

bits & bytes

Web Accessibility: Why You Should Care

by Renee Cerullo

No one anticipated how the Web would influence every aspect of daily life. As the Internet has become more and more utilized, the issue of accessibility has come to the forefront and now impacts every Web presence.

Web accessibility is the practice of making Web sites and their content accessible to the disabled. It is a trend that often results in general feelings of agony for those who design Web sites. It's not as if the majority of Web developers intentionally make sites inaccessible. But they often do and it might be costing them more than lost sales. It might be severely damaging their brands and putting them in legal limbo. While many now realize the importance of having an accessible site, few initially had the foresight to recognize the ideal of total accessibility. To make matters worse, it is often seen as far too complicated and expensive to undertake.

Several years ago, Target was the subject of a lawsuit brought by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB). NFB sued Target alleging that Target.com was inaccessible and it violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The phrase for the ADA is "a place of public accommodation" which means you are required to accommodate people with disabilities. Target's argument was it did not apply to its Web site. They were wrong.

Very quietly, a number of large organizations now work behind the scenes to be accessible. The banking, travel, and education industries are now quickly trying to improve their Web sites. It is a law for New York State organizations and fed-

eral government agencies. Target quickly settled their lawsuit for \$6 million but that is just the beginning. As part of the settlement Target had to make their web site accessible and be certified and monitored by the NFB. Amazon was the most recent target by advocacy groups because of their Kindle. The Kindle is not accessible.

When teaching a class last year I used a screen reader to view JCPenny's Web site. My class was amazed. The site had so many images and the image names were all 15-plus number names. Just listening to the screen reader trying to go through the page for 15 minutes, it made us all have a new found understanding of what a visually impaired person goes through.

Many blind people use programs like Jaws or Window Eyes. These are screen readers with a voice output that reads what is on the computer screen. When a Web site has a lot of pictures, charts, pop-ups, the screen reader is unable to follow the wording on the page and it is very confusing. Also, the blind use keyboard commands rather than a mouse so when a Web site is flashy, it is difficult to navigate the screen.

For a person who has some vision but needs things magnified they often use programs like zoom-text. This program takes what is on the screen and enlarges the font. When a Web site has an all-text version, it is much easier to use the assistive tech. The wording can easily be enlarged and read in the correct format. This works the same as for the screen readers, when a Web site is busy and there



are a lot of tabs/pics and pop-ups, it makes it nearly impossible to use. Also, if a Web site requires a person to open a lot of new tabs, it is very difficult to know what page you are on. On Mac computers, there is a feature where you can enlarge the font on the screen without purchasing a different program but a person still needs quite a bit of vision to be able to use this feature.

What can a company do to ensure accessibility compliance? Outside bringing in usability testers, those concerned with accessibility can also use automated testing tools to provide an indication of potential issues.

• WorldSpace – <http://worldspace.deque.com> – scans a URL against the US Section 508 Accessibility Guidelines or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Ultimately the mindset of a Web professional should be "Why not accessible?" Not only is it the right thing to do ethically and morally, it's the best deterrent from litigation and its better customer service!

To truly provide an accessible Web experience it is necessary to make access to information usable by people of all abilities and disabilities. This is not just the visually impaired. It includes senior citizens, people with physical disabilities, and other health issues.

Chapter member and Web developer, Renee Cerullo brings us new technology each month! Contact her at Cerullo@RLComputing.com.

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wednesday, december 9, 2009

The Advantages of Women Business Enterprise Certification

Have you thought about applying for certification as a Women Business Enterprise (WBE) or Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)? Your questions will be answered by **Adrian Rodriguez**, MBE/WBE Coordinator for the **Erie County Division of Equal Employment Opportunity**. He will discuss certification with Erie County; the advantages it offers and an outline of the process and what is required from the woman-owned business.

