

QUICK ASSESSMENT WEBSITE USABILITY

Assessment

The checklist below provides a number of statements and profiles of the 'ideal' promotion portal. Each of these thesis / guidelines in the table will be given a score: **Good**, **Sufficient** or **Poor**. Main goal is to obtain ideas for improvement.

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
1 CONTENTS		
1.1 Correct presentation of information and organisation		
The website contains:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> good and correct information on the organisation and the services. What is exactly the service the organisation can offer to exporters and international buyers. The more specific the better. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when necessary, information of relevant staff and their added value. Contact details are provided: Provide e-mail addresses and telephone numbers in international format (with the right contact) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a privacy policy is presented on every page (food for thought: http://www.howto.gov/web-content/requirements-and-best-practices/laws-and-regulations/privacy) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> your linking policy describing how and the guidelines for how you select (Food for thought http://www.howto.gov/web-content/requirements-and-best-practices/omb-policies/linking) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> your policies on digital rights, copyrights, trademarks, and patents. 		
Your website:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows a sales process based on the expectations of your key clients... 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains no dead ends ... 		

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offers Multiple interaction possibilities such as contact form, e-mail, call me back form, Skype, telephone, download, subscribe, follow us, post selling leads, have a showroom. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses well-designed calls to actions. Action should be triggered through outstanding buttons/links, attractive design, bigger font ... 		
The needs of the key clients are clear (based on a profound Market Intel needs analysis). Depending on the goals, the website is available in one or more languages.		
Unnecessary info and low priority options are avoided, such as weather forecasts		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide credible and up to date content. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data should include reference from a reliable source. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulate engagement and interaction through blog formats and social media 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> integration and alerting formats. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should inform your key clients when new content is added to your website (E-mail alert, RSS, ...). 		
1.2 Market Intelligence		
The market intelligence covers major sectors / product market intelligence		
The market intelligence covers major markets (countries)		
The market intelligence covers major topics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the most suitable markets for product X, opportunities, trends, short and up to date analysed trade flows, relevant most suitable trade channels, buyer requirements, market access requirements,). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syndication with Customs trade statistics databases or affiliation with ITC's TradeMap tool. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WTO member states have to publish information online on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trade procedures and documents applied duties, fees, taxes and charges rules governing classification, valuation and origin penalty and appeal procedures 		
The market intelligence is accessible from a database via search filters		

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
The market intelligence is accessible from a keyword search		
The market intelligence is up-to-date, specific, includes forecasts and provides advise to the exporters and/or international buyers		
There is up to date international sector news available		
Market intelligence is tailored to multiple target groups (domestic and international)		
The Market Intel is integrated with the other services of the organisation		
1.3 Event Information		
The portal includes a calendar of (relevant) national or regional trade shows / conferences		
The portal includes a calendar of training events		
The calendars are up-to-date end easy accessible and includes an expiration date		
There is clear call to action: possibility to apply for or subscribe to these activities, phone call to the suitable staff member ...		
1.4 Sector / Company Information		
The portal offers national or regional sector reviews (present it through a compelling mix of charts, tables and text)		
There is up to date regional or national sector news available		
The portal offers info on 'how to do business'		
The portal includes a searchable exporters database, with company information such as:		
• Main products and services		
• Production capacity		
• Exportable offer		
• Certification		
• Health, safety requirements and social requirements		
• Delivery and payment terms		
• Track record		
• Number of employees		
• Virtual exhibition of companies (include pictures and / or videos)		
• Unique value proposition		

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
• Call to action?		
The portal includes information on how to make a quality list of potential partners		
The portal includes a trade lead possibility (offers to buy, offers to sell, ..)		
• Trade leads Database offers a clear search (product, country etc)		
• Trade leads contain enough information about products		
• Trade leads have option to add images		
• Trade leads contain information of buyer / seller		
• Trade leads contain easy way to get in contact with buyer/seller		
• Clear call to action		
1.5 Links		
The portal includes links to relevant national or regional business / trade support bodies or governments / international organisations		
The portal includes links to relevant international databases (statistics, business directories, trade fairs, tariffs and non-tariff barriers, prices etc.)		
The portal includes links to relevant international e-markets / vertical portals (sector based)		
1.6 Tutorials & Export Tools		
The portal offers downloadable manuals / guides on export marketing management		
The portal offers downloadable manuals / guides on export procedures		
The portal offers downloadable manuals / guides on conducting market research		
The portal offers downloadable manuals / guides on trade fair participation		
The portal offers downloadable manuals / guides on doing business		
The portal offers downloadable manuals / guides on export promotion		
The portal offers interactive export checkers		
The portal offers interactive tools for preparing export marketing plans		
The portal offers interactive tools on corporate social responsibility		
The portal offers a useful set of frequently asked questions and answers (FAQ)		
These tools are supportive / integrated with the other services of the organization		
1.7 Testimonials / Case studies / Success stories		

