

## **5 Tips to Update Your Website for Success**

*Special Advertorial Section- NJBIZ*

When it comes to the internet, your website is your front door, your waiting room, your store and your office. The impression you make with a clean, professional-looking and functional website will carry over through your business dealings with customers and clients. A little common sense and care can go a long way. Try to view your site from a user's perspective and don't be afraid to get feedback on improving the web experience. Here are some tips to help you spruce up your site design.

1. **MIND THE BASICS:** A visitor should be able to tell what your business does right away from your main web page. Most web surfers don't have much patience, so you have only a few seconds to make a good impression. Keep your site updated regularly with new content, products or information, and your customers will have a reason to stick around as well as come back later. Proofread your entire website to catch spelling and grammatical errors before your customers do. Make sure your contact information is easily accessible.
2. **KEEP YOUR SITE STRUCTURE WELL ORGANIZED:** Be sure your website navigation is clear, simple and consistent from page to page. Overall page sizes should be reasonably compact, and blocks of text streamlined to a manageable size. Try to place the most important information toward the top of the page so that you minimize the amount of scrolling that your customers needs to do in order to view important content or product information. In particular, watch your graphics placement and avoid horizontal scrolling; it an annoyance that does not generally sit well with surfers. A site map or search function also can be a handy tool to help visitors located the exact content they're looking for, especially large, elaborate websites.
3. **FLASHY WEBSITES WITH LOTS OF SPINNING VIDEO, ANIMATED SPLASH PAGES AND AUTOMATIC MUSIC MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR SOME BUSINESSES; BUT NOT MOST:** Elaborate web design can slow down the user experience and be a turn-off for potential customers. Keep the look of your website clean and always consider the impression you're making on a first-time visitor. Do you really want them waiting around for a page to load or frantically reaching to turn down their speakers? On a more basic level, be aware of the size of your graphics files. Keep them slimmed down so they will load fast.
4. **PAY ATTENTION TO THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT COLORS:** If you wouldn't print a business card with hot pink text on a black background, you shouldn't have a website that looks like that, either. Be sure to check that all text is easily readable and that your overall use of color is easy on the eyes. Businesses that already have a color scheme associated with their branding can carry that over to their website look for a consistent experience both online and off.
5. **GO TO A PROFESSIONAL WHEN YOU NEED TO:** Most busy entrepreneurs don't have the time or expertise to build and maintain an elaborate website. For simpler sites, web design templates like those Network Solutions offers to its customers can be a quick and pain-free way to get up and running on the web. If your needs are more complex, it may be a good time to check in with a designer who can specifically tailor a site to fir your business and budget.