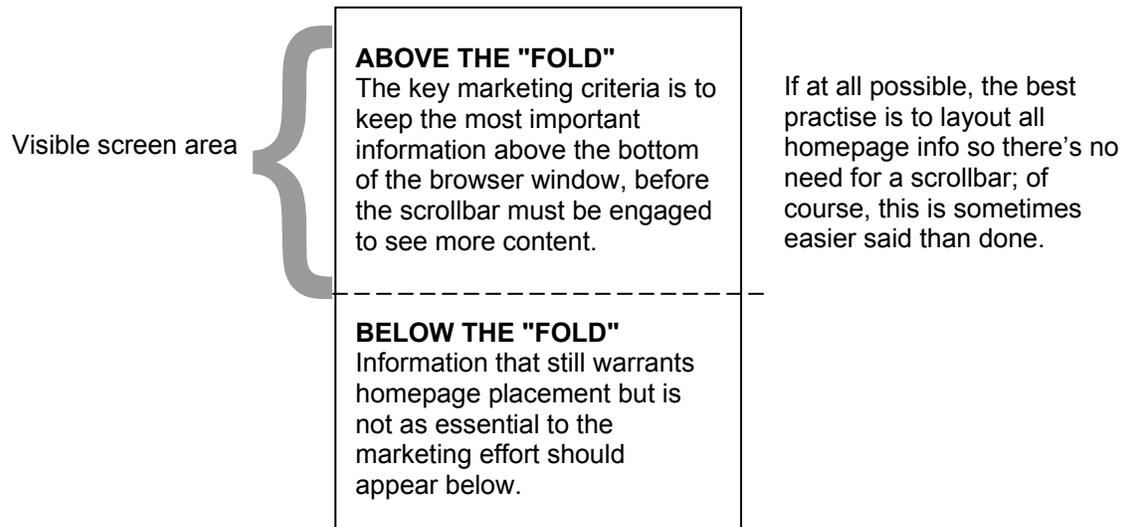


## APPENDIX I: WEBSITE HOMEPAGE BASICS

The homepage is the place to deliver the first obvious message. On average, visitors spend only a few moments on a typical website unless they are seeking specific information



**Navigation.** Clarity is key. Call things what they are even if you think it may be less than exciting. Label buttons according to what they directly represent and be wary of using too many insider terms unless your audience are insiders; most audiences are general and not yet customers.

- Style of navigation
  - **Directed:** forces a choice upon site entry (English/French)
  - **Searchable:** primarily for search-based sites such as search engines or informational sites in which keywords are the best way to navigate to the desired content
  - **Tabbed:** familiar file folder model allows sites to convey heavily categorized information in a clear manner
  - **Linear:** takes the user down a predetermined path; not common for primary navigation, but used with a portfolio sequence or a slide show with Next/Back or Forward/Previous buttons
  - **Cookie-crumbs:** cookie-crumbs or bread-crumbs show the full hierarchical path the user has taken from the home page down all the levels to the current location
  - **Pull-down:** upside: maximizes screen geography for communication design;
  - downside: users can't see the full set of choices without having to take an explicit action
    - What about drop down menus?
      - In order to maximize screen space for selling and for allowing items to not be cramped together, navigation can be organized and rationalized into fewer choices or logical choices
      - Fly-out right
      - Drop down

**Motion.** Most website owners have little time for updates but the illusion of freshness can be create via the simple slideshow or text scroller.

- Text animations help create movement and can alternate messages
- Image slideshows can be varied though on homepages should be autoplay
- House ads can sell products with animation of image and text
- [www.dynamicdrive.com](http://www.dynamicdrive.com) is a great resource

**Credibility.** Establishing your professional approach to your customer can be done without fanfare, but good press helps sales efforts by validating your product claims.

- Testimonials
- Awards links and logos
- Industry association logos
- Community involvement press releases
- Newspaper articles about your or your industry (the good stuff)
- Video clips or broadcast news items

**Copywriting:**

- **Headline**
  - Directs every page and helps manage customer/visitor expectations
  - Needs to be obvious it is a headline
  - Grab attention with punchy, short, relevant statement
  - Must be aimed at key marketplace interests or concerns
  - Should be changed periodically to let visitor's know the site, the business has not been abandoned
  -
- **Sub headline**
  - Support main message and bridge coming text
- Sell the benefits of the product not just the product or service
- AIDA: grab Attention, stimulate Interest, build up Desire, urge the user to Action
- Use bullets to break up long passages
  - Link individual bullet points to use as directed navigation
- Isolate key statements to use as call-outs that add eye-catching interest to the page
- Photo captions on all images to help the uninitiated and to connect with marketing efforts