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Purpose

Crossroads Flowers is an established Fort Wayne floral shop. In addition to floral arrangements, they sell gift baskets, garden stepping stones, afghans, plants, fresh cut flowers, and other items.

The purpose of www.fortwayneflowers.net is to sell flower arrangements directly through the website, or to prompt the visitor to pick up the phone or come to the physical location.

This report will analyze the website from the perspective of a new visitor, addressing the topics of branding, usability, graphic design, etc.

Summary

The Crossroads Flowers website is in need of a design overhaul, and would definitely benefit from moving to a new ecommerce system with better design flexibility, SEO, and higher usability which would result in a higher conversion rate (more completed orders).

Design

Overall, the look and feel of the site is flat and uninspiring. Everything is trapped inside a black-bordered box, and the colors are sterile. Everything feels constricted; the content has no room to breathe. It doesn't look very inviting or elegant, and lacks unity. The navigation menus look like basic text. There is no typographical hierarchy between the various text elements on the page—everything is the same font size: navigation, headings, product names and descriptions. You can't tell at a glance what the most important text areas are.

Your website should be redesigned. You only have a few precious seconds to capture a visitor's attention, and establish your credibility and professionalism before they click the back button. Studio 625 is equipped to produce a stellar design for you, should you choose to do business with us (<http://www.studio625.net/portfolio/>).

Branding

The Crossroads Logo could use an update. The rose doesn't strike me as a solid, distinct mark, and the cursive font looks too spidery and weak, and doesn't relate to the rose very well. The text and logo mark looks like separate entities, rather than a whole.

The site doesn't really have a clear, intentional theme. It doesn't particularly support or enhance the logo, and I would have to see your other printed materials to judge whether the site aligns with your current branding and company identity.

Home page

The homepage of the site is functional, but it doesn't say what you do. There should be some introductory text that just briefly explains the purpose of the site and what visitors can accomplish there. For example:

“Order flower arrangements and gifts online or stop by our store at 6221 Maplecrest Road. We offer same-day delivery to Fort Wayne, Churubusco, Grabill, Harlan, Hoagland, Hometown, Leo, Monroeville, New Haven, Spencerville, and Woodburn.”

The large graphic on the homepage is good, because it leads visitors to the shopping area. I would recommend using that graphic more strategically, perhaps to promote a specific product rather than just taking the visitor to a listing of arrangements.

The product search box is a good addition to the site, because it allows you to read your visitors' minds if you hook it up with your analytics software (you're using Overture, which I assume has a site search statistics area). My recommendation would be to have a better results page when there are no results. Currently, it just takes you to a blank page if there are no results, which could cause a visitor to exit the site. There should be a friendly message like “Sorry, there are no products that match your search, but here are some other things you might be interested in—”

Architecture & Navigation

Having the different occasions listed out is smart. I think that's the way that most visitors will shop for a flower arrangement, but you could also display by product type (flower arrangements, plants, balloons, gift baskets, etc).

I would recommend renaming “About Flowers” to “Flower FAQ” or “Flowers 101”. When I first hit the site, I saw “About Flowers” and assumed that the page was about Crossroads for some reason.

Usability: Is the site easy to use?

There is a lot of room for usability improvement. The navigation should be redesigned to look more like a menu, and less like a list of text.

The product listing pages should show more than 6 items per page, and the next and back buttons should be more prominent.

On the product detail page, it would be nice to see the different size variations. Also, the photos aren't really big enough to see all the details of each product.

The biggest usability issue is the checkout process. It looks like you can only order one item at a time, so if the user wanted to order 10 different arrangements, he or she would have to place 10 different orders. On checkout, the user is presented with this confusing page:

Call Toll Free: 800-321-9634

Home • Customer Service • About Flowers • About Us
6221 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana
260-485-9634 • 800-321-9634

Crossroads Flowers

Login >

My Account

Proceed directly to checkout. >>>

New Customers

Create New Account
Why create an account? Click here.

Email Address:

Password:

Re-enter Password:

Minimum Of 5 Characters Required For Password.

Create >>

Returning Customers

Welcome Back!
You currently are not logged in. Please login below.

Email Address:

Password:

Login >>

Forgot your password? Click here.

Why create an account?

- * Expedite your purchases
- * Create a handy recipient list
- * Request email reminders of important events
- * View your order history & email or fax any invoice

back

Crossroads Flowers is located at 6221 Maplecrest Road in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Call 260-485-9634 or 800-321-9634. We provide full service flower and gifts delivery, featuring same day service. We deliver daily in Indiana to Fort Wayne, Churubusco, Grabill, Harlan, Hoagland, Huntertown, Leo, Monroeville, New Haven, Spencerville, and Woodburn.
About Us • Customer Service • Track My Order • About Flowers • Plant Care • Flower Meanings • Flower Library

It isn't clear that you can checkout without first setting up a profile. I would recommend making the "Proceed directly to checkout" link much more prominent, and minimize the account areas, maybe with a graphic that says "Sign in or create an account." I suspect that a lot of users abandon their order when they see this page.

On the next checkout page, I would remove the balloons and plush animals, or make it clear that these are additional items that the user could add to his or her cart. The checkout process should be as simple and clear as possible, otherwise you might lose customers that are prepared to buy.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

A properly optimized site will be search engine friendly, maximizing your chances of achieving a good Google ranking.

Your site is currently doing well in Google, coming up second in the rankings when you search for “fort wayne flowers”. Your competitor, armstrongflower.com is the only one performing better.

Here are some things you could do to improve your SEO:

1. Page-specific meta titles/meta descriptions, and page titles
2. Keywords in your url's. For example, instead of:
<http://www.fortwayneflowers.net/cgi-bin/crossroadsitem-dba.cgi/CF22-10>,
have something like this:
<http://www.fortwayneflowers.net/anniversary/burst-of-color-bouquet>
3. Use H1 tags for headlines
4. Get more backlinks. There are currently only 16 other sites on the web that link to your website. Your competitor, armstrongflower.com has 336.

Some of these items will probably require you to move to a different shopping cart solution. We have some recommendations, if you are interested, and would be happy to help with the transition.

Conclusion

Studio 625 would be happy to help you with these recommendations!

Please call us at 260-450-5664 or email us at hello@studio625.net