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The portal offers testimonials and success stories from exporters and international buyers. Promote the services of the organization and brand the image of the sector and country.		
2 USER EXPERIENCE		
2.1 'Pop-ups' are avoided		
2.2 Optimize the credibility of information-oriented websites.		
- Ensure the website is arranged in a logical way		
- Ensure the site looks professionally designed		
- Ensure the site is as up-to-date as possible		
- Provide links to outside sources and materials		
2.3 Minimize the time required to download a website's page		
2.4 Print friendly option in place		
3 ACCESSIBILITY		
3.1 Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element that conveys information, including images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, animations etc.		
3.2 The main menu is on the top or at the left side.		
4 HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE		
4.1 Design, develop and test for the most common browsers.		
4.2 Design for the connection speed of most users.		
4.3 Design for monitors with the screen resolution set at 1024x768 pixels. Or preferably responsive design		
4.4 Mobile friendly: Content has to be presented in the easiest and most digestible way:		
• concise in text		
• infographics for quick insights		
• video for ease of consumption		

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> swipe friendly content and layout for smart phone and tablet users 		
Design your site with mobile users in mind, and test your site on mobile browsers to ensure the public can access your information on the go. http://www.howto.gov/mobile		
5 THE HOMEPAGE		
5.1 Enable users to access the homepage from any other page on the website.		
5.2 Present all major options on the homepage. The homepage draws the attention to the main services and functionalities.		
5.3 Treat your homepage as the key to conveying the quality of your site.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The page appearance is quiet, clear and can easily be scanned. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 5 seconds, the homepage convinces the target group to continue exploring the website. 		
5.4 Clearly and prominently communicate the purpose of the website on the homepage		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your homepage clearly communicates your Unique Value proposition. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tagline is properly defined 		
5.5 Communication		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit the amount of text on the homepage. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homepage does not offer unnecessary information (supply driven, like a mission statement or vision). 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most important information and actions are above the fold. 		
5.6 Ensure that the homepage has the necessary characteristics to be easily perceived as a homepage.		
5.7 Strong testimonials / convincement power is provided		
5.8 Social media icons are in place (Facebook, Youtube, LinkedIn and Twitter at least (Google+)		
5.9 Action is triggered through outstanding buttons/links (calls to action). The calls to action are clearly designated (attractive design, bigger font, larger size).		
5.10 The pictures used are professional, the best that you have, and enhance your value		

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proposition, what do you want to sell / communicate.		
6 PAGE LAYOUT		
6.1 Create pages that are not considered cluttered by users. To facilitate finding target information on a page, create pages that are not too crowded with items of information. The page appearance is quiet, clear and scannable.		
6.2 Put important, clickable items in the same locations, and closer to the top of the page, where their location can be better estimated.		
6.3 Structure pages so that items can be easily compared when users must <input type="checkbox"/> analyse those items to discern similarities, differences, trends, and relationships.		
7 NAVIGATION		
7.1 Do not create or direct users into pages that have no navigational options.		
7.2 Clearly differentiate navigation elements from one another (group and place them in a consistent and easy to find position on each page). There is a clear divided structure for content relevant for international buyers and exporters. The structure of the site and the navigation are clear and intuitive.		
7.3 On long pages, provide a 'list of contents' with links that take users to the corresponding content further down the page. On this long page you can easily go back to the top of the page by means of a special 'go to top' button.		
7.4 Provide feedback to let users know where they are in the Website (use of bread crumbs).		
7.5 The button to the homepage is placed on every page (could be an icon). Moreover the logo is a clickable button to the homepage		
8 SCROLLING AND PAGING		
8.1 Use an appropriate page layout to eliminate the need for users to scroll horizontally.		
9 HEADING TITLES AND LABELS		
9.1 Ensure that category labels, including links and buttons, clearly reflect the information and		

