



# Episode 20: 8 Ways to Make your Website Better

## E20: 8 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE BETTER

00:00 Announcer: Welcome to the Neon Noise Podcast, your home for learning ways to attract more traffic to your website, generate more leads, convert more leads into customers, and build stronger relationships with your customers. And now your hosts, Justin Johnson and Ken Franzen.

00:17 Justin Johnson: Hey, everybody, welcome to the Neon Noise Podcast where we decode marketing and sales topics to help you attract more visitors, generate more leads, and close more customers. I am Justin and with me is my co-host, Ken. Ken, how are you doing today?

00:32 Ken Franzen: Doing great, Justin. How about yourself?

00:34 Justin Johnson: I am doing wonderful, thank you. Ken, we talked to a lot of businesses that are looking to make improvements to their websites but they simply don't know what direction or really how to get started. Majority of these individuals, they haven't updated their website in a while, so we get a lot of questions around, "What improvements can I make to my site that will make a big impact?" So, we put together a list of eight items that can be implemented easily that will help improve your websites. So, let's dive in. You guys have probably received dozens of phone calls over the past two to three years about making your website responsive. However, there's still plenty of websites out there that are not responsive or are not mobile ready, and some of you may not even know what the heck that is. So, let's chat about making your website mobile ready.

01:38 Ken Franzen: Yeah, this is a great one to start with because it's been around for a little bit as far as this big movement in the web design world and a lot of this was pushed by the rise of the mobile devices, the increased use. Now most... The majority of websites, likely when you pull up an analytics report, you're gonna see all your traffic's coming from mobile devices than desktop computers. And so, this one might not be as simple, easy update as some of these others might. The changes that we're gonna talk about here, some of 'em are super simple things that you can adjust to your existing website, some of 'em might require a little bit of an overhaul. This one here's a little bit more of a bigger item but it's very important. So, if your website is not mobile ready, if you haven't made the move yet, you really, really should give consideration to it now. It's super important that you take a look at rather than how your website looks on your laptop or your desktop, start to think like the majority of your website visitors think or how they're using your site. And it's likely that you need to shift your focus to a mobile-first standpoint. So, the best thing to do, I could say here, is, if your website's not mobile ready, definitely make that step. Now, the flip side is, your website might be mobile ready, and what you need to do here is then take a look at how your website does appear or how it functions on a mobile device.



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03:26 Justin Johnson: Right.

03:27 Ken Franzen: Because a lot of these sites were built back during the initial changeover, let's say changeover is like there was this date on the calendar that everyone... Well, there kind of was when Google did their switch or their update. Now, what you wanna do is some of these sites have been built a long time ago, their responsiveness... They're "responsive" but maybe they're not optimized best for mobile devices.

03:50 Justin Johnson: See, but Ken, I think people are still getting confused because they look at their website on a mobile device and they see that it's just like a shrunk down version of it and they're like, "Well, you know, my website is mobile ready, isn't it?" I don't know...

04:07 Ken Franzen: That's an interesting thing you're bringing up, yes, because I had recently visited a client that we just did a redesign for and they were a little angry when I walked in the door, and this is my fault for, I think, in not properly educating. But they were like, "Our website isn't mobile ready," and then, "I'm not very happy about it." And I'm like, "I am pretty sure that it is. However, perhaps there's something that's not causing this thing to load right, maybe there's a glitch that we overlooked, and we are human, so this happened. Let me pull this up." And I'm like, "That looks fantastic. It looks great." He goes, "That doesn't look like our website." And I'm like...

04:47 Justin Johnson: That's not it. Somebody else has designed that.

[laughter]

04:50 Ken Franzen: I'm like, "But this is the mobile version of your website." "But that doesn't look like what it looks like on my computer." And I was like, "Well, you're used to the shrunken version because we just came from that." I'm like, "Oh, my gosh. I assumed that we understood this and now it's my fault for assuming..." So once I explained to him what we had going on, he was like, "Oh, it makes absolute sense." So, great point. The mobile version, so if you have a site that's not responsive, your website still will appear on mobile devices, it just is going to be shrunk. It's going to be smashed down...



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05:23 Justin Johnson: Super small. Super, super, super small.

05:26 Ken Franzen: So, the text is gonna be super tiny and it's... You're gonna have to do the pinching to expand and see what anything... How to...

05:31 Justin Johnson: Could it be used? Absolutely. However, it's not what we're talking about here.

