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Home Sweet Home Page: The 5 Deadly Mistakes Authors, Speakers and Coaches Make with Their Website's Home Page and How to Fix Them!

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Home Sweet Home Page

The 5 Deadly Mistakes
Authors, Speakers and Coaches
Make with Their Website's Home Page
and How to Fix Them!

Carma Spence-Pothitt



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Introduction

Your website's home page is its most precious and valuable "real estate." The home page is like a virtual business card, a virtual storefront and a virtual greeting card all wrapped into one.

According to Jakob Nielsen, "the king of usability", the home page has three main goals:

1. To give users information,
2. To serve as the top-level navigation for information within the site, and
3. To tell users the site's purpose and where they are relative to the Web as a whole.

When it comes to the website of an author, speaker or coach, I would add one more thing:
To establish credibility, authority and/or personality.

I've visited a lot of websites in my meanderings around the web and one thing that I've noticed is that there are a large number of really ineffective home pages out there. And, it seems that most of them belong to solo-entrepreneurs, particularly authors, speakers and coaches.

These websites may accomplish all of Nielsen's goals to some degree, but they often do not accomplish the one I believe is most important – establishing the owner as the go-to person in their field. These websites suffer from what I call the **5 Deadly Mistakes of Home Page Design**:

- **Lack of Clarity**

I've seen home pages that left me puzzled as to what the website was all about. There were too many things to do and it was not clear what the key purpose of the website was.

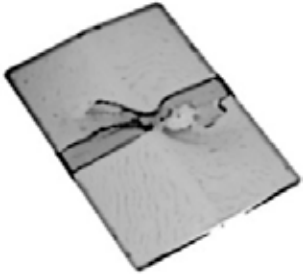


- **Lack of Professionalism**

I'm still surprised by how many people like to use cutesy fonts, free clip art and clashing colors on their home page. Some will have distracting background images that make the content difficult to read. Others have noisy animated images or automatic music playing. All these things distract the visitor from the purpose of your website. Even worse, they can increase the load time of your site, so visitors leave before they even see a thing!



- **Lack of an Invitation to Continue the Conversation**



Most web surfers suffer from short-term memory loss – once they’ve left a website, they often forget about it, never to return. Therefore, if you want to build a loyal fan base, you must invite visitors to continue the conversation by subscribing to your list. Alas, so many websites of authors, speakers and coaches either lack this simple tool, or de-emphasize it so that it might as well not even be there!

- **Lack of a Reason to Continue the Conversation**



There was a time when simply offering a web visitor a subscription to your newsletter was enough to get them to give you their name and email address. That is no longer the case. Now you need to give them some immediate, up-front value with an “opt-in bonus.” And not only that, you need to tell them why they simply must possess this opt-in bonus – you actually have to sell your freebie!

- **Bad Copy**

As a writer and marketer myself; I totally get how hard it can be to write compelling copy that sells *you*. Most of the authors, speakers and coaches I know are in the business to serve others and have an over-developed sense of humility. This results in some of the worst copy ever written for home pages! If you can't stand up and tell people why you are the neatest thing since sliced bread, then why should they believe you are? And, even those home pages I've seen that have decent copy, often have it in the wrong order and don't use appropriate search engine optimization techniques to make this good copy work for them behind the scenes.



That's why I wrote this book – to help authors, speakers and coaches not only realize what they might be doing wrong, but to show them how to easily fix them and turn their website into an effective, cost-efficient, business growing tool.

So take a look at the **5 Deadly Mistakes** and see if you are making any of them with your home page. Then flip to that mistake's chapter in the book and discover how to fix it! You don't have to fix them all at once, either. Every step you take to improve your home page will help you grow your business that much faster. So take those steps, put one virtual foot in front of the other and, like the song in the Rankin-Bass animated TV special, *Santa Claus Is Coming to Town*, "soon you'll be walkin' out the door!"

The Quick 5 Deadly Mistakes Self-Test

Check all those that apply to your home page. The more you check off, the more likely you are making that deadly mistake.

Lack of Clarity

- Several different calls to action
- No call to action
- Too busy
- Not sure what you want visitors to do

Lack of Professionalism

- Cutesy fonts
- Free clipart
- Too many colors
- Clashing colors
- Animated images
- Automatic music

Lack of an Invitation to Continue the Conversation

- No opt-in box
- Opt-in box far down the page
- Opt-in box is not obvious

Lack of a Reason to Continue the Conversation

- No opt-in bonus
- You only offer a subscription to your ezine
- No compelling description of your bonus

Bad Copy

- "Welcome to my website!"
- No compelling headline at the top
- Focuses on features
- Focuses on what you want
 - not what the visitor wants



*“All you need is the plan, the road map,
and the courage to press on to your destination.”*

– Earl Nightingale



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