



Episode 12

How to Optimize Your Website for Visibility



**Maria: [00:00]**

Hi and welcome to Designer Discussions today. We are going to talk about how your website can make someone know, like, trust and understand exactly what you do and how that is the first step you need in your business to have visibility.

Intro: [00:25]

Welcome to the Designer Discussions podcast. Tune in each week where we discuss marketing, branding, PR and business advice for design professionals.

Maria: [00:30]

So, Jason, I want to be found on the Internet, and I want to have my business show up and be representative of who I am. But what am I doing wrong? Why are people not clicking? Why are people not contacting me? What can I do better? Can we talk about my website?

Jason: [00:48]

Sure. And one of the things that I say with designers is that you have to have a website. And what I find is that a lot of the designers do not even have a website, which blows me away. And one of the reasons you want to have a website is because it's one of the properties that you own. And I always talk about the two properties that you own and as your email list and your website. And for an example, we actually have a client that did all of their work on Facebook, and they ran some ads, and one of their employees ran the ads of the wrong way out. Their account shut down for, like, three to six weeks. And so they came to us because they were not online for that amount of time. So having a website is vital. But just having a website is only one step. Now you need to optimize it to make sure it's actually conveying what you represent and it represents you the right way. So your clients or your prospects and understand who you are, what you do and why they should choose you over the competition.

**Maria: [01:53]**

I like that. I like that you gave three actionable things that my website needs to be doing. So that helps me out a lot. How do I package myself that I can show what it is that I do so that someone who wants to hire me for exactly what it is that I do can find me and understand what services I provide.

Jason: [02:18]

So that actually heads back to episode number two, where we had Johanna on, and she had talked about branding. And one of the things that you have to do is that your website brands you as hopefully an expert in your area. So you want to understand who your client avatar. So you want to do the exercise that we had in episode six on how to understand who your ideal client is. And once you understand that, you can now create the content on your website around who you are that represent you the best way so they can understand. And what I usually tell a lot of designers is that if you've been in the industry for a while, you don't need to have every single project on your website, only have the projects on your site that represent you and then show your unique selling proposition. Your USP. You may have worked on 15 projects, but I can almost guarantee all 15 projects don't actually represent who you are, what you do and your ideal client because as an architect, we actually have a lot of projects that we worked on. Some of them were honestly just used to pay the bills, but they were not who our ideal client was. So define who your ideal client is and then select the projects that best represents you. I won't get all into the details because we're going to have a workbook that explains and lays a lot of this out. But at a high level, you just want to make sure that once you understand who your client avatar is, that your content and your projects speak to them so they can understand and begin to know like and trust you and eventually buy from you.

**Maria: [04:14]**

What are some credibility things that I can add to my website that help it to appear that it's not just my opinion of what it is that I'm doing, but others feel the same way about me.

Jason: [04:26]

One of the first and most obvious is actually testimonials. If you can obtain video testimonials that is by far better than a written one video testimonials like we had talked about an episode seven is vital because that helps your end user, your potential client hear from a third party and not just hear from you. Also, if you can actually have third party reviews and outlet, Mirjam, speak more to this. That is also an aspect that helps you in the credibility realm, and I'll let Mirjam take her from here on that.

Mirjam: [05:04]

Yes, I was getting very anxious to say something, because the next step to client reviews, obviously to me as a PR pro, right, or press clippings. So if you have press coverage, if you have publicity, it's really important that you mentioned that on your website on other places, too. But make sure that you have a listing of your press coverage on your website because it's important for clients. But it'll also be important if other media go there that you may have reached out to hopefully or that find you in other ways, that they can see that you already have some publicity under your belt. So that's step number two after your client testimonials.

**Jason: [05:55]**

One other thing I'll add is the images on your website, making sure you have professional images of yourself and your team and also of your projects, because what I find is that the imagery that you have on your website can either help you or hurt you. So when the end user or the prospect looks at your website and they see a design that is not photographed professionally, it will not have you in the best light. So make sure you have professional photography on your website, of your projects, of you and of your team.

Mirjam: [06:33]

Should I link my social media and other channels?

Jason: [06:37]

Most definitely all of the platforms that you own, whether that be Instagram, Facebook, Houzz, any of those, you should have them all linked to your website. And that also helps you out because they're also linking back to you. And so that helps you with Link Juice, with which we will talk about when we discuss SEO. But having all of the platforms that you want, they should be linked and readily available someplace in the above the phone area. And what I mean by above the phone, that is the area when someone enters into your website and they see it before they have to scroll up or down. So you should have your number. And this is what I find a lot of designers do not have is that they'll have a pretty image. They'll have their name, they'll have a logo, but they won't have a number. They'll have the number in the footer, but they will not have it at the top. You want to have it at the top because if somebody is looking and they see something that they like, they can call you immediately. They don't have to look and find where your number is.

