Website Design: Content Considerations

A Fantastic Website

In an earlier article, I considered the preparation required to achieve a fantastic website - one that has great content, is easy to navigate and provides a visual symphony. I outlined what steps must be taken, emphasising the importance of being clear about what it is that you want and planning every aspect of the website before requesting a website developer to revamp your website.

Wow 'em!

We now move onto just how to develop a site that Wows them. In this article I outline content considerations – there are four main aspects to consider.

Real Estate

Web pages tend to be divided into four main areas. I will refer to these as the: Body, Header, Footer, and Menu. Although the content of each piece of real estate is largely discrete, there is one guiding principle that affects all: keep it short and simple. Visitors to website tend to scan, looking for key words or phrases that mean something to them. They are not interested in pages and pages of content. For the main content area (Body) make use of bullet points, white spaces, and break text up into logical blocks. Add an image or two, and make use of colour (here and elsewhere) – black and white on a web page is very boring.

Page Layout

Spend a little time with a word processor or a presentation package to prepare a mock-up of each page. Determine the location of the website navigation menu – a vertical menu on the left or a horizontal menu near the top of the page. Consider the Body area – one large area or two or three columns. The location of a Header and Footer is self-explanatory. But you do need to decide what they are to contain and the desired visual impact.

A Reason To Visit

Almost all websites in the public domain contain information on products and services, the organisation, and contact details. But look beyond this. People need a reason to (re-) visit a website. So make use of the "Free" concept (avoid the word free on a web page as search engines do not approve!). Free draws people to your website, Consider including free consultations, sample products, case studies, white papers, articles written by staff that have been published in industry or professional magazines.

Credibility

Prospective clients want to deal with reliable, trustworthy organisations. They want to know they can trust your organisation. Consider including the following onto your website brief resume of key staff, a photograph or two of staff en masse or as individuals, awards, reviews and articles from trade publications, quote comments from customers, give an idea of who your clients are, names of industry or professional associations that the firm belongs to.

Promotion

Now that you have a revamped web site promote it! Make use of the ideas contained in A Reason to Visit. Make use of your advertising, your business cards, e-mail signatures and so on.