

*Why We're Strong
(And Different !)*

WHY WE'RE STRONG (AND DIFFERENT!)

By Eng. Anas Samman

There are hundreds of web design firms around. Why has Web O₂ become so successful?

Web O₂ are a leading SY-based new media developer, specializing in the design and production of innovative Internet, Multimedia CD-rom/DVD and bespoke software for commercial client and publishing partners.

We develop high quality, client-focused new media solutions for range of purposes including online business application, marketing/promotion, interactive/online catalogues, business information resources, multimedia presentations and e-commerce.

Clients are drawn from throughout the SY and Europe and include major organizations such as ACC, Miakcorp, Magicworld ... as well as many in the small - medium sector.

We've been in business 7 years, first as a graphic design and software developer, and for the last three, as both web and graphic studio.

Design is about communication – whether it's a web site, an annual report, or an identity.

But being a design firm for 7 years isn't all about experience; we believe it's our expertise combined with our experience that makes us unique. Expertise and experience in issues such as:

- ▶ Hiring the right people
- ▶ Running a business well and not on ego
- ▶ Utilizing the right technology
- ▶ Treating our clients (and our vendors) appreciatively and with respect

What we do...

We believe that new media offers tremendous opportunities to a wide range of organizations. It is possible applications are as diverse as they are exciting, ranging from interactive marketing/promotion to online commerce, and from multimedia training to touch screen information systems.

At Web O₂, we work closely with our clients to realize the potential of their new projects. Our philosophy is that any new web site project must be integrated into the overall strategy of the organization, must reflect its brand values looks, the creative approach, and the ease in which it is update.

Our success is founded on our partnership approach to projects. We take the time to understate what you are trying to achieve before suggesting possible solutions and design each project to address these specific objectives.

Our aim throughout is to maximize the effectiveness of the finished product for your organization.

How we do it...

We have an in-house team of producers, interactive designers, software engineers and graphic artists all dedicated to creating the very best new web has to offer. This team, combined with the latest development tools and practices, ensure the Web O2 is reputation for quality and service is second to none.

The key to our success lies in the time we take to understand our client's organization, their objectives and their reasons for using the website. By doing this at the start, we help guarantee that the end product achieves its original goals.

Dependence on a new media project can seem a daunt prospect for clients, particularly if it's the first one they have worked on. Web O2 aim is to ease the process, marking it as enjoyable as possible. Our flexible production philosophy allows us to adapt to your way of working, ensuring that you to have as much or as little participation in the development process as you wish.

So, if you are thinking of commissioning a new media project, or would simply like to talk through some ideas, then we would love to hear from you. Why not contact us now?

What are our three core beliefs?

1. We design smart, clean solutions with attention to detail.
2. We build technologically sound sites.
3. We manage the project with you foremost in our minds.

1. Smart, clean solutions:

Less is more. Form follows function. Sure, you've heard it a thousand times, but look on the internet.

What do you see?

- ▶ Long download times
- ▶ Poor informational architecture
- ▶ Awful site navigation
- ▶ Me-too, uninspired design

We approach a site design thinking, "Okay, I'm the end user... I've never been here... and I probably won't come back if this site doesn't help me. "

That means creating graphics that have been optimized and deployed for snappy downloads. It also means creating a structure to the site that's easy to understand while moving around seamlessly, not deeper and deeper.

And finally, it means creating a site that's clear and concise in its look, that's unique to your marketing effort.

2 .Technologically sound sites:

You'd be surprised at how many different things can be part of a web site: calculators, databases, Security, e-commerce, search engines, dynamically driven sites, e t c.

We like to hear what you want your site to do for your end-user.

It's likely we've got an intriguing technological solution.

3. Project Management

Do you know where you are on the budget? The project timeline? What's next in the process?
How will you review what's going on with your site?

Quotes from our clients...

