

Features

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Spring Clean Your Website for Higher Sales In-store and Online

Katie Elzer-Peters

Fresh off leading a three-part E-commerce Mastery Series for AmericanHort, I'm pumped to tell you about what the attendees found most helpful over the course of six hours of classes. I call it the "DIY Website Audit," which sounds super techy, but it's actually not. Complete both parts, as soon as possible, and you'll see higher sales online and in-store.

Part 1: Answer These Questions

There are three questions all customers visiting your website want answered, whether they realize it or not:

- Who are you?
- What do you sell?
- How can I get it?

Does your website answer them? Pull it up and pretend like you've never seen it before. Take notes of things you might need to change. For example:

Who are you?

Is your "about" page linked in your main navigation or in your footer? Does it talk about your history, what you offer, who you are?

Are there pictures of you or your staff on your "about" page? (People buy from people not from websites.)

Is your address easy to find?

What do you sell?

Can someone visiting your website tell what types of products and services you sell?

Do you use clear terminology that everyone understands like "Houseplants" or "Indoor Plants" or do you call those "Living Decor?" (Which they are, but everyone knows what houseplants are. They might not immediately connect with "Living Decor.") If you offer landscape design, do you call it "landscape design?" Or do you call it "Optimizing outdoor living space"?

How can I get it?

If someone wants to shop with you, can they easily learn how? Is there a “Visit Us” or “Hours & Directions” tab on your navigation?

If you have an online shop, is there a shop tab?

If you offer landscape design, is there a contact form with some information about how to get started?

Part 2: Guide your Customers

Once you’ve taken care of the three big customer questions (so potential customers don’t just LEAVE), you can move on to Part 2, which is getting your customers to do what you want them to do when they land on your website. Remember—your website works for you! Or it will, once you make sure you clearly identify your MDR and SDR and guide your customers along those paths.

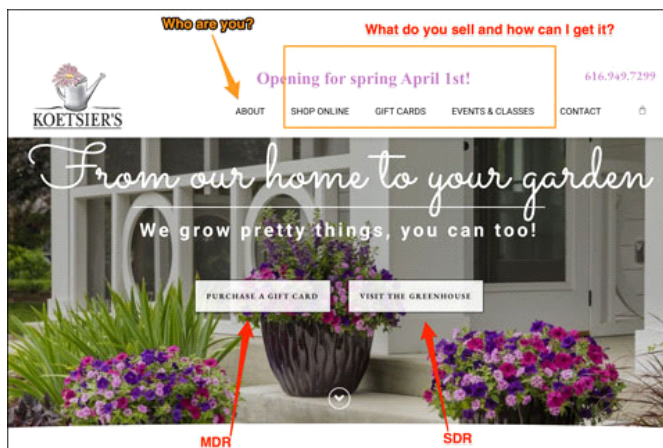
What are those? The MDR is the “Most Desired Response” and SDR is the “Second Most Desired Response.”

Let’s tackle the MDR first. When a customer lands on your home page, what is the ONE thing you wish they would do more than anything? Some common MDRs for IGCs are:

- Decide to visit the store
- Make an online purchase
- Join the email list
- Sign up for an event

You’ll use the space at the top of your website, below the main navigation, but “above the fold” (before people have to scroll) to highlight the MDR.

The reason to bother highlighting an MDR is that people have short attention spans and you have about two seconds to get them to do what you want when they land on your home page. Don’t make them decide between six options from the start; they’ll be overwhelmed and annoyed, and you’ll look disorganized.



Pictured: The owners of Koetsier's Greenhouse in Michigan attended my series and they've done a great job at the entire DIY audit. Here's a screenshot of their home page "above the fold" as of March 12, 2021. Their main navigation makes it easy for customers to answer the three big questions. The area right below the navigation gives customers only two choices without a lot of distracting fluff: buy a gift card or come visit. As of writing, they're still closed for the season. I bet when they're open again the "Come Visit" might be the only thing highlighted. Or maybe Shop Online will be. It depends on what they most want customers to do. In any case, it's a clean, clear place for customers to land and navigate. Bravo!

The SDR is the second most desired response. Anything on the MDR list can be an SDR. I almost ALWAYS vote for making “Join the email list” the SDR. If it were up to me, right below the MDR section, I'd have an email sign-up form on the website.

If you’ve met me, you know I can’t go 10 minutes without talking about email marketing, but for good reason. Done

right, email marketing makes money. It's also what (the smartest marketing brain alive right now) Seth Godin calls "Permission Marketing." When someone signs up for your email list, they've given you permission to stay in touch with them and YOU control when you send emails. You're not at the mercy of a social media algorithm.

Also, email marketing and ecomm go hand-in-hand because you can hook your shopping cart to your email program and track direct revenue from your emails. I have yet to meet an owner who doesn't like hard numbers! Or marketing that pays for itself. **GP**

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Quick Tips

Optimize Ecommerce Transactional Emails

Selling online? Add some branded copy to your "order received" and "order ready for pick up" emails. Slap your logo on there and a little bit of info about add-ons they can purchase when they retrieve their plants.

Help Customers Find You with Google My Business

Have you updated your Google My Business listing lately? Check that your hours are updated, add new pictures and fill out all the info so it's easy for customers to see that you're open to pop by for a visit.

Make your Phone Number Clickable

Please make it's easy for customers to click and call. If they can't, some of them just won't come shop. And you want them to come shop!

E-commerce Mastery Series

Recordings of the three-part E-commerce Mastery Series taught by Katie Elzer-Peters are still available for purchase at the AmericanHort website. Visit www.AmericanHort.org/mastery-series/ to purchase them.