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
items contained within the category. Key clients will have a clear view of the contents.		
9.2 Use descriptive (and unique) headings liberally throughout a Website.		
9.3 Ensure that data tables have clear, concise, and accurate row and column headings.		
10 LINKS		
10.1 Provide links to other pages in the website with related content.		
10.2 Make the link text consistent with the title or headings on the destination (i.e., target) page.		
10.3 Ensure that items that are not clickable do not have characteristics that suggest that they are clickable.		
10.4 Ensure that important content can be accessed from more than one link.		
10.5 Use text links rather than image links.		
10.6 If any part of an image is clickable, ensure that the entire image is clickable or that the clickable sections are obvious.		
11 TEXT APPEARANCE		
11.1 When users are expected to rapidly read and understand prose text, use black text on a plain, high-contrast, non-patterned background.		
11.2 Ensure that the format of common items is consistent from one page to another.		
11.3 When users must read a lot of information, use lower-case fonts and appropriate capitalization. The use of fonts is consistent (guideline max of 2 fonts) and CAPITAL fonts are avoided as much as possible.		
12 LISTS		
12.1 Arrange lists and tasks in an order that best facilitates efficient and successful user performance. Place a list's most important items at the top. Make lists easy to scan and understand. Display a series of related items in a vertical list in stead of continuous text		
13 SCREEN BASED CONTROLS		

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13.1 Distinguish clearly and consistently between required and optional data entry fields.		
13.2 Ensure that a pushbutton's label clearly indicates its action.		
13.3 Ensure that data entry labels are worded consistently, so that the same data item is given the same label if it appears on different pages. Treat upper- and lowercase letters as equivalent when users are entering codes. Display an associated label for each data entry field to help users understand what entries are desired. Do not require users to enter the same information more than once		
More info: Offering easy access to online forms and publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.howto.gov/web-content/manage/categorize/common-content/forms-and-publications • http://www.howto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/OnlineFormsChecklist.pdf 		
14 GRAPHICS, IMAGES AND MULTIMEDIA		
14.1 Use background images sparingly and make sure they are simple, especially if they are used behind text.		
14.2 Ensure that all clickable images are either labelled or readily understood by typical users.		
14.3 Take steps to ensure that images on the Website do not slow page download times unnecessarily.		
14.4 Place your organization's logo in a consistent place on every page.		
14.5 Do not make important images look like banner advertisements or gratuitous decorations.		
14.6 Ensure that Website images / video convey the intended message to users, not just to designers. Short text in the picture with a call to action is a powerful combination.		
14.7 Follow the trend of disseminating your Market Intel via videos		
15 WRITING WEB CONTENT		
15.1 When describing an action or task that has a natural order or sequence (assembly instructions, troubleshooting, etc.). Structure the content so that the sequence is obvious and consistent.		

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15.2 Do not use words that typical users may not understand. Do not use unfamiliar or undefined acronyms or abbreviations on Websites. Show complete words rather than abbreviations whenever possible.		
15.3 To optimize reading comprehension, minimize the number of words in sentences, and the number of sentences in paragraphs (max 5 lines with blanks).		
15.4 Do not put a lot of prose text on navigation pages.		
15.5 When it is useful enumerations and /or bullets are used		
15.6 Active writing style is used (no passive)		
15.7 Internal publication guidelines: In the case of sites where several people are responsible for the contents it is better to work with internal publication guidelines. Employees who publish on the site have a good knowledge of 'writing texts for the internet'.		
15.8 Make use of storytelling when relevant. For example when promoting a sector to international buyers or a trade mission to exporters.		
16 CONTENT ORGANIZATION		
16.1 Organize information at each level of the Website so that it shows a clear and logical structure to typical users.		
16.2 WORD and PDF: The information is offered in Word format as little as possible. When documents have to be printed, they are presented in PDF format. The link to the document offers enough information on the contents, by means of which the visitor can determine whether downloading might be worthwhile. The printing quality of a file is good. Points of attention for this are: • The company, internet address and contact possibility are mentioned • A good numeration (page number and total number of pages indicated).		
17 SEARCH		
17.1 Ensure that the results of user searches provide the precise information being sought, and in a format that matches users' expectations (Result page of Google is a benchmark).		
17.2 Design search engines to search the entire site, or clearly communicate which part of the site will be searched.		

	SCORE	REMARKS / ACTIONS
17.3 Treat user-entered upper- and lowercase letters as equivalent when entered as search terms.		
17.4 Provide a search option on each page of a content-rich Website.		
17.5 The search method is clear e.g. by means of combinations of words.		
17.6 The search engine results directly lead to the place where the information can be found.		

Source: benchmark of best practices, own experience with trade information and trade promotion portal and usability.gov (<http://guidelines.usability.gov/>)