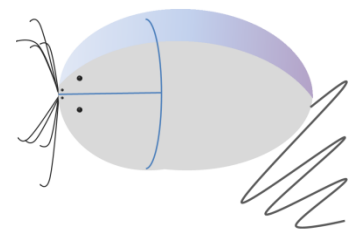


The CDA Content Lab website *personality test*

Who's representing the online
expression of your brand?

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Your website
is just like
any other
member of
your team...



Okay, it doesn't draw salary (in quite the same way) and it doesn't turn up at the Christmas party clutching half a bottle of tequila. But it represents your organisation, its products, services, values...

The question is - what type of personality have you got fronting the most important doorway and window onto your world and what kind of job are they doing?

- *You wouldn't place one of your best technical brains in front of a room full of impatient customers.*
- *Neither would you leave your top sales person to install new system software over the weekend.*
- *And everybody in your organisation will have received some form of job interview, possibly some personality testing and certainly get annual appraisals to check they're on track.*

So here's a quick (and fun) website *personality* appraisal test. See who you've got manning the online store.

Instructions for completing the test

1. Read and complete each section in turn.
2. Complete every section - even if you think you've already discovered the profile that most closely matches your website's personality.
3. Tick every box that applies in each section.
4. You'll find out how to score only when you've completed entire test.

The 'aging' Rock Star



Here in the lab we've noted a growing fondness for using aging rock gods to front media campaigns. Right now you can find Iggy Pop selling insurance in the UK and Alice Cooper suggesting we 'buy' TVs rather than throw them out of hotel windows.

This is an interesting variant on 'the voice of experience'.

Meet Curt 'The animal' McDwain

Curt started his career with the Suicide Monkeys back in the 60s. The band were due to play at Woodstock but missed the gig after an unfortunate incident involving the base player, two gerbils and the frontman from a rival outfit called the Death Inguanas. But the time they made it out of casualty they'd missed the helicopter due to airlift them into the Woodstock site and the roads were impassable.

Curt split from the band in the mid-70s, recording a seminal but commercially disasterous album called Intestinal Living. Then followed a period of relative obscurity punctuated by the odd court case.

But the Suicide Monkeys reformed in 1991 and have enjoyed renewed success. Curt divides his time between touring and running a gerbil sanctuary just outside Ontario.

Does Curt embody your website's personality?

Tick all that apply

- Your website and your home page in particular seem to be dominated by references to past successes and reminiscences - some of them now very old indeed.
- There are poster-size (well, pretty big) studio portraits of senior managers in the About us section.
- You talk to customers as if they were fans (not necessarily the case) and treat prospects in a slightly condescending fashion.

Pretty Woman



There's something about a beautiful woman that tends to arrest the eye. It is a magic that has been exploited by artists and advertisers throughout history.

We all respond to a little glamour and hope that we can either become - or date - something as beautiful. But in our hearts we can differentiate the reality from the dream.

Meet Pippen

Pippen, so called because of her apple fresh complexion, was discovered by Roddy Beltblack, the famous head of the Coltish Glamour model agency. Roddy's Porsche broke down on the way back to his country pile after a hectic round of meetings during London Fashion week five years ago.

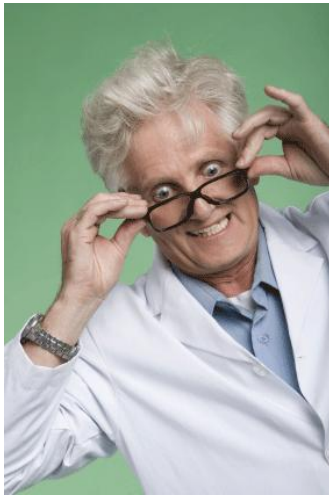
Driven by hunger and the extraordinarily long wait for a tow truck he entered the Hungry Haddock, a wayside fish and chip shop on the road that ran through a small village 30 miles from his home in Hampshire. He was half way through explaining to the proprietor what 'low carb' was when Pippen, then known as Mary Fry, walked through from the back of the shop carrying a bucket of battered roe. The rest, as they say, is history.

