

Pro Sharepoint 2013 Branding And Responsive Web Development The Experts Voice

Pro SharePoint 2013 Branding and Responsive Web Development: The Experts' Voice

SharePoint 2013, while a powerful collaboration platform, often suffers from a generic look and feel. This article delves into the crucial aspects of professional SharePoint 2013 branding and responsive web development, drawing on expert insights to elevate your intranet from bland to brilliant. We'll explore how strategic branding and responsive design can transform user experience, increase adoption, and ultimately, maximize your investment in this powerful tool. Key areas we'll cover include **custom SharePoint branding**, **responsive design best practices**, **SharePoint master pages**, and **mobile SharePoint access**.

The Power of Branded SharePoint: Beyond the Default

A well-branded SharePoint 2013 intranet is more than just a pretty face; it's a vital component of a successful digital workplace strategy. Unbranded or poorly branded SharePoint environments often lead to low user adoption and a lack of engagement. Imagine walking into a business with mismatched furniture, faded paint, and an unclear purpose – that's the digital equivalent of a poorly branded SharePoint site.

Custom SharePoint Branding: This involves tailoring the look and feel of your SharePoint environment to align seamlessly with your company's brand guidelines. This includes consistent use of logos, colors, fonts, and imagery. This goes beyond simple theme changes. Effective branding requires a deeper understanding of your company's visual identity and its application across all SharePoint components. Think of it as creating a digital extension of your physical office space, reflecting your company culture and values.

Benefits of Custom Branding:

- **Increased User Engagement:** A visually appealing and familiar environment encourages users to actively participate.
- **Improved Brand Recognition:** Consistent branding reinforces your company's identity and strengthens brand recognition among employees.
- **Enhanced User Experience (UX):** A well-designed and branded interface is intuitive and easy to navigate.
- **Higher Adoption Rates:** When users find the platform visually appealing and user-friendly, adoption naturally increases.
- **Professional Image:** A professionally branded intranet reflects positively on your organization's image and professionalism.

Responsive Design: Accessibility Across Devices

In today's mobile-first world, responsive design is no longer a luxury but a necessity. **Responsive web design** ensures your SharePoint 2013 intranet adapts seamlessly to different screen sizes and devices – from desktops and laptops to tablets and smartphones. This crucial aspect of modern web development is paramount for ensuring accessibility and a consistent user experience across all platforms.

Implementing Responsive Design in SharePoint 2013: This often involves customizing master pages and CSS to create fluid layouts that adjust automatically based on screen resolution. It might also necessitate utilizing SharePoint's mobile capabilities or integrating third-party responsive design frameworks that complement SharePoint's functionality.

Key Considerations for Responsive SharePoint:

- **Mobile-First Approach:** Designing for smaller screens first ensures the core content and functionality are accessible on all devices.
- **Fluid Grids and Flexible Images:** These allow elements to resize and rearrange automatically based on screen size.
- **Touch-Optimized Interfaces:** Ensure buttons and interactive elements are large enough for easy touch interaction on mobile devices.
- **Performance Optimization:** Responsive design should not come at the cost of performance; ensure your site loads quickly on all devices.
- **Testing Across Devices:** Thoroughly test your responsive design across various browsers and devices to ensure compatibility.

SharePoint Master Pages: The Foundation of Your Design

SharePoint master pages are the underlying templates that govern the structure and layout of your SharePoint sites. Customizing these pages is essential for implementing both branding and responsive design effectively. Working with master pages requires a deep understanding of ASP.NET and SharePoint's architecture, often requiring the expertise of a skilled SharePoint developer.

Modifying SharePoint Master Pages: This involves editing the ASPX files to incorporate your branding elements and responsive design principles. This is a powerful but potentially risky process requiring a comprehensive backup strategy and careful testing to avoid unintended consequences. Improper modifications can severely impact your SharePoint functionality.

Leveraging SharePoint 2013's Built-in Features for Enhanced User Experience

SharePoint 2013 offers several built-in features that can be leveraged to enhance the user experience and further enhance the effectiveness of branding and responsive design. These include:

- **Custom Themes:** While limited compared to full custom branding, custom themes provide a quick way to apply basic branding changes.
- **Page Layouts:** Utilizing pre-designed or custom page layouts can help maintain consistency and streamline content creation.
- **Web Part Design:** Strategically placing and customizing web parts allows for a more engaging and informative user experience.

Conclusion: Investing in a Professional SharePoint Experience

Investing in professional SharePoint 2013 branding and responsive web development is an investment in your organization's productivity and efficiency. A well-designed and branded intranet fosters collaboration, improves communication, and ultimately enhances the overall employee experience. By prioritizing these aspects, you can unlock the full potential of SharePoint and create a truly engaging and effective digital workplace. Remember that choosing the right experts, whether internal or external, is key to achieving a successful outcome.

FAQ:

Q1: Can I brand my SharePoint 2013 site myself without technical expertise?

A1: While you can perform basic branding changes using SharePoint's built-in theme customization options, more extensive branding and responsive design implementations generally require a strong understanding of ASP.NET, CSS, and SharePoint's architecture. Attempting complex customizations without technical expertise can lead to significant problems and potentially break your SharePoint site. It's advisable to seek professional assistance for anything beyond simple theme adjustments.

Q2: What are the potential risks of modifying SharePoint master pages?

