

What Makes a Good Website

To put it simply, a good website is customer focused – it is about providing a solution to your customers wants & needs in a simple, inviting, informative way and providing an opportunity for people to do something about it. Focusing on your customer means that you talk about the benefits of your product/service before the features.

That sounds easy - let's look at it in a bit more detail:

A) PREPARATION

Before you start you need to have some things sorted out in your own mind:

- What is the objective of the website? What do you want customers to do after they have viewed your website? How will you measure its success?
- Who is your target audience? The more tightly defined the better.
- How do you plan to promote the website? - How will customers know they should go to your website in order to find their solution?
- What is unique about your business and what sort of image you want to project?

B) CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

The number one thing that customers demand from a website is that it is *EASY TO USE*. Simplicity is the key. Customers want to feel that they are in control of what they see – in fact, while they are at your website they feel that *THEY OWN THE WEBSITE* so if it doesn't do what they want immediately they will get disillusioned & go elsewhere.

Use plain & simple language. *DO NOT TRY TO BE OVERLY SUBTLE*. Your customer doesn't have the time or inclination to try to figure out what you really mean.

C) PAGES

Your Home Page is critical. You have less than 10 seconds to create a favourable impression. If you don't, it won't matter how good the rest of your website is, your customer will never see it, they will have already gone somewhere else. Your home page must pass the *"What's in it for me"* test. It's the place where you demonstrate how your customer can *BENEFIT* from owning your product/service. You also need to create your image/branding & introduce your *UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION*. Quite a task to get all that into one page – that's why you will need the help of a professional.

All of your other pages should support the overall objective of your website.

D) CONTENT

People read internet pages much faster than they read pages of printed material so your writing style needs to be simple, in plain punchy language with lots of headings, short paragraphs and bullet points. Use pictures primarily to support the text. Pictures take time to download, so consider that when deciding which pictures to use. Simple is always better.

E) PROMOTION

Make sure that your website is an integrated part of your overall marketing strategy – it should support & enhance other marketing efforts, rather than standing alone.