

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROTECH

PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL SERVICES

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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Protech Professional Technical Services, Inc. is ready to engage in an all-encompassing shift of their existing web marketing strategy to leverage new and innovative internet technologies for the purpose of drawing in new customers.

The current Protech website does not accurately reflect the quality of its services. The goal of this remodel is to make the image of Protech one of an industry leader in professional training services, offering its clients the best classroom and virtual training from the brightest instructors in the world.

A strategic combination of branding, website usability, search engine optimization and marketing, a value-added portal for technical professionals, technical blogs from industry experts, and other “Web 2.0” ideas will turn Protech into the best-of-breed for technical training firm websites, the benchmark for all competitors, and a brand that clients trust.

II. SITE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Logo Redesign

If there's any interest in a logo redesign or re-branding initiative, now would be the proper time to pursue the possibilities. After viewing the websites of your competitors and their logos, I've come to the conclusion that none of the websites of your direct competitors have a very "professional" look to them. Therefore, this is an excellent opportunity to create a best-of-breed brand and website in the industry.

It is important to note that in most cases, your website is the first interaction that a person will have with your company. If your website does not look professional, then this negative first impression is a reflection on your company, rather than on your web development firm.

Websites with a professional look:

<http://www.globalknowledge.com/>

<http://www.learningtree.com/>

<http://www.newhorizons.com/>

<http://www.it-training.com/>

<http://www.kalliance.com/>

<http://www.elementk.com/>

Websites that do not look professional:

<http://www.cbtplanet.com/>

<http://www.traininghott.com/>

<http://www.intelligentedu.com/>

<http://www.ittraining.net/>

<http://www.ittatc.org/>

<http://www.accelebrate.com/>

(and many others)

Competitor Logos



Recommendation

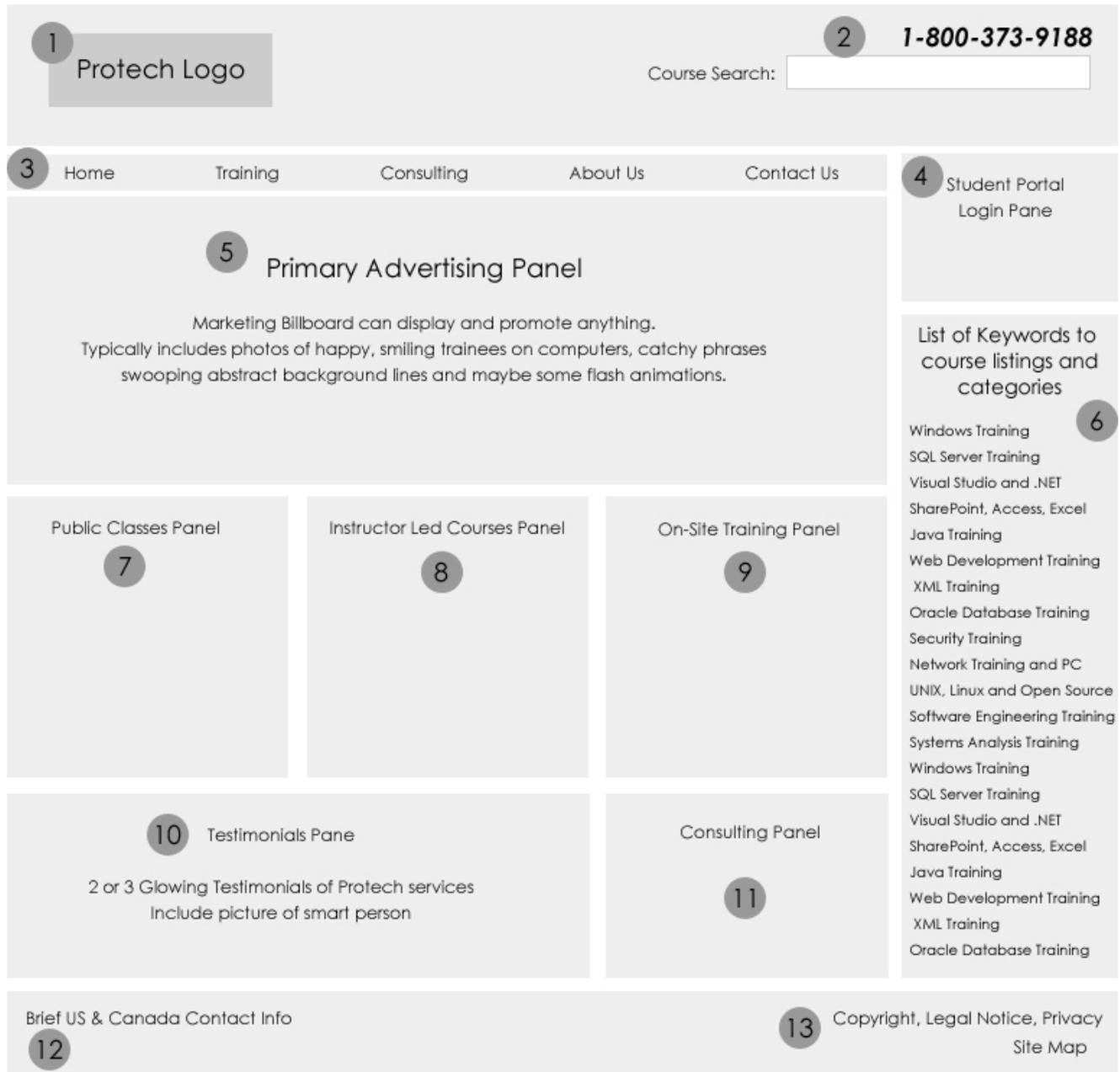
Investigate some new branding ideas and hire a professional company put together some logo concepts for you. I highly recommend [LogoBee.com](https://www.logobee.com), I've dealt with them before and they have a package that will create eight concept logos for only \$389.

