Title:
8 Important Elements for Small Business Web Sites

Word Count:
510

Summary:
Advice to help small business owners check code in their web site design.

Keywords:
web site design, web site evaluation, html validation, html validator, small
business advice

Article Body:
Key visitors to your commercial pages include web robots that crawl the internet
and catalog your content. Having proper HTML source code, plus the right
combination of text and graphic presentation, is just one secret to success.
Proper code may mean higher robot ratings, and the "look" is equally important.
Once a new prospect finds your web site, you have 5 seconds to get them to stay.

As a small business web site owner, you may have asked "Why don't we get any
hits?". Did you know web pages can load and appear correct with improper or
deprecated HTML code? A browser may ignore your mistakes, and display what it
thinks you meant, and it may look great. Web robots may not be as forgiving.

Following is a list of 8 basic elements for good search engine placement that
need to be considered in your design and web site promotion. For details on code
issues from the worldwide authority, visit the World Wide Web Consortium to view
DOCTYPE and other quality standards.

1. DOCTYPE Statement
2. Page Title
3. Proper HTML Code
4. META Description
5. META Key Words
6. First Paragraph of the Home Page
7. An Extra Page of Just LINKS
8. Backlinks (Links to your pages)

These 8 key items are either missing or poorly designed in 85% of all web sites.
Some search engines may only list the other 15% in their directories. In other

words, as few as 15% of the 6 billion web pages online ever make it into some
search engines. Even worse, there are mistakes that may result in your page
being blacklisted, and the search engine web crawlers may never come back to see
if it's corrected. This could explain why you "never get any hits".

Web sites can be simple and professional without using fancy software to create
your pages. Veteran programmers hand code and many create the HTML in NotePad.
Web authors who choose to use flash, frames, or the latest software may be
losing a significant portion of new visitors (customers) because the visitor may
lack the technology or newest version of browsers. If they are turned off and
leave without giving your site a fair viewing, it could mean lost profits.

Most designers use prepackaged software to create web pages. If the software
leaves out any of the key elements, the code is hidden, and you'll never know
your site was not optimized for search engines. The designer may not know, or
care, about these items as long as the page looks attractive. Note: Search
engine algorithms vary by company, so some elements such as "an extra page of
links" may not be as important today with some search robots. Backlinks refer
to marketing your site and getting other web sites to link to yours.

Finally, business visitors want information. They do not visit your home page to
be entertained. Most have a need (problem) and want a fast answer (solution), so
designs should be created to minimize the use of music or video unless that's
your core business. Anything that distracts from a positive first impression
may violate my "5 Second Rule".