

CRAIN'S CHICAGO BUSINESS

Focus: Small business – Web design

“New and improved”

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For Integrated Project Management (IPM), effective Web site redesign began with what wasn't working. Clients and potential clients complained they couldn't navigate the Burr Ridge consulting firm's unwieldy, text-heavy Web site. So IPM hired an outside Web designer, graphic artist and copywriter to retool. The new site, which launched in January, is earning raves, says **Tim Noffke**, vice-president of IPM's life sciences division. *Crain's* asked him how he did it.

What was IPM's objective in redesigning the site?

We wanted a Web design that represented in a concise manner who we are, what we do and how we do business.

How did you accomplish that?

For one thing, we refined the descriptions of who we are and what we do, making them clearer and more concise. For another, we reorganized our content into areas that correspond with the major industries we serve. So, for example, if you are a prospective client at a health care institution, you can now go directly to that area.

How does the site use graphics?

The graphics that populate our design are much more clearly aligned with our message. Project management is all about rolling up your sleeves and getting in there; it's about people and teams. By reflecting that human aspect of our business, the new graphics are now part of the site's consistent theme.

Are clients and potential clients the sole audience for your site?

They are the primary audience, but by no means the only one. For instance, we were recently approached by McGraw-Hill and offered the opportunity to develop a book on effective project management. The publisher found us through our Web site. While we've decided not to pursue that project this year, we may be revisiting it in 2007. Another important audience for our growing firm's site is recruits. Our former site did not prominently feature a careers section on the home page. As we saw how much recruits were relying on our Web site to communicate with us, we decided to make that easier.

How have these design changes improved business?

It created a great opportunity to reach out to prospects and existing clients. The relaunch of the Web site increased awareness of IPM in the industries we serve. In the intervening months it has also resulted in lead generation. In at least a half-dozen instances, potential clients have Googled us, reviewed our site, contacted us and gone down the new business development path with us. That was not happening with our previous Web design. Even more frequently, the Web design compliments our existing networking activities. A prospect will meet one of us when we are presenting at a conference and we will refer them to the site. With our increased functionality, they glean a great deal of information about what we can do for them, and it often triggers a call that leads to new business development.