



Expert HR insights that empower your workforce



MOST POPULAR STORIES

- Chip maker SkyWater cancels plans for Indiana plant—at least for now
- Four Winds Field set to get new look by opening day 2025

PERSPECTIVES



Is your website creating the right impression?

You’ve probably heard that you get just one chance to make a first impression so many times that it’s become trite. But when it comes to your company’s website, what may seem trite is absolutely true....



# Is your website creating the right impression?

Friday, April 5, 2024 06:00 AM EDT  
By Deborah Daily, Co-founder & President, Buckaroo Marketing | New Media



You’ve probably heard that you get just one chance to make a first impression so many times that it’s become trite. But when it comes to your company’s website, what may seem trite is absolutely true.

Not that long ago, a company’s first impression may have been the exterior of its building, an ad in a prominent magazine, or the smile and firm handshake delivered by one of its sales reps. Today, that first impression nearly always happens on a screen, the first time you visit the company’s website.

That’s where most of us begin the process of trying to understand a company we may choose to do business with. Whether we’re thinking about buying a product or service, are looking for a new place to work, or simply curious about a brand name we saw today, the first step in our journey to knowledge is nearly always a visit to the company’s website.

It wouldn’t pose a problem, except for one thing: an amazingly large percentage of websites haven’t been updated in a significant amount of time. It’s like that page where you put the Flash animation you loved to show off ... 15 years ago. (It doesn’t work anymore.) Your pricing page thinks this is 2015 and that great New Customer Discount expired at the end of the same year. Judy’s funeral was such a sad day, but according to your website, she’s still on your admin team.

When was the last time your team took a fresh look at your online image? I’m not asking whether your website is pleasing to the eye (although that is important). No, I want to know three things about your site: does it accurately reflect the company you are right now, is it creating any technical issues because of outdated code, and does it speak directly to your most important audience’s needs?

First, is the site an accurate depiction of your people, products, and purpose? Put another way, what impressions of your company does it create? Does it capture your team’s energy and focus on quality? What about the things you do to make sure you’re the best choice? Is it written to talk about you ... or to what the viewer is after?

Just as important, when companies fail to keep their websites updated, they miss out on opportunities to share good news and draw more viewers. Has your company grown and changed at all since you created that website? Is that growth and change addressed on the site? If not, people who look at it may see you as a smaller, less-capable operation than you really are.

Making sure the site is compatible with all types of devices is a given, but portions of many older sites might be invisible on a smartphone. That brings us to the third question: is your site about what you want to say or about what audiences want to hear? There’s often a disconnect between the two. Companies emphasize features or issues that aren’t all that important, and neglect those cared about most by their target audiences.

If you feel like I’m picking on you, trust me, you’re not alone. Before our team begins the process of creating a new website, we need honest feedback from audiences. They might be hesitant to say things to you, but they’ll speak freely to a third party. You can discover all sorts of interesting and useful information — for example, maybe price is less of an issue than you assume. We also like to interview employees. It’s not unusual for their view of the company to differ from that of the management suite.

Sure, this approach takes some time, but what it really requires from leadership is courage. Are you really ready to hear the truth? More important, are you really ready to act upon what you hear?

It’s also useful to develop the familiar SWOT analysis to better understand potential adjustments to your focus. Carefully reviewing the competition’s sites is also wise. You may even identify and pursue a market niche they’ve been neglecting.

Creating your next website can seem like an overwhelming challenge, but it’s actually a tremendous opportunity to stop and take stock of where your company stands today and what you need to thrive. It’s a great excuse for taking a pause and looking more closely at where you are today and where you want to be in five years.

The new website you create will indeed be the first impression your most important audiences get of your company. If you make the site about that audience, it will also be the source of second, third, and the thousands of other impressions that will inevitably follow.

Deborah Daily is the co-founder and president of Buckaroo Marketing | New Media, a Fishers-based strategic multi-media, marketing, communications and advertising agency established in 1999. She can be reached at [DLDaily@gobuckaroo.com](mailto:DLDaily@gobuckaroo.com).



Inside Indiana Business  
A division of IBJ Media  
  
1 Monument Circle, Suite 300  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
  
PHONE: (317) 634-6200  
FAX: (317) 263-5060  
NEWSLETTER@IIBNEWS.COM