



Info2000 Information Services

Website Development Checklist and Usability Tips

To make the most of your Internet investment, your Web pages must work as hard as you do. Anything that distracts your audience from quickly and clearly understanding what you have to offer should be shoved off the site!

Here's the basic checklist followed by an explanation for each topic. Note, this list does not include techniques for performance (speed, quick loading images, etc.)

- Simplicity in Navigation and Content**
- Benefits and Features**
- Above the Fold is Gold**
- Products/Services Separately Listed**
- Page Tags**
- Short, Simple Headlines**
- Content is King So Make It "Sticky"**
- Call to Action**

Simplicity in Navigation & Content

Navigation should be simple and consistent throughout your entire Website. Talk about how you solve problems and what you can do for your audience. Stay focused and use hyperlinks if your content goes in multiple directions.

Tip: Keep your home page brief – you only have a few seconds to make an impression. Use your home page as a billboard to quickly announce what you do. If your audience has to dig or scroll too far, you'll lose them.

Resist talking about yourself on your home page even if you are an astrologer or artist and your Website is entirely about your talent and what you do.

Benefits and Features

Talk about benefits first, and then describe the features. Selling an invisible service is more challenging than tangible products, so be creative and give more of yourself by sharing your knowledge and the expertise that your customers ultimately need.

Tip: Create lists and emphasize important benefits first. Use the hyperlink features to link to other related pages, or pages with more detail.

Above the Fold is Gold

The term "Above the Fold" is an old newspaper phrase that denotes the space on the front page above where the newspaper folds. This is the most visible and important section of the entire newspaper and it holds true for Web page development.

Tip: Place your most important benefit or information at the top of the page. Use bulleted lists or bookmarks that link to more detail further down the page.

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Products and/or Services Separately Listed

Naturally, you will group similar products and services. Don't miss a spontaneous sale because specific product features are missing. Many customers will skip to the next supplier rather than contact customer service. Group similar products and service, but put them on separate pages.

Tip: Placing products and services on separate pages will help your SEO (search engine optimization) because search engines index pages, not web sites. Creating separate pages provides more opportunity for keyword diversity that will ultimately give you increased search engine exposure.

Page Tags

This is the text that displays on the top bar of your Internet Browser. It is also scanned by the search engines.

Tip: Make it work for you by making it descriptive. Get to the point as quickly as possible to improve your search engine indexing; in other words don't start your description with the word "the."

Short, Simple Headlines

Use compelling and informative headlines to help your audience skim for relevant content. Lead them toward information and solutions. Avoid long blocks of text. If you have lots of copy, break it up into layers and use hyperlinks that lead to other pages with more detail. This is the beauty and a primary benefit of Web pages.

Tip: Make your headlines bold; keep the font size and style consistent throughout your Website. If you use italics, which some people find difficult to read, make sure the font is very readable and in a dark color.

Content is King So Make It Sticky

Keep your pages short and easy to read. But, above everything else make your content "sticky."

Example: If you sell the best previously-owned cars in town, educate your audience about how to shop, select, and get the best deal. Tell them what to watch out for and how do a quick inspection themselves before they drive off the lot or pay for a mechanic's evaluation.

Education through shared knowledge and experience builds relationships and will increase your business. An information-rich environment will make your Website work for you.

Tip: Check your competitors' websites and know their products and sales methods. Use bulleted lists, downloads, and links to authority websites (associations, consumer reports, etc.) to reinforce your market position. But, by all means, keep your sticky content easy to find and quick to read. Make your Website part of your overall marketing and sales process.

Call to Action

Ask your audience for their business. Provide emails links and phone numbers that are prominently displayed, even if you have a contact link as part of your navigation.

Tip: Give something of yourself and offer a free quote, consultation, or contract review ... whatever applies to your business. Make it a no obligation offer and mean it. In other words, be a part of your community and earn your reputation as a business or individual who is willing to help others.

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