

# The Internet Marketing Chronicles

Powered By: [Internet Marketing Challenge](#) - November 2nd, 2001

## Special Edition - *"Practically Appealing Web Design"*

To all those who received an invalid link to the **Wordnet University Special Offer** in last week's chronicles, please accept my apologies. It appears that due to an error in our mailing system, most outlook users were unable to access Wordnet University's info site and register for the discounted enrollment price.

Fortunately, Wordnet University was kind enough to extend the special for those who were unable to enroll. Here is the correct link:

<http://www.wordnetuniversity.com/imc/>

For those of you who may have missed last week's chronicles altogether, I've included a copy below for your convenience.

Once again, I'm very sorry about the error and I sincerely hope that it did not cause too much inconvenience.

Finest Regards,

Boris Chow  
Internet Marketing Challenge

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First off, I would like to apologize for the omission of last week's Marketing Chronicles. We've been extremely busy over the past few weeks working on the new design for our website and have been deluged by questions regarding the new look.

Updating the design of our site is just a small indication of the **exciting changes that are currently taking place here at Internet Marketing Challenge** as we continue to develop new tools, techniques, and information to help you start and grow your Internet business.

In fact, I think you'll be pleased to hear that we've also been hard at work implementing many of the suggestions we've received from you over the past six months. So if you have not had a chance to check out the brand new look of our rapidly growing community of ebusiness professionals, please take a moment and go to <http://www.marketingchallenge.com>.

In the meantime, reading through the feedback we've been getting about our new site design over the last few weeks made me reflect on what I have learned over the past few years. Those thoughts inspired me to write this week's special edition of the Marketing Chronicles...

## 1. EDITORIAL: "Practically Appealing Web Design"

After seeing many of the questions and comments our customers and subscribers have about our new site design, I came to an important realization: Doing website development day in and day out for the past 7+ years has afforded me the luxury of taking for granted my knowledge of many key design elements.

So while I know that many of you already have a good sense of what constitutes effective web design, I'd like to take some time now to do a quick review of the key focus areas. This will give those of you who are new to web design the insight you need to **clearly direct the purpose and function of your site**, and for the rest of you "experts," it will be an important refresher!

### Getting Started...

It seems these days that almost anyone can build a website for relatively little cost. And why not? Building a simple website doesn't take much time, and more importantly, it's not that hard. With some of the software available today, **you don't even need to know Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)** to create stunning, interactive web pages.

Of course, with this increased ease comes a false pretense that successful, traffic-generating, audience-considerate websites come straight out of a box. This, as you all know, is simply not the case. Unfortunately, it's this underlying misconception that has cluttered the Internet with useless "junk sites" and moderately satisfying "destination sites."

I'm sure you'll agree that *there's much more to building a successful sales website than knowing how to use software to add a handful of pretty buttons to your page*. Compelling sites are those with a specific, well-defined purpose -- sites that communicate this purpose with every aspect of their content and design.

That's why, in my opinion, before you even reach for your mouse, you should spend considerable time planning!

For example, the first, most critically important aspect to be considered is your site's purpose - **who is your audience and what message do you want to communicate?**

Only after a resolution to this question has been found can your website's deliberate

personality be appropriately determined. And only after your site's personality has been established can you successfully deliver its intent to your audience.

So now that I've thrown a big messy ball of ideas your way, let me organize those thoughts into a few key considerations that should go into the design of your next great website. Like I mentioned earlier, the points that I'm about to cover come from 7+ years of experience -- with both fabulous web design successes and dismal rejections.

### **Website Appeal:**

Spend some time brainstorming. Jot down a list of keywords or key phrases that describe the primary purpose or message of your website. This will, in turn, help you to pinpoint the audience your product will appeal to. If you already have a specific target audience in mind, still write down the primary purpose or message that you would like your site to convey. This will help to ensure that you **actively direct the design of your site to consciously shape its overall personality.**

*"Every website has its own personality, whether intended by the designer or not. However, very few website owners put any intentional thought into what that personality will be,"* explains Ralph Hilliard, a professional web designer, and web design instructor at WordNet University.