05:38 Ken Franzen: No. And so what we're talking about here is your website being constructed in a way that it adjusts to the width of the screen upon which it's being viewed. So, your texts, your font size remains consistent and the elements rearrange based on whether it's been looked at on a smartphone, a tablet, a laptop, or a desktop. And so, what we're really trying to do here is we're trying to serve up an optimal viewing experience for every site visitor, no matter what device they're using to access. And so, it doesn't require the zoom in to find that button that's on the far right corner of the header of the navigation. I think it says, "Schedule a consultation" but you're not quite sure because, well, no one's eyesight is that good, except for Superman.

06:29 Ken Franzen: So, what we wanna do here is look at some things. So, let's flip back to the talk track where we're assuming that you're... And here I go, assuming again. We're gonna go along the mindset that your website is mobile ready. What else can you do? Let's say that your website was built to be responsive a couple years ago, but you haven't really looked at it much, and now you're seeing in your analytics report that your mobile traffic...

07:00 Justin Johnson: 60%, 70%.

07:01 Ken Franzen: Is outpacing your desktop traffic. It's time to pay attention to how you're looking to the majority of your site visitors. First thing I say to look at is, "What do you see on the homepage right away when your website loads?" Is it your main call to action, your main headline, your value proposition there, front and center, that they can see? Do they clearly understand what's going on? Where they're at? Or is it filled with a bunch of navigational items because your navigation doesn't collapse? What does that experience look like? And is that how you would like your website to be presented, first and foremost, above

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the fold. Your fold is definitely smaller on a mobile device than it is on your desktop, so you have to make better use of that real estate. And look through the experience. Go through the experience. How are all the elements on your, the homepage or the secondary pages? How well are those positioned? Does it flow well? Does it feel natural? 'Cause it's going to be a different view. You have, again, much less real estate, you have a much narrower screen, there's gonna be more scrolling required, so do you present all of the images and all the information that you normally do on your desktop version? Or do you have a different version that is presented there?

08:32 Justin Johnson: Yeah.

08:33 Ken Franzen: Forms are another thing that's huge, because the thing is...

08:35 Justin Johnson: Huge.

08:37 Ken Franzen: If you're sending traffic to your site, you have marketing campaigns going on, you're investing whether it be paid search or just the effort you're putting in for organic or driving people to your traffic from your email marketing efforts, emails, so much email is opened on mobile devices. So they're gonna visit your website from a mobile device, and if you're trying to convert them through use of a form and your form is not easy to use, you're crushing your conversion opportunities.

09:10 Justin Johnson: I've got somebody that I just talked to about this. And they couldn't figure it out. They had multiple forms of marketing that they were doing. They were running ads from Google, from Facebook, from Yelp. They had a couple of traditional methods in place that they were doing to direct traffic to their site. The reason that she reached out was the fact that they were getting two to three website form submissions on a monthly basis. And she couldn't figure it out. She had a pretty decent amount of traffic and everything, so we started diving in and I took a look at it, and I was like, "You know that your mobile traffic is 75% of your visitors." And she had a website that wasn't mobile ready. So, essentially, she's spending all this money on a monthly basis, sending these folks to a website that's not mobile friendly and she's got all of these ads running to this page. Again, these are just things that people are not aware of. They don't know that they've got 75% of their traffic being mobile as opposed to 25% being desktop, and just the importance of this, if you have not looked at it, is huge.

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10:28 Ken Franzen: Sure. Literally she's paying money to send people a bad experience.

10:32 Justin Johnson: They're leaving. Right. All you're doing is flushing that money down the drain, essentially.

10:39 Ken Franzen: Absolutely. Absolutely. The last thing I wanted to make, mention about, the things to look at regarding your website being mobile ready or responsive is, also check and see how quickly your site loads on mobile devices.

10:52 Justin Johnson: Yeah.

10:53 Ken Franzen: You wanna make sure that your website does load quickly. We all know what a slow loading website will do to our bounce rate, and that is the quickest way to get someone to simply do that, to bounce off, leave your site before you give them the opportunity to dive in deeper and go to more information, more pages. So, if you haven't made the switch yet, do so. If you have, do an audit, run through some things, make sure that that experience is everything that you would expect it to be on the desktop.

11:29 Justin Johnson: Yup. All good points. Alright. So, next up, we talked about... Actually, we just recently talked about this, I think. We talked about the importance of having a value proposition on one of the recent episodes. This one should be an easy addition to your website without making a bunch of changes, just adding a value proposition. It helps provide a positive visitor experience. There's absolutely nothing worse than getting to a homepage of a website and not having a clue as to what service, what product it is that you're being offered to your visitors. You need to connect with your customer the second that they land on your site. Having a proper value proposition in place is an extremely important first step, wouldn't you say?

