EP. 016 - WEBSITE MISTAKES THAT ARE COSTING YOU DESIGN CLIENTS

Krista: Lately with the different things I have going on, right now my business, I have been spending a lot of time looking at designer's websites and pointing out the same mistakes over and over. I did some website reviews a while back for about 15 people, and for this episode I kind of scrolled through all that and took out the same things I was telling everybody. I think that it's easy for you as a designer to focus on your client's websites and how they could be better, but totally forget about your own. I know I do that as a developer.

These things that you are forgetting could be costing you clients, both because you are just not set up the right way to grab their attention or bring them in, or they could be even looking at your website and being like, no, I don't really want that, I'll go with someone else. Even if you are doing a much better job for your actual clients than you are doing on your own website. Today I want to talk about some of these mistakes that I'm seeing that you might be making and how you can fix it.

Kory: I am really excited for this episode, because some of the things that you have listed in our outline, seriously are things that I went over with my initial coaching clients. I remember looking at their websites and that was one of the main things that I do through those services. It's like, help you with your website, make sure that you are getting clients. It's like, I don't want to be mean, but these are the things you really need to change because it's just not working. So yeah, I'm really excited to kind of share these tips with everyone.

Krista: Yeah, and I think a lot of them are going to seem maybe really obviously to people, and you might be surprised when you look at your website and are like, "Oh, darn, I'm doing that really obvious thing." So we'll see about that. I'll just dive right in with the first one here. I didn't save the best for last. I'm starting with the biggest one that drives me insane the most, and that is when I see designers focusing on what they do rather than the benefits.

Think of if you have a tagline on your website, or a call to action in your header, are you focusing on what you do, or why your clients are going to want to hire you in the first place? What I've found is that most of you are focusing on what you do. Your tagline will say something like, web design and branding, maybe with a couple more colorful words added in. Or a call to action would be like, "Ready for a website refresh? Click the button below to learn about how we can work together." Okay, that's great, but that is not getting anyone excited at all.

Think about when you are in a Facebook group, this is going to apply to a lot of our points today, but think about if you are in a Facebook group where someone is asking for a designer and you post your website. What about those really general things is going to make you stand out to that person? Absolutely nothing. That's why this is such a big deal. You can't just say, "Great, I do design and branding," because that's what all the designers do.

Kory: Exactly, and I think a good point that goes along with this is a lot of the times when you have potential clients looking at your website, they already know that you are a designer.

Krista: Yeah.

Kory: Most of the time a lot of people are getting designers names from Facebook groups, but sometimes they are also reaching out to their friends and saying, "Hey, do you know any good designers?" Through both of those ways, they are going to get to your website because they know you are a designer. Reiterating that right in your header or right on whatever your home page looks like, you are just kind of overkill with it. They already know what you do, so instead it's so much better to talk about ... Maybe not even the benefits, but at least who you do it for. Something like that, get out of being obvious, and kind of start narrowing in.

Krista: Yeah, you are not going to catch anyone's attention by saying you do design.

Kory: Nope.

Krista: For this, I want you to look at your website, get rid of all the places you are just saying that you do design, branding, whatever you do, and instead tell them what they are going to get out of working with you, and point out who you do it for. Instead of saying web design and branding, say something about if you are going to increase their conversions, if you are going to demonstrate their authority. Those are the things that are going to make people want to hire you. That is the big one, the mistake I see almost everyone making, stop just stating the obvious.

Kory: Totally. When you are going through and looking at your website, I feel like the home page and the services page are probably the most obvious, but don't forget your about page too, because that's another page where I think we would obviously all say, "Hey, I'm a designer." Then you kind of say, "I design websites," and blah, blah, blah. You kind of go on a little bit from there. Obviously again, they are on your website, they probably already know you are a designer, so get a little bit more creative than that.

Krista: Yeah, yeah, this is the easy way out, just stating the general stuff. Okay, so I'm going to move on to the next mistake, which is actually several of them

all around your services. I think I have like five things listed here to talk about. Basically if you guys aren't getting clients as easily as you'd like to, maybe some of these would be the culprit. I'm going to start with one that just relates right back to what we were talking about, and that is your sales page. If you are listing features like what your clients are going to get but not what they are going to get out of it, not how they are going to benefit, that is definitely keeping people from hiring you.

I am way more likely to book someone for a project if they are promising me that I can increase conversions, or book more clients, or sell more products instead of, you are going to get a three page website with an about page, or something like that. If you are only listing features on your website, and not benefits, this is definitely going to be holding you back.

Kory: Totally. Just keep in mind, we have talked about this in another episode before, but keep in mind what makes you want to hire someone, or what makes you want to buy a course, you know? Those people that are enticing you with those things are probably not just saying, "You get this course and it's going to help you with your business, and here is the buy now button." No. They are listing out all the crazy benefits and amazing things that are going to happen to you after you buy the course and go through it.

