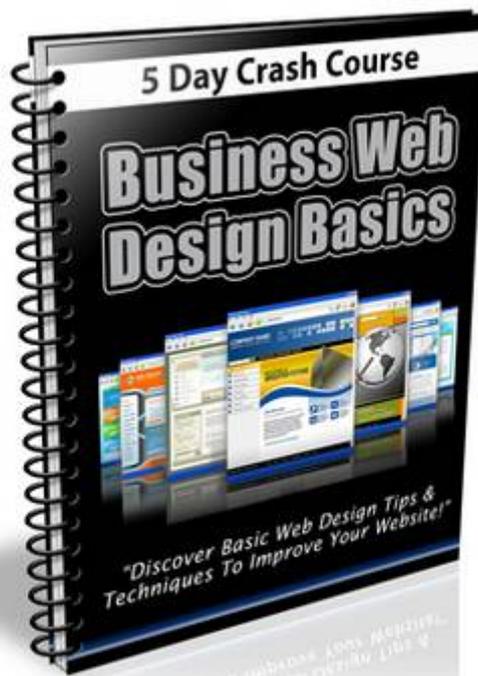5 Day Crash Course

Business Web Design Basics

"Discover Basic Web Design Tips & Techniques That Will Help Improve The Look, Function & Usability Of Your Business Website!"

5 Day Crash Course

Business Web Design Basics

"Discover Basic Web Design Tips & Techniques To Improve Your Website!"

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Subject line: First Lesson - Business Web Design Basics

Hello,

Welcome to the first lesson in the Business Web Design Basics. Over the next few days you will receive several lessons that will help you learn some basic web design techniques that you can use to improve the look, function and usability of your website.

In this first lesson let's talk a little bit about the importance of good web design.

Fact #1 - Your website is the life force of your online business not to mention vital to your overall success. It is the virtual representation of your company.

Fact #2 - When you are doing business online, people can't meet or see you as they would in a more traditional off-line business setting. Hence, they judge you by your website. This is where a good design comes into play.

Think for a minute about running an offline company. Would you allow your salespeople to behave or dress inappropriately when they are dealing with customers?

By making your staff wear professionally, you are telling your customers that you do care about quality. This works simply because first impressions matter.

The same holds true with your website. If your website is poorly designed and hard to navigate, you are literally driving your visitors to your competitors websites and leaving them with the impression that you are unprofessional, unreliable and not safe to do business with.

On the other hand, if you have a totally professional looking website you are giving your visitors the perception that you have given meticulous attention to every detail and you care about professionalism. You are organized, focused and you really mean business.

Now let's go over a few quick design tips that you can use for your own website right way:

Make sure you have clear directions on the navigation of your website.

The navigation menu should be uncluttered and concise so that visitors can find what they are looking for without confusion.

Reduce the number of images on your website. They make your site load very slowly and more often than not they are very unnecessary. If you think any image is essential on your site, make sure you optimize them using image editing programs so that they have a minimum file size.

Keep your text paragraphs a reasonable length. If a paragraph is too long, you should split it into separate paragraphs so that the text blocks will not be too big. This is important because a block of text that is too large will deter visitors from reading your content.

Make sure your website complies with basic standards at: www.w3.org and that they are cross-browser compatible. If your website looks great in Internet Explorer but loads poorly in Firefox and Opera, you will lose a lot of prospective visitors.

Avoid using scripting languages on your site unless it is absolutely necessary. Use scripting languages to handle or manipulate data, not to create visual effects on your website. Heavy scripts will slow down the loading time of your site and even crash some browsers. Also, scripts are not supported across all browsers, so some visitors might miss important information because of that.

Unless you are using a design platform like WordPress to build your site you should consider using CSS to style your page content, because it will save allot of time and effort as you expand and grow by styling all of the elements on your entire website consistently.

Remember, your website is the face of your online business and that makes it crucial to your success, so it only stands to reason that it is extremely important for you to take the time to learn and practice good design principles.

That's it for today's lesson. We have a lot to go over in the next few days if you want to learn how to improve the look, function and usability of your website, so make sure you look for your next lesson soon.

subject line: Second Lesson - Business Web Design Basics

Hello,

It's time for your second lesson in the Business Web Design Basics crash course. I hope you found lesson one informative and now have a better understanding of the importance of good web design.

In this lesson we are going to go over a few more ways that you can improve the usability of your website, so that you can attract and retain more visitors.

As we discussed in your last lesson, the look of your site is very important. However, if it's hard to navigate and the main content isn't visible and easily accessible, then the simple fact is; your site isn't very useful to your visitors and they won't waste any time moving on to your competitors.

Today we are going to discuss some simple tips that you can use to improve the usability of your website to ensure that it looks good, functions properly and remains user-friendly.

