

The Goldfish Report

What has your website got to do with goldfish? What a strange question! But did you know that the attention span of the average web-surfer is equivalent to that of a goldfish? About four seconds - if you're lucky!

So what will stop them clicking off somewhere else? Something has to get their attention really quickly - within that magic four seconds.



There is a whole host of components to your website:

- Design - that's the visual bit that makes it attractive;
- Development – that's what sits underneath; the programming that allows people to enter names and email addresses, and other

information or use a shopping cart, or automatically generate messages;

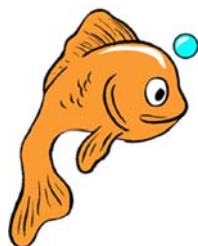
- Usability – that's how easy it is to get into and around your site;
- The copy – that's what engages the visitor and keeps them on your site;
- Search engine optimisation – that's getting your website in front of the great world wide audience that you're looking for;
- Hosting – that's the place where your website sits so that the world wide web can see it.

All of these are important and play their part in making your website work and be profitable for you.

The problem is that very few companies actually KNOW all about all of these elements – you get experts in one or two, but then the other areas get overlooked. This leaves you with only part of what you need. A fantastic looking website is no good at all if the words don't connect with the visitor; a really well written website won't work if the design prevents the reader from reading easily. It doesn't matter how fantastic your web development is, if nobody knows your website is there or if every time they try to access it they get 'unavailable' messages because the host server is 'down'. You can get all these things right and people can still leave in droves if it's difficult to navigate.

If you don't get your visitor's attention really quickly, you won't get a second chance. Once they've hit that 'back' button, they won't come back. They just go to the next one on the list the search engine has created. If you've spent time, effort and money getting your website designed, built, written and listed high on the search engine - you can see that might be a huge waste.

So where do we start?



Your visitor

If I had a pound, or even a dollar, for every client that told me that their target audience was 'everyone', I would be on the way to being quite well off by now!

Whilst I accept that there are some commodities and services that are, indeed, suitable for 'everyone' – you can't hit such a big target. You need to look at a niche market, one where you can start to describe your ideal customer.

Why do you need this level of detail? Well, if you don't know exactly what your customer wants, don't know what their problems are, and don't know what they're looking for when they arrive at your website, then you probably won't present them with the right information.

So what? They'll simply go somewhere else. That back button takes them straight back to the list they've Googled and they'll just visit the next one on it.

Your website host, or designer or developer should be able to tell you how to see the statistics. You need to know how many visitors have arrived on your home page – and how many have clicked through from your home page to other pages. That will give you an idea whether they've found your site good enough to stay that long.

So how do you find out what your visitors want? The simple answer is that you should already know this, but a reality check says that most of us don't!

There are two things you can do to find out :

1. Ask your existing customers (or previous customers) why they buy from you? You could be surprised at the answers you get.
2. Do a FAB chart. FAB stands for Features, Advantages and Benefits.

Many people have heard of Features and Benefits, but don't understand the difference between an Advantage and a Benefit.

A Feature in relation to your product or service is what it IS. So a feature of a car is an 'anti-lock braking system'.

An Advantage is what the product or services DOES. So the anti-lock braking system ensures that your car stops in a straight line and doesn't skid.

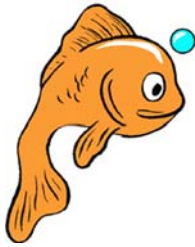
A Benefit is the answer to the question 'what's in it for me?' The benefit of an anti-lock braking system is that, if you have to stop very quickly your car will not skid sideways and cause an accident that may endanger your life or that of your family. There's a much higher chance that you will stop safely and that could save you money in body repairs. OK, that was two benefits!

Benefits are emotional triggers – and they are the thing that people buy on. An advantage is a 'nice to have', but it isn't powerful enough for people to want to buy on.

Why are we doing all this sales talk stuff? Simple – people are looking for something when they arrive at your website. If you know what that is, your website can say to them when they arrive, 'you know that problem you're having – you've now found a solution'.

