



Episode 25: 8 Tips For Improving Your Bounce Rate

E25: 8 TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR BOUNCE RATE

00:16 Justin Johnson: Hey, everybody, welcome to the Neon Noise Podcast, where we help you decode marketing and sales topics. This is Justin and with me, I have my co-host, Ken. Ken, what's going on?

00:26 Ken Franzen: Not too much, Justin. How are you today?

00:28 Justin Johnson: I'm good. Thank you. Thank you for asking. We talk quite a bit about the importance of tracking metrics on your website. It allows you to get a good understanding of what your visitors are doing once they arrive to your website, and also helps you identify areas that you may be excelling in, some areas that you could possibly use some improvement. Obviously, most of us want to increase our metrics for items like visits, unique visitors, page views, etcetera. These metrics indicate that things are probably going well and headed in the right direction, however, the metric for bounce rate is one that we would prefer to have a lower number, as opposed to something high. So we get a lot of questions from business owners like, "I'm not getting any leads from my website," or "We've got all kinds of website traffic, but our submissions are really low." "People are coming to my website, but they're not staying long."

01:27 Justin Johnson: We hear a lot of stuff like this, and once we go back in and start diving and digging into things to try to identify what their issues are, a lot of these questions that these business owners have, they could be indications that you are having some issues with your website and your bounce rate being higher than we would like it to be. Having a high bounce rate could mean that you have something wrong with your site or maybe possibly something wrong with your strategy. Either you're attracting the wrong site visitor, or visitors are coming and they simply are having a difficult time locating what they need. Today, we wanna touch on website bounce rates, basically what website bounce rates are and just cover some tips on ways that you can help reduce your website bounce rate. A lot of you guys are probably scratching your heads and wondering what the hell website bounce rate is.

[laughter]

02:22 Justin Johnson: You haven't even looked at your analytics report. If that's the case, not a big deal. This is what we're gonna cover today. Okay, so the definition of a bounce rate is the percentage of single page visits, visits in which a person, basically, they came to your website and they left off of that entrance page. Bounce rate is a measure of visit quality and high bounce rate generally indicates the site entrance pages aren't relevant to your visitors. In a nutshell, having a high bounce rate could indicate the information that you have published isn't organized well, maybe it's hard to navigate, maybe it's not engaging to the site visitor. There's a number of different things that it could be. We are going to address some of those problems by providing eight tips on things that you can do to help reduce your bounce rate. So, Ken, why don't we dive in? What do you got on the list for number one?

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03:30 Ken Franzen: First up is the formatting in your page. We've mentioned this before, but a lot of times we'll get someone come through our front door and then run screaming [chuckle] back out that door, is just the fact that our site's not very visually friendly, that the formatting, it's a giant block of text. You think back to how we used to build websites a long, long, long time ago, Justin. Remember what some of those sites used to look like? The formatting, just you had a left side bar, a right side bar, you had your content...

04:08 Justin Johnson: It was very, very similar for every single site.

04:11 Ken Franzen: Every single site. Yes.

[chuckle]

04:13 Ken Franzen: Sure, sure. But it was ugly. It was... I mean, compared to what we...

04:20 Justin Johnson: Compared to now. Yeah.

04:21 Ken Franzen: Yes, of course it is.

04:22 Justin Johnson: Back then, it actually worked.

04:23 Ken Franzen: Back in the day, yeah, it was... No. Exactly, but that style of site today would realize a very high bounce rate.

04:32 Justin Johnson: Sure.

04:33 Ken Franzen: And so, the things that we do now today, that we can put in play: Use headlines, subheadlines, make them big, make them bold, make them stand out from the rest of the text. Use really good white space balance in your content. Bullet points are underutilized. Bullet points can really help make your text appealing, seem more digestible, easier to consume, easier to scan. Bold up the text on some of the keywords for that topic of that page. People are gonna come to that page. If they're coming from a search engine visit, they're looking at the title and the description that they saw on the SERPs, and they're saying, "Okay, well, this is what this page is about." And they're gonna quickly scan to see how close that matches.

05:23 Justin Johnson: If that relates.

05:26 Ken Franzen: Yeah, in those headlines, those bolded words, those are gonna be the things that they're really gonna cling on to. Visuals like images, charts, screenshots, where it's appropriate throughout the page. There are a handful of really good readability tools out there that you can use to test your pages. Just do a

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Google search for "website readability tools." All you have to do is plug in your URL and it gives you the results and most of these'll offer suggestions on what you can do to improve your page formatting...

