

# Does your website need an Extreme Makeover?

by Ivana Katz

**I**t was Friday night and I was enjoying a quiet dinner at home, when suddenly CRACK! - part of my tooth broke off!!!! "Damn" I thought, "Now what?" I immediately went online to see if I could find a dentist that is open on Saturday morning. So I searched and searched.

The good news was there were plenty of dentists in my area ... the bad news was that I couldn't find whether they were open on Saturdays. After looking through various websites for about an hour, I narrowed it down to three dentists, who were open on the weekend. But in the end there was no competition as only one of the dentists had a professional looking website!

Don't get me wrong the website wasn't flash, but it was clean, easy to navigate and most of all, provided me with the information I was looking for. I phoned the next morning, made an appointment and even got to see a dentist that day!

After that experience, it really hit home ... what difference a professional looking website makes! I am sure most of the dentists in my area are great at what they do, but none of their websites portrayed that. As a result they lost a customer who will spend hundreds, possibly even thousands of dollars on their services.

So if you have a website and are hoping it will bring you lots of visitors who will turn into paying customers, it is EXTREMELY, let me say that again EXTREMELY IMPORTANT that your website:

## 1. IS VISITOR FRIENDLY.

What this means is that your customers must be able to find what they are looking for easily and quickly. And that means a great navigational system. Most websites either display their navigation

bar on the left or at the top. And since most people are used to this type of navigation, it's best to stick with it. It also helps to include your navigation bar at the bottom of each page to save your visitors from having to scroll back to the top.

## 2. FOCUSES ON YOUR CUSTOMER'S NEEDS.

Rather than trying to "sell your business", let your prospects know how your product/service is going to benefit them. Emphasise the benefits and solve problems. Make this the focus of everything you write on every page of your site. Don't try to sell visitors your products or service, help them.

## 3. THERE ARE NO SPELLING MISTAKES.

Ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Check that all links are working and graphics display correctly.

## 4. PROVES CREDIBILITY.

Include testimonials from your current customers to show your potential clients that you are trustworthy, reliable and that



## 5. CONTACT DETAILS.

Place contact details in as many places as possible. Make it easy for your customers to contact you. Create a special "Contact Us" page, include your details in "About Us" page and also at the bottom of each

page. Information to include: business name, physical address, mailing address, telephone, fax, email, emergency number, website address and most importantly, don't forget to include your business hours.

## 6. OFFERS A MONEY BACK GUARANTEE.

The longer the guarantee, the more effective it will be. It could be 30 days, 60 days, 1 year or lifetime. Remember you are trying to take the risk out of doing business with you.

## 7. PROVIDES INFORMATION THAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR.

If you don't provide it, someone else will. Content is still the king. You should include as much information as possible -

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If your website features any of the following, your website definitely needs an EXTREME MAKEOVER or at least a face lift.

1. Flash intros, revolving globes, bevelled line separators, animated mail boxes
2. Loads of pop up or pop under boxes
3. Autoplay music. Allow your customer to play music only if they choose.
4. Hit counters of the free variety, which say "you are 27th visitor"
5. Date and time stamps, unless your website is updated daily or weekly
6. Busy backgrounds.

Ask yourself - does my website portray the professional image I want my customers to see? Have I provided all the information that my customers may want or need to know? If you answered no to either of these, call your website designer today or you could lose thousands of dollars as your customers head to your competitor's door.

Ivana Katz is the owner of Websites 4 Small Business, a company specialising in the design and promotion of growing, small and home-based business websites. She believes that every business deserves to have a successful website, no matter what its budget is. [info@web4business.com.au](mailto:info@web4business.com.au) - <http://www.web4business.com.au>

## Targeted Mailing Lists

Looking for people who might have an interest in your OPPORTUNITY, PRODUCT or SERVICE? We have an upto date list of people who have expressed an interest in being kept informed of new offers etc. For details either Fax (02) 4577 6942 or send an email to [mailinglist@profitcentre.com](mailto:mailinglist@profitcentre.com) with 'ListSB101' in the subject line or write to: AAA Media Network, Dept SB101, PO Box 5518, Windsor Sth, NSW 2756.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNET a language all of its own.

by Marion Drazil

**I**t never ceases to amaze me as to how wonderful and yet how strange, we the human race can be at times. In the past two years I have come to know the Internet and everything it has to offer, and I sincerely believe that it is structured so only those people who have the time and energy to dedicate their entire life to working out how to confuse the rest of us, can actually understand it.

If you as a small business owner want to have a successful presence on the web then contemplate on my following rambles before you take any further steps to setting up your own website. Don't get me wrong, the internet has a fascination that keeps me sitting at that infernal machine night and day trying to understand the latest new software or making the decision as to whether to code my new website site in HTML or PHP, or both, of which I am proficient in neither to any great degree.

So, I am going to share these insights with you in the hope that you at least take into consideration whether this exercise of you setting up your own website is really the most desirable way to go about establishing your internet presence.

The internet has a language all of its own, it is neither of the two specific codes I mentioned previously yet it is both of those and many more. They all intertwine and mingle and sometimes get so confused you are not certain what you are looking at any more and God forbid if you ask someone for help, the questions they ask are as confusing as the answers they give.

Consider learning Russian and just as you seem to have come to grasp the basics of asking for a loaf of bread, someone comes along and suggests you learn Japanese instead because that is what everyone is going to speak in the future or at least for the next month as they are contemplating on changing to German because people are eating more sausage

than ever before. I searched for answers to this dilemma and concluded that there appears to be no structure in the system of internet coding, or is it only that I came into it so late in life that the grey matter just can't take it all in.

So here you are with a thriving business and a longing to take your business to the world so you purchase an easy DIY software program or use the existing one that comes with your basic setup, only to find that you cannot understand how to get started as the upgraded programs are not the same as the instruction.

Never mind, you figure that you can always get in touch by emailing their support service, of course being mindful of time zones as they are probably located in Romania. So, you go to the support service to locate the Contact Us email address, only to find that they have a series of questions for you to work through just in case the solutions are in the FAQ ( Oh! FAQ = Frequently Asked Questions), did I happen to mention that you also need to learn Acronyms as well.

Having fastidiously gone through and perused every problem and it's solution in the FAQ, you decide your answer doesn't appear to be there so you move onto the forums as any self respecting site needs a forum for the lodgment of, and solutions to... you guessed it... more problems. By this time you have logged in and become a member several times over and have added more user names and passwords to your lengthy and ever growing list of important things to remember.

After the first hour has passed you come to the slow realisation that you are not going to find the answers to you particular questions, as most questions listed are followed with a response from the moderator to the effect that if the access information to the FTP and the MySQL (and you thought you had seen the last of the acronyms) is emailed, they will attend to it privately. Finally after sending the email you should have sent a full week