



Frequently Asked Questions About Design

By Debbie Manning



Without a doubt the question I get asked most frequently is ... *"I love the new website you designed for me yesterday! But when I type in my name, my site's not listed on the first page of Google. What can I do be listed first with the search engines?"*

I have a client who decided to call Google and ask them herself. Their response was that unless she had a an advertising budget over \$50,000 she should call back later!

Most of us can't afford that kind of budget. But there are things you can do to be sure your site gets adequate "hits" by search engines. First of all, be sure that your site is search engine friendly.

- Be sure you have **keywords and a metatag description**. Have text on your site that complements your keywords.
- Have **links** on your site. Search engines don't like your site to exist as an island.
- Search engines like **change**. Periodically add new products, new descriptions. Additions will keep your site up-to-date, and will encourage search engine visits.

Submit your site to dmoz.org. Dmoz is one of the few directories on the web actually run by humans. A real person will read your submission and manually enter your site into their directory. Search engines interact with each other. Once you're in the DMOZ directory, you'll be exposed to Google, Yahoo, etc.



Check out www.TouchedByJules.com/

After you've done all this, you really need to sit back and wait. There are a huge number of sites on the web, and the number expands exponentially on a daily basis. Like it or not, search engine recognition won't happen overnight.

Recently a new career field has developed that deals exclusively with search engine optimization (SEO). Some of these people work with designers, but their expertise is generally more behind the scenes. A designer's mission is to create an attractive, effective website for clients – one that exposes your marketing message to a large target audience. SEO companies are analytical and mathematically oriented. Their challenge is to analyze your website relative to ever-changing robot behaviors – they're continually trying to second guess the computer programming that makes search engines do what they do. Designers and search engine optimizers are essentially two different animals.

Other questions?

"When it comes to marketing, I get totally overwhelmed! Even though I think I know what I want to accomplish, I have problems making a decision ..."

Years ago decisions to print depended totally on the quantity you wanted to print. I had many clients who complained they could wallpaper their house with leftover newsletters – it had cost "just a little more" to print 1000 than 500.

Although it's still cheaper to print in quantity, it's not very expensive to print smaller amounts these days. Digital printing has entered the print market. Ten years ago, I could only get estimates from printers in terms of 500 or 1000 copies! Today places like Office Depot and The UPS Store have equipment that can turn out fabulous ads, newsletters and postcards - in any quantity. *Anything is possible!*

To return to the original question, marketing decisions are not as costly as they used to be. You can make a **BIG** decision and initially print only 100 copies! These days you can reconsider

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your first decision when you go to press for your second hundred copies! Financially you can afford to try things out more than you could in the past.

And when you're dealing with the Internet, you're not committing to anything – changes can be made as fast as your webmaster is willing to make them!

"I'm thinking about starting a new company and I don't know where to even start ..."

Businesses that succeed realize they can't do everything ... **You're in business to do what you love most.** To be most efficient, you'll want to partner with companies who can operate as "departments" in your company – your accounting department, your legal department, your marketing department and so forth. Like the big corporations these days, you're outsourcing!

My advice is that it's usually easier to give one company you trust all your marketing responsibilities. If one company creates your logo, the same company can easily adapt that logo to the sign for your business ... to your business card ... to your *DuPage Woman Central Edition*TM article and ad ... to your website ... and so on. Then all a new marketing project requires from you is a phone call.

Simplify.

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