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Tips on Website Success

1. **BRANDING** – Your site must reflect you and your business. Is your site consistent with your brand? What image does your site reflect now? Is it time to revisit your site’s design and update it? People search on the web before they pick up the phone. Will your site convince them to contact you?
2. **IS YOUR SITE CURRENT AND UP TO DATE?** Always make sure the information on your site is up to date and relevant to your business. All services, products and prices must be correct. Is your copyright date at the bottom of your pages current?
3. **DOES YOUR WEBSITE HAVE A CALL TO ACTION?**
 - Can you purchase something on the site?
 - Are you collecting email addresses for an email newsletter? Email marketing is a very cost effective way to keep in touch with your clients and potential clients.
 - Is your contact information easy to find? Do you have an online contact form? Is your phone number listed and easy to find?
4. **IS YOUR SITE ORGANIZED WELL AND EASY TO NAVIGATE?** Navigation buttons should remain the same throughout the site (except sub-navigation – which changes according to the primary navigation). Is the site easy on the eyes – with enough white space?
5. **ALL LINKS GOING OFF YOUR SITE SHOULD OPEN IN A NEW WINDOW.** That way – your site is always open and the user has to return to your site. PDF’s should open in a new window also because they do not have any navigation on them.
6. **ALL ADVERTISING AND COLLATERAL SHOULD INCLUDE YOUR WEBSITE ADDRESS.** People can research more about you and your business by going directly to your site where you can expand on all your products and services.

7. **MAKE SURE YOUR SITE DISPLAYS CORRECTLY IN DIFFERENT BROWSERS.** Some sites do not display correctly in FireFox or other browsers. It does not reflect well on your business if your site does not display correctly.
8. **MAKE SURE THE MAJORITY OF THE TEXT ON YOUR SITE IS NOT A GRAPHIC.** Text within graphics is not analyzed or indexed by the search engines. As much text as possible should be text and contain your relevant keywords and keyword phrases.
9. **TITLE TAGS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR SEARCH ENGINE PLACEMENT.** Keywords and keyword phrases should be sentence-like and located in the title tags of each page of your website. The keywords need to be relevant to your site – and include your location in the title tag, such as Richmond, VA. Irrelevant words like “Welcome”, “About Us”, “Contact Us” or “Home” should never be in the title tags.
10. **INCOMING LINKS TO YOUR SITE ARE VERY IMPORTANT.** Take the time to get your site linked to from other sites. Links from blogs, organizations you are a part of, other sites you partner with are all good places to get incoming links from. To determine what sites link to your site, go to <http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/> and enter your site name, then click on the “Explore URL” button.
11. **ANALYZE YOUR COMPETITORS’ SITES.** Look at their title tags, meta tags and analyze their incoming links so you can see if you can link with the same sites. Read their copy and determine what keywords are being used – and incorporate those keywords and phrases into your copy.
12. **JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING ON YOUR WEBSITE DOESN’T MEAN YOU SHOULD.** Keep a consistent design focused on your products or services. Remove your splash page (why make your customers click an extra time to get to your site?) and any music, and don’t junk up the site. Keep it clean.