**Jason: [07:46]**

They could just call you. We actually did an example for one of our own clients, and they were at them in, but they did not want to have their number at the top. So I said, okay, let's actually try to have your number at the top for a month. H just bear with us. Have your number at the top for a month and we tested it. So for one month we didn't have the number. We had everything she wanted to have, the imagery. And all in the next month we had the number. Her phone call volume jumped by 200%. It jumped by 200% just by having a number at the top, because you have to remember you have for the end user, you have to make it easy for them. That's what we talk about when we say having a user friendly website is that all the information they want to get to is readily available. And by having your number at the top, they could easily call you. And so when we did that exercise, now her number is at the top, and she and I had no other issues with her after that about having the number at the top. So you want to make sure that you have all of the vital information in the above the phone area. One of those elements should be your phone number.

Maria: [08:58]

This question is for both Mirjam and Jason, how important is it for the website to be something I can easily update with my newest, latest and greatest photos?

Mirjam: [09:09]

Well, I think it's critical because especially when it comes to your newer project or your newer press coverage, it's really important that you share that with people. Right. So when people go to your website, let's say you got publicity two years ago. That's great. But it's much better if you can show something that from last month. Right. So people understand that you're actively working the business and that you're being successful and that people are talking about you. So I do think it's very important that you updated on a regular basis.

**Jason: [09:49]**

I agree with 100% having your newest and your most up to date project shows that you are relevant now. So you don't want to have projects that you've done four or five years ago. A because in the design industry is all about style, too. So, you know, styles change. So what you did four or five years ago may not apply today. And so now that you have the up to date projects on there, you're showing that you are relevant and you're active now as well.

Maria: [10:18]

Do I want my domain name to be hosted with the same service I'm using to make my website that's honestly.

Jason: [10:27]

Really a preference is if you want to have it all in the same or if you want to separate it out, but looking for where you may be able to save a little bit here and there can also play into that. But that's really just a preference.

Maria: [10:40]

So there's still no hostage situations with domain names and websites anymore has not gone away.

Jason: [10:46]

No, that still happens. That still happens. We've had a few clients and I won't name any names, but there's a really popular domain provider that is known for that, and I won't name any, because if I name the name, you all would know who they are, and I'm not about to call them out that way. But there is one company in particular that you if you try to take your domain away from them or you're hosting of your website away from them, they're going to call in time you charges, or they're going to try to hard sell you on why you need to stay in lieu of that happening, everything else is just preference.

**Maria: [11:26]**

Are we going to do additional work on SEO blogs and all of that kind of stuff? Because I know those are bigger media topics.

Jason: [11:35]

Yes. So honestly, that's a behemoth all to itself out. And there's a lot involved in that SEO search engine optimization. So that's a whole topic on its own blogging is an aspect of the website as well. And that's also SEO too. But we're going to have a session just on that about how to create a content for your blog, because that's one of the topics. And one of the questions I hear from a designer all the time. Should I have a blog? And the answer is yes. Now how do I create content for the blog? That's what we will talk about in future episodes.

Maria: [12:12]

Okay. Cool. So how do I know if my website? I mean, I can kind of tell if a website looks good or not, but should I have it where it's like scrolling down where I see lots of stuff all on one page. Should it be multiple pages? Is it better to have lots of places you have to click? What's the goal with a website? What you want to have? You want to have multiple pages, especially as a designer, because you're going to have projects. So to have all of your projects on one page, you would be scrolling for eternity. Honestly, because you'll have a lot of projects on there. What you will want to have is all of the pages of your website. The home page should be a summary of that. You may have one of the highlighted projects or what we talked about earlier. One of your most up to date projects.



Jason: [13:01]

You may want to have that on a home page that they could then click and head to that project page. I you want to have your contact information, phone number at the top, but then in the footer you can have your address or any of that other information, a small section on you and your company About Us area, so you can have just a synopsis of that and then everything else could be on the about US page. So most of your major pages you want to summarize that in the homepage, so they get an idea of who you are, what you do, what your specialization is, you serve what your design style is, so they could get a flavor of who you are in the home page and then all the other pages. You have more detail. One other thing you want to see how your website looks in a mobile on a mobile device that's vital a lot of designers design for a desktop, which is great. But you also have to design for mobile view. 80% of search starts on a mobile device. So if you ignore how it looks on a mobile device, you will be losing customers or clients or prospects because you need to see how the experience is on a mobile device as well as on the desktop view. I would say even more. So you want to reverse engineer and design for mobile first and then see how it looks on the desktop, because like I said, 80% of search starts on a mobile device.