The message here is that you need to really get to know your target audience, their needs, wants, desires, problems, challenges and what drives them. There's a chance you will be able to ensure that the message you put on your website will reach them if you know all that.

If you are now confident that you know your potential customers, let's look at some of the things that turn web-surfers on - and off! We'll try to start at the home page - because that is where most of your visitors will start.



Try getting in

I use the word 'try' deliberately. To get your message, first the visitor has to access your website. Having an easy to 'get' web address is always a good start. If you have a company name that has a number of spellings you might need to think carefully about what your web address actually is.

For instance, if your company is called 'Ace Test Trials Co' and that translates to a web address:

www.acetesttrialsco.co.uk?

or is it

www.acestesttrialsco.co.uk?

or

www.acetesttrials.co.uk?

Or do you buy all three domain names and have them all pointed at the same place?

Or do you stay away from .co.uk websites and stick to .com's, .net or .biz?

You can see how difficult it can be! This is something most people don't even think about – until it's too late. Make sure that you don't fall into this trap. If people don't spell your web address right, they'll find themselves somewhere else.

Splash pages

If you have four seconds to get your visitors attention, why waste it showing off your web designers graphics talents? Generally speaking that is the only purpose of a splash page. It's an opportunity for whizzy graphics to move and change. What does it do for your business?

Nothing! It uses up valuable time as people get impatient and search for a means to get in. If they can't immediately find this, they'll hit that little green back button.

Bear in mind that the Internet has trained us to be impatient. We have demanded faster and faster connections – how many of us now have broadband in our homes? So we want our information faster and faster. How many times have you been happy to sit and wait for even half a minute for a site to load? It doesn't sound long, but I can guarantee if I asked you to sit and look at the screen for even half that time you'd be tapping your fingers and telling it to 'hurry up'!

This might tell you a couple of things:

- Don't have a 'loading' bar, that's a really quick turn-off, it's like announcing that the visitor is going to have to wait for a while. Result – most will leave and find another site that loads quicker;
- Don't have any sort of counter showing the seconds ticking by – it has pretty much the same effect. I don't need to know I've been sitting here for 12 seconds waiting for your site to do something useful.
- If you are absolutely welded to your existing splash page, create a great headline - and then split it in two. Put the first half on the splash page - and the second half on the main home page. e.g. If you're having problems with your car you can get a replacement within 6 hours.

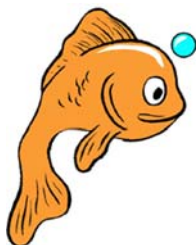
The other thing about splash pages is that they are famous for having 'click here to enter' somewhere on the page. This is often very faint, as the web designer doesn't want his audience to miss a moment of his/her 'show'.

Sometimes the splash page has something that Vince Flanders* calls 'mystery meat navigation'. This means that there is no obvious way to enter the site without being a great detective. The 'way in' may be hidden under a graphic, or on a panel or simply be in a text box – you just have to try and find it. So, if you're an impatient web-surfer, what would you do?

That little green back button looks awfully tempting!

At the end of the day ask yourself this question: "Why do I want to put obstacles and barriers in the way of someone who might want to spend money with me?"

The home page



This is the real landing point for the majority of visitors. You need them to get your message fast, but you also need to present a clean, professional image that is consistent with everything else your company produces.

This isn't an 'either/or' choice – you do need both – and a number of other factors will have an impact too.

Your image

First and foremost you need to have a nice clean 'masthead' - that's the bit with your company name and logo at the top. This needs to have a consistent image with everything else you produce that has your identity on it.

Don't be tempted to squash your logo over to one side and have a big slogan or a bit of advertising in this area. If you have a 'strap line' or 'tag line' (that's the bit that comes after your company name - like Nike - just do it!) it should not be bigger or more prominent than your company title.

