Website Wednesday Episode 006: Choosing the Right Images for...

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SPEAKERS

Liz at britelime

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They say an image is worth 1000 words. And when it comes to your website, you better choose wisely.

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Welcome to the Website Wednesday podcast. I'm your host, Liz Langford-Cobo of britelime Creative. I'm a website template designer and coach focused on teaching farmers, ranchers and rural entrepreneurs how to build better websites for their small businesses. Every day, you work hard and your small business, your website should work hard too. In each 15 minutes or less episode, I'll teach you a tip, trick or element of website design, management or growth. So whether you're on the tractor, fixing fence, or folding laundry, this episode is designed to help you make your small business website better. Let's get to it friend.

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I hear from a lot of entrepreneurs that writing their about page or about section is one of the most difficult aspects of putting together their small business websites. But I also hear that choosing the imagery for their sites can cause a lot of anxiety, and sometimes some frustration. So today, I want to talk through the importance of what images you choose for your website and how you prepare those images for your website so that you're sure that you are giving your target customer the best images to look at. And you're also making sure that you're not slowing down your website because your images are too large. So let's tackle this question of what images should I be putting on my website. First of all, not every image you put on your website needs to be taken by a professional. In a former version of my entrepreneurial self, I was a wedding photographer. And I spent about seven years photographing weddings, I photographed a few other things here and there some seniors and some headshot portraits, but primarily I focused on wedding photography. And I will tell you that there is a difference

between professional photography and candid photography, there just absolutely is. A professional knows how to use that gear in a way that most hobbyists don't. And so professional photography is awesome, it is a great tool to use to sort of elevate the perception and the image of your brand by having high quality professional photos on your website. But not every single photo needs to be taken by a professional. And you can use the tools that you have, you can learn to use those tools even better, and kind of take some tricks from professional. So I'll share a couple of those with you today. But first, let's talk about simply deciding what kinds of images you should share on your small business website, all of your imagery, all of your content that is still photo based or video based or even GIF based. If you've decided to include some GIFs on your website, all of that content needs to be supporting the text content on your site, and sort of vice versa.

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Before I was a wedding photographer actually worked for a small production company on a national reality television show about NASCAR, it was called NASCAR Angels, and we went around the country and helped deserving people who had car repair needs. And we would get their cars repaired. for them. We worked with Goodyear Gemini shops, and we partnered with NASCAR drivers. And it was a really cool experience.

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But I remember distinctly that our executive director taught me the importance of having your imagery, match your text content. And he talked about this book, and you can actually go find this book. It's called the Napping House. And you can find it on Amazon. And the Napping House is this great children's book about how all the different people in the house are napping, there's a grandma in the house, and she's napping and there's a boy in the house and he's napping and there's a dog in the house and he's napping. But what's so critical about the way that the story is written is that as the story builds upon itself, the imagery, the illustrations build upon themselves. And what you read in the text content is what you see in the images. And so I want you to think about that I want you to have sort of a napping house approach to your website. What is it that is being supported on the page by the images? Did the images make sense with the written content? Does the written content make sense with the images? And I for one would prioritize that written content over the image content?

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Now Google is getting a lot better at understanding what is in an image. But you still to a great extent have to tell Google what is in an image doesn't just know, and it's never going to write a narrative for you about what is in the image. And that's where that Napping House philosophy comes in, you want to have text content on the page that really is an explanation of what's happening in the image. Now, I'm not suggesting that you have to have a caption for every image, not the way that say an online newspaper does or the printed newspaper does. You don't need to have a caption on the page. But you need to make sure that the text content on the page is supporting what is in the image. So for example, if you are a beef producer, and someone comes to your website, and the first image that they see on your site, is you and your dog, now we have a disconnect, because you might look like you're a dog trainer, or a dog

breeder, or someone who does something having to do with dogs. Now, you may love your dog, and your dog may be a significant part of your brand. That can be totally cool. But we need to make sure that that imagery is actually supporting what your brand is. So if your brand includes your dog, but you're a beef producer, we need to make sure that we get a photo of you and your dog, with your cattle behind you, or next to you or somehow make that connection.

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What we don't want to do is ever ask our users to have to think too hard, we want to remove that brain strain. And take that burden put it back on us as the website designers as the website builders to really lighten the load of how much the user has to think when they come to our site. And by using this napping half strategy by including images that really are supported by the text by the brand. It just makes a lot more sense to the visitor when they come to our sites. So start to choose your images based on that brand synergy and that ability to have the content on the page, the text content on the page, really support what is in the image.

