

Lead-Losing Web Mistakes

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You're probably used to reading about ideas that can enhance your web site and methods to generate more leads from your Internet presence. From my perspective, hours of viewing real estate web sites recently revealed the need to share a few comments on tactics that should be avoided in order to achieve the same results.

With that thought in mind, here are the top four "lead killer" tactics that are too commonly employed on real estate web sites.

1. **Multimedia Introductions** - While multimedia Internet experiences may be enjoyed by first time visitors who have broadband access to the web, they are a huge turn-off for those on dial-up connections and for just about anyone who has already seen a half-dozen of these presentations.

If you absolutely must include all the whistles and bells on your site (usually done in "flash" format) then make sure that such a multimedia presentation is not located on the front page (the one visitors will typically first see) of your site.

Viewing such slow-loading displays should be strictly optional and only accessed voluntarily by the visitor. Offering the viewer the ability to "skip" the introduction is often not enough as it can take an unreasonably long time for enough of the presentation to load to even allow the viewer to make this choice.

The greatest attraction of the Internet is convenience and "flash" introductions are directly opposed to this benefit for most of those who try to visit your site. The cost of ignoring this advice is simply lost web site traffic from those prospects that never made it in the door.

2. **Music & Sound** - While including music (and other sounds) on web sites might have been novel and entertaining several years ago, this time has passed. Again, such media can take a considerable amount of time to download and play and this again can be very trying on a visitor's patience. Regardless of how much you might like the music on your site, you need to realize that many visitors are coming to your site from computers connected at work, late at night, or from public places such as libraries and cyber cafes.

In many of these situations the blaring sounds produced by your site can be an extreme annoyance and even an embarrassment for the visitor.

Imagine the likely reaction of a potential buyer who is visiting your site from a cubicle at work, (at a company that discourages "personal" web use on company time) when your homepage plays that song you like so much.

Almost nothing will drive a potential customer off your site faster than this scenario.

3. **Too Many Pop Up Windows** - While there are proper uses of pop-up windows (those that open in addition to the main window displaying your web site) they are few and far between.

Pop-up windows have come to be associated with unwanted advertisements. They can confuse those with limited Internet experience and also consume an additional amount of system resources on the computer being used to view your site.

When you feel that you must use a pop-up window to convey information, make sure that this is only in response to a user choice or action - as opposed to implementing an automatically loading pop-up window that cannot be avoided.

Additionally, it is often best to warn the viewer that a new window will open if they select a hyperlink, so as not to take them by surprise.

The ultimate misuse of pop-up windows are those that load automatically when the visitor views your homepage. This action can be immediately annoying and may potentially drive the visitor off of your site.

Even if the visitor continues on, you'll likely lose them at some point because every time they reload your home page (often as a result of clicking on the "home" button or menu) the same pop-up window will re-deploy forcing them to close this same window again and again.