

The first step in a successful website marketing plan is the design of the website. This can often times be the most crucial in some projects writing the content on the page isn't hard, especially if they have already gone through the process of creating a brochure for their company already or have done trade show handouts in the past. The truth is, if you do everything else perfectly including great content writing, build a terrific pagerank, or implement a carefully planned PPC campaign, it is all for nothing if the site isn't user friendly in its layout and gives the visitor the utmost confidence that they have found a company they can trust.

We believe that the factors that impact the user experience are:

- **Confidence:** The look must be current and look professional. This doesn't mean compete with MTV.com for the sexiest website on the internet, be do ahead of your competition.
- **Easy to read:** Make sure your content is placed in the page where the users eyes are drawn to immediately and select fonts that are easy to read with colors that are pleasing to eye.
- **Ease of navigation:** Users need to find the page they are looking for within one to two clicks at the most.
- **Focus:** Studies show most people can only perceive about 5% of what is on the screen. Use **bold** and underline sparingly so let them know what to stop and read. As you will see on my site I absolutely love headings and bullet points. If they don't see what they want right away, they will click the back button.
- **Consistency:** Keep the same look and feel throughout the site and group similar items together in the navigation Don't change layout and make vistors wonder if they accidentally went to a different website.

- **Relevancy**: Think about how someone is going to use your site and give them a direction to take with similar items to look at and come back to. You can also use contextual links to 'offer up freebies' to similar and related content on other pages.

- **Expectations**: Keep their expectations in mind. I once worked on a website that had everything going down the right path, but used a nature theme with the 4 major areas of the site colored after the four seasons in Minnesota. This actually worked out really nicely, except they sold high end IT products and people got the impression they were a campground or resort.

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