

Getting Your Website Right

The temptation to rush through the creation of your website can force you to compromise on a great many fundamentally important aspects of solid website operation – compromises that you will ultimately need to go back and correct. The trick is to get it right the first time, leaving changing your website for those infrequent times when you change your corporate look or shift your company's message.

There are a number of things you need to consider when constructing your website so as to avoid the costly revisions later on. It should also be noted that many times, despite the good intentions, the revisions you are intending to make never seem to get made, as you become too busy to tend to them. The result then, is that you are stuck with a deficient website.

So what are those elements you need to keep in mind? Tudog has a few questions you should be asking yourself. They are:

1. What is the purpose of this website?

There are a number of legitimate functions a website can serve. For example a website can be set up as a means of disseminating information. It can also be an online example of your company's skills and expertise. Whatever the purpose, you must have it clearly and well defined before you start considering other aspects of website development.

2. What should be my user paths?

The navigation you incorporate into the website will significantly influence the experience your visitors will have, how long they will stay, and how successful they will be in extracting from the website what they wanted (and what you wanted them to get out of it). User paths need to be logical, clear, easy to follow, and categorized in language that is common and typical. You do not want to create links that people cannot understand or send them through a maze to get to where they want to go.

3. How do I want the site to look?

The appearance of your website will greatly influence the extent to which you are able to extract from the website the full potential of your effort. The development of the look of your site begins with the corporate identity of your company. The website should be consistent with this look. In addition, you should consider what "feel" you want the website to have. For example, a financial services website might want a "safe and established" feel, while a technology company might want to demonstrate its technical savvy or communicate its high technology image.

4. How will the site be used?

While you considered your objectives, you also need to consider the objectives of the people who will be visiting the site. There is a need to anticipate the purpose people will have in exploring your site and make sure that you deliver the experience as you understand they would want it. While some of this has to do with the aspects we discuss

above, such as site appearance and navigation, it also has to do with the core message of the website and the content you provide.

5. How should the content be presented?

Beyond what content you should provide is the question of how it should be organized. While some of this is taken care of when considering the navigation, much of it has to do with the way pages are laid out and the interaction of text with graphics. Once again, this question is at the core of the visitor's experience, the success of which will determine in the long run the success of your business.

6. What communication channels have you created?

You need to make sure that you are allowing your visitors the opportunity to interact with by providing the ability to email you or call you. Tudog recommends providing as much contact information as possible because we believe that websites with little contact information lack credibility, as if they do not want inquiries. You need to put your company out there for evaluation and you need to do so in such a way that you express confidence that you will pass any evaluation with flying colors.

The creation of a high quality, well conceived website will afford your company the ability to establish and maintain credibility while also serving as an interactive tool for people interested in learning more about your company. What they learn – and what they perceive – has a lot to do with how good your site is. When building your site, ask yourself these 6 questions, and you'll be able to answer the question "how good a site do I have" with the answer "quite good indeed".