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Do you know your website needs work, but you keep putting it off till tomorrow, next week, next month or even next year? Could you use some direction on how to make the website you have right now better? Do you prefer hands-on, in person learning? The Website Workshop is coming up in January 2023 in Waco, Texas, and if you answered yes to any of those questions, friend, you might want to join me for the workshop. The Website Workshop is a hands on all inclusive, small in person only workshop hosted by me, Liz of britelime.co. At this working workshop, you'll learn how to make the website you have right now better. You're gonna head home with a better homepage, a strong About page - and did you know that your about page is probably the second most popular page of your website? It is for most small business websites. So it's got to be good! And you'll head home with a plan for growth for your small business website. This is a relaxed, small group workshop designed for female entrepreneurs who want to walk away from our time together with a better website and a framework to grow that site. Space is limited and seats are filling up. But I hope you'll go take a look and think about joining me. You can learn more by going to britelime.co/workshop. That's B r i t e l i m e.co forward slash workshop.

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Now when it comes to sizing your images, this is going to vary a little bit depending upon what website platform or builder you've used to build your website on. And whether or not you're talking about your desktop, or the mobile version of your site. If again, you're using a builder that allows you to separate those and have more control over your mobile site. But typically, your images that are going to go edge to edge images that you want to fill the entire screen need to be 2500 pixels wide, that's fairly standard 2500 pixels wide will allow that image to go edge to edge on most computers, I use a really large 27 inch Thunderbolt display from Apple. And so sometimes when I go to websites, it's easy to see that the images have not been sized for a large screen, they've only been sized for a small screen. And it can be difficult because if you're designing your website on a laptop, and there's nothing wrong with using a laptop to

design your site, you don't have the benefit of being able to see what it looks like on a large screen. So you need to scale up In that situation, you need to make sure that those images are wide enough to fit the space.

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Another important element to consider when you are sizing your images for the web is that you want images that are web optimized. And they're web friendly. They're not too large in terms of the DPI or the PPI. And basically, what that means is, you don't need to have an image that could be used for print quality that could be used to create a billboard for the side of the highway, you don't need to have that large of an image for your website. Instead, you want to have an image that has been optimized for the web, and sized to 72 dpi, that sort of web screen standard. And you can use that and know that your image is going to look good, as long as the dimensions are correct. And again, dimensions can change based on the platform that you're using, the template that you're using. And so you'll need to dig in, do a little bit of research and figure out what size does this need to be, for example, a lot of blog images don't need to be larger than 800 pixels wide. So you want to make sure that you have size those dimensions properly. So you're not uploading an image that is much larger than what you need. Because larger images will slow down your website, you want your web pages to load really, really quickly. And large images that have not been properly sized for the web can absolutely slow you down.

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If you need help resizing images for your website, one of the best tools, one of my favorites is Canva. using Canva. You can resize your images to fit any dimensions you need and be web friendly. Canva is a great way to do that. It's quick, it's easy, and it doesn't have the same learning curve that other design programs are going to have. And it doesn't have the same cost, you can start off with Canva. For free, check it out, see if it works for you. You want to try it out, go and visit britelime.co/friends and click on the Canva link.

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Like I mentioned earlier, not every image on your website needs to be taken by a professional. Yes, professional photography is elevated. Yes, professional photography is wonderful, it's great. If you have access to it, you're able to have a pro take your images for you. That's awesome. do that all day long if you can, but not every single image on your site is likely to be shot by a professional photographer. But there are some tricks of professional photography that you can implement right now, even into your iPhone photography. Now, if you have an iPhone, or even even an Android phone, our mobile phones have come so far in their camera abilities. And you can take beautiful, beautiful images with your cell phone. And this is probably a famous quote, but I don't know who it's from, the best camera you have is the one you have with you. And you want to be able to take images at a moment's notice, pull out your phone from your pocket, and snap an image that you can use on your website. A couple of different things that you should be paying attention to, when it comes to taking your own images is lighting. So photography is really painting with light and understanding how light is hitting a subject, whether that's a person or it's a product. Maybe it's an animal out on your farm or your

ranch, really thinking about where is my light source coming from? So where's the sun? Or where is that barn light? How is it hitting landing on my subject? And how can I maybe adjust where I'm standing to get better light onto my subject. So lighting is that first place. And then composition is really important. Understanding how to compose an image where to have a subject stand or where to move yourself to get better composition is really key. And composition is going to vary depending upon whether or not you're photographing a subject, like a person or an animal or whether or not you are photographing a product, say for your website for your E commerce portion of your site. And eliminating clutter is always great. And then utilizing something called the rule of thirds where you Place your subject. And ideally, you place the eye or the eyes of your subject at the point that if you were to divide the image into thirds, both vertically and horizontally that the eyes would end up on or near where those lines intersect, and you can look up the rule of thirds on the internet, you can find way more information about it. But once you understand some of these rules that happened within photography with an art, then it makes a lot more sense how professional photographers are composing their images, that if you can just sort of harness those two things, lighting and good composition, you can create great photos yourself using the phone camera that you've got right in your pocket right now.

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That's it for this episode of the Website Wednesday podcast. Remember, your website should work as hard as you do in your small business. For more tools, resources and to connect directly with me, visit britelime.co and follow me on Instagram @britelimeCreative. I know you can build a better website for your farm, ranch or rural small town business. All you need is a little help. See you next time friend.