

Tips for User-Friendly and Credible Websites

Always remember that your goal is to get more visitors and exposure AND to help your site visitors buy more of your products or take your desired action. Make it easy for them to do so!

Website Layout and Usability

- Site look and feel should be clean and uncluttered (don't overdo bold, italics, use multiple colors, spinning and flashing objects, etc.) This all distracts and makes it confusing for the visitor.
- Feature an easy to spot navigation menu – left side or across the top are most common.
- Make the site easy to navigate – flow of pages should be logical and presented in an obvious way. Don't make your visitors guess!
- Most important information goes “above the fold.”
- Make sure that all links work.
- Size pictures correctly (don't distort size or dilute quality of photos)
- Use dark text on a light background (white or light text on black or dark backgrounds is very difficult to read and you will lose a lot of visitors)
- Break up blocks of text into small chunks for easier reading. More “white space” promotes easier reading and is “friendlier” to your visitors.
- Add audio or video to the site if possible. Many visitors prefer listening or viewing to simply reading. (Audio and video have tons of marketing potential as well if promoted across the web by submitting to video and podcasting sites.)
- Make subscription forms (lead generation tools!) easy to use and ask only essential info (first name and email address will generate lots more response than if you require phone numbers, addresses, etc. Keep it simple and non-threatening.
- Where applicable, add Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn icons to solicit followers/friends/contacts. This shows you are actively participating on the web (assuming that you are!)

Website Credibility

- Include contact information several ways – phone, email or form, etc. (If using a physical email address on your site, be sure to cloak it so that it can't be automatically extracted by spam bots.)
- Consider an 800# if you do business beyond the local area – it shows that you are considerate of prospective customers. An 800# also portrays a professional image.
- Include contact information in several places and make it easy to find. Ideally a phone number should be displayed on every page.
- Include testimonials on your site. (If you don't have testimonials, start collecting them.)

- Include trust factors such as BBB logos, associations you are members of that may be relevant to your visitors, awards won, positive reviews, media coverage, and similar notations that convey your expertise and professionalism.
- Add pictures of owners, staff, happy clients – these personalize your site and make your business appear friendly and approachable.
- Brand your site (beyond using logo on the site itself) by including pictures that show your company vehicles, store signage, etc.
- If you have a shopping cart, show with icons or convey with text that your site is secure.