



Engaging content, sound, movement, and color create a walking, talking interactive company experience, bringing the brand personality to life. A website is the next best thing to reality, and in some cases it is more efficient, more user-friendly, and faster. The customer is in charge. The internet provides the customer with a no-pressure sales environment, and at the click of a mouse, a competitor is waiting.

The best websites understand their customers and respect their needs and preferences. A company's website should quickly answer these

questions: "Who is this company? Why does anyone need to know? What's in it for me?" Expressing an authentic brand identity on the web is still a new frontier that communication architects, information architects, designers, and engineers are just beginning to conquer. Websites are increasingly used as portals for media tools. From logos to message points, downloading from a site enables employees to jumpstart marketing and communications from anywhere in the world.

**The number one Internet myth is "Build it and they will come."**

Richard Kauffman  
Panoptic Communications

## Interactive experiences require nonlinear thinking, inviting interfaces, and creative intelligence.

Stella Gassaway, Visionary and Creative Principal  
Stellarvisions

### Characteristics of the best websites

Easy to use  
Meets visitor expectations  
Communicates visually

## Process: website design

Compiled by Stellarvisions

### Initiate plan

- Set goals.
- Establish project team.
- Identify audiences.
- Define key messages.
- Revisit positioning.
- Set priorities.
- Rough out project plan.
- Define success.

### > Build groundwork

- Conduct competitive audit.
- Gather data about audience.
- Consider content sources.
- Explore technological issues.
- Assess resources for ongoing site updates.
- Evaluate existing site.
- Revisit goals + set strategies.

### > Define structure

- Outline content.
- Map content.
- Define logical relationships.
- Create user personas + scenarios.
- Postulate visitor's mental model.
- Build wire-frame prototypes.
- Test prototypes.

### > Prepare content

- Set editorial calendar.
- Decide how often content changes.
- Identify existing content.
- Rewrite text for web.
- Commission new content, visual, or media assets.
- Approve content, including legal signoff.
- Review content in screen context.
- Edit and proofread text.

### > Create visual design

- Color palette, tone, metaphor
- Grid and element placement
- Graphic elements + text styles
- Navigational cues
- Layouts of key screens
- Planning display on small screen devices
- Interfacing for functions
- Integration of media
- Prototyping and testing with users

## Website basics

Keep site goals, audience needs, key messages, and brand personality central to each and every decision about the site.

Anticipate future growth. Measure, evaluate, change.

Site structure should not simply reflect organizational structure.

Begin site structure with content, not a screen design.

Do not force content into counterintuitive groupings.

Write content specifically for the web.

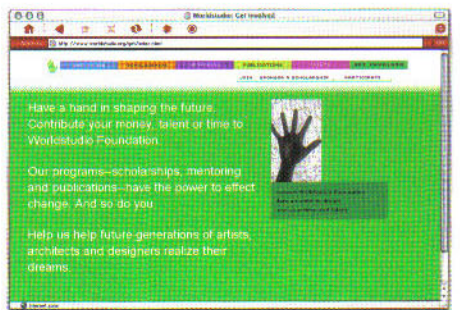
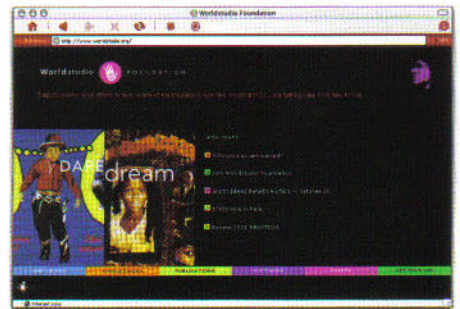
Conduct usability testing.

Observe etiquette. Alert visitors where special technology is needed, where a screen may load slowly, or where a link leaves your site.

Comply with ADA: Arrange for visually impaired visitors to use software to read the site aloud or greatly magnify text.

At each stage ask: Is the message clear? Is the content accessible? Is the experience positive?

Confront internal political agendas that may sabotage site goals.



Worldstudio Foundation: Stellarvisions

### Develop technical design

- Strategy for data integration
- Static vs. dynamic screens
- Content management option
- Transaction flow design
- Quality assurance testing plan
- Security + scalability
- Technical specifications
- Prototyping and testing
- Building feature set

### > Finalize development

- Production of screen graphics
- Development of HTML templates
- Content freeze
- Inserting content into screens
- Approval of beta site
- Quality tests of beta site
- User tests of beta site

### > Launch and maintain

- Promote site launch.
- Complete style guide.
- Optimize site for search engines.
- Develop maintenance plan.
- Monitor logs and user paths.
- Measure success.
- Test ongoing usability.