

## Putting Personality in Your Marketing

You know those people who stand at the entrance to Wal-Mart and shake your hand or greet you as you walk in? They serve a specific purpose: to give a little personality to a large corporation with thousands of identical stores.

This is called “handshake marketing,” but it doesn’t just involve people who stand at an entrance and shake your hand. Handshake marketing is everything businesses do to give them personality.

Here are a few quick, inexpensive ways for you to put a little handshake in your marketing:

- Put the extra effort into people who are already good clients. Reward them with a discount or small gift every time they shop with you or use your service. At least make a phone call or send a thank you note, especially if they bring you a new client. Chocolate or movie tickets go over well.
- Create a newsletter and send it to people in the community, or people who have shown interest in your business. Put a lot of personality into it as well as information people can use.
- Keep business cards with you

### SUMMER...AT LAST!

We moved this year from winter to summer with a very short and almost nonexistent spring. It had its effects on the retail industry and the economy, in general. It now looks like the overall economy is brightening up with the stock market breaking through the 9000 barrier.

EMBA’s business continues to flourish with the adding of several new accounts. We are looking forward to holding our workshop on “Accessing the USA” for the benefit of the Midwestern-based Foreign Consular Corps and we will be presenting our “High Impact Marketing on a Shoestring Budget” at the Institute of Management Consultants’ 26th Annual Confab in Reno, Nevada on October 27th. We are excited about the prospects for a great 2003, hoping yours is equally exciting.

wherever you go, because you never know when you’re going to meet a potential client or business associate. Write a quick note on the back before you give it to them...something to personalize the encounter so they will remember you.

- When you meet someone, smile, have eye contact, and give that person a firm, not crushing, handshake.
- Above all, remember his or her name.



## DID YOU KNOW

Part-time workers are getting more benefits these days, according to recent reports. A survey of 350 large companies found these improvements made between 1995 and 1999:

- 91 percent offered paid vacation days to part-timers, up 8 percent from 1995.
- 77 percent offered paid sick days, up from 64 percent.
- 47 percent made flexible scheduling and telecommuting available, up from 25 percent.
- 57 percent provide short-term and long-term disability coverage, up from 47 percent and 53 percent.

Eight percent of American managers cannot answer, with any measure of confidence, these seemingly simple questions:

- What is my job?
- What in it really counts?
- How well am I doing?

*No matter how far you have gone on a wrong road, turn back!*



# The Greatest Problems of Small Business Web Sites

People come to us to revamp their Web sites for one simple reason: Their site is bringing in little or no business. In some instances, the site actually generates hostility.

Here is what I believe to be the 6 greatest problems plaguing the majority of small/mid size business sites. Needless to say, not all sites have all of these problems. I list these in what I consider to be their order of importance, though I'm sure other experts might disagree with the order.

**1. Lack of compelling content.** Sometimes this is simply a lack of good content. Often, we visit sites where the home page contains less than 100 words. That's simply not enough. If one checks the top 10 listings for any given search phrase in Google, they will find that the number of words of text on those pages will range from 200 to 2000 words with the average being around 400. Search engine positioning requires good content.

**2. The site can't be found in search engines.** Small business owners and professionals expect their web sites to generate prospects and customers. We've done informal surveys of Web site owner objectives, and this almost always is at the top of their lists.

**3. Pages load much too slowly.** Research has shown that a site will lose over 30% of its visitors if the home page takes more than 8 seconds to load. This means a home page shouldn't be more than 40k in size if the visitor is on a dial-up connection. Many small business home pages are two to four times that size. **Today, people are impatient.; have respect for their**

**time and they'll have respect for your site.**

**4. Visitor can't print pages properly.** Many site designers don't take into account that a majority of visitors will attempt to print out pages of interest. Many web sites clip off the right side of the screen and text when the page is printed. Example: I went to the City of Chicago site to look up a building code. I found the code, but it wouldn't print properly; the right side was clipped off. Since the information was detailed and 7 pages long, I did not want to read it on screen. Shame on our city! **When pages won't print properly, you've created a hostile prospect or alienated an existing customer.**

**5. Navigation.** Your visitor can have problems if navigation links are in unusual places or are inconsistent from page to page, or there are pages without any links. The site visitor has a generic idea as to where certain things should be. For example, they expect "Home" to be somewhere on the upper left side, not on the right side or lower left. **A visitor who gets lost on your site is a lost opportunity. Remember, they are always just one click away from leaving.**

**6. Text that is too small to read.** Many sites assume the average visitor is under the age of 25 and has 20/20 vision. It's not unusual to see 8 or 9 point type used on an "updated" site. **Equally bad are text and background combinations with little contrast, or text on a textured background..**

*For a summary, see page 3.*

## SUMMARY OF WEB SITE DO'S AND DON'TS

The business owner or professional needs to realize that their **web site is a business tool, not a status symbol.** Sites should be designed with the prospective customer's needs at the forefront.

