

SUMMER 2010

P GREAT LAKES AIRLINES LEAKS & PLAINS

RECREATION • LIFESTYLE • BUSINESS • CULTURE



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ONLY SECONDS

You have only seconds to grab the attention of your web site visitor. How are you using your time? You've spent money and time creating a logo, letterhead, and brochures for your business. You care about your company message, and you want customers to know you care about quality. You've hired professional graphic artists, designers, and printers to do the job.

But what have you done about your small business web site design? Does it match the quality and look of your other marketing materials? Since the Web has more reach than the rest of your marketing materials, it should demonstrate the highest quality. And yet so many business owners have hired amateurs, relatives, teenagers, or created McWeb (fast setup, cookie-cutter) sites themselves.

An important distinction about the Web is the amount of time you have to create interest for your web site visitor. You have only seconds to make a great impression. How are you using yours? Now is the perfect time to see if your small business web site design needs some tweaking to make that great impression. Visit your own web site and check out our three-step approach below to see if it's time for you to consider a change.

- Before you click to review your web site home page, ask yourself what your current business goals are. Do you want to sell products? Do you want to sell services? Do you want to provide information for prospective buyers? What do you want to accomplish? Your goals and your business may have changed since you first put up your small business web site. Deciding on your current business goals will help you to decide on the main focus for your small business web site.

- Discover what your firm's largest strengths are. This can be done through customer focus groups, surveys, interviews, or informal processes. The result should be something similar to your unique selling proposition or how customers benefit from doing business with you.
- Now, visit the home page of your web site. What is the first item that you see? Put one and two together, and shouldn't your small business Web site home page immediately feature your biggest strengths or a means to your goal (or preferably both?)

The Web is filled with what not to do. Yesterday, I saw a consulting web site that I couldn't tell was an accounting web site until I clicked through three pages. A speaker's web site had a huge picture of the speaker that took forever to download and was not by any means Mr. America. And a photographer's web site had a long, irrelevant Flash movie about the creator's dog. I don't know of any customer who is going to sit there and try to guess what business you're in. They'll just go to other web sites and do business with the small business web site that has a clear message for them.

If you want to make money on the Web, use your seconds wisely. **P&P**



~Sandi Smith's marketing formula has generated millions of dollars for her clients. Sign up for free marketing tips at <http://sandismithdesign.com>.