

WEB SITE EVALUATION – WWW.YOURWEBSITE.COM

SITE SCORE CARD

www.yourwebsite.com



Critical Dimensions

Score

| | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Look and Feel | ★★★★★ |
| 2. Navigation | ★★★★☆ |
| 3. Visual Hierarchy | ★★★★★ |
| 4. Concise, Easy-to-Scan Text | ★★★★★ |
| 5. Differentiation and Sales Messaging | ★★★★★ |
| 6. Search Engine Visibility | ★★★★☆ |
| 7. Modular, Template-Driven Design | ★★★★★ |
| 8. Standards and ADA §508 Accessibility | ★★★★☆ |
| 9. Communication and Data Collection | ★★★★★ |
| 10. Fresh, Relevant Content | ★★★★★ |

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Look and Feel** – overall site look and feel and color scheme are attractive, clean and professional. The Certified Advisor badge, shot of the product box, and portrait say almost instantly who you are and what you do. Only a few minor suggestions here, and these are just for fine-tuning: The aqua/light-blue color used in the logo and behind the site’s left bar was a trendy color a few years ago, but will start to look dated as time goes by. I would replace that color within the next 2-3 years. The dark blue, yellow, and red used throughout the rest of the site are relatively basic, classic hues. It looks like there may be a newer version of the “Certified Advisor” logo that plays more nicely with the “Authorized Affiliate” logo (which I would place over a white background or make transparent so the white box doesn’t show over the teal background).
- 2. Navigation** – your site navigation could be made more consistent by following the same conventions throughout the site. Currently, the home page has a navigation bar down the left side of the page, but many of the rest of the pages use a horizontal bar directly below the main logo/header. Sometimes the top navbar is there, sometimes it isn’t. Sometimes there’s a menu bar on the left, and sometimes there isn’t. This is confusing when visitors to create a mental map of where to go on your site. I would recommend placing either your top or side menu on every page (choose one or the other – I think the “side” version is more complete) and be consistent with its placement. Using a server-side include for your main navigation will make it easy to update the whole site at once in the future. There are a couple of broken links in each version, so make sure to double-check links while you’re developing it. I also noticed that the “home” link in the header is disabled on a number of pages.
- 3. Visual Hierarchy** – overall the site uses heading and subheads, as well as consistent styles for things like quotes, etc. There are several pages, however, that use colored boxes interspersed between the blocks.

On some pages, these colored blocks are clickable links, and on others (such as the "About Us" and "Software" pages) they are used as headings, which can be confusing to your visitors.

For the sake of both interface design and search-engine visibility, I recommend using text-only styles for headings and sub-heads, and using stylized boxes *only* for clickable buttons.

4. **Concise, Easy-to-Scan Text** – this site makes good use of web-optimized copy. Text is an easily-read size, copy is broken down into easy-to-digest blocks interspersed with headings and subheads. Copy is also has a nice flow and is easy to read for busy people that scan without reading. Not much I can add to help you improve in this area.
5. **Differentiation and Sales Messaging** – the copy on the site already appears to do a great job of selling the services of [name withheld] to companies that don't currently use [your services], or might need [software consulting] help. And for larger businesses that might be considering several potential candidates as part-time [executive], there is a list of attributes that helps you stand apart from those offering similar services in your area. Make sure to update this list as you add qualifications, years of experience, and more high-profile testimonials.
6. **Search Engine Visibility** – this site has a lot of things going for it, but I have a few recommendations that could help you improve your natural search rankings. Having an archive of past newsletter articles not only give you gives you a nice bank of relevant, searchable content to draw potential customers, but it gives you a steady stream of fresh content. Keep it up. You have good meta-tag keywords, but your description meta-tag could use a little more fine-tuning. It currently reads "Bond Technology provides profit improvement techniques and consultation to improve accounting efficiency for small businesses." This sentence contains typos and also does not say who you are or what you do in plain English. Since some search engines display the contents of this tag, along with the title tag, to describe and link to the page, you should consider updating this to remove typos and provide a more accurate description. You are already using potential keywords as link text, in your title tags, and in your headings and subheads. Continue to do so. Another thing to consider is using CSS to create a button style for your buttons using an image as the background with styled HTML link text in the foreground. That will make all the text on your buttons searchable too! Finally, I recommend creating a sitemap page, containing links to every page on your site. Link to that sitemap page from every other page on your site. In my experience, this helps search engines find and index your site's pages much more quickly.
7. **Modular, Template-Driven Design** – I can't tell from your site code if you are using server-side includes, but your pages do all have a consistent layout, and I can see that you are using a globally-linked CSS file, which are good signs. If you are not currently using server-side includes, I would encourage you to start using them for things like your header, footer, navigation bar, newsletter signup box, etc. Then you change that one file and any pages that call to it are instantly updated as well. Once your site gets to about 50 pages or more (and you might be getting close if you include your newsletter archives), you might consider moving to a content management system.
8. **Standards and ADA §508 Accessibility** - Site is written in HTML 4.01, using tables for page layouts and limited use of embedded style sheets. The code for the site places the navigation links before the content. Site would be very difficult for visually-impaired users to navigate using a text-reading browser. Site would benefit from XHTML/CSS code standards. Use of globally-linked CSS would establish and

enforce visual hierarchy and layout consistency throughout site, and use of XHTML would make code more lightweight, flexible, and easy to use for those with disabilities.

9. **Communication and Data Collection** - Site includes e-commerce, forms for newsletter signups and sales inquiries, so you are already collecting data and using the site as a two-way communication tool. You may want to create a privacy policy outlining your policy for collecting data about your visitors.
10. **Fresh, Relevant Content** – it appears that the bulk of the content on your site is updated frequently, however the “News & Events” page lists only past events, some of them over a year old. On the plus side, your monthly newsletter and frequent training sessions give people (and search engines) a reason to come back and visit often.

This report was prepared by Dan Wilson of MarketDifference Communications Group. If you need help putting these recommendations to practice on your current site, or are considering a redesign, please feel free to contact Dan directly at (916) 396-5402 or dan@marketdifference.com.