



# More than just a website.



Steve Teare  
Web Engineer

**W**hen an industrial client approached us about getting a website, they said we had to use WordPress, and that the deadline was just two weeks. Sometimes two weeks isn't bad – for a small and simple site – but this project was going to involve a lot more than just putting stuff on some web pages, and taking it online.

**Not only did we** need to come up with a great design, but we also had to figure out the marketing strategy, come up with all the graphics, write the copy, write up an interview with one of the product developers, design pseudo product packaging, and more – all for a product we had never heard of.

**We also had to battle** our way through some problems with the ThemeTrust Clarity theme, including major weirdness related to the built-in slideshow.

**Did this keep us up late at night?** Yes. Did we get the job finished in time? Yes. Is the client happy? Yes, the client is very happy. ■

**Baseball sage, Yogi Berra, said,** “You can observe a lot just by watching,” and we're pretty sure that *you* will learn a lot by watching how we worked through this project.

**PagePipe**

100 East Bluff Street  
Palouse, Washington 99161

Copyright © 2013 PagePipe

# Critiquing the original design.



▲ **Bad positioning strategy:** Our client's original website concept may be great art, but it's not good marketing. It may speak "lubricant," but the product is actually a "coating" – not a lubricant enhancer. There's widespread potential for the product, but we chose to focus on the area with the best niche potential – the wind-energy market.

**Also, the original concept** was long on design, but short on facts. That's the opposite of what the potential buyers of this product want. Engineers, technicians, and purchasing agents want facts and specifications. That's not only an expectation – it's a requirement.

**A**t first glance, the old concept looked OK. But the look didn't match the product – and we quickly saw that the text and the graphics didn't address what the client is selling, what the company is all about, and why anyone should care. Here are some of the problems:

**Overselling breeds suspicion,** and glossy marketing materials are immediately suspect. Industrial buyers don't want glitz. The original concept is slick, but looked more like an ad for a motorcycle-performance product than a scientific coating for industrial machines. We knew that had to change.

**The Home page** of a website has to immediately and concisely show the potential buyer: Who this company is. What they do. Why the buyer should care. And then it has to tell him what to do next. The small, squeezed, and reversed text of the client's original concept totally failed – but we knew we could fix that. ■

## Boring headlines don't sell.

Great headlines talk about quantifiable things – such as saving money on crane rentals, keeping motors running longer than before, etc. Compelling headlines beat eye candy every time, and our headlines are never boring.

# Color produces continuity.

**A** new web site typically takes several weeks or even months to complete, but our client gave us only two weeks for this one. That meant we had no time for perfection, so we focused on the points that would make the biggest difference.

**First, we developed a theme.** Of course there's a "WordPress theme" – software that runs behind the new website – but our concept of "theme" goes well beyond that.

**The theme we developed** for our client set the course for everything that followed. And it laid the groundwork for future marketing efforts. First we

▼ Three industrial colors, with block sizes showing their hierarchy on the page.



simplified. We worked up an improved color palette. And we paid special attention to our choice of typefaces and the typography that makes it all work.

**We made sure that** the theme communicates what they are and what they do. It's appropriate to their company and to potential buyers.

**Our theme is all about credibility.** The look, the feel, and yes even the speed of a website all weigh in to determine credibility.

**And, equally important,** this new theme forms the basis for all future marketing materials and design projects. ■

▼ Conservative colors for text.



▲ The client supplied us with their icon and logotype, and even though a logo (or a logotype) by itself is not a brand, we were happy to use it.

The reality is that logotypes are nothing more than repetitive design elements for small businesses. They provide a small amount of "branding power," but the only logos and logotypes that even begin to have heavy-duty marketing power and real meaning are the ones created by expensive design studios at prices most small businesses just don't want to pay.

# Typography's role on websites.

## Website sections

### Home

Description, specifications, benefits, warranty, and RFQ form.

### About

Company principles.

### Library (disabled)

Links and PDF downloads.

### Interview

With Chief Technology Officer

### Contact

### Footer

E-mail link.  
Positioning statement.

## WordPress plugins we added:

Contact Form 7  
Dropcap shortcode  
Email address encoder  
One-click child theme

**T**ypography: Even more subtle than the visual cues presented by the layout and the graphics, type communicates a feeling about the text.

As typographers, we didn't just choose the first typeface that came along. We considered what the client was selling, the look of the page (the layout), and the feeling we wanted to project. For this job, we chose two typefaces for the majority of the text - a serif and a sans-serif face. And for additional interest, we chose a few compatible typefaces for headlines, drop caps, captions, etc.