Consider your website like a newspaper. Your company identity is across the top – the newspapers call this 'the masthead' – 'The Telegraph', 'The Mirror', 'Wall Street Journal', etc. Newspapers don't have lots of other things interfering with their identity; they've been getting this right for years (centuries in some cases) and continuously work at it, use their learning and experience.

Part of the professional look is that you make it easy for people to access your message. This means that your home page must be easy for them to decide what to do next.

Some websites resemble a patchwork quilt with boxes, ads, graphics, bits of text and no proper headlines. Anything that busy means that the decision making process gets more and more difficult – what do I look at first?

The less conscious thinking that your visitor has to do, the better chance you have of hanging onto them and leading them to the place you need them to be. Confusion is not a good place to start.

Don't be tempted to try and put all your product categories or services onto your front page. Go back and decide what it is they most need to know and then tell them about that.

If people are searching for your services under a particular search word or phrase make sure that the first thing they see addresses that problem. This leads us neatly to ...

Headlines

A headline that grabs attention is a big plus. If the visitor has to search to find out if your site has any likelihood of providing them with what they are looking for - most won't bother. Tell them they've come to the right place!

Firstly, 'Welcome to our Website' is NOT a headline. It's simply more useless information. They've arrived, they don't need welcoming in words – they just need to know they've come to the right place to address their problem or need.

In order to be able to write great headlines you will need to have done your FAB research.

A headline that grabs attention is a big plus. If they have to search to find out if your site has any likelihood of providing them with what they are looking for - most won't bother. This means you really need to be clear about what they are searching for.

Good headlines target the visitors problems, ask questions and use 'you' language.

'We provide top quality widgets' is not a good headline.

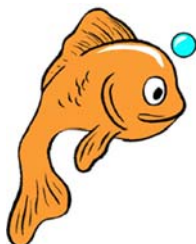
'How many hours have you spent trying to find that widget?' is much better.

Whilst very long headlines are not great, don't be afraid of something a bit longer if it taps into the problem your visitor is trying to solve.

The headline should be the first thing on the page that the reader really sees. This means it must be big and bold. Too many web designers use bold text just a size or two bigger than the rest of the copy – it's so small it disappears on the screen page.

If the headline doesn't grab them, you could find that mouse heading towards the back button again.

Content



There is a fine line between getting all your 'key words' in and having too much text on your web pages.

The SEO experts place high value in integrating all the words that people search on that bring them to your site. Unfortunately, if you have a lot of key words it results in a lot of text to integrate them in a way that makes sense.

The problem is that most people don't READ websites, they scan them. There are a number of things that you can do to deal with this.

1. Write small amounts of text and use short paragraphs and sentences to make reading easy.
2. Use bullet points for your key points. People seem to read bullet points where they don't read paragraphs.
3. Make sure that the words you do use connect quickly and strongly with your reader, action and emotion words. Know your reader's 'hot' buttons.
4. Write 'you' and 'your', not 'we', 'our' or 'us'. People like to read about themselves, not about you.
5. Use bold to highlight particular words you want to stand out. However, don't go mad, just one word here and there is all that's needed. Don't overuse bold, it interferes with people's reading process.

According to the daddy of website usability, Jakob Nielsen, people tend to read your home page in an 'F' pattern. Across the headline, down a bit, scan out to the right and then down to the bottom.

To interrupt that pattern you need to put things in place that will capture their attention without confusing them.

You also need to make things easy for them – so when they get to the bottom of the page, tell them what to do – and give them instant gratification in the form of a hyperlink to where you want them to go.

A note of caution: if you are going to have a hyperlink it should actually be the words that tell the reader where they're going. For example:

[Explore your options on our services page](#)

Not

[Click here](#) to explore your options on our services page

The main reason is that people who have visual disabilities and are using a screen reader to 'see' the website will only get the words 'click here', which doesn't tell them anything useful.

