

# Ten Tips for Creating an Awesome Insurance Agency Website

## *Unleash the Power of Your Insurance Agency Website*

by SmartsPro Marketing

### The Problem:

**Are you happy with your insurance agency website?** If you have one — and you know you should — chances are good that it's underperforming. For one thing, insurance agency websites are usually poorly designed. That doesn't mean they don't look good aesthetically. They may look great — or not.

**But looks aren't everything.** The problem with most agency websites is that they are not designed for marketing.

- They don't do a good job of positioning the agency's unique value proposition.
- They don't make visitors feel like they want to get to know the people who work at the agency.
- *They don't invite visitors to do business with them or even get to know them.*

**Nice design, lousy performance.** A lot of insurance agencies miss the forest for the trees with their websites. They focus so intently on creating a sophisticated design with high-end gadgets and special effects that they miss the whole point. They think the main reason to have a website is to buff their corporate veneer and validate their credibility.

Maybe so — if you don't mind wasting the best marketing tool in your entire Internet tool kit.

The purpose of a website, most practical agency owners would agree, is to sell products or build relationships with people so you can eventually sell them products.



**Poor design, lousy performance.** On the other hand, a lot of agency websites not only miss the boat from a marketing perspective, they are poorly crafted from a design standpoint. These DIY websites lack structure and, as a result, text pours down the page without visual relief; sidebars are loaded with copy that distracts from the main theme of the page; and random graphic devices either scare people off the page or leave them bewildered.

## The Solution:

### How to Create an Awesome Insurance Agency Website

Your agency website can be a powerful marketing, prospecting and relationship-building tool. But to get the most out of it, you need to follow certain best practices.

When SmartsPro Marketing decided to expand our range of marketing tools to include insurance agency websites, we didn't just hire a developer and a web designer and start selling websites. We researched insurance agency websites for almost two years, studying their design and marketing features to determine which ones were successful and which ones were not — and why. Then, working with a professional design and development team, we created a line of websites especially for insurance agencies.



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In this special report, we'll share with you the “secrets” of success that we discovered after examining hundreds of insurance agency websites. What we've learned we summarized in ten important tips that will help you unleash the power of your insurance agency website. Here they are:

#### Tip #1: Make Your Website Functional as Well as Attractive

When visitors arrive at your site, you want them to understand intuitively how your site is put together. So make it easy to navigate. Divide the material on your site into easily organized chunks: About Us, Our Services, Get a Quote, Service Center,

Newsletters, Our Blog, Contact Us. Use titles like these for each section in your navigation bar, with pull-down menus that further define the content in each group.

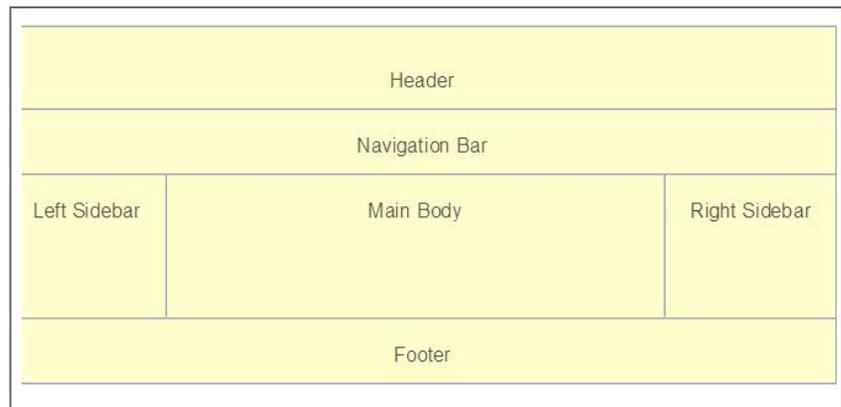
**Make sure your website has a clean and consistent look throughout.** Font styles, headers, graphic images, sidebars and footers should have the same look from page to page. But don't crowd your page with lots of busy graphics and dense text. Let the pages breathe with plenty of white space. Limit your choice of font families to one or two. These style choices will make reading your website easier, more coherent and help create a more professional image.

