Website Design Tips

Making your websites homepage work

Your Websites homepage is increasingly the first impression of your business, and this piece of prime real estate can MAKE or BREAK your credibility.

So what can you do to keep your visitors reading?

1. **DO make it blatantly obvious what your website is about**
   Whilst this sounds pretty obvious, it's the one thing you need your website's homepage to achieve. A concise blurb with together with taglines, menus and headings should immediately identify who you are and what it is that you do.

2. **DO set the theme and the tone for the rest of your website**
   Although your websites homepage does not have to be identical to the rest of your website, it's vital that it sets the theme and tone. Consistency between pages means that your visitors won't have to learn how to make use of your website each time that they browse to a new page. PRACTICALITY IS BEST!
   The layout grid, menu names, colours, fonts and writing style should not be up for negotiation. This is particularly important for those visitors who don't land on your homepage upon entry.

3. **Tie your layout with your call to action**
   Think of how you'd like your sections to flow together, then logically organise them on the page to lead to your call to action. Whether you'd like for your visitors to sign up for your newsletters or read your blog, or you want for them to purchase a piece of property online, ALL WEBSITES, regardless of size, need clarity of purpose.

4. **Make your homepage easy to scan**
   Stick with short blocks of two to three sentences. Bolden your carefully considered keywords, but don't be too bold-happy – you are more likely to be of a nuisance than of assistance.

5. **Make it easy to contact you**
   Having a contact page with your contact details may NOT BE ENOUGH! If your call to action requires for your visitors to pick up the phone and make a booking, then make sure the call to action and the phone number is on your website's homepage.
   Go one step further and have this information available on every, single page. Many print a particular page from a website for future reference or to show someone else. Make it as easy as possible for them to contact you without having to revisit your website.

6. **DON'T make the client think**
   This is what your website's homepage – actually, your entire website – needs to do. Steve Krug's book *Don't Make Me Think!* Chats about how we really use the web and the various techniques to make our websites a breeze to use.

7. **DON'T try to promote everything**
   You'll only clutter your website's homepage, stuff up the layout and make your visitors over-think. Constantly remind yourself about the role of your homepage and stick to it.

8. **DON'T have a Flash spectacular as your homepage**

   Not only are you making it difficult for search engines to crawl and index the key page of your website, you are driving your visitors to click on one very popular button: "Skip This Intro". Don't let your visitors start their website experience on the wrong click.

9. **DON'T scare the wits out of your visitors with music**

10. **DON'T use images that take an age to load**

    Images that are too large in data size will keep your visitors waiting and waiting. Use images which are small in size and load quickly, yet are sharp and clean to view. Unprofessional images portray unprofessional business.