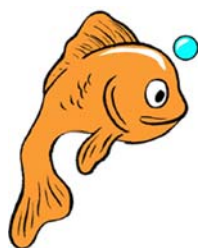
However, it is also much more powerful to have the whole sentence hyperlinked. More people will instinctively click on this than those words 'click here'. We don't like being told what to do directly! Click here is more of an instruction than an invitation.

Make sure it IS a hyperlink too. Don't expect people to scroll back to the top and search the menu for the page. They won't.

You need to decide what you want people to do at the end of each page and then provide that call to action. If it's 'email us for more information' – that should be a link that creates an email ready for them to write. If it's 'phone us now to get your free consultation' then the phone number should be the very next thing they see.

Sounds obvious – but look at a few websites and you'll soon discover that very, very few people have got the message.

The About us page



Many people dislike the words 'About us' and get creative with 'Who we are' or 'Our company' or 'The team'. The problem with any of these alternatives is that they require conscious thought – at least momentarily – to work out what they really are. Some people still won't 'get it'!

Steve Krug, author of 'Don't make me think!' recommends that you stick to the instinctive as much as possible.

People have got to know the 'standard' stuff – they know what is likely to be on the 'About us' and Contact us' pages – if the title is different they need to stop for a second to think about what this new title might actually be. If you're really obscure, they start having to check – and that just causes either frustration, irritation, or impatience.

None of these states are where you want your visitor to be when you introduce them to your organisation.

So – what should you put on the About us page?

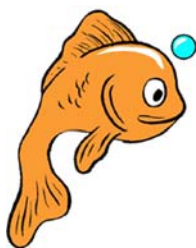
Remember one very important fact – no matter how big your organisation, people buy PEOPLE, not things or organisations. Telling people that your organisation is a family company formed in 1983 really doesn't help them make a decision about whether or not they might feel comfortable working or dealing with you.

If they see a picture of a human being or a team of people and there is some passion and background to WHY the company does what it does, there's a much bigger chance of them wanting to work with you.

Remember, the About us page is not the first stop from the home page. Most people go from the home page to the page that has the information they want (especially if you've cleverly led them there). Once they've confirmed that

you can provide a solution to their problem THEN they'll go and look at the About us page to check you out.

Readability



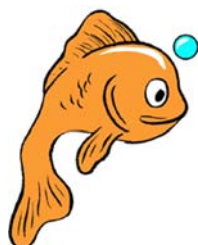
Writing what is known in the trade as 'killer copy' is not enough. It must be presented in a way that helps people to read it easily. However, web designers often are not familiar with some of the things that actively make reading harder. They are usually very talented graphic designers, but often see the copy as part of the 'picture' rather than as words that need to be read.

Here are some of things that designers should really know:

1. A smart website looks good and is easy to read - so text should NOT be smaller than 10 point (some of us have dodgy eyesight, don't make it too hard for us).
2. Use clean, sans serif fonts (that means Arial, Gill, Helvetica, Verdana, not Times New Roman, Palatino and Garamond). With the screen resolution being relatively low (72 dots per inch or dpi) in comparison with printed media (a minimum of 300 dpi), lots of little lines just contribute to the dazzle effect.
3. Don't use capital letters for whole words – anyone using a screen reader will find they are being shouted at. If you need to highlight a word use bold.
4. Don't use capital letters for every letter in your headline – it interrupts the flow of the reader, and it's an American habit. Newspapers don't do it – why should you?
5. Stick to light coloured backgrounds - white or pale yellow are best, but if your corporate colours are dark blue, don't be tempted to use a dark blue box with light coloured writing - it might look pretty, but it's impossible to read easily. This is because your eye will pick up the dark colour first. Normal text then cuts this up and creates a dazzle effect. The problem is that your conscious mind doesn't register this, your brain just doesn't get the message. The most you can get away with in 'reversed' writing is a headline in big fat bold letters.
6. People with dyslexia find pale yellow or pale blue easier to read from. However, we are talking PALE here! Just a tint that takes the white glare off.
7. Don't have whole paragraphs in bold. It creates a similar effect to reversed writing – more black than white (or dark than light) which hinders reading.
8. Don't have text justified on both sides - it just makes it easy for the reader to lose their place. If you've ever read the same line twice, or found you've skipped a line, it's probably because your eye has lost its place in a block of text. Left justified is fine - leave the right hand side unjustified. Don't centre text – except for headlines – it looks untidy and is even harder to read, the eye needs somewhere to start.