While type often serves as a design element, our most important consideration was legibility and readability. And with that in mind, our attention to typographic detail means that the text grabs the attention of the readers and holds it, without getting in the way of the message. ■

Memphis extrabold – a geometric slabface font.

**abcdefghijklmnopqr  
stuvwxyz1234567890  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO  
PQRSTUVWXYZ?!.:;''**



▲ We used Memphis in the images for the web site. This wind-turbine graphic displays at a large size on the web site (710 x 300 pixels) – larger than shown here – but is lightweight at only 11.6k, because it contains just three colors.

# Our job included creating a product name.

No naming technique is perfect, but all have the same goals:

- Be short.
- Be legible.
- Be legally eligible.
- Be pleasing to the eye and tongue.
- Be pronounced easily.
- Be memorable.
- Be parts of standard English rather than regional dialects.

Although these points seem to be common sense, many product managers still like to use “engineering names” such as “XR1000” or “Biophenometer,” which don’t really tell much about the product.

Names like this may sound cool, but they’re not memorable, and they blend together with lots of other names.

Is an “XR1000” an engineering instrument, or is it a new car with a turbocharged engine? And what does the Biophenometer do? The names provide no clues.

# DuoLife 2.4

LIFE EXTENSION FOR AGING MACHINES

**P**otential customers don’t want to waste time. They want to know right away if a product is going to work for their application. With so many new products coming out every day, all needing new names, standard English just can’t keep up.

**The solution?** Fusion nouns – word combinations put together to create a new word or a new name. Applied to a product name, a fusion noun has two parts:

**Connotative function:** This relates to the way people feel about the product or service. We asked

ourselves: *How do we want the prospective customers to feel about this new product?*

**Denotative function:** This relates to the “dictionary” definition of the product or service. This appeals to the more logical and analytical part of the brain. We asked ourselves: *What is this product? What does it do?*

**Combined into one new word,** these functions help make connections for people when they are introduced to new ideas – such as DuoLife. ■

# Concept mockup packaging.

## Words and terms our client doesn't like.

The client company is headed by two scientists – serious PhD types with a deep knowledge of their product and the applications for their product. These guys are careful and precise with the words they use to describe what their product does, and soon after we started writing copy, they called us in to set us straight on how to use (or not use) certain words or terms:

- **Additive:** The market perception is that additives are cheap automotive snake oil.
- **Atomic or molecular:** The nanoparticles used in the product are much larger than that.
- **Synthetic:** This implies that the product is a lubricant. But the product is a coating, not a lubricant. They are not the same thing.
- **Nanoparticle and nanotechnology:** All great terms, but to be used only on a limited basis.

**W**e decided that a two-part presentation (two bottles) would raise the perceived value of the product. And as we soon found out from the client, the two-part idea resulted in an improved application method. This was the beginning of the “Part A and Part B” packaging.

**A small amount goes** a long way with this product, so the original container was very small. We decided that larger and more attractive, standard-size aluminum bottles would not only raise the perceived value, but also obviate the need for custom-made bottles. The look and feel of the bottles (with the nicely designed tags) sets the product apart from the competitors’ cheap-looking plastic bottles.

**Potential licensing** manufacturers and future customers want to see products developed, packaged, and looking ready for sale. In the absence of physical interaction, packaging now plays a much larger role in an online world. ■



▲ Aluminum 26 oz. bottles, 10" h x 2.75" w x 2.75" dia.

# Comparing biggest customer websites.

**W**e always think it's a good idea to see what a client's potential customers might expect in a website, so we took a quick tour of the websites of the top providers of large-scale wind technology.

**One of the first things** we noticed was that there was nothing in common between the websites of these top OEM buyers and the websites of our client's competitors.

**Why does this matter?** It's a subtle thing but true: Like tends to work with like. A potential buyer who has a nicely done website obviously cares (at least on a subconscious level) about design. They are accustomed to a certain level of design quality. When that potential buyer lands on a website that is chaotic, noisy, and disorganized, it strikes a

discordant note somewhere in his subconscious – sometimes even at a conscious level.

**If you're selling Porsches** to the typical Porsche buyer, you're going to dress and act in a way that helps you fit in with that buyer. And we carried this idea into our strategy for this website.

**Of course we wanted** a clean, top-notch design that would appeal to the potential buyers – but we took it a step further when we realized that all these OEM sites included either a Flash presentation or a slide show. We're not Flash fans, but we do think slideshows are a good idea – sometimes. So with all this in mind, we decided to include a slideshow on the *Home page*.

