



Episode 77

Website Updates in 2023 for Design Professionals



**Maria: [00:00]**

Hello and welcome to designer discussions with Jason, Mirjam, and Maria. Today we are talking about what updates you need to make to your website in 2023.

Intro: [00:17]

Welcome to the designer discussions podcast with Jason, Maria, and Mirjam. Tune in each week where we talk about marketing, PR, and business advice for design professionals. Are you wondering where to start marketing your interior design business? We are opening the Designer Discussions Marketing Studio, a monthly series of indepth actionable content to guide your marketing, PR and business development. We want to help you transform your business and elevate it to work with your dream clients. You are going to want to hear this episode. Jason is going to tell you how to get your new website paid for and include all the bells and whistles that you're going to need for 2023. Let's get out there and let's update that interior design website.

Jason: (0:45)

This is a topic actually, that I talk about at the start of every new year. And where I want to start is what we've seen last year are the issues with websites that we have seen from designers. And I actually have the top four here that we're going to talk about. And then afterwards I'll mention about what are the updates that you need to do for 2023. But with the issues that we've seen last year, just in general, is the age of the website. A lot of designers have not worked on their website for years, if not decade plus. And I've actually talked about in how to recession proof your design. I admit this in that podcast is if you had listened, is that if you haven't did any updates on your website in years, you're not using your best project. Because if you've been in this for any length of time, hopefully as your design, as you design more, the quality of your work heads up, you know the type of clients that you're after and you improve over time. And if you still have the old projects up, it's not actually presenting you the right way.



Jason: (02:15)

So that's one of the issues we see is the age of the website. The next one we see is that the website and this also ties it to age, but they're not built for user experience. Designers often design a website on the aesthetics of the site and not for how the end user will use it. So one example there is by not having your number at the top of the website, because as you always hear me talk about, over 90% of search starts on a mobile device. And by having your number at the top, if they're interested, they could call you immediately as opposed to having to find your number either at the end or on another page or someplace else. So that's just one of the areas about having the site designed for the user, not for another designer. Okay, next one is not having any type of tracking. I don't know how many designers I talk to that say that they have no type of tracking on their site. And that's easy, like I said, and you'll hear me talk about over and over. Google Analytics, Google Search Console are free tools that you can put on your website that tracks users, how many are on the site, where they come from, how long they stay. And this is all information you need to know that helps you enhance the website long term. Then the other one is not having your reviews or not having them anywhere on your site. Having a site A is great, but you need to have some testimonials or reviews someplace on your site, preferably on the home page. But you can have a review page or you can have a testimonials page, but if you have a homeowner visiting your website, they're going to automatically know you're going to talk about how great you are. They already know that you're but you want to have the third party credibility from your client saying how great you are. And so that's the purpose of having those reviews someplace on your site. But like I said, preferably on the homepage someplace and then on either like a review page or like a testimonials page. So those are the main issues we saw in 2022. Now when we talk about where you need to do updates for 2023, these are a few of the areas that you really need to focus on. SSL certificates. This is almost required now by the search engines.

**Jason: (04:15)**

So when you head to a website and they either say this site is unsafe or we're not sure you want to head to this website, that is because you do not have an SSL certificate. Having the end user know that this is a safe website, that you can have your information in it because it's safe. So having your SSL on there is vital. Now that was actually talked about ever since 2020, but it's becoming more and more vital now. So that's something that you have to do. Okay, web speed. This is something else that in SEO search Engine optimization. One of these factors that the search engines look at is speed. And looking at speed on mobile, not just the desktop. Because like I said, 90% of search starts on a mobile device. You need to actually look at the speed of your site. And what I actually mean by that, you need to check how fast it is to load your site on desktop and especially on a mobile device. What usually slows down a site is images. Having a lot of animation, videos, and if you have a WordPress website, not having the plugins up to date. So you always have to update the plugins because that will also slow your website down. So all of those small things will slow the site down. And when I talk about the images, you could easily head to a site like tiny Jpg or tiny PNG to shrink the actual size, but not the quality of the image. So it'll help everything on your site load faster. So that's vital because that's one of the search engine features that they're tracking to see if you should be ranked or not. Okay, one of the other areas you want to look at is geolocation and browser based content. Making sure that you have content that is for your area. Even if you are a national site, which not a lot of designers are, but just use it for a hypothetical just in of looking at either the regional or the national, you should still have content that pertains to your area. Because this is mainly for SEO, but for search, you're going to get ranked for the areas that are around your location. So having that content that actually tells about where you are. So if you're in the Chicago area, having information about Highland Heights or upper Chicago or wherever those areas are that you're in, having content for that specific area actually helps you out.