9. Don't have moving images on your site. They just distract people who are trying to read your message. If they MUST move - then they should move ONCE and then stay put. Flash media and whizzy graphics are now very old-hat.
10. Don't overload the reader with text - short paragraphs with lots of white space will encourage them to carry on reading. Big blocks of text will stop them from trying to read - break it up.
11. Do use bullet points - they are much easier to read and often are read where traditional paragraphs are not.
12. Don't put clever little internal scroll devices on your site. The whole page needs to scroll down - but not too far. Most web-surfers won't read more than a couple of screens.
13. Do remember that we don't all work on huge screens. Make sure that your website fits to the screen of the web-surfer. Having to scroll from side to side to read is guaranteed to send your reader elsewhere.
14. Don't have more than one column of copy on one page. If I have to scroll back up to the top of the page to get the rest of the message you have to ask 'am I bothered?' The answer is probably 'no'. That mouse is on its way to the back button.
15. Don't use colours that are of a similar tone – they will often compete with each other on the screen. Also be careful of colour combinations like red and green – a considerable proportion of the population have red/green colour blindness.

Contact us

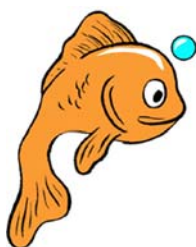


IF you have a Contact us page you need to have your phone, email and real address showing, if only to reassure people that you are a 'real' company!

Don't use mobile numbers or 'freebie' email addresses - it just makes you look like an amateur outfit.

Make sure you have a landline number and professional email (ideally the same as your website) on every page - don't make it hard for people to contact you.

Navigation



A good website is a breeze to get around. You can tell what the menu choices offer, they are simple to use and you don't get lost in a maze.

Before you start putting content on your website you need to plan it.

- What pages do you want?
- What is each page intended to achieve?
- What information needs to be on first level pages?
- What information can be on a second level page?

Ideally, your site map should show all the pages that are accessible from the home page and the pages that are accessible from each of those pages. If you stick to those three levels – home, first level and second level you should maintain a reasonably easy to navigate site. Not like one website that I worked on (several years after it had been created) that had about 18 buttons on the front page and I 'found' well over 70 pages tucked away with links from one page to another, to another, to another!

Realistically your website should have the main pages on the menu on every page, but have a simple menu - not 23 buttons for them to choose from. You should be able to get back to the home page from EVERY page on your site.

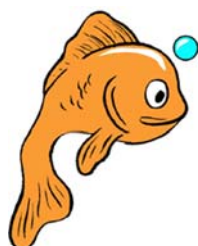
A common habit that web designers have developed is little pop out boxes from some or all of the menu choices. This is all very well if you want a sub-page, but often, the main menu choice is NOT a hyperlink. How frustrating for those impatient people who are clicking madly on it and wondering why it doesn't take them anywhere.

Ask your designer to ensure ALL the menu buttons are links. If people need to visit a sub page they'll get there quite quickly from the first level page.

Only put useful information on the website - think about it from your potential client's angle - what do they want to know? Don't tell them everything about your company, the journey your organisation has had to arrive at 'today', your operating procedure, etc. Always ask yourself – or your website team 'will this information help our web visitor decide to contact us or buy from us?' If the answer is 'no', leave it out.

Once you have planned the structure and planned the content, the rest should be straight forward.

Testimonials



Many people like to include testimonials on their sites. It's a great idea if you have some good feedback from your clients. However, there are a few things to remember.