You kind of want to think about your sales pages or services pages, however you want to look at them, the same exact way because your potential clients are thinking the same way that you are.

Krista: I really like that kind of reframe. Look at it more as a product you are selling. When you are buying a course, you don't care really how many modules are in, you just want to know what those modules are going to do for you. I like that, I like that.

The next mistake that people are making with their services pages is just offering too many. I've seen in my website reviews, I had I think three people who were offering everything from social media packages to design work, to VA work. If you are doing this, please just stop for me. Please just pick one.

Kory: That's so overwhelming. I feel that would be a really good way to have a unique week, because you can kind of work on a bunch of different stuff throughout the week, but then at the same time I feel like you would just get confused. It's like, "Wait, what am I doing for this person? Let me pull the … You know, a piece of paper out of a cup and figure it out." Confusing.

Krista: Yeah, well the thing is you can't be amazing at all of those things. Look at how much time we spend just trying to be amazing at one thing. You are not going to get higher end clients for any of those because they are going to see that and that's a red flag for me. If I even go to a VA's website, and they

list off that they can do every VA task in the book, I'm like, "I'm not sure about that."

If you are trying to market yourself as a designer and you have all these other random things, that is a big red flag for at least clients who have been in business a while. Maybe not the newbies, but other people are going to wonder about that a little bit.

Kory: Exactly, that's a great point.

Krista: And right along with this, if you offer just too many types of design packages, even that can be a mistake. If you are offering maybe business cards, branding, websites, different tiers of these kinds of things, and maybe retainer work and all of this is one your website, that is going to overwhelm the people who are looking to hire you. Instead, create a couple packages that you really, really want to sell at different price points. People can always customize them. Right now on my website I have three packages.

I do about five regularly, and it doesn't keep people from asking about those things, they just send you an e-mail. They are like, "Hey, I see you have this, but can you do this?" Or, "Can you cut this part out?" Or, "Can I only have this?" It's not going to hold them back and having those packages just makes people more likely to pick one that you really want to offer.

Kory: Yeah definitely. I think another point here is that if you are scared that creating packages and listing those are going to make you lose people who don't necessarily want one, you can always mention under those packages, if you see something that we may need to tweak for you or make a custom package, then still reach out to me because I'd be happy to do that. That way you aren't worrying about missing those few people that need something kind of custom for their business.

Krista: Yeah, or it can even be in a FAQ section. If it makes you feel better to point it out, definitely do it. I think it's probably just a good thing to have regardless. But kind of right along with what you were saying, not having any packages at all is also a mistake. Don't just list out the different kinds of things you can do, make these packages that we were just talking about.

Kory: Yeah, I feel like when you don't have any packages, your potential clients, they are going to come to you for things like what we were mentioning earlier where someone can do social media, design, VA, all that stuff. When you don't have any packages listed and your just randomly listing off all the stuff you can do, then you are going to have people coming to you for a little bit of everything because they aren't really sure. Not only that, but you are less likely to book those big projects that bring in the nice money.

Krista: Yeah, if you don't have your packages listed, people don't know what they need when it comes to the design. That's what you guys are there for, you are the expert. They want you to tell them what they should have. What should they get with their website? If you are doing branding, what should that include? They shouldn't be the one to tell you, you should tell them. Packages are really great for that.

The next thing, again, still on the services page, is the steps your clients are taking to book. The most common issues that I saw here was just having a contact me button on the services page that brought them to a plain contact form. Again, do not expect your clients to do this work. They are going to get to that page and be like, "Okay, well, so I have to tell them how much information do they need from me? Should I say what package I want? Do I need to tell them? Do I need to give them details?"

Again, they are not going to know, and this is something for the most experienced business owners, they will see this as a red flag if you are not guiding them through the process and at least pre filling, or giving them options for the service type you offer and things like that. They need at least a little guidance. If you are sending them to a general contact form, that's definitely something you want to change.

Kory: Not only that, but it creates so much more of a headache for you because I feel like when you have just a contact form where it's like, name, e-mail, message, hit send, they are going to tell you the least amount of stuff they can just so they can hit send and say they contacted you. They are not going to tell you what package they want, they are not going to tell you anything about their business, they are just going to say, "Hey, I'm interested in working with you on this design project, what now?"

Krista: Yeah.

Kory: I've had those exact inquiries pretty much, even on my contact form which is not just a plain thing.

Krista: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Kory: You really do want to encourage them to give you as many details as possible, just so you can avoid some of that headache. When you see the inquiry, you are not like, groaning, "Oh my gosh, they didn't tell me anything."

