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Your business needs more than an attractive website to succeed on the Internet. A business website should also be highly readable, easy to navigate and intuitive in layout. The goal is to make it easy for potential customers to give you their business. Unfortunately, many business websites focus on flashy media and images, putting usability at a distant second. With a little care and the right web design software, you can avoid these pitfalls.

Consider Your Target Audience

When you put together a new website, take a little time to think about whom your visitors will be and how they'll use the site. An audience primarily composed of young, technologically savvy viewers will have different graphic web design requirements than an audience made up mostly of older people with little Internet experience. An e-commerce or social site needs a more robust feature set than a relatively simple blog.

The Basics of Good Design

Every site should have a few basic characteristics, no matter who will use it or what type of site you intend to build. A clean interface that stays consistent through all pages will help your visitors identify the important parts of the site without having to search. The best sites don't make users work hard to find the information they need.

Well-designed sites use graphic web design with plenty of white space between the elements. They keep the number of animations, flashy graphics and special features to an absolute minimum, avoid auto-playing music and movies, and put the most important information where viewers will see it right away. Smart designers also choose a high contrast color scheme to make sure that everyone can read the site easily. Simple black and white sites provide higher usability than more atmospheric designs that can be hard to navigate.

The Role of Content Management Systems

Business owners no longer have to build their own websites from scratch; they can use content management systems to put together even very complex designs. CMSs rely on a series of modules or extensions plugged into software running on your web server. These modules provide all kinds of functionality and can be swapped out depending on your site design. Common options include blog commenting modules, e-commerce shopping cart systems, Flash-based animated galleries and ad managers.

Using a CMS to build your site also means that you don't have to be an expert to update or change it. Whether you choose to build the site yourself or hire a professional to do the work, you can add features and make new posts without knowing how to program. CMSs provide basic design templates that you can adjust for your own site, forms for creating new pages or blog posts, and easy management of all the features your site uses. These kinds of web design software make it far easier to use good design principles to build your business site.

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