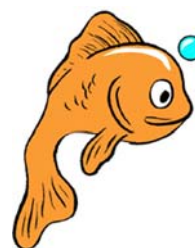
1. A testimonial has three elements – what you have done for that particular client; what their experience of working with you was like (this is the bit they usually want to tell you, but without the third element it is more like therapy than a testimonial. The third element is what happened as a result of your input – in other words the outcome you were responsible for creating).
2. A testimonial should be short and to the point.
3. If you don't have permission to include the person's name, position and company, people will probably think you made it up! At least initials and the industry sector would be useful (GB, IT Director, major food retailer).

Having a testimonials page is fine – make sure they're good quality though. If you don't want to do that, then scatter them about in 'boxes' through your profile – one or two to each page. However, be consistent and put them in the same sort of position so people quickly become

familiar with the fact that the 'pale yellow box' is a testimonial or the column on the right always has a testimonial in it.

... and other bits and pieces

Over the years various little devices have been used on websites – the most common of these is a 'hit counter'. Very few websites have these now and there is a reason or two.



Firstly, the number of visitors that visit your website won't help any visitor to decide whether you can help them or not. The person that needs to know how many visitors you've had is YOU. You also need to know over what period – in a day, week or month – they've visited. You should have access to these figures through your web designer or developer.

Secondly, if the hit counter shows a low figure it can influence a visitor to think you are either a new company and may not have a reliable track record OR that you aren't very good at what you do, so nobody visits your site. If the hit counter shows a high number then the visitor may decide that you started at a high number, or that you are so busy that you wouldn't have time for them. This is the opposite of win-win, in other words lose-lose!

Get your web host to give you comprehensive statistics monthly about how many unique visitors, how many repeat visitors, how long they stay, how many click throughs from one page to another – this will help you to improve your site.

When you make changes make one at a time. Change a headline and let it run for a while. Check the stats to see if there are any notable changes in visitors, length of stay, click through. Then change something else. Note what makes an impact.

Test your headlines – have two or three alternatives and try them out one at a time. See what people respond to best.

Remember, only put information on your website that helps you to grow your business. That's what your website is for – it's a sales and marketing tool.

Get a blog – if you link it to your website (your web designer should be able to make it look like a page on your website, even if it isn't actually hosted there. The more activity on your blog the more the search engines will pick up your site – it's a very efficient means of search engine optimisation.

Similarly, activity on the public areas of sites such as Ecademy are also regularly picked up by the search engines and can raise your profile noticeably in the rankings. For example: google 'Lesley Morrissey' and see how many references are from my Ecademy activity.

Follow these recommendations and you'll soon find your website is actively helping your business to prosper.

Never forget that the goldfish goes round and round, but doesn't go anywhere – make sure your web visitors get where they want to go as quickly as possible.

Bonus section

Other written documents

Business cards

This is your first opportunity to make it clear what you do. We all pick up business cards without necessarily having time to find out much about the person that gave it to us. How do we remember a week later what Jill Bloggs of Express Services actually does?

If Jill is a smart cookie she will have something on the **back** of her card that explains either what she does, or, better still, what the recipient of her services gets. In other words – the benefits.

Make sure you use that marketing space on the back of your card, but leave some space around the edges for people to write where they met you and the date.

Keen networkers like to write information on the back of cards – so don't laminate them or make both sides glossy, you're just making it difficult for them.

Use a slightly heavier card than your printer uses as standard – thin cards say 'lightweight', heavier cards subliminally say 'quality'!

Never use the freebie cards – again it sends subliminal messages to the recipient and they soon work out that it's one of those from the very limited designs available, even if it doesn't have the printers details on the back, which are a dead giveaway!

Flyers

There are various sizes and layouts for flyers. The most common are the A4 single sheet and the 'trifold' (A4 sheet folded into three).

Use the same rules as you would for a website. You'll need a strong headline to engage the reader. If it's a trifold I need a reason to make me want to open it.

Don't put too much information – it just looks busy and hard to read. Think about what you want the flyer to achieve. Is this a phone call, an email, for the reader to visit your website or shop? Make sure that the information you include is all focused on this outcome.