"We chose Web O2 Interactive on their record of producing quality products for high profile companies. Maintaining brand integrity and consistency in all communication to the consumer is paramount to us at ACC. and we knew we could rely on Web O2 to help us do this. The fact they are now producing the sound edition of the ACC. CD for us is testimony to their innate professionalism and understanding of a client's needs. We're delighted with what's been done for us and the feedback from the Engineering who've used it only reinforces our belief that we chose the right people for this job."

Salim sinno - General Manager, ACC.

"We needed a company with a creative outlook backed by proven technical skills. Web O2 were the ideal choice "

Ziad al kateb - Director, Alkateb Co.

"I write to thank you very much for the work you have put in to leading us to the production of an extremely good website"

Georgandis Co.

"Excellent, professional Service - The website is great!"

Khaled arabi katbi - General manager, Miakcorp

All essential questions. We endeavor to speak with our clients once a day (at least) during the project. That way, everyone is on the same page with the same concerns.

Finally, we hope that you'll contact us to collaborate with you on your next project. We'll show you what 7 years of expertise and experience in designing for business communications can do for you.

Demystifying Web Development

Demystifying Web Development:

by anas samman

It's hard to imagine, but as a practical business application, the web has only been around for 2000 days. Yet today, It seems impossible to believe that any company would *not* have a web site.

Even with the pervasiveness of the web, most buying and development decision makers are unsure of the complete process to guarantee a well executed and effective web site.

This white paper is written from the perspective of the client and will provide an excellent framework.

Here are the basic steps to create a successful web site:

Step 1 – What Do You Need in the RFP?

Step 2 – Reviewing the RFP

Step 3 – Discovery Meeting

Step 4 – Review JPEG Home Pages and Secondary Pages.

Step 5 – Review Working HTML Pages

Step 6 – Content Drop-In

Step 7 – Review and Test

Step 8 – Upload on Server

Step 9 – Maintenance

Step 1 – What elements go into the RFP?

With an RFP, always error on the side of asking for *too much information*. That way, you'll never be surprised further along in the process. Here's a quick checklist of the things you'll need to give the web development firm for an accurate RFP:

▷ **How many html "pages" will comprise the site?**

A pinpoint count is not necessary, but with 15% will suffice. Also, try to break the pages into sections. For example, 1– Home Page; 7– Sub-main pages; 49– Third-level pages; 12– 4th Level pages; 64–"Press Release" pages. Some pages are easier to do than others are. It could definitely lower the cost of the site.

▷ **Will the site have Flash?**

Depending on the complexity of the Flash animation and/or navigation, cost can vary greatly. Also, it's very important to remember that for every Flash page you have on site; you must also make a mirror page in HTML. Why ? Because even though you may have a Flash–detect built into your site to ask people to download the Flash player, often people won't elect to download simply because they don't like to put new things on their computer. Also, many corporations do not allow Flash on sites coming through the Firewall.

▷ **What kind of home page do you want?**

Do you want a type solution only? Imagery? Colors ? Working within the style on your advertising and marketing campaign?

▷ **What kind of navigation and information architecture do you need for the site?**

Information architecture is how the site is structured so content is retrieved easily. Navigation obviously, is how you get there. The crucial aspect of information architecture is to *prioritize* the information; in relationship to the site, each section and each page.

- **Will the site have a search engine?**
- **Will the site have forms?**
- **Will the site accumulate names and information?**
- **Does the site have a database on it?**
- **Can you purchase anything on the site?**

Step 2 – Reviewing the RFP

When reviewing RFP, it's important to look at *value* not cost. Make sure you're comparing apples to apples. The bottom line question to answer is, "Can they get this job done for me on time and on budget."

Step 3 – The Discovery Meeting

After you've chosen the design firm, a "discovery" meeting should take place. Block out an hour. At the meeting, the designers will ask a few dozen questions ranging from, "What sites do you like, and why?" to the themes of the site. The designer *must* walk away from the meeting with a very clear vision of what you want to accomplish with your site.

Step 4 – Review JPEGs of Home and Secondary Pages

Approximately a week after the discovery meeting, you'll review three to six jpegs of what the Home Page could look like. Corresponding to each of the home pages designs will be a jpeg that will show what a secondary page will look like. There are usually two to three rounds of changes before a design is selected.

