

In-Credible Conversion

**How You Can Increase Your Sales
Conversions Using Nothing More Than A
Tiny 1inch Image, But Only If You Do It
Right....**



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Together We Can Do So
Much..."**

Helen Keller

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Introduction

Trust seals have been around quite some time on the internet and indeed on the offline world too.

Why do businesses use these graphics on their websites and sales brochures?

The rationale can be summed up in one powerful word:

PROFIT

Savvy business owners know they profit through association with a credible third party.

When an authority business provides another with a recommendation of sorts (i.e. they allow them to be certified and use a web seal), this recommendation/certification allows some of the authority and credibility “to rub off”.

The upshot is an increased level of trust in the business which ultimately means:

Higher Sales Conversion Rates

Resulting In

More Profit...

So which seals should you choose and indeed are there any pitfalls along the way?

Let's find out...

Why Do Seals Work?

Seals work because we are social individuals. I'm willing to bet you have made a purchase based on the recommendation of a friend at some time in the past.

Perhaps it was an iPod, iPhone, Blackberry or even a car.

We like to know when we spend money, we are doing so wisely. Having had a trusted friend walk down the purchase path before gives us a warm fuzzy feeling about our purchase.

Subconsciously we think something like the following:

"I like Jim/Jane, they have similar tastes to me and if they like it, I'll like it, I know it's money well spent"

So, if you get a strong personal recommendation to buy a product/service from a friend, it's pretty much a done deal.

But what if you don't have any friends who have purchased an item you are about to buy. You have no immediate feedback to sample from your circle of friends so you feel a little out on a limb as a result.

So, you start doing some research – you look to reviews online, forums, blogs and try to elicit feedback about your purchase.

"Is the product good"

"Are there any quality issues"

"Is there a guarantee"

"Can I trust the business owner"

These and many other questions go through your mind because you feel a lack of trust going into the transaction. You are afraid you might be disappointed with the product, the service or indeed both.

Maybe you'll even be RIPPED OFF by an unsavoury fly by night internet scammer!!!

This is where Trust Seals come in.

92% of consumers polled stated website trust is a determining factor when deciding what to buy.

100% of those polled believed when a reputable 3rd party company has verified a business is protecting sensitive personal information, has explicit privacy policies, and accessible contact information, the business is more trustworthy.

Source:Business-Verified.com

Authority

In effect, they act as your friend online.

They have put in place a set of standards a business must employ and/or follow before they can be associated with a trusted authority.

And so you as a consumer now feel a little easier

because you know the company you are dealing with has gone out of their way to reassure you and get “certified/recommended” by a trusted 3rd party authority site (your next best friend to the real thing).

Are trust seals as powerful as an endorsement by a trusted friend?

No.

They are not and never will be. They are a halfway house when it comes to increasing the likelihood of a sale.

But they will in all likelihood have a positive effect on your sales.

Why is this?

Never Enough Time

"I don't want to achieve immortality through my work; I want to achieve immortality through not dying..."

Woody Allen

Robert Cialdini described a phenomenon called Fixed Action Patterns which goes a long way to explain why we trust 3rd party seals.

In our everyday lives, we have numerous things clamouring for our attention. Work, spouse, kids, pets, bills, hobbies and we are all left with the same common denominator – 24 hours in a

day.

Not only that, our brain is constantly processing huge amounts of information ALL the time, most of this information is not brought to conscious awareness (instead it is “squelched” by our Reticular Activation System).

As a result of all these demands, we need a way to **shortcut decision making**.

This is why we listen to friends when making purchases and indeed why quite often we behave like sheep when in crowds – we follow the leader and allow others to make decisions on our behalf.

Increased Conversion – An Example

So, if having a recommendation from a friend is the best way to go (which is why referral marketing is so effective too), let's see how a trusted seal can impact your bottom line.

Let's look at a specific example using a number often cited by a reputable 3rd party trust seal site.