It's also important to understand how people read and handle different shaped documents.

An A4 sheet should only ever be single sided. If people have it face-up on their desk they may never turn it over. If you have too much information for a single A4 sheet – turn it into a 4 pager – A3 folded in half. People read these like a book, so they'll turn them over and read the back. However, put your contact details on the bottom of **every** page, just in case they're interrupted for any reason.

If you don't have enough for four whole pages – give some added value by adding '7 tips for ...' or 'what you need to know before ...'.

How to create an effective single page flyer

Start with a strong headline – it should look like a newspaper masthead (that's the bit that says 'The Telegraph')

It's often a good idea to have a subheading that tells the reader what the key benefit is, underneath this (not shown on example).

A 'leader' heading top left that intrigues and engages the reader is critical as this is roughly where their eye starts from.

The paragraphs below this continue to lead the reader with strong benefits (or pain statements).

Visuals work best top right as the eye scans across to this area before moving back to the left and downwards. The yellow lines show the path of the eye around the page – it's more or less a 'Z' shape.

Don't put too much solid text – people read bullet point more than paragraphs.

Always include the benefits – a bullet point list usually works well, somewhere towards the lower part of the left hand side.

Include feedback from people who have heard your presentations helps to convince the reader that you are worth listening to. A good place for this is the bottom left as this is roughly where the eye goes before the last sweep across to the right

Your personal biography needs to be relevant to the presentation and carefully pruned to keep it short and snappy. It's what people will look at AFTER they've decided that the presentation will fulfil their needs and that you've delivered good quality presentations before. Some won't even read it, they'll ring you and decide after they've spoken to you.

The bottom right hand corner is where the eye of the reader ends up – so this is the best place for your contact details.

And print it on decent paper – there's nothing worse than a flimsy piece of paper, it just looks cheap and tacky!

Management with Motorbikes

Personal development with a twist!

This presentation highlights how planning, belief in yourself, flexibility and focus all come together to get successful outcomes.

The keynote explores the importance of planning - and of restructuring plans to meet changing circumstances; the impact of different management styles on the people they manage; and what happens when setbacks challenge people.

Delegates will learn about:

- ▶ The 7 Steps to Powerful Planning
- ▶ How you manage your attitude - and that of your colleagues
- ▶ Dealing with obstructions and road blocks
- ▶ Effective communication - and knowing when it's working - or not!
- ▶ Motivation, self esteem, confidence - and how to generate these for yourself.

The story behind all this will make this presentation a truly memorable one for all the delegates.

What's in it for your COMPANY

- ▶ Higher profits
- ▶ Lower staff costs - good retention and you keep your best people.
- ▶ Faster achievement of corporate goals
- ▶ Outstrip the competition (their best people will want to work for YOU)
- ▶ A motivated, enthusiastic and committed workforce.

Who is Lesley Morrissey?

Highly motivational, but with both feet firmly on the ground, Lesley specialises in helping managers to develop others. She has been instrumental in providing the tools managers need who have been 'thrown in the deep end'.

Lesley is owner of Inside News, specialising in written communication and readability.

She has written 'Grow Your Own Achievers' - already a 'must read' for all working managers, and two books in the Hands on Management series 'Managing Yourself' and 'Managing People' providing a 'toolbox' that ensures that managers at all levels are well-equipped to manage - rather than just managing.

Lesley is a founder member of the Professional Speakers Association (currently a Board member and past President of the London Chapter) and has experience speaking and working in both Europe and the Middle East with multi-cultural audiences.

After a career encompassing journalism, administration, human resources, training, consultancy and a wealth of multi-cultural experience Lesley's knowledge and background severely underpins her lively presentations.

soundbites:

'The whole programme was done exceptionally well.' David Humphries, Design Engineer.

