Prime Web real estate

after



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B.C. realtor's 'large superstore' site gets a virtual renovation, **Peter Wilson** reports



For more than a decade, Les Twarog has been helping homeowners and investors to sell their personal and investment properties.

He is part of the top 10 per cent of all British Columbia realtors, and created a Web site to assist prospective clients with their home-selling and buying needs.

"Most realtors are a corner grocery store where I'm a large superstore"

said Twarog.

His Web site (www.vancouver-bcrealty.com) contains a host of useful information, including special reports, a Vancouver relocation guide, property tours, and an in-depth property search.

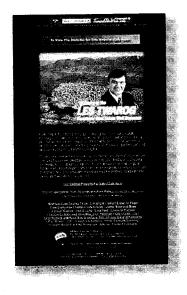
Unfortunately, the look of the Web site is outdated and no longer reflects the success of Twarog and his realty.

Twarog wants a site that will reach the maximum number of homeowners and investors, and deliver the message of their superior service and top-ranked results.

Falcon-Software (www.falcon-software.com), a Web site design and development company in Victoria, was asked to evaluate the current site and suggest ways to increase its effectiveness.

Sometimes a little renovation is needed for a property to reach its full potential. Here are Falcon-Software's Web site makeover recommendations:

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- Improved Branding Les Twarog Realty invests a lot of time and money in the distribution of print material to maintain a competitive advantage. Updating the Web site regularly with current ad material will increase the scope of the target audience, and interested parties will come to rely on the site as the source for the latest market information.
- Improved Usability The current start-page has 26 navigation items.

Reorganize these items to a few major categories that drill down to sub-levels using a dynamic navigation menu.

This will provide access to all the site's resources without overwhelming or confusing the user. Locating the navigation at the top of each page removes much of the need for scrolling.

• Attract New Clientele — Strong visual appeal and a professional design will build confidence in first-time visitors. Marketing the site as a Vancouver resource will increase traffic and visibility.

References to the achievement awards combined with glowing testimonials will convince wary visitors that this realty means business.

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Trust is an essential component when choosing a realtor.
Actual client testimonials will add a personal touch to the site and convey the message that this is a reliable and successful realty.

Improved navigation is easy to read, simple to use and expandable as the Web site resources grow. The creation of a Resource Section will focus users who require industry-related information and increase repeat traffic.

Marketing material reaches a wider audience on the Web, strengthening its production value while creating more graphical interest on the page.

The use of Remax colours and trademarks reinforces the local recognition of Les' team by borrowing from their corporate identity.

Concerned that your investment in Web technology isn't paying off? Worried that your Intranet or Web site doesn't really have much to do with your key marketing, sales or customer-service objectives?

Have a gut feeling that there's a positive return on investment for a Web project but don't know how to prove it?

Well, you're in luck. Here's a chance to send your questions or issues to the Web experts at Falcon Software or other Web design firms and get some help in the business pages of The Vancouver Sun.

Remember, however, this is advice only, not an in-depth top-to-bottom revision of your Web site.

If you're interested, write networks@pacpress.southam.ca.