

# How to Give Your Small Business Web Site a Corporate Look

By Milana Leshinsky

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Milana Leshinsky  
milana@helpingfoot.com

First Business Web Site <http://www.firstbusinesswebsite.com>

The Web is an amazing thing! You can be a 15-year old girl and make everyone believe you are a big-time executive who just can't wait to get home from work after a busy day of meetings and lunches, and relax by your big-screen TV with an expensive Siberian cat in you lap.

I am not exactly sure why you would want to do that, but it's certainly possible :-). In the example below, however, you might find that sometimes boosting your online image is important to you AND your wallet.

Have you ever said to yourself, "I am just a person, not a company - why would anyone trust me enough to buy from me?" You ARE a company! If you provide a service or sell a product that others are willing to pay for, then you are a one-person company.

Just because you work out of your home office, doesn't mean you are less professional. Still many people today will not take you seriously if they see you talk from the "first person" ("I" instead of "we", "mine" instead of "ours").

There is a remedy for this problem. You can reate a professional, more corporate look on your web site using the skillful techniques I will share with you here.

1. Create a high quality logo on your web site. If you don't consider yourself a good graphic designer, hire a professional. The owner of gotlogos.com can give you an excellent quality for only \$25.00. There is no good reason not to have it done.

2. Professional web site look. If you can't come up with good design ideas for your web site, consider using high quality web templates. This will immediately boost your credibility by at least 50%, so do this as soon as you can. Just go to <http://www.freewebtemplates.com> for a huge collection of

templates and pick one out.

3. If you don't have your own domain name, get one ASAP! It is not even a question - you absolutely need one to be considered "in the game", so to speak. I don't think I have ever shopped on a site that has an address like [www.geocities.com/1234/~meg](http://www.geocities.com/1234/~meg) or similar.

4. Once you have your own domain, you can use a "real" business e-mail address. For example, my domain name is HelpingFoot.com. This means that instead of milana@earthlink.com I can use milana@helpingfoot.com. Ask your hosting company how you can set your e-mail address up to match your domain name.

5. Have you ever heard of a catch-all e-mail account? I have one and I absolutely love it! You can send me an e-mail to anything@helpingfoot.com: sales@helpingfoot.com, president@helpingfoot.com, service@helpingfoot.com and whatever else you can think of... and I will receive it in my mailbox. You can use this feature to create different "departments" in your business: service, sales, support, owner, etc. and when you get an e-mail you will know exactly who the sender was trying to reach. This will also create an impression of a bigger company.

6. Add a toll free phone number and a physical mailing address, if possible. An 1-800 number always makes an impression on me as I can pick up the phone and ask a question of a real person.

7. Consider using a multiple-column site design instead of one or two columns. Take a look at big corporate web sites like MSN.com, CNN.com, cars.com - they are all constructed with at least 3-4 columns. I like to call it a "magazine" layout, because the columns are also illustrated with small clipart or photographs and creates a really fancy commercial appearance.

8. Make your web site consistent. Choose a design and use it on every page, along with your logo. Don't make every page on your site look different like so many personal web sites do. It's distracting and confusing, and your visitors might not even realize they are still on your site.

9. Create a "Partners" section on your web site. List your affiliates, ad exchange partners, joint venture partners, or those people who published your articles. The word "partners" itself sounds so big and important that it will immediately boost your credibility in the eyes of your visitors. Just make sure to list the names professionally: instead of Joe Smith say "Founder of the very first site for senior awareness, Joe Smith".

10. Make sure your web site is filled with

useful content. Put up a "Frequently Asked Questions" page, gather relevant articles with free reprint rights, as well as your own writings. Post your newsletter archives, tips, business history and owner's information. Most big corporate web sites have a wealth of helpful information.

11. Add a "Translate To Another Language" link to your web site. Simply go to AltaVista.com, click on "Translate", choose the language, and type in your web site address. You will see your web site in a different language placed in a frame. Right-click on your web page and choose "Properties". Highlight the URL and link to it from your main web site.

For example, if you click on

[http://world.altavista.com/urltrurl?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.helpingfoot.com&lp=en\\_de&tt=url&urltext=&doit=done](http://world.altavista.com/urltrurl?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.helpingfoot.com&lp=en_de&tt=url&urltext=&doit=done) you will see my HelpingFoot.com translated into German. Too bad they didn't have a Russian translation - I am just dying to find out how to say "Helping Foot" in my native language :-)

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Milana Leshinsky is a full time web and the author of two books: "Create Your First Business Web Site in 10 days" and "65 Instant Web Design Answers".

"><http://www.firstbusinesswebsite.com>

"><http://www.instantwebanswers.com>

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