



WEBSITE DESIGN AND HOSTING  
SOFTWARE AND DATABASE DESIGN  
GRAPHIC AND MULTI-MEDIA DESIGN  
WWW.STONESOFTWAREWORKS.COM

---

## Web Design Checklist

---

### Questions To Ask Yourself

Every decision you make about your web site should be focused on what you want to achieve by having a web site. To avoid spinning your wheels or spending money on services you don't need, list the capabilities you want your the site to have and consider the cost factors associated with those capabilities. Among the points to consider are:

- What do you expect to accomplish with your web site
- Who do you expect to use it?
  - Customers?
  - Vendors?
  - Employees?
- How many visitors per day, week, and month do you expect?
- How will you advertise and promote the site to get people to use it?
- Who will do the marketing?
- What capabilities (online ordering, live chat, message boards, databases, audio, video, etc.) will you need?
- Will you have an online catalog?
  - How many items will you include?
  - How many sizes and colors or other variations will be involved?
- Where will the photography and copy come from?
- How often will you have to update the web site?
- Who will do the updates?
- Who will design the web site?
- What will it cost to design the web site?
- What will it cost to host the site (store the files and make them available on the Internet)?
- Will your current merchant account allow you to sell on the Internet?
- Will it allow you to automate transaction entry so that you do not have to retype all the data your customer enters online?
- What will it cost to advertise and promote the web site?
- What will it cost to make changes on your web site?
- Will you have to hire employees to manage your web site?
- How many sales or leads will you need to break even on costs?
- What sale volume do you expect to achieve on the web?
- How much income, if any, do you expect to make from the sale of advertising on your site?
- Who will sell the advertising space for you?
- How soon do you need to reach your goals?

Use the answers to these questions to determine what it will cost to build the site and maintain it. Then compare your costs to the results you hope to achieve and determine if the cost will justify the results.

## Design Do's And Dont's

- Unless you have a compelling reason, when designing business sites- use a white or subtle bordered background - It looks more professional.
- Do keep a theme throughout the site - a logo and navigation on each page - This way the visitor knows he is still at the same site.
- Do use the same font throughout the site - don't use Verdana on one page and Arial on another.
- Keep animation to a minimum - Use it to draw attention to special offers or information.
- Do use browser safe colors whenever possible.
- Do make your site browser compatible - do not use scripts, applets, DHTML, etc. that are only compatible with one browser.
- If you use cutting edge technology, design a second site for those visitors who still have a an older browser.
- Do keep your visitors in mind - Design the site for the people who are going to visit, not for yourself. You might like bold, bright colors, but a funeral directors site should use subtle colors and hues.
- Do add proper navigation on each page - At the very least you should have a home button on each page.
- Do design for the "three click" theory - this means that any section of your site should be no more than 3 clicks away.
- Do use a site map for complex sites - this way if your visitor gets lost, they can always go back home or to the site map.
  
- Do not use multi-colored backgrounds with text that clashes with it- If you are using a dark colored background, use light colored text and visa versa.
- Do not use dark backgrounds and light text if you have a lot of information to convey - Reading light text on a black background strains the eye.
- Do not use "rainbow text" (this would be having each letter a different color) - Another tough thing to read.
- Do not use allot of animation - Not only does this create a slower loading site, but if the visitor is going to be staying awhile, it gets annoying.
- Do not add several pop up ads for each page. They are irritating and will most likely drive the visitor away from your site.
- Do not put music on your site unless the visitor can turn it off.
- Do not put huge photos on your page - create thumbnails for those who would like to view a larger version
- Do not use obscure fonts - unless the visitor has the bubblegum font installed on his/her computer/ they will only see their default font.
- If you need to use a unique font, create is as a graphic.
- Do not center align EVERYTHING on the site.

## Tips For Writing Web Content

Keep in mind that most people scan text, they're impatient, and they're skeptical if they haven't done business with you before. These are the reasons that ultimately lead to less sales and income for most online businesses. Keep the following in mind when writing your website content.

- Write headlines that are directly meaningful to what you're selling.
- Order your content starting with your most important selling point and work your way down the list. Make sure your most important selling point is right at the beginning of your content.
- Keep your paragraphs short and focused on one idea per paragraph.
- Use bulleted lists and bold text where appropriate to highlight your key selling features and benefits.
- Use simple language that anyone can understand. Keep industry specific terms to a minimum. Potential customers **MUST** understand what you're offering!
- Keep your choice of words objective. Avoid exaggerated claims or heavily promotional language. The more factual your content is written, the more people believe it.

Remember; be direct, be clear, and be easily understandable. The easier you make it for your potential customers to understand what you're offering and what's in it for them, the more likely they will convert into paying customers.