



## Design the right web site.

- 1. Keep it simple.**

The business web site is there for the customer. Keep your customer in mind at all times. Don't become so enchanted with showcasing your company that you lose sight of the reason your visitor came to your site. If you lose him once, you are not likely to get him back for a second chance.
- 2. Update often.**

Good web sites have changing content and changing design. If your site looks like it has not been updated lately, can your customer actually depend on the information he finds there? Well designed web sites allow for easy updating within the structure of the site. The best designs offer a dynamic site which has something different each time the visitor returns. Talk to your designer about options for automating your web site content.
- 3. Provide relevant content.**

Do not assume that your visitor is interested in your company history, employee roster, personnel photos. Give him something worth reading in an interesting format and he will return to your site and recommend it to others. The most visited web sites are those which offer unique content and easy access to information the visitor cannot find elsewhere.
- 4. Look professional.**

Many companies try to save on their web sites by designing and maintaining them "in-house". These offices often end up spending more on creating and maintaining their web site than if they had hired an outside consultant. What often happens is that employees have other responsibilities which must be balanced with the web site, and when time is tight, the web site is the project which gets put aside for later or given to another employee to finish. Remember that your web site has the potential to reach thousands of customers every day. Be sure it is leaving the right impression.
- 5. Use quality graphics.**

Just as you would not decorate your customer lobby or the front of your offices with clip art, you should not use these images in your web site. Quality photographs and graphics are an essential part of your professional design. Good professional photography and graphics enhance your web site and keep your visitor exploring longer.
- 6. Use quality fonts.**

Too many web sites can be found which use fonts more appropriate for greeting cards than for business. Keep your web site clean and professional with one font and add interest by changing sizes and weights. Resist the urge to scatter fonts creatively throughout the web site.
- 7. All computers were not created equal.** - Remember that colors will vary wildly from computer to computer. There is no way to control the exact appearance of colors across the web. Therefore, don't spend a lot of time trying to match your letterhead or logo.
- 8. The web is not print.**

This may seem like an obvious statement, but it is important to remember that printed materials cannot just be scanned to your web site. Printed materials must be reformatted for use on the web. It is not always practical to try to reproduce your existing printed materials for web site use. Let your designer guide you to find the right balance between good web design and consistent image for your business materials.
- 9. Spell check everything.**

Errors and typos always seem to find their way into web sites. You can reduce the number of errors on your site and the time necessary to correct them by using the spell check function for any text files you send.
- 10. Download time matters.**

The average visitor will wait 4 to 6 seconds for a page to download. It is important that your web site have something for your customer within that time or you may lose him forever. Keep your web site pages to a size which can be downloaded quickly. There are still plenty of potential customers out there using dial up modem to connect to the Internet.
- 11. Use animation sparingly.**

The use of FLASH animation can dramatically increase a Webster's interest without increasing the download time significantly. However, too much animation can compete for the visitors attention and actually drive away traffic. Integrate your animated elements into the design concept and let them support your information rather than competing for attention.
- 12. Make your site unique.**

There are thousand upon thousands of web sites out there today. Most of them look very much the same. Do

not design your site with a template which will make your web site just like all of the others. Keep your design memorable, but professional.

13. **Navigation is the key.**  
You have probably been to one of those sites which makes it hard to find the information you are seeking. Clear navigation is important. Your site should allow the visitor to clearly choose his options and to get back to the beginning without difficulty. Good navigation is an important key to successful web site design.
  14. **Get your money's worth!**  
Listen to your professional designer - After all, that is what you are paying for! If you have chosen your design firm well, then they will know their business - just as you know yours. Too many cooks spoil the broth - and the web site, too! Of course you should be involved in guiding the direction of your new web site, but let your designer give you the benefit of his expertise in the field.
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