<div align="center">**TOP TEN MISTAKES IN WEBSITE DESIGN**</div>

Your website is one of your most powerful marketing tools, but have you looked at it lately? There are so many preventable and easily corrected mistakes in website design. The biggest mistake, and it is made over and over again, is designing your site with the focus on what's important to your company and NOT what is important to your site visitor. People visit your website seeking information about your products and services. They ONLY ask one question...
"What can you do for me???"

Here are a few questions to ask when reviewing your website for design and content:

- Does your site represent your company and support your brand?
- Does it relay your message?
- Does it reach your target market?
- Does it set you apart from your competition?
- Does your site load quickly and guide your visitors to your Most Wanted Response?
  (Do you even have a Most Wanted Response?)
- *Most importantly, does it WOW you? And if not, how will it WOW your audience??*

From a marketing perspective, THE TOP TEN BIGGEST MISTAKES in website design (in no particular order)...

1) NOT COMMUNICATING PURPOSE
Is the purpose of your site clear at a glance? Is your company name, slogan, and contact information immediately visible? You have about 10 seconds of a visitor' time before they decide to either search deeper in your site or leave.
Be specific and succinct... say exactly what you do right up front – are you selling a product? A service? What do you offer the visitor? How can they reach you? Why should they stay on your site? Why should they come back???

2) TALKING ABOUT 'ME', NOT 'YOU'
Do you think visitors arrive at your site and immediately want to read all about you and your company, your company's goals, company history? NO! They arrive there seeking either entertainment or information about products or services. They are trying to resolve THEIR problem, not to understand YOURS. *Include company history and detailed information, but save this information for the About Us section of your site. Visitors will search for more information about you if they want to read it.*

3) TOO MUCH CLUTTER
Don't underestimate the power of white space. De-clutter your website! Too many options and too much clutter overwhelm the visitor and cause them to abandon their session. Have you combined flashing images with half a dozen fonts in several colors on one page thinking you are drawing the visitor in and attracting their attention? You are only succeeding in overwhelming them. Less is more in life and in design. *White space is not lost space – it emphasizes the content it surrounds!*

4) OUTDATED CONTENT, GRAPHICS
Sounds overly simplistic, but is your site content outdated?
Take a few minutes to re-read your site content to make sure it represents you NOW and not three years ago.
And what about your site graphics... are they easy on the eyes? Do your colors blend or clash? Does your site contain flashing test or scrolling text banners? Are the graphics so big you have to scroll down to even see your company name or purpose? *Dated graphics are a dead giveaway that your site hasn't been updated in a decade!*

5) BURYING IMPORTANT FEATURES

Is your home page design clean, but lacking in important information? Visitors do NOT want to search for information, they want it immediately accessible. Walk your visitors directly to the information they are seeking. Do you present your company name AND contact information clearly on EVERY page of your site? *Make sure site visitors understand your purpose and can easily reach you from any page on your site.*

6) NO VISUAL HIERARCHY

Important content, like a statement of purpose, a call to action, and contact information, should be the most visually dominant items on your page. This can be accomplished easily by varying size of fonts and using engaging images. Create a visual hierarchy to gently guide your site visitor to your Most Wanted Response. This will make your website easier for your visitors to digest. *A visual hierarchy also influences metrics that search engines may consider for organic ranking, like time-on-site and depth of engagement.*

7) TOO MANY "TECH-Y" BELLS AND WHISTLES

Site visitors are NOT impressed with bells and whistles. They don't like slow-loading sites, loaded with "tech-y" graphics... and neither do search engines. Customers expect a site to load in approximately 3 seconds and 40% of visitors will leave the site if it takes any longer. *Review your site or encourage your site developer to take a look and determine the root of any performance issues.*

8) NO CALL TO ACTION, FORCING REGISTRATION

What is your Most Wanted Response? Do you want visitors to call you? Email you? Submit a form? Sign up for your mailing list? Remember that a website visitor is just that... a browsing visitor, NOT a prisoner. Forcing visitor registration before giving out information doesn't convert visitors into clients and customers... it sends visitors away! *Give a call to action on every page of your site, but don't FORCE visitors to share their personal information. It is your job to create a trust environment for your visitors, and that is what will convert visitors to clients and customers.*

9) FAILURE TO TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

Does your website speak directly to your target market? Have you even clearly identified your target market? For example, if your target audience is an older population, consider creating your site using larger fonts and color schemes that are easy on the eyes. If your target audience is a young population, consider designing your site specifically to be mobile-friendly. *Make sure your site speaks the language of your audience!*

10) NOT SEARCH ENGINE FRIENDLY, NOT RESPONSIVE

Is your site responsive? If you don't have a mobile site, have you looked to see how your site displays on mobile devices? Is your page content keyword rich? SE placement is not only dependent on a keyword list. Does your site content establish you as an expert in your field? *Optimize your site for better usability to benefit visitors AND to increase your site's organic search engine placement – a win-win for your business and your bottom line.*

BOTTOM LINE -

What differentiates you from your competition is *YOUR CUSTOMER'S EXPERIENCE OF YOUR BUSINESS*.

You have one chance to make a first impression, so revisit your website and ask yourself this question...

"What do people see when they visit my site?"

Lynne

Lynne DeLuca

MIND'S EYE
PRESENTATIONS, INC.

website design . graphic design . marketing . solutions

design@mindseyeweb.com | www.mindseyeweb.com

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