semantic

Selling your value proposition online

Great imagery & video

Bring your value proposition to life.

Semantic Website Wins #8

Neil Lewin – April 2020

Welcome

Semantic Website Wins is a new series of mini guides to help marketers optimise their website, learn something new, and make the most of these strange times.

Many of us are working from home or furloughed, so day-to-day work has reduced or stopped. We hope that you can use our guides to find website wins to use now, or in the future and also build your skills so that you're ready to bounce back stronger.

We'll be writing guides with advice, tips and ideas to help you optimise your website in the coming weeks. Of course, we're always happy to help with any questions and provide further support if you get stuck.

Just drop me a line I'll be back in touch: neil@semantic.co.uk or 02380 111 545.

In the meantime, stay safe, and stay positive.
Neil

P.S. Need some extra support?
We're offering free video-call consultancy sessions for leisure & tourism, sports, theatres and professional bodies impacted by Coronavirus.

We can cover SEO, conversion rate optimisation, technical or critical analysis of your site.

Just give us a call for more details on 02380 111 545.

Creating compelling assets

In the last guide we looked at effective writing for the web, now we can really bring your value proposition to life through images and video.

If a picture can say a thousand words, then perhaps a video can show a thousand pictures. Well, maybe not quite that many, but creating engaging assets and showing them off on your website is a key factor for success.

- Image checklist
- Video checklist
- Content Management Systems (CMS) pitfalls to check

We'd strongly recommend getting professional help with image and video creation. The checklists in this guide should help when you brief photographers and videographers.

In terms of the pitfalls to watch for, CMS's are all set up differently, but our guidance will help cover off common things that can get missed.

Try to check through these pitfalls whenever you're adding assets to your CMS. If there's already a lot in there, then go back through assets on key pages to make sure the pitfalls are covered off. It can have a big impact on site speed and SEO, plus it helps keep things easy to find in your CMS.

Let us know how you get on with the checklists, and if you have any questions. We'd love to hear from you.

Image checklist

We're often asked about image sizes… these days, this shouldn't matter.

CMS sites that we build do the heavy lifting and optimise images for our clients automatically – hopefully yours does too!

Simple photographer guidelines

- Go for maximum quality

- Get a variety of wide and close-up shots. Remember that images will need to be cropped.

- Think mobile first
  Crops differ on mobiles v.s. desktops so make sure subjects have room to breathe, and there are images that will suit a square/portrait crop.

- Get a photographer on retainer so they can cover key events, different seasons, and visit at short notice (e.g. snow day)

- Try to get faces
  It's a common insight from our client work - browsers are drawn to faces, so feature them on your site. Take care however, when you have a photographer on site for marketing purposes that you let your customers know so that they can opt out of any crowd pictures. Close up pictures should usually feature models only. If you wish to take pictures of genuine customers then you must seek their permission first and use model release forms.

Video checklist

Again, the format of videos shouldn't really matter these days. Just aim for the highest quality you can. It can always be scaled down, but you can never scale up.

Simple videographer guidelines

- Go for maximum quality

- Start with the end in mind
  Be clear on the purpose of the video – is it to provide an overview of an experience, or a more in-depth product review.

- For overviews, generally short clips edited together work best for homepage features, e.g several 5-second long clips, edited together for a 30 second montage.

- For informational videos then the length is less of a concern… the rule-of-thumb is that the video should be as long as needed to sell the product.

- The photography guidelines also apply –

    o Think breathing room on mobiles for different crops
    o Try to get the videographer in regularly to cover key events
    o Try to get faces and happy expressions!

Video hosting

Often the best approach is to upload videos to a 3rd-party service like Vimeo. This enables seamless embedding into your site, optimised video across devices, and means you avoid a large hosting bill.

CMS pitfalls to check

Image uploading

- **Keep the originals**
  Keep full resolution images on a shared drive for your team

- **Speed up uploading**
  Ideally, bulk resize images to 2500px wide or less before uploading. It's faster to upload and faster to work with online.

- **Check image file size in the page** - see our Page Speed guide

- **Set focal points**
  If you have a modern CMS, it should let you set a focal point. This means that the key part of the image will be visible at all sizes.

- **Set alt-text/description**
  This is really important for SEO and helping disabled people know what's in an image. Make sure you're as descriptive as possible.

Video uploading

- **Keep the originals**
  Keep full resolution files for your team.

- **Set descriptions and captions**
  If you're using Vimeo or Youtube, then you can add captions to help disabled people find and enjoy your video.

- **To auto-play or not auto-play?**
  Auto-play converts better on mobiles, but watch the page speed.

Need a hand?

So that's it, some simple pointers to help jump start the process, next time you're getting new photography and videos. If this is all you need, then go ahead and put it into practice, otherwise we're always happy to help with further recommendations.

In the next guide we'll get into some of the amazing psychology that can help sell online. It's a fascinating subject full of surprises and tips to get you thinking.

Keep an eye on our blog and LinkedIn for more tips and updates. If you need a hand in the meantime, then we're always happy to help.

- Email me on neil@semantic.co.uk

- Call 02380 111 545

- Book a time in my diary to chat at https://calendly.com/neillewin/

Neil
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