

Building Great Websites--and Keeping them that Way

by Mark O'Brien, October 2009

Our journey from consultants to implementors and back to consultants again.

Newfangled is a very active place; things are always growing, changing, and being refined. Of all the new things going on, I am most excited about our new support model. Here's why.

It used to be that we would build a site and send it live, not knowing when our next experience with the client would be. One very important change would happen at exactly this juncture, we transitioned from our role of the trusted consultant who actively led our client to being just another implementor waiting for our client to ask us to do something.

This had predictable results. We built great sites that were embraced by entropy upon going live. After a few years our client--who may or may not remember us or even have the same point of contact in place--would feel the need to bring their site up to date and call us up (or not). This was not an ideal situation for us or our client, but this is how web development is usually done, and we didn't know any better.

Now everything is different.

When a site goes live today, all involved rest easy knowing that we will have an opportunity to speak together every single month for the purpose of making sure the site is on the right track and that the client is receiving the latest and most relevant advice as it pertains to their current and upcoming marketing objectives. This is mandated by Newfangled, and we take responsibility for making this event happen. Each and every month we do the research, schedule and manage the call, and follow up with a written summary of the call.

What does this mean?

It means that we have figured out a way to preserve our status of trusted consultant throughout the life of the relationship. This is fantastic news for us and for our clients. We have greater impact, our clients receive better service and have better websites, and everyone is getting smarter all the time.

I believe that regularly focusing on the long term health of the sites we build instead of just the initial development of the site is one of the best moves we've ever made. I fully expect this new long-view approach to be the hallmark of many years of very successful, profitable, and enjoyable client relationships.