Location Sean Patrick's Restaurant
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Time 5:30 p.m. Networking
6:00 p.m. Dinner

Cost \$30 Member
\$35 Prospective member

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(Cancellations 48 hrs in advance. "No shows" will be billed)

make your dinner reservation online: www.nawbowny.org

Include your full name, telephone number, dinner choice, and if a guest, the name of the NAWBO member who invited you. Mail pre-payment (check payable to NAWBO) to: NAWBO, P.O. Box 917, Williamsville NY 14221.

Questions? – Please call Pat Herberger at 716-863-6577

friday, december 11, 2009

Lunch Bunch

This small member-only group meets monthly on a **Friday** at **12:30 p.m.** Join us at **Lisa and Bob's Citta di Militello**, 60 Wehrle Drive (Gold's Gym Plaza, corner of Union and Wehrle) on the Cheektowaga/Amherst border. Our discussion will be "Looking back at 2009, what do you really want to go ahead and do in 2010 and what do you think you should leave behind?" Please RSVP to Amy Remmele at amy@peakofsuccess.com.

thursday, december 17, 2009

Breakfast Bunch

Our member-only group meets each month for business talk, problem solving and fellowship on **Thursday** mornings at **8:00 a.m.** at **The Original Pancake House**, 5479 Main Street, Williamsville (www.originalpancakehouse.com). The side room off the foyer has been reserved for NAWBO. Our topic: "New Year's Resolutions – Setting Goals for the New Year." Please RSVP to Dottie Austin at daustin@rwcaldwell.com or 632-7663.

niagara university family business breakfast forums

tuesday, december, 2010

Protecting your Firm from Customer and Employee Theft

Presented by Paul Catalano, TOPS Markets, Loss Prevention Manager. The Niagara University Family Business Center is dedicated to serving the needs of family and privately owned businesses in Western New York and Southern Ontario through the exchange of knowledge. The Center's mission is to develop and exchange relevant information on family business issues in order to strengthen the stability and long term viability of family and privately owned businesses through education, research, and service.

Through a scholarship program with Niagara University, NAWBO Buffalo Niagara members can attend the The Center's Breakfast Forums **free of charge**. Space has been allotted for **up to 5 NAWBO members to participate at each forum**, held monthly at **Sonoma Grille**, 5010 Main Street in Snyder. Breakfast & networking: 7:30 – 8:15 a.m.; presentation: 8:15 – 9:30 a.m. **To register:** Contact Cindy Valtin at 688-4943 or CValtin@roadrunner.com. Niagara University contact info: Melissa Heidt, (716) 286-8160 or CBAcenters@niagara.edu.

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member news

Lisa Hunter Jewelry Open House

All members are cordially invited to an after hours Holiday Open House exclusively for NAWBO members on **Monday, December 7, 2009** from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Lisa Hunter Jewelry, 5350 Main Street in Williamsville (entrance on North Long).

Have your jewelry cleaned and polished to bring out its holiday sparkle! See the latest creations, perfect for holiday gift giving or for a special treat for yourself: and make out your wish list. Receive 15% off the purchase of any inventory items through January 30, 2010. Your old gold is welcome for cash or credit toward a purchase.

Please RSVP to **Barbara Maira** by Saturday, December 5, 2009 at 634-5353 or jewelry@lisahunterjewelry.com

welcome new members!

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did you know?

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara Built the 50th Habitat for Humanity's House in Buffalo: "A Woman's Place"

Starting with fundraising efforts in 1996 and continuing on with construction through early 1998, the chapter spearheaded construction of Buffalo Habitat for Humanity's 50th house. "A Woman's Place" was Western New York's first Habitat house built by an all-woman team, and is a tribute to the 300 dedicated female volunteers. The ground breaking was attended by a crew of NAWBO members – armed with pink hard hats and shovels – with then-Buffalo City Mayor, Anthony Masiello (nattily attired in his own pink hard hat!).

The chapter raised \$42,000 through fundraising and donations of building supplies; it took 4,000 volunteer hours to complete the project. NAWBO's "A Woman's Place" committee was headed by Carol LaBruna Harmon and the late Gretchen Stringer. More than fifty local businesses and foundations donated time, money, and services.

