

# The Essential Principles Of Good Web Design

By Remi Engels

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First things first! To sell a product or a service on the Internet it is best to have have a Web site. No getting around that!

Once you have a Web site it must be used as a marketing tool and nothing else. Everything you do must be geared towards convincing your visitor to buy your product. Anything less will reduce your chances for making a sale.

If we are talking about a personal Web page the same principle holds. You need to make sure the visitor gets the point of your page or site and doesn't feel cheated when leaving.

To be effective as a selling tool your Web site must exude confidence in your product and above all must look professional. A sloppy unorganized site is bad form and bad sales"person"ship.

A good question then is: How do you imbue a Web Site with those qualities? And the answer is that you must follow The Essential Principles Of Good Web Design.

We already hinted at one basic general principle: Everything you do on your Web Site must be directed towards fulfilling the purpose of that Web Site which is selling your product or service. Not only should your page text and graphics themselves clearly convey your message to the visitor but also the way they are put together. No clutter allowed! Be direct, truthful, clear, concise, etc. Well, you get the point!

Here then are some more principles to reach that goal:

(1) The overall page should appear balanced, inviting, and attractive. Make sure your site does not become an eye sore which is easy to do.

(2) All text and graphics should have a consistent look. When using a theme, be consistent with it throughout your Web site. Also, use no more than 2 to 3 dominant colors in your theme which goes back to principle (1). And please, don't use those harsh colors that hurt the eyes. Your colors should not distract from the message. Instead, they should support your message and make it stand out.

(3) Put between 200 and 600 words on one page. Be generous with blank space. Do not crowd your pages, that is, show sufficient background.

(4) Do not make a Web page too long. Remember, visitors don't like to scroll. One or two monitor

screens is enough for one page. Long pages require more scrolling and take more time to download.

(5) Avoid long download times for your pages. 60Kb (Kilo bytes) per page is more than enough. The size of your GIF animations should not exceed 100Kb per page. Each Web page should not take longer than 3 seconds to download over a 28.8 Kb/s (Kb per second) modem, particularly the home page (the first one). There are nice little programs to check download times for Web Pages.

(6) Put breaks in your text. Every 100 words or so, put a line, a picture, or use a different font size. Try to avoid boring layouts. This is easy to do, so step back once and awhile and eye your pages critically.

(7) Be sober with the use of different font types. Three different fonts is more than adequate. Make sure that the font colors stand out against the background at all times. Nothing is more annoying for the visitor than difficult to read text.

If you follow the above tips you can be assured you can at least produce an appealing and professional Web site. And remember, the quality of your Web site is your best marketing tool. Good luck!

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