

5.2 Selecting an Internet Service Provider (ISP)

An Internet service provider **will not only allow you access** to the Internet, **but will form an important communication link** with your customer base. Your ISP **will allow you to have access** to e-mail, the World Wide Web (WWW), as well as a few other information sources.

When selecting an ISP the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

ACCESS:

Some ISPs offer unlimited access to the Internet, others will limit the time you are allowed on the Internet. This can affect your company communication.

SPEED:

Speed or bandwidth of the ISP's connection to the Internet.

COST:

Some ISPs offer free Internet access which can be slower than some of the other paid ISPs.

CALL COSTS:

Make sure that you can connect to your ISP with a local phone call. If not, then choose an ISP that is based as close to you as possible.

Some ISPs offer you free web space to host your web site. Around 5-10 Mb for a simple web site.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Most ISPs will offer you more than one e-mail address which can be used for promotional feedback.

24-HOUR TECHNICAL SUPPORT:

Important when you are having problems, especially if you are new to the Internet.

It would be good practice to talk to a few people about their Internet access and compare the results.

5.3 Creating a Home Page or Web Site

This is usually **the first page you will view** of a web site. A web site **can be one page or multiple pages** that are linked together. A competent computer user should be able to **create a simple, effective web site**. There are numerous web sites that provide reference material and software to help.

The **pages of a web site are written in Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)**. This **allows the computer to read and interpret** the format of the page **and display the images on the page**. Many of the word processor packages will allow you to **save a document in html format**, ready to transfer to your web server. **A basic understanding of the html tags is needed** if you are going **to build the web page yourself**. Alternatively, there are **numerous companies that will design the web site** for you. Remember, general **design principles that apply to brochures also apply to the web pages**.

Certain factors need to be taken into consideration when designing your web site:

Information from your existing brochure needs to be customised to fit on the computer screen, which is a different size

Text on a computer screen is harder to comprehend; therefore you may need to shorten some of the sentences in your brochure text

Images need to be of a lower resolution, this will make the pictures download faster

Background colours can make text hard to read

5.3.1 Links

Links are used to move from one web page to another. It is important to link your web site to other web sites to ensure that visitors view your site. The local tourism body may arrange for a link to their page. Linking to co-operative partners in the industry will increase the number of visitors. Special interest sites, relating to your product or advertising, on another web site (e.g. travel site) can be beneficial.

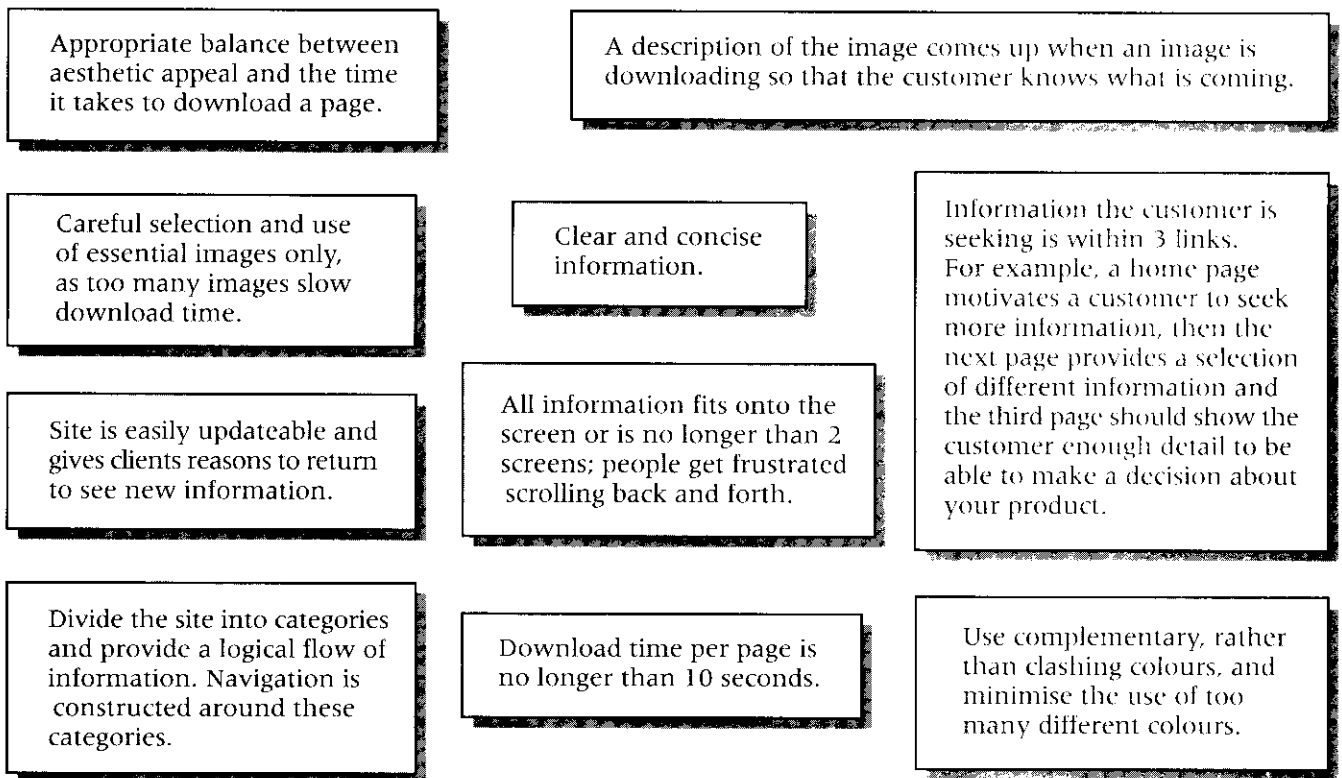
5.3.2 Banner Advertising

Banners are small adverts that appear at the top of a web page. The customer would click on the banner and it would then link to your web site. These banners are a good method of promoting your web site, but should be approached with caution. It is difficult to monitor the results, and can be costly.

5.3.3 E-mail Advertising

This is a cost-effective method of reaching a target, but it needs to be approached with caution. Ultimately you need to seek permission from the intended recipient, before sending the message. Often unsolicited e-mail or "spam" is frowned upon and may cause more damage than good. E-mail is a good method of keeping in touch with your past clientele or to send out special offers to travel agents.

Characteristics of a good web site



WHAT TO AVOID!