If you have a website which currently has a 1% conversion rate and each sale was worth \$97 to you. If you sold 100 with a profit of \$40 per item, you'd have \$9700 in gross revenue and \$4000 in profit

$$\text{\$97} \times 1\% \times 100 = \text{\$9700.00 Gross Revenue}$$

$$(\text{\$97} - \text{\$57}) \times 1\% \times 100 = \text{\$4000.00 Profit}$$

Now let's add in the trusted seal which helps to increase conversion a healthy 17.9%¹

The numbers now look a lot healthier:

$$\text{\$97} \times 1.179\% \times 100 = \text{\$11436.30 Gross Revenue}$$

$$(\text{\$97} - \text{\$57}) \times 1.179\% \times 100 = \text{\$4716.00 Profit}$$

Now you can see what all the fuss is about when it comes to trust seals on the web and why they are such big business.

For a small amount of time and effort invested in "accreditation", you reap the rewards of more money in your pocket at the end of the day.

A nice trade...

What if we used a different example and plugged in some numbers from a different trusted seal source. This time how about a 59.61%² conversion rate.

That's a whopping **\\$6384.40** in profit!

¹ Source: HonesEOnline.com

² <http://blog.trust-guard.com/increases-conversion-rate/>

The Secondary Benefits of Trust Seals

Credibility Through Association

"A rising tide lifts all boats..."

Having joined the fraternity of Trusted Seal members, you have given yourself another added benefit.

You are now directly associated with the credibility and good will of the 3rd party site.

If they are seen as whiter than white and dazzling to the world, you just added

some sparkle to your own business.

The bigger the seal becomes, the more trusted it becomes and as a result, the more trust is imbued to you and your business through association.

Stronger Customer Relationships

Provided you uphold your end of the bargain with customers (and adhere to the terms and conditions of any seal you are aligned with), you will forge stronger bonds with your customers.

This comes to another principle covered in the classic book "Influence" by Robert Cialdini called:

"Commitment and Consistency"

Customers have bought on the back of your association with another trusted brand (the seal). Buying products from businesses associated with the seal is something they are comfortable with – it is part of their profile - and as a result

they will go on to purchase more from you in your backend (to remain consistent).

“I bought from him/her before, I was right so I’ll buy again...”

Of course, this isn’t a huge boost, but it is a boost nonetheless and you should remember to “congratulate” your customers on making the wise decision to buy your products/service just like so many others have done before...

Some of The Seals Today

If you thought trusted web seals were a niche marketing ploy only for some business types, think again...

- BBBOnline
- Trust-Guard
- WebAssured
- HonestEOnline
- Betterweb
- McAfee Secure
- Verisign Secured
- BizRate
- Paypal Secured Shopping
- Paypal Verified
- eBay PowerSeller
- TrustWave
- savaSecure
- TRUSTe
- BuySafe

Trust is big business both on and offline...

What Not To Do

Isn't it great, all you need do is pay a few dollars (ok, some seals require THOUSANDS of dollars and are way out of reach of most entrepreneurs), paste an image on your website and it will all be hunky-dory.

Sales will flood in as a result – right?

Err, no they won't.

Adding a trust seal to your site is not just paying lip service to an ideal. You need to make sure you don't break these golden rules.

#1 Use the seal when you were never entitled

There are some people out there who think they can use 3rd party trust seals and graphics with impunity as a conversion device. I know this isn't you but there are people and there will always be people who will flout terms and conditions of use.

This will ultimately come home to roost with them because how stupid will they look when the shopper clicks on their “approved seal” only to find no mention or trace of the business.

Incensed shoppers are likely to report such transgressions and legal action is but a step away for such scammers...

#2 Use the seal when it has expired

Many seals have approvals which are time-limited. Normally you sign up and are able to use the seal for a period of time – usually 12 months.

It is easy to overlook renewals but you need to be aware of when your rights to use the seal are coming to a close.