12:19 Ken Franzen: Yeah. Actually, we just covered this in the last episode, but it's so important, I think it's so overlooked. First thing that I often chat to individuals about is pull up your website and then, "What do you think?" I was like, "I know what you do, but if I never you met you before, I wouldn't know what you did or what my purpose... What you were gonna give me by visiting your website." And so, you need to know right away when... You need to let your site visitor know right away, they're in the right place, that you can help them by clearly just identifying what you do and how it will benefit them.

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12:58 Justin Johnson: Yeah.

13:00 Ken Franzen: So this value proposition, check out the last episode. Episode, I believe, 19, and we go through some detail on creating this. But this is one of those easy to add items. We can plug in a value proposition above the fold on the homepage and if you're finding struggles of having a high bounce rate, this is one of the easiest things to do. Likely people are coming to your site and they're not clear on what it is that you're doing.

13:25 Justin Johnson: They just don't know what is it they should do next.

13:28 Ken Franzen: So, what exactly, without forcing you to go through the last episode, what exactly is a value proposition? It's a concise statement positioning the value that you bring to a customer and how exactly you can solve their problems. So, it clearly will identify the following questions: What is the product or service you're selling? What sets you apart? What makes you different from your competitors? What is the key benefit of your product or service? What does that key benefit provide to the site visitor? And it defines who you are actually selling to, who is your target buyer persona? So, definitely check this out. Take a peek. It's Episode 19, I believe. I'm not gonna hold that, but we'll include a link in the show notes.

14:20 Justin Johnson: Yeah. It was the last episode. We had some great examples in there and it's well worth the time to take a peek at that, if you haven't yet.

14:29 Ken Franzen: Absolutely. But of all the items here on this list, I think that this one is probably...

14:33 Justin Johnson: The easiest.

14:33 Ken Franzen: Super easy and could have the most impact. So definitely take a look and go through the exercise. If you don't have a clear value proposition, create one, get that above the fold, it'll do wonders.



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14:46 Justin Johnson: That one's pretty easy. This one's pretty easy as well. Let's talk a little bit about having clear call to actions on your website. One of the biggest mistakes website owners make is just not telling and letting the visitor know what to do next. This ties into the value proposition. It's just provide your site visitors with a clear call to act... Clear CTA, in which you're gonna hear a lot, "call to action" that tells them exactly where you want them to go next on your website, what are the next steps that you wanna take that visitor through. So, Ken, our value proposition talks about attracting more traffic, generating more leads and closing more customers, and then we follow that up with this nice shiny blue button, aka CTA telling our visitor to get started. And this is where you have the ability to guide your visitor through what it is that you wanna present. Take 'em through the journey on your website. What are some different CTAs that can be used with these types of offers?

15:48 Ken Franzen: Sure. So the button's a perfect example. They're the most simplistic form, and the different types of calls to action vary depending on where they're at in the buyer's journey or the funnel. And so you have top of funnel, middle of funnel, bottom of funnel calls to action. So a bottom of funnel one would be "Call today" or "Schedule an appointment." More of a top of funnel, like we have on our website is, "Let's get started." This is the first step. Get started here and we're gonna take you on this little journey here of explaining what we do and, ultimately, helping you decide where you need to go, what's your next step.

16:31 Ken Franzen: So other types of CTAs, they can be banners, graphical banners, they could be a simple video or an animated GIF, it could be a simple link. And a lot of times, you'll find that it's great to position multiple CTAs on the same page, because each site visitor's gonna have a different intent and they're gonna be at different stage of the buyer's journey while they're visiting your website. So it's like having these different offers for the different folks at the different stages. And so, basically, it's not uncommon to have a single CTA on a page and it'd probably be something a little bit more deeper into your site, where you'd have it more pointed, knowing that if they're on this page that this is a specific CTA. But with your CTAs, they're gonna be typically linked up to a landing page with a form that has this desired action. It's a clear, "Fill out this form, and you will receive this benefit."

17:38 Justin Johnson: "Here's where you go, here's what you do next."

17:41 Ken Franzen: Exactly.

17:42 Justin Johnson: There's never options to do anything.



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17:45 Ken Franzen: Yeah, so you're not gonna... That landing page is gonna be void of phone numbers or navigation. You're really trying to take them along this path and have the least amount of distractions as possible. Your sole purpose is to get them to convert. Whatever the instruction of the call to action was, you want them to follow through, through that action. So, landing pages, they're also gonna help you convert or check out those conversion rates, which are really helpful, so you can see how well your CTAs are performing. And then make adjustments if you need to, but adding CTAs are gonna help with your conversions. So all that website traffic that you're working your butt off to get... All the eyeballs you're working to get to your website, and you sit there, and you scratch your head, much like the customer that you were talking about previously, scratching your head, going, "Okay, great. I have all this traffic and I'm spending a lot of resources, time and money in getting this traffic, and I'm not getting conversions. What the hell's going on?"