**Simple layout and design choices will help people find their way around your page.**

The basic layout of a website is a header with a navigation bar under it, a sidebar to the left or right (or maybe both), the main content area in the middle and footer at the bottom of the page. The diagram below illustrates the basic architecture of most websites.

**Surprisingly, there is a lot you can do with a basic layout like this.** The header

contains the name of your agency and main contact information. The navigation bar displays links to other key content pages. Sidebars may contain quote buttons, your newsletter sign-up button, buttons for Facebook and other social media, and pull-



quotes from testimonials or links to other popular pages on your site. The main body of the page, in the middle, is for the subject content of the page, such as policy descriptions, profiles of your key people, your newsletters, your blog, etc. Use the footer for required or supplemental content, including links to legal material, for instance, your privacy policy statement. This isn't the place for significant content, for the simple reason that most people are not likely to notice it.

## **Tip #2: State Your Unique Value or Selling Proposition**

**The “about us” page is really the key to your entire website. It is critical to get this right, for it should contain the essence of your unique selling or value proposition.**

This is where you tell visitors clearly and simply why they should do business with you. Many marketing people call this a positioning statement.

**Caution: Listing the insurance companies you represent and naming the products you sell is not a positioning statement.** Beyond mentioning your excellent customer service and professionalism, your knowledgeable staff and years of experience, the meat of your positioning statement defines what makes your firm unique.

**Do you have target markets?** Has your agency has been serving truckers for 30 years? Do you specialize in hard-to-insure health risks? Is your firm dedicated to providing insurance and risk management services to design professionals? Maybe you sell personal lines and individual life and health in Daly City, Calif. The “in Daly City” part, your great service and maybe warm, home-baked cookies for walk-ins on Friday could be your unique value proposition. Whatever it is, you want the people in your target audience to know that you’re the one they should do business with.

### **Tip #3: Promote Your Team**

**No matter how great your positioning statement is, it only does part of the job. Your website needs to tell visitors about what a great team you have to back it up.** Help clients and prospects understand that it’s the people on your team who humanize your mission.

**Tell an interesting story or two to illustrate your agency’s uniqueness.** The immense popularity of social media teaches us that people like doing business with people they know. So help people get to know you better. Provide links to places where they can find you on the Web, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or media forums. Let them know you’re accessible and invite them to contact you and get to know you through social media.



**Writing profiles of your sales and staff people is almost as important as writing about the agency itself.** Use the same approach you take when writing about your agency: What makes each person on your team stand out? How does each individual's skill set make your team stronger? Include photos or better yet, if you can, post videos of them talking about how much they enjoy their job and the clients they work with.

### **Tip #4: Provide Testimonials**

**If you want people to do business with you, make them feel secure about what they can expect from that experience.** Let them read about or hear from other people like themselves who have done business with you and are glad they did. Photos of your testimonials writers are a nice touch — and, again, video testimonials are even better. Place them liberally around your website and collect them under one of your tabs.

**Take every opportunity to ask for a review whenever a client makes a favorable remark or expresses satisfaction with something you've done.** Make it a part of the routine of everyone who deals with customers in your agency. **Tip:** Encourage people to post their reviews at Google Places; then post them to your site.

### **Tip #5: Content Is King**

Your website content is important for at least three reasons:

1. **You want visitors to appreciate and value your insurance expertise.** Your content demonstrates this. Even if they don't read your content, visitors want to know that you have it. You are an insurance information resource, and you want visitors to feel confident that they can rely on your knowledge and experience.
2. **Content helps increase your page ranking.** Google and other search engines are constantly looking for content to serve up when people enter search terms. The more content you post on subjects of interest to your target audience, the more likely your agency's website will appear higher in search engine rankings.



3. **You can use content to develop and nurture relationships.** Your newsletter sign-up button draws email addresses of people who want to hear from you regularly. You can also send the newsletter you post on your website (or links to it) to your clients and prospects as a regular communications “touch.”

