

## *Great websites:*

Websites are a critical part of any company's marketing campaign. There are many goals for a website. It could be general business information – like a modern version of the yellow pages\*. Your website's goal could be to highlight a specific product or service or issue. It might even be a mechanism for e-commerce. The point is there is a myriad of reasons for why websites are created. But there are a few commonalities among them all. If you are seeking help in building a website, then ensure your vendor understands these features.

- Is your website discoverable?
- Is your website readable?
- Is your website valuable?

## *...are discoverable*

Outside of you telling folks the name of your website, no one will know you built this wonderful website. Search Engines are the key to making a website discoverable. These engines autonomously discover and read websites. The information is then summarized and presented for future search engine users who query a related subject – and hopefully got to your site! Search Engine Optimization is both an art and a science. You need a vendor who understands how to make your site not only discoverable, but is able to achieve a top ranking within the query's result set.

## *...are readable*

Is your website engaging? Or does it look like last year's newspaper? Are people drawn by the colors, the design, the graphics. While your content is very interesting - if your design does not engage the reader both visually and emotionally, chances are they will leave very quickly. In our "instant age" readers have to be captured by good design and good experiences. You need a vendor who understand how users interact and engage with websites. You need a vendor who can create compelling, visually stimulating websites that convey your message.

Is your website readable by phones? tablets? desktops? If you are not targeting mobile users and desktop users, you could be leaving 50% of the readership behind. Research shows that mobile is here – it is now. You need a vendor who understands how your content can fit on all devices – from a 24 inch desktop monitor, to a landscape-mode iPad, to an iPhone 5. Your content needs to be visible and magical for everyone.

Is your website accessible to the 250+ million users who have some kind disability? Accessibility is not only the right thing to do, in many cases, it's the law. You need a vendor who understands how to make a website accessible to all; even those who use specialized software to read the web.

If your website isn't engaging, adaptable to all devices, and accessible to all people, then your readership will be limited.

## *...are valuable*

With 1.7 billion websites, readers have a lot of choices. Now that your site has been discovered and folks are reading your content, are they finding value? If your message isn't compelling and informative, people will leave! You need a vendor who understand the science of how people read websites. If readers can't find your valuable information or its just not there, your message and your brand suffers. Ensure your content is valuable and worthy of the reader's time.

\*if you don't know what the yellow pages are, then ask your parents....or your grandparents!