Step 5 – Review of Working HTML Pages

After a design is selected, a working HTML home page and matching secondary page is created. Here are elements on the home page must be checked and the navigation confirmed.

Step 6 – Content drop-in

Welcome to the longest part of the process! After the home page and one secondary page are approved, all text and imagery (content) must be given to designers to be dropped in. Inevitably, this is the longest part of the process (no matter how small the site) because of approvals. Here, also, search engines, forms, extra flash or html, asp, databases, security, order function, and e-commerce solutions etc. are all put in.

Step 7 – Review and Test

Simply put, try to break the site. The site needs to be tested on multiple browsers (IE and Netscape), multiple platforms (PC and MAC), all the navigation links as well as search engines, forms, and databases need to be checked.

Send the site to as many people as you can and start making punch lists .

Web O₂

[white paper]

Step 8 – Upload on server

If the designer is putting the site on server (as opposed to them putting it on a disk and simply sending it to you),

they will need three pieces of information to "FTP" (File Transfer Protocols) the site to the server:

- site name
- user name
- password

Your Internet Service Provider or MIS people will have this information.

Step 9 – Maintenance

Obviously, a good site is well maintained with fresh content. Don't assume that your team can't do any of the

updates. The web developer should handle navigation, programming, updating artwork and layout. However, simple – html only pages can be set up as templates and updated handily by you or someone on your staff and quickly uploaded to the site. Any pricing on doing maintenance should be broken out separately.

Glossary of web terms

GLOSSARY OF WEB TERMS

ASP

Developed by Microsoft. Dynamically creates a web page from a database.

ASP

(Yes. There is another acronym ASP) This is "Application Service Provider". An ASP can provide an application over the web without you having to buy it and put it on your computer.

Broadband

Size of the internet connect. Broadband and its big brother, "megaband," ensure that enough information is getting through the pipes to your computer.

Browser

There are two main browsers web developers test for: Internet Explorer and Netscape. IE has almost 75% market share.

Cascading NavBars

Navigation that pops out revealing sub-navigation links.

CGI

Common Gateway Interface. Used to dynamically generate information on a site (e.g., Mortgage Calculators).

Data-driven web sites

Example: Amazon. A site that uses stored information to build a site. Very little--if any--html is involved.

DHTML

Dynamic Hypertext Mark-up Language. A beefier version of HTML that creates broader and more powerful web pages. Example: Cascading Navigation.

Flash

Program that creates animation for pages and navigation in web sites.

Frames

Replaceable sections of an HTML page that ensure a border of information remains while other information inside the border can swap out.

GIF

An image optimized for the web. GIFs and JPEGs are the two most common image forms. GIFs are generally used for flat color files like logos. JPEGs are used for photographs.

HTML

Hypertext Mark-up Language. Code that creates the backbone of a web page.

Java

Developed by Sun Microsystems. Operating language that can be used on any computer regardless of OS.

Javascript

Language that enables interactive occurrences (like rollovers or submit buttons) to work on a web site.

Microsoft

A large company in Redmond, Washington that is controlling every aspect of your life at this very moment.

MP3

Compression code that enables songs to be reduced enough to transport over the web. Napster songs are MP3s.

Navigation

Dovetailed with Site Architecture. It is the ability to move seamlessly through a site.

Site Architecture

How a site is prioritized and structured to provide the most efficient presentation of information.

SmartCards

The latest form of Credit Cards. SmartCards have a small chip in them that enables computers (and web sites) to do many different tasks.

Tables

Basic building block of an HTML page. Ensures that the elements of a page line up.

Unix

Type of server built by Sun Microsystems. Unix servers have difficulty running ASP pages without special plug-ins.

Windows NT Server

Type of server built by Microsoft. NT servers have difficulty running CGI/perl scripts without special plug-ins.

WML

Wireless Mark-up Language. Used to create sites on wireless devices like PDAs.