

## Wired and Wonderful: The Web Site Advantage

By Faith Monson

We live in a wired world. Thanks to cell phones and WiFi, all of the information on the Internet is never more than a click away. That's precisely why having a web site is more important than ever before—even for creative, artistic professionals like interior designers.

Those of us who pride ourselves on our ability to create and nurture relationships to build business may cringe at the impersonal nature of the web. But look again. What may seem impersonal at first glance is actually the most revolutionary tool to connect conversations, ideas and solution providers in the history of the world—and you don't want to miss out on it.

Here are five ways you can make the most of a web site for your company:

- 1. Expand on your portfolio without high printing costs.** In a visual business, creating marketing materials that show your work to its best advantage can be very expensive. Full-color brochures on heavy stock paper with quality binding have a high cost per piece. They're too expensive to mail out to all but the most qualified prospects. A web site can show your work in full color without the expense of printing and distribution, and it's very inexpensive to add new photos or even a video tour of your latest show house or designer room.
- 2. Make a personal statement with audio, video and motion.** Your web site isn't limited to just words. The best web sites are interactive. Let your personality shine through by utilizing easy-to-play audio recordings, video clips from speeches, maybe even a video testimonial from a satisfied client. The web is perfect for a visually-focused profession like design, and with the new options for audio and video, your prospects can really get a sense for your individuality as well as your work.
- 3. Become more than just a pretty room.** Brochures can't tell your story as well as you can. Yet to keep your business running smoothly, you can't spend all of your time meeting with prospects. Your web site can fill in the gap by sharing your design perspective, your style philosophy and your unique impression of trends via click-and-play audio and video. Prospects know that you'll be a good fit for them before they ever pick up the phone to schedule a meeting. That saves time for you and increases the odds that your new client meeting will be a success.
- 4. Stand out as a thought leader.** Today's editors and reporters do their research online. When they are looking for someone to quote on trends for a given industry, they turn to the web to find experts. They decide which experts to contact based on what they can learn about that person's point of view and credibility—and that is often determined by the expert's web site and online articles. They're also looking for experts who have great visuals and photos that can spice up a story—another reason to showcase lots of

your projects on your site. How many interviews have you missed because reporters couldn't find you online?

**5. Offer options and added benefits to your clients.** With a web site, you can make it easier for customers to do business with your company. You can offer online payment, provide automatic email notification when special-ordered materials ship, and even sell related books or signature products that you have created. Let your current and past clients know about your recent awards, speeches and show houses—it might just spark a call for a new project! You can offer online quizzes and downloadable articles and encourage current clients to purchase additional services by educating them about trends or helping them understand the full scope of what you provide.

The best thing about harnessing the power of the Internet is that you don't have to do it by yourself. It's more affordable than ever before to work with a qualified web designer and create a site that is not only a great sales tool, but also an elegant showcase for your work. There's really no excuse in today's competitive business environment not to have a web site. Add a web site to your marketing and expand your outreach overnight.

Faith Monson is a Success Consultant who works with entrepreneurs, designers, retailers and sales-driven organizations. She makes people and businesses better by daring them to be great and helping them to reach their full potential. Visit [www.FaithMonson.com](http://www.FaithMonson.com) or contact her directly at 703-237-2077 or [Faith@FaithMonson.com](mailto:Faith@FaithMonson.com).