

next tuesday afternoon

january 15, 2008

It's easy to leave the design of websites to IT guys because they "get" all that "computer stuff." Is this smart? No, it's not. Website design goes well beyond a person's knowledge of code and "computer stuff."

A good web designer is a *designer* first and foremost. A good web designer can write beautiful code, sure, but great code is meaningless if the website looks horrible or doesn't serve the needs and wants of its users (your customers). Designing a website is about creating a consistently engaging, pleasant and valuable user experience.

Look at most corporate websites today, and you will notice that the same templates are used over and over again. Is there anything wrong with that? No. The value, especially for very small businesses, is in spending as little money as possible for a site that can launch inside a week. But that falls short when it comes to creating or driving a brand. It can actually backfire and cause you more harm than good. At some point along the way, you/your company needs to differentiate itself. Your website needs to reflect the difference between your company and all of your other would-be competitors. If you are going to stand out as being different, "be it" versus "saying it."

We all know that a lot of first impression's are made on the web today, and that this manner of introduction will only grow over time. This isn't 1997 anymore, heck, it isn't 2007 anymore either. Your website isn't an aside. It isn't something you can throw at your cousin's neighbor's kid because he needs a part-time job or do based on price alone. Your website is your global storefront/lobby/showroom. You can't afford to allow it to be boring, ineffective or outdated.

How to be proactive: If you have a website now, put together a small team of branding, marketing and customer service experts in a room with a handful of customers, and get them to do a complete 360 review of your website. The point of the exercise is to identify all of the things that could be improved upon and things you would like to change - today. Then, hire a real web designer to either improve your website as needed or rebuild it completely. Spending money on creating a branded web presence is one of the best marketing/communications investments you can make for your company. If your senior management team doesn't understand that completely yet, it is your job to help them get there.

I'm Lisa Davis. Let me know if I can help you in any way, please feel free to visit at OneAlliance.com and I'll be back next Tuesday afternoon.

Lisa Davis
859.225.2684
Lisa@OneAlliance.com
marketing • advertising • brand management