Krista: Yes, yes. I love that point. Even with our more detailed questionnaires, it's like, okay, how did you still manage to not give me enough information. They always figure out a way.

Kory: Yep.

Krista: Then our last issue I've seen with services pages is not really pointing out your clients struggles, and reminding them why you are worth the investment. If you are charging more than a couple hundred dollars for a design, which please, I hope you are, you need to remind them why they should be hiring you. What are there struggles? What are you going to help them with? Why do they need you in the first place?

             You might think that okay, they are coming to me, they know they have these struggles, but they don't. There is just something in their mind for a lot of them that's telling them that they need to work with somebody. If you can bring these struggles to light, and to the front of their mind and put it in words for them, that's just going to make them that much more likely to book you.

Kory: Well too, and I think if you list out their struggles, similarly to how we talked about including them in the proposals, you are really making them feel like you get them, you understand where they are and you can help them overcome those things.

Krista: Yeah, and when these people can see that you understand them more than some other random designer they are looking at, that's just going to make them want to work with you even more because they are going to feel so, so confident that you can fix all of the issues that they are having just through your design services.

Kory: Yep.

Krista: All right. Let's move off of the services page here. I think we've beat that to the ground enough. Go fix your services pages guys. But next, let's move on to portfolios. This seems like it should be a simple one, I think we've talked about this a couple times before, but I just feel the need to point it out again because I'm seeing the mistakes over and over. If your portfolio page is just a gallery of images, a gallery of maybe mock ups or something like that, that is not enough if you are trying to attract higher end clients, or just good clients in general, the kind that value what you do.

Kory: Well and let me just say here too, you are not just saying a gallery of things that you can click on, and open, and read more about what you are about to just say, because I have also been on designer's websites where it is literally just the gallery, like what you are …

Krista: Exactly, that's what I'm saying.

Kory: Yeah, exactly what you are saying right now, and this is not enough for anyone to be able to tell what kind of designer you are. That's not enough information, and when you think about how small those little images are and then sometimes they have the computer in them, and then the actual

website is even smaller, no one is spending time to figure out what that website is to go click on it. Please, if you have a gallery portfolio with nothing else, no links or anything, please listen to what Krista is about to tell you.

Krista: Yes, you heard the lady. Okay, so having a gallery is cool if it links to an individual page for that project. No more just gallery images that open to nothing. I want each of your portfolio projects to be linked to their own page with a testimonial, pictures, full mock ups, a link to the website or branding, or whatever it is, and you talking about the project. I want you talking about why your client came to you in the first place, what they were struggling with. I want you talking about what the process looked like, how you guys came to the decisions you did, how your client picked the logo, different things like that. Then most importantly, talk about the benefits your clients saw after working with you. What did their whole transformation look like? That's what your portfolio projects need to be focusing on if you are really going to attract clients who value your work and are willing to pay for it.

Kory: If you feel like that is too much to have on your portfolio pages, just remember that people are actually looking at these projects in your portfolio, and it can get them really excited too about the process of working with you. When they can read about how you went through the whole branding and logo phase with someone else, they are like, "Ooh, I want to experience that same thing too. I want to be so excited about my project." They are that much more likely to reach out to you if you include the project details and don't just show an image and then hope they like the work and that's it.

Krista: Yeah, and you're not forcing anyone to look through all this information, so it might feel like a lot but people are only there if they are interested and want to be there. You don't have to worry about overwhelming them like you might with other things. People are there because they want to know what went on and what the project was all about.

Kory: Yeah, that's a really good point.

Krista: All right, so our next one is a simple, super quick one. It is just if you have a full width image in your call to action header area, please do not link it directly to your services page. That's a big one. Literally just hire me buttons are what I've been seeing on websites of designers and their header. Design is something that people have to trust you for. They have to trust that you are going to get them, that you are going to understand their business, and that you are going to do a good job, and be able to move them forward in the future.

They are not ready for that the first time they land on your website, the first thing they see right in your header. They need to get to know you by maybe following you on social media, or reading your blog posts, probably being

on your e-mail list. Wasting that good space in the header, drawing people right to your services page, is not doing you any favors.

Kory: I think this is such a good point, and I will admit that I was guilty of this recently. I mean this year recently. I thought that by linking straight to the services page, I was definitely going to get more inquiries, and all that did was increase the page views on the services page because people were clicking over to look at it. But that did not increase my inquiries, that didn't really help me with anything on that front.

I think another important thing to think about is you wouldn't meet someone and ask them to buy you a house on the first date, right? Going right along with how big a deal design work is, especially if you are a branding designer or you do web design, these projects cost quite a bit sometimes. You can't meet someone the very first day and expect them to be willing to invest sometimes thousands of dollars into working with you. Keep that in mind when you are deciding what link you want in that header.

