

The Five Most Important Things to Know Before You Purchase a Website



Rule #1: Choosing the wrong web developer isn't much better than not have a website.

Choosing the right web development company is like selecting a photographer for your wedding; anyone who takes pictures can call themselves a photographer. And snapping a photo or two of the bride as she walks down the aisle is simple... right? Wrong! Your decision as to which photographer to use must be based on a number of factors.

1. How reputable are they?
2. Have they photographed hundreds of weddings before? (Don't be the first!)
3. Do they work alone or are they part of an established company?
4. Do they outsource or do they do all of the work themselves?
5. What sort of guarantee do they provide?
6. Can they provide you with samples of their work?
7. Do you know exactly how much it will cost you before you commit?

The same is true for web development. Too many frustrated clients come to us who have tried to get a website designed with a "friend of a friend" or a "guy who works out of his house." A professional website needs to be designed by a professional.

Making a bad first impression can mean the loss of business. The most important decision that you will make will be choosing the right developer to help you.



Rule #2: An ineffective website isn't much better than not having a website.

IQnection knows that simply turning out a nice looking site isn't enough in today's marketplace. We know that most of all, clients need an effective website. We believe that an effective website will do one of two things. It will pass you warm leads or it will convert leads into sales. This means that the website must accurately reflect your business and be beneficial to your business. After all, a website is an investment and should yield a return.

The first thing that any reputable developer will ask you is, "Why do you need to have a website?" & "What do you expect to gain from your website?" If you do not

hear these questions, RUN!!! It means that you are probably buying an ineffective website.

Don't be fooled. A website is a representation of your business. It's your opportunity to reach thousands of people and tell them who you are. Don't let that message say anything but "Our Company Is the Best".



Rule #3: An out of date website isn't much better than not having a website.

When you buy a newspaper, you only want to purchase a current copy because yesterday's news doesn't do you any good now. Similarly, a website that isn't updated at least once a month will not be applicable to surfers.

We believe that there is also a new trend going on in the Search Engines. In the past 12 months, the major search engines have started keeping track of what is changing on a site. There is fresh evidence that they will decrease the ranking of sites in their listings if the sites do not change their content regularly. They know that a website that gets updated repeatedly is more interesting to people than a stale website.

This is one of the many reasons that every single site we develop comes with a tool called a **Content Management System**. It allows you to change the text and photos on your site from an easy to use web interface. Otherwise, you would have to rely on a developer for every change that you wanted to make. With C.M.S., you control your website, and your site becomes useful to your clients. As you can see, a Content Management System is a must have application.



Rule #4: Information that is hard to find on a website isn't much better than having no website.

It's just common sense. If you don't your information is not easily accessible, then it is just a click away at another site. There are so many websites vying for your potential client's eyeballs that they won't stick around your site for very long unless you put what they want right under their nose.

Too many times sites have useless (and long) flash introductions, moving menus, and moving, twirling, blinking, or fading graphics. The question that we always ask is... does this help you sell?

For example, the homepage of your site should do only 3 things.

1. Clearly convey what the site is about.
2. Identify that you have what the user is looking for.
3. Direct users to the right place within your site to find it.

We recommend that you start by determining exactly what your clients and potential clients will be looking for when they come to your site. Then, with the help of a developer, put together a site plan that puts these topics prominently on your site.



Rule #5: A website that can't be located isn't much better than not having a website.

Did you ever hear about the people who found a copy of the Declaration of Independence behind an old picture frame in their attic? They had been sitting on a goldmine for years and didn't know it. We believe that many of you have websites that could be goldmines for your business if they could only be found!

We've heard too many times that the success of a website revolves around search engines. The truth is that search engines are only part of an overall marketing strategy of every effective website. Getting traffic to your site can come in many different forms: Post Cards, Business Cards, Word of Mouth, Search Engines, Pay Per Click Advertising, Direct Mailings, and many more. Before beginning a website design process, be sure to address all forms of traffic generation.

Optimizing your site for the search engines is important. However, constantly tweaking your site to get better placement in the search engines is not a game most people have the time or energy to play. So, instead we recommend that you focus on the things that will make your site great for many years to come.

1. Focus on quality content. A website with pertinent copy that is useful to your visitors will do well in the search engines.
2. Focus on keeping your website fresh. We explained the importance of keeping your site updated earlier. When speaking with a potential developer, demand that your sites come with a Content Management System so that you can update your site easily.

There are many other things that need to be addressed in order to have your site show up in the search engines. For a much more detailed list, please schedule an appointment with one of our developers.

g.c.