- Content

The first thing you should do is make sure that your content is free from spelling and grammar errors. Break it up into small easy to read blocks of text that your visitor can consume quickly, without much effort. You should also make sure the font size of your text is large enough to read easily so that your visitors don't have to strain their eyes to read the actual text.

If you are using CSS to style your website it will do most of the work for you by setting the font size and spacing out the lines according to your desired style set.

- Navigation

Make it easy for visitors to find content that brought them to your site by focusing on good navigation. For instance, if you have hundreds of articles on your site and a certain visitor wants to find one specific article, you have to provide them with an easy way to locate it quickly.

You can do this by providing a search feature on your website, adding easy to see navigation links and including a sitemap. how you include

these aspects in your design will depend on what platform you are using to build it. If you are using a platform like WordPress you will be able to use a SQL-driven database to help organize your content easily and effectively.

- Load Time and Compatibility

It's important to make sure that your site loads fast so that you don't lose visitors before they've had a chance to see what you have to offer. Fact: most internet users will leave a website within 15 seconds if it doesn't load completely. There are several things that you can do to reduce the load time of your website including optimizing your images, limiting the amount of scripts you run, Etc.

It's important to keep in mind that your visitors will be using different Web browsers when viewing your website, so you will also want to ensure that your website is cross browser compatible.

There are many tools available that you can use to check the load time and compatibility of your website. they will also provide you with helpful tips and information that you can use to make sure that your visitor has a smooth and enjoyable experience on your website.

Here are a few to help get you started:

Pingdom.com
http://tools.pingdom.com/fpt

Webpagetest.org
http://www.webpagetest.org

Browsershots.org
http://browsershots.org

Last of all you should test each and every link on your site to ensure that their functioning properly. There is nothing more irritating to a visitor than clicking on broken link's. Of course you should check the links manually whenever you create a new page. However, if you have hundreds or even thousands of pages on your website then you may want to use a good link checking tool like the one at: http://validator.w3.org/checklink

By taking the time to make sure that your website is easy to navigate and user-friendly you can help ensure that your visitors will stick around!

That's it for today's lesson. In your next lesson we will be talking about the importance of including a sitemap in your web design. Again, I

appreciate
you joining me for this short course.

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subject line: Third Lesson - Business Web Design Basics

Hello,

with your third lesson Business Web Design
Basics crash course. I hope you found a lesson two informative and now
have a better understanding of the importance of making your site easy to
navigate and user-friendly.

Today we're going to talk about the importance of including a well-crafted
sitemap. We touched on this briefly in your last lesson, but I feel it
deserves a little more attention because it is often a forgotten or
overlooked part of a good site design.

As the name implies a sitemap literally acts as a map of your website.
Unless your website is massive and includes thousands of pages a
sitemap is usually a single page that contains links to each individual
page on your website.

There are several options available when it comes to creating a sitemap
for your website. Including manually creating the page yourself or using a
sitemap generator like the ones found at: http://www.xml-sitemaps.com

There are also different types of site maps that can be created including:

-XML sitemap that can be submitted to Google, Bing, Yahoo and other
search engines to help them crawl your website better.

- A text sitemap that displays a plain list of all your pages.

- An ROR sitemap, which is an independent XML format used by multiple
search engines.

- An HTML sitemap specifically designed to help visitors to easily
navigate on your site

Which ever type of site map you decide to use it's a good idea to include
a link to it on your front page as well as the main pages this will help

ensure easy access for not only your visitors, but the search engines as well.

Let's go over a few reasons why a sitemap is important to the success of your web design:

- Optimization

Sitemaps are very important when it comes to search engine optimization. Imagine what happens when search engine robots visit your sitemap. They will follow the links on the sitemap and naturally index every single page of your site.

- Navigation purposes

If your visitors browses your site and can't find what they're looking for from the main pages on your site, they will often refer to your sitemap. You may be surprised to learn that many Internet users will go to your sitemap first and navigate through your pages from there.

- Organization and relevance

A sitemap enables you to have a complete bird's eye view of your site structure, and whenever you need to add new content or new sections, you will be able to take the existing hierarchy into consideration just by glancing at the sitemap. As a result, you will have a perfectly organized site with everything sorted according to their relevance.

Once you have created your sitemap you'll want to take some time and submit it to search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing etc. This will encourage the search engines to send out robots, often referred to crawlers, which are powerful programs used to catalog and index your webpages for inclusion in their directories.

That's it for today's lesson. In your next lesson we are going to talk more about search engine optimization and creating search engine friendly webpages.

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subject line: Fourth Lesson - Business Web Design Basics

Hello,

How are you today?

Well, we are winding down to the end of this short course, but we still need to go over a few things if you want to know how to start designing a website that looks good, functions properly and is still user-friendly.

Today we are going to jump right in and talk more about search engine optimization and creating search engine friendly webpages.

