6 Tips for creating brilliant coming soon websites

Sometimes, your big idea isn't quite ready. Occasionally, you'll want to generate hype and an air of excitement about a new product, service or website.

One of the best ways to do this is actually rather old-fashioned. Remember when you used to visit websites only to be met with a graphic of a hard hat emblazoned with the words 'under construction'? Well, we've moved on a bit since then, thankfully, but the process of implementing a holding page for something that isn't quite ready remains a very sensible one indeed.

Known more commonly these days as 'coming soon' pages, these simple websites are designed for immediate impact and with the sole aim of informing visitors that something exciting is on the way. Get it right, and they'll hand you their details in order to be informed of the eventual launch. Get it wrong, and they'll disappear, never to be seen again.

With this in mind, we've put together six brilliant tips for creating 'coming soon' websites that engage and encourage interaction.

1. Keep the design ULTRA simple

We're all pressed for time online, and if you get too fancy with the design of your coming soon page, people simply won't bother to engage with it.

Instead, focus on a very small amount of text (a header, strap line and short paragraph is all you need) against a prominent, eye-catching image.

2. Add a countdown timer

When will it be ready? You don't want to keep the audience waiting indefinitely, and they'll need some idea of when to return or mark a date in their diaries.

To help them out and add yet more tantalising suspension, add a countdown timer (just ensure it's accurate!).

3. Don't forget the newsletter sign-up

On pain of death, don't forget to add the ability for people to sign-up to a newsletter. If they've reached your page, chances are they're interested in whatever it is your working on, but they probably won't be interested enough to make a mental note to keep checking your site.

In fact, there's little to no chance of them doing so, therefore you need to help them out. Add a prominent newsletter sign-up form accompanied by the text 'sign-up for further updates!' or similar. You should find that the email addresses begin trickling in, as a result.

4. Add a pre-order option (if appropriate)

If the 'coming soon' message refers to a product or service you're working on and the pricing has been confirmed, consider offering the ability to pre-order.

By undertaking this step, you'll save your sales team an awful lot of effort by gaining those all-important early adopters.

5. Add a video

Any digital marketer worth their salt will tell you that video is an incredibly sticky form of web content, and for that reason, it's perfectly suited to this type of web page.

If your budget allows (or if you fancy simply making use of your smartphone camera), add a video which offers a human introduction to what's to come. Combine it with the aforementioned sign-up form and you should start to see significant interest develop.

6. Promote the page judiciously

So, you've gone to all the trouble of creating a brilliant coming soon page, but who's going to find it? You're unlikely to gain a huge number of organic search referrals, therefore the onus is on you to promote the page - hard.

If you've got an existing blogging strategy, add promotion of the coming soon page to it and share the URL judiciously on your social media platforms with lots of juicy cliff-hangers and appropriate hashtags to get people flocking by.

That's it!

Our tips won't guarantee huge audiences for your coming soon page, but they do represent best practices for building suspense and encouraging people to sign-up for more information.

The takeaway? You need to be proactive in promoting the page - it simply won't do very much by itself at all, unless you give it that significant push!