Do's and Don'ts for an effective website

Web sites. You have them in all shapes and sizes. One even more beautiful than the other. One more effective than the other. Finding that balance between a beautiful design and an effective design is the art. How tempting is it to put beautiful before effective? In any case, it's not a good idea. At least if you want the goal of your website to be achieved.

Websites can have all kinds of purposes; provide information, sell products, acquire customers, etc. They also have a common goal, namely that the visitor must be served according to his wishes. Visitors want to quickly find the information they are looking for, preferably without too much effort.

So what should you pay attention to? And what better to leave behind?
Whether you are creating a new website or optimizing your current website. With the do's and don'ts below you are well on your way to an effective website.

Don'ts

#1 Filling your pages with chunks of text
Do you have a lot of content on a page? Break the content into bite-sized chunks. You can do this by using bullet points and subheadings, adding white space and alternating your content with images.

#2 Too many different and/or hard to read fonts
The visitor should not have to make any effort to read your text. The ideal font size for websites is from 16px. For some fonts, 17 or even 18px is better.

Different fonts on your website can be nice. but stick to 2 (maximum 3). Otherwise it will become unclear. In addition, many different fonts make your website slower.

#3 Show many pop-ups at once
Sometimes I come to websites where the pop-ups immediately fly around your ears. A chatbot, a free giveaway, a cookie banner and sometimes all at once. I haven't seen anything from the website itself yet. I often click them all away, usually without even reading them. Pop-ups can certainly be valuable, but get the timing right. You will find out by experimenting what works best for your website.

#4 Let your visitors get lost
Basically people don't like change. Recognition leads to trust. So do not deviate too much from the standard so that your visitor does not have to think. Think about:

· logo top left
· use your logo as a button to your homepage
· navigation menu right
· make your content findable with a search function
· place the link to your contact details in your menu as well as in the footer
· option to log in at the top right

Questions visitors have when they come to your website.

#5 Asking for unnecessary information in contact forms
Ask yourself if you really need all the information you're asking for. Even though not all fields are required; the fewer entry fields, the higher the conversion.

#6 Making your visitors wait too long
This relates to the loading time of your website. The following factors affect the loading time of your website:

- good, fast and stable hosting
- too heavy images
- too many and/or too heavy plugins
- scripts not loading properly
- caching

#7 Thinking your website is ready

Your website is never finished! There is always something to optimize. Just like your company, your website is constantly evolving. It is important to become and remain relevant and findable. You do this by regularly updating your content. Let your website grow with your business.

Do's

#1 Putting together a clear menu structure

Based on the menu items in your main menu, a visitor should already be able to see what you have to offer. General terms such as services, offer, products are too vague. Be specific. Make your most important products/ services immediately visible in your main menu. Besides being useful for your visitor, this is also good for the search engines.

#2 Less is more

A popular trend to keep your website organized is 'minimalism'. In other words, as few bells and whistles as possible makes a website more effective and less stressful for the visitor. It helps the visitor to find his way on your website more easily, so that they stay on your website longer. With every functionality, visual animation and content you want to add to your website, consider whether it contributes to the visitor's goal.

#3 Make clickable elements stand out

Clickable elements can consist of CTAs (call to action buttons) or links in the text. Include in your design that these also look like this.

Tips for a good CTA button:

- choose a color that contrasts with the background
- make sure there is enough white space around the button
- make the button look clearly clickable with a border, shadow or hover effect*
- choose a logical position for the CTA button where your visitor can expect it
- Show in the text what action is being taken, such as "Download Free eBook", "Contact Us", "Order Now".

*A hover effect means that when you hover the mouse over it, for example, the button moves or changes color.

Tips for clear links in the text:

Make links stand out by coloring and/or underlining them
Do not use "Click here", "Read more", etc. It is better to use a relevant name or keyword. The visitor sees where the link leads. And you give Google information about the page being referred to.

#4 Don't forget to optimize for mobile

Did you know that more than half of searches are done via mobile? Yet this is often forgotten. A responsive design, where the design of your website adapts to the dimensions of the screen, is a must. The correct font size is also something to keep in mind. And make sure the clickable links and buttons are not too close to each other. You can click much more precisely with a mouse than with (fat) fingers.

#5 Update your most important content regularly

There's nothing more annoying when you google and you come to a page that clearly contains outdated information. I don't even look any further and leave the website. That is of course a sin. It is good to regularly walk through your relevant pages and update them.

For example, also check in Google Analytics which pages and posts score well. Check whether the content of these pages is still up to date and adjust it if necessary. Who knows, you might even score a few spots higher in Google.

#6 Check your website for errors

A common error is the "404 error / Page not found". This error is caused by links that point to a web page that no longer exists. Not nice for visitors and also a reason why they leave your website early. You can check your website for dead links at https://www.deadlinkchecker.com/. You can solve it by setting up a 301 redirect and pointing the relevant link to an existing page.

Other things to check:

· Are your images/videos loading properly
· is your SSL certificate installed correctly

#7 Post reviews on your website

Reviews are a valuable addition to your content. With this you provide extra information about you and your company written by someone who has experience with your company. This way you inspire the trust of the visitor and you give them more information about your working method.

Place your reviews in a strategic place on your website. The homepage is a suitable place for this, but it is also good to place reviews on your sales page.

Conclusion

In my view, an effective website is a website where every decision about design and content is made with the visitor in mind. What is best for your visitor?

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