Action Item : Hire LogoBee to develop concept logos. Cost: \$389

Why change the current brand?

The websites of most of your competition appear amateur at best in terms of website design and brand. Currently, Protech's brand and website do not stand out from the crowd. I'm confident that we can successfully re-brand Protech for the future while staying true to its history.

Front Page Wireframe



1. **Header Logo** – Permanent home for the logo
2. **Course Search** – Available on every page, includes bolded primary phone number
3. **Global Navigation** – Top level navigation available on every page.
4. **Student Portal Login** – Panel contains user/pass form, also a link to the public areas for non-registered users
5. **Advertising Panel** – The primary site real estate for promoting Protech services

6. **Course Keywords** – The SEO bread & butter, Google will pick out these links and apply the link text keywords to your website. Also very efficient means of prominently displaying course content for the user.
7. **Public Classes** – Panel to describe public courses
8. **Instructor Led Virtual Courses** – Panel to describe online courses offerings
9. **On-Site Training Panel** – Panel to describe Protech’s on-site training services (I thin
10. **Testimonials Panel** – Place to show that real people enjoy the Protech experience. Probably will be replaced by “Recent Blog Entries” in the future.
11. **Consulting Panel** – Panel to describe consulting services
12. **Footer / Contact Info** – Quick contact info that exists on every page
13. **Footer / Copyright** – Copy, Legal Notice, Privacy, Site Map (all the standard stuff)

Course Schedule Application

The most important aspect of the website, and the section which should get the most attention, is the Course Schedule. I want to create an application which will artificially establish a dialogue with the user, answering his questions in this order:

1. Do you teach the course I am looking for?
2. If yes:
 - a. Are you currently registering students for the course?
 - b. If yes:
 - i. Where is the course located?
 - ii. How much does the course cost?
 - c. If no:
 - i. Can you notify me when this course is offered?
 - ii. Can I ask that this course be offered soon or on my company campus?
3. If no:
 - a. Can I request that you teach it?
 - b. Can I request a trainer to come teach it on my company campus?

Finally, I’d like to try to integrate virtual and physical courses into one application.

