Lyon Graphic Design

The Web Design Process

Designing a web site can be an intimidating, confusing and frustrating process for many who have little or no website design experience. Whether you are creating a new website for a new business or updating an existing site, there are basic design principles you should follow to create the right web site for your business.

The approached to website design should be organized and comprehensive. Taking an organized approach will save you many hours spent aimlessly following ideas that lead you away from your main goals. With the right process you avoid the headaches of misdirection and save yourself time by keeping your project within budget thus insuring you meet your business goals by attracting your target audience.

It is very important to remember that site design isn't about meeting "your" needs; it is about meeting the needs of your "target audience"!

The following is the process Lyon Graphic Design uses to insure your site design success:

> 1 DEFINING GOALS: The design process begins by identifying the goals for your Web site, so you need to define what your business goals are. If you are redesigning a site, ask yourself what currently is working and what needs to change (Your customers will dictate this). Once goals are defined, strategies will be developed to maximize the effectiveness and function of your site design while staying within your budget.

> 2 IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE AND YOUR COMPETITION: The next step is to identify the demographic of those whom you want to attract to your Web site, this is your target audience. We will help you identify your audience in order to structure your site to meet their needs and expectations. Remember, the site is being created to meet the customer's need.

> Another important step is to Identify who your competitors are. Analyze the competition by researching their websites and see what works for you. What is attractive about their site? Actually use their site and compare features and services. What do you think works for them and why? Remember, design for your users!

> This is also good time for you to come up with a unique web site address (URL) that is short, catchy and identifies your business. Lyon Graphic design can help you with your search and help you choose a Hosting company.

3 SITE DESIGN: Now comes the fun part. During this phase, content will be developed. Drafts of your site design will be presented to you for approval along with a navigational chart outlining your site structure. Once a design has been approved, and text (copy), graphics and images and other elements of the site have been provided, the site's "look and feel" begins to take shape. A prototype will be created and posted on a review page where you can interact directly with the site's construction as it is developed.

4 SITE CONSTRUCTION: When your site prototype has been approved, final construction begins. Detailed navigation and content are created during this step. Only after the site has been completely tested by actual users and approved by you, is it published to the Internet.

At the end of this stage you should expect:

   • Finished W3C compliant XHTML code for all pages and content in place

   • All navigational links structured and working

   • All graphic design, illustration and photography in place

   • Solid Search Engine Optimization established (SEO).*

   • Final proofreading completed

   • Comprehensive user testing of site navigation and functions such as email, forms, interactive media and links to social media.

   • Archive made of all site components, XHTML code and materials

5 SITE MARKETING: Now that your site is complete your target audience needs to know that it exists. You need to tie your site directly to all your other marketing materials. The Web site address (URL) should be placed on all materials generated for your business, including all business papers, advertising, and correspondence and marketing collateral your organization produces.

The Web site address should appear on all:

   • Business cards and stationary

   • Printed advertisements

   • Direct mail advertising

   • Invoices and billing statements

   • Manuals and packaging

   • Publications and promotional pieces

   • Posters and postcards

   • Radio and television advertisements

   • Standard and local Web indexes

6 SITE MAINTENANCE: Now that you have spent so much time and energy developing your site, you need to keep it current and regularly maintained. Links to sites outside yours can come and go. If you have regular events and promotions placed on your site you'll have to keep your site updated regularly. Lyon Graphic Design can provide you with a maintenance contract to keep your site running smoothly 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Congratulations, you now have a published web site! The test however of a successful site is how useful it is to your audience in meeting their needs and expectations as well as its ease of use.

*SEO is a moving target as it exists in an ever changing environment. A strong SEO also takes time to acquire and the importance of some SEO practices are debatable, however, your site will be equipped with many features that set the stage for further strengthening of SEO if you wish to pursue professional avenues.