

6 Tips for Website Usability

From an SEO standpoint, a highly “usable” website is well thought out and includes clearly defined rich content, relevant headers and tags, and has an easy to follow navigation and linking structure. If your site has the content people are looking for; you will likely find people linking to that content. Jakob Nielsen, a master on the subject, defines usability as “a quality attribute that assesses how easy user interfaces are to use...usability also refers to methods for improving ease-of-use during the design process.”

Here are 6 tips for website usability:

- 1. Design a site with your users in mind, not your brand**
It may be a great idea to start the process with actual user-feedback. Conduct user-interviews, online surveys, or advanced tracking and incorporate the responses into a mock-up and a sitemap. Considering user perspectives from inception will allow you to develop a site that is intended to suit your audience’s needs.
- 2. Know what a “conversion” means to your site and business model**
Search campaigns are simply vehicles to help drive traffic to sites and landing pages, traffic does not equal conversion. Conversion is the responsibility of your website and is closely associated with an excellent user-experience; one element cannot exist without the other.
- 3. Make sure users can learn from your site content**
Users should be able to accomplish basic tasks the first time they enter your site. Set your website apart from others by providing solutions and relevant information. Remember that a blog shouldn’t be the only part of a website that is constantly updated.
- 4. Focus on ease-of-use and include helpful tools**
This lends to an intuitive navigation and emphasis of important elements. Ideally, users should identify a call-to-action quickly and easily. Also include tools to enhance your user-experience. Widgets, calculators, or video clips can help draw your audience in and also keep them on your site longer.
- 5. Create a memorable site**
A usable site should be extremely intuitive. If a user visits your site and returns a month later, they should be able to recall what steps they took, or how they found specific information. If your site and content are memorable, chances are you will experience many return visitors and a lower bounce-rate.
- 6. Base your decisions on data, not just internal opinion**
Do your homework before you have the usability conversation. Conduct online user focus groups, implement in-page analytics, or run experiments with Google Website Optimizer. Do not simply rely on internal company opinions of your website. Let user-data drive your decisions. After all, internal team members may not identify with your target market’s needs.