If you do not want to renew, fine but you need to ensure the seal is removed from your website in a timely fashion (before expiration) or else you leave yourself unwittingly open to the same fate as the nefarious scammer mentioned above.

#3 Break the trust of the consumer

All trust seals have terms and conditions associated with them. They are there for good reason:

- To protect consumers
- To protect the seal owner
- To increase the seal brand value

If you break this trust in any way, you will have your rights to use the seal revoked by the seal owner quicker than you can say Jack Sparrow.

Remember, if someone abuses a seal, it reflects on the seal owner too which is why trusted seal owners are very protective of their brand and may initiate legal proceedings.

#4 Don't Link to central page

This is something you need to look out for when aligning yourself with a seal – you need to make sure you have a “direct line of site[sic]” to your page on the authority site.

There is no point directing the consumer back to the home page where they have to go through hoops to actually find your listing.

If you have a listing page, make sure your link refers straight to it.

#5 Not Linking

So you have a seal which you are displaying proudly on your site and are happy this will help with your conversions. Customers believe something different – should they not take your seal association at face value (and a lot of customers do believe it or not!), you need to make sure they have an easy way to verify your status.

Make sure your seal is hyperlinked back to the authority site listing for your specific business.

The Non Compliance Risk

This is a risk all businesses run regardless of whether they employ trust seals or not.

For those who do use them and abuse them, the negative feedback received will likely be higher as customers will hate being “bait and switched”.

Businesses who do abuse the trust of consumers do deserve the resulting negative feedback they will inevitably receive.

The year is 2009 as this report is written.

Twitter is in the ascension, feedback on your business is seconds away in the form of a tweet and seconds thereafter from going around the world via retweets and blogs.

The Compliance Reward

Where there are risks, there are rewards.

You're in business – it's a risk.

You make profits – that's the reward.

So, you are using a trust seal in a passive fashion – it's sitting proudly on your site saying "Trust Me, Trust Me, Trust Me".

You are not getting the full mileage you should out of your trust seal.

Here's what you should do:

When you have made a sale with a customer, actively solicit feedback from them and when you get good feedback, ask them to review your site and rate your site.

This is a great opportunity for you to get great testimonials from your loyal customers.

Q. Where is the best place for this feedback to go – on your own site or the trusted third party site?

A. Both - but especially the third party site as this is seen as more of an independent and unbiased.

Think this is a small benefit?

Think again.

Look how powerful the feedback model is for some big name sites you may have heard of:

eBay

ePinions

Where Should A Seal Go?

Buy Button

The #1 most obvious place you should place a trust seal is in close proximity to the buy button on your sales page.

This is the hot-button for consumers.

They want to know when they place an order you can be trusted and if this is the first time they have heard of you, they don't have a personal friend recommendation and you have a trusted seal they recognise and can verify – you have made their decision making to buy from you a whole lot easier.

Point of Purchase

This is the order form itself. In some cases this can be the same page as the sales page but often not (due to design and/or shopping cart limitations).

Squeeze Pages

Landing and/or squeeze pages are another great place to display your trust seals and often overlooked.

Thank You Page

Why the “Thank You Page” I hear you say – it's all about commitment and consistency again. There's nothing wrong with letting your prospect/customer know:

“You made the right choice, you can trust me”

In fact, you can look to place trust seals on every page of your website to reassure your visitors – remember it must be highly visible to make a difference though.

Action:

JointWinWin.com is a business community whose aim is to help member businesses grow so they can give more back.

JointWinWin helps member businesses achieve the following benefits:

- **More** Customers
 - **Higher** Sales Spending
 - **Higher** Customer Retention
 - **Lower** Customer Attrition
 - **Higher** Customer Satisfaction
 - **Increased** Consumer Trust
 - **Lower** Refunds Due To Less Buyers Remorse
 - **Higher** Employee Morale
 - **Inspired** Commerce – You're Making A Difference!
-
- **A Trusted Seal** – Use It!



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All the best,



Tom O'Brien

Editor

JointWinWin.com

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