A WEBSITE IS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

Website design is about more than layout, mark-up language, and technical wizardry. Website design is about communication, it's about turning advertising into content, and content into an experience that viewers will remember.

Seven Words To Remember:

1. Communication
People are always asking us what's wrong with their websites, and the answer in the vast majority of cases can be summed-up in a quote from the movie, "Cool Hand Luke" (1967): "what we have here is a failure to communicate." Communication is the key to success, and that doesn't just apply to your website, it applies to almost everything you do both inside and outside your business-life.

If your website isn't communicating on both a rational and emotional level, if it doesn't provide the psychological and emotional context of your marketing message, then exactly what is it doing?

2. Audience
I can't think of too many people who actually like being sold. In fact, sometimes customers get so irritated by sales tactics that they end up not buying the thing they came specifically to your website to purchase.

Solving the problem is merely a question of altering your perspective; the average buyer is predisposed to dismiss and ignore high-pressure tactics, and meaningless sales pitches. So instead of treating customers like customers, try treating them like an audience. Audiences want to be engaged, enlightened, and entertained. And that is the most effective way to make a sales impact.

3. Focus
All too often websites inundate their Web audiences with facts, figures, statistics, and an endless list of features, benefits, options, and whatever else the sales department can think of throwing in. All that stuff just confuses people.

Focus your message on the most important elements of what you have to say. If your website can embed that singular idea in an audience's mind, then it has done its job.

4. Language
The words used, and how they are put together provides meaning; they inform personality; they provide mental sound bites; and they make whatever you are saying, worth remembering.

Language is one of the critical elements of 'voice', the ability to convey personality; and writing without a 'voice' is instantly forgettable.

5. Performance
Even the most articulate prose can be lost in a befuddled delivery. Communication is more than words; it's a combination of language, style, personality, and performance.

Things are rarely what they seem. Even our memories are a stylized version of what we've actually experienced. Creating a memorable impression is about managing the viewer experience, and providing the right verbal and non-verbal cues that make what is being said memorable.

6. Personality

Every business has a personality. The first problem is, few medium-sized companies ever attempt to manage that persona, and as a consequence, the buying public forms its own opinion. And that opinion is often not the way you want to be regarded.

The second problem is companies either don't have a firm grasp of who they really are, or they know, and they are afraid to promote it. If your company's identity isn't worth promoting, it is time to think why that is, and change it. The bottom line is, a company without a personality is a company without an image, and that makes you instantly forgettable.

7. Psychology

The most important feature you can provide your audience is psychological fulfillment, not deep discounts, fast service, or more bells and whistles.

The real reason people buy stuff is that it makes them feel something. Cosmetics make women feel attractive or sexy, while cars make men feel they've achieved some level of status. Even services make people feel important, as in "I've got a guy, who does that for me." Finding the psychological hot spot in your marketing, and promoting the hell out of it consistently and continually should be your primary marketing goal. All those features and benefits are merely the excuse for a purchase, not the reason.