

Contact Forms

All but the most unusual sites will have prospect and customer contact as a goal. As discussed earlier, we recommend giving viewers complete contact information on every page of your site. (That way, when any particular page of your site is printed for further consideration, contact information is sure to be included.) In this chapter, we'll recap email contact information and give you specifics on contact forms.

Mailto Statements

Mailto statements are simple text email links to contact `sales@YourName.com`, `webmaster@YourName.com`, `info@abc.com`, `applicationengineering@xyz.com` or any other pertinent contacts at your company. It is important that the link actually spell out the email address, rather than saying "contact customer service" where customer service is a link to `customer-service@YourName.com` or `custsrvc@`, etc. In other words, spell out the email link properly and completely (with the "@" sign and your domain name) so that when the page is printed, the user does not have to return to the website to get your correct email address.

Webmasters, note that you can write the actual mailto statement in high ASCII (except for "@" and ",") and other methods to help camouflage email addresses from spiders that glean email addresses from websites to resell as email collections to spammers.

We have a personal preference for sales emails. We prefer, and we encourage clients to use `info@` as their sales email address because it is a bit less 'threatening' to buyers than `sales@`.

"Contact Us" Included in Primary Navigation

If you are interested in prospect and customer contact, every page of your web presence, as a rule, should include a link to your "Contact Us" page in the primary navigation.

Track Inquiries via the Contact Us For Contact Us pages that generate many inquiries and are perhaps routed to multiple individuals, consider programming so that each completed query is numbered for easy tracking.

Another customizable feature of Contact Us pages is enabling the queries to interact with your CRM package. Many programs like ACT! and Goldmine allow completed inquiry forms to be dumped directly into the contact relationship management program, often with preset response templates.