

Do You Need a New Online Presence?

In 2008, we decided to audit our own website. We quickly realized that we had come a long way in the years since our last redesign. Despite our busy schedules focusing on creating fabulous client work, we made the time to reflect on ourselves and how our brand was representing whom we are and where we are today. Turns out, the shoemakers' kids had been barefoot for a while! By April 2008, we were sporting our new online presence.

Here are a few things we used to help us determine if it was the right time for a change. (And guess what? We use the same tips to assess our customers website needs too!)

1 » JUST LIKE FASHION TRENDS, WEBSITES CAN BECOME DATED.

What people thought was cool five, even two years ago, just looks and feels old-fashioned now. Let's be honest, most people realize they need to change their hairstyle or wardrobe. (We do all the time!) But websites often go untouched for too long. Remember when Flash intros were a must have? Well, designers soon realized users didn't want the annoyance and wanted to get straight to the content. Web technology and online styles are changing at an increasingly rapid pace. You don't want to look like you can't let go of your leg warmers. So if your site is looking old and tired, it's probably time for a makeover!

2 » BE BETTER THAN YOUR COMPETITORS.

People surf the Internet more now than ever before. It's the easiest way to find information about any subject, let alone about your company. Well, your competitors know this too. It's important for your website to stand out and stay ahead; users make up their mind about a website in a few seconds. It needs to outdo your competition or you may lose valuable clients. If you check out a competitor's site, and your site seems to be at a similar level, you may think it unnecessary to redesign. But wouldn't you rather them chase after you instead of playing catch-up with them?

3 » FORGET THE PAST. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Markets change. Clients are particularly smart consumers and businesses evolve to meet new demands all the time. If your site is more than a couple of years old, the chances are it's more of a reflection of where you've been than where you are headed. Clients prefer to do business with somebody who is looking to the future rather than being stuck in the past. Websites can often trigger a realization that some planning and strategy is needed to develop new business goals. Once you get that going, you may find yourself wondering why you waited so long.



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4 » LOOKS GREAT, BUT HOW DOES IT PERFORM?

Sure, you can update your look to the latest trend, and that's an important step, but just because it looks good doesn't mean it's going to be effective. It's shocking how many websites get built without any strategy or goals in mind. You need to consider the audience you are targeting and what your site says to them directly. This applies to the overall look of the site, the content, the ease of use and the type of functionality it offers the visitor. Ultimately you want your website to inspire the user to take action—with you.

5 » HELP THE PEOPLE FIND WHAT THEY WANT.

Users want to get to where they want to go—fast. We all know the frustrating feeling of not being able to find the information we are looking for on a difficult-to-navigate site whose content is complex and confusing. If your site can be tricky to get through, it's not doing its job. Content is a huge factor here and needs to be written specifically for the Web. It needs to be short, fresh and relevant with the main messages speaking loud and clear, so your clients can't help but listen.

People have short attention spans. It's a common belief that it takes around seven 'touchpoints' before they become a client. Redesigning your website (like we did) can be a great opportunity to reconnect with previous customers, strengthen existing relationships or further develop potential partnerships.

Simply put, a website redesign can be a great marketing and PR tool for your business. And why wait any longer to evaluate if you need a change for the better?