Maria: [14:30]

What about video? Should we include video at all in our website design?



Jason: [14:35]

If you have access to video, I would say yes, some may or may not have video, but if you have access to that, and like I said, if you have video testimonials, yes, now you may not want to host the videos on your website. You may want to use other apps like YouTube or Vimeo or other platforms like that, because if you put a lot of video on your website, it'll slow down the speed. And I had talked a little bit about that in episode four, and I'll just re reference the website GTmetrix. You can put your website in there and it'll show you how your website looks to the search engine and how it's ranking and how the back end of it looks. And I hand you a score from A to F. Video is vital, but at the same time, you do not want to host on your website. You want to host on a third party. And if you have access to video most definitely, I would say have it on your website.

Maria: [15:36]

Yeah, because we're having to do more video for social media now. So it might seem like we have loops or things that we can put together. Where is tours of houses or a series of slides and things of projects. So I'm wondering if that is an area where we need to start looking towards since videos becoming so much more popular in social media as one of its tools. Mirjam, I have a question, can a good website get me found? Can I get a better opportunity to get pressed through having a good website?

**Mirjam: [16:47]**

And I see this a lot when I go to design our websites because they market to oftentimes local and regional audiences, they neglect to mention where they're based. But if somebody from the media or the internet is global, so if anybody else comes to your website and you don't tell them where you are, they're not going to know. And that might work against you. Right. So let's imagine somebody from the media has come across your name and they go to your website and what your website looks like really can make or break your case about getting coverage and being included in whatever it is that they're working on, and everything that Jason has said is spot on. I think what works for your ideal client really is also going to work for the media. It's just important that you have current information on there that you tell them who you are so they can get a sense of your brand and the types of projects that you do, what you have been working on lately, what other media outlets you have been featured in? And if everything is a good reflection of you and your business and the editor likes it and make it easy for you to contact them. Say the same thing as for potential clients. Just make it easy for people to find you and reach out to you. And if your website is in tip top shape, that can go a very, very long way in helping secure press coverage.

Maria: [18:23]

For sure, hiring an interior designer is super intimidating. It usually comes with a retainer a large budget. So what is the best way that I could present myself so that someone might want to reach out to me and talk to me without feeling like they're having to make a long term commitment with me?



Jason: [18:39]

You should have some place on your website, preferably at the top where I talked about the above the fold area. You should have some opting of some sort where you have a call to action and say, fill this out for a free consultation or something of those sorts, because that is how you now turn looky loo into potential prospects that can talk to you. And then once you're on the phone with them, hopefully you can close them. But you want to have some type of CTA- call to action on your website, because if not, they will not know what to do. They may love your website, they may love the imagery, but if you don't have some type of call to action, what you want them to do, whether it's to sign up for a newsletter, whether you want them to have a free consultation, where do you want them to call now? Whatever that is, you need to have some type of call to action on your website. And having that simple CTA can help turn what you have as a website into a driver of leads. And so you want to make sure that you have that because in the workbook that we have that's in the show notes, I show an example of a client we had that had 500 visitors a month, on average. That did not have a CTA, they had a closing rate, or they had leads around one to two a month. But when they added on the CTA, they started to have 15 to 20 leads a month. And so you could just imagine just the same amount of visitors. But now you're adding the CTA. Now you have potential to make more money because you have that CTA on your website.

Maria: [20:21]

So a call to action could be as simple as a schedule, a 30 minutes exploratory call with me and submit some pictures on the budget and ask questions. So that would count exactly.

**Jason: [20:37]**

That is just as simple as that. You just need to tell you need to tell prospects what you want them to do. Now that they're on your website, they've seen all of the imagery. They've seen who you are. They seen what you do. What do you want them to do?

Maria: [20:50]

Because if not, they're just going to leave thank you guys for helping me to understand what is important for an interior Designers website and what we can do to make them better. And I am super excited to know that a website can help know like trust and want to take action to get to know me or work with my business through some of the tools that you have described today.

Outro: [21:16]

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions. What was your takeaway care to share your thoughts and tag Jason, Maria and Mirjam on social media? You can find them on all platforms at DesignerDiscussions.com. Don't forget to like subscribe and leave a review or comment for this episode from wherever you are listening.



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