

Introducing the One-Page Website. Cut!

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by Sara Grillo

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I would derive such immense pleasure from lighting a match to the website of every single advisor in this profession and watching it burn down to the ground.

Stop throwing money down the well!

You advisors know I'm not a fan of your websites if you've read other articles I've written. As we approach the end of the year, I know many of you are going to be inspired by naïve thoughts like these:



- Geez, we're coming up on a new year. Maybe I should redo my website.
- You know, that was a great webinar on website design. I should get a new website next year.
- I haven't revised my website in years. Let me put that on the list for January 2020.
- The other day I saw competitor XYZ's website. I want mine to look like his/hers.

Get that idea right out of your head before you throw one more dollar of your hard-earned money down the well.

By the way, don't postpone your strategic planning until the New Year – do it now! After you get back from the beach in Jamaica you're content and in a good mood. This sets you up to be dishonest with yourself about your failures. Analyze your 2019 results now while you're unhappy, tired and dragging yourself over the finish line. Trust me it will give you a much more accurate picture of what reality looks like in your practice.

For sure this will get you good and mad. Break open your Google Analytics and look at how many website visits you got this year.

Ah ha – gotcha! Now you're in a bad mood, aren't you?

Most advisors get fewer than 200 visits a month to their site, which makes total sense. Think about it; how much traffic does your dentist's website get (because nobody likes to think about getting cavities drilled). That is a similar experience to your awful websites.

If you had a car that would cost you \$10,000 (what a website upgrade would cost you) and I told you that it would get used 0.5% of the time you would say, "Grillo, that's ridiculous! I'm not buying it!" But your website, now that's a worthwhile investment because it's about your ego!

Yes, I said it!

Your ego:

- Your CFP® designation or CIMA or whatever;
- Your great team who always works together and never fights or disagrees with themselves or any client you have;
- Your charity work that you do altruistically;
- Your wonderful tenure in the business of 20 or 30+ years and how it makes you unique (not really);
- Your fiduciary status; and
- How much everyone loves you because you're so cool;

Is there one modicum of anything related to what your clients actually experience as people? They're paying you the

equivalent in some cases of a whole year's rent for you to help upload their checking accounts to eMoney and shove their money into some DFA funds.

Probably not!

And now you get why advisor websites don't work. Let's just call it what it is: a broken system that needs to be fixed.

My ethical decision: throwing in the towel

Now here I'm about to get classical literature major on you:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre.

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold

from "The Second Coming" by Yeats

Whenever that I write something outside of the regular cliché, the advisor points me to a competitor's website and says, "Ummmmm...I like this site better. Can you make it look like this instead?"

Announcement:

I'm giving up.

You won, advisors.

You beat me into submission.

As of January 1, 2020, I refuse to write website copy for advisors. It is an ethical decision. I could be doing good for the world by helping advisors where it is actually possible to make them succeed. It's pointless to keep writing website copy for people who reject every iota of creativity.

The one-page webpage

I'm a mother of four kids under six years old. Do you recall the story of Tikki tikki tembo no sa rembo chari bari ruchi pip peri pembo? Remember what happened to him? He almost drowned while the brother with the short name was rescued instantly.

Do the same and condense your website into a one-page webpage (not *website* but webpage).

Cut!

Ever since I have put the two-sentence rule into place for my clients, not one of them came back to me and said, "Grillo, my readers wanted a longer newsletter. They wanted this month's blog to be longer than you wrote it."

Nobody has time for other people's blathering!

The one-page webpage is my contribution to societal progress. It's like I just showed you how to make a spark by banging one rock against the other. But don't call me a thought leader. Guess what – nobody leads by thought. Thought itself creates no results. People lead by taking actions that make other people money.

I'm taking action. Here's my invention: the *one-page webpage*.

Let me describe a one-page webpage. It's not one of those scrolly type websites in which you have 10 sections in one long page that you scroll down. It is literally one screen length only and consists of:

- Five simple paragraphs of two sentences each;
- One team picture or picture of the advisor if you are a solo act (high resolution image); and
- Disclosures in the footer so that compliance is happy.

Period!

The one-page webpage eliminates my least favorite aspects of advisor websites: the process and services pages. If somebody reads your website and then asks you for this info, just refer them to a competitor's site. Explain that it says the same exact thing you would have said anyways.

This brilliantly solves the problem of advisors trying to be creative. My solution: Don't try because it's a lost cause. Be boring, advisors, but get it over with quickly!

I'm delighted about this invention. Are you? In fact, I may actually patent it.

Sara's upshot

What will those five paragraphs be about on a one-page webpage? In future articles I'll tell you. Do you agree that long advisor websites should cease to exist?

Sara Grillo, CFA, is a marketing consultant who helps investment management, financial planning, and RIA firms fight the tendency to scatter meaningless clichés on their prospects and bore them as a result. Prior to launching her own firm, she was a financial advisor and worked at Lehman Brothers.