



## "Welcome to SI! Please take a seat!"

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You head to your favorite Italian restaurant, Viaggio, and find that you'll have to wait a bit for your usual table. In that ten minutes do you a) tell all your friends that you're waiting for a table, b) play a game to beat your best friend's high score, or c) find out that 'Viaggio' is Italian for 'journey'?

If you're part of the Social Internet (SI), you know that the correct answer is "all of the above."

Every day, more and more people expect to be able to use the Internet to facilitate social and meaningful interaction. If you don't engage them as part of the SI, they will move on to another business that does.

### **Get Interactive**

One of the best ways to service these SI customers is to make interactions with your brand or service "bite-sized." Give customers something meaningful they can do easily in 5-10 minutes. Let customers comment online about your products, show their friends that they're doing something fun, or purchase your products in as few steps as possible.

When designing your websites in the SI world, realize that "bite-sized" often means "task oriented." More often than not, your users know exactly what it is they want to do when they arrive at your site. Make sure you know what tasks your users want to do and design everything to match those tasks.

### **But Beware!**

Once you have your tasks and your design you aren't finished! Now you have to test: put some users in front of your new website and ask them to perform those tasks.

Could they find everything easily without any coaching from you? Did they accomplish all the tasks without a hitch? If so, great! If not, you have things to fix. And once your website is up, make sure that it's as easy as possible for your users to communicate with you. You should never stop listening to your users. Preferences and modes of communication change at a rapid pace.

### **How they feel about you**

In a nutshell, remember this: your Internet presence is about how you want your clients/users to think and feel about you. Your internet presence is also about empowering people to accomplish exactly what it is that they want to do.

### **A sense of triumph**

Try using game structures to give actions multiple layers of value. Games are built from the ground up to motivate people - they provide clear challenges, teach players how to participate, and give them a sense of triumph. Apply the same lessons to your site and your audience will feel that triumph in walking through the virtual "doors" of your place of business or volunteering for your non-profit.

for example, testing your vocabulary at <http://www.freerice.com/> makes you a humanitarian!

Using the SI, even mundane tasks become value-rich experiences enjoyed any time from anywhere!

*Studio Cypher is a leading Internet Game Developer, focused on online interactive games that offer entertainment, mental skill improvement and social value on behalf of a wide array of groups. In next month's Agenda, Studio Cypher will offer a self-checklist for assessing the effectiveness of your group's website.*