

INSTORE

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FOR JEWELRY PROFESSIONALS

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Category Focus: Website Design

By Josh Wimmer

If you're revamping your website—or, at this late date, building your first — figure out whether it's going to be a "brochure"-style site whose aim is to bring customers to your showroom or if you want it integrated with your inventory and POS system. And make a commitment to the project. "The biggest factor in how quickly a project gets done is the level of preparedness on the client's side," says Taft Tucker, Web developer for Abbot Jewelry Systems. "This is a living, breathing marketing component, not an ad that gets stuck in the Yellow Pages. The Web and social networking are no longer to be sneezed at, and anyone who ignores that is turning a blind eye to something very important." — JOSH WIMMER



POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Weigh the pros and cons of e-commerce. "A lot of retailers say they're interested in it, but they don't necessarily understand it can be like running a whole separate store." — Tucker
- "You should be able to manage your own site. You don't want something that's going to go up and just sit there, unchanged." — Harout Khadarian, Logic Mate



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- “Look for a Web designer who can create websites that: use cascading style sheets (CSS) so it’s easier to test multiple variations of site elements; employ text-oriented navigation (instead of images or Flash) since it’s much easier to test; and, have a fluid design where the site’s elements can be moved around without interrupting the surrounding content.” — Kim Ann King, CEO of SiteSpect (www.sitespect.com)
- Create a social-networking community around your Web presence, where enthusiasts can network, share and access information and get insider deals. — Dominic Wheatley, CEO of SocialGo
- “Set up tools on a website now that let a customer search your inventory based on a variety of criteria. We’ve developed a calculator tool that allows users to plug in their salary and see an engagement ring within their price range.” — Chris Weakley, senior vice president, the Shand Group
- Find a designer who will create a flexible site: “Every month, there should be a design element that changes on the front page, whether it’s a special or the current birthstone or something else.” — Khadarian
- Make sure the designer understands your store and can convey that information. — Tucker
- Look for a company that will ensure your site will be highly visible in online searches. —Daniel Yahdav, DJW



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