



Creating an Engaging User Experience

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Design engaging, responsive web content

Creating an Engaging User Experience

Designing Engaging Web Content

When designing your e-commerce site, remember that your purpose is to help users achieve their goal (purchase a product, read reviews, download a report, etc.) as quickly and efficiently as possible. Let's look at some ways that we can design content that keeps readers on the site and engages them with the brand.

Design Do's and Don'ts

When designing your website, focus on keeping it simple and easy to read. That means:

- Using grid-like layouts that focus the reader's eye on what's important
- Breaking up text into chunks that are easy to scan and help your visitors find what they are looking for
- Using graphics, images, audio, video, and interactive widgets to appeal to different types of visitors
- Using a minimum number of complementary colors that suit the brand and the audience
- Using fonts that are easy to read
- Creating a consistent structure that includes menus, categories, and search boxes (see Session Five for more information)
- Making sure that pages load quickly
- Building in ways for visitors to interact with you and each other

Text your Knowledge

Visit a few websites and consider what works and doesn't work in terms of the design of each site. Here are some examples that you can use.

- Gates N Fences (<http://www.gatesnfences.com/>)
- Mountain Dew (<http://www.mountaindew.com/>)
- Irish Wrecks (<http://www.irishwrecksonline.net/>)
- Tinke (<http://www.zensorium.com/tinke/>)
- Spokes Pedicabs (<http://spokespedicabs.com/>)

Site	Design Elements That Work	Design Elements That Don't Work

Use Dynamic Pages

Visitors and search engines love content that is new, fresh, and relevant. In addition to keeping your site up-to-date with new articles, posts, and product features, you can use dynamic page generation features in your website hosting suite to generate unique pages on the fly. Dynamic pages can also be customized per user to reflect products that they have looked at before or terms that they have searched for.

Leverage User-Generated Content

Another great way to engage users is to encourage them to create their own content. Some ways to do this include:

- Contests for user submissions (for example, a recipe website might have a contest for the best apple pie recipe)
- User forums
- Ability for users to leave comments on articles and posts, or to review products
- Guest bloggers
- Easy-to-use widgets that allow users to share your site on their social networks

Be very careful when re-using content from other sites. Text, images, audio, and video presented on the Internet are usually copyrighted. Always get reprint permission in writing and cite the original source when re-posting content. Alternatively, share the relevant content right from the author using social media.

Positive Emotional Drivers

Successful e-commerce copy gives visitors a positive feeling about using the brand. It may also give a negative connotation about not using the brand.

Have you seen websites use phrases like this?

- Start feeling better today with our vitamin-rich meal replacement solution.
- Don't be fooled by the other guys... get the real deal today.
- Make the smart choice!
- Help a child in need by donating today.

These are examples of emotional drivers that are designed to generate the most-wanted response. (Remember, the most-wanted response, or call to action, is the website's goal. They might want visitors to donate to a charity, purchase a product, or download an e-book.)

Touchpoints

Give customers a way to make a human connection to the brand. One way to do this is to have audio, photos, and videos of the business owner, employees, and customers throughout the e-commerce site. They might be talking about how they use the product, behind-the-scenes information about the company, or something relevant to the industry.

