

Website Navigation

So far we have captured the attention of our viewer by detailing the benefits of what we offer. They like what they see and they want to see more. How you present that “more” is very important to keep your visitor around long enough for the “Call to Action”.

A website navigation scheme is a pyramid where the information offered is more specific and located at the top of the pyramid. The information is more complete and offers a greater explanation of the topic as you scroll further down the pyramid and deeper in the navigational content.

Navigation placed at the top of the page or on the left side will receive more of the reader’s attention. There are tools known as heat maps that show these locations are where a viewer’s eyes travel first. My preference is to have two navigation areas with one being smaller and oriented to typical expectations such as HOME, CONTACT and SITEMAP. The second navigation area can include ABOUT, PRODUCTS, SERVICES, ARTICLES, NEWS, etc. It is important to keep your pages consistent throughout your website.

Use JavaScript for navigation menus so that changing the nav bar on 25 pages only requires a change to the menu.js file. This allows all pages running this script to display the new menu. However, the downside to this technique is that Google and other search engines might not index the contents of the javascript file; therefore, the website won’t have all the pages indexed by search engines.

A management technique for this problem is to put an HTML menu of all the website pages you want indexed at the bottom of the home page. Voila! Problem solved. Now all pages are indexed from the home page and will be found by search engines.

Navigation has gone through a lot of changes over the years. It has evolved from buttons to image rollovers to text. In the last few years most navigation tends to be text-based. This is also my preference because it is so controllable and easily identifiable.

Remember, the purpose of the navigation area is to draw your viewer as deep as they want to go into your website. Your job is to capture their attention on the home page, keep them from getting distracted, and attract them to your Call to Action.

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