'The presentation was exceptional.' Patrick McKeown, Dana S U

Excellent - especially based upon identifying people are different and trying to predict their reaction and plan accordingly.' Simon Bull, Senior Vice President, Bank of America

'She was great! She only had 20 minutes - much too brief, I was dying for her to go on.' Tony Arnold, Irish PSA

'Great interaction with the audience, a good voice, easy to hear - an excellent practical talk using loads of the skills.' Evelyn Ryan, Nurse tutor

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The trifold

The problem with this is often that people create it on a flat screen or piece of paper and forget how it is handled by the reader.

Let's look at an example:



This is the 'outside' of the trifold and here's how the sections work.

Front page: needs a strong headline to make me want to read more. Should have your corporate identity, but not much else.

First fold in: nobody stops here so a few bullet points only – nothing critical or 'must read'.

Back page: contact details and any additional company information.

Now for the inside.

Centre section: this is the first place people stop to read, so your key message goes here. They don't usually open the 'flaps' out flat, so won't read in the normal left to right manner.

Left side: this is the second place people look – so your secondary information goes here.

Right side: this usually get a quick scan rather than a proper read, so keep it easy to read. Again bullet points work quite well, or a list. Lots of white space gives it an 'easy to read' look.

Secondary message

Key message

Nice to have, not important

Why do you need financial advice?

During your lifetime you're likely to earn millions of £s.
You can make your money work really hard for you - with the right advice.

- Discover your options when investing in property - whether this is your main home or subsequent properties;
- Ensure you have the peace of mind of a solid savings scheme to help you plan towards your retirement;
- Know how to protect your income and your family;
- Develop healthy savings & investments;
- Be sure that you have the most efficient estate plan to enable your family to avoid suffering from unnecessary inheritance tax;
- Make sure your existing financial plans are giving you the best possible outcomes.

Why independent financial advice?

Independent - your adviser works with you so you know there is no bias towards any particular organisation or plan.
Financial - you get expert advice on all areas of your financial health.
Advice - your interests are at the forefront; you'll get a range of options from the whole marketplace, not just from one company.

We will help you make the right financial decisions by:

- Reviewing your current financial position;
- Helping you to prioritise your financial aims and objectives;
- Making specific recommendations on how to achieve your objectives;
- Agreeing an action plan with you;
- Providing regular reviews to ensure plans put in place, are achieved.

Why CI Financial Planning?

- Because our clients recommend us!
- You'll be treated as an individual;
- You'll receive a personalised service;
- You'll have a long term business relationship that will help you to achieve your aims and objectives;
- You can be confident that you will have the benefit of 40 years of financial services experience, and we can offer advanced qualifications in pensions and retirement planning;
- We provide complete transparency concerning our professional remuneration, agreeing all fees payable in advance, and disclosing all commissions we may receive.

Our business grows on recommendations

Use heavy paper or light card to give this type of flyer substance.

Consider alternatives like postcards for impact and short messages, or folders with inserts for flexibility. Every type of document has its place.

Business letters

Keep them short. It's better to take information out into an attachment than to include it in the letter. People don't like to read long letters and often scan the second and third pages, whereas they will read a one page letter and study any attachments with more care, especially if they are laid out in an easy to read format.

Best documents have headings and sub-headings (like this one). Lists and bullet points aid reading. Visuals add interest and clarity.

For any written document remember the KISS rule:

Keep it short and simple

Reading that might be useful and/or interesting!

Don't make me think! By Steve Krug (web: www.sensible.com)

Son of Web pages that suck by Vincent Flanders (web: www.webpagesthatsuck.com)

Home page usability by Jakob Nielsen and Marie Tahir (www.useit.com)

Websites made painless by Christophe Dillinger

Writing copy for the web in a week by Nigel Temple

Web marketing in a week by J Jonathan Gabay

Lesley Morrissey is an expert in readability and specialises in helping people to develop a website that works for their business.

You can contact Lesley on +44 1245 473296 or Lesley@insidenews.co.uk or visit the Inside News website at www.insidenews.co.uk.

