

Capitalizing on Mobile Commerce with Responsive Web Design

RLC MEDIA

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While the factors that contribute to successful commerce are more like a complicated ecosystem than a single linear pathway, mobile's influence on everything from in-store experiences to the final purchase is undeniable. We are a mobile-first world. According to Google, 82% of shoppers say they consult their phones on purchases they're about to make in store, and mobile-related shopping searches increased 120% in 2016.

Based on this growth, businesses are finding that mobile is essentially the "front door to the store," driving shoppers to reach for their smartphones in every kind of impulsive and transactional moment—I-want-to-know to I-want-to-buy (and critically, I-want-to-buy-again) moments. When developing a website, first impressions are key to generating leads, and when 38% of people stop engaging with a website simply because the layout is convoluted or inaccessible, businesses must be prepared to match marketing messages with effective mobile design.

RWD: The What and Why

Responsive web design, or mobile-first design, is a relatively new design technique that utilizes one page to satisfy user expectations regardless of their browsing device's page width. Responsive pages transform themselves instantaneously to scale and reposition content in order to deliver a streamlined user experience for all viewports— smartphones, tablets, desktops. Ultimately, the specific interface experience delivered to the user is based on the width of their browser.

Why does it matter to your business? Consider the following three factors that create favorable (and conversion-worthy) experiences for your customers:

RESPONSIVE DESIGN CREATES COMPELLING FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Responsive design is web design that responds to the user's environment (i.e. smartphone) and their behavior. Based on factors like orientation, platform, and screen size, the design should ensure that layouts, grids and images fit the criteria required by a specific platform in order to avoid a disorienting layout.

The credibility of a business is highly dependent on the formatting of content on a landing page. Similarly, your bounce rate, conversion rate, and—most importantly—your sales, are impacted by page loading time. In terms of first impressions, almost 47% of online shoppers expect your web page to have loaded before 2 seconds are up. Continuing customer engagement with your site requires a responsive design that accounts for the weight and behavior of your content and viewport.

RESPONSIVE DESIGN INCREASES SEARCH ENGINE RANKINGS

Google knows it's imperative to satisfy all these devices—now. The mandatory switch to enhanced campaigns on July 22, 2013 was Google's line in the mobile sand, and in 2015, Google announced that it would use mobile-friendliness as a ranking signal in search results, making it "easier to get relevant, high-quality search results that are optimized for users' devices." An official testing of their mobile-first index in 2016 announced that algorithms will eventually primarily use the mobile version of a site's content to rank pages from that site, to understand structured data, and to show snippets from those pages in results.

Compared to a separate mobile site that fails to respond to Google's duplicate content penalty, responsive design keeps your content at one URL, as opposed to mobile site URLs like "m.site.com." If your current site is not mobile-friendly, retrofitting actions and plugins are possible to improve your site's rankings.

RESPONSIVE DESIGN INCREASES CONVERSION RATES

Besides all of the search benefits, including ensuring users' satisfaction with their experience, responsive design has the ability to increase those coveted conversion rates through both common sense and technical design.

At the most basic level, if a website isn't accessible on mobile or tablet, users won't convert.

But beyond the obvious, the tenet of progressive enhancement ideology (the method behind responsive design) forces designers to create the smallest design containing only the essential

features, thereby establishing the core of the UX. This means creating inviting and clear call to actions (CTAs) so that users can easily tap buttons and hyperlinks to purchase or make contact.

It also means using page-jumps that enable visitors to quickly move from one part of your content to another, helping increase conversion rates as they move from one part of the sales funnel to another. Page jumps work hard to make relevant content—the kind that drives primary user behavior—easily found.

MAKE RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN PAY OFF

As a best practice, responsive web design should be an integral part of your mobile strategy. While this design approach offers extensive opportunities to build your brand, it's important to view it as a method of design across all viewports. Desktop is still integral to your business strategy and requires it's own aesthetics and content formation in the responsive design process. To deliver a truly seamless and satisfying end-user experience across devices that stays ahead of the competition, you need responsive pages that make your SEO rankings and conversion rates thrive.

Is your site meeting the new responsive standard?

Your customers are always on the go. Let us coders build elegant responsive design to join them wherever their shopping takes them.