06:00 Justin Johnson: Yeah, definitely. We should come up with... There's a handful of 'em, I think that we use, and we can include those in the show notes, but definitely helpful for helping out with your page formatting.

06:07 Ken Franzen: Perfect.

06:11 Justin Johnson: Second is, we just talked about value propositions not too long ago. Having a high bounce rate is usually due to not having a solid value proposition in place. If your customer is confused as to what you're selling or how you're gonna solve their problem, how you're gonna address their problem, they're going to run for the exit right away, which is obviously going to increase that bounce rate. So the good news is, you can address the problem fairly easily, by adding a value proposition front and center for your website visitors. If your visitor has a good understanding right away when getting to your site on how you're gonna help them solve their problem, then they should continue to stay on your site. Hey, Ken, what are some items that we can make sure that you have in place for your value proposition?

07:06 Ken Franzen: Some of the things, when it comes to value proposition, you wanna do is... I don't know, break it down. Answer the following questions: If you can quickly tell the site visitor what product or service you're selling, the benefits of that product or service, who that target buyer persona is that you're selling to, and what makes you different from your competitors, you're gonna crush it. You're gonna do much better and that's gonna give them a solid understanding, a solid foundation, that's quick, easy to digest, so that they instantly feel like, "I'm in the right spot." Or maybe they're not in the right spot and they should bounce, and that's okay too. Then it's not our value proposition. We figure out what the other... One of the other tips will take care of that. But for the points of the value proposition, cover those four items and you'll be way ahead.

08:00 Justin Johnson: Alright. Next up, include a strong call to action. You've done all this hard work it took you to get all these visitors to your page, you formatted the page nicely, you're providing great content, you just simply do not want them to bounce due to a weak call to action. Alright, so include a strong call to action. You've done all this hard work attracting visitors to your page. You've formatted the page nicely. You're providing great content. Don't make them bounce due to a shitty call to action. We don't want them to exit the page. We want them to take action now. Our goal should be, for every visitor to buy our product or our service that we're selling, or at least, be interested in moving on to get further information from us. Majority of websites we review, they don't even have a call to action in place. And this is absolutely a reason why you're gonna have a high bounce rate and a lower conversion rate. So why don't we talk about some different tips for creating a strong call to action?

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09:11 Ken Franzen: Yeah, so a couple tips for CTAs, let's start with urgency. Create urgency. Give them a sense of, "We need to act now." Use discreet measurements in time in your call to action, phrases like, "click now," "try our software today." You could even say that there's some type of exclusivity or limited availability to that offer, where...

09:40 Justin Johnson: "You have to click now."

09:43 Ken Franzen: "Ten free trials are being given out now. Be one of ten." And make that an accurate number. But give the visitor an understanding of how easy and immediate their action should be. Use numbers, concrete digits, including prices make the action very specific for the visitors. And indicate a specific action. Make your action as specific as possible. You have to tell them exactly what you want them to do. Don't leave any stone unturned, areas...

10:16 Justin Johnson: I think this is a big one that people struggle with. I do.

10:20 Ken Franzen: I do. I think that they're somewhat assumptive, maybe, and this will...

10:24 Justin Johnson: Yup. Tell them what to do. Tell them how to do it. Give them specific direction on where to go next.

10:29 Ken Franzen: Very specific. Yes, absolutely. And make sure that there's no mistake. I'm not undermining the intelligence of anyone's audience, but set it up to where a third-grader can understand what they should be doing, what that next step is.

10:48 Justin Johnson: Exactly. That's a great one.

10:51 Ken Franzen: There shouldn't be a question there. Make your CTA clickable. And this seems like a, "Well, duh," moment...

[chuckle]

11:01 Ken Franzen: But if you're using a text link, underline it. Make it easy to see. If you're using a button, take advantage of some of these CSS abilities, whether it be drop shadows, 3D effects, whatever. Make sure that it looks like it's clickable. I think that buttons that alter some way, when you hover your cursor on the top of 'em, whether it be they invert color or something, definitely lets me know that this is an actionable component, a hot spot. And again, I go back to the beginning of this, these seem like, "No, well, duh," moments, but they're small, simple things that you could do that have a major impact. Make sure that your CTAs are clickable... The other thing that I think is often overlooked and should be utilized is the use of color.

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Use contrasting colors, it draws the eye, and figure out where you want them to go, and make sure that that's the focal point. And leverage the use of those contrasting colors in, and that's actually...

