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Some Thoughts to Keep in Mind when Working with Your Web Designer

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All Web design should start with a unique design concept, effective visual appeal, and most importantly, search engine readiness in mind. When the design is complete, you should have a powerful marketing tool with a blend of custom graphics, banners, and logos that represent your business effectively in cyberspace. Following are some thoughts you should keep in mind while you are working with your web designer.

1.) A company's website should be an integral part of its marketing campaign, and should create an online presence utilizing the search engines. Ensure that you reach this goal by building a fully optimized, and "search engine-ready" website using unique optimization techniques. Making sure your pages and web site are search engine friendly before you go live is essential. Having a well designed, effective web site that cannot be found by the search engines is almost like not having a web site at all. In other words, "save your money."

2.) A website, while being an information portal, must also act as the marketing arm and entice visitors to visit again and again. A company's website should serve as a community, develop brand loyalty, position your company as "experts" in their field and nurture a long-term relationship that will turn a regular visitor into a valued customer.

3.) More and more web sites are going the dynamic route – a trend indicating that in the near future, database driven sites are going to become the norm. This is due to the fact that updating content for large sites is becoming more and more difficult and impractical. Make sure your web design team has experience designing dynamic web sites using ASP, or Cold Fusion technology; Microsoft Access for simple databases; Microsoft SQL; and Oracle for complex sites. If you update your company's products often, tell your web designer you want to include a content management system that allows you to change content on-the-fly.

4.) Look for a web designer that incorporates value in their approach. Don't let your design team just throw jargon out and ask you to make sense out of it; look for a team that will listen to your processes and your business needs in order to increase their understanding and make recommendations for your site that will ease your business processes.

5.) The web designer is the most important component to achieving the site you want; however site owners should be proactive. Look on the net for existing sites that match your company's direction and needs. Don't feel that your site needs to be the pinnical of web sites. It is fine to get ideas...not copy!... from similar design functions from existing web sites that meet your business objectives. In other words you don't need to "reinvent the wheel".

6.) Because there are a plethora of web design firms, you can narrow your choice by asking to view their portfolio. This portfolio should contain some of the best work a design firm has done. Paying close attention to the portfolio will provide you a benchmark for determining the style, quality and content of sites created by the web designer. You can tell by the products or services offered on these sites if the site has indeed been designed with the right content, navigation, and creative elements that fit the companies' profiles. Pay even closer attention to the navigation. It should be very easy to maneuver around the sites.

7.) Don't let your designer convince you to have a Flash intro page where a surfer can either view the intro or skip it. Most times the surfer will skip it....right on to the next site! Remember; make the experience as easy as possible.

Keep in mind that your web site should include usability, functionality, navigation, content and information. These are just as, if not more important, than the overall appearance of your web site. Factor these components into your web design, in addition to search engine ready pages, and you will go a long way to achieving your goals for your web site.

About Judith Stolpner:

Judith is the Director of Marketing for Blue Robin, Inc., a leading eBusiness Infrastructure developer that designs, develops, implements, and supports eBusiness infrastructures that combine data, voice, and video, utilizing the latest and the greatest hardware and software technology in diverse operating environments. Prior to joining Blue Robin Judith spent 15 years working exclusively with technology companies, providing them with a wide range of public relations and marketing services. Judith graduated with honors from Fisher College, Boston, MA.

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