce rate (high) - \$.16 page value

#8 - /products/2013-calendar-uncoated - 3,094 unique visitors (2,050 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:01:18 minutes on page av. - 79.86% bounce rate (high) - \$4.53 page value

#9 - /products/seize-the-year-2012-calendar-ships-on-friday-dec-9th - 1,554 unique visitors - 00:01:18 minutes on page av. - 66.82% bounce rate - \$0.21 page value

#10 - /cart - 5,123 unique visitors - 00:00:45 minutes on page av. - 48.31% bounce rate - \$8.76 page value

#11 - /products/academic-year-2012-13-dry-erase - 6,979 unique visitors (1,947 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:01:08 minutes on page av. - 79.52% bounce rate (high) - \$1.70 page value

#12 - /checkout/orders/processing - 865 unique visitors - 00:00:05 minutes on page av. - 0.00% bounce rate - \$30.87

#13 - /products/academic-year-2012-13-uncoated - 2,640 unique visitors - 00:01:07 minutes on page av. - 75.10% bounce rate (high) - \$2.63

#14 - home page - 55,111 unique visitors (15,117 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:01:01 minutes on page av. (low) - 36% bounce rate (low) - \$.57 page value

#15 - /pages/about - 9,446 unique visitors - 00:00:59 minutes on page av. - 62% bounce rate - \$.42 page value

#16 - /pages/contact - 601 unique visitors (274 from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013) - 00:01:01 minutes on page av. - 70.27% bounce rate - \$1.89

#17 - /pages/39257-mrccyj-47825 - 692 unique visitors - 00:00:38 minutes on page av.
- 50.31% bounce rate - \$15.56

#18 - /checkout/carts/create_order - 565 unique visitors - 00:00:38 minutes on page
av. - 66.67% bounce rate - \$12.44

#19 - /collections/all - 24,359 unique visitors - 00:00:27 minutes on page av. (low) -
64% bounce rate - \$1.56 page value

#20 - /blogs/news - 6,478 unique visitors - 00:00:45 minutes on page av. - 58.10%
bounce rate - \$0.56 page value

From this list, you can see that the checkout pages rank highest, the product pages next, and the blog pages last. The only two blog pages on the list are the tweet-to-save-20 page, which is valued at \$8.81, and the /blog/news page. The /checkout/orders/processing page is valued at \$30.87 – your highest valued page.

Your site has an average bounce rate: 54%. In 2012, you had 55,111 unique visitors to your home page, who spent an average of one minute on it. You had a 36% bounce rate for that page, which means that over one third of your visitors left without clicking on anything. Google Analytics gives this page a 57 cent value, which is one of the lowest values on your site. By way of comparison, from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013 you had 15,117 unique visitors to the page, so your number of visitors is growing at a very good rate. The only solution to decreasing the bounce rate further and increasing the value of the home page would be to increase the content on that page, which I'm not sure you want to do at this point.

Over one-third of the people who come to your home page leave without clicking on anything. Of those who stay, 48% click on the Products menu button, 48% click on the rotating banner, 8% click on the About menu button, 6% click on the Home menu

button, 6% click on the NeuYear logo, 3% click on the Blog menu button, and .4% click on the Contact menu button.

Conversions

Based on the above, it sounds like people who come to the site know why they're there and what they want. Yet, only between 3 and 4% of all visitors end up converting into a sale! In 2012, out of 75,242 unique visitors (this is a different number from the one under "Visitors/Traffic" above, which is for Jan 10, 2012 through Jan 9, 2013), there were 2,756 total transactions. That percentage might work for a gift web site, where there is usually a lot of browsing going on; but for an item like this, an item that people would come to your site specifically to buy – like going to Office Depot for a desk calendar - that seems awfully low. What is the reason? What are customers not finding that they're looking for – especially with a 20% discount? I think I have at least some of the answers, and will get into those shortly.

According to Shopify, you had 768 orders (\$24k sales) in the past 30 days and 1,517 orders (\$48k sales) in the last 90 days. Are your sales seasonal, or is that part of the upward trend? Do you think you'll be doing most of your business in the 4th and 1st quarters? If so, then you will need to plan for that.

As far as sales in 2012, you sold 953 Seize the Year 2012 Calendars; 734 2013 Calendars (DryErase); 673 2012/13 Academic Year Calendars (DryErase); 463 2013 Calendars (Uncoated); and 237 2012/13 Academic Year Calendars (Uncoated).

Products

Of your products, the seize-the-year-2012-calendar page got the most hits - 38,402 unique visitors, spending 1:20 minutes average per visitor. That page had an 83% bounce rate, which is high. Google Analytics values that page at 16 cents.

I think your 2013-calendar-dryerase page is better, even though it had only 7,939 unique visitors. Compare 4,694 visitors from Dec 10, 2012 to Jan 9, 2013. It looks like it is picking up steam. The average visitor spent one and a half minutes on this page. It had a 70.62% bounce rate, which is still too high. Google Analytics values the page at \$2.86, which is considerably more than the Seize the Year page.

My biggest complaint about your product pages are the photos – they look amateurish. The lighting is dark and low contrast (not balanced), and the sets look chincy - like something out of a B-rated movie. I know you started on a shoestring, but as soon as you can, I would upgrade these. And clips holding the calendar to the wall? Not good. You ought to get someone to design a nice brushed aluminum bar to go across the top to hang it on the wall - and a brushed aluminum frame for your higher-end clients.

Photos in one column, copy in the other - not good. It would be far, far better if the photos were embedded in the copy - e.g., one photo above each block of copy - larger (the width of the block of copy), and related to the copy. Right now, the photos and copy are not related, so both the copy and the photos are less effective. The photos should *illustrate* the copy.

