The Website Essentials That You Will Need For A New Website Design or A Website Upgrade

For any business the decisions to go online, stay online and be effective are hugely important. If done expertly your website will transform your company quite rapidly as your product or service will be made available to vast numbers of potential customers and trading won't be restricted by time or place. Of course, you might also be starting a business exclusively on the web. Either way you need to think seriously about what you want in and for your website.

A good web design company can work wonders for your business but they can't do it alone. They will need your input at every stage of the design process and also your overall vision for the website.

If you are new to web design fret not: here are thirteen website elements that you will need to consider. You will reap the benefits of a well-planned and well-designed site and you'll be glad you put some thought into it and also, perhaps, not a little proud.

Think of these thirteen points as a map of a journey you must make toward the goal of a successful website.

1. A Good Website Name (Domain)

A good website name is essential as it is the handle a visitor or customer will have on your site. Think of it as naming a baby: this is the name they will have for the rest of their life so give it some thought. If you choose a name and somewhere down the line you decide you don't like it and want to change it, this will be bad for business.

A name can be created or chosen but either way you must try to make it original so search engines will direct potential customers to your site and ensure that no others have the same or similar name. You must also decide on a domain name 'TLD' - this basically means the letters at the end of your web address e.g. .net or .org etc. Do you go with .com or .ie? If you want to target an Irish market .ie is the one to choose whereas if you want to target a global market go with .com.

2. A Good Design And Logo

As far as being a handle on your site, the logo is as important as the title of the site. The power of a logo is in the fact that it doesn't have to be read like text. An original logo will be instantly recognised by returning visitors and customers. The logo must also suit the industry you are in. The same is true of the design and overall look of the site.

People will instinctively go for designs which fit the area of business the site is in. A poor or ill-fitting design will turn the visitor off. A good layout, colour scheme and font which suits your area of business will make a huge difference in terms of converting visitors into customers.

3. Planning The Site

The design process is important but the most vital point you need to consider is the content of your site. You need to make a plan, with the help of your designer, to make a site that not only looks good but works. The content is the meat of a site and so it needs to be relevant, well-written and must generate business.

You must also think about what you want your site to do. If you want an e-commerce site, creating a shop is the obvious thing to do but there are other options to consider such as: do you want a forum, a blog or a contact form? The more things there are to do on your site the longer a visitor will stay and the more likely it is that he/she will bookmark it.

4. The Necessity Of A Mobile Website

The future of the web lies with mobile devices such as smart phones and iPads and so 'going mobile' is a must. Most traditional websites look awful on mobile devices and are a real turn off. By making your site mobile friendly you will reach huge numbers of potential customers. It is important to get in there ahead of the competition.

A simple, clear, easy to read and navigate mobile site will be far more attractive than a site which isn't mobile friendly, which is likely to be a mess. As the future rapidly becomes the present creating a mobile site is necessary if you want your business to thrive.

5. Installing A Good CMS

A CMS (Content Management System) allows you to publish pages to your site without the need of a programmer. Your web designer will introduce you to it and show you the ropes. Once you start using it you'll find it as easy as using MS Word. A good CMS is essential for keeping content fresh and fresh content is one of the keys to a successful website.

A CMS is ideal if you want to create a blog or news section for your site. It will keep you busy and busy websites are more attractive than idle or stale ones. Editing and publishing content has become so easy that there is no excuse for stale content.

6. Hosting And Matching Email Addresses

Don't be put off by these technical terms. All you need to know is that your designer will connect you to a powerful computer which will provide an email service. This is different from a Hotmail or Gmail service in that it is more suited to businesses. A good email service is hugely important as it is a way to interact with customers, often on a more personal level.

7. Website Security, Backups And Website Support

Good hosting and security will help prevent things from going wrong and, if they do, backups and website support will help to put them right again. With these measures in place there is no need to worry about the welfare of your site. The internet can be troublesome and unreliable but these things will help to keep it running smoothly and save you valuable time as you get on with your business.

8. S.E.O.

S.E.O. stands for Search Engine Optimisation which basically means getting your business as high as possible in search engine rankings, in particular, Google. You need to sit down with your designer and have a discussion about your website and Google as most people will find or discover your site through this pre-eminent search engine.

You will need to consider things such as meta-descriptions and keywords, which your designer will elucidate. This is a very important stage of the design process as the success of your site will depend largely on S.E.O. You need to establish a strong online presence and get ahead of the competition and Google will help you to do this.

9. The Use Of Photos

Like the logo of your business the power of photographs lies in its immediacy – it doesn't need to be read. A good selection of photos with the right image format can make a substantial difference to your business. They can enhance the experience of reading the text so that the visitor is less likely to scan over or ignore it.

The written word is very important content but without images it might seem like a bit of a chore. A few well chosen, well placed photos will help to keep the visitor interested. Images can also provide a human element. For example, photos of your company staff to show that there are people behind the sleek, smooth running website.

10. Calls To Action

These are vital points of interaction with the visitor or customer on the website. Their main purpose is to get a visitor to 'do something' e.g. adding an item to your shopping cart, downloading something or requesting info. They usually take the form of buttons.

Calls to action are important as they entice the reader in and help to turn him/her into a buyer. They invite the visitor to buy in stages which is easier than making a decision to buy based on non – interactive content alone.

11. Incorporating Social Media Into Your Website

By embedding your Facebook and Twitter feeds into your site you will increase the numbers of potential customers considerably as your details are spread throughout networks of users on either medium. Facebook and Twitter have helped to make the internet more social, which is good for businesses as 'word of mouth' spreads about your product or service.

12. Training

Your website won't be worth much if you aren't trained up on how to manage it. This should be done by your website designer. Learning to run a website is a bit like learning how to drive a car. At first it is difficult but give it time and it will become as easy as riding a bike. This is especially true of a good CMS.

When you get used to it there is no need for a designer or programmer to edit content for you unless you can't find the time for it, in which case you can get the designer to do the work for you. Most of the work in running a website is in keeping content from going stale – visitors instinctively know stale content and many will make a mental note not to return to the site in future.

13. Website Statistics

Make sure you have access to good website statistics. The best source is probably Google Analytics. By installing this you get useful information such as how much traffic you're getting, where it is coming from, what they do on your website, how long do they stay etc.

Statistics are important as they help to improve the site and evolve it into a more productive one as far as gaining new customers and retaining loyal ones are concerned. They can be a bit boring but they provide a good grasp of how your site is performing.

All of the above essentials also require you to have a good knowledge of your target customer and what they are looking for. You also need to really understand your products and services and what would attract your customer to them. What would your customer need on your website in order to make a decision to buy from you? If you think about your customer you'll know what material to add to your website to engage with them.

These are thirteen important considerations in designing a good website - once they have been worked out to your satisfaction, and your web designers satisfaction, you have a very higher chance of having a successful website. The success of your business or enterprise will also depend on how well the website is run after it goes live on the web and again your website design company can advise you here. Give us a call on 01-6216866 in Dublin or email us on info@myit.ie if you need some some good website advice.