



# Good Enough is the New Great

By Paul Regensburg



RainCastle

In the New York Times Annual "Year in Ideas" issue, that came Sunday, December 13, 2009, there are a collection of ideas that the editors believe characterized the year. One idea that caught my attention was titled, "Good Enough is the New Great," and was described by Robert Mackey. Mackey contends that everywhere you look, people are accepting a lower level of technology and quality in exchange for ease-of-use and lower cost. Mackey provides examples such as the growth of Flickr, which displays snapshots often taken with cell phones and cheap point and shoot cameras. Despite the easy availability of multi-megapixel cameras with zoom lenses and auto focus, iPhone images are "good enough." Although high definition plasma TV's are available, more and more people spend time watching blurry, low-res videos on their laptops or iPhones. Younger audiences he contends, actually prefer the lower-end sound of music on an iPod than then the crisper fidelity of a CD and so forth. In the field of graphic and web design, this has been true for some time, although 2009 put the ! on the concept.

Because websites are so ubiquitous and it doesn't take much expertise to put up a templated site, even in many cases where a client needs a website with a lot of customization or strategic insight, they are often willing to go for a "good enough" solution if it's cheap and reasonably professional. Recently a former client for whom we created a website in 2005 came back to us for a new site. The specifications were similar to the site we created 4 years ago plus a few extra features that are now available. When I brought out the budget from 2005, and said the new budget would be about the same, I thought by not passing on our increased expenses, I was being sensitive to economic realities. The client informed me that our budget was higher than "others she was speaking with." Although that client had come to me in 2005, looking for something great, she was now measuring us against a set of vendors who had the distinction of providing a "good enough" solution at a "great" price.

The notion of great to me has always meant providing the A+ in all facets, i.e., navigation, messaging, design, use of technology and client service. Great meant we'd differentiate our clients by sweating the details the way a craftsman does. Great meant we offered guidance on the business implications of our sites, not just navigation and design. Because I was classically trained in the most rigorous manner in a Bauhaus-inspired design program, it was always ingrained in me to do things the right way and I've always surrounded myself with like-minded people. As we enter 2010, due to the pace of business, speed of communication, fear of the economy, advent of technologies du jour and general stress in the work force, business is getting back to basics. People have something of a "wing it" attitude and if winging it saves time and money without too much of a hit on quality, it's a wrap.

"Good Enough" is a trend worth watching. Businesses in 2010 will continue to be primarily budget-driven with regard to interactive and creative services, and firms like RainCastle will need to work with that. It will also be incumbent upon us to remind our clients and prospects that if they view their brand and online presence as something that should create competitive differentiation, help increase leads and improve business; sometimes good enough is not good enough.

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