Through the efforts of NAWBO Buffalo Niagara, a low-income family – headed by a woman – obtained the home that they would not have been able to afford through conventional means.

We will continue throughout the 2009/2010 year to share the memories, achievements, projects, and events from 15 years as the premier organization for women business owners in Western New York.

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Networking or “Schmoozing”

by Amy Remmele

According to the thesaurus, “network” and “schmooze” are synonyms. Both basically mean to engage in the process or practice of building or maintaining informal relationships, especially with people whose friendship can bring advantages such as job or business opportunities. These words, then, mean to talk persuasively to somebody, often to gain personal advantage.

Schmoozing has been around since Biblical days. On the surface, this may seem like a bizarre observation, but consider the story of a man named Joseph. Probably everyone, religious or not, knows the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors. After Joseph landed in prison, he began to interpret the dreams of his fellow inmates, a butler and a baker. At some point later on, the butler ended up working for the Pharaoh. When the Pharaoh started having bad dreams, the butler of course recommended that his ex-cellmate, Joseph, be called in to help. Joseph was very subtle and while he was giving his dream interpretations, he threw in a little advice about the need for a new position in the kingdom. It all paid off when the Pharaoh gave Joseph a really good job and continued to use him as an advisor. And now many playwrights get to use the story – so everyone benefited.

It is important to note here that Joseph gave before he knew if he would get anything in return. This is the point that is stressed over and over when studying “networking.” It’s almost like “keeping the faith” is part of the process that makes it successful. My guess is that the people who keep the faith also have other qualities that lend themselves to networking successfully. Qualities like a positive attitude and the ability to be friendly and cooperative even in the face of rough times.

While we all network to “get business,” there are some other reasons, too. First, networking gives some people social connection. Many people who are in sole proprietor businesses only get to talk to customers and clients. It can be very beneficial to network with other business owners in order to have contact with people who will listen and understand. Another good reason for networking is health. Studies have shown that people who have social lives and support in several areas live longer and are less likely to get sick. Finally, there are the professional services that are made available to us through the connections we make.

In the spirit of networking, at the next NAWBO meeting, consider sitting with people that you have never sat with before and bring a “topic” with you. Tell the people with you that you are experimenting with a new networking technique and go around the table, asking everyone to talk about the topic you have brought. At the Lunch Bunch, we have used topics

such as “How does your interaction style affect the way you do business?” and “On what tasks do you procrastinate and do you know why?” Just ask an interesting question and see what happens. You may be surprised how happy people are to network on a different level and get to know each other in new ways.

A few years back, I gave a talk at a NAWBO meeting, called “78 Schmoozing Tips.” Here are the really good tips from the handout that I distributed at that meeting.

1. Remember the Zeigarnik Effect. More about this later.

2. Have a clear understanding of what you do and why, for whom, and what about the way you do it makes it special. What makes you different from others doing the same thing? In order to get referrals, you must first have a clear understanding of what you do that you can easily articulate to others. In other words, make sure that you have done your Defining Statement homework. One of mine is, “I work with individuals and business owners who want to work with the life and death issue of communication and keep the needle on LIFE.” Having a defining statement can be wonderful for your business, and the process of developing it can be life changing. I highly recommend it.

3. Brand yourself with a slogan. Print a slogan on your business card that answers questions like, “Why should I hire you” or “What makes you different from everyone else?” A catchy phrase or slogan insures people will associate a company name with a product or service. We all remember “catchy” television ads and jingles for years, even after they are no longer on. That’s called branding. Consider doing the exact same thing on your business card. For example, “At Peak of Success you get *CHANGE* back from your coaching and training dollar\$.” An organizer might say, “My business is giving you back *time* to manage your business,” or a cleaning service might use, “Your dirt is my business.”

4. Be Memorable. The first two items are ways to be memorable, but adding something else cannot hurt. Some people do it with clothing or hats, others do it with special talents, such as magic or rapping.

5. Networking is about being genuine and authentic. Take the time to build trust and relationships, and see how you can help others.

