

A What's Up Marketing Assessment Sample

Positioning Overview – Bird's Eye View

Your current website says solo practitioner with great credentials and loads of experience. The style is clean and implies someone buttoned-down. However, your pieces lack personality and differentiation. This is a missed opportunity to connect with potential clients and differentiate if not addressed in the next design.

Analysis – From the Ground Up

Each segment below covers a current trend and recommended changes to help integrate the trend into your new website.

Content:

Personality and Perspective: Copy trends are current informal and offer a definite perspective. The landing page is the place to start building a conversation, establishing a voice, and demonstrating insight into what people need and what you deliver – a tall order for such a tight space. Currently, your home page copy tells me you have industry experience, but sounds formal and a little vague - what I categorize as corporate speak. It doesn't tell me about your style or approach; what makes you different.

Change: To show people your thinking, you could lead with challenges you know clients are experiencing; share your personality by peppering up the copy and making it more conversational. Metaphors offer a lively way to show your personality, but only if there is a strong connection for you. Otherwise, it can sound forced.

Headline Help: According to my UI friends, people have the attention span of gnats and only tolerate a few lines of copy – almost like a headline - before going deeper or jumping off the page. The biography information on the landing page is long.

Change: Check out how effectively the competition uses small information bites to introduce the company and show thinking. I like the ability to self-identify with a tidbit in a box and click through for more. You could do something similar here by audience (B2B, consumer, etc.) and a quick challenge description. (Example: Did you know that B2Bs successfully employ social media to engage an audience? Learn more.)

Wins, Case Studies, Testimonials, Oh My: In a Yelp-addicted world, this appears to be a critical checklist item. It's a paradox that no one wants a canned testimonial page, but we do want to read positive reviews. This is absent from your current site.

Change: A customer quote on each page becomes part of the conversation. My suggestion is to click through the quote to a corresponding case study. Choose only the examples that line up with your positioning and the clients you want to attract in the future (not more of what you didn't enjoy doing.)

More on Positioning: Your services and client lists, while clear and easy to follow, read very generically and imply that your work is plain vanilla.

Change: Introduce each segment with some creativity to show style, or context to show thinking.

Design:

The headshot is corporate, which feels dated based on website trends. Check out your competitor's photos. It's the social media close up. If you want to be seen as a boutique agency, I'd save the close up for your bio page. If you want to highlight the independent practitioner, you can use a photo of yourself on the landing page, but I suggest an environmental or active color shot.

Show me the Technology: The consultants who instill the highest confidence are the ones using the technology, not telling me they understand it. That said, your competitor has many blogs and hits you over the head with a front-page Flash. I the more subtle approach much better.

Change: If you recommend a technology, I think it's important to use it, so I'd pick carefully the social media you really like and want to participate in for this next design round. (Or, at least make it easy to swap one social media icon for another.)

To minimize the updating nightmare of multiple social media conversations, you could create a blog series of concrete tips (e.g., how to raise your voice in 140 characters or less, avoiding a communications sideswipe) that not only positions you and drives traffic, but also can be repurposed for twitter, or LinkedIn conversations.

Active not Static: The new breed of websites seems to fall somewhere between the static brochure website (what you currently have), and the informal blog sites that came after. Regular updates say you are in motion and engaged. However, too many update lines can be confusing.

Change: Consider a hybrid of quick information about you (like a brochure) mixed with a couple of manageable updates on your speaking calendar and latest article.

The Graphics Challenge: The trend now is more graphics, less copy - plus a combinations of graphic design and photos. Unfortunately, communication images are limited and seem to fall into the phone, computer, radio tower category. iStock photos of corporate people are missed opportunities to express true personality. Your current site is limited to one strong design element and one photo, which add to the static feel.

Change: Here's where a metaphor can help, or you may want to think perhaps branching out to include visuals of people in the industries you address. As you are a writer, I'd suggest picking your artist based heavily on the ability to deal with graphics and photo layout.

That's the nutshell version. Let me know if there's anything you wanted feedback on that I didn't cover and I'll be happy to take another look. It was a pleasure.