Two common marketing #fails (and pet peeves)

When you see the same mistake done over and over again, you have to wonder how people manage to keep jobs or their business afloat.

Marketing fail #1: Not sending emails from an organizational address

If you get an email, as I did this morning, from a certain Ellyn Fisher, whom I have never met, would you open it? I bet, like I did, that if you did, you would hesitate to open it if not delete it completely. However, I get so many emails from individuals in organizations, that I decided to open it up and it turned out to be from the Ad Council. So the email was legitimate, but this organization does not seem to understand how email appears in your inbox and why sending it from a staffer's email address is a bad idea.

The best practice would be to send the email from the name of the organization. This is easily done in your email sending options, especially when you are using a email provider such a Constant Contact or MailChimp.

The second-best practice is to use an individual's name followed by the organization's name. For example, I get emails from Janine Wampler, ACES Communications. Those always come from the same individual, and they identify the organization so I know that it's OK to open.

If you don't understand that we are living in an age where each of us gets hundreds of emails a day, we have limited attention spans, and we have a fear of being cyber attacked, you should not be doing any email communication.

Marketing #fail #2: Not having a complete website (or not

having one at all)

Last Friday, I was meeting some friends for dinner. There’s a new place that I had heard about and I did some searches to see if I could find a menu. The only thing available was a one page website with absolutely no useful information and a Facebook page, with even less useful information. We did end up meeting at this restaurant. We got there and were asked if we had reservations. Since we did not (by the way, it was 6:30 p.m. and the place was not full), the hostess told us our only option was to eat outside on the patio. Normally that would have been fine, but it was abnormally hot and humid and the patio did not even have ceiling fans. We took a look at the menu, which remember, was not available anywhere online, and we were very underwhelmed. The offerings did not make us want to brave the heat and we decided to go elsewhere. A couple showed up right after us and they too were offered the patio, and they also left.

A restaurant website should include all the information that diners need. This includes: hours, reservation policy, menu, special considerations (for example, in this case, the website could indicate diners without a reservation would be seated in the outdoor patio).

These days, there is no excuse for not having a working, attractive website. There are so many providers of build-it-yourself websites, from Wix to Squarespace. And there are providers that specialize in industries, such as restaurants.

What are marketing fails that you see over and over? Share them in the comments.