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## 11 Steps to "Sticky" Web Site!

By Collette Gillian

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An attractive and user-friendly Web site is crucial to attracting prospects and holding their interest. Seems obvious, yet poor design and even more poorly written content clutter the Web.

The basics of a good web site are simple. Generally, if the purpose of your web site is to convey information, the emphasis should be on clear navigation and engaging text. If however, your purpose is to showcase a portfolio or develop a brand identity, then it will be more appropriate to limit the amount of text, and concentrate on the graphics.

However you define the purpose of your web site, following a few basic guidelines will keep your web site user-friendly.

### Keep It Simple.

This is the most important rule of Web site design. Keeping things straightforward from a user's perspective requires some thought and planning.

If people find it difficult to get into or move around your site, they may not stay for the show. Ditto if you make it difficult for them to contact you or place an order. A little research into what your visitors will be looking for when they click on your Web site will help keep them happy.

### Make Your Links Clear.

An important part of keeping it simple is making your links clear. If you use icons or pictures for your links, be sure to give them text titles. It may sound boring, but your site visitors don't want to waste their time trying to guess where to go next.

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Also, make sure that your links are easily visible. Don't make your visitors have to scroll across to find them. Typically, links are found across the top of the page, or vertically arranged on the left.

Use Straightforward Navigation.

Make sure your visitors always know where they are by providing a navigation bar or map on every page. Also, try to arrange your information so that it is never more three clicks away. Make it easy for your visitors to find what they're looking for, and to get around your site.

Tell Them What to Do.

Web users like to know what's expected of them. If you want them to order your product, sign up for a newsletter, or contact you – tell them. And then give them an easy way to do it.

Give `em What They're Looking For!

Your home page should include enough information about your site to let your visitor know they have found what they're looking for. Nothing annoys users more than wading through click-thru's, only to find that you don't have the information or product they're seeking.

Clear, engaging, value-driven content is essential to your web site's success. Lame language and garbled grammar will ruin your professional image.

Minimize Download Times.

Big graphics, flashy animation, intricate images - they all take time to download. Take care when using whistles and bells. Again, consider your typical visitor. Will they have access to the latest technology? Or will they be dialing up from their rinky-dink home desktop? All the flash technology in the world won't impress your visitors if they don't stick around until the page loads.

Use Images Sparingly.

Images are a great way to add some pizzazz to a Web site. Too many, however, can detract from your site's appearance or message, and they can make your site slow to load. Try using images that support and add value to your text, not as a substitute for information. Remember too, that although JPEG files are better for photographs, GIF files are quicker to download.

Avoid Unnecessary Forms.

This is especially relevant for e-commerce sites, but applies equally to subscription forms for anything. Long forms complicate the ordering process, and prospects may not be willing to fill in what they see as unnecessary details.

Color.

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Use color with restraint in your Web site design. Too many colors may make your site look garish and incoherent. Stick to two or three complimentary colors to make a better impression. The same goes for textured or colored backgrounds. Often such backgrounds make text difficult to read, for example, a light blue background with yellow text or a black background with light blue text is virtually unreadable. (Don't laugh! I've seen `em both.)

Text.

Different browsers support different fonts, and not all the same ones. So that unusual lettering that you think looks so good as your font choice, may show up as indecipherable gobbledy–gook on your visitor's screen.

But all is not lost. There are a few fonts (called "true type" fonts) that are common to all browsers. The ones most commonly used are Times New Roman, Ariel, Helvetica, and Verdana (which was designed specifically for the Web).

Also, allow plenty of "white space" on the page. Spaces give readers a visual break, and allow them to focus more fully on separate elements of the page.

Following these simple guidelines, or using them as a checklist for your existing web site, will save you

time and money. More importantly, your site visitors will feel understood and appreciated. And that's a good thing!

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Collette Gillian is a copywriter specializing in Web content and Web copy with an emphasis on usability and results. She also helps her clients optimize the content of their Web sites to improve search engine positioning. Visit

for more helpful articles and information.

### **Is Your Website "Sticky"?**

**By Jennifer Clason**

While it's great to get a multiple visitors one time on your site, it's even better to get returning visitors multiple times. This means that your site really has an interest to them enough that they've bookmarked it. Bookmarkers over time will lead to sales, and once you've sold to someone it's always easier to get them to buy from you a second time than getting them to buy the first!

So is your site "sticky" enough to keep them coming back?

## 11 Steps to "Sticky" Web Site!

Here are a few good ways to make your website "sticky" so that you get repeat visitors that are interested in your site:

1. Have frequently updated, fresh content. People aren't going to come back if your site stays the same all the time. If they've already got all the information they need from your site, why should they return? Make sure that the information is always new, fresh, and changing so that they have an incentive to return. Perhaps even give away prizes or rewards to make them return. Free gifts are a great motivator!
2. Your content must be valuable. Don't talk "small talk" and fill your site up with gimmicks, bells and whistles, and other page fillers. Make the content on your site actually useful to someone. Use relevant articles to your topic, maybe have free tools or calculators or something that are relevant to your product, or even just keep the people up to date about what's happening with your product. Refrain from using flashy animated objects, java applets, and midi files. These are only annoying to the surfer and it will discourage them from coming back.
3. Make your site easy to navigate. Especially if your site has got lots of competition on your product or service, maybe they'll choose your site over your competitor's site just by the sheer fact alone that they can get around your site easier! People want to get the information they need quickly and easily. Don't make it a challenge for them or they'll only become frustrated and click off of your site.

Using these easy and common sensical tips you can make your website "sticky" and watch the traffic increase!

Jennifer Clason is the site owner and operator of

. She has been running a

full-time home-based Internet business for 7+ years now and owns more than 10 different Internet Sales websites.

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