
The Seven Essentials Of Good Web Design

Posted by admin - 2008/03/24 21:19

Green businesses are not just competing amongst themselves but with ALL businesses. For this reason, it is crucial that your website is professional, well thought out and worth visiting. Otherwise, instead of attracting business, you'll effectively be turning people away!

However, learning the ins-and-outs of the web is a time consuming process. Pitfalls abound.

Here are the seven most important elements of good web design. Your visitors (potential customers) will thank you for following these simple web basics.

1. Full contact details on every page

Web users are a notoriously impatient bunch. If your contact details are not clear, your potential customer can easily click elsewhere. And they will.

Have the following information on each and every web page:

- Phone number
- Mobile number (if applicable)
- Fax number
- Email address
- Web address
- Business or postal address

Make sure all email addresses and web addresses are hyper-linked - allowing visitors to "click" directly to the information they require.

2. An Attention Grabbing Headline

Once your page has loaded, the visitors' eyes are immediately drawn to your headlines and sub-headings. If you don't pique interest quickly, they'll move on to a site that does.

The headline must grab people. If the headline doesn't exist – or give them what they're looking for - you can kiss them goodbye.

3. Quality Photos and Visuals

After your headline, your visitors' eyes will next be drawn to photos and images. The images you choose need to be high quality and relevant to the site's objective.

For businesses that offer products (cosmetics, art gallery, real estate, eco-tourism etc) you must have images of the product available.

For service industries (consultant, graphic design, copywriting etc), have photos of yourself and your employees. It's also useful to show the physical address of the business. It gives your service credibility - you're a real business that exists in the real world.

One final word on photos and images. The more you have, the longer your page takes to load. Balance is key here.

4. Sub-headlines that expand on Headlines

Only 21% of users read word-by-word. The remaining 79% scan from headline to headline and sub-head to sub-head - searching for the information they require.

Strong headlines and sub-headings show thoughtfulness on your part, and cater specifically to your user.

5. Readable Text

Too many websites are designed with little regard for the end user - potential customers. We read 25% slower online, mostly because it's harsher on our eyes.

Make your visitors' time on your site more enjoyable by providing:

- Dark text on a white background (especially if there's lots of content)
- Text no smaller than 10, 11 or 12 point font

- Easy-to-read fonts (Verdana, Arial, Helvetica or Georgia)

6. Keep It Simple – Be Concise

Try to get your message across in as few words as possible. A good rule of thumb is to reduce your web text by 50% compared with printed documents.

A visitor will spend on average between 3-15 seconds on your page before deciding to move on. Give them the information they require, concisely. If you need to expand on your content, use links within the page - allowing them to navigate for specific more detailed information.

7. Value-Added Content

Make your website a destination. Give people a reason to visit your site.

You can add value by providing free information they might not be able to find elsewhere. Information directly related to the product or service you're offering.

Other ways to add value to your site include:

- Incentives to buy online (web only offers)
- Interactivity (polls, quizzes, message boards, links etc)

If you can exceed the expectations of your web visitor, they'll be more likely to a) stay on your site, b) visit your site again and c) use your product or service.

And finally....

If you follow these tips, your web users will be able to quickly and easily find the information and details they're looking for. By catering to your visitor, you're creating business opportunities. It's worth the extra time and effort to make your site informative, interesting, readable and highly usable.

Article submitted by:

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Leigh believes that working alongside like-minded people provides inspiration for both parties.

"As a 'green' business, you're at the cutting edge of a market that represents around 26% of Australia's adult population. Understanding and reaching that customer is crucial to your business success."

"The way I like to think about your marketing material - it's a first impression. And if you don't pique interest with your first attempt, you won't get a second chance. Effectively, you're turning away customers."

Leigh works alongside environmentally aware businesses every day - to improve their marketing, communications and strategy.

Leigh's memorable quote:

"Before you speak, ask yourself: is it kind, is it necessary, is it true, does it improve on the silence".

Shirdi Sai Baba
Indian Yogi (1838 – 1918)

Re: The Seven Essentials Of Good Web Design

Posted by GetGreen - 2008/04/02 01:49

Great article and solid advice.

A couple more suggestions if I may:

If you're about redevelop your website, ensure your web developer uses a Content Management System (CMS) so you can continue to add good content to the site

Don't use a Flash animation based site as these won't rank well in search engines

If you have a new website, consider using PPC advertising (Pay Per Click) through Google, Yahoo or MSN to promote your products and services

Ensure you mention you geographic location often in your content. Many environmentally conscious customer search locally, ensuring list your state and suburb will help with your search engine results for these geo-searches.

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