12:13 Justin Johnson: I think that's another big one. You get a lot of sites that people send over to us and they've got a specific color scheme, maybe there's blues and greens or something along those lines, and then all their CTAs are blue and green, and just blend right in with everything else, and it doesn't stand out, so you don't even know it's there.

12:33 Ken Franzen: Sure. No, that's a great point. And then piggyback off the colors. Another thing I really like to... That wouldn't create in CTAs, is if you're using an image of a person, have their eyesight look at the actual button or CTA itself. So if somebody's on there, make their focal directions be at the CTA...

13:01 Justin Johnson: At the CTA. Absolutely.

13:04 Ken Franzen: It'll naturally guide your user to it, which segues in the next step, is positioning. If you can put your CTA above the fold, I mean, if we can present the site visitor with a call to action immediately, when they land on the page, without requiring scrolling, then that's awesome. Some pages have more content than others. Obviously, position the call to action, the CTA, where the page, naturally, it makes the most sense. If there needs to be some content that support and leads to that CTA, then make that be in the proper progression, I guess. But having a great call to action is going to improve your visitor usability. Giving your visitors a great user experience will keep them on your site. Every additional second they spend on your site is only gonna help improve your conversion rate, and then also lower that bounce rate. So take these tips that we just talked about for CTAs, implement them. It'll definitely bear fruit.

14:15 Justin Johnson: Beautiful. Alright, number four. Get rid of annoying pop-up windows. I know this sounds ridiculous and everybody should know it, but it's not nearly as bad as it was 10, 15 years ago, where there was just pop-up, pop-up, pop-up everywhere. However, we still run into plenty of websites that have that dreaded pop-up window right when you get to the front door of the site. Does that annoy you? It annoys the crap out of me.

[chuckle]

14:48 Ken Franzen: Yeah.

14:49 Speaker 1: It's just the first thing that you do, when you get to the landing page or something, and you got this giant pop-up window. There's nothing more frustrating.

14:57 Ken Franzen: Yeah. I don't like it. Right when I'm starting to try to get into... Let's say, it's a blog post and I wanna start reading it, and all of a sudden I have to start clicking things.

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15:06 Justin Johnson: Boom! [chuckle] It's frustrating.

15:10 Ken Franzen: Putting masks over top of the content I'm trying to get to. I agree with you.

15:14 Justin Johnson: Very frustrating and it's not only me. I read someplace that there were around 70% of website visitors found pop-ups irrelevant. We're trying to lower our bounce rate, not turn away seven out of 10 visitors that are coming to our website. I would suggest that you just remove any pop-up completely from your site, in my opinion. Anything that's going to distract me from being able to read your content is probably going to make me immediately take off from your website. Try avoiding pop-ups, if possible. I will go ahead and you can thank me now for adding 70% more website visitors to your website.

[laughter]

16:00 Ken Franzen: Yeah, if you find that you want to have that pop-up, then I think there's less intrusive ways you can go about doing it. I think that putting it to be a trigger, that happens three milliseconds after they land on your page, is the wrong way to go. If you're going to have a pop-up that needs to cover the page, give 'em a chance to look around, at least walk in and take off their coat, before you start bombarding them. The other things you can do is, it doesn't have to be a smack dab right in the middle of the page covering it up, so you cannot continue reading that content any further unless you click on the pop-up, or...

16:43 Justin Johnson: It just should not distract from why they're there in the first place, period.

16:48 Ken Franzen: Correct. I've seen some subtle use of 'em, where they're on the bottom right corner, where they pop-up...

16:51 Justin Johnson: Definitely. Totally different.

16:53 Ken Franzen: And they only consume, maybe the bottom 15% of the page, in the bottom right corner. Those I don't mind, 'cause I'm just gonna like, "Well, I can work around this." But when you force me to... What is that Forbes or Inc. Magazine? I can't remember which one it is. Every time I click one of their articles, they put me those stupid pop-up, and I have to... It's a countdown...

[overlapping conversation]

17:13 Justin Johnson: Yeah. So, how often do you stay on that page? Perfect example.

17:16 Ken Franzen: Well, I took some... But I don't... It's a pointless pop-up. It's annoying me. It annoys me.

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17:20 Justin Johnson: Exactly. [chuckle] You're just like me. You're one of those 70%?

17:27 Ken Franzen: Sure. They're selling impressions. My favorite thing in the world is impressions and there's sarcasm in there, heavily laden, so if you're not picking that up, I'll explain it to you. They're selling impressions, and that's how they get their impressions, and it's total BS, because I don't remember any of those advertisers. I'm looking for the skip button as quickly as I possibly can, to move on as we go. So beat the crap out of pop-up windows there, but here we go.

