

THE KEY to a SUCCESSFUL WEB DESIGN

15 Basic Tips

The key to a successful web design begins with a plan. Below are 15 simple basic rules.

1. Utilize a straight-forward simple design.
2. Stick with a clean elegant aesthetic approach.
3. Avoid blinking text and flashing text. For a professional website this is merely an annoyance. There are plenty of other methods to draw attention to important information.
4. Use titles and headers that include your keyword phrases.
5. Stick with one h1 header per page that includes one of your keyword phrases.
6. Skip the background music. No two people enjoy the same music so just do not use background music and avoid turning anyone off. If you absolutely have to have a theme song, at least embed a music player that allows the guest to turn the music off.
7. Keep your theme consistent throughout your website (especially with your colors – stay neutral and if you have a logo, theme your website colors to compliment your logo.)
8. Never use annoying pop-up windows. This is the fastest way to lose a new guest.
9. Stick to traditional navigation systems. Use standard menu structures – either horizontally across the top or vertically along the left or right column.
10. Create a site map. Many people will use this to navigate a site when they are new to using it. A sitemap also helps the search engines navigate your site for indexing.
11. Do not center everything down the middle of the website or align everything to the right or the left. Try to create a natural flow of text and images that flows from right to left and then back again.

12. Never use all caps in your content body unless you are emphasizing something very important and only then when it is a few words in one context.
13. Use italicized text sparingly as well. This is a good way of displaying quotations and drawing attention to specific text but do not go overboard.
14. Bold text is another fine way to draw attention to a sentence or keyword phrase but use it judiciously or it loses its value.
15. When using imbedded images always included alternate text and apply the same rules as stated in rule 11 for the formatting.

Additional tips to keep in mind:

1. Come up with original, creative, content that is relevant to your industry. I cannot emphasize this enough. This is absolutely the most important aspect to a successful website. If you have trouble writing content, please find a copywriter to write unique, quality content for your website even if you have to hire someone to do so. Nothing else will improve your website's success more than good quality, well written content.
2. For a new website a great place to start for quality content could be a glossary of terms with definitions that are related to your industry.
3. Another great thing to include for any website is a set of FAQs (frequently asked questions) with answers.
4. Do not be afraid to share as much information about your industry as you can on your website. Remember, the information is already out there somewhere, would it not be better for you to be the source of the information, the authority?

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