

# 7 Quick Tips For an Effective Website

By Jean Lam

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Jean Lam  
jean@zineguru.com

Zine Guru <http://www.zineguru.com>

So you've finally decided it's time to create your own Web Site. After all, your friends and business associates have one and you don't want to be left behind on the Information Super Highway.

Great Web Sites all have a few common elements about them, and that's what I'll be discussing here. It's usually a good idea to plan the site out on paper before even touching your PC.

It can be difficult to come up with content staring at a blank computer screen, so get out an old fashioned pen and paper and let those creative juices flow. You want to be sure to include all there is to know about your products and/or services.

Many people fail to understand just how important the design of a web site is to your online image. Some simply assume that because they have a great product they'll be automatically successful.

But in order to achieve online success, one must have both a wonderful product or service and a great design. This is because people assume that since the web design is unprofessional, the product is inferior.

Just as humans have a tendency to "judge a book by its cover," they also tend to make an association between a business's Web Site and product.

I am giving you 7 Quick Tips to adhere to in building an effective Web Site.

(1) Keep your site clean and organized, not "busy!"

Do not, I repeat, do not make your site overwhelmingly "busy." Have you ever visited a site where there were thousands of animated pictures, fluorescent text and colors, crowded pictures,

and huge text? Me too.

And every time I visit one, I head for the "back" button in my browser. Don't run off your visitors without letting them read what you've got to say, or they'll never buy!

## (2) An easy-to-understand navigational system

Can your visitors get around easily, or are they easily lost? Do you have a link to get back to your home page and/or "table of contents" on EVERY page or only a select few? What if someone decides that your website is so great they decide to link to one of your secondary pages?

Ten times out of eight, other Webmasters WON'T tell you when they've linked to you. So, if they link to a page that isn't connected to your home page ... how are they supposed to find it?? It doesn't occur to most people to take the base of the URL they've visited. 90% of the time, you've just lost a potential customer.

Also don't make the visitor scroll horizontally to read your content. That's pretty annoying. Ensure that your content is visible on the whole page as far as possible. Vertical scrolling is just fine.

## (3) Proof read your ENTIRE site

Poor grammar or spelling is the end-all, be-all of presenting yourself unprofessionally online. After all, if you can't spell correctly, you don't pay attention to details or those "small things" that make a product or service great, right? Well, that's what your visitors think. So run your pages through a spell check once or twice, and have someone else proof read them.

## (4) Keep your design consistent

You ever visit a site that changes designs, backgrounds, and navigation systems completely whenever you click a link? Kind of makes you feel lost, doesn't it? You feel as though you're at another site, and you don't know where you are. So, keep your web site's design consistent, and make it clear to the visitor where they are on the Internet and on your site. (Note: Consistent does NOT have to mean boring!) Use two to three colors and stick to it.

## (5) Optimize your graphics

Have you been on a site that takes really long to load? It's quite irritating. Well that is due to heavy graphics. I don't mean

that you should use visually small images. You should use images that are small in terms of file size. The best way to go about doing this is to compress your images to a more reasonable size.

Try something like Ulead's SmartSaver Pro - <http://www.ulead.com> or Adobe Photoshop itself which has an optimizer in it. Instead of using "Save As", use "Save For Web".

#### (6) Stay away from backgrounds, for the most part

Backgrounds have a tendency to make a site feel very unprofessional. If you don't know what you're doing, stick with a plain white background with well contrasting text. It's simple, and it's very clean and easy to read.

#### (7) Use reasonable font size

Perhaps the biggest indicator of someone who doesn't have a clue what they're doing online is huge font sizes. Keep your fonts at a reasonable level, but make sure you don't make it too small.

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