18:41 Justin Johnson: You're just not telling them what to do.

18:42 Ken Franzen: Exactly.

18:43 Justin Johnson: You're not giving them enough direction. That's it. Period.

18:45 Ken Franzen: Just grab their hand and say, "Follow me". And that's all it is. Just put yourself in their shoes. If I came to my front door and I was lost, what would I do first? What would be the next step? And as with the CTAs, you just wanna take 'em through.

19:04 Justin Johnson: Guide 'em.

19:05 Ken Franzen: That CTAs are another simple example.

19:07 Justin Johnson: Perfect. Another big, big area that I can see for improvement is with forms on your website. I see this all the time where clients have... They wanna... They want everything from their website visitors and they provide you with this ridiculous long list where it's 34 fields of information, and this is what I'm gonna collect from my website visitors, so put this on this form. It's funny but it happens more often than

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not. Would it be nice to collect all that information from your visitor? Heck, yeah. But that's probably not gonna happen. They're probably gonna take a glance at that form and just run because nobody's going to fill out that much information. So, this one's simple. Just make your forms as simple as possible, and make 'em extremely easy to complete.

20:05 Justin Johnson: And just going back to our conversation on how important it is to have your site mobile ready. Just think about that from that standpoint. If you've got this form or you've even got... Nothing ridiculous, let's just say 10 fields and you're buying ads and you're sending these folks to your website and maybe you are sending 'em directly to a landing page, directly to that form, and then if I'm on my phone and I have to fill out 10 fields, just think about how long that would take you to do that. So, just really take a step back and look at your form, simplify them, and think of just the necessary information that you need in order to get that lead into your system, and you'll be able to gather all that additional information at some point if you have them properly set up in some type of funnel or a sequence where you're sending them out information.

21:01 Ken Franzen: That's the key there, what you just said. You'll be able to grab all those additional data points that you just have to have...

21:10 Justin Johnson: At some point.

21:11 Ken Franzen: At some point. But right now, what you're trying to do, don't walk up to...

21:16 Justin Johnson: Don't make them run. Don't make them leave.

21:18 Ken Franzen: The very first second you meet 'em, be like, "Hey, my name is Ken. What's yours? Great. Can I have your social security number?"

21:24 Justin Johnson: Your firstborn?

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21:26 Ken Franzen: Right.

21:27 Justin Johnson: Your thirdborn. Your mother's maiden name.

21:27 Ken Franzen: No, that's just not gonna happen. You're gonna build some...

21:29 Justin Johnson: What else can you give me right now?

21:30 Ken Franzen: Exactly. So you gotta build some trust there. And really, the first time... This is your first meeting with them likely. And if it's not, even so, you want them to complete this form.

21:39 Justin Johnson: Make it easy. First name, email address, anything else? How does that sound?

21:43 Ken Franzen: Well, at an initial entry point, yes, first name, email address, or just an email address, just get them in your system. Now, if you're a little bit more bottom of funnel and you're trying to schedule an appointment and you'd like to have a phone number, then fine, grab a phone number, get an email address, and maybe if you wanna ask 'em a little bit about their project, at that point, they're gonna be willing to give up a little bit of information. You don't need a business address. You don't need to know what their annual revenue is, how many employees they have, all that jazz at this point, right? You just need to understand... Just get them comfortable...

22:14 Justin Johnson: Just need to be able to talk to 'em.

22:16 Ken Franzen: Easy form to fill out. And so, there's a couple things to really consider when you do your forms, look at 'em and see, are they easy on the eyes? Are they clear? Is there nice color contrast? One thing that's important, if they're difficult, challenging, they have buttons that are too close to the color of the backgrounds, there's not a clear purpose of your form in the headline, tell 'em exactly what the reason is they're filling out this form. And then tell 'em what they're gonna get out of it. So, what's gonna happen after they fill out the form? Will they receive an email with more instruction? Will somebody from the company be

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contacting them? So be explicit in letting them know that, you fill this form out, this is what is going to happen. Label your fields clearly. This is one thing where I've gone through and looked at the forms, and I wasn't quite sure, especially the longer forms, if you find the need, sometimes you have an online job application, which there's no way around, those usually have many, many fields.