17:51 Justin Johnson: Alright. Number five, decrease your page load time. We just recently talked about this not that long ago, I think. Speed is, it's extremely important to users. They expect your website to load within 1 to 2 seconds. And the longer that it takes for your page to load, the better chance that they're gonna be clicking on one of your competitor websites, or going to one of your competitor ads, or whatever it is. Google is also concerned about your site speed. Your rankings can slip, if your site is constantly slow to load, and that is also gonna obviously result in higher bounce rates. Bottom line, just a slow site is going to discourage visitors from sticking around and waiting for your site to load. What are some tips for decreasing load time for our listeners?

18:50 Ken Franzen: I think the biggest violator, one of the biggest, is images. A lot of times images are dropped into sites, and they're not optimized properly, and they're giant images. And so making sure that those images are properly optimized to be... We don't wanna sacrifice quality. We still want our images, that are so important to telling our story and delivering our message to be as quality as possible, but they don't need to be that gigantic 3.2 megabyte file that you pulled off your digital camera and loaded right into your website.

[chuckle]

19:25 Ken Franzen: Take it into a photo editor and crop that baby down.

19:31 Justin Johnson: Crop the baby down.

19:32 Ken Franzen: Resize it, so that it...

19:35 Justin Johnson: Just make it smaller.

19:36 Ken Franzen: Make it small as it can be.

19:38 Justin Johnson: A reasonable size.

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19:41 Ken Franzen: Other things that really crush load times, is sometimes, there's unnecessary scripts running in the background. And then the other thing I see a lot of times is plug-ins. A lot of sites are using WordPress, which uses plug-ins. Magento uses extensions. And sometimes these add-ons, they're super handy, they're easy to drop in. Sometimes we run into sites with really slow load speeds and we see that there are a warehouse full of plug-ins all installed and activated, that aren't even being used. A lot of times just cleaning those out and get rid of what's not being used. Declutter the plug-ins in your WordPress...

20:25 Justin Johnson: Declutter your box.

20:27 Ken Franzen: Dashboard and you'll probably see a lot of help there. But correcting your load time, it's gonna reduce that bounce rate. And so that's how you keep your visitors smiling, but as you mentioned, it's going to keep the search engines happy. The search engines are looking at bounce rate too. They're taking that into consideration as a search signal. And if you have a lot of people coming to your site...

20:48 Justin Johnson: Coming to your site and interested in what you're putting in front of 'em.

20:51 Ken Franzen: Exactly. Then if you're bouncing, especially for a certain keyword, let's say, you start ranking well for one of your favorite keywords, but then the bounce rate on that's super high, you're gonna lose your positioning on that right away, because the search engine's like, "Well, we thought this was relevant, but the actual usage, the way that the users are interacting with this page, doesn't speak to that. And so therefore, it looks like, based on the bounce rate, that they're getting to what we thought was a quality result, and they're not finding what they like, and they're leaving. We're gonna have to drop this in our search results down a little lower for something that is performing better." There's a lot of reasons to get that bounce rate down and don't let the page speed be one of them.

21:38 Justin Johnson: No. Absolutely not. Number six is, you're not targeting the right visitors, or maybe, not targeting the right visitors, based on where they're at in their buying cycle. Higher bounce rates, they generally indicate that you may be getting the wrong visitor from the very beginning. As a result, that could be a problem with your targeting. So you may wanna consider looking at your content marketing strategy at this point. It's possible that you have content structured for the buyer that is only interested in buying from you today. So you're focused on someone that is more at the end of the buying cycle. If your website visitor is just coming to do research on a product or a service that you have, and you are only displaying content for somebody that is a different stage in the buying cycle, you're gonna lose that visitor due to the content not being relevant to where they're at today. You just need to consider a content strategy that takes care of, basically, every stage of the buying cycle. Ken, what are some tips for making sure that we have all those buying cycles covered?

22:55 Ken Franzen: So we have the three stages of the buyer's journey or the buyer's cycle. We have awareness, consideration, decision. I think that the best way to go about this, is creating offers for...

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23:07 Justin Johnson: Each one of those.

23:08 Ken Franzen: Each of these stages. Yeah. For those that are at the beginning of the buyer's cycle...