6. Ask yourself what your goals are in participating in networking meetings. This way you will pick groups that will help you get what you are looking for. Some meetings are based more on learning, making contacts, and/or volunteering rather than on strictly making business connections.

7. Become active. It is much better to be active in one professional association than to periodically

attend meetings of five or ten. Once you become active, people in the association get to know who you are and what you do. It takes time for people to recognize you, view you as a colleague rather than a stranger, and trust you.

8. Become a good listener. This ability to remember what others say and value is critical to fostering good relationships. It also gives Introverts an advantage over chatty, extroverted networkers. Make appropriate gestures such as leaning forward toward the speaker and facing her directly. Use minimal attending responses, such as head nods, “Uh-huh” and “Oh, really?” Ask targeted follow-up questions that show you have understood the speaker, such as, “So do I hear you saying that you only like to work with flying purple people eaters?” And remember that a great deal of communication is non-verbal.

9. Listen with both of your ears for opportunities. Pay attention to conversations for problems that you can solve. Follow up with the solution during business hours.

10. Ask questions. Instead of worrying about what you will say to others about yourself and your business, focus instead on asking questions. There is no greater compliment you can bestow on someone than to ask them about themselves.

- Simple open-ended questions are best. This means questions that ask who, what, where, when, and how as opposed to those that can be answered with a simple yes or no. This form of questioning opens up the discussion and shows listeners that you are interested in them.

- Ask thought-provoking questions. “How did you get started?” or “What do you enjoy most about what you do?” But the very best questions are specific to the person you’re interacting with and will arise in response to your initial conversation.

- Ask “Feel Good” Questions. You’ve begun to establish a nice rapport with your new prospect. You are focusing on *him or her*, as opposed to you and your awesome product, as most salespeople do. He or she is starting to feel good about you and has enjoyed answering your first two “Feel-good” questions. Now it’s time for the “One Key Question,” and here it is: “*Name*, how can I know if someone I am speaking with would be a good prospect *for you*?” Here, you’ve continued to establish yourself as being different from all others they meet who are in business, who only seem to want to know, “How can you help me.”

- Ask some non-business questions. People love to talk about themselves. A great conversation starter is to ask what they like to do when they’re not at work.

- Ask unusual questions. When you meet

someone, don't say "How are you? What is your business?" Instead, try something like "Tell me something your friends would be surprised to learn about you." "Where did you go on your last vacation?" "What's the last book you read/movie you saw?" You are more likely to remember people who have been induced to give you some unusual information, and they are more likely to remember you.

11. Be an interesting person to talk to. Do your homework. Plan some casual topics to bring up that you like to talk about. Being prepared will also help to build your confidence.

12. Be able to articulate what you are looking for and how others may help you. Too often people in conversations are asked "How may I help you?" and it is a real conversation stopper when no immediate answer comes to mind.

13. Diversity. The old boy's network is alive and well, but so are many others. In the financial community, a diversified portfolio is preferable. The same is true with your network.

14. Don't try to sell. Selling at professional meetings is usually inappropriate. Instead, use the meeting as an opportunity to develop a relationship and schedule a meeting for a later date.

15. Check out how you feel. If you're feeling nervous, you're thinking too much about yourself. This is about making the *other* person feel important.

16. Get feedback on your networking style. Everybody needs a coach in her life. Someone who will say, "This is how you're coming across and it's not helping your cause." People are reticent to do give such straightforward feedback, so make it clear to your "inner circle" that you really appreciate this and that it will not "hurt your feelings." Ask them to tell you the truth especially about subtleties you yourself may not notice. An example would be the inflection of your voice, which may be suggesting uncertainty or lack of confidence. Often style or behavior can be changed, resulting in more effective networking.

17. Be fully present. Be fully engaged and fully aware of the people you interact with. You can break this down into smaller, somewhat mechanical pieces, such as listen well, respond promptly, maintain eye contact, etc, but if you are truly present in the moment, those things will happen naturally. Many people seem to be only "half there", so being fully engaged helps you stand out.

