Yin and Yang

of effective websites

Your website is you.

At least that's how your visitors see it. How are you going to convince them that you have the solutions they are looking for? How to engage them and make them buy what you sell?

Obviously there's no universal recipe for that. Yet the winning combination always revolves around creativity and technology, the Yin and Yang of effective websites. We have dissected them into 12 must-have ingredients, 6 creative and 6 technical. Building your website on these principles will benefit your company's online image, and ultimately increase conversions.

SET GOALS

and fine-tune them to analytic results

content

1 First impression counts

Studies show that you have about 7 seconds to capture the attention of, motivate and entice visitors to stay on your site. The most effective way to do this is by eye-catching design, benefit oriented headlines and a copy relevant to user's needs.

2 Trust

Anyone can claim to be an expert. But few sites take the effort to prove it. Use case studies and testimonials to substantiate your credibility. Let your experiences tell the story for you. Connect your site with groups and brands that your visitors trust.

3 User-centric design

Design must make the site easy to use. By reflecting content hierarchy, the design should subconsciously direct the visitor to their goal. Visitors must always have a clear picture of where they are on the site, what the current page is about and what's behind the link they are going to click.

4 Readability

Avoid long and monotone text blocks. Use sub-headings and emphasise bolded parts to split the content into digestible chunks. Make sure the copy is concise, focussed and jargon-free. Avoid too many different typefaces. Make the text big enough so that it is easy to read.

5 Relevancy

Don't talk about yourself. Focus on your visitors. Your website needs to give them exactly what they think they need. Explain what's in it for them, what the benefits of doing business with you and why you are better than the competition. In that order.

6 Call to action

It should always be obvious what action visitors need to take, at each step. Thus, content should end in a clear, visually emphasized call-to-action. The same goes for contact forms. They should be short, asking only for basic contact information.

7 Stable Standards

Using HTML5/CSS3 coding standards and cascade rules will result in a site that works well across various browser versions and devices. By allowing a website to be accessible to a broad range of devices, means that you have expanded its purpose. Test the site in multiple browsers while developing.

8 Reliability

Modern sites tend to be dynamic and engaged, which adds to their vulnerability. One way to fight this is *decoupling*, which means that a failure of a particular component won't bring down the entire system. Have your website hosted by a reliable web-hosting service, ensuring that your website stays live for the maximum amount of time.

9 Optimization

Your page coding determines how search engines spider, index, and rank web pages. Code that doesn't separate style from content or is packed with obtrusive JavaScript and dead links will result in a poor ranking, making the site impossible to find.

10 Modular architecture

Modularizing your front-end code is a great way to make the maintaining of a complex site a lot more manageable and cost-effective. Your developers should be able to know exactly what effect changing one line of code should have on the rest of the site. Use the principles of *graceful degradation* to make your site accessible, even with older browser versions.

11 Speed

Users expect your page to load instantly, so keep page load times down to a minimum. Fast pages lead to higher visitor engagement, retention and conversions. So make sure your code, images, URLs and links are optimized. Speed is becoming an increasingly important factor for search engine rankings.

12 Flexibility

The web is changing rapidly. The only way to handle changes is through open and flexible architecture. By leveraging the above-mentioned principles, your web developers will be able to integrate new features and services, while maintaining the full control of site consistency and stability.

technology

MEASURE

and re-define your strategy, according to results.

BUILD YOUR AUDIENCE

and generate leads. But that's another story.

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Do you need help in building your website? Visit www.creatim.com.