

# Tips & Tricks



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About : Based in Sydney, Australia, Brenden began his career in embroidery in 1996 as a digitizer using Wilcom ES 4.5. A love for embroidery design and a keen interest in Information Technology has led to Brenden's occupying the role of Wilcom Product Strategist and Evangelist, playing an intimate role in the future development strategy of Wilcom products.

## Reasons why Websites fail

For : DecoNetwork.com

Websites are a vital part of a business in today's technology-driven world. Without a website, you are unknown to the millions of people who look for information online.

Simply having a website is not enough. A poorly designed website will lose you customers. Not having a website at all will make your competitors happy. So there is a balance between a website presence and proper website presence that can mean the difference between failure and success.

First let's address some of the reasons websites fail:

### 1. Lack of content

People browse websites for a reason. They are after something, either entertainment or information. People are not interested in seeing the pretty logo you spent hours designing. They want content!

### 2. Poor design

Ugly is ugly, be it a brochure, business card, or website. Having an ugly website designed by your 12 year old cousin, Johnny, (no offence to the 12 year olds of the world) is as bad as drawing your product offering on a café serviette and passing it to your client after a wonderful coffee meeting. You simply wouldn't do it if you want their business. You would have a properly prepared brochure or product proposal on a professionally printed letterhead. A website is the same. Don't make a serviette website. Make a serving website that looks good, is easy to use, and again has content!

### 3. Lack of updates

Content is good but old content is bad. It makes you look old, stale and outdated. Haven't you chuckled to yourself when you read those café signs 'Runner up Café of the Year 1995'. Firstly,

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they weren't the best and secondly ... they haven't improved since 1995? Starbucks here I come! Update your site regularly and ensure your content is fresh and in-tune with your company's direction. Treat your website like a flesh-and-blood sales rep. When you have a new product or product change, tell your site! When you have a special or promotion, tell your site! Chances are your site speaks with more customers every day than your flesh-and-blood sales rep. Look for a website solution that empowers you or a member of your team to make easy changes. Don't fall into the trap of spending thousands on 'website maintenance'. DIY!

#### **4. Keywords are key**

Have you heard of Google? Yahoo!? These are household names because we all use them. For that reason they are one of the most important identities on the web. Well, just as Google and Yahoo! are important for us to find things, keywords and descriptions are as important for Google and Yahoo! to find your site. They rely on these to list your site appropriately. Not having proper keywords and descriptions on your website would be like going without Google for a week. I personally couldn't imagine it!

Beyond Keyword and Description Meta tags, use these same words and sentences as text on your site. Google will also look at the text on your site but it won't look at the images, so be careful of fancy graphical headings, because Google will simply skip over them.

#### **5. Think local**

One of the mistakes people make with a website is that they think 'World Wide Web – Global domination here I come!' Just because a person in Morocco can see your site, doesn't mean they will buy from it. Therefore, ensure you register your site with local directories and search engines. Directory services such as Yahoo allow you to register your site to your local country, state and town, providing accurate and local search results for their users.

#### **6. Too much advertising – not enough substance**

Who are you trying to promote? Your business or some random business that appears in a Google AdWords on your site? Chances are the Google AdWords relate to your industry so chances are it's your competitor. Congratulations! You just lost another customer! Avoid plastering your website with advertisements particularly from external ad placement sources. I know that 20c per click will help you bottom line! But seriously, stay focused on your products and services and present them in a clear and professional manner. Fancy and flashing banners are a distraction, and popups are the new evil of the modern world. Ads can make a site look messy and unprofessional.

#### **7. Money, money, money**

Many companies fall into the trap of employing the best web developers in town, spending tens of thousands of dollars on a custom-built site. In most cases it is through lack of understanding of how the web works or what options are available. But the cost of building a website no longer

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has to be the second largest investment you've ever made. It can be simple. It can be fast. And it can work. And it doesn't have to cost you a fortune. Spend wisely.

### **8. Make money**

Many people see a website as a cost. A website is a sales representation and like all sales representatives it should make you money! Give the sales representative who speaks to the most customers the best opportunity to take your customers' money. Give your customers the opportunity to buy while their interest is at its peak. And consider ways of including value-adds so your customers buy even more.

#### **The traditional route to online presence**

Now that we have addressed some of the reasons websites fail, let's look at some of the costs associated with setting up and maintaining a traditional website. For most small businesses, this usually results in one of the following:

1. The company forks out exorbitant costs to develop the site.
2. The company decides it's too much and forgets the idea entirely.
3. The company opts for a 'cheaper route' and Cousin Johnny gets some more after school work.

Whichever way you look at it, a huge opportunity has been missed. The company owner is either left feeling ripped off but 'what else can I do? I need a site!', doesn't have a website at all (suicide in the modern business world), or has a website that poorly represents their company, products and services. These are common problems faced by every web-aspiring business. Add to this the complexity of the decorative goods industry, and the nightmare explodes!

Wilcom has been researching this topic, as we believe it is a crucial part to our customer's success. For this reason we have created Wilcom DecoNetwork.com which is designed to address these problems and more. For more information, visit <http://wilcom.deconetwork.com>

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