

MOBILE HIPPO! Mobilizing your website for today's smartphones...

An interview at Mobile Hippo by George Moses

A little background on the founders of Mobile Hippo:

It was founded by 3 local men: Derek Crandall, Steve Russell and Robert Paquette. They're all from this area and have grown up here in Brighton. And Robert, who grew up on Lake Chemung. So they're all local guys. They went to school here. Derek and Steve went to Brighton High School. Robert went to Howell.

Mobile Hippo background:

Derek: "I've been in web design and development for 16 years and I've been looking at Google Analytics and watching the traffic on those websites I've developed. I could see that mobile was really taking off. More and more traffic was coming on mobile devices. At the same time, I'm realizing that Google and everybody else is really pushing "Everybody needs to go mobile!" Google is really pushing it right now. They have a mobile initiative called "How To Go Mo." And they'll let you pull up your site and see if it's mobile friendly or not and tell you the steps you should take".

"They emphasize thumb-friendly navigation. They give you a checklist of what a good mobile website should feel like. So we built ours on a framework that is thumb-friendly, is easy to navigate, is easy for people to build and maintain. I started off building these one at a time. I built one for Buddy's. I built one for a few of my other clients. I could go in and I could make changes to their sites, but the natural next step was they wanted to be able to make changes themselves. They want to be able to update their coupons and they want to be able to manage the content of their site. So, instead of building sites one at a time we built a tool that anybody can use to build their site and update their content. Instead of chasing after one client after another, we said, "Hey! anybody who wants to, you can use our tool, you can build your site. It will work with any existing website. You don't have to redesign your existing website in order to use this."

"So we've kind of evolved from building mobile sites one at a time to wanting to provide a tool so people could go on and build it themselves. So we could do more volume. It's much more scalable to us that way. And it's also a tool for myself, to make it easier for me to build these websites. So, web designers that already have a bunch of existing clients and marketing agencies, they can use this tool. They can become a reseller on our system. They can build sites and sell them to their clients."

"So it's an easier way for web designers to take our tool and build sites for their customers. "



"So

Derek and I were working on a few projects before this and we came up with the idea to create this tool. And we've been running with this for the last year and a half and developing it. "

"I didn't know the obvious advantages of a mobile site until they called me. The touch-to-call and the directions are the biggest features."

Derek said, "We like to tell people, look at the advertisers in The Marketeer! This is a great extension of what you're already doing. And nobody has to pay extra for it. It's included. If you advertise in The Marketeer you're gonna get this." said Derek.

"It's the potential new customers who are gonna want to look and see what you're about. So if you have a mobile friendly site that's gonna make it a lot easier to get the information they want. "

We thought that this was a great way to introduce people to our product. When they click on that link they're gonna get a desktop version. Probably 75 to 90 percent of the people that are advertising in your publication are that way. So when they pull up their Marketeer ad, they see their ad, they see their phone number, they see their driving directions that they can click on now and interact with. When they click on their website we want it to link to a mobile version of their website. Just like The Marketeer's mobile now, they need to be mobile. Then it all works well together." said Derek Crandall of Mobile Hippo.

That's the whole idea exactly. Get The Marketeer on the go. "Marketeer Mobility" as Pat Anderson puts it.

"That's kind of why we've been going door to door in the community, making people aware that it exists, as opposed to just putting it out there online and people that are looking for it will find it, but people that don't know or don't care will never hear about it unless somebody tells them. You've seen from some of your advertisers already that they're excited about it, so you're building the excitement about something new in your product."

"I'm doing what you're doing. Going door-to-door and showing it to people. It's very visual. People need to see it."

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