**Content, content, content.** When it comes to web sites, **a picture is NOT worth 1,000 words.** A site needs good text to attract the search engines and retain prospects once they reach the site. Good content includes pages most visitors will expect to find "About Us", "Contact Us", "Privacy Statement", "FAQs", "Case Histories", "Testimonials", etc. Good content establishes credibility. CREDIBILITY is the currency of the Internet.

**Respect the visitor's time.** Keep pages small and fast, avoid opening "splash" pages and other things that require additional time and clicks.

**Keep navigation simple and obvious.**

**Worry about good design fundamentals first.** Menu buttons that dance and glow, animated logos, etc., are now considered "tacky". **However, flash movies, etc., do have their place, but only if they can truly contribute to the purpose of the site and not distract from it.** Small photos of your business and its people in action will go a long way toward establishing visual credibility.

**Hire a designer who really knows what they are doing.** Check out other sites they've designed and see how well they avoid the 6 major site problems listed on the previous page before asking them for a proposal.

**A well-designed site will be easier and less expensive to maintain!**

*William Stocking*  
*Internet Strategy Consultant since 1996*  
*312-437-3777*  
*Wwww.websiterevamp.org*

## Building Rapport with Your Customer



By  
Judith Filek – President  
Impact Communications, Inc.  
jfilek@att.net

Within seconds, callers assess the competence and sincerity of a technical support or customer service representative. By listening to the rep's tone of voice and opening remarks, they feel that they can determine whether to trust the individual or ask for someone else. To build rapport quickly with your customers, remember some basic principles.

First, to make an initial positive impression with your voice, take three distinct pauses as you say your greeting. *"Good morning. // This is Jessica.// How may I help you?"* With these three distinct pauses, the tone of your voice will be sincere, and the customer will conclude you really do want to help them.

When you start to ask customers for information, be sure to tell them **why**. *"May I please have your confirmation number so that I can check the delivery instructions?"* *"May I have the last four digits of the credit card you used to place the order so that I can verify that the transaction was debited to your account?"* Customers do not want to feel as if they are being interrogated. They want to feel valued. When you give them the reason for asking them questions, they are more receptive to giving you the information you need.

Your customers can't see that you are accessing information from multiple screens or inputting data into the computer. Be sure to keep the customer abreast of what you are doing and why you are

taking so much time to complete the transaction. In the interim, make small talk about the weather or the season. It will continue to build rapport.

If you need to place the customer on hold, tell them why it is necessary and approximately how long it will take. Check back with the customer about every 30 seconds. If you need to transfer the customer to another department, explain why. Assure the customer that you will stay on the line until the transfer is complete. Before you disconnect, introduce the customer to the new rep.

Use your customer's name during your conversation, but make sure you are pronouncing it correctly. If you want to use the customer's first name, always ask permission. It shows respect.

Never interrupt your customers. Let them finish what they need to say, particularly if they are calling about a problem. If you find yourself wanting to jump in because you think you know what they will say next and can service them more quickly by interrupting, think again. **Let the person finish!** It will show them that you are really listening to them.

Smile while talking to the customer. Remember "Smile, then Dial". When you smile it affects your vocal cords, and your voice sounds warmer and friendlier.



Elliott M. Black & Associates, Inc.

Effective Marketing and  
Business Assistance

Your off-site Marketing Department

2511 Windsor Lane  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
Tel. No. 847-272-2884  
Fax No. 847-272-3551  
E-mail: eblack@embainc.com  
www.embainc.com

Email: info@embainc.com

## ***From the Editor's Desk***

*Summer is always so beautiful here in Chicago. I bet you would like to spend more time outside the office and still make sure your business continues to thrive.*

*We can help you achieve that wish. Call us for a free consultation and let us show you how we can help your business grow and take some of the burden off your shoulders. You will be glad you did!*

**MAXINE**, Newsletter Editor

```

"-----"
" If you would be happy for an hour,
" take a nap.
" If you would be happy for a week,
" hit a hole in one.
" If you would be happy for a year,
" inherit money.
" But if you would be happy for a lifetime...
" HELP other people!
"-----"

```