III. TECHNOLOGY

Linux / PHP / MySQL

My preferred architecture in this project will utilize a Linux server (Ubuntu or otherwise), PHP and a MySQL database. We will also need PHPMyAdmin installed as well, this directory must be password protected. Using this architecture will also allow Angela to contribute to the project.

Communication with FoxPro

In the same way that the courses on the current website are updated, data uploads to the server will have to occur nightly. After the data files have been uploaded, a Cron Job will run that will import the data from the data files and place it into the MySQL database. The website will then utilize the data from the database.

Why duplicate the data from the data files into MySQL?

As we've previously discussed, while using Javascript and AJAX to import data into a webpage works, this method is completely dependent upon the user having a Javascript enabled browser. If Javascript is turned off, then the user is presented with a blank page.

Also, once the data is stored in the database, we can link courses to student accounts. Reversely, we can then link upcoming courses to those students who have previously taken related courses. Really, anything is possible with information properly stored in the database.

RSS / Content Syndication

Protech should offer course announcement feeds. User can subscribe to an "All Categories" feed or select the course categories he/she wishes to monitor. Additional feeds will be added when blogs are created. Having such feeds is a smart SEO strategy as well.

IV. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Goals

It's a good idea to create a set of goals that, when realized, will determine the success of an SEO campaign. This list is a realistic set of goals that are measurable. Below are some example goals.

Reach a point where 50% of all incoming traffic comes from organic search engine results

Grab the #1 organic listing on Google for the term "protech"

Page 1 of results list for "technical training"

Page 1 of results list for subject matter, e.g. "java training"

Action Item : Define a list of 10 measurable SEO goals.

Strategy

Clean Source Code:

Develop the website cleanly, keeping GUI objects separate from content. Content markup will be compliant with the W3C's XHTML Strict 1.0. All GUI elements will be stored and delivered using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). Adhering to such strict rules will ensure that the site is search engine friendly.

Pay-Per-Click Advertising

Map out a Pay-Per-Click Advertising campaign using the "Big 3" in search term marketing, Google Adwords, Yahoo Search Term Marketing, and Microsoft Live Search Advertising.

Set a monthly budget for such advertising and spread it out among the services, 60% to Google and 20% to the others. A recommended budget for an effective campaign would be \$1000 per month.

Define a set of "keeper" search terms, meaning that they should never be turned off, for instance, "protech", "protech training", "protech consulting" and others such as ".NET training" and "ITSM training"

Define a set of "turn on / turn off" keywords, those that correspond with registration periods of a training course such as "C# training"

Monitor the success of keywords daily and determine which keywords are best at generating sales.

Yahoo Directory Paid Inclusion (<https://ecom.yahoo.com/dir/submit/intro/>)

The "Yahoo! Directory" was Yahoo's first offering as an internet company and is the site's "official" listing of websites. The sites contained within are monitored for viability and listings are maintained routinely. There are 2 methods for inclusion in the directory, first is a free URL submission which Yahoo! makes no guarantee that your site will be reviewed or listed, second, Y! offers a paid inclusion for \$299 per year that guarantees a listing in less than 7 days.

As a great source of good web content, the Yahoo Directory is one of Google's primary targets for bots to spider the internet. Websites listed in the Y! Directory receive a bump in page rank for being listed in the highly regarded, paid inclusion directory.

Currently, Protech Training -is not- listed in the Yahoo! Directory.

Action Item : Get listed in the Yahoo! Directory. Cost: \$299 per year.

Open Directory Project (ODP) (<http://www.dmoz.org>)

Similar to the Yahoo Directory, the Open Directory Project is an internet directory that attempts to categorize each website of the internet. It is run solely by volunteers and is another highly regarded destination for Google Bots.

Currently, Protech -is- listed in the ODP.

V. STUDENT PORTAL (Protech*Exchange)

Integrate much of Angela's student portal into Protech Exchange

To brand the student portal, I suggest "Protech Exchange". Why? It sounds more like a collaborative environment than just MyProtech or Student Portal. From a search engine standpoint, if a user who is new to Protech finds "MyProtech" in search results, he may assume that he doesn't have access, same with a "Protech Student Portal." Whereas "Protech Exchange" sounds like something that one can join.

