



Website Maintenance: Your site needs it as much as your car

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No, your relationship with your Web developer doesn't end when your site is launched for the world to see.

Websites need continual updating and modifying to keep them looking fresh and serving the needs of visitors and customers. These updates will ensure that you get the most from your development investment and that you leverage the Web to your greatest advantage.

Assuming that you are satisfied with a developer's performance during the site creation phase, he or she can make these changes as part of an ongoing retainer relationship or as project work.

The following list covers many of the tasks you'll likely want a Web developer to do on an ongoing basis.

1. **Content updates.** Keep your site fresh by regularly rotating in new articles, tips, services, images, testimonials. Work with your developer to create an editorial calendar, which outlines what will be added to your site and when it will be added. Your developer can also come up with ways to highlight new content, such as through a "What's new" area, or by using icons or other graphics to identify these items. On the flip side, avoid having out-of-date content on your site, and work with your developer to remove time-sensitive items when appropriate.
2. **New product information.** Your site should reflect new products/services or modifications to your offerings as soon as they happen. Whether this is adding new items to your catalogs or swapping out old terms for new wording, your developer will be involved. If frequent modifications to your product set or terms are likely, ask a developer up front to set rates for these common changes.
3. **Site navigation.** While you hope that site navigation meets visitor needs, it may require tweaks based on how people use your site. For example, one feature of your site may be unexpectedly popular, encouraging you to make it more accessible. Likewise, key pages that prove difficult for users to find may need to be made more prominent.
4. **Special offers and promotions.** Special promotions will keep your site looking fresh and provide you an opportunity to encourage customers to buy from you and learn more about your entire product portfolio. As you rotate services or items, your developer will need to make these changes to the site. You may also want to create special "landing pages" to direct site traffic to when you run promotions. These pages help you to track the effectiveness of outbound marketing, such as newsletters and e-mail, based on how many people visit the page. SCHEMA can help you with outbound promotions through its marketing and online advertising tools.
5. **Site redesign.** If you've just launched your site, you probably don't want to think about your next redesign. But Internet time often dictates that companies revamp their Web sites regularly in order to communicate to customers that they are always doing something new and innovative. Think of where you want your site to be 12-18 months down the road, and work out a long-term plan with your developer.