

Mountain Creek Web Design

Website Design Tips

When designing your website, there are a lot of variables that should be taken into consideration. For example, the questions I have posted on my website's contact page.

- ◆ What is the purpose of your website?
- ◆ What do you envision for your website?
- ◆ What kind of design & layout do you want?
- ◆ What color scheme do you want?
- ◆ Do you have a company/website logo?
- ◆ How many pages will you need for your website?
- ◆ Are you wanting or needing a flash intro/splash screen?
- ◆ What domain name do you want to use?
- ◆ What hosting company do you want to use?
- ◆ Will you need merchant's accounts for payments, credit cards, paypal, etc?
- ◆ If your selling products, how big of a catalog/shopping cart will you need?
- ◆ How many email accounts will you need?
- ◆ Will you be performing your own site maintenance or paying someone for it?
- ◆ Will you be doing your own SEO and site promotion?
- ◆ What kind of timeframe do you need to have your website online?
- ◆ Is this something you can do for yourself and still be unique and effective?

Below, I will list some design tips for you to keep in mind for your website. Some of which you've probably never given any thought to.

Target Market: You need to know who your target market is, who your audience is, and design your website with them in mind. Don't just choose colors, graphics, and layout based on what you like, but instead think about your site visitors will want and like.

Content: Don't over text your website with too much text or graphics. Try to keep your website simple by using bullets points and plenty of white space, or black space. Most visitors will skim a web page first before they decide to read it. Also, content is king in the SEO department of web design. Use the right keywords that best reflect what your website is about in your text, but don't overdo it. Write and re-write your textual content

over and over again until you get right and submit to your website. The better your text content is utilizing the right keywords, the better chance you have of achieving a higher page rank in search engines. I can't repeat this enough of how important this factor is.

Navigation: Try to keep your website easy to navigate and minimize the amount of hyperlinks you have embedded within your paragraphs. This will keep your site more user-friendly and won't frustrate your visitors and turn them away. The cleaner your website is the better it looks and will perform. If you have a lot of pages in your website, then use a sitemap at the bottom of each page for easier navigation.

Downloading: Statistics show that if a website takes more than 7 seconds to download, most visitors will turn away. If you use a lot of graphics, try to keep them to a minimal and as small of file size as possible. This is where thumbnail views play in. Thumbnails are great way to show an example of what you're offering while allowing your visitors to enlarge them to full size for better viewing. Also, try to avoid using too much animated graphics. They may look great, but seriously slow down your page loads. Even in today's world, there are still a lot of internet users that have a dial-up connection.

Resolution: Not everyone online these days have the same monitor size, and there are multiple screen resolutions to consider when designing your website. The most monitor resolution the last few years has been 1024 x 768, with 36% of internet users using this size. Some people still have 800 x 600 monitors while others have larger monitor resolutions. As of January, 2010, 76% of internet users have a larger monitor resolution than the standard 1024 x 768. When I design a website, depending on it's purpose, I will generally use from 960 – 1000 pixels wide. This allows for those visitors that still have smaller resolutions to view the website while still leaving room for future development. Also, try not to go over 2-3 page folds down for optimal effect. People generally do not like to have to scroll too far down a website and certainly don't like to scroll across horizontally.

Web Browsers: There are many different web browsers online today and each one displays a website in different ways. The major browsers are Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera, Safari, and Chrome, just to name a few. The best way around this is to use strict and correct HTML or XHTML coding.

Plug-Ins: Media files for audio and video require plug-ins in order for them to play. If you're going to place this kind of content on your website, try to use the more common types of files for the most common types of plug-ins, such as Windows Media Player, RealAudio Player, or QuickTime. If possible, place a link next to your file so your visitors can download the plug-ins if they don't already have them.

Color Schemes: Using the right color scheme can make all the difference in the world. Your colors should blend well with the rest of content including text and graphics, and don't overdo it using too many different colors. Be consistent throughout your website.

Layout: When you first start designing your website, start with the top and work your way down, setting up the basics, such as headers, page titles, taglines, navigation links or buttons, and footers. While doing this, you're creating your own website template that you can use for the rest of your website. This will also help you be more consistent throughout your website so it will have the same look and feel to it.

Fonts: Not everyone online has the same operating system or web browsers. If you use an uncommon font on your website, your visitors' web browsers may not be able to display it correctly. Try to use the more common fonts such as Arial, Tahoma, Times New Roman, or Verdana, and try not to mix them up. Be consistent throughout your website. I normally will use Arial on most websites unless someone requests a different font. What a lot of people don't understand is that a particular font and font size may show one way on their web browser, but doesn't show like that at all on other web browsers. The HTML code tells the web browser what to do and how to do it, but if your visitors don't have that particular font installed on their computer, their web browser will display it however it can and it will show up completely different than the way you intended it to. This will throw off your design work and turn away your visitors.

Flash Intros: Depending on what you're designing your website for, having a flash intro or splash screen may be good or bad. A lot of people don't like having to wait before entering your website and it may turn them away, especially if you want to keep them coming back. Search engines do not like flash intros and have problems indexing your website page links. Also, remember what I said about download times.

Before you start looking for someone to design and build your website, ask yourself if you are capable of doing it yourself. It's not that hard, but it can be tedious and time

consuming. If you can do it yourself, then you will know how to perform your own site maintenance and updates. This will save you some money in the long run. All the information your need is available through the links on my resources page. Take the time to do some research first before you begin your website.

Website Designing Steps:

- ◆ Register Domain Name
- ◆ Gather content, graphics, photos, text, etc
- ◆ Decide on color scheme and layout
- ◆ Design website
- ◆ SEO
- ◆ Setup hosting account
- ◆ Point domain name to DNS servers
- ◆ Upload website files to servers via ftp client
- ◆ Search engine submission
- ◆ Website promotion
- ◆ Site maintenance

Before you start looking for someone to design and build your website, ask yourself if you are capable of doing it yourself. It's not that hard, but it can be tedious and time consuming. If you can do it yourself, then you will know how to perform your own site maintenance, search engine optimization, setting up your hosting account, purchasing your domain name, pointing your site to your name servers, uploading your files to your hosting account, and repairing glitches when they occur. This will save you some money in the long run. All the information you need is available through the links on my resources page. Take the time to do some research before you begin your website.

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