

- > **Top Story:** Ensuring a Great Start for Your Next Web Project
- > **Awards:** Marker Seven Receives Top Industry Honors
- > **Projects:** Customers Across the Globe
- > **Connect:** Join Us on Facebook

Top Story Ensuring a Great Start for Your Next Web Project



It's no secret that successful projects, especially in the online world, start with a well-defined plan. But before the first line of code is written, the first pixel is drawn, and before a Web agency is even contacted, there is a piece of homework clients need to take on themselves: the Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP is a critical document that tangibly defines a project's business goals, and lists what features of the project are critical to ensuring those goals are met. Clearly, clients don't need to have all the answers at this stage – those will be arrived at during collaboration with the agency.

However, a well thought out RFP has two major benefits: 1) it challenges clients to define a project as thoroughly as possible in a written format and 2) it helps the agency to better understand the project scope, which in turn leads to a more accurate proposal and price estimate.

We've spelled out more about the groundwork that needs to be done before your design gets going in "[How to Make Sure Your Web Design Works for You.](#)" It's the first of several articles we are planning to develop to bring you up to date on trends and issues in Website development and design.

Awards Marker Seven Receives Top Industry Honors

We were thrilled when the [American Conservatory Theater \(A.C.T.\)](#), one of the country's most respected regional theaters, selected us to architect and design its Website. If that wasn't enough of an honor, you can imagine our excitement receiving a [2009 Award of Excellence](#) in the 15th Annual Communicator Awards for our work with A.C.T. The Communicator Awards annually recognize creative excellence among communications professionals around the world. This year, the program received over 9000 entries. The competition is sanctioned and judged by the International Academy of the Visual Arts (IAVA) an invitation-only body consisting of top-tier professionals from a "Who's Who" of acclaimed media, advertising, and marketing firms.



No sooner were we getting over the excitement of the Communicator Award when the [Interactive Media Awards \(IMA\)](#) honored us with "Best in Class" in the Public Relations Category for our work redesigning the Website for [Text 100](#), a leading global public relations firm. IMA judges evaluate Website entries based on design, content, feature functionality, usability and standards compliance. To earn the Best in Class Award level, a site has to excel in each of these areas -- an achievement only a fraction of sites in the IMA competition earn each year.

Projects Customers Across the Globe

Two new completed projects over the past few months indicate not only the range of clients Marker Seven represents, they also show our reach globally.



Locally, we partnered with [SFOpenHome.com](#), a site that provides a complete listing of all available homes in the San Francisco area. User experience and an attractive visual design were paramount to this project since thousands of homebuyers and agents visit to find new listings. This project had a big data management component to enable the site to pull and update Multiple Listing Data (MLS) from Real Estate Transaction Standard (RETS) so that visitors can get reliable, up-to-date information on all available properties. We used Drupal, the open source content management system (CMS), for development to enable SFOpenHome to easily update content.

We also were very pleased to provide pro bono services to [Bpeace](#), the non-profit international volunteer network of business professionals that help women entrepreneurs in post-conflict countries to expand their businesses. The Marker Seven team donated our services to help Bpeace tell the story of its Rwanda Beauty School Project, a program that provides intensive beauty school training to Rwandan women to enable them to become skilled professionals and in turn create businesses that boost employment. Rising employment contributes to a more peaceful future for Rwandan communities. The new Rwanda Beauty School Project Website helps participants to share their experience and raise funds for the program.



Stay Connected Join Us on Facebook



We are now on Facebook and we hope you join us. We want to create a community around Web design and development issues that will be of interest to anyone with responsibility for your organization's online presence. Just how organizations are leveraging new social media tools on their sites is another area of discussion.

You can find our [Facebook page here](#). If you are not already a Facebook member, you can sign up for a free account at [www.facebook.com](#).