



WEB ADVICE

Your website is your brand

Your brand is your identity as a company and for many, a company website *is* the brand. Dave Suter from Beaver Design looks at how a website needs to fit a brand identity

What face do you give to your web presence? In these Web Advice articles over the last few months, you'll have seen a number of different and practical features of good web design. We've already looked at why it's important to have a web presence, what search engine optimisation means for your business, as well as e-marketing and e-commerce. As the front door to your prospects, a website becomes your brand's face. From the moment they land on your home page, visitors make snap judgments about the value you provide and how you're different from competitors. So it's important to consider how well your web presence communicates your value.

For many people, the website is all they see of your company; so how the website is branded is key to how customers will perceive you.

Where brand begins

Getting your website designed properly starts with your brand identity. Who are you as a company? What value does your company add to the product or service it provides? Your brand is your identity as a company and is how you mark yourselves different to the competition. A brand is something which runs through everything you do and when your customers buy from you, it's because of more than just the thing you sell. Successful companies are selling a brand, a designed identity which they use throughout their business. This means for your letters, brochures, business cards and your website.

Design to differentiate

Customers need to see your brand identity in



Your website is key to your brand and how you are perceived, says Dave Suter

logos, colours and slogans throughout your company material. By doing this, people will begin to think of your company name when they think of your product and that's when you start to have a real impact. When I think of vacuum cleaners, I think of the name "Hoover".

In 2006, in support for the England football team at the FIFA World Cup, the packaging for Mars bars was rebranded as "Believe". It was the same product, just a different name on the wrapper.

"If this business were split up, I would give you the land and bricks and mortar, and I would take the brands and trademarks, and I would fare better than you." – *John Stuart, former CEO of Quaker Oats.*

Four months later, Mars went back to the original "Mars" packaging. Because of the brand icon of Mars, they were able to change the name on the packaging with consumers still recognising their product – such is the power of a strong and well designed brand. When it comes to your website, make sure that you're thinking of your identity. Get a brand designed which can run through everything you do and treat your website as a way to communicate that brand. As a door into your business, the web gives your company a space to best express its values and build a customer following for more than just what you sell.

◆ *For more information, take a look at www.beaver-design.com/brand.*

Design for



Beaver Design is an established and successful web and graphic design company based in Ware, Hertfordshire.

We have been around since 1978 providing graphic and web design solutions for our UK and international clients.

We'll make **sure** your website, printed material and marketing gives you the best possible design for 2009.

Web Design and SEO
E-Marketing and E-Commerce
Powerful Branding
Stand Out Stationery



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