



Your Website Coach



Business Website Basics: Part III – 9/29/05

It appears that the questions I've covered so far have been sequential in nature; however, that is typically not my pattern. As a developer, I get asked many great questions that are all over the map. I like to choose those that appear to be of most interest to people. This month, we have a question that fits right in with what's been covered so far, as well as a question that covers a hot topic: search engines.

Daniel Joseph, *Daniel Joseph Salon in Royal Oak* asks:

Q. What information should be on a website for a business?

A. My first response is to tell your visitors what *you want* them to know about your business. Keep in mind that they are looking for the usual data like: location, phone number, hours, types of services and pricing (if possible). Next, I want to make the point that they are also looking for **why** they should be **your** client. This is your chance to shine and set yourself apart from the others. So what are some of the ways you can shine online?

Here are only a few:

- Clear Navigation – Make finding stuff on your site easy and pleasant. Don't make your visitor work for it.
- Aesthetics – A site that looks nice is more memorable than one that does not. You don't have to have Flash, sound, animation to have a nice site; what you need is something that is pleasing to the eye. Photos of you and/or your surroundings really help to warm up an otherwise cold medium.
- Pertinent Information – Let your site answer the questions your clients normally ask when they meet with you. Not only are you making it easier for your client, but when they call you *after* seeing your site, you know you're a few steps closer to doing business with them.

Lisa Babich, www.bodyworkalternatives.com asks:

Q. What does Yahoo! and Google pull from your site to rank you? Meta tags? Content?

A. The two search engines represent two different techniques in search engine methods. Google is a **deep search engine** which means it sends out little programs called spiders to gather data about sites on the web. Yahoo! is a **standard search engine** and it gets its data from you, the web owner, submitting your website information to Yahoo! Truthfully, neither search engine *relies* on metatags for rankings and **both** look at the content of your site. Inktomi is the only search engine that looks to metatags to help decide rankings *and* (oddly enough) Yahoo! now owns Inktomi, but doesn't use metatags. Even so, metatags can be useful and I would use them. I'm limited in space here, but maybe next time I can go deeper on this very important subject.

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