

HORIZON NEWSLETTER

Informing Businesses Using Computers

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Be Web Prepared

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Visual Marketing Team

Whether you already have Web pages or are planning to implement Web pages in the near future, we have the **right team of experts** who, combined together, provide all of the necessary talent and technical expertise **to create the 'correct' product for your company.**

In addition, many of the capabilities required for Web page creation also apply to other types of visual presentations. Creating and designing successful web pages or visual presentations requires a varied area of knowledge and expertise. We call them our **Visual Marketing Team** (VM-Team).

Heading up our VM-Team are ...

- ✓ Denise McDonald
- ✓ Bridget Weigel
- ✓ Andrew Charon

In our efforts to keep you, our valuable clients, on the cutting edge of new technologies and professional

services, the Advanced Horizons VM-Team can offer you the following services . . .

- ✓ **Website Creation**
- ✓ **Print Collaterals Copywriting and Editing**
- ✓ **Video Production**, *from concept to final product*, from an award-winning team with 14 years of nationally syndicated television experience
- ✓ **CD-ROM Creation**
- ✓ **Kiosk Creation**
- ✓ **Self-Running Presentations** (*for tradeshow, sales purposes, etc.*)
- ✓ **E-commerce** - B2B (*Business to Business*)
- ✓ **Logo Creation**
- ✓ **QuickTime Virtual Reality Production**
- ✓ **3-D Renderings**
- ✓ **Custom/Unique Music**

- ✓ **Digital Video Rendering**
- ✓ **Streaming Video and Audio**
- ✓ **Voice Over Recording** capabilities
- ✓ **Marketing Materials** from concept to final product (*direct mail, brochures, annual reports, news releases*) and publicist services

The following is a list of some of the tools and technology that we use in the creation process . . .

- ✓ HTML
- ✓ JavaScript
- ✓ Macromedia Director/Shockwave
- ✓ Macromedia Flash
- ✓ Macromedia Fireworks
- ✓ Adobe Photoshop
- ✓ Infini-D
- ✓ Lingo
- ✓ Filemaker Pro
- ✓ Dreamweaver
- ✓ After Effects
- ✓ Digital Cameras

Web Usability

I am sure that you have visited web sites on the Internet.

- ✓ How many sites were **easy to use**?
- ✓ Did the site **provide the information you were seeking**?
- ✓ Was the information **easy to find**?
- ✓ Were there **too many options**, causing confusion?

Despite the growth and popularity,

the web is still having growing pains. Many web sites need to be redefined to improve their usability. They may be graphically attractive but too difficult to navigate or use.

If you already have a web site, how usable is your site?

If you are planning a web site have you considered the appropriate usability factors?

What are the usability factors?

Usability of a web site is a broad-sweeping concept consisting of...

- **How easy is it to navigate the site.** Too many selections or inconsistent navigation can make it confusing. Make sure all selections are obvious and clear as to where they take you.
- **How easy is it to find things.** Is there a table of contents providing an overall picture of the web site? Does the site have search capabilities? Have you provided easy-to-use links to topics that interest your customers?
- **Being consistent with a user's expectations.** Does the site actually provide the tools or information that the user is expecting or needs?
- **Applying the user's vocabulary.** Is information provided with terms the customer is used to using?
- **Providing valuable information.** Is the information

provided of use to your customers? Is there enough information or is information lacking?

- **Confirming and providing feedback to a user's actions.** If a user action is required is it made clear that the action took place successfully?
- **Being intuitive to the way the user thinks.** Does the flow of the site feel comfortable and natural to your customer?

Improve Marketing Presence

Some of the benefits to having a highly useable web site that will **improve your company's marketing presence** are . . .

- **Facilitating your customer's goals.** Of course you have to know what your customer's goals are. Do you?
- **Increasing your customer's retention to your web site.** If the web site is not easy to use or does not provide the needed features, customers will not return.
- **Enhancing brand loyalty.** Are you providing adequate product information?
- **Inviting repeat purchases.** Any tools that make it easier for your customer to do business with you should result in repeat business.
- **Increasing productivity.** Not only should your customers be able to increase productivity, your internal staff should also realize the same results. This

should also decrease your company's support costs by having the web site address tasks that are currently provided by your staff.

- **Making products and/or services more accessible.** A web site works 24 hours a day seven days a week. Status of existing product information and services is readily available to your customers. New or changed product information can quickly be distributed to customers.

By creating a useable web site that caters to your customer's needs, goals and expectations, you will increase the company's profits. Which after all, is always the goal for making changes or enhancements.

Here are some areas that need to be addressed for creating that usable web site . . .

Who are your customers? Are they...

- New to the web
- Frequent repeat visitors
- Novices or experts on using their computer and/or a web browser
- What services do they need
- What information do they need
- How do they expect to access or find your services or information
- How will they access the web - slow dial-up or faster dedicated connection

Keep it Simple

- Make sure navigation methods

are easy to understand and consistent

- Don't include information that is not necessary

Don't be Nosey

- Don't require that the user has to identify themselves until it is necessary
- Only prompt for necessary user and company information
- Provide an easy means for the user to change their personal information

Check Competitors Sites

- Discover what they did wrong and don't do the same thing
- Discover what they did correctly

It is most important that input is provided from both your own staff and your customers. You need to establish their targets and expectations in order to create a site that will please everyone and



accomplish its intended purpose.

Once the blueprint is in place, let the web site development begin.

Signs You've Had Too Much Techie Stuff

- ✓ You just tried to enter your password on the microwave.
- ✓ You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
- ✓ You call your son's beeper to let him know it's time to eat. He e-mails you back from his bedroom, "What's for dinner?"
- ✓ Your daughter sells Girl Scout Cookies via her web site.
- ✓ You chat several times a day with a stranger from South Africa, but you haven't spoken with your next door neighbor yet this year.
- ✓ You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.
- ✓ You buy a computer and a week later it is out of date and now sells for half the price you paid.
- ✓ The concept of using real money, instead of credit or debit, to make a purchase is foreign to you.
- ✓ Your reason for not staying in touch with family is that they do not have e-mail addresses.
- ✓ You hear most of your jokes via e-mail instead of in person.
- ✓ You get an extra phone line so you can get phone calls.
- ✓ You get up in the morning and go online before getting your coffee.
- ✓ You wake up at 2am to go to the bathroom and check your E-mail on your way back to bed.

Instructions for life from the Dalai Lama

I think these are worth sharing. Sometimes we all need these simple reminders. Hope you find enlightening.

- ✓ Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
- ✓ When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
- ✓ Follow the 3 Rs: Respect for self, Respect for others and Responsibility for all your actions.
- ✓ Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes

- a wonderful stroke of luck.
- ✓ Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.



- ✓ Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
- ✓ When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
- ✓ Spend sometime alone every day.
- ✓ Open your arms to change, but don't let it goof your values.
- ✓ Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- ✓ Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.

- ✓ A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.
- ✓ In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
- ✓ Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
- ✓ Be gentle with earth.
- ✓ Once a year, go some place you've never been before.
- ✓ Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
- ✓ Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
- ✓ Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.