A major source of traffic for most sites on the Internet is search engines like Google, Yahoo!, Bing, Ask and so on. Hence, by designing a search engine friendly website, you will be better able to rank well in the major search engines and in turn obtain more visitors.

As I briefly mentioned in your last lesson, the search engines use programs known as robots or crawlers to index the pages of your website to include in their directories. When a search engine robot visits your website it follows the links to your pages, reads the content and records it in their directory database.

These directories literally house millions of webpages all categorized according to keywords and relevance, ready to serve up the best results possible based on an Internet user's query. So it stands to reason that you'll want to make your site as search engine friendly as possible.

Let's quickly go over a few things you can do to help ensure that your site is search engine friendly:

Avoid using frames on your website unless absolutely necessary. Frames can confuse search engine robots and often cause them to index it incorrectly or abandon completely. Frames also make it difficult for users to bookmark a specific page on your site without using long, complicated scripts.

Do not present important information in video, Flash, or images. It's important to keep in mind that search engine robots can only read the text in your source code, so if you present important information in any other format other than text your search engine ranking ca be affected dramatically.

Use meta tags accordingly on each and every page of your site so that search engine robots know at first glance what that particular page is about and whether or not to index it. By using meta tags, you are making the search engine robot's job easier so they will crawl and index your site more frequently.

Stop using wrong HTML tags like <font> to style your page. Use CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) instead because they are more effective and efficient. By using CSS, you can eliminate redundant HTML tags and make your pages much lighter and faster to load.

I hope today's lesson was helpful to you. Don't forget to keep an eye out for my next email. There will be some great stuff in your last lesson. we are going to be talking about going to talk about designing your website so that it's easy for your customers to make a purchase.

subject line: Fifth Lesson - Business Web Design Basics

Hello,

Well, we have come to the final lesson in the Business Web Design Basics crash course. I sure hope you have enjoyed your lessons and learned a lot about building your own attractive, user-friendly website.

In this last lesson we are going to talk about designing your website so that it's easy for your customers to make a purchase.

There is no doubt that convincing your prospects to make purchase from your website is a hard job! But have you ever considered that you could be making the process more difficult and necessary? This is especially true if your site is poorly designed and your prospective customers don't have a clear and easy path to the order button!

That's why when designing your website it's always important to keep in mind that it doesn't matter how good your content is or how good you are at convincing your prospects that they need what you have to offer, they won't make a purchase if they find the process confusing or complicated.

Now let's go over a few specific design techniques that you can use to ensure a smooth and painless transaction for your customers:

- Clear path to order

As I mentioned, make sure that your prospective customers can find your order form quickly and easily. You never want to make them hunt for the buy button. You can do this in several ways, one is by writing a clear, concise paragraph to direct your prospects to your order form so that you can minimize the chances of them getting lost. You can also reduce the chances of losing prospects by putting a prominent link to your order page from every other page on your site.

- Multiple payment options

Next, you should offer multiple payment options? Some people may feel comfortable paying via Paypal, some may only want to pay with their credit card and others might want to send a check. The more options you offer, the better your chances of covering your prospects' desired payment method.

You also want to make your that prospective customer is as comfortable making a purchase from you as possible, so you need to do everything you can to prove that you are a reliable and credible merchant.

To do this make sure that you are using a secured order form with SSL encryption technology. Most online payment processors like PayPal offer this without any extra effort or cost on your part.

Here are a few of the top online payment processors for you to check out:

PayPal
http://www.paypal.com

Authorize.Net
http://www.authorize.net

Google Checkout
http://checkout.google.com

Amazon Payments
https://payments.amazon.com

We Pay
https://www.wepay.com

- Offer a money back guarantee

It is also important to offer a money back guarantee, so that people will feel confident about buying from you. Don't worry that this will cause you to lose money in fact a good refund policy often increases sales substantially.

The majority of customers will not request a refund, especially if you are offering a quality product. However, if they do request a refund make sure the process is quick and easy as well. This will make them happy and help ensure that they will feel comfortable making a purchase again in the future.

- Be available to help

Always include some form of contact information on your sales page. A help desk or ticket system is an excellent choice and not very difficult to include. This way customers can contact you with any questions, concerns or problems they may have before or during the purchasing process.

- Include testimonials

If you have a list of happy customers be sure to include their testimonials on your website in a prominent place, for instance, with in the sales copy and below the order button. This will help make new customers feel more confident when making a purchase from your website.

By taking the time to include these basic elements within your web design you can make your prospective customers feel confident and safe and such your during the check out process, which will help increase your profits too!

As we close this final lesson I would like to thank you again for joining me for the short course and I sincerely hope that you have learned a lot about how incorporating good design elements into your business website!

We Wish Your Success!

….and not forget to visit our website where you will find so many tools to Make Money Online from now!

www.marketing-business.com