I like the link to Scott Branson's book, *Making Ideas Happen* - but it should open in a new window. If someone clicks the link, you've just taken them off your site! You never want to do that – they'll leave soon enough on their own! ☺

The "Tweet to Save 20%" is a no-brainer. Who wouldn't do that? Plus, it gives you good exposure. Great idea. How much of your increased sales would you attribute to that? I assume everyone takes advantage of it. What was your price and what were your sales before you started offering that discount? You might do a "How did you hear about us?" question in your check-out process, if you're not already doing it: that would tell you how effective the tweeting campaign really is.

Here's another idea: offer an executive calendar - one that is classier, framed in brushed aluminum. I can see your present calendar in a non-exec's office or a workroom, but not in an executive's office or conference room. So, you might consider offering several levels of calendars for different levels of business people.

Blog

I like the blog. It just needs more posts. I especially like the ones with photos and when you're making fun of yourself. It makes you seem real.

I like the gift card giveaway. I think those types of things pay off in the long run. It makes you seem generous.

About

You should hire me to rewrite your About page. The way it is written now, it makes it sound like you and James are a couple: "We are a couple designer-entrepreneurs..." 😊 Oh, what the search engines could do with that! 😊 You have three sentences about who you are. The rest of the page is a sales pitch. Save the pitch for your Products pages. People want to know about *you*. They buy stuff because they like the person doing the selling as much as for the product they're selling. You're a likeable guy. Let people know who you are.

Video: I really like it. It's great. And it makes you guys seem really likable and real.

One suggestion, and I offer this with some reservation: next time, you might consider hiring a videographer that knows something about lighting. Like your photos, it's dark and, at least as far as the photography, looks amateurish. The graphics (words) and music, as well as the way it's cut, look professional. So, I have to think that the guy did

natural lighting on purpose - to make it look casual and real. But in the business world, people expect professionalism, even if it looks somewhat "slick." A real professional would have known how to light the scene and *still* make it casual and real - but he did such a good job on everything else, I hesitate to mention this.

Here's the conclusion that customers come to: if these guys don't know enough to have professional-looking photos and videos of their products, why should I assume that they know enough to create a great calendar? It's a good question. So, again, how do you balance professionalism with a "fun" feel? Well, here's another question: Do you think this video is good enough to run on prime time television as a commercial? If not, then it's not good enough for your web site. Your web site should have photos that are good enough to run in national publications, and videos that are good enough to run on national television. Pictures do 90% of the selling - words, only about 10%. And I'm a writer saying this!

You had 9,446 unique visitors to your About page in 2012. The average time they spent on the page was 59 seconds. So chances are *most* visitors looked at your video, since it's only 1:16 minutes long. You should feel good about that. But here's something: how to get more people to see the video? I think if you had a teaser of some kind on your home page, which would take them to the video - that would do it. That, and have it on YouTube. Do you?

By the way: you can put keywords into a video the same way you can put them into copy. Search engines do read videos now; but they have to be set up that way. It's worth the extra effort.

Contact

I like it, but I would add a feedback form. You have the space, you might as well use it. That would give people three ways to contact you.

Welcome

I don't understand how to get to this page.

Sitemap

There is no sitemap. That is a major problem because search engines depend on them. That is your chance to tell them about your site. I can do that for you, but as I said above, the checkout pages aren't showing up. We'd need to find out about that.

Facebook, Other Social Media and Other Sites

I did not find a NeuYear store on Facebook. Is there one? I also did not find a link to the NeuYear site on your personal page. Did I miss that?

I love the fact that you're tweeting your site. That is probably the best thing you can do, socially. Are you also tweeting your posts?

What about selling your calendars on the websites for Office Depot, Office Max, Amazon, etc.? You've looked into that, I'm sure.

Summary

Your web site has very little SEO (Search Engine Optimization), which is why you are not showing up on search engines, except for the name of your company and the names of your products. You can do so much to expand your business by making that a priority. I would especially optimize my blog and produce more posts. Blogs rank

better than regular web sites on search engines and the traffic they bring is usually serious.

I would upgrade the content of my pages. I did not read all the descriptions on your product pages; but I'm guessing they were similar to the one on your About page, as well as the script in your video. I like the structure of your sales pitch; but I can definitely help you say things better, if you like. I can also build in the needed keywords and phrases that are keeping you off the search engines, as well as do the backend work that is needed.

I would improve the quality of my photos and video as soon as possible, with the photos taking priority.

I would do more with referrals - they seem to be bringing in a lot of good traffic. And I would rethink Adwords - that doesn't seem to be working. Adwords gets you in the door with search engines, but then the content of your site keeps you there.

I would definitely add a sitemap to the site, with a button to it either in the top menu or in the bottom area. The sitemap for users needs to be HTML; but for search engines, it needs to be XML.

You need to figure out why your conversion rate is so low, and how to make visitors to your site more targeted. What is it they're looking for that they're not seeing on your site?

I would expand my product line, especially with more upper-end calendars and hardware, as well as other support items, like dry-erase markers, etc. People like one-stop shopping. Add-on items could be just the thing to double or triple your sales.

I would blog, blog, blog – even when I’m not running a new discount or campaign. That stuff adds up, especially with search engines. And I would fill those posts with the keyword phrases that I’m needing to rank higher in. People love “how to” posts. Blog about your calendars; but also blog about your business experiences, your business philosophy, your customers, etc.

I’d upgrade my About page and make it more “about” you. I would incorporate my photos into the copy on my Products pages. I’d beef up my contact page. And, if you don’t already have one, I’d add a Facebook store to the mix. Don’t be afraid to have more than one venue – the more the better, as long as you can manage them all.

Thanks for this opportunity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Waitzel". The letters are cursive and connected, with a prominent 'W' and 'S'.

Waitzel Smith

Creative Sharks

January 10, 2013