MET Design, Inc.
315 West 102 Street, Suite 3B
New York, NY 10025
212.665.4155
www.metdesign.com

Ten Point Checklist for a Winning Website

by Marya Triandafellos, President, MET Design, Inc.

Is your site performing its best based on the top ten Web site evaluation criteria? Make sure you're on track and evaluate your site based on the criteria listed below. If you would like our opinion, please visit <http://www.metdesign.com/workspace/evaluation.html>
to see if you qualify for a Free Website Evaluation. Of course we are available to help with any improvements you require.

1. Branding

Components (a name, text, visual graphics and/or sound) used to signify a company and distinguish it from its competitors. A brand is comprehended by the viewer on an emotional level.

- The brand is well defined on your site.
- The site branding is consistent with branding in other media.

2. Architecture

The site's structure, what are the main sections and how are they organized into sub sections and pages.

- No area on the site is deeper than 5 clicks.
- Site structure flows logically from one topic to the next.
- Naming conventions are coherent from a User's perspective.

_____

3. Navigation

The Interface that allows the User to travel through the site.

- The navigational components are comprehendible and relevant to the brand.
- It's fast and easy to navigate from page to page within the site and to find the information you need.
- It's easy to determine your location within the site.
- Visitors can access the homepage, email and contact information from every page.
- All links are properly functioning.

4. Design

The "look and feel" of the site. Its aesthetic.

- The color palette, page layout, typography, photos and graphics complement your brand and are consistently and creatively executed across all areas of the site.
- The color palette used for links, backgrounds and navigation is harmonious and web safe.

5. Content

The information contained in the site: whether it is text, graphic or interactive features.

- Every page has meaningful, concise content and clearly articulates concepts.
- The usefulness and quality of content inspires users to return.
- Its obvious by content on your site that you update frequently.
- All text is grammatically correct and free of typos.

_____

6. Technical
The site's code, platform, and server.
-   Clean error-free code.
-   All graphics have been compressed properly and saved in the correct format (i.e.: photos as jpegs and type/flat color as gifs).
-   Include page titles, descriptions, keywords and tags on every page.
-   Effective use of leading edge technologies such as active X, Java, DHTML, Cascading Style Sheets, Flash, Streaming Media and Database Integration/Functionality.
-   Correct choice of platform for the site's requirements. (i.e.: Unix for large sites with heavy hits and security issues)
-   The site is technically designed to be scalable.
-   If a vendor sets up the hosting for your site, obtain control of FTP passwords and register as the administrator/contact of your domain name.
-   The site should be compatible with the browsers used by your audience.
-   Monitor resolution should be compatible with the browsers used by your audience.
-   If your site uses non standard technology, provide an alternative. For example, if you have a Flash intro, provide an HTML alternative.

7. Usability
The usability of an interface is a measure of the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which specified users can achieve specified goals in a particular environment with that interface. (International Organization for Standardization, ISO)
-   The site contains components that connect to the real world.
-   The site effectively engages the visitor and has a "WOW" factor that makes visitors want to spread the word.
-   The audience of the site is clearly addressed and considered.
-   All components as a whole work in unison to provide an intuitive and valuable experience (branding, architecture, navigation, design, content and technical).
-   Consider offering a multilingual site, or one accessible for a differently-abled community if they are part of your audience.

_____

8. Credibility

The company and its offerings should appear believable and trustworthy.
- There's adequate background information about your company.
- The mission of the site is evident.
- The site and its offerings are uniqueness–not a "me too" site.

9. Legal Issues

The site should be approved by your legal counsel.
- All content and functions of the site are legal.
- Consult with legal counsel to assure that the site posts legal disclaimers when and where they are appropriate (membership requirement, privacy policy, return policies).
- Copyright laws are correctly observed and copyright notices are indicated.

10. Marketing

Planning on how to spread the word about your site and its offerings.
- Consider a cross-media marketing campaign.
- Registered with the top 10-20 search engines/directories.
- Print your URL on all marketing materials.
- Link to other sites via link trades, affiliate programs, trade articles or paid advertising.
- Distribute a press release via email to trade publications, existing and potential clients, etc.
- Provide a special offer to attract new visitors if they register on your site and maintain a registered users database.

Stay tuned for more articles on creating a winning site. Good luck with your venture!