

>more HOME (PAGE) Remodeling Tips



Today's customers interact with online content in increasingly diverse ways. The speed, convenience, and relevance of your content will make or break your business' online sales and marketing success. To maintain your competitive edge in this fast-changing and demanding new consumer environment, it's crucial to update your Web site design. Starting with your home page, it's time to retool your Web site. Think "Home Improvement."

Brief, but expandable... Modern home pages contain large quantities of expandable on-demand content conveniently nested within small amounts of screen space. With this, more information can be quickly located and viewed "above the fold" (without requiring the visitor to scroll down the page).

To conserve space and speed page loading, use smaller-sized images with mouse triggered "alt text" instructions to "Click the image for an expanded view." Once viewed, the larger-sized image can collapse back to the original smaller size on the page. Additional home page space may be saved by limiting text to brief partial paragraphs ("teasers") that end with a "Continue..." link for more detailed information. Further, for video content on your home page, only post a small, clickable static thumbnail screen shot that launches the video player manually, instead of forcing the visitor to wait for the segment to open and begin playing automatically.

Relate to your audience... Consider your target audience. Generally, it's better to keep Web content succinct, simplifying navigation, minimizing download times and emphasizing substantive content over superfluous style. However, the unique characteristics, attitudes, interests and habits of your primary consumers should also guide your home page content and design decisions. Visitors who can more easily relate to your home page respond more quickly and return more often.

Decide what specific qualities or perceptions about your product are particularly attractive to your primary customers. For instance, if your audience is particularly interested in reading about your product in great detail, include expanded text or list links to supplemental PDF resources right on your home page to capitalize on the natural inclination of your buyers. If your prospects are most likely to access your home page while using a mobile device, replace complex drop-down navigation menus in favor of simpler large, easy-to-click links, or place convenient, "click-to-call" options at the top of the screen.

There's no place like home... Remember to give your customers a compelling reason to revisit your Web site on a frequent basis. For instance, consider incorporating a "blog" entry within your home page design. Blog "followers" will receive an online notice and invitation to link back to your Web site each time you add a new post. Another good idea is to encourage customers to "bookmark" your home page, so that they more quickly and easily reconnect to you whenever needed.



~Kip Cozart



QUESTION & ANSWER

Q • Do I need Google Analytics?
~Charlotte, NC

A: First, let's define Web Analytics. Web Analytics is simply the term given to the collective data that measures and reports key Web site activities like visits, page views, traffic sources, search engine referrals, Internet marketing campaigns and more. You definitely need some form of Web analytics package to help you track, understand and optimize your Web site activity.

Google Analytics is one of the most popular choices today because it is free, extremely user-friendly, and relatively easy to install. Google also provides robust help resources at no cost to support Google Analytics users. You can learn more about Google Analytics by visiting google.com/analytics. CC Communications also provides helpful resources at cccommunications.com/ga and cccommunications.com/customers_analytics.

Have a question about Web design or online marketing? Submit your question to www.greatercharlottebiz/webbiz. Questions & Answers may be reprinted here in upcoming editions of *Greater Charlotte Biz!*



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> Biltmore Farms Hotels—Interactive Sustainability Flash Presentation

Only one thing separates good intentions from reality. Action. Biltmore Farms Hotels is all about taking action to support their community and their environment. Sustainability is not a buzz word to this leading Asheville, N.C. hotel group, but a corporate way of life. Each of the company's five hotels engages in important sustainability projects, ranging from endeavors such as annually planting trees with elementary school students to employing one of the nation's first solar powered hot water systems.

Biltmore Farms Hotels recently teamed with CC Communications to communicate sustainability details through a dedicated section of their corporate Web site. Patrons, guests and visitors can learn more through this interactive Flash presentation located at <http://www.biltmorefarm-hotels.com/sustainability>.

Content provided by CC Communications, a Web design, programming and Internet media company providing a full array of services to businesses and organizations to enhance and produce effective Web, e-mail, multimedia marketing initiatives and business process improvements. For more information, contact Kip Cozart at 704-543-1171 or visit www.cccommunications.com/resources_articles.cfm.