A2: Modifying master pages directly impacts the core structure of your SharePoint site. Incorrect modifications can break site functionality, lead to data loss, and negatively impact user experience. Always back up your SharePoint environment before making any changes to master pages.

Q3: What is the cost of professional SharePoint branding and responsive web development?

A3: Costs vary significantly depending on the project's complexity, the scope of work, and the expertise of the chosen professionals. Simple branding adjustments might be relatively inexpensive, while comprehensive overhauls with custom master pages and extensive responsive design features can be significantly more costly. Obtain detailed quotes from several providers to compare options.

Q4: How long does it typically take to complete a SharePoint branding and responsive design project?

A4: Project timelines are highly dependent on project scope and complexity. Simple branding projects might be completed within a few weeks, while more complex projects involving custom development and testing can take several months. Clear project timelines should be established upfront with your chosen service provider.

Q5: Are there any third-party tools or services that can assist with SharePoint branding and responsive design?

A5: Yes, numerous third-party tools and services specialize in SharePoint development, branding, and responsive design. These tools can assist with automating certain processes, providing pre-built templates, or offering expert consulting services. Research available options to find tools that best suit your needs and budget.

Q6: How can I ensure my SharePoint 2013 site remains responsive after future updates?

A6: Properly planned and well-documented customizations are crucial for maintaining responsiveness after SharePoint updates. Work with developers who understand SharePoint's upgrade process and can implement solutions that minimize disruption. Regular testing after updates is essential to identify any compatibility issues.

Q7: What are some examples of successful SharePoint branding and responsive design implementations?

A7: Many organizations have successfully implemented branded and responsive SharePoint intranets. Search online for case studies and examples to discover successful approaches and strategies. Look for companies that have similar organizational structures and industry contexts to yours for the most relevant examples.

Q8: Is it possible to migrate branding and responsive design from SharePoint 2013 to a newer version of SharePoint?

A8: Migrating branding and responsive design to newer versions of SharePoint requires careful planning and often significant redevelopment. While some aspects may be transferable, many customizations may need to be revisited and potentially rewritten to ensure compatibility with the newer platform. Consult with SharePoint experts for guidance on this complex process.

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SharePoint 2013, while effective in its intrinsic capabilities, often lacked the visual appeal and user experience expected in a modern collaborative platform. This is where proficient branding and responsive web development step in. This article delves into the insights of experts in the field, exploring successful approaches for transforming your SharePoint 2013 installation into a attractive and intuitive platform.

Branding Your SharePoint 2013 Intranet:

Branding goes beyond simply changing the logo. It's about shaping a consistent brand image that reflects your company's values. This comprises uniform use of color schemes, fonts, and graphics. Experts highlight the importance of developing a visual identity manual to preserve coherence across the entire platform.

Leveraging SharePoint's internal branding features is key. This includes personalizing the site theme to embody your brand. However, for more sophisticated branding requirements, creating site templates is often required. Experts often advise using stylesheet language for precise control over the visual aspects of your SharePoint site. This allows for seamless integration of your branding without impacting the underlying functionality of SharePoint.

Responsive Web Design for SharePoint 2013:

In today's multi-device world, a adaptive design is non-negotiable. A responsive design promises that your SharePoint site resizes seamlessly to different screen sizes and positions, offering an optimal user experience across tablets and smartphones.

SharePoint 2013 doesn't inherently support responsive design out-of-the-box. This is where skilled implementation is vital. Experts propose using mobile-first design principles to create a site that automatically adjusts its arrangement based on the device being used. Utilizing a front-end framework like Bootstrap can substantially ease the development process.

Further, considerations such as image resizing and optimized JavaScript are essential for preserving a fast and seamless user experience across all devices.

Integrating Branding and Responsive Design:

The successful implementation of both branding and responsive design necessitates a coordinated approach. Experts recommend for a tight working relationship between UX designers, programmers, and end-users. This ensures that the final product matches with both the business' visual style and the needs of its staff.

Thorough planning and specifications are essential for managing the difficulty of such a project. Developing wireframes early in the process can assist in imagining the final product and identifying potential issues early on.

Conclusion:

Revamping your SharePoint 2013 environment with skilled branding and responsive web development offers a significant opportunity to boost user engagement, improve productivity, and fortify your business' image. By following best practices and utilizing the expertise of experienced developers, you can create a aesthetically pleasing and user-friendly SharePoint platform that facilitates your organization's goals.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q1: Can I implement responsive design in SharePoint 2013 without custom development?

A1: While some limited responsive features can be achieved through adjustments, true responsive design usually demands custom development using CSS and JavaScript.

Q2: What are the potential challenges of branding and responsive development in SharePoint 2013?

A2: Challenges encompass integration issues, challenging customization, ensuring consistency across different platforms, and the potential of compromising core SharePoint operations.

Q3: How much does professional branding and responsive web development for SharePoint 2013 cost?

A3: The cost differs significantly based on the scope of the project, the complexity of the implementation, and the expertise level of the designers involved. Plan for a significant expenditure.

Q4: Is it worth upgrading from SharePoint 2013 to a newer version for better branding and responsive design capabilities?

A4: Upgrading to a newer version of SharePoint offers built-in support for responsive design and often more sophisticated branding features. However, the cost and work of upgrading must be weighed against the benefits.

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