Website Analysis

Since our team project revolves around creating a new website for people to rent tools from each other, for my website analysis I have decided to analyze a similar competitor site that is already out there called Rental Max, and their site is rentalmax.com. Rental Max offers a wide variety of tools to everyone for use in their home project, while their tools range in variety they seem to focus on large equipment tools.

Rental Max is a business to consumer site that allows customers to rent power tools for their home or business needs; their site rentalmax.com’s mission is clearly stated in their site and it reads as follows “Whenever a person has a Rental Max encounter they are treated so well they tell two people about their positive experience.” This is a very interesting stamen in the fact that not too many companies state their goal of customer satisfaction with a number; in other words by stating that their goal is to have their good service passed on by each satisfied customer to two other. This type of e-commerce follows both, business to business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C), even though their site is marketed more towards customers. An important aspect of the site that needs to be noted is the fact that they also offer a marketplace for customer to purchase new and used tools, as well as merchandise. This adds an extra an extra functionality to their site that allows them to cater to potential new customers that are not only looking to rent.

Rental Max primary competitor are sites that allow any type of exchange of tools between different parties, and a very significant marketplace today on the web is Craig’s list. While Craig’s list mostly allows the selling of tools, it creates one aspect of the revenue model used for Rental Max. Rental Max site integrates various channels to get to the customers, they use e-mail newsletters sign up, online coupons and news articles to create various forms on online engagements to the visitors who may or may not necessarily be the main audience of the site. Rental Max’s primary audiences are males who are do-it-yourselfs, however in their promotional advertisement they have women using different power tools.

As stated above Rental Max offers an array of different channels in which to attract the segment of the population that is needed. By offering an e-mail newsletter sign up, it caters to the type of customer that might want more information but doesn’t have time to browse the site and prefers the information pushed out to him without him having to make an effort to find it. Additionally it helps the loyal customers keep in touch with the company by having information sent to their email, so it helps build trust between the company and the customer. The news article provide another form of attracting customers, in one way it provides assistance and new ideas to potential and current customers visiting the site, and along the way it drives new customers to engage with new articles. In using these articles and news Rental Max can push only articles that are related to tools/projects that they offer, thus targeting even more the communication that they are providing to the desired audience. Lastly the benefits of online coupons are not only incentivizing potential/current clients, but also provide the
option to upsell a particular product/project. In the other hand they can be a tangible way of measuring the amount of people that are visiting the site. Lastly Rental Max has offers a physical channel to connect with customers via stores, in which the customers can go in and physically see the tools before making a decision.

The site offers different way of engaging the different type of customers; impulsive buyers will find that the two drop down menus found in the opening page to be very effective into getting what they need fast, especially since one of them will search by categories and the other one does sub-categories. An important note that needs to be made is that the first item on the submenu right above those two drop downs is the store locator; by putting this item first you also cater to the impulsive buyers. Also on the throughout the site you find a bubble either on the side or on the homepage that scrolls thru the current set of promotions they offer. However, for the patient buyers, Rental Max site doesn’t offer many options, as there is no way to compare prices between different pieces of equipment. While comparing two different pieces of rental power equipment can be difficult, it is important to offer this functionality, especially in the digital world where a potential customer have so many ways of gathering information; an interesting idea that could be implemented depending of feasibility would be to price match competitor’s prices via coupons found on the site or newsletters pushed out to them. In the other hand, Rental Max website offers many different options for analytical buyers; this is great due to the nature of renting power tools and completing these types of projects. First it offers in two different places in the homepage the option to calculate the project, critical when trying to decide which tools to use and to calculate cost/time. Additionally having the news/articles help steer analytical customers in the direction you need, while helping build brand awareness and trust.

Overall the site does an average job of utilizing web 2.0 technologies to engage the audience and increase their user experience. Among the things that are good is the option to receive a “VIP email sign up”, which allow the customer to receive some type of personalize information pushed to them. Also allowing the ability to pay online the bill is critical, not only from a convenient standpoint, but from implementing an advantage that having an online site can give you. On the other hand by not having some form of reviews of the power equipment not only makes them lose patient and analytical buyers, but it prevents loyal customers from helping you create more revenue on those other buyers, which on this case might be the a significant amount compared to impulsive buyers. Overall the lack of personalization can be a big caveat with potential “power” users or businesses that might need many tools and services.

The site processes payments thru a link found at the top of the page, location of the link is good as it’s grouped with other important navigation, and however this is only for existing rentals. For new rentals the site makes you submit a request for reservation in order to verify availability and due to having different locations not only renting tools online. As far as shipping, delivery and returns Rental Max offers in-store support for any malfunction that a customer might encounter, this is where that channel becomes critical in reacting to customer needs.

As stated before the way the content is laid out in the site can be arranged in a better way, especially in a way that invites the patient buyers more; and as far as the graphical interface the site looks and feels a
little bit outdated, with the choice of buttons and colors. As far as the shopping experience found on
the site, it’s mostly utilitarian in a way that when you are visiting you are there to complete a task to
then move to the second step of the process which would be the in-store user experience. A Hedonic
experience can be achieved within the site in the marketplace that they offer, but this would require a
very through engagement not only in the other channels, and it would be mostly consisted by emotional
buying a piece of equipment that they offer that they have known from before; again lack of customer
testimonials/reviews don’t help this shopping experience.

Lastly some of the recommendations to the site would be to add reviews/testimonials that way you
create trust with the customers; as recommendations from fellow customers can go a long way towards
creating loyalty with your brand. Additionally the personalization aspect cannot be stressed enough
with the “power” users of your site, because this is a very important way to maintain that loyalty that
you are acquiring.