

# Marketing 101

# Web Design Basics

On the Web, you have about 8 seconds to capture your reader. And the best way to capture a reader is to design for easy scanning, provide visual navigation and accessibility aids, provide concise information and convey credibility.

## Design for easy scanning

- Reading rates slow by 25 to 40 percent on the web.
- Almost 80 percent of Web readers scan Web text. That means only 20 percent read every word.
- Readers scan a site for only about 10 seconds before they move on.
- Make your fonts legible but selecting a sans serif fonts. The smaller the type to more important it is to use sans serif fonts. Verdana, arial and helvetica are good sans serif choices for monitors.
- Italics decrease legibility; use them sparingly.
- Font size on the screen should be a bit larger than what you might choose for publishing on paper.
- Dark type on a light background reads and prints much better than light type on dark.

## Navigation

- Experienced web users expect a colored bar at the top or left of the page with links to key sections of the site.
- Don't put more than three carefully chosen words in button or text hyperlinks.
- Don't use icons along; use them only as supplements to a hyperlink.
- Group hyperlinks when you have a lot of them. Make these groups visually distinct.
- Don't rely on colors for navigation.

## Be Concise

- When writing use the journalist's inverted pyramid. Bring the conclusion to the top of the story. Link to additional details and background.
- Keep line lengths short. Don't make your web lines longer than 40 to 60 characters.

- Limit each paragraph to one idea. Use three or four sentences per paragraph.
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence.
- Keep sentences short.
- Use simple sentence structure and plain language.
- Use headlines and subheads to break up your text.
- Use bullets and numbered lists. They're easier to read and scan.
- Highlight key words. Use a color-reserve blue for links- or simply use a bold face font. Remember, only 20 percent of web users read every word.

## Convey Credibility

- Make it clear who is publishing your site. Users are skeptical about content when they can't identify who is sponsoring it.
- Provide your credentials. You can use a link to give this information.
- Link to high-quality sites that support your content.

## Make it Customer Friendly

- Break your information up into small bites.
- Use common terms that people are familiar with...people think "I want to file a complaint" not "I want to file an incident report."
- Less is more.
- The fewer the clicks that better. All content should be reached in five or less clicks. Three clicks is the most acceptable.
- Personalize your information whenever possible.
- Be a station, not a destination. Provide links to other agencies and organizations that will be helpful to your web visitors.
- Put your most sought-after services on the front page.
- If you provide email address to solicit questions, be sure you answer them in a timely manner.