Instructor and Administration Interfaces

This step should also mark the beginning of the Instructor and Administrator interfaces. While they will be short on functionality to begin with, the physical constructs should be in place to build off of.

Initial Launch Configuration

Upon the initial launch of the website, I think we should ensure that the Register, Login, Student Evaluations and Course History functions are in place, basically all of the pieces that Angela developed. After the initial launch of the new Protech website, we will then focus on rolling out the social functions of the Protech Exchange. Otherwise, the project could become too ambitious and overly presumptuous as to what our customers want in a social forum.

VI. POST-LAUNCH ADDITIONS

Google Search Appliance

The Google Search Appliance is a server that you mount into your rack system. Once installed, you can configure it to search any number of data sources. With this tool, we can create a site search that will spider every page of the website (content, forums, blogs, feeds, documents, etc) and bring them all together in a search application powered by Google technology.

Blogs

A blog section by Protech experts will go a long way in establishing Protech as a trusted industry leader. If readers find blog content insightful and useful, then they will project that image upon Protech as a whole. Blogs should focus on industry news and help tips of a given topic, i.e. Java, Oracle, Web Development. Blogs also create very relevant and optimized pages for search engines. The great dynamic about blogs is that it demands more content. Most bloggers will post several times per week, and if the posts are interesting then they start receiving the most valuable SEO benefit of all, a quality backlink.

Discussion Forums

As part of the Protech Exchange, a discussion forum will be implemented. Proper measures should be taken to ensure that it is properly moderated. Forum moderators ensure that forum content is well organized and categorized, that threads stay on topic, and remove any threads that are inappropriate. As the forum grows into a valid Protech service, paid moderators should be considered.

Podcast

I am a big fan and supporter of Podcasting. A podcast is basically an audio (or video) show that is downloaded directly to a podcast reader such as iTunes. Once a user subscribes to your show, he is fed each new episode that is created and posted to that show's xml feed.

Protech is in a unique position where it can create a show that covers a wide array of topics and offer help on each. Perhaps each show could start out with the show host introductions,

and then go into a news segment, then into an "Ask the Experts" segment, then finish up with training offerings and other promotions or advertisements.

The bottom line is that a successful show that includes good conversation from enthusiastic hosts may result in tens (possibly hundreds) of thousands of weekly subscribers. These subscribers will use the Protech Exchange and Protech Expert Blogs in conjunction with the podcast, to be branded as Protech customers.

A good case-study that provides a proof-of-concept for this model is Boagworld.com. Paul Boag is the founder of London-based web design firm, Headscape. The entire community that is thriving at Boagworld.com is a direct result of publicity from his podcast.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

1. Dima – Set up test server with Ubuntu, PHP, MySQL and PHPMyAdmin
2. Scott – Hire LogoBee to develop logo concepts
3. Scott – Get listed in Yahoo! Directory
4. Scott / Alan / Angela – Define a list of 10 measurable SEO goals
5. Dima – Create an email account webacct@protechpts.com
6. Alan – Setup accounts with Google Analytics for web statistics analysis
7. Alan – Create accounts with Google Adwords, Yahoo Search Term Marketing and MS Live Search Marketing
8. Alan – Setup account with iStockPhoto

VIII. TIMELINE

1. Complete all action items
2. Finalize Design Concept (logo, colors, style guide)
3. Mock up Front page and sub-page layouts in Photoshop
4. Build Page templates (XHTML, CSS, PHP)
5. Finalize data structures of all XML nightly uploads
6. Spec and build database
7. Write the cron jobs needed to migrate data into MySQL, and test them
8. Build out Course Schedule application, the application that will present courses to website users.
9. Build out Website Front page
10. Build out remaining content sub-pages
11. Integrate Angela's Student Portal, create Instructor and Admin interfaces
12. Test entire site for 2 weeks, fixing bugs along the way
13. Launch