**Jason: (07:15)**

And that's not just an SEO thing. That's also for having your site relevant for your end users, for your prospect that know that you service my location. And not just generically. Because remember, at the end of the day, you want to differentiate yourself from all the other designers. And if you're generic in nature, you're going to turn off others that say, well, I don't know if he or she is for me, because they're talking about XYZ and what's happening here in Chicago, what's happening here in La. That does not apply to us. So making sure you have that geolocation content helps you out. One of the other areas these actually tie in. So having voice activated interface. So this is one of the areas that if you're working with either an SEO firm or web designer, they know how to integrate that content. So it's actually voice activated. And that's something that is more so used now because of mobile, because a lot of mobile users are talking into their mobile device and saying, I want to find an interior designer near me. And then that will actually trigger the content that's on your site. It's actually small tips. It's not a lot, it's not hard, but if you're designing the website on your own, you might not know how to incorporate it at that end, where if you're working with a web developer or SEO firm, they know how to do all that information. You want to make sure you add that in.

Maria: (09:11)

Jason, I've already started getting those phone calls. I'm getting those phone calls as an interior designer and they're saying your website is not voice activated. And I'm like, well, are these people really helpful? Are they going to charge me a lot for that? And I think it's really good that we start talking about it. That is something that we all should be updating on our websites to make them more optimized and that we can be found easier. And I am grateful there's someone out there like you that can help us to make that work on our websites.

**Jason: (09:15)**

Appreciate it. One of the other things and we'll talk about that ties into that as well, is accessibility. So this is a growing area that the government is now talking about even more so they're actually incentivizing small businesses to make sure that their websites are accessible to the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, with the visually impaired. That actually ties into the voice interaction, because by having your site compliant with ada and accessibility issues, now you're opening up your site to users that may not normally use your website. Also that helps you in search engine optimization as well, because that allows users to stay on your website longer and to use it for however their disability is. And one of the positives that we have found out last year is that there's actually tax credits for this. So the government is, like I said, incentivizing small businesses to have their site accessible. And they're handing you it's in the tax code. You could get up to five K written off on your taxes if your site is accessible. So that's something that you should honestly want to do that anyway without the incentive. But that's just an added benefit to have it on your website. So that's something that you want to look at, and then you want to look at interactivity on your website. How interactive is your website? Okay? And that also ties into what we saw of the issue last year about the user experience. Are you thinking about how the end user will use your website? And that also hits back who is your ideal client, how are they using it? And so by knowing that now you can design the site, how they plan to use your site, that will increase how many end users homeowners visit your website, how long they stay, and how they actually interact with the site. And then the last one that we actually have is VR virtual reality. Now, that may seem like high level now, but if you look at the metaverse, there are ways that most designers some way or another have either, like animations on their site, they may have renderings on their site. So there are ways that you can incorporate VR into the site to have it interact, which we just talked about the interaction with the homeowner to show them the designs that you have. And so there are ways that you could do that.

**Jason: (12:15)**

And we'll get into that a little later. But this is just a high level that we want to talk about to the updates that you want to make to your website in 2023 to actually have you hand out over the competition and differentiate your website from all the others. We had aimed about five or six updates. Even if you do one to two updates, it's going to be more honestly than the competition will do. Look at this and try to bring your site up to date. Use it the right way, better experience at the end of the day, and that will make you stand out from your competition. That was all we want to talk about today, so we hope to see you all here next week on Designer Discussions.

Outro: (13:03)

Are you wondering where to start marketing your interior design business? We are opening the Designer Discussions Marketing Studio, a monthly series of in depth actionable content to guide your marketing, PR and business development. We want to help you transform your business and elevate it to work with your dream clients.

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions and all of the helpful information. Subscribe to our podcast, leave us a review and share it with your friends. We look forward to having you back next week. For more information on the podcast and the Marketing Studio, visit DesignerDiscussions.com and follow us on social media.



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