23:29 Ken Franzen: But sometimes they're laid out, where you're just like, "Okay, does my name go here? Does my name go there?" And it's just really confusing. So, make sure that the labels are easily associated with the proper field, which comes to the next point of using lots of space. Don't try using tiny fields all crammed into the smallest space possible. Some people they'll say, "Well, I can fit more fields in here if I make my form, if I make it smaller fields and jam it all in here." It's gonna look cluttered. And the thing is this, the more intimidating your form looks, the less...

24:04 Justin Johnson: The more people are gonna not fill that thing out.

24:06 Ken Franzen: Exactly. Exactly. So, for your forms, if it needs to be a long form, like that application, break it into multiple sections so that it's super simple to do. If you have a job application form, break it into sections: General information, education, so on and so forth. Break it down into five sections. When people refresh, go to the next step, it's just gonna be like, "Okay, great. I only have six fields to fill out on this page. This is easy."

24:33 Justin Johnson: Yeah, it's so much easier.

24:35 Ken Franzen: If you serve 'em up a long, scrolling form that... They're gonna look at that, their eyes are gonna glaze over, and they'll be like, "I think I can find something better to do." And then the last thing is, just check out what they look like in mobile, 'cause like you said with that previous example, if your site is a mobile, then you definitely need to get there. But if your forms are challenging to use on mobile devices, you're gonna find it even more challenging to get conversions out of that. So, make your form simple.

25:03 Justin Johnson: Especially if that's where the majority of your traffic's coming from.

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25:06 Ken Franzen: Absolutely.

25:08 Justin Johnson: Alright. So speaking of cramped, this next one, I'm not sure why, but it seems like a ton of websites that we review, they are really, really scared of using whitespace on their page, or they just have never tried it. You get to one of these sites and you instantly... Just everything is jammed together. Just like you said with the forms, where you're trying to save space and the site visitor's not gonna have a clue as to where they're going next. They're gonna be scratching their heads, wondering, "What should I do? What should I concentrate on? What's the point of me being here?" So, end of the day, add some whitespace, give your website a little bit of a breather, and air that sucker out, right?

25:56 Ken Franzen: Oh, absolutely. That's the key here. You're right. And I think that this is becoming less and less common, where we're cramming everything together. I think whitespace is being more readily used, but don't try to cram too much into one spot on your site. You can move that stuff around into the other pages. Oftentimes, I hear clients or customers say this, "I never scroll down very far so I need to get as much of this above the fold as I possibly can." And so, they don't want a long homepage because...

26:37 Justin Johnson: Right. And they were probably told that in the past too, "Get everything above the fold."

26:42 Ken Franzen: Well, no, no, no. And it is important to get the important elements above the fold, but you gotta make sure that you can clearly present the point you're trying to make. So, if you start throwing too much above the fold, there's no focal point, it's just one giant blob of a mess.

26:58 Justin Johnson: Clustered mass of stuff that you don't know where to go.

27:01 Ken Franzen: Absolutely. Absolutely. So, there is... Lots of people, lots of users do scroll, and I always tell everyone that comes with a statement like that is, "Don't make these types of decisions based on how you, yourself, use this."

27:19 Justin Johnson: Yeah. Everybody is gonna navigate differently.



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27:22 Ken Franzen: Exactly. So these things they really look... I'm not gonna argue all day long that the above the fold gets a lot more viewership than the bottom of the page. By far, that's...

27:34 Justin Johnson: If you have direction and if it's not loaded up with 48 things.

27:40 Ken Franzen: Sure, absolutely. But there are a lot of factors that go into the likelihood they're gonna make it to the bottom of the page outside of the length. And so, how you present your information, how clear you are, and a lot of things we've already described are gonna be in that factor there. But mobile views, you think about... You're never gonna get all that information above the fold that you have on your desktop, there's just less real estate there. Really make use of the whitespace, make it easy, present, be clear and concise. Spread your items out. If you need and find that the page is getting too long for your likings, then look at moving some elements over to secondary pages and presenting some clear avenues, lengths, CTAs, to get to that additional information. Use whitespace, and I guarantee if you air out the website a little bit, make things a lot easier to digest, you're gonna find that more and more people are going to find your information more attractive, more engaging, and overall, a better site experience.

28:52 Justin Johnson: Completely agree. Next on the list, we have increase page speed. This is something that's becoming a topic that a lot of people are hearing about and, really, there's nothing worse than when you get to a website and you see the little loading, loading, loading message. The load time of sites is... Especially with Google and the way that your site is being displayed in the SERPs anymore. There's so many different factors now. Page speed is extremely important. Everybody's impatient now, and if your page is taking... You've got all these different elements that are making it load for five, six, seven, eight seconds, people are leaving anyhow. So, just make sure that you're measuring your website load times and...

