



By Debbie Manning



Sometimes explaining “what we do” is difficult. We know the ins and outs of our business in great depth and detail – and we also know experientially what our business was in the past ... and what we want to become in the future. When we sit down and try to think what we

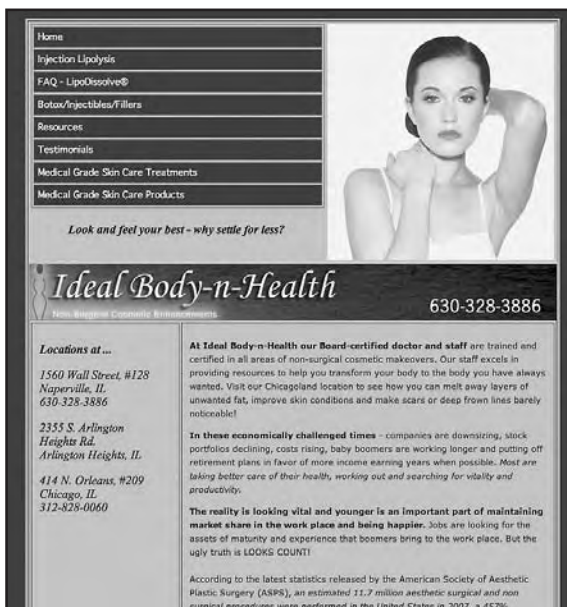
want to convey to our potential customers ...the actual explanation of “what we do” can easily become a documentary!

A paper brochure is fairly “concrete” – space is limited. But websites are much less definite. We tend to think, “Wow! Everything that didn’t fit on that little business card or brochure can now have a home on our website!” But think about your webpage concretely as well – less is still more.

As we all know, “less is more.” Recently I read an article interviewing a young, successful female entrepreneur. She said her biggest regret was that she initially “blew through” over \$1 million on a website. The site was never even completed because she decided to initiate a simpler site that she could grow with! Ultimately she decided to ignore the competition’s website strategies and proceed – simply – at her own pace.

Less really is more

When clients come to us frustrated with their own design efforts, most often we **take away** from what they have done instead of **adding** to it. We do this with both graphics and with words.



www.idealbodyhealth.com debuted their new site this month. Their site features information about non-surgical cosmetic enhancements along with an extensive FAQ page

Simpler Graphics

We often change complementary images’ color hues to reinforce the color of the main image or the logo. We pare down the numbers of colors used. Often we eliminate colors entirely. The idea, especially when dealing with clip art type images, is to eliminate the “crayon” look and to create a set of colors that look well together.

In print, creating a logo, fewer colors is less costly to produce. If we’re creating a brochure or postcard or even a website, we create a color pallet that’s aligned with your particular design or style.

For logos, we take our pared down color pallet and simplify the image itself. Right now we are in a time of action. Those little squiggly characters are everywhere! In the past, logos and images tended to be more “blocky” but now, even globally, we tend to prefer shapes and text that imply action, movement and excitement. Simple shapes like swooshes and swirls prevail in logos; active people and motion symbols work well in stock photos.

Simple Text

Website copywriting ideas are permeating print materials now as well. In these fast-moving times, we try to present our idea quickly and precisely. Catch the attention of your target audience with creative headlines and easy to read paragraphs – and bullets. Our preference is to create an almost outline-type visual structure for both print and web materials.

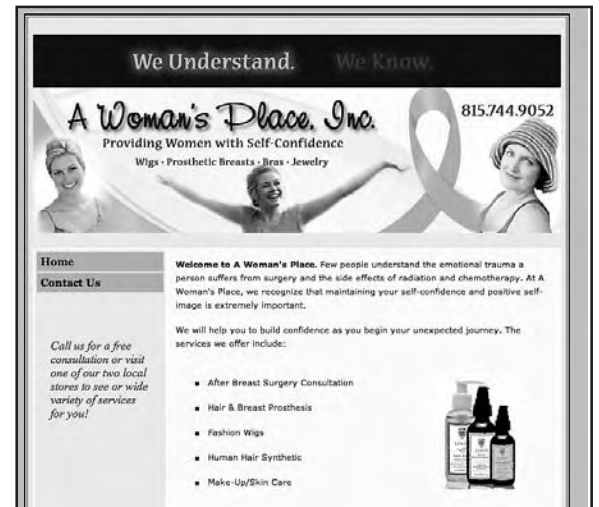
On the web, your carefully thought out text is going to be “crawled” by search engines that will index your site on their services. Think of three main words or phrases that define your business (remember, keep it simple). Now search those



Bonnie McCrary & Bobbie Gold created www.benbentgiftbaskets.com to display examples of the custom baskets they prepare

words in your favorite search engine. Did your website appear? I have a small business myself, and realistically I know that if I search “web page design,” I’m rarely going to appear in the top of the search engine listings. Large corporations spend millions of dollars on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in order to be number one in their respective areas (or they pay to be sponsors – see the slightly shaded backgrounds in the Google listings?).

The Case for Simplicity



A Woman's Place, whose business cards were shown here last month, has expanded to the web with www.awomansplacenaperville.com



www.michaelwynne.com, the website of Naperville-based speaker and consultant Michael Wynne, took on a new look to highlight some of his innovative programs.

Nowadays in editing text for the web, we try to emphasize the following:

- highlighted keywords (links serve as one form of highlighting; typeface variations, such as bolding and italics and color are others)
- meaningful sub-headings (not “clever” ones)
- bulleted lists
- one idea per paragraph (users tend to skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph)
- the inverted pyramid style – the most important concept appears first in your paragraph, then the details
- half the word count (or less) of conventional writing

Remember ... less is more! Value your readers’ time by presenting your marketing information in a simple, easy to follow format

With more than 14 years of experience in graphic and web design, DebManning Design specializes in support services that will make your business excel. Call today to discuss your ideas or visit www.debmanning.com to explore services we offer.

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