Krista: Mm-hmm. And I totally get the logic behind it. Like you were saying, you wanted people to go to your services page, because you are thinking, "All right, if I get them there, I mean the more people that see it the more likely they are to hire me." In certain situations, okay, if you are doing it the right way. If you have made a really good e-mail sequence that are prepping people for this, then okay. But just right off the gate with no context is just not quite right. There is a time and place.

Next is another simple one, and that is I see a lot of people on both home pages and services pages just listing off a whole bunch of questions. So like, "Do you need a new website?" Or, "Is your website holding you back?" Asking questions. Don't do that. Don't do that. You are doing that because you are kind of not feeling super confident. You are not confident in what your audience needs, maybe you don't quite know who they are. That's what it comes off like too.

If you have any questions like that on your home page or your services page, restate them into statements. Rephrase them into statements. So, "Is your website holding you back?", say it, "Your website is holding you back from building your business into what you want it to be." Tell them what it is, and they are going to be like, "Yes, okay, you get me." That relates right back to what we were talking about before. If they feel like you understand their struggles and that you can fix them, they are going to book you for that project.

Kory: I think sometimes having a couple of questions can kind of help you set the tone for those statements, because I will be honest, I don't know if I would be confident enough in myself to put on my website, "Your website is holding you back from getting more clients."

Kory: I think it's okay if you have one or two questions. They can't just be, "Are you not confident in your website?" They kind of have to be a little bit more than that, but I think if you just have one or two that then sets up the rest of what you are about to say, where you are saying, "Your website is holding you back from holding you back from booking more clients and making more money, and accomplishing your goals." That's okay, and it's a little less in your face, you might be a little more comfortable with it.

Krista: I think we are going to agree to disagree with this one. I'm trying to find a way I agree. I'm thinking the about page I could be okay with because this is a place where you are filtering people out, you are relating to people, you are saying, "Okay, no, you're not my people." Or, "Yes, you are my people." Maybe it's okay there, but I just … especially sales pages. I don't want questions on sales pages. If you are going to convince people to buy something expensive, you can't be asking them questions, but okay, we don't agree on this one.

Kory: Yep, agree to disagree, that's okay.

Krista: Okay people, go to our show notes on this one. It's going to be getbacktodesign.co/016, and let us know what you think on this one. Break the tie and agree with me.

Kory: Or not.

Krista: Okay. I have one more here. I think Kory and I are going to agree a little more, although I am going to lecture her.

Kory: Yep.

Krista: Last one, I need you to show your face if you are offering design services. If someone is going to trust you with their brand or their website, or whatever it is, they need to feel comfortable with you as a human. They are not going to hire a website to design something for them. They are not going to trust a website with the future of their business. If you are not showing your face at least somewhere, you are losing out, you are definitely not making the connections you need to be making for people to trust you and people just aren't going to feel comfortable. I really, really like to see headshot on the home page. Somebody that I know really well doesn't have that.

Kory: That would be me.

Krista: But at the very least, at least you have it on … Do you even have it on your about page, or is Zoey on your about page?

Kory: Oh, I have it on my about page. Zoey is on the contact page.

Krista: Okay, that's what it is, okay. At least on your about page, at least have a headshot there.

Kory: Well and something else to kind of go along with this point that I definitely talked about I think in episode 1, was not only show your face, but show your personality, show who you are, what you care about, these kind of things. Because it's just like you were saying, people don't feel a connection with a website with some words on it. They may really like your design, but if they don't vibe with you, then they are going to go hire someone else. Not only just show your face, but kind of do things like put your dog on your contact page. That's okay to do, share some personal stuff at the bottom of your about page. Share that kind of stuff on your social media too, you know? Build up the connections with your potential clients because I promise you, that is going to make them want to hire you so much more.

Krista: Yeah, you are not standing out to anyone when you are just kind of writing in a general voice and not letting them get to know you. For Kory, if someone is a total dog lover, they are going to get super excited when they go to her contact page and see adorable little Zoey sitting there.

Kory: Yep.

Krista: That's great, that's going to make her stand out way more than anyone who just has general stuff all over the place.

Kory: Mm-hmm.

Krista: I know it is so easy to forget about your own website when you are busy focusing on everyone else's. Whether it's branding, making graphics, doing full website designs. It's just easy to get in the flow of helping other people and not yourself. I want you to kind of go through what we talked about, and just make sure you are not missing anything that's simple, that's easy to fix, that could be costing you clients.

             Your action step for today is to go back through the mistakes we talked about, and make a list of any of them that you are doing wrong, and then add a task to your calendar to fix at least one per week. Since we talked about so much today, I'm not going to make you do it all at once, but set a reminder on your calendar to go off weekly, until you have them all fixed and get your website spiced up.

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