23:12 Justin Johnson: We see that a lot though. When we talk about that a lot, is we see where they've got offers set up, and they're for somebody that's they're ready to buy it today, and that's it. And there's not anything for people that are considering their products.

23:28 Ken Franzen: Sure. If you think about just the simple logistics of, [chuckle] if you wanna get around a bounce rate, and if your only CTA on your page is a bottom of funnel offer, statistically, that... Let's say... Let's just be really generous and say 5% of your traffic...

23:46 Justin Johnson: You're high, but...

23:49 Ken Franzen: I know I am, but let's just say it's 5%. Then only 5% of them are clicking through and ending up on a second page. I'm not saying this is the only way you're gonna get another second page look on your site, but back up, stick with me here for a second, if you had a top of funnel or middle of funnel offer that clicked through to another landing page, more of your site visitors are gonna connect with that better, and they're going to likely... The likelihood of them clicking on it is higher and you're going to then be serving up a second page, which, voila, you've just solved your bounce rate problem. You've taken them to a second page. There's dual purpose here. It's actually just good marketing to serve up and be recognizing those that aren't just ready to buy today and need to be... They have some education left, they have some research left to conduct, and be that person that helps them out, but it solves a lot of problems there. And this isn't difficult, just work on creating for your buyer persona, addressing some of those concerns that happened earlier in the buyer's journey.

25:04 Justin Johnson: Perfect. Alright, cover all your bases for your buying cycle. Number seven is, your visitors are being sent to external websites. You've created all this great content, and maybe, you included some quotes to an external site, or you've referenced something from an external site, and you're providing a link to give them credit to the source, like we talked about earlier. Alright, so what happens here is every time a visitor clicks on a link to an external page, they have to click back buttons to come back to your website, so this is obviously going to decrease page views on your site. There's a real simple fix for this. When you have these links set up for different sources and whatnot that you're trying to give credit to on your site, set it up so it opens up a new tab, or a new window, and ensures that your website is, basically, still open underneath it, so they don't have to continue to try to click back to get to you. This will greatly reduce your bounce rate, if you've got external links set up on your pages.

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26:21 Ken Franzen: Yeah. And it also speaks to the fact of, when you... Sometimes you're gonna earn, where it's easier to link to an external site, where maybe that's content you should create on your own site.

26:33 Justin Johnson: Correct.

26:34 Ken Franzen: And this happens a lot. I don't like to drive traffic. You've made mention of referencing sources where it's due. All day long, absolutely, without a doubt, give credit where credit's due. Where I see this happen most often, is when we're in the content creation phase for a website, and the client just wants to be lazy with the content, and they'll say, "Well, I carry this line. Let's just link to the manufacturer website." And it's like, "No, that's not what we're gonna do here."

27:00 Justin Johnson: No, not with the...

27:01 Ken Franzen: We need to create copy for this and talk about their products on our website, keep them under our roof.

27:06 Justin Johnson: Great point. Great point.

27:07 Ken Franzen: So there's that small twist to the tip, that you just made there. But you, definitely, yeah, if you gotta link to an external website, then have it open up a new browser tab, so that your site's still there. It's not being replaced for that new business.

27:24 Justin Johnson: Right. Alright, number eight, is reduce your bounce rate by having a mobile-friendly site. We've discussed the importance of having a mobile-friendly site. We're not gonna dive into all that, but as well, as the amount of people that are searching for your products or services... What did we say last week? It's probably exceeding 50% of your website traffic.

27:52 Ken Franzen: Oh, no doubt. You look at all the analytics reports...

27:54 Justin Johnson: It's high, 50-60%, anyhow.

27:57 Ken Franzen: It's well over half.

27:58 Justin Johnson: It's time to make your website mobile-friendly, because your customers have their mobile devices on them everywhere. We're living in a mobile age right now, where 90 to 95% of your customers are on mobile, so it's time to make your website mobile-friendly, because your customers have their mobile devices with them everywhere. We're now living in a mobile age. I would guess anywhere from 90% to 95% of your customers are on mobile, so your website must be optimized for them. As you can see, there are quite a few different items that could affect your high bounce rate. If you're experiencing a high

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bounce rate, review the list that we've discussed today, make adjustments, and continue to monitor your bounce rate. Well, that wraps up the episode for today. We hope you enjoyed the conversation about bounce rate, and how it will help you understand bounce rate better, and address some of the problems you may be having. Until next time, this is Justin and Ken from Neon Noise. Make it a great day.

[music]

28:58 Speaker 1: 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 at Neon Goldfish or through our website at neongoldfish.com.

