

The Connected Business | FT Bowen Craggs Index

Be a 'king of content' not a piecemeal relauncher

Analysis of results

David Bowen looks at how successful organisations are in getting their messages across via the web

The devil is in the detail of the FT Bowen Craggs Index. Here are some of the specifics that struck us during our analysis.

Siemens has reinvented the homepage - again.

In 1997 the German group spawned a host of imitators by turning its homepage into a self-contained multimedia microsite, which changed every month to an editorial schedule.

Now it has done something almost as radical by replacing this approach with a series of short films, shot by well-known directors and avoiding obvious marketing messages.

Presumably, it hopes the YouTube generation will take to

it and it provides plenty of icons and links to encourage them.

Will Siemens change the corporate website game again? It is too early to tell, but it is nice to see a huge corporation prepared to take risks.

Then there is confusing the public by a piecemeal relaunch. This approach illustrates the dangers of updating your site bit by bit, as done by Hewlett-Packard and BNP Paribas.

HP has become remarkably muddled, with different templates fighting each other, while BNP appears to have two careers sections - it does not in fact, but there is plenty to baffle jobseekers.

Some sites are kings of content. If you have to be stranded on a desert island with only two corporate websites, take General Electric and Google. They have more interesting stuff on them than any others.

GE impresses with videos, its Ecomagination site and its lively GE Reports newspaper-magazine blog.

From Google.com, find your way to Google.org and see how its technology has been used in Japan, analyse the environment with Google Earth Engine and track disease with Google Flu Trends.

Yet neither site is at the top of the Index because their management is weak - no one is trying to make them work as smoothly running machines.

Sites can also be used as tools to defend reputations. BP.com did not rescue the group's reputation in the Gulf of Mexico, but it must have limited the damage.

Backed by social media and a jointly-run crisis site, it acted as an information machine. It gave a blow-by-blow account of what the company was doing - it provided a mass of practical information: for example, the ability to download a fisherman's claim form in Vietnamese - and it spawned state-specific sites.

It is one of the few aspects of crisis management that BP got right.

More on reputation: General Electric used its GE Reports site to give detail on the Fukushima nuclear reactors in Japan, correcting what it saw as flaws in newspaper reports.

Chevron continued to wage war again Ecuadorians suing it for environmental damage, using its website and YouTube in powerful tandem.

British American Tobacco popped up from the usual lying low approach of its industry with a hard-hitting web film on black-market cigarettes and organised crime.

Investor relations is an area where "we'll use what we've got" seems to trump the more rational "we'll give users what they need" approach.

Innovations driven by supply include a plethora of flashy online annual reports, a surprising development given analysts' insistence that they prefer documents in PDF format.

An example is the technology Microsoft uses to display its earnings announcements.

Moving on to social media, we classified 22 of the 75 sites as "social media friendly".

IT companies have a natural community of experts, so can easily exploit the social media side - see Cisco's Newsroom to see how far that can go.

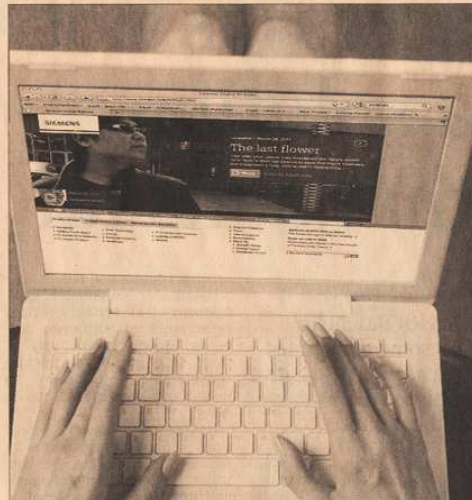
Elsewhere, most companies limit themselves to displays of icons, plus some Twitter feeds perhaps.

Where there is closer integration, it is concentrated in careers sections, where Facebook's demographic makes it a very obvious choice.

Otherwise, spot Siemens' brave decision to show how many social media comments have been posted about its homepage videos, and Walmart Stores' coverage of social media channels in its search engine.

This last is a significant development - let us see if others follow.

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German innovation: Siemens has reinvented the homepage - again

Sites will become 'suns' with a set of satellites

FT Bowen Craggs Index

David Bowen on the 2011 ranking of corporate websites

Tim Berners-Lee invented the world wide web 21 years ago. Has it come of age?

