

## Manage Your Agency Home Page to Get More Out of Your Website Traffic

Your agency home page is like a billboard you own at a busy intersection. It will likely be viewed by hundreds and hundreds of people each month. A billboard that doesn't change over time starts to blend into the landscape and is no longer noticed by passers-by. The same is true of an unchanging print ad that appears in a publication in the same place, on the same page week after week after week. And the same thing goes for your agency home page. But before we get into what kind of changes to make to your home page, and why, it may be helpful to understand why your website home page will typically be the most often visited. And it's not the first reason that comes to mind.

We are conditioned to think about website traffic occurring for one reason: search traffic from Google, Yahoo, Ask, or Live. Generally speaking though, it isn't a website home page that gets 'found' by most web searches. Remember, Google search results display web pages, not websites per se. And search engines favor pages that are easy to understand; and pages that are about one thing, or a small number of things (keywords) make it easier to assign relevance ranking to a search query. Most home pages are about many things: all the products and services you offer, business history, location, testimonials. Because of all the things we often ask a home page to do, it is often not the page that is found via search.

Search engine traffic – visitors that arrive at your agency website after performing some kind of search on Google or Yahoo – will most often arrive at one of your website's lower level web pages†. An insurance agency website with over 300 pages of content, like those Confluency provides, offers a tremendous variety in keyword content, positioning the website for relevance to a great variety of search terms. People are idiosyncratic, and so are the search terms they use. You may have a few well focused web pages that get a lot of visits (target market pages, e.g.). But over a long period of time, you will often see search traffic distributed over a wide number of pages on a large site. And a few hits to this page, and a few hits to that will add up to a lot of traffic.

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>TOTAL PAGE VIEWS</b>	<b>HOME PAGE VIEWS</b>
<b>Agency 1</b>	2567	469
<b>Agency 2</b>	2324	1171
<b>Agency 3</b>	1464	300
<b>Agency 4</b>	1727	475
<b>Average</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>604</b>

Total Page Views vs. Home Page Views  
4 Actual Agencies - 30 Day Interval

But what about the home page? All this search activity going somewhere else, and yet most visits to your site start with your agency home page. To say your website home page will be the single most visited page on your website seems counterintuitive to the foregoing discussion about search traffic. But visitors often arrive at your home page through mechanisms other than search. Here are a few:

- Your home page is directly linked from agency locators (like your insurance companies), and other sites linking to you.
- Your email tag includes a hot link to your website
- Customers have bookmarked your agency home page (especially if you encourage it)
- Your agency web address (which goes to your home page) is included on business cards, brochures, hard-copy mail, advertising, and other print collateral, and people will type it into their browser address bar.

Add to all those reasons the fact that a growing number of people will look for your agency phone number by ‘looking up’ your agency name by doing a Google or other search. The result is a goodly number of eyeballs on your agency home page each month.



Top Organic Result for Search on Agency Name  
Goes to Home Page

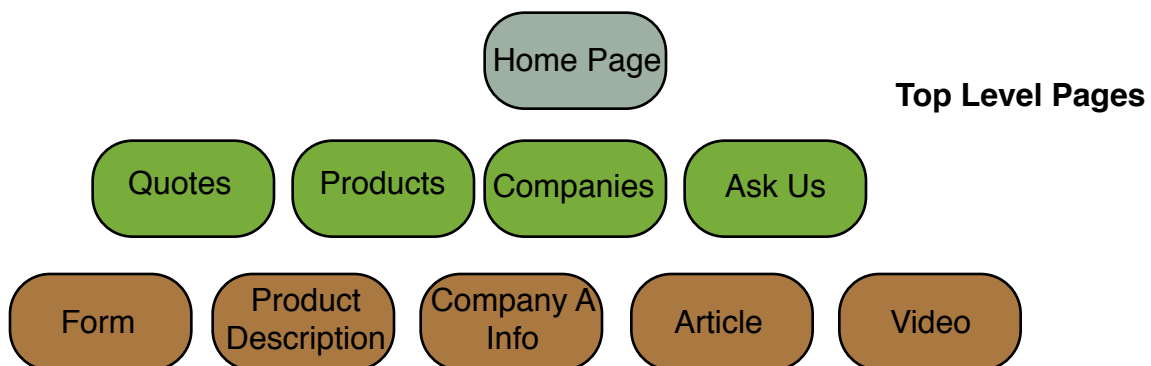
Traffic is good. Results are better. And results are more likely to happen if you keep people on your site, and get them to visit more places. If you have site analytics available for your website, the two measures we are talking about here are Average Time per Visit (ATV), and Average Number of Pages Visited (APV). The more quickly a home page visitors *interacts* with your website, the more likely they are to stay and sample more pages. Most people will scan a page for 3 - 4 seconds, and if they don't see something they want to click on or type into, they will leave. This is an argument against page clutter and excessive text. Make it obvious what you want a visitor to see and do. This is also an argument for changing your home page periodically.

Just because somebody visits a web page doesn't mean they see everything on the page. The phenomenon described in the opening paragraph has a name - habituation. When you are subjected to same stimulus over, and over, and over, you cease to sense that stimulus any longer, whether it be taste, smell, or sight. So if you want return visitors to your home page to 'see' what you have displayed for them during their 3 second scan, make changes to your page from time-to-time.

The simplest way to do this is with a concept that publishers call an editorial schedule\* (for more on this see the Best Practice video on the Managing Website Traffic Quality section at [www.cfluent.com/insurance-agency-website-best-practice](http://www.cfluent.com/insurance-agency-website-best-practice)). That is, decide once a year what you are going to display on your home page each month (or every other month, or every third month). Keep the information relevant to viewers by choosing seasonal information, and be sure to include at least one link to a resource deeper in your site - and make that link, or links, stand out. For an example, see Confluency's demonstration website at <http://demo.cfluent.com>.

You should be alert for opportunities to deviate from page content dictated by your editorial schedule. Inclement weather causing a spike in claims activity or a closing of your office give you a good reason to communicate new claim or other contact information in the aftermath of the event. Market place events, like a major competitor raising rates, or pulling out of the market; or a high profile news story about fire or flood damage not covered by insurance create an awareness you can capitalize on. Change your home page copy to relate to those news stories. Weather events and well publicized claim events will also lead to an increased level of searches - another reason to look at these situations as opportunities to make some changes to you home page.

† Top level pages are generally those pages that are main navigation links (Quotes, Ask Us, Contact, Products, Claims, etc.). The top most page on your website is your home page.



\*Confluency website customers can get a template for an editorial schedule in the Comprehensive Customer Communication document. Default home page copy can be found in the document with that name. Both are available inside the Insurance Zone, in the Manage Your Website section.