29:48 Ken Franzen: Yeah. There's oftentimes some really simple things that you can do to speed up your page load, the loading of your website, how quickly it loads. And not only is it great for your site, but... Because the thing is, like you said, there's nothing more frustrating trying to serve up a webpage and be like, "Oh, my Lord, when is it gonna load?"

30:07 Justin Johnson: When is it going to display?

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30:09 Ken Franzen: Exactly. So that's gonna hurt you, but in the same sense, you made mention about showing up in the search engines, in... The search engines are taking into account page load speed, how quickly your website will load, into consideration. Now, you're not gonna get added points for having an all fast website, but you will get demoted if you have a slow one. So, what are some things that cause websites to load slowly? Large images are oftentimes, a main contributor to slowing something down. So look at your images. Make sure that you have those optimized. You don't wanna sacrifice qualities to wanna have a good looking image but... 'Cause oftentimes...

30:51 Justin Johnson: Just not a 50 megabyte image.

30:54 Ken Franzen: Definitely don't go with that large of an image, for sure.

[laughter]

30:58 Justin Johnson: We've seen it.

31:00 Ken Franzen: The other thing to look out for is some of the template sites or the themes that you'd buy out of the box and set up, a lot of times, these purchased themes are just chockfull of all this functionality. It allows someone that doesn't know how to code to create a website, which is fantastic. The problem is, it's oftentimes jam-packed with so much additional bells, and whistles, and tools, and things that it just slows everything down. To give you that functionality, that ability to set up your own website, you end up having these additional elements that are hurting your page load speed. So, oftentimes you can strip out a lot of those things because you're not using 'em. So definitely check into that. Plugins, same thing. If you're using Wordpress or another site that uses plugins or extensions, check out and see if any of those plugins, sometimes they need updates, sometimes they conflict with one another and cause some page load issues.

32:08 Justin Johnson: Yeah.

32:09 Ken Franzen: Some of these items, you can address yourself, like the image size thing. It's likely something that you could quickly look and say, "Oh, if I pull this image down," and you're looking up a tutorial

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on YouTube on how to optimize an image in a photo editor, make that smaller, make that in size something that it's more acceptable, load that back up. That's something that you can likely do yourself. Some of the troubleshooting of maybe stripping out unneeded things from purchased themes or conflicts between plugins, you might have to actually seek the assistance of someone who knows a little bit more about coding. But definitely look at page speed. Two big visitors that are gonna really be interested in page load speed are your site visitors, the actual humans, and then, obviously, the search engines, when they come crawl your site, they wanna make sure that that loads quickly, nicely, neatly. So be nice. Make your site load fast.

33:08 Justin Johnson: Load fast. Alright. So let's talk a little bit about... This is actually similar to our whitespace, formatting your content. There is absolutely nothing worse than getting to a website where you've got just walls of text everywhere and it just resemble a high school textbook. Just take a look at your h1 tags, your headlines, your subheadlines, and pay attention to the spacing and everything with all your copies, [33:42] \_\_\_\_ have all jammed together. Let it breathe. It's the same thing that we're talking about with whitespace. You just really need to take a step back. From a visitor's standpoint when they're looking at your website, do they know what they're looking at with your content? Do they understand the direction to go next? Is it all crammed together? Just let it breathe.

34:00 Ken Franzen: Absolutely. The thing is this, you go to a site and you're served up that wall of content, like, "Oh my Lord, this is...

34:09 Justin Johnson: What is this?

34:09 Ken Franzen: "this is gonna be too much to read. I'm not even interested." And it served up in 12-point font with a super tight line spacing and it's...

34:20 Justin Johnson: 12 paragraphs.

34:21 Ken Franzen: It's 12 paragraphs long with just...

34:24 Justin Johnson: How am I gonna get through this?



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34:25 Ken Franzen: [34:25] \_\_\_\_ I didn't realize, 10,000 words, 12 paragraphs. You're just like, "Holy crap, I am not touching this." So, we still need to tell our story though. We still have to give the site visitor the information that they need in order to decide if they're gonna continue doing whatever it is they're, on our site, to do. And so, what we wanna do here is make use of some of these formatting options, so that our text looks more appealing. Now, 10,000 words, 12 paragraphs, you probably might be able to cut that down perhaps, maybe not. Let's just say that we're gonna go with that. You have 10,000 words that are as lean as possible, so what can we do here to make that more attractive? Well, you made mention of using h tags or headlines. So make sure your headlines are properly set up to have distinction. The h1 should be likely a little bit larger and dominant than the h2 and then the h3. And so make use of these properly throughout your content so that each section, if we're gonna stick with the 12 paragraphs we have going on, let's make sure that each of those 12 paragraphs are defined by a headline.