"The website personality, by default, then becomes a reflection of the owner or designer themselves rather than a purposeful company image aimed at your primary audience, the rightful rulers of your web space."

Ralph also points out that, *"Your website personality should be a deliberate, well thought out image. This image should include the primary messages and the graphical tone that best caters to your primary audience."*

### **Branding With a Company Logo:**

Once you've determined your website's main purpose, and the audience it will attract, think about a logo that will **express the company message accurately and clearly.**

Plan for the placement of your logo in a prominent area that is easily recognized by your audience. One of the most obvious places for a logo is at the top of a page. This is where visiting eyes will look first -- so make sure that your logo falls within the first fold of every page on your site. To be safe, the first fold of a webpage should encompass anything within the first 400 pixels of a browser.

### **Color Coordinating:**

Again, you'll want to choose your website's color scheme according to the audience

you want to attract. One thing that aided me when I was new to color was the constant review of other professional websites (preferably larger sites with heavy traffic).

I made notes of different site colors on a constant basis, describing the color scheme (Classic, Contemporary, Corporate, Funky etc.). After a while, I started to discover a specific mood each different color represented. This eventually helped me to compile different color schemes based on my intended audience.

### **Links and Navigation:**

More and more websites these days offer unique and robust navigation schemes that, when approached correctly, really increase the functionality of the site. However, let's face it -- sometimes navigation becomes more appealing to the eye than useful for website exploration.

To create easy-to-use, functional navigation, it's best to **keep things simple**. Instead of creating a graphically intense menu bar, just create a simple menu that utilizes plain text links. And try to **keep the links in their default color - blue**. This way, everyone that visits your site can easily identify the main navigation point.

The audience should be able to take one look at your webpage and immediately distinguish a link from non-interactive elements like regular text and images.

Essentially what you want to achieve in navigation is familiarity. Almost everyone knows what to do when they see a line of text that is highlighted blue and underlined.

### **Consistency:**

For any successful website, *consistency is key*. How many times have you been on a site where the navigation bar changes or moves to another position from one page to another? Or worse, how many times have you caught yourself wondering, "*Am I still on the same site?*"

Consistency throughout a website is **crucial for both branding purposes and visitor retention**. Your audience should never wonder whether or not they're still on the same site, and they should never struggle to navigate from one page to the next. If you give them any sort of grief with your layout, you give them a reason to move on.

My design teacher once told me to take a few magazines I've never read, rip out all of the pages from each, and scramble them in a pile. He told me that without being familiar with the magazines, I should still be able to figure out which pages belonged to which magazine by design and layout alone. A website is no different.

No matter what page of your website your audience is at, it should always be clear to them which site they are on and how the navigation works. The style of navigation

should never change unless there is a specific reason for this -- **a reason that is clear and obvious to your visitors.**

### **Clarity:**

When a visitor comes to your site, they need to be able to establish who you are and how to find what they are looking for in the *least amount of time possible*.

Not only should the point of navigation be immediately apparent, without fail your link descriptions must clearly communicate where the visitor will go when they click on them. And of course, **do not to overwhelm your visitors** with too many navigation choices - too many will intimidate them and drive them away.

### **Loading Time:**

I'm sure you already understand the importance of designing a fast-loading website. Although many people are using faster Internet connections like DSL and cable, considerations must still be made for users that have slower connections. As well, people who travel for business frequently don't have the luxury of high-speed Internet access on the road.

So please, be considerate and keep your graphics simple and fast-loading for the sake of anyone who might be high-speed impaired!

### **Training Resources:**

Now obviously we've only just begun to scratch the surface of building a website that is not only going to look cool but also, most importantly, **sell your product!**

As you start to build your site (or readjust and tweak your existing site), you will discover that each of the key focus areas we've discussed here require a "deeper" understanding for you to be able to effectively apply them to really increase your sales.