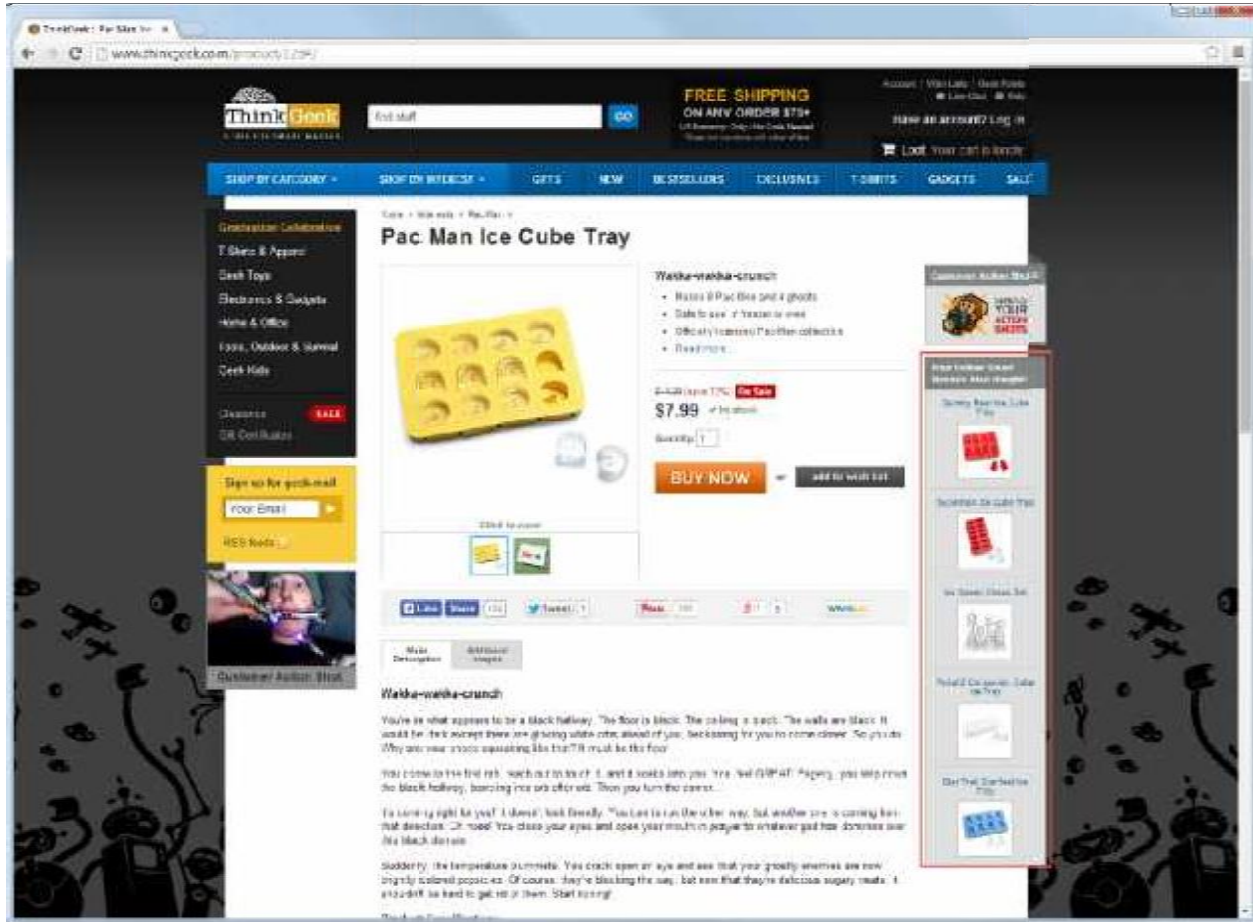
For example, Think Geek has a Customer Action Shots section where you can see pictures of their products in use.



Social Selling

We tend to work with what works. We look at best sellers, best practices, and ideas that are endorsed by other people because if it works for them, it just might work for us. To leverage this online, e-commerce sites often show customers what their Facebook friends bought, or offer opportunities for customers to share their purchases on their social networks.

Here is an example from Think Geek.



Personalization and Customization

Customize the user experience as much as possible. By tracking click history, analyzing customer profiles, and using cookies, you can create a personal experience for every visitor to your site.

Amazon does this extraordinarily well. To begin, they welcome visitors to their site by name.



They also offer recommendations on almost every page based on the visitor's past browsing history and what others have purchased.



Some sites go even further, allowing the user to change the font size, language, and/or color scheme, and then saving those settings in a cookie or in the user's account.

(Although browser tracking tools are commonly used in North America, they are not legal in all areas of the world. See Session Fourteen for more information on privacy laws.)

Test Your Knowledge

Think of some sites that demonstrate engaging web content and a relationship-building focus. List the specific engagement strategies that the site uses.

Here are some ideas:

- Doritos (<http://www.doritos.com/>)
- Weight Watchers (<http://www.weightwatchers.com/>)
- NatureScapes (<http://www.naturescapes.net/>)
- MailChimp (<http://mailchimp.com/>)
- TechCrunch (<http://techcrunch.com/>)