35:32 Justin Johnson: Yeah.

35:34 Ken Franzen: And then pay attention to the space in your copy. Some simple things like padding and margin adjustments can make a huge difference in the appearance of your text. So if your paragraph, the paragraph text is hugging too closely to that headline, it's just gonna look, back again, cluttered. Use some whitespace, add some padding and margin to those items there, so that it spaces that out a little bit.

36:03 Justin Johnson: It's just gonna be easier on the eyes.

36:05 Ken Franzen: Absolutely. Line heights and other things, it's a super simple fix, but make sure that there's a little bit of space in between the lines in your paragraph. It lets that text breathe and it makes it just much easier. When you're moving from one paragraph to the next, add a little bit of extra spacing, super simple. And don't place text too close to any particular edges: Edges of your browser window, edges of images. Again, make sure that it is... You've got plenty of space around it. The other thing that I find super important when it comes to formatting is font choice. Choose a font... So let's say that your logo, let's say that you are in the health and beauty... You own a beauty salon and you see there's a lot in beauty salons, they like to use script-type font types in...

37:02 Justin Johnson: My text shouldn't be script type too?

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[chuckle]

37:03 Ken Franzen: No, you should not, definitely...

37:04 Justin Johnson: Come on!

37:05 Ken Franzen: Look at...

37:06 Justin Johnson: I should?

37:07 Ken Franzen: No. So make sure that your font is easy to read, go something simple, don't try to get fancy with it. Don't try to serve up your entire site in Papyrus or Comic Sans because you'll have people outside your door with pitchforks and flaming posts ready to take you out. No! Just make it simple and easy to read for sure. Make sure that there's really good contrast between your font color and your background, especially if you're gonna use a dark-colored... Black, or dark blue, or a really dark background, go with a white text. And make sure that your links are going to have that same contrast. Don't make it challenging to try to have anyone read what it is that you're trying to write, 'cause that's just counterproductive. What are some other things? Don't make your...

38:00 Justin Johnson: Bullets, lists.

38:02 Ken Franzen: Yeah, absolutely. Without a doubt, bullet.

38:04 Justin Johnson: Bold.

38:04 Ken Franzen: Yes, make lists as much as you can, bold, italicize keywords that are key points that...

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38:11 Justin Johnson: Just break up the text.

38:11 Ken Franzen: It'll make things a lot easier.

38:15 Justin Johnson: Images.

38:15 Ken Franzen: Images are awesome. The other thing is, don't make the width of your paragraphs too wide on your page. The eyeball only wants to travel so far before it comes back. So the ideal width of a paragraph is about 40 to 55 characters, which is usually about eight to 10 words. So you might be looking and be like, "Are you kidding me?" No. Literally think about it, look at it, try. If you take that 10,000-word post and you put it into a format where you only have eight to 10 words per line, let's just do simple math here. It's 10 words per line, you have a thousand lines in your post. No problem, it's gonna be a longer page. But guess what? It's going to be much, much easier to read, and I guarantee you it's going to be read more often than if you serve that up in 500 lines. So, definitely take that into consideration. And use links. Link to other pages throughout your website for relevant copy. If you cite something, link to that external source to provide credit to 'em. And like I mentioned earlier, make sure your link color, one, has clear contrast against your background, but also is different enough from your normal regular text color, so they can clearly identify that it is a link. But yeah, formatting a content will take you a long way.

39:42 Justin Johnson: Alright. So we talked in an earlier podcast about how important it is to use great photos on your site. This is a really... It's cost-effective. This should be relatively inexpensive to be able to update and it will make a huge impact on your visitors, so use awesome images. Images are the key elements that are grabbing attention, telling your story. They can be between someone driving further into your content or simply just taking off and leaving right away. If it doesn't resonate with them, if it doesn't relate to what it is that you're presenting, they're gonna go bye-bye pretty quick. Ken, do you think it's a good idea to use your own images? What would you suggest?

40:30 Ken Franzen: If possible, yes. Use your own images, your own imagery is going to definitely be understood as genuine and being your own, versus stock photos. Now, I'm not saying anything bad about stock photos 'cause sometimes we don't have an option, we only can use stock photos, but when possible, if you have the ability, use your own photos. Make sure, though, that they're high-resolution. Some of the

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screens on, even, the smartphones these days are freaking amazing as far as the resolution, what they can bring out. The best... They bring out the best in a great image, but they also can... They amplify the worst of a bad one as well. So, make sure that you use photos at a high-resolution.

