

Microsites can be used for many different purposes. Marketers may use them for a promotion or give-away. Or they can be used to foster community and social interaction, to highlight a product or service or even to educate users. Read on to learn more.

<h2>What is a Microsite?</h2>

A microsite is an individual webpage or group of webpages that function as a separate entity apart from the sponsoring brand. They are flexible in that they can utilize a completely different domain or live in the subdomain of the sponsoring company.

Most companies use microsites as a marketing tactic. The site is built specifically for their customers, yet may not live on the corporate site, which allows for creativity, greater audience targeting and a break from the restrictions of the corporate domain. When done right, microsites can effectively increase brand awareness more than traditional advertising.

<h2>1. Clean Design</h2>

It is important that visitors immediately grasp the purpose of the site. A clean and focused design should eliminate distractions and draw all attention to the product or service. Integration of content and design is usually employed for an aesthetic site that is pleasing to the eye.

Using a subdomain or completely different domain provides flexibility for designers as well as removing the distraction of corporate site navigation bars. Simplicity is vital. If there are too many steps or options, people may click away.

<h2>2. Clear Call to Action</h2>

As with the previous point, visitors should have no questions when engaging with the site. Take great care when developing a microsite. The goals and audience need to be clearly defined beforehand in order to generate a successful design and CTA.

<h2>3. Minimize Branding</h2>

A great microsite is created for your customers. By minimizing your brand and creating a unique and memorable experience, visitors are more likely to remember and engage with your site. Your brand will receive natural exposure by making the product or service easily identifiable.

A recommended practice is to place your company logo at the bottom of your microsite. This can provide visitors the "aha!" moment as well as preventing distractions while consuming the content placed above.

<h2>4. Enable Sharing</h2>

Since the site is created for your customers, you need to make it easy to share. Social media is important for brand equity and recognition as well as generating traffic for your microsite. Help your brand evangelists spread the word by stacking social media buttons to the side of your site so they are easily found.

<h2>5. Creativity</h2>

The most successful microsites have a unique experience that attracts visitors. People are inclined to talk about something new and innovative, a little bizarre, quirky or just different.

For example, Juicy Fruit employed a marketing campaign that championed a <a href="<http://serenading-unicorn.evb-archive.com/>" target="_blank">serenading unicorn that sang a wide range of musical songs. Their microsite allowed you to watch the short videos and send them to friends. What does a unicorn have to do with chewing gum? Not much. But it was successful because it was out of the ordinary.

<h2>Examples</h2>

SimpliSafe

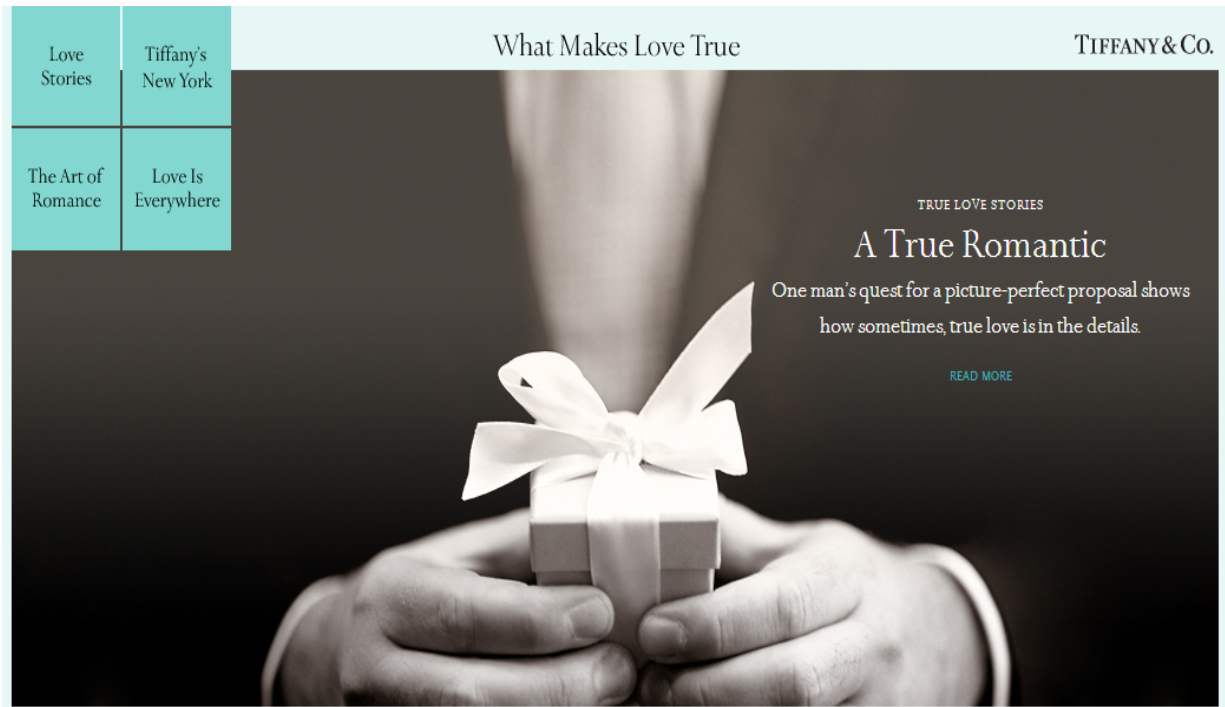


SimpliSafe's <a href="<http://simplisafe.com/resource/digital-security/>" target="_blank">digital security quiz is the first example of a well-done microsite. The call to action clearly asks you to take the quiz and the design is well-executed and simple. There are no distractions and the only option is to scroll down. After answering each question, the quiz dynamically provides valuable information for the user on how to protect themselves.

While the company logo isn't at the bottom, it is minimized and placed in a corner instead of

being a focal point. The social sharing buttons on the side allow for users to easily post via their social media accounts.

Tiffany & Co



A place for hopeless romantics, Tiffany & Co created the microsite "What Makes Love True". It contains a catalog of love stories, lists of romantic places to go in New York City, collections of music and other art forms, as well as a social component. The site engages with users by allowing you to add where you experienced love in NY or sharing a picture of you and your true love.

While the site has a tasteful design and is specifically focused on the topic "true love," the site lacks visible social buttons. Once you navigate to the picture gallery, there are social sharing options, but its much harder to find than recommended. Branding is prominent, but not overtly so as the main focus on the homepage is the romantic story featured.

Simply Business



Unlike the previous examples, this <http://www.simplybusiness.co.uk/microsites/youtube-for-small-business/> Small Business Guide to YouTube by Simply Business has placed the company logo at the bottom of the page. This promotes the central focus and CTA, an informational resource for small businesses to begin marketing on YouTube.

The design is clean and inviting and the social media buttons are clearly exhibited to the right.

Burton



Burton's [Bag Check](http://burton.com/on/demandware.store/Sites-Burton_US-Site/default/BagCheck-Start) is another example of a well designed microsite. A quiz to help you determine the type of bags you need, the call to action is obvious and highlights Burton's bag products.

Although the microsite still has the distracting navigation from Burton's ecommerce site, the dynamic portion is very streamlined. It goes through a short series of questions and after selecting options, the design dynamically updates until bringing you to possible backpacks that match your criteria.

Microsites can be a valuable tool in your marketing strategy. Correctly executed, it can position your brand as a contributor through rich content and social interaction.