



Less is More on the Home Page

By C. David Gammel

Many web site home pages look like a big-box toy store aisle that has been devastated by two six year olds. Dozens of links, graphics and stories are scattered across the page in a cacophony of demands for attention, resulting in most of them receiving none. Creating chaos on your home page by putting too much on it is an indicator that your site is not aligned with the overall goals and strategy of your organization.

You can focus your home page to drive traffic where you want it when you have clarity over exactly what value your site should be contributing. This clarity comes from having frank discussions about what the organization is trying to achieve, how you wish to achieve it and in what way the Web site can contribute to those efforts. It is a simple concept but very hard to get right in implementation.

Sit down and have a discussion with your top executives about what they need to achieve over the next year and how the web site can support those efforts. Focus most of the home page on those key outcomes rather than on a 100 at once. Developing the capacity to plan and rotate

content through home page features will help. (See my article, *Managing the Politics of Your Web Site's Information Architecture*, for tips on how to do this.)

Even when there is clear understanding of strategy, the will has to be there to implement it. Staff are not likely to cooperate for long if they do not see focusing on high level goals as being in their self-interest. The key to getting started on this long road, in my experience, is to find early supporters and develop quick and effective wins for them. As word spreads, you'll find more and more people swinging into line in order to accrue similar benefits.

Discipline and focus are the secret ingredients to home page success. Put less content on the home page but more of it that is intentionally contributing to your goals.

C. David Gammel is president of High Context Consulting. David helps his clients to maximize the value of their people, processes and technology. You may contact David at +1 (410) 742-9088 or david@highcontext.com. More articles and resources are available at www.highcontext.com