41:15 Ken Franzen: If you suck at taking pictures, which some of us do, find someone that doesn't suck. It's pretty simple.

41:22 Justin Johnson: There you go.

[laughter]

41:24 Ken Franzen: If you don't have any friends that take pictures, hire someone. You can get a decent photographer at a reasonable rate.

41:32 Justin Johnson: Right.

41:35 Ken Franzen: There's really, really, really good, accomplished photographers that'll cost you more, but there's a lot of really good photographers that are more than willing to come out and take photos of your products or services, your facilities, your staff, you hanging from a tree, cutting a branch down. Whatever it is that you do, they will come out and take a picture of you, and you can get that done at a reasonable rate. So yes, if you're not... If you're a novice or you have no idea how to use a camera outside of point and clicking, yeah, perhaps someone that understands, maybe, use of lighting a little bit so that you can really get some good imagery for your websites. But if using your...

42:14 Justin Johnson: So what if you stink, and you can't find anybody, and you can't find a photographer?

42:20 Ken Franzen: Sure. So if you strike out on all three of those fronts, then you can rely on stock photography. There's lots of photographers that have taken awesome pictures that are putting them out there for you to use, so long as you secure the licensing to do so. So, that's the key element here. Stock photo

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sites, there's lots of 'em out there, most of 'em are super reasonable in price. I'm talking a couple dollars you can find an image to put on your website. It's definitely worth spending the money on purchasing the rights to use those images. Don't steal photos from Google. For one, that's somebody else's work, and just because it's on the Internet, it does not mean that it's fair game, contrary to popular belief. Someone does own the rights to that photo, and we've seen it. I know we've mentioned it here in this podcast before, we've seen it firsthand with clients who have chosen to do that or people that we've started working with who told us stories where photos from their website were pulled from Google and they got some nasty letters from some fun-filled attorneys and all that jazz.

43:35 Justin Johnson: Avoid it.

43:36 Ken Franzen: You don't wanna do that, it's not worth it. I've seen, "Well, my buddy stole a picture from this other site here, so technically, he said, 'I could use it, I don't know where it came from.'" If you don't know where the photo came from, don't use it. Even when you're working with a web developer, a web designer, web developer in creating your new site, ask them. Say, "Hey, do we...

44:04 Justin Johnson: Well, because, ultimately, they're responsible for it. It's not the person that put it on your server, it's you.

44:09 Ken Franzen: Correct.

44:09 Justin Johnson: It's you. You're the owner, you're the website, you're the business owner, and guess what? You're gonna get smacked with a nice, hefty fine. So, definitely figure out where that came from before you have it posted.

44:21 Ken Franzen: Yup, but... Not to scare the crap out of anyone, stock photography is available, it's affordable, what we're just trying to say is just don't steal it. Don't steal it. So, in the hierarchy of importance here, take your own photos, hire someone if you can, that's very affordable. Next step down, use stock photos and purchase the rights. Sometimes the image you need isn't something that you can exactly get, and so this is where the third option, maybe you use the services of a graphic designer. And you take components from a couple different photos to piece together some of the best ads and artwork and hero images, and elements that are compilations of a couple different elements. So it might be part of a photo that you took,



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coupled with the background of something else. You can really create whatever you'd like, and then you have the best of both worlds. So, several different options there for using awesome images, but as you started talking about this item here, using awesome images, your images are gonna be... The people visiting your site are gonna look at the images first and they're gonna start looking at your copy. So make them awesome and have them support your story.

45:46 Justin Johnson: Absolutely. Good deal. Well, that was the eight items that we think that could be relatively easily implemented to help improve your websites. That's gonna be a wrap for today. I hope you guys enjoyed our conversation. We would be more than happy to provide you guys with a free evaluation of your site and provide you with some further details on some different improvements that you could make. We will provide a link in the show notes. If you would like to request an evaluation, the show notes will be available at [www.neongoldfish.com/podcast](http://www.neongoldfish.com/podcast). We are going to talk to you guys again next week.

46:30 Announcer: Thank you for listening to this episode of the Neon Noise Podcast. Did you enjoy the podcast? If so, please subscribe, share with a friend, or write a review. We wanna cover the topics you wanna hear. If you have an idea for a topic you'd like Justin and Ken to cover, connect with us on Twitter @neongoldfish or through our website at [neongoldfish.com](http://neongoldfish.com).