When I started my web design education, I had no choice but to acquire this "deeper" understanding through a painful and expensive process of trial and error. I spent literally thousands of dollars on courses in design, and thousands more on hardcopy design books that cost anywhere from \$40 to \$500+ dollars each, to pick up small tidbits of information here and there.

Fortunately, a lot has changed since then so that now, we have found one online resource that literally gives you...

**All the answers to all of your design questions with the minimal time and expense and maximum results and profits!**

Whether you need hands-on training in everything from building a *simple website to fast-track your ebusiness* on the Internet to learning Flash design and advanced HTML coding to *increase your existing sales*, the 100% online, WordNet University is your definite solution.

Unlike any "school" you've probably ever attended, WordNet University is a 100% online, hands-on training center that focuses on providing you with...

**Practical, understandable strategies and techniques in an extremely simple to follow format so that you can instantly apply them to your Internet business!**

No matter what your level of expertise, whether it be completely new or years of coding, there is something for everyone!

When you join WordNet University, you instantly become an active member of a private online campus, with free access to...

- **Over 80 downloadable teaching videos** covering everything from simple website design to Macromedia Fireworks, Dreamweaver, Flash, etc. These videos literally **take you by the hand and visually walk you step-by-step** through each new technique; a learning strategy that is extremely powerful because you're actually interacting with the lesson!
- **Personal answers to all of your tough questions from expert professors**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in WordNet University's special tutoring forums. Save yourself hours of frustration, and have all of your unanswered questions clarified on the spot!
- **The exact strategies and techniques required to build a web site that sells!** Let's face it, anyone who can learn HTML can design a cool web site, but it takes true talent to design a web site the actually sells... and trust me there is a big difference. Fortunately the expert instructors in the WordNet University are *true experts in building websites that can close the sale...* and they are literally waiting to share their knowledge.

So unlike a typical university course where the professors decide what you'll learn, you're always **100% in control of what new information you discover next**. You always learn at your own pace and get immediate answers to your toughest questions -- and this dramatically speeds up the learning process!

Fortunately, after much negotiation with the president and founder of the WordNet University, Ralph Hilliard, he has agreed to give an opportunity to the customers and subscribers of the Internet Marketing Challenge that has never been offered before so that **you can become a member and start taking advantage of his coveted design strategies today!**

This special offer is **exclusive to our subscribers** and is valid only if you become a

member by *November 10th*. So do not hesitate and go to:

<http://www.wordnetuniversity.com/imc/>

Face it, if you plan on starting a business on the Internet, *you must have at least basic HTML and web site design capabilities*.

Even if you plan on hiring someone to design your website for you, how will you ever know if they are designing a site the sells or just giving you garbage if you do not at least know the basics!

Get the skills without the spills!

All the best...

Boris Chow - Internet Marketing Challenge Team

#### **About the Author**

Boris Chow is a seasoned Internet marketer and member of the IMC Think Tank, the team of Internet marketing professionals who gather in the IMC Private Site to spill the beans about Web marketing breakthroughs -- as they happen!

To learn their profitable secrets (and avoid the costly mistakes) so you'll have more time to grow your business, visit <http://www.MarketingChallenge.com> for instant access.

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## **2. CONTACT THE CHRONICLES: Got questions? Get Answers!**

Do you have Internet marketing questions? Do you want to share your thoughts? If so, send your lemons or your laurels at: [Share@MarketingChallenge.com](mailto:Share@MarketingChallenge.com)

Are you a successful cybermarketer? Do you want to contribute an article in exchange for some free exposure? If so, send your contribution with your brief promotional byline to: [Article@MarketingChallenge.com](mailto:Article@MarketingChallenge.com)

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**Internet Marketing Challenge**

1664 Harbor Seal Drive, Point Roberts, WA, 98281

Phone: 800-505-8232 or 604-730-6979

Fax: 800-505-0507

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