

What makes a good website?

Nowadays almost all companies and a large proportion of individuals have their own websites. Companies large and small use websites to communicate with their customers and to market themselves to the wider public. Thus, using a website to advertise your company is crucial if you want to stay competitive, drive business and attract new customers. Companies primarily use websites to;

- Let customers know that they exist. When individuals search for a particular service using online search engines, they will come across companies that are applicable to the search terms and who have a website.
- Let customers know what they do. Having service descriptions, company objectives and feedback from existing customers on their websites enables customers to build up a picture of how a company operates, what services it provides, and also gain assurance about quality and reliability of delivery.
- Show case their work. By including examples of their work on their website, or by incorporating design, content and style into the website itself which is reflective of the company, the customer is able to see and appreciate the quality, standard and value of service delivery that the company can provide.

There are many more reasons individual reasons that motivate a company to build a website, and these can include a desire to create an online community that is focused around the website, company or company-specific industry, a desire to increase revenue by providing advertising space to others, or purely to provide a creative outlet for global communication. Regardless of the motivating drive, the underlying message is the same – a website is a powerful tool for company development and customer expansion. So what are the key elements of a successful website?

1. Keep the content concise and well written. It doesn't matter how good a website looks, or how high the search engines rate it, if the content is poor, your company will not be well represented online.
2. Ensure that customers can navigate around the website easily. This means ensuring that pages are linked together in a logical and sensible way, that the home page is always accessible no matter what page the browser is on, and that the menu bars are not too long or cumbersome.
3. Keep the design clear. Customers want to spend time on a website that is easy and pleasing on the eye, not something that gives them a headache. So make sure that colour tones are eye-pleasing, that writing is clear and easy to read, and that any animation or use of flash is fast to load, clear in image and not overbearing.

4. Ensure the website reflects your company. This means ensuring that the branding is consistent with your off line marketing material, that colours, tone and style are all compatible, and that strap lines are also used where appropriate.
5. Finally, customers need to be able to go on and contact you after they have visited your website. So ensure that a contact telephone number and email address are both provided.