

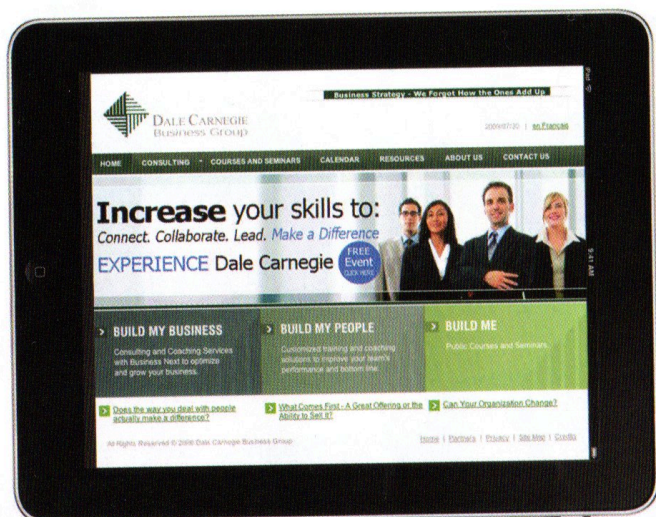
DESIGNMAKEOVER

JAKE WIDMAN

CLIENT

Dale Carnegie Business Group / <http://dalecarnegie.ca>

BEFORE



“THE GROUP’S CURRENT WEBSITE TRIES TO PRESENT TOO MUCH INFORMATION, AND CLIENTS SAY IT’S HARD TO FIND WHAT THEY’RE LOOKING FOR.”

business development

- Dale Carnegie—the man, not the organization—first started offering his personal development courses in 1912, and in 1936 cemented his place in business history with his book *How to Win Friends & Influence People*.

In 1973, the Dale Carnegie Business Group opened its doors in Ontario, Canada, as a local franchise of the Dale Carnegie Training organization. The Group offers the Dale Carnegie courses in Ontario, and it has a consulting arm operating under the name Business Next. “People don’t always see how the Dale Carnegie courses help businesses, not just individuals,” says Dave Mather, one of the Group’s corporate specialists. “We started Business Next to answer that question.”

As a franchise, the Group has an identity challenge. They can’t deny the heritage of the Dale Carnegie courses, but they want potential clients (and website visitors) to know they do more than that. But while they can give their consulting arm its own name, their franchise agreement says that they can’t imply it’s not connected to the Dale Carnegie Business Group. Furthermore, their site (dalecarnegie.ca) gets most of its traffic through links on the main DaleCarnegie.com site, so the connection should be immediately clear.

The Group’s current website maintains that connection but, says Mather, it’s too boring. It tries to present too much information, and clients say it’s hard to find what they’re looking for. The Group wants a site that looks well grounded but still current: “It’s not your grandfather’s Dale Carnegie course,” says Mather. “Dale Carnegie was an innovator in his time, and we’re still innovators.” They also want to attract clients from the 24–45-year-old crowd, another reason to have a fresher, more modern homepage.

We asked three designers to meet the Group’s challenge, to demonstrate innovation that has stood the test of time.

DESIGNER

Patty Miller / www.sanjosegraphics.com

AFTER



- My goal in redesigning the Dale Carnegie Business Group site was to emphasize the diversity of options they had to offer. After all, they do more than offer courses. To accomplish this I reduced the emphasis on the navigation bar by placing it at the top of the page in a smaller font size. Then I took the three aspects of their business—"Build My Business," "Build My People," and "Build Me"—and placed them prominently under the company name. I added color to help differentiate the different arms of their company and illustrated the various branches of the company by placing photos under each heading that convey what each branch focuses on.

The rounded corners on the buttons, brighter colors, and drop-shadow effect help give the site a more contemporary look and will increase the site's appeal to the 24–45 market they want to go after. The gradients at the top and bottom of the page help to soften the look and focus the eye toward the center of the page, where the main information is located.

I added a Search feature to the site, placing it at the top of the page so it would be easy to locate. The Group has recently established a presence on Facebook and LinkedIn, so I added those icons at the bottom of the page.

I used Century Gothic for the navigation, search, "Follow Us," and copyright information because it's easy to read at smaller sizes and gives a nice clean look. I chose Trajan Pro for the company name, headings, "Increase Your Skills...", and "Free Event..." because a serif font says "business." I also liked the caps/small caps look for the company name. The text under the heading is done in Byington, another font inspired by the carvings on Trajan's Column in Rome.

