



**Your Website Coach**



## ***It's a New Year, So Spruce Up Your Site – 1/19/06***

It's a new year and you are raring to go, but is your website ready? You have probably thought of areas in your business which need revitalizing – hopefully you've not overlooked your strongest marketing tool.

Some basic rules to follow when sprucing up your website:

Say NO to –

**Grammatical errors.** This is just not acceptable. It's quite likely all of your printed material has been proofread for errors; your web presence requires the same scrutiny.

**Broken links.** Yes, this means you must go through every link in your site and make sure that link leads somewhere other than a "404 – File Not Found" error. FACT: Did you know that that "broken" or "dead" links can affect your search engine ranking? This is because the search engines that use "spiders" (a.k.a. crawlers or webbots) rely on links to navigate through your site and to get to other sites. A broken link stops their progress and that can result in the spider just leaving and not traversing the rest of your site.

**Distorted images.** A photo or graphic image that looks distorted or grainy detracts from the quality of your site. The human eye subconsciously captures so much detail that even if your site content is valuable, your visitor may be distracted or even irritated because something feels "off".

Say YES to –

**Keeping it fresh.** Keep your current information readily accessible and archive the old stuff. Like a print marketing campaign, you want your potential customer to see your new and improved stuff. If it is hidden among your "older" news, your marketing efforts may be lost.

**Being the "information depot".** Offer your visitors a nugget of information that identifies you as "the" knowledge expert and keeps them coming back for more.

Here's a search engine tip by Jill Whalen, a guest writer for *www.searchenginewatch.com*: "Write at least 200 - 250 words of visible text copy based on your chosen keywords. This is a crucial component to high rankings and a successful Web site. The search engines need to 'read' keyword rich copy on your pages so they can successfully classify your site. Use each keyword phrase *numerous times* within your copy for best results."

I must issue a caveat here. I recently read that one needs to be careful of how *numerous* is the use of your keywords. This is because too many times could be considered spamming to a search engine. There is no hard number for "too many" however you could do this: write your copy for one webpage and use your keywords as frequently as you naturally would when speaking directly with your customer.

Have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

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Written by Christine Chubenko, [christine@yourwebsitecoach.net](mailto:christine@yourwebsitecoach.net)