



## In Focus: THECHATEAULOIRE.COM

Bonjour, Hello!

Continuing my quest to help business owners increase their Findability (the ability for their customers to find them online), I want to highlight a fundamental element of the equation.

Findability is not about getting found by anyone and everyone online, but instead getting found by your target customer. So understanding your Internet voice and your target audience is absolutely essential for findability.

In the International arena, this becomes even more challenging. Cultural nuances and language styles can either be a driving sales factor or the equivalent of cultural suicide. It's easy to envision the United States population as your sole audience, when in actuality people from all over the world can search and find your site. Connecting and identifying your brand in different, viable markets is crucial for search marketing as well as converting those visitors to customers.

After combing through over 100 e-mails for consideration for a Findability Makeover, I chose TheChateauLoire.com for our subject this month. After speaking with the company and getting some background, I knew this would be an interesting subject with a compelling dilemma — that is, matching cultural identity to its target market.

offended them. After all, Abbey of Pontlevoy is a historical landmark established in 1034. In addition, they also confused their U.S. market — “Chateau Loire” does not really exist on maps. In an effort to appeal to both U.S. and European audiences, they diluted their brand and confused their prospective customers. They were not being found under any of their keywords that were representative of their event center, or their historical standing as a chateau in the Loire Valley.

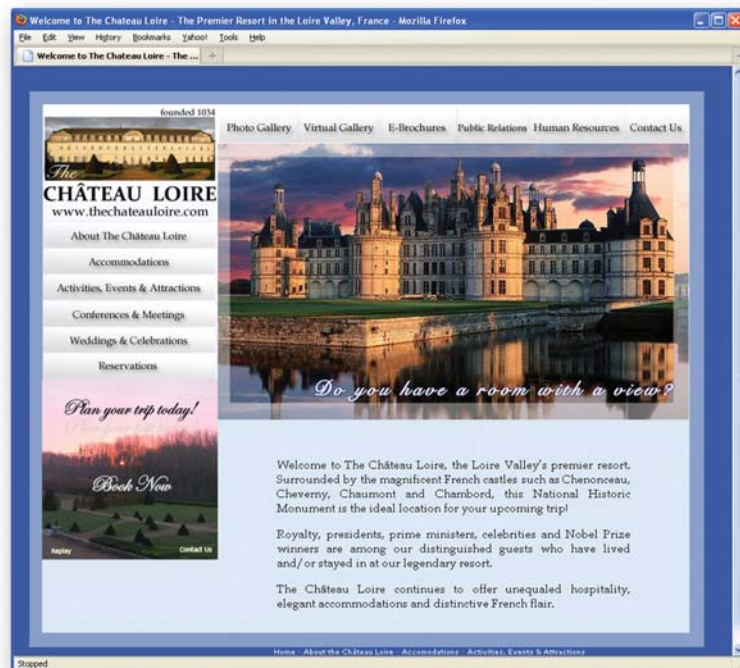
**“Marketing to the French market is quite different than marketing to the U.S. market in that you must always appeal to their in-bred sense of style, depending on the product of course, and saving money is a side benefit, not the emphasis. When complimented on a beautiful dress or new car, the French consider it bad taste to point out that it was purchased ‘on sale,’ whereas Americans love to expound on the deal they made and even direct the person who complimented them to where they got it.”**

— Barbara Pasquet James  
*Expert on the luxury market in France and manager of www.ParisTalks.com*

### The Problem

“Through the website we would like to welcome visitors [primarily from the U.S., France and other countries in Europe] to visit our property in France — The Chateau Loire,” says Radika Gadiyaram of The Chateau Loire. “The website aims to provide information about the Loire Valley region and also promote the accommodations available at the property. We are trying to create the identity for the Chateau Loire (commonly known as Abbey of Pontlevoy). Some of our visitors are familiar with older names of the entities but not the new brand (Chateau Loire). This poses a challenge to reach out to people and provide an assurance that the properties are the same, but we are trying to create a new brand. So I guess creating the identity is the main problem.”

Chateau Loire suffered from multiple personality disorder. By changing their name from Abbey of Pontlevoy to Chateau Loire, they confused their local French audience, maybe even



French and Americans do not search the same way. As a result of trying to target both French and American prospects in one fell swoop, Chateau Loire was targeting neither.

