



If customers like your website
they might trust you

By Rubilda Segura – Global Head of Marketing & IT at Affinity Maker



About Rubilda Segura

Rubi is the Global Head of Marketing & IT at Affinity Maker, with experience in developing corporate branding, business profile and marketing materials, as well as co-branded products evaluation.

She is a business IT professional, experienced in using CSS, HTML, Joomla and relevant components for website development. Recent projects include developing the Affinity Maker™ web site tools, design, and content; developing the Newsletter (Partnership Focus) and e-mail communications design and content; selecting, installing and customizing the company's e-mail system; concept development and project management as well as collection and interpretation for the award winning Affinity Engine™ (winner of the 2009 Australian Business Awards for Innovation).

Why Trust Matters

Conventional knowledge and research suggests, that trust affects consumer spending, corporate reputation, and a company's ability to navigate the regulatory environment. Basically, trust in business relationships is a greater determinant of success than anything else.

"In the past year, 91% of 25 to 64-year-olds around the world indicated they bought a product or service from a company they trusted, and 77% refused to buy a product or service from a distrusted company" (2009 Edelman Trust Barometer).

One of the key elements of trust building is web marketing, and how you market your business on the web; and even when your company's trust is build around different business elements, your web site is often the first impression that someone sees of your company.



Trusting your website, trusting your company

Much has been said about how the design of a web site influences the trust of its users. In particular when it comes to online shopping, intuitive user reactions such as: "If a Web site strikes me as beautiful, I will gladly give away my credit card number, [or] If it looks pleasant, I just trust it" (*Building Trust, usability.gov, USA*), have been well researched and taken into account by some organisations when designing their own web site. In fact, some consider the pleasantness of a web-site's layout as a POD (Point Of Difference) for online vendors.

But, what about those organisations whose main business happens on the 'real world'? Do they need to make their website attractive for users?

The answer is 'definitely', because as much as some organisations like to hide behind the premise that they are not doing e-commerce, the feeling your website gives to your online visitors will reflect on how they feel about your company. And, if a user does not like hence trust your website chances are, he is not going to trust you in the 'real world' either.

The good news is that it is very easy to create and build trust in your online visitors; here are some basic points to help you get started:

- 1. A professional look/graphic design** – You have 3 to 5 seconds to interest a visitor or lose them in a click. If you're serious about customers buying a product or service from you, then show it. Believe it or not, you do not have to spend thousands of dollars to develop a professional-looking web site. Open source website-building-tools such as Joomla will provide you with the perfect environment to use, professional looking and most of the time cheap templates to create your website. A homemade or poorly designed website will speak volumes about your business and drive potential customers away.
- 2. Up-to-date and easy to understand content** – Relevant and regular content demonstrates two key elements: a) you care enough to update your site and b) the company is still in existence and trading. Additionally, you need to ensure that your website speaks a language your audience understands and relates to; forget about 'over-the-top' and outlandish claims, or technical jargon as this will drive away potential customers.





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- 3. Navigation** – First, and most importantly, use of accessible information (e.g., no broken links), some organizations underestimate the negative influence that broken links have on their visitors. Just think about it, is like if ‘in the real world’ you were giving a wrong business address to your customers. When it comes to creating the structure of your web site, you should create it following a hierarchy chart, and keeping the structure in a way that it makes sense and it is predictable.
- 4. Contact Details** - Having your telephone number and address displayed prominently on your site inspires confidence and trust in people, as they know they can speak to you if they want to.



Affinity Maker™ is an international boutique consulting company that helps clients create new partnerships and alliances or make existing ones perform better. We recognised the growing popularity of partnerships and realised that many of these partnerships were not being nearly as successful as they could be. These collaborative partnerships demanded a specialist facilitator – Affinity Maker. Our expertise covers a broad range of [partnership types](#) in [Business-to-Business](#), [Shared Services](#) and [Public Private Partnership](#) sectors.

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