18. Set goals for each event. Decide before you arrive at an event how many people you will talk to and what information you hope to learn. You'll be amazed at how much more information you'll learn when you've set some targets.

19. Bring new members to your group. Nothing will make the existing leadership happy faster than your infusion of new members. An additional benefit is that it is easier to start a conversation with someone you know only marginally if you can go up to them and introduce someone new who is interested in the group. You don't even have to know the existing member's name. Just walk up and say, while shaking their hand, "Hi. I would like you to meet a potential new member." Your target will introduce herself and then you will know her name.

20. Write on the back of business cards. This way you will remember what the person had to say and what the connection between the two of you might be. Follow up the next day with an e-mail or a telephone call.

21. When asking for something, use the word "because." Research shows that asking for something with a "reasonable" reason boosts the chances of getting what you want about 40%.

22. Ask for advice. It is one of the highest forms of flattery.

23. THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE – Have fun and be funny. Think of the event not as work but as a great time to get to know others and establish valuable relationships. People like to be with people who are happy.

24. THE SECRET IS: Being ready to network when you get there. Ninety percent of success is showing up PREPARED.

25. The Zeigarnik effect is a proven law of psychology stating that people remember incomplete or interrupted tasks better than completed ones. I'll bet you remembered the name from the first item! Leaving some tantalizing gaps in the information you give out may keep the appetite whetted. You may also try asking a person to complete the sentence, "I might want (your name) to help me with _____," before the two of you meet again.

NAWBO Buffalo Niagara member Amy Remmele is the owner of Peak Of Success. Her company specializes in behavioral style and personality assessments, consultation, and counseling. Contact her at 716-626-5977 or amy@peakofsuccess.com.



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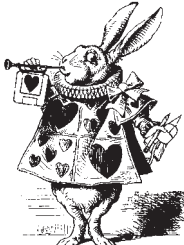
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SCORE Western New York offers numerous low-cost workshops throughout the year at various locations. There should be one that covers a subject of interest to you. To register for any of these workshops, call 716-551-4301 or e-mail your name, telephone number and name and date of desired workshop to scorebuffalo1@roadrunner.com.

Starting and Managing Your Own Business

What: All-day seminar (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) Repeats in most months.

Topics: Marketing, business plans, insurance, federal and state taxes, legal, accounting, government resources, financing and much more. Typically consists of between six and eight speakers, plus SCORE representatives for one-on-one questions. Includes coffee and doughnuts; lunch is on your own.

Reservations are required: Please e-mail scorebuffalo1@roadrunner.com or call 716- 551-4301.

Cost: \$30; with SCORE counselor coupon \$25 (available at www.score.org/cgi/third_party.cgi?url=http%3A//www.scorebuffalo.org/). Veterans attend free.

Upcoming dates and locations:

January 20, 2010

Lackawanna Public Library, 560 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna 14218
716-823-0630

February 24, 2010

North Tonawanda Public Library
505 Meadow Dr., N. Tonawanda 14120
716-693-4132

March 17, 2010

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Sq., Buffalo 14203
716-858-8900

Can't attend? Counsel by Skype with us! (Skype counseling is one-on-one, individual counseling; workshops must be attended in person. For details, go to "Links" and click on Link #1.)

advertising

ANNUAL AD RATES AND SIZES:

Ads run in 11 issues (no issue in July).

Full page (7 1/2" x 10") \$1,000 Half page (7 1/2" x 4 3/4") \$525

Quarter page (3 3/4" x 4 3/4") \$225 Business card (3 1/2" x 2") \$125

SPECS:

Send business card, and check (payable to NAWBO) to: White Rabbit Design, 173 Audubon Drive, Snyder NY 14226. For electronic submissions, preferred formats: PDF, eps or tif. E-mail files to: whiterabbitdesign@roadrunner.com.

articles

E-mail your submissions to: whiterabbitdesign@roadrunner.com. Contributed articles must be original work; all previously published works must be accompanied by the publisher's authorization to reprint. *WOMANink* reserves the right to edit contributed articles for clarity and length, and reserves the right to refuse to publish any contributed article.


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