

CYBERBULLETIN

The bulletin that powers up your online presence



More Than Just a Pretty Site!

Webmaster for Hire, LLC

May 1, 2006

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A Well-Designed E-Commerce Site Can Mean the Difference between Success and Failure

Whether you already have a business online or are considering creating one, there are some features that a successful e-commerce site must have.

Before you begin, discuss with your designing consultant your marketing, promotion, and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies. You need to know how people will know about your web site, as well as how, why and when they will buy specifically from you.

Then, you need to decide on keywords or keyword phrases to use in your meta tags (used by search engines) and within the text content of your web site. Once you have brainstormed, researched and concluded the answers to these questions, develop your strategies. Once you know how you will use and promote your site, you are ready to design your web site.

The first needed feature is a **carefully selected domain name**. You need a name that identifies with your web site and your business. Upon seeing the domain name, it should “say something” about your business to the viewer. It also has an enormous impact upon search engine rankings — if one of your keywords or a keyword phrase is part of the domain name, you may receive higher rankings when Internet users search on the word or phrase.

A domain name needs to be easy to remember; so, forget the names that are lengthy or hard to pronounce/spell. Along with this thought, it should be easy to type correctly and not constantly misspelled. For example, the word “accept” in a domain name will be easily misspelled as “except”. Additionally, be careful when doing a slight variation of a name because someone else has your original option. Always go to that person’s web site and see what subject matter is there. I had a friend who found out the hard way that the original domain name she wanted belonged to a porn site (she had dropped a couple letters to closely resemble the original words).

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She had to change her domain name, due to customer complaints of constantly getting the other site. Before buying a domain name, research the Internet to see what is already being used that is similar to your preferred domain name, as well as what type of web sites they are.

Next, you need a **hosting provider** that guarantees a stable and reliable server that is up and running 24/7, 365 days a year — at affordable prices. If you are not getting this from your current provider, contact Webmaster for Hire for our rates.

The third feature of a well-designed e-commerce site is its **interface and navigation**:

The design and layout should create a mood that reflects your business, such as scales of justice or a gavel are good representations for a site dealing with the law. If you are selling, for example, travel services but your site is designed around a flower theme, you are confusing your visitors and will lose them within the 60-second time frame that it takes visitors to decide whether to leave or stay. Yet, jets and cruise ships reflect the travel business.

Another important factor is how easy it is to navigate your web site — how quickly can visitors find your products/services and information. Do you have the Contact Us and “credentials” pages, such as About Us, Company History or Profile, and so on.

Included in your business site should be a **shopping cart system**, which allows your customer to actually purchase your products directly from your web site without any interface from you.

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A Well-Designed E-Commerce Site Can Mean the Difference between Success and Failure Continued

It should be easy to use without reading any instructions, reliable and always working, compatible with major payment and shipping systems, and customizable to use your own business brand on the shopping cart pages. Webmaster for Hire can advise you on the best shopping cart scripts for your individual business needs.

For some businesses, you will need an **online catalogue** that divides your products into categories with product title, price, description and image. You must be able to edit this information, as well as the position of the products in the catalogue. Additionally, you want to be able to manage the pricing of your products, allowing you to create “hot prices”, special offers, discounts, or any other pricing you wish to offer.

A plus as part of the shopping cart system and online catalogue is a statistics tracking system that gives you information about your customers, orders, and payments — with the ability for you to manage it.

Necessary for most e-commerce site owners is a **Content Management System (CMS)**. This enables you to frequently change and update the content at your web site without hiring a web designer to do it for you. Any web designer, who is truly a professional, will be willing to set up a CMS for you.

Webmaster for Hire provides all of these design services, using knowledge in design, marketing, consumer buying habits, and the psychology of Internet users. Call 561-748-7766 now to discuss any of the features discussed in this article. We are here to assist you.