

Whitepaper:



# CAN ANIMATED SPEAKING CHARACTERS HELP YOUR WEBSITE?



## LEARN:

- Potential benefits of speaking characters
- Potential pitfalls of speaking characters
- A/B Test - Impact of speaking characters
- Mini case study - Goldfish software, LLC.



Now you're talking business™

### **Web.com Users Get a FREE SitePal account!**

Click here to sign up for a FREE SitePal account. Using SitePal's online editor, you can design a character to your liking, add an audio message and copy/paste the code into your website. SitePal Speaking Characters are easy, fast and free to create. Learn more.

You may also sign up for a FREE SitePal account at the following URL:  
<http://www.sitepal.com/partner/launch.php?id=WEBCOM9324&mode=fa>

## **Can Animated Speaking Characters Help Your Website?**

Having an animated speaking character on your site to greet and guide your visitors has unique advantages and challenges. This paper is written to introduce you to some proven benefits and pitfalls of using speaking characters to increase personalization, site conversion, traffic and time spent on a site. The information provided in this paper became available through feedback from thousands of actual small businesses that have been using SitePal, a popular speaking character web tool.

### **1. Potential Benefits of Speaking Characters**

Putting an animated speaking character on a landing page can greatly reduce the landing page bounce rate by immediately grabbing visitors' attention. Beyond the instant emotional engagement, speaking characters provide a marketing opportunity: they can deliver a short sales pitch to the site visitor that outlines the key aspects of the site's offering – whether it's competitive pricing, robust customer service, or premium product quality. Speaking characters are a proven tool in **motivating visitors to stay longer on a site and guiding them towards a purchase decision.**

Another common use of speaking characters on a landing page is to **help customers navigate a site.** When there are numerous menus and links to click, site visitors can often feel frustrated, overwhelmed and lost without knowing where to start. Using a speaking character to direct people to the right section of a website can rescue 10% or more of site visitors who might have been lost otherwise – this benefit impacts bottom line sales.

Speaking characters are used to **collect contact information from potential customers** before they leave a site even if they don't make a purchase. With built-in Lead Generation functionality, speaking characters allow merchants to easily set up a 'contact us' form that is built directly into the speaking character and permits site visitors to leave their contact information and receive a personal follow up from a sales

representative. This is often more effective than relying on visitors to find and click on a separate contact page.

The most simple, but powerful use of speaking characters is to make it easy for customers to find the call to action button by giving a specific instruction on what to click. (e.g. "Click the red Buy Now button to get started")

#### **A/B TEST - Impact of Speaking Characters**

Dr. Ralph Wilson, CEO of [www.webmarketingtoday.com](http://www.webmarketingtoday.com) conducted an A/B test to experiment the influence of a virtual speaking character on engaging his visitors to read writings on his website. The results proved a speaking character had a remarkable impact with a 33% increase in the average time spent and a 17% increase in pageviews per visitor.

[http://www.wilsonweb.com/conversion/sitepal\\_1.htm](http://www.wilsonweb.com/conversion/sitepal_1.htm) for a full report

### Mini Case Study - Goldfish Software, LLC

Goldfish Software, LLC, an online retail website selling business software, implemented a SitePal virtual salesperson on its website in 2004 to provide customers with more consultative product information and also highlight its “Hot Deal” to customers. After using SitePal, the company saw a 33% increase in the conversion rate and a 53% increase in average sales \$ as a result of successful upsell and volume sales. Goldfish Software has been using a SitePal speaking character for 3 years now.  
[www.SitePal.com/casestudies](http://www.SitePal.com/casestudies) for a full case

#### Client Results

Since using SitePal, Goldfish Software, LLC experienced:

- 33% increase in conversions from browsers into buyers
- 22% increase in repeat visitors
- 53% increase in sales value per customer



## 2. Potential Pitfalls of Deploying Speaking Characters

Speaking characters may not improve traffic and conversions if they are poorly used. Here are pitfalls to avoid:

- **Overuse.** Setting the speaking character to speak every time a visitor refreshes a page can irritate visitors who do not wish to hear the message over and over. The way to avoid this is to set the speaking character to speak only once per visit unless clicked by the visitor. Adding an audio control tab to the character so visitors can control the audio is a must.
- **Poor Audio.** Marketers must be careful about distracting recordings. Ideally, a professional voice recording service is recommended. Such services are very affordable and easily integrated into the speaking character platform. Alternatively, use the easy record-by-phone feature in a room without background noise.
- **Staleness.** Just like all web content, it's important to refresh the look and message of the character because its effect will diminish over time. It's best to update characters on at least a quarterly basis. Using a speaking character to wish seasonal greetings, highlight special promotions or announce company updates are easy ways to keep the character fresh and current while improving the customers experience.

## 3. How To Create a Speaking Character

SitePal provides an easy-to-use online editing interface that allows users to create a fully customizable speaking character and embed it into their sites in minutes. The process is automated, and doesn't require any programming skills.

### • Step 1: Design a Character

Using SitePal's online editor, users can choose and customize a model to their liking by changing its attributes such as gender, hair style, skin color, clothing and even age. For further enhanced personalization, SitePal offers an AutoPhoto conversion feature as an



*Now you're talking business™*

add-on service to allow users to upload a digital picture and instantly turn it into a one-of-a-kind 3D speaking character.

- **Step 2: Add Audio**

There are a variety of different ways to add an audio to your character - recording your own voice via microphone or telephone, using built-in Text-to-Speech feature, or uploading a professional voice recording. The general rule, however, is to keep the audio message simple and under 30 seconds when possible.

- **Step 3: Embed into Your Site**

As the last step, the online interface automatically generates a code that a user can copy and paste into a website to publish the character live. Users can also choose from a list of specific hosting providers and then receive code specific to those providers. SitePal offers 24/7 online customer service through email, live chat, and a toll-free call center.

***Web.com Users Get a FREE SitePal account!***

[Click here](#) to sign up for a FREE SitePal account. Using SitePal's online editor, you can design a character to your liking, add an audio message and copy/paste the code into your website. SitePal Speaking Characters are easy, fast and free to create. [Learn more.](#)

You may also sign up for a FREE SitePal account at the following URL:  
<http://www.sitepal.com/partner/launch.php?id=WEBCOM9324&mode=fa>

