

## Top Ten Rules for an Effective Website

There are literally hundreds of ways in which you can make ensure your website is an effective marketing tool. These are the essentials.

1. Use the same basic layout as other sites. If people expect the contents to be on the left or the links to be underlined, why confuse them?
2. Use relevant photos and graphics. Something that merely looks pretty is clutter. Avoid flash- it smacks of gimmickry.
3. Make the text contrast with the background- black on white remains the easiest to comprehend.
4. Some people have poor eyes or small screens, so use layout and text that can be resized.
5. Keep the text simple with bullet points and sub-headings. If you have a lot to say, use lots of pages rather making people scroll down and down.
6. Don't open new windows unless it's essential. People like to be able to use the back button. New windows disorientate them.
7. An About Us page with a postal address inspires confidence.
8. The Home Page (the first page visitors see) should explain who you are and what you do. Visitors should be able to take it in at a glance. They owe you nothing, so you can't expect them to work at it. Feature maybe four or five key bullet points (the most relevant to your visitors) with short text explanation.
9. Make your site attractive to Search Engines. There are two essentials to a good ranking. Keywords and Links. Put keywords (the words people are searching for) into the Page Title (the line that appears on the blue strip at the top of the browser), headlines, links and anchor text (don't just put 'click here'), and the body text (about 5% of content should be keywords). Persuade other sites to link to yours.
10. Test whether your website works. Get even a small number of people to try it out.

There's a theme here. Design for your visitor not yourself and Keep It Simple.