Can you picture a lot of Pippen in your website's personality?

Tick all that apply

- It's a really beautiful site but rather thin on the actual content that might offer useful sustenance to a site visitor.
- The site doesn't actually do a lot - such as give people practical information, a chance to 'do' something, buy, download, contact people by name and email address... It tends to stand around doing nothing in particular. Except look lovely.
- There are loads of impractical or expensively arranged accessories - such as a chance to register for the email newsletter but only after wading through 5 screens of detailed questions and a five minute Flash animation.

The Technical Genius



All branches of the media have a weakness for the 'boffin'. He, or she, is the voice of reassuring authority, with a grasp of statistics and a technical inventiveness that offers solutions to everything from global warming to foot odour.

The fact that they major in a branch of science we can't hope to understand doesn't stop us recruiting them into ever more inventive positions as frontpeople.

Meet Robert Asquith-Cholmondley

Robert graduated from Cambridge at the age of 12. While he was passionate about nuclear physics and produced a number of groundbreaking academic studies, his life underwent a complete transformation after appearing on the children's television programme This Quark Lark.

He became the media's favourite pundit and earned a fortune when he was signed up to a 10 year deal to be the 'face' of a new men's skincare range being launched by a leading cosmetics' brand.

In the early 2000s he turned his back on television to devote himself to research and a yet undiscovered sub-atomic particle he called the Dribble. But academe never forgave him his commercial success and within 3 years he was back on telly, returning to his children's television roots in White Coat Magic.

Are you letting Robert's personality influence your website?

Tick all that apply



Your website pays homage to leading edge technology and is awash with functionality that, usually, works, albeit in a rather abrupt and 'in your face' manner.



Your error messages and auto-response emails love to indulge in cyber-talk eg: "A field on the previous page as been inappropriately infiltrated by a word or phrase not compatible with the end output required. Rephrase or abandon task?"



Your site is littered with interesting and esoteric names for your products and services, but bereft of explanations in lay terms.

The Selling Dervish



Hey, everybody wants to make a dollar or two - that's okay. It's why we need great sales people. Snow to the Inuit and all that.

Most of us can respect a good sales story when we hear it and can admire expert delivery. So long as we're in the mood to be sold to...

Meet Debbie Closing

Debbie, or DC as she's known in sales circles, cut her teeth in the double-glazing industry before moving onwards and upwards. Six years ago she became Head of Sales for Mega Inc and was single handedly responsible for their exponential global sales growth - until she was poached by Unbelievably Bigger PLC.

She has a seat on the UB board, a cottage nestled in the English countryside, a tumbledown gite in France and flats in London and New York.

Just before the recession hit the CEO gave her a Lamborghini Gallardo as part of a 5-year golden handcuffs deal. Rumour has it that Debbie initially used the car to prop open the back door on the 16th century barn conversion she bought in a remote corner of Ireland (with the cash element of her handcuffs). She later sold the Gallardo to buy the small Northern Ireland supermarket chain that she runs in her spare time.

Is Debbie's personality type calling the shots on your website?

Tick all that apply



Both the board and the sales team love your website. It positively bristles with product information, pricing and sales messages.

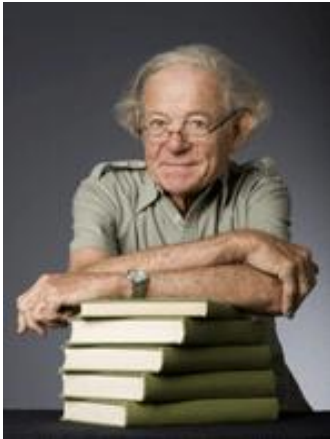


It's easier to find the PDF download for last year's corporate annual report and accounts than the phone number for customer services.



The Product of the Year award you won 18 months ago is still being trumpeted on the website home page (and is the last news item loaded in the Press section).

The Librarian



Structure and order are cornerstones of our business existence and no more so than on the web, where it's possible to build giant cathedrals to content and its archiving.

Being able to find stuff is important and people who know how to structure information so that it can be found are indispensable. The question is, should that information be up there in the first place?

