

Web Site Best Practices Checklist

Site: _____

Best Practice	Site Con-forms	Comments
Strategy		
Tag line that explicitly summarizes what the site and/or organization does		
<p>A clear value proposition A statement summarizing the customer segment and the core differentiation of one's product from the offerings of competitors.</p> <p>A clear and specific statement about the <u>tangible benefits</u> of an offering.</p> <p>Emphasizes what the site does that's valuable <u>from the user's point of view</u> and plays up key differentiator(s)</p>		
Organization name & logo prominent at top or upper left		
Content		
Uses customer-focused language		
Avoids repetition		
Avoids jargon and "lingo" and is easy to understand		
Uses consistent style: punctuation, capitalization, etc.		
Uses all-uppercase letters sparingly or not at all		
Links		
Links look different from other text		
Link colors show visited and unvisited links		
Navigation		
Global links at top of page		
Local links on left or right side		
Contextual links within content area		

Primary navigation area is in a highly noticeable place, preferably directly adjacent to the main body of the page		
Shopping cart link on home page (if applicable)		
Lower level pages contain contextual navigation cues so user knows where they are in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site as a whole (“You are here”) • major section • parent page • the next page 		
Supplemental navigation		
Facilitates fast, direct access to content of site for users who know what they want		
Avoids overwhelming user with too much info: helps rather than scares user		
Search		
Input box on home page		
Search box is wide enough to allow users to see and edit standard queries on the site, minimum 25-30 characters		
Search box has “Search” button to right of box, rather than a heading.		
Search box placed at top of main body of page, but below any banner area		
Homepage search is a simple search, with link to advanced search, or link to advanced search appears on search results page		
Home page search searches the entire site by default		
Avoids “Search the Web” functionality		
Graphics		
Graphics show real content and don’t just decorate the page		
Graphics and photos are labeled if meaning is not clear from context of content they accompany		
Photos and diagrams are cropped and sized appropriately		

Avoids text placed on top of images (watermarking)		
Avoids animation used strictly for unrelated entertainment		
Avoids animation of key items such as logo, tag line or main headline		
Gives users option to turn off animation		
Font styles and text formatting are limited and kept simple		
Text and background colors are high-contrast for maximum legibility		
Text is dark color against light background for legibility		
Avoids horizontal scrolling		
Critical page elements are above “the fold” and don’t require user to scroll down		
Logos used sparingly (i.e. For partners, products, etc.)		
Window Titles		
Window title begins with information-carrying word, usually company name		
Avoids use of top-level domain name in window title (ie. Company.com)		
Avoids use of “homepage” in the title		
Includes short description of site in title		
Titles no more than seven or eight words and fewer than 64 total characters		
News and Press Releases		
Headlines give maximum info in as few words as possible		
Summaries for press releases and news stories are featured on home page, rather than the first paragraph of the article.		
Summaries include specific details		
Gathering customer data		
Links to user registration explain the benefits of registering (or link to page explaining them)		
Benefits explained before users are asked for their email address		

Provides link to Privacy Policy where registration takes place, also as part of global navigation		
Miscellaneous		
Homepage or top-level page lists actual discussion topics for bulletin boards, blogs and other discussion features, and provides schedules for live chats		
Avoids "guestbook" sign-in		
Shows users the time that content was last updated		
Includes time zone whenever a time is referenced		
Uses standard abbreviations		
Spells out month or uses month abbreviations, not numbers		