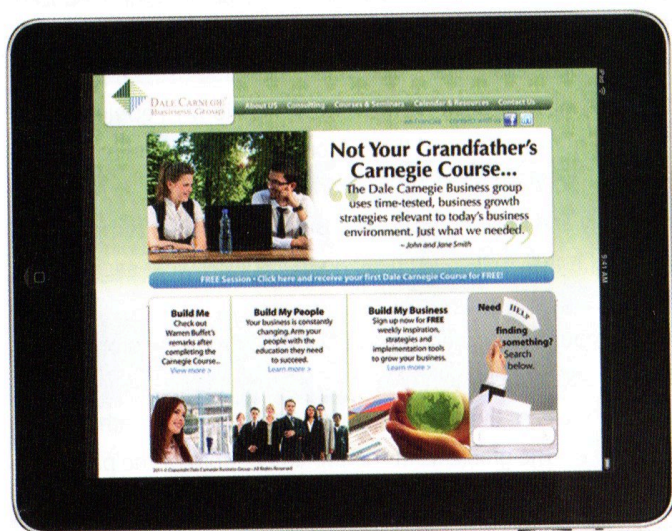
"THE ROUNDED CORNERS ON THE BUTTONS, BRIGHTER COLORS, AND DROP-SHADOW EFFECT HELP GIVE THE SITE A MORE CONTEMPORARY LOOK AND WILL INCREASE THE SITE'S APPEAL TO THE 24–45 MARKET."

DESIGNMAKEOVER

DESIGNER

Damien Golden / www.ikandegraphics.com

AFTER



“THE BEST ADVERTISEMENT FOR ANY COMPANY OR GROUP IS WORD OF MOUTH, SO I INCLUDED A BIG AND BOLD TESTIMONIAL.”

► In redesigning the Dale Carnegie Business Group's website, I thought it best to create an inviting page around the “not-your-grandfather's-Carnegie-course” theme. I drew on various techniques to fuse the two worlds of innovation and old-school reliability, such as the wallpaper background, green palette, large fonts married with easy navigation, white space, bright blue tones, and social media links. I used the font Myriad everywhere, with the exception of the Group's logo and the testimonial—there I used Optima, a font that balances traditional and modern. I was careful to only slightly update the logo, giving it a minor pop of color to attract a younger crowd while keeping the traditional green intact.

The best advertisement for any company or group is word of mouth, so I included space for a big and bold testimonial. The quote helps solidify the overall theme, but it's still generic enough to speak to potential clients, no matter which of the Group's services they might be interested in. A promotional “FREE Session” banner is placed in the middle with a “click here!” call to action.

Studies show that the longer you can keep a visitor on your website, the better the chance you have of getting them to spend money with you. So it's important to give visitors enticing reasons to go beyond your homepage. The three main blocks of information, lower left, are great doorways into the three services the Group offers to those looking to build themselves, their people, and their company. I used iStockphotos here instead of graphics to continue to create a more personal feel. That's also why the search feature is so easy to find at the lower right. Nothing is more frustrating than not being able to find what you're looking for quickly and easily.

DESIGNMAKEOVER

DESIGNER

Dan Herron / www.herroncreativeworks.com

[AFTER]



“I CHOSE A PHOTO THAT EXEMPLIFIES YOUTHFUL AND ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE TO MIRROR THEIR TARGET MARKET.”

► My first reaction upon viewing the current site was that for a business skills training site, it was lacking many of the communication channels available for reaching its market. Social media is a necessity in doing business these days, and it's been proven to increase lead generation in B-to-C (business to consumer) business by 10%. I added icon links for the social media channels the company currently has in the top header to make them readily viewable.

Also, with YouTube being one of the top sites in the world for number of search queries, I added space for a video to give them a multimedia presence. This is also imperative for great SEO and to lead the market. For lead generation, I added a call to action box near the bottom to further entice the prospective customer.

I thought the existing green color of the website was a little overused these days, so I wanted to freshen it up. I found a nice medium blue that would make the website color scheme appear confident yet relaxing to the user.

I've seen their stock photo many times around the Web, so I changed it out to freshen up the site. I chose a photo that exemplifies youthful and attractive people to mirror their target market and appeal to that 25–45 demographic they seek. The photo is the cornerstone of the redesigned site, using strong imagery to brand the design in the right direction.

I wanted to incorporate a font with a masculine, new, and fresh feel to it but one that's easy to read and inviting. I chose the sans-serif Gothic, mostly to keep with the client's request to keep the design simple.