

Top 10 Web Design Tips

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1. Give people a reason to visit.

Most of the successful websites give people a reason to visit. By letting your visitors know that you update your site with new information can give people a reason. Make it easy for customers to learn more about your business when they come to your homepage by listing an e-mail link, toll-free number, and/or address. Create a sign-up box that invites people to subscribe to your mailing list so you can send email updates about your Web site to keep them coming back.

2. Give people a reason to stay.

Allowing your visitors to interact with your company online gives them a reason to stay. This could be an interesting article they read or download, news about your company that is updated, interactive animation, a guestbook, and shopping your products and services.

3. Keep the design simple.

Don't overload your homepage with images, colors, and different sizes of text. By filling your pages with animation, graphics, and photos that may or may not relate to the page's topic will only confuse your audience. Use standard colors and keep your site clean. Don't try to do too much on any one page. Use Java applets, forms, and animated images sparingly. It can cause them to leave your site early and never return if your site just as too much to absorb.

4. Make the page unique.

Ask yourself what is unique about your business' products and service. Let your audience know that you have a business that is special and deserves their attention and patronage. In addition to a unique web site, make sure each page is unique so your audience is, again, not confused and can easily distinguish one page from another by its topic (not by its design).

5. Remember your target audience.

The most successful web sites consider their audiences and make allowances for visitors' computer equipment, time constraints and need for information. Ask yourself if you are targeting your local markets or globally. Is your audience young and hip, or older and conservative or visa versa?

6. Remember your other marketing material.

Be conscious of the rest of your company's printed material and publicity outlets when you create your Web pages. Be consistent in your graphics; use the same logo that appears on your letterhead and business cards. In addition, make sure that your web site is complementing your current marketing and business strategies.

7. Create an easy-to-navigate Web site.

This tip is often overlooked in web design. Place navigation links where people expect to find them, and make sure all pages of your Web site have a consistent set of navigation links. Make sure your audience knows where they are in your web site and how they can get back Home.

8. Proofread and check.

A key point in creating a Web page is not something you do but something you don't do: make spelling errors and grammatical blunders. A single typo at the top of your Web page can ruin the professional appearance. Most importantly, always test your pages.

9. Keep the content fresh.

To show your audience that your site is worth visiting often, update your homepage frequently with special offers, information on new products and services, as well as changes to your business operations. Also include the last time your site was updated. Fresh content lends credibility to your web site.

10. Promote your business -- online and offline.

If you regularly place an ad in a newspaper or magazine that already draws visitors, add a reference to the URL of your web site somewhere on that ad. Be sure to include your web address on all of your printed material: letterhead, business cards, invoices, envelopes, brochures, shopping bags, billboards, etc. And lastly, be sure to list your web site with the major search engines.