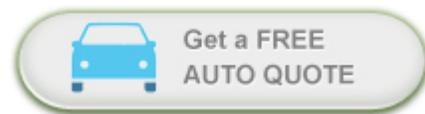
A powerful insurance agency website will include several kinds of content:

- **Coverage summaries** should describe the essentials of all principal lines of insurance you sell.
- **Blogs** require a lot of work. But when you post regularly and consistently seek new connections, you expand your circle of contacts and deepen these relationships, leading to new business opportunities.
- **Newsletters are the most versatile content tool.** On your website, they regularly keep readers informed about all aspects of the kind of insurance you provide. If you don't mail a paper version of your newsletter to subscribers, you send an email introduction with a link to your website version to your subscriber list. (SmartsPro Marketing can do this for our clients.)

## Tip #6: Use “Calls to Action” on Every Page

**Nothing happens until someone pushes a call to action button.** There are two basic things you want your insurance website visitor to do:

Become your customer *now*. Or become your customer *later*.



That's what those little website buttons that beg to be clicked do: build relationships and sell products. Here is a list of typical calls to action:

- **FREE Quote.** Examples: FREE auto quote, FREE life insurance quote, FREE Medicare supplement quote. Link the button to a third-party quote engine that supplies an online quote. Or link to a form on your own website that collects basic information so you can call the visitor before you provide the quote, giving you a chance to build a relationship.



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- **Request a consultation or policy review.** A great door-opener.
- **Sign up for our newsletter (or blog).** Build relationships with a consistent, reliable stream of articles that demonstrate your knowledge and underscore your credibility.
- **Download our special report on \_\_\_\_\_.** Target your niche markets with this and the next button.
- **Register for our webinar.**
- **Refer a friend.** Offer customers a small gift as a token of appreciation.
- **“Follow us on Facebook” “...Twitter.”** They help build relationships, too



### Tip #7: Engage with Social Media

**You shouldn't limit engagement to your website.** It's important to reach beyond your website to communicate with people. With 110 million Americans now using Facebook, it's big, it's important and insurance agents ignore it at their peril. By posting to social sites such as FaceBook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn, you can keep your community aware of your business.

The content your post on your social sites should be less formal in general than the content on your website: Helpful insurance tips are good to post from time to time, but focus on businesses you work with, your community service; and status updates on the people at your office; you're also allowed to have fun on social sites.



Your engagement with people through social media keeps you top of mind and creates ample opportunity for people to link to your website — and to do some serious business when they're ready.



in the Bay Area, place some copy on your site that uses the keyword phrase “professional liability insurance for Bay Area design professionals.”

- **Be sure you are taking advantage of HTML code to support your keyword phrases.** If you know HTML, great, but having your website built with a user-friendly content management system makes SEO easy (see Tip #8).

## Tip #9: Build Your Website with a User-Friendly Content Management System

**Too often we see websites with outdated content and information.** Nobody has bothered to update this information for months, even years. Why? The website is probably underperforming and no one cares enough. Another reason is likely because the backend access and coding are so arcane no one at the agency can figure out how make changes themselves.

**There are many popular content management systems (CMS), including WordPress, Movable Type, Joomla!, Mambo and Drupal.** It’s unlikely you will have the expertise in-house to build a professional website that follows the Tips outlined in this report. You will probably need a professional team to help you. But the point is to have your website designed with a user-friendly CMS so that you can make basic changes yourself quickly and easily. You shouldn’t have to call a web expert every time you add or change text or photos on your website or create a new page or even add a whole new section.



## Tip #10: Choose a Knowledgeable Partner to Build and Host your Website

**Most of the insurance websites we studied were functionally inadequate because the design firms that built them likely knew little or nothing about the insurance agency business.** The designer was not given any guidelines for what an effective insurance agency website should look like or how it should perform. The result, more often than not, was an ineffective website and waste of the firm’s marketing dollars.

## Ten Tips for Creating an Awesome Insurance Agency Website

**SmartsPro Marketing started developing insurance agency websites only after a thorough study of the market.** Our knowledge of the insurance business, insurance marketing and what we have learned from studying all kinds of insurance agency websites have helped us develop a product that incorporates the powerful features outlined in this report.

**While you may not be able or even want to follow every Tip in this report, adhering to many of them will dramatically increase your likelihood for success.**

If you've read this report and are ready to work with a partner that know the Tips of effective insurance marketing, give us a call. We're ready to help you unleash the power of your insurance agency website.

Call Brian Tingle today and let him explain how SmartsPro Marketing can be your insurance website marketing partner.



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