

SAMPLE EVALUATION SUMMARY

To: _____

URL: _____

Thank you for requesting an estimate from WhooshWeb for the redesign of your website. Following is a free evaluation of your website as a whole, with prioritized suggestions for helping it work harder for your company.

Your website has several things going for it right away.

- A lot of good information is already there. Redesign of the site with current information will immediately improve your web presence, and additions/edits can be made as time avails.
- Your staff already has a working knowledge of a web editing software so once the cosmetic and navigational challenges are met, you'll be in very good shape for maintaining the site.
- With little or no assistance from meta tags, the search engines find you by your business name very well.

The following evaluation outlines key elements in a successful website, and offers possible solutions. The attached estimate gives a line item cost for each suggestion, so that you can choose those areas that are of most concern to you, and also plan for work that you may want to incorporate at a later time.

EVALUATION

1. **FONTS:** Font use is not consistent, some pages have serif fonts and some san serif (and some use both), without clear purpose for the change.

Solution: For maximum readability on the screen, use a standard san serif font such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, or Trebuchet. These have Mac equivalents that will not significantly alter the look of the font. Define link styles in the body tag and in a stylesheet so that they will be consistent across all pages and all viewer browsers.

2. **HEADINGS:** Boldness and size of featured words and headings are not consistent between pages. Consistency is important in building an atmosphere of order on the site, all headings should have a consistent look and placement.

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Solution: Use a stylesheet to set fonts for text and headings so that you can set character height in pixels rather than in points. Then no matter what resolution the viewer is using, the font will be the appropriate size.

3. **STRUCTURE:** Global (site wide) and local (section specific) navigation structures are erratic and difficult to understand. An easily navigated website will guide the reader easily to the main pages of each section of the website. Each section should include a local navigation system to help the reader easily get to the pages within that section and any subsections.

SOLUTIONS: The 53 sub-pages should be consolidated. Fewer, more targeted pages will assist not only your readers and the staff maintaining the site, but also helps the search engines do an effective job of indexing your site so more people can find it.

Use two simple Access databases to drive searchable, sortable tables for educational course information, and for product / rep / vendor information.

Develop logical, targeted global and local navigation trees. Use informative words for links - help your viewer know what information resides on that page.

Substitute HTML text for links, to help search engines.

Use hyperlinked bullet lists at the top of lengthy pages to help readers scan and jump to the information they came looking for.

Add site map and site search function will help navigation further.

3. **HTML:** The code of your pages is confusing. This in large part is attributable to Front Page 5.0, and the use of Front Page special effects, most notably image swapping.

There is no character encoding detected, so I was unable to run a validation check on the HTML! To assure correct HTML validation, processing, and display, it is important that the character encoding is properly labeled.

Solution: An upgrade to Front Page 2002 would be a cost effective way to keep your code clean, and retain the ease of maintenance. Use of Front Page extensions and dynamic coding (for instance, image swaps) is not recommended. Front Page is an excellent drag / drop / FTP software, and v2002 keeps the code neat and tidy, but it still does not produce browser friendly effects.

You should make the first line of your HTML document a DOCTYPE declaration.

4. **ACCESSIBILITY:** Your site does not meet the minimum standards of the W3C or the Americans with Disabilities act. While these standards are not (yet) laws, they soon will be.

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Many graphic headings do not include alternative text. People with disabilities will not be able to “see” or “hear” them. Using the HTML for your headings can increase your accessibility to search engines as well.

Solution: Replace most graphical headings with HTML headings. Placing alternative text for graphics and incorporate keywords into both alternative text and HTML headings to make them friendlier for search engines.

Use Checklist 1 of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) as a guideline for coding choices. More information on the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) and a prioritized checklist can be found for free at: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html>

5. **SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION:** Your source code currently reveals little or no use of the TITLE, KEYWORD, and DESCRIPTION meta tags that help your website get listed well on the major search engines. Nonetheless, your site does remarkably well when searching by your business name. However, when searching by products or course offerings (for instance, “MSCE Olympia”) your site has no presence at all.

Titles serve many important functions, from search engines to viewer marketing. While you do have titles on most every page of your site - which is great – some titles are just the page file name, or something generic.

SOLUTION: To improve search engine optimization (SEO), it would be a good idea at some point to add targeted keywords into your titles, and to extend (acronymn) to say the full company name, as your name incorporate your two primary search keywords.

A small amount of work targeting high revenue areas and special offerings could significantly improve your traffic generated by major search engines.

6. **AUDIENCE** From the information on your site, you seem to have two distinct audiences – Education and Sales. It would improve the ease of use of your site to make the distinction in a visually creative way on the home page, thereby directing your viewers to the area they came to research. Some information, like Contact and Corporate, will be of interest to both groups. Other pages will be exclusively useful to one of the other.

SOLUTION: Identify your highest revenue sources and really target those income producers in the way that the site navigates. You don’t have to lose any of the current information; websites are great places to market to specific audiences while still providing information to a broad group of potential customers. But think about streamlining the copy for the reader.

Add bullet points at the top of lengthy pages will allow that impatient reader to easily scan, rather than asking them to read through so much text. Highlight critical ideas.

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7. **PERSONALITY:** This site needs photos of humans using the machines and taking classes. The average internet reader wants to feel like they are in a real store, and one accomplishes that by using people's smiling faces.

SOLUTION: Add photos of your store and staff, maybe even an online tour of your classrooms (class in progress, of course.)

8. **MARKETING:** People on the web today are impatient, and usually searching for something very specific. To enhance your search engine attractiveness, and to create an environment that attracts viewers.

SOLUTION: Create value by giving something away for free – helpful tips for example. “Tips for Keeping Your Copier Glass Clean”. Anything that your service reps are tired of explaining to every single customer. Every business has info they give away for free, and your website should also. Offer a free key chain to anyone who prints the offer off the web and brings it in to see one of your machines. Whatever. It gives people a reason to recommend your site to others, promoting you and setting you up with new potential customers.

Not everyone will have the time to read the tips on your site, but they might be read it in their inbox. Set up a “Sign up for Free Tips” box where they give you their name and email, a document is automatically emailed to them without any staff time requirements on your part. You get email addresses from prospective customers and follow up with a promotional email. As part of your sales strategy, consider including a customer testimonials page.

Summary of Tips to Improve Your Website

By implementing some of the following changes, you will be able to bring your website up to date, create a friendlier environment that is easier to scan for information, and provide an immediate value to both your current and potential clients.

1. Develop a consistent design and layout for pages that communicates your company style
2. Use stylesheets for formatting consistency throughout the site
3. Integrate simple databases to provide searchable, sortable information tables
4. Create a consistent Global menu, and consistent local menus
5. Give links informative names
6. Add alternative text to graphics
7. Regularly optimize pages
8. Find ways to target and guide readers toward high income producers
9. Add personality with photos of your store and staff
10. Create value by providing helpful tips to your new and returning readers