

# The 10 Parts of a Business Website

By Maria Marsala

The 10 Parts of a Business Website

Maria Marsala  
maria@coachmaria.com

Maria's Place: Coaching and Consulting <http://www.CoachMaria.com>

Business owners who are ready to bring their brick 'n mortar businesses to the Internet experience headaches dealing with designers, while the latter too often end up wanting to rip their hair out because of add-ons, or things they learn about their clients after they've started the projects. Why? Web sites require planning and lots of communication. So before you decide to speak to a web designer or client... consider these 10 parts of a business website.

## Planning

Just as a new building needs planning before construction begins, the creation of a web site is preceded by preparation. Preparing for a new site includes having a business vision, an ideal client profile and a clear picture of how your site will compliment your overall marketing strategy. From the web designer's standpoint, it also includes where the files will go, what will they be named, the number and type of graphics, text copy, programming needs, server environment and similar technical issues (<http://webctr.com/services/web-design.htm>.)

## Trustworthiness and Integrity

Much is made of the virtual business relationship nowadays: doing business with people you've never met in person. The fundamentals of a virtual business are the same as those of brick and mortar business: you must prove that you can provide (and service!) what you're selling. Your site must also exude trustworthiness or your visitors will leave faster than they arrived. The article "Ways To Make Your Site Trustworthy", [www.coachmaria.com/articles/trustableweb.html](http://www.coachmaria.com/articles/trustableweb.html) , may assist

you as you create an atmosphere of trust and integrity within your web site.

## Text Copy

One of the most common embarrassments in the web design industry is the pervasive presence of text copy with misspellings, poor grammar or simply poorly written. I've personally seen this even on the sites of famous companies whose print publications are flawless. Why? Take the time to get it right the first time. Hire a Copywriter or Virtual Assistant ( [www.coachmaria.com/coaching.html#Virtual](http://www.coachmaria.com/coaching.html#Virtual) ) whose forte is in proofreading and grammar, not only for your web site, but for all your editorial needs.

## Graphics

Where are you getting them from? Do you have legal permission to use them? Do you know that you have to format graphics differently for the Internet than for your printed literature? What are JPEG, GIF or PNG? Which format is best to use and when to use it ? Have you calculated the extra time it will take for someone to view a page with your graphics vs. without them . Think twice about using free graphics. Your professional image may be damaged by including commonly used free clip art.

## Supporting Documents

Documents are often a special case issue, as they require the viewer to possess the proper helper applications (programs such as Adobe Reader) in order to open them. Special software is required for PDF (.pdf) documents, Word docs (.doc) or WordPerfect (.wpt) files. Provide your target audience with as many options as possible. Make sure they have the programs that you want them to use or provide them with what is freely available. Consider protecting your files from being plagiarized, too.

## Coding

Your web site is created through the use of one or more computer languages. The type and version of each language can affect who is able to see the pages (<http://webctr.com/services/html-coding.htm>), the cost to create the site, the difficulty of ongoing maintenance and the ease of upgrading or making major changes. If you want to easily maintain the site yourself, or to include

sophisticated forms, or utilize a database or provide services such as personalization or ecommerce, consider hiring a programmer qualified in an appropriate discipline, such as PHP, ASP or Cold Fusion.

## Multimedia

Depending on your ideal client profile, multimedia usage can make a good site great or it can make it completely unusable. Movies, audio files, Flash movie presentations: all are relatively large files requiring special applications ( programs called plugins) to work. Multimedia has an impact on your site's performance. Consider these questions: Where would a Flash movie best serve your viewer? Do you want music? Should your sound file play continuously or not? Is your ideal client multimedia-enabled, or would they prefer viewing a website without multimedia features?

## Implementation

Now that you have made all your decisions and collected all your materials, it's time to put the plan into effect. What is a realistic amount of time to get from this point to a finished site? Have you included extra time for unforeseen coding issues (bugs)? How long will the beta period (public testing time) be for your site and why is it necessary? Building a web site is so much more than sticking images and text on web pages. Invariably, the design team is faced with last-minute challenges that will threaten the professional image you are striving for and the only way to minimize the undesired impact is to allow for the time and resources needed in advance.

## Marketing

Did you hear the one about the company who built a web site and nobody came? Probably not, because neither the company nor the site exists anymore! The Internet is comprised of millions upon millions of web pages, with a tiny percentage of the web sites getting the majority of the traffic. How is your site going to pull in it's share of the pot? Your marketing plan consists not only bringing traffic to your site, but also of providing stickiness: convincing visitors to purchase your services or projects, to tell others about them and to come back time and time again.

## Customer Service

Getting people to your web site is a beginning, but keeping

their interest and patronage is an ongoing job. A great customer service policy includes a code of ethics, guarantees, and consistency. Your viewers want to be able to easily contact you without providing their life history! They want to receive answers to their questions within a reasonable and predictable amount of time. They want to know when you'll be there to call and when you won't. People may contact you initially based on what they find in your site, but they will only stay with you if they like what find in you.

© 2002 Collaboration between Maria Marsala of and Darrell King.

Maria Marsala is an international Business and Life Coach-Consultant. She assists entrepreneurs, professionals, executives, coaches, consultants and others as they propel their success to even higher levels. Visit her website at <http://www.coachmaria.com>

Darrell is president of The Web Center, Inc., a firm specializing in dynamic web sites for small businesses. He routinely handles requests to automate web sites, build customized online forms, create professional graphics or design and implement databases. Learn more at <http://webctr.com>

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)