Meet Burt Boone

Burt studied information retrieval systems and archiving at a polytechnic on the English South Coast, but even at school had showed an obsession with data structures and library systems. He once presented his English teacher with a 12 page essay on the Dewey Decimal System. He was aged 9 at the time.

After his degree he began working in the library of the same polytechnic where he had studied but, much to the surprise of co-workers, was eventually tempted into a job in the private sector looking after the personal archive of an eccentric billionaire who was rumoured to own the largest and most complete archive of MAD magazines.

In 1999 he wrote a book, which, although it failed to find a commercial publisher, was eventually released through the vanity press. It was entitled: 'Why people who write in the margins of books (even when they own them) should be hanged'.

Is Burt wandering the aisles and avenues of your site?

Tick all that apply



Your website has an awesome number of pages. You fall asleep at night knowing everything is available online but then wake up in a cold sweat because you dreamt you couldn't find the Autumn 1978 product catalogue PDF.



Six months ago somebody was given the task of cataloguing your website pages prior to a site redesign. Nobody's heard a peep from them since.



If you need to find something in a hurry you tend to phone your customer helpline using a false name or ring old Dave, who retired last year but who has a memory like an elephant.

The Gardener



We all need nurturing and it's amazing how people and organisations can respond to some tender loving care.

A good gardener knows how to make things grow but also understands when things need cutting back.

Meet Gardenia Green

Gardenia runs a small nursery but people travel from many, many miles around to buy from her. The plants are of excellent quality but, more than anything, people come to seek her advice. She probably knows the Latin name for every plant on the planet but she tends to use the common names, or simply points customers in the right direction saying 'it's that big pink flower over there'. The nursery is large but people rarely get lost.

She used to exhibit at the world famous Chelsea Flower Show but stopped a few year's back. She doesn't tend to bang on about it publicly, but people who know her well understand that she became disillusioned with seeing garden designs at the show which were increasingly about dramatic effect and attention grabbing.

Last year she unveiled a new hybrid tea rose that she had created. It is the palest pink, has a delightful scent, and is resistant to most bugs and blights. It's also extremely hardy. Sales have been disappointing.

Is Gardenia nurturing your website?

Tick all that apply



When you visit the website you tend to find there's always some new, pleasing development. It attracts both staff and customers.



Links are rarely broken. You very rarely get 'page not found' messages. The impression is of many hidden hands ensuring the website thrives, yet you know that the web team is small.



While most people love the site it tends to get dismissed by some as *not having the Wow! factor*.

How to interpret your score

About the CDA Content Lab

The CDA Content Lab is run by Content Delivery & Analysis Ltd, a content strategy and digital communications consultancy. CDA helps organisations plan and develop the skills, resources and measures for an effective online presence.

We believe the first step for clients looking to build useful websites and write good web copy is understanding how their users tick.

In order to help them do this we take an obsessive interest in web and email language. Our Content Lab is where we test theories about online content and share ideas.

You have 1 personality type where you have 3 ticks. (In all other types you have less than 3 ticks.)

This is the dominant personality on your site. The question is, is this the sort of personality you want in charge?

If there are other personality types where you have 2 ticks you may want to take them into account. They may not be as dominant as the personality where you scored 3 ticks, but they're probably still having an influence.

2 or more personality types where you have scored 3 ticks.

Multiple personality disorder. Chances are there's conflict going on between, say, sales and customer services; or your site's technical capacity is being undermined by pretty pages that do little to direct people to its useful functionality.

You score 2 ticks or less on one type or more.

You may not have an overriding personality casting an undue or unwanted influence but, with the exception of The Gardener, treat every tick as a possible problem and think about what you can do to solve it.

You only score 3 ticks on The Gardener.

Fantastic. Great. Chances are it's a brilliant site (or you cheated). But be careful of confusing what *is* with what you want your site to be. If you're in any doubt, get a site user (who is not an employee) to do this quiz for you. *And treat every tick you got elsewhere as a possible problem.*

This fun quiz is has been produced by the lab rats. If you want a more serious discussion about improving your brand online contact CDA on 01273 553393

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