Judging by the fifth FT Bowen Craggs Index of corporate web effectiveness, the situation is much the same for the websites as it is for the human race.

Some are remarkably



The FT/Bowen Craggs corporate website index 2011: top 40

| 2011 Rank | 2010 Rank | Company | Construction | Message | Contact | Serving society | Serving investors | Serving the media | Serving job seekers | Serving customers | 2011 score | 2010 score | Country |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| | | Maximum score | 60 | 48 | 12 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 280 | 280 | | |
| 1/2 | | Siemens | 43 | 41 | 10 | 27 | 22 | 28 | 24 | 22 | 217 | 210 | Germany |
| 2/2 | | BP | 49 | 36 | 10 | 28 | 26 | 21 | 24 | 22 | 216 | 210 | UK |
| 3/1 | | Royal Dutch Shell | 47 | 37 | 9 | 26 | 28 | 21 | 24 | 21 | 213 | 213 | UK - Netherlands |
| 4/6 | | Eni | 44 | 36 | 10 | 27 | 27 | 24 | 21 | 20 | 209 | 200 | Italy |
| 5/8 | | Unilever | 47 | 38 | 8 | 25 | 25 | 20 | 23 | 20 | 206 | 198 | UK - Netherlands |
| 6/4 | | Roche | 39 | 41 | 9 | 22 | 22 | 25 | 23 | 23 | 204 | 209 | Switzerland |
| 7/9 | | General Electric | 43 | 39 | 8 | 25 | 18 | 21 | 23 | 23 | 200 | 199 | US |
| 7/24 | | Intel Corporation | 47 | 31 | 9 | 25 | 26 | 19 | 22 | 21 | 200 | 189 | US |
| 9/13 | | British American Tobacco | 46 | 36 | 10 | 25 | 25 | 19 | 16 | 22 | 199 | 194 | UK |
| 9/21 | | Novartis | 47 | 37 | 10 | 19 | 22 | 23 | 19 | 22 | 199 | 191 | Switzerland |
| 9/22 | | WalMart Stores* | 47 | 36 | 9 | 20 | 22 | 24 | 19 | 22 | 199 | 190 | US |
| 12/18 | | iBM | 39 | 36 | 7 | 23 | 22 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 198 | 192 | US |
| 13/18 | | Chevron | 45 | 38 | 10 | 26 | 24 | 16 | 20 | 18 | 197 | 192 | US |
| 14/12 | | Nestlé | 40 | 36 | 7 | 25 | 23 | 25 | 17 | 23 | 196 | 195 | Switzerland |
| 15/9 | | AstraZeneca | 42 | 37 | 9 | 21 | 24 | 20 | 24 | 18 | 195 | 196 | Sweden |
| 15/15 | | Cisco Systems | 36 | 28 | 9 | 24 | 24 | 26 | 24 | 24 | 195 | 193 | US |
| 15/9 | | Procter & Gamble | 48 | 34 | 7 | 24 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 195 | 196 | US |
| 18/5 | | Rio Tinto | 43 | 35 | 7 | 23 | 26 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 194 | 201 | Australia |
| 19/18 | | GlaxoSmithKline | 46 | 35 | 8 | 24 | 25 | 18 | 20 | 15 | 191 | 192 | UK |
| 19/27 | | Statol | 44 | 39 | 3 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 19 | 16 | 191 | 186 | Norway |
| 21/29 | | Microsoft | 36 | 30 | 7 | 18 | 24 | 20 | 27 | 28 | 190 | 182 | US |
| 22/13 | | Coca-Cola* | 40 | 37 | 10 | 26 | 20 | 20 | 14 | 22 | 189 | 194 | US |

How the rankings are arrived at

Bowen Craggs has developed a detailed methodology to benchmark corporate websites. The FT Bowen Craggs Index uses a simplified version, writes David Bowen.

The metrics are divided into two groups: overall and specific.

Specific metrics concentrate on how well the site serves groups.

Within the overall metrics, *Construction* covers navigation and coherence and *Message* looks at visual and content messages. *Contact* covers ease of making contact and use of FAQs.

We do not use a checklist approach: our analysts are experts on the corporate web, and ask first what should be provided and then judge how well it is done.

A new review takes 16

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