Unfortunately, I had to give them a Findability rating of 25 percent, as they were being found under their old name and their new name but not other keyword-driven searches like “Loire Valley Weddings” or “Loire Valley Event Center.”

L'identité votre audience et finissons travailler! (Let's identify your audience and get to work!)

## Action Plan

### Know Your Target Audience

Chateau Loire must clearly identify their audience by country and set up separate voices. Understanding and tailoring to their audiences will enable them to market the Chateau to each group, connect with them online, and start converting those qualified searches into customers.

## The Challenge

We don't want to downplay the amazing heritage of this chateau, which matters to the French searchers. However, we must also re-brand this facility to appeal to American sensibilities.

## The Solution?

In order to capitalize on each audience, Chateau Loire needs two websites.

### Tip #1: Identify Your Audience by Domain

Having a keyword in your domain name is a great way to gain high rankings in search engines. Because the audiences are unique, we recommend Chateau Loire purchase two distinct domain names.

#### *U.S. Site Domain Recommendation:*

[www.LoireValleyEventCenter.com](http://www.LoireValleyEventCenter.com)

The true rebranding of this site is not about an ultra-chic domain, but instead one that relates to the U.S. search market. First, we make sure English words are in the domain name. This helps reassure a searcher that the website is in English, and also gives them plenty of information about the website before the click. Second, “Loire Valley Event Center” is much closer to how an American would search for event venues in France, versus “Chateau Loire.”

#### *French Site Domain Recommendation:*

<http://www.AbbeyPontlevoy.co.fr>

This domain has a few key differences. First, it's a .co.fr denotation, letting French searchers know this site is hosted in France. Second, as with the U.S. domain, the words in the domain are in the searcher's primary language — in this instance, French. The keyword strategy is different than the Americanized domain, as it keeps the historical reference and elegance that the French adore. This will also re-brand a well known entity as more than just a chateau but an Event Center in a well known location.

### Tip # 2: Know Your Audience and Value Proposition

Effective findability only happens when a good user experience is given. Chateau Loire must deliver what each audience wants when they arrive on the website.

*U.S. Site: It's All About The Money, Honey*

As Americans, we are largely focused on value pricing. For this reason, a value proposition promoting a luxury event center at affordable prices is a great approach. This site must be in English and speak to an American audience looking to book a special event in France. For example, this site could have a section entirely dedicated to destination weddings for American brides and speak to their concerns about planning and price for their special day.

#### *French Site: You Get What You Pay For*

Unlike Americans, the French do not see value in affordable or low-rate venues. As such, the site content should appeal to the sense of style and history that makes this event center unique. The language can speak more in-depth on the event center established in 1034 and has been joined together to form the ultimate fashionable place for music, conferences, weddings and even one-night romantic evenings. This site must be in French.

### Tip # 3: Test your Audiences — Get Started with Pay-Per-Click

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising using a keyword tool, and setting up extensive tracking can give you the inside scoop as to how your target audiences search when they are ready to buy your product. Chateau Loire could setup PPC accounts for both new sites and utilize geo-targeting features that will enable the site to test a large group of keywords divided between the U.S. and France.

#### **U.S. PPC**

When geo-targeting the U.S., Chateau Loire should serve English language ad text with a more deal-making tone. Also, this is a great opportunity to test out a bargain value proposition, such as offering 10 percent off bookings.

#### **French PPC**

When geo-targeting the French audience, they should provide French language ad text with an elegant, historical tone in the ads. The landing page the user would arrive at would complement this messaging with aspects such as a photo gallery and testimonials.

They are now serving the exact message by site to the ideal audience to book their event center. In time they will gather enough data to tweak many features on each of the respective sites for increased organic ranking on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or [www.google.fr](http://www.google.fr).

I look forward to seeing these tips in action and watching Chateau Loire rise in the rankings!

Do you know a website that could use a facelift, or have you tried any of these suggestions on your site? Send your suggestions to [findability@websitemagazine.com](mailto:findability@websitemagazine.com). I'm always on the lookout for my next Findability Makeover Subject. ■

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*Heather Lutze has spent the last 10 years helping business owners get their enterprises noticed on the Web by their target audiences. She is the author of “The Findability Formula: The Easy, Non-Technical Approach to Search Engine Marketing.” Visit [FindabilityFormula.com](http://FindabilityFormula.com) for tools and resources to increase your site's findability.*