



The Content Man

The information you need to optimize your web content.

The role of flash in website best practices

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A lot of people ask for my opinion on the use of flash on one's website. Here are several situations where flash animation might be a good idea for your home page:

1. Do you target multiple markets?
2. Are there different roles/titles involved in the decision-making process for your product/solution?
3. Do you have multiple products and/or lines of business?
4. Does each market, title, product and/or line of business require a different message?
5. Do you have a particular product or solution that you want to prominently display?

Flash animation is perfect for targeting multiple markets. Think of it as a billboard. The flash animation could have a rotating panel for each market. Each panel could have messaging and imagery specific to that market. To make it real easy for this target market to venture into your site, you could have a "learn more" link in the panel that takes the visitor directly to that market's page within your website.

Flash is similarly helpful for companies whose products require multiple roles/titles in the decision making process, or who have multiple products and/or lines of business.

A more in-depth and very effective use of flash is for products or solutions that are difficult to describe in words, or for describing the ease of use and the benefits of a product. You can then promote that flash in a variety of ways.

- Use it as an offer on your website. Entice people to view it with language such as "See how this hospital's orthopedic surgery department has successfully deployed our product in (name the setting)." Or "See how easy it is to set up our product and begin (name the business benefit)". Once the flash concludes, you could have a "speak to a product professional" link to encourage and make it easy for the viewer to convert into a qualified opportunity.
- Use it as a rolling demo in your trade show booth.
- Use it as a fulfillment piece to a sales rep's conversation with a prospect.

Flash animation can be one of your most valuable types of content for a website. Use where appropriate, and it should make your site more helpful and informative for your visitors--and more profitable for you.