



FINDING YOUR PLACE ONLINE

Where Does Your Site Fit Into The Web?

One of the biggest questions you may ask yourself might be this: Do you need a Web site in the first place? Several years ago, Web mavens could confidently assert, "If your customers aren't online, there's no reason for you to be either." That's no longer true. A Web address is rapidly becoming as essential as a telephone and a fax line. Having a Web site not only provides an additional communication channel, but it boosts your credibility as a serious, forward-looking company.

People used to ask, "Do you have a catalog?" Now they ask, "Do you have a Web site?" Not having a website today is like not having a telephone a few decades ago.

If your customers aren't online now, they will be soon, and they'll expect to find you up and operating there too. Vendors, potential partners, and prospective employees will be looking for you on the Web as well. If they find your competitors instead, guess who has the advantage? Not you!

All Web Sites Should Have

Compelling Content: Visitors arrive expecting to learn everything they want to know about your products and services. Make your site worth visiting by anticipating their questions. Include compelling, relevant content on every page.

FAQs: (Frequently Asked Questions) If your site receives a great deal of customer feedback or questions, you should create a page that organizes the premise of that contact. It's a rule of thumb to assume that if one visitor or customer has ever asked a particular question, there are dozens or even hundreds of more people that will ask the same question. So to circumvent repeatedly answering the same questions, this FAQ page should be created. Visitors will feel more empowered and grateful for the information your site provided.

Pleasing Graphics: Part of the beauty of the Internet is that it has evolved to use graphics. Pictures, logos, and graphics liven things up. If you're selling a product, or a variety of products, make images of those products available to visitors.

Relevant Links: An essential component of every Web site is a collection of links leading to other related sites. The best sites are those that offer links to other sites that offer more information on a related topic.

Feedback Forms: Because so many Internet users browse after the normal business day is over, it's important to include feedback forms. Visitors can request information right then and there, without needing to write down a number and call at a later time. It also helps out visitors who are without E-mail accounts of their own.

Contact Page: Visitors like to know there are real people behind the information they're reading; somehow it's a comfort, a way to confirm that the tips and tidbits came from somewhere. Keep in mind, Feedback through E-mail only can turn off some people.