**We like it**, and we know it's going to make some of the potential buyers feel right at home. ■

## Clarity Case Study ▼ Suzlon



## ▼ Vestas



## ▼ Gamesa



## ▼ GE Wind



▲ Nordex



▲ Siemens



▲ Enercon



▲ Acciona



▲ Goldwin



# HOME

## HOME

Speed 2 seconds

Page weight 429.1k

HTML 16.2k

Javascript 198.2k

Style sheets 49.4k

CSS Images 800 bytes

Images 164.4k

Favicon 100 bytes

## INTERVIEW

Speed 1.1 seconds

Page weight 250.9k

HTML 14.9k

Javascript 169.4k

Style sheets 49.4k

CSS Images 300 bytes

Images 16.8k

Favicon 100 bytes

# INTERVIEW

# Animation, not distraction.



▲ Slideshow image 24.7k JPG.



▲ Slideshow image 35.3k JPG.

**S**ome designers like to load up their websites with animation. Things that go blink in the night. Images that slide around the page. And even jarring videos that suddenly start talking. In a very loud voice.

**Animation can be entertaining**, and is sometimes an effective way of getting attention. But all too often animation is a distraction from your real message, and also causes pages to load very slowly. That's not good.

**But this doesn't mean** all animation is bad. While considering the layout for this site, we knew we wanted to present a lot of interesting photos, but didn't want to waste visitors' time clicking through multiple pages.

**The solution was a fast-loading**, interactive slide show that lets us show several photos in a relatively small space, and provides a certain amount of entertainment for the visitors.

**This slideshow is not only** a great way to show groups of photos, but also can show a series of Power-point slides and other graphics as the web site matures. ■



# DuoLife<sup>2.4</sup>

LIFE EXTENSION FOR AGING MACHINES

Smart coating  
Recondition  
ball bearings,  
Industrial  
gears, and  
moving parts.

**Scientists & engineers**  
We don't just make a series of  
iterations, the exact texture and  
wear at the interface.

**You keep going**  
Applied in time, DuoLife works at  
the surface level to extend the  
condition monitoring system can  
predict high load turbine failure,  
bearing equipment of a crane or  
pneumatic tools. We give you an  
alternative. We can get you into  
the next maintenance season  
guaranteed - or your money back.

**Return on investment**  
Your equipment never running  
while DuoLife gets to work.  
DuoLife costs or no downtime,  
preparing bearings and  
fitting costs in a matter of weeks,  
100% satisfaction or your money  
back.

**Made in the USA**



DuoLife creates a self-regulating  
protective layer during normal  
operation.

MacBook Air  
Conditioning for [Information Request](#)

# Our painful slideshow experience.

**A**s is the case with almost every WordPress theme, you'll run into some weird problems with the ThemeTrust Clarity theme. For us, and for many others, the built-in slideshow caused trouble. With no instructions, users have to feel their way through the slideshow setup, and we were no exception.

**First you upload** your slideshow images– then set up new pages (not posts) – and add one of the images to each page. Next, on each of these pages, select the checkbox for slideshow inclusion. Then copy and paste the URL for that particular graphic into a text field. Why so many steps? And why no instructions?

**The slideshow images** may not appear in the expected order – the (clunky) fix is to change the Media Library upload dates. Size your slideshow-image images correctly. The typical size is 970 x 300 pixels, but if you want a caption to appear with the image, size your image to 720 x 300 pixels.

**Many Clarity users** (including us) had a problem with the slideshow navigation circles disappearing for no apparent reason. A note on ThemeTrust's forum mentioned that sometimes the navigation images can “drop behind” the slideshow – and provided a fix – but the fix didn't work for us.

**Running out of patience, we turned to the Yslow tool**, which quickly showed us that calls for the circle image components were generating 404 errors, so we checked the images folder, and found that those files had inexplicably vanished. We uploaded the images from our saved version of the theme, and the problem was solved.

**We recommend** that you build some experimentation and troubleshooting time into your project schedule. Of course you could always skip the built-in slideshow, and use a compatible slideshow plugin, but that's a subject for another day. ■

◀ These exclusive slideshow tips are not published anywhere else. You're lucky. Here they are.

# A great web site needs great photos.



▲ Slideshow image 17.1k JPG.

**C**lichéd advice tells us that a picture is worth a thousand words. The reality is that the “just right photo” is worth *many* thousands of words.

**We knew going into this project,** that we were up against another reality. We knew there would be no time and no money for a professional photo shoot to get that “just right photo” we wanted for this site. But that didn’t stop us.

**We knew that,** with a bit of extra effort, we could find some “really great” photos at “really great” prices that would more than do the job. The photos we chose are powerful, and drive home the points we wanted to make – and the low royalty-free prices don’t break the budget. ■