

# SitePal™ Best Practices



Version 1.0

## **I. STRIVE TO CREATE SITEPAL CHARACTERS THAT ARE UNIQUE AND PERSONALIZED FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

Creating SitePal characters that are unique and personalized for your business will help it stand out from the rest and make your website more appealing to prospective customers on both an *aesthetic* and *emotional* level. This will eventually lead to increased traffic and better sales conversion.

The SitePal Editor (regardless of the account type) supports the ability to create thousands of different characters by allowing you to adjust various physical attributes (e.g. skin, eye and hair coloring, hairstyles, makeup, facial hair, eye, nose and mouth shapes, aging, etc.) and by selecting various accessories such as clothing.

Given this, you are *strongly* encouraged to experiment as much as possible with SitePal's character design capabilities. The end results will be more than worth it.

## **II. CREATE A SITEPAL THAT MATCHES YOUR IMAGE AND APPEALS THE AUDIENCE YOU ARE TRYING TO ATTRACT**

This is simple common sense. If your website caters to specific socio-demographic groups or market segments, it makes sense to use a SitePal character that accurately reflects and engages that audience. Doing so will insure that you are projecting the right "image" while making your prospective customers feel more comfortable about doing business with you.

**NOTE:** SitePal's incredibly flexible character design tools make it possible to design characters that fit a wide variety of businesses, site designs and audiences.

## **III. HIGH-QUALITY AUDIO MAKES FOR A HIGH-QUALITY SITEPAL**

SitePal is an audio-visual tool so how your SitePal characters sound when they speak *is just as important as how they look*. Since most websites get only *one* chance to make a good impression, having SitePal characters with inaudible or otherwise poor-quality audio is tantamount to turning away prospective customers.

The following are some suggestions for how to produce high-quality audio for use with your SitePal:

### **Tips for making your own Audio Recordings:**

- Use a high-quality microphone and make sure that you are neither too close or too far from the microphone when recording.
- Speak slowly and clearly while recording. Remember: haste makes waste!

- Try to minimize any background noise while recording as this can diminish the quality of your recording.

#### **Tips for using Pre-Recording Audio:**

- If at all possible, use SitePal's [Professional Voice Talent](#) services in lieu of making your own recordings. The difference in quality will far out-weigh the cost.
- Make sure the audio file is recorded at the proper volume level.
- Make sure that that your audio files meet the requirements specified by the SitePal application as this will minimize problems. This includes uploading mono (not stereo) audio files for the best results.

#### **Tips for using Text-to-Speech Audio:**

- Only use the best-sounding Text-to-Speech voices. Not all SitePal Text-to-Speech voices have the same quality and some are better suited than others for certain purposes. You will need to experiment to see which ones work for you.
- Take advantage of Text-to-Speech's [Prosody commands](#), which allow you to adjust various elements such as volume, the rate-of-speech and other Text-to-Speech features on a word-by-word basis. They are extremely powerful and can dramatically improve the quality and realism of Text-to-Speech messages if applied judiciously.

### **IV. BE CONSIDERATE WHEN USING AUDIO WITH YOUR SITEPAL**

Both research and experience tell us that many web users find audio that they don't initiate to be annoying, especially if they aren't provided with a way to control it.

If you're using SitePal for business purposes, the last thing you want to do is annoy prospective customers. Therefore, please be considerate when using audio with your SitePal by allowing your site visitors to have control over the playback of your audio messages.

Although there are several ways to do this, the easiest to is to simply publish your SitePal Scene with a player. The SitePal player provides options for adjusting the volume and pausing the playback of audio and offers users a way of controlling your SitePal without negating the impact of its audio message.

**NOTE:** The SitePal player is described on p.29 of the SitePal User's Guide.

## V. USE SITEPAL'S VARIOUS AUDIO CAPABILITIES WISELY

SitePal supports several different Audio technologies, with each being suited for specific situations. The following suggestions will help you to choose the right technology for the right application:

### **Recorded Audio**

Use this feature for simple messages where audio quality is not paramount. It is also useful when time and/or budget prevent you from taking advantage of professionally recorded audio.

### **Uploaded Audio**

Use this feature for situations when you have access to a large library of pre-recorded audio files or when you want to use professionally recorded audio messages with your SitePal account.

### **Text-to-Speech**

Use this feature when you want to take advantage of interactive and dynamic messaging as Text-to-Speech can be controlled via a program to speak a certain message based on a visitor's action on your site, time-of-day or some other event.

Text-to-Speech is also useful when you want some flexibility with regards to the sound of your audio messages but do not have the budget for creating professionally recorded audio.

### **Update by Phone**

Use this feature for those times when you need to change or update an audio used by your SitePal and do not have access to a computer – e.g. on your way to work, out-of-the-office on business, etc.

### **Professional Voice Talent**

Use this feature for situations when you want to make the *best possible impression* to your audience. [SitePal's Professional Voice Talent](#) services are provided by seasoned TV and radio voice-over specialists at very reasonable prices.

## VI. AVOID LENGTHLY SITEPAL AUDIO MESSAGES

Currently, SitePal supports audio recordings up to :60 seconds (1 minute) long. This number came about from research that indicated that most people will start to “tune out” when exposed to spoken audio messages longer than that.

Even though SitePal supports recordings up to :60 seconds long, it is *strongly suggested* that you keep your audio messages under :30 seconds for maximum impact and to insure that your message was actually heard. Otherwise, you risk boring and alienating your audience.

## VII. EMPHASIZE CALLS TO ACTION AND ALWAYS KEEP YOUR SITEPAL'S MESSAGING FRESH

Regardless of what you use your SitePal's audio messaging for, always emphasize calls to action – e.g. terms like “buy now”, “check out our special offer”, “register now”, etc. as much as possible in your SitePal audio. Ultimately, it is the specific call to action that get people to do things on your site, including important things like buying your products.

**NOTE:** Calls to action are most effective when placed at the beginning and at the end of your audio messages.

In addition, you should *always* keep your SitePal's messaging fresh and up-to-date. Regardless of how good they are, older audio recordings will eventually lose their effectiveness as people get used to hearing them. Therefore, to get people's attention and to keep people interested, you should your SitePal's audio message frequently (at least every week or even more often depending on the nature of your business).

## VIII. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL OF SITEPAL'S FEATURES

SitePal is much more than a “cool” technology that features animated speaking characters. In fact, SitePal is a *complete environment* for creating fully interactive websites.

For example, using SitePal's [API](#), it is possible for users to make SitePal characters interact with your site's visitors and perform a wide variety of actions based on their input. Meanwhile, SitePal Silver and Gold accounts can access Artificial Intelligence via SitePal's AIMC technology so they can respond “intelligently” to user questions. And this only scratches the surface of what SitePal can be made to do!

**NOTE:** You can view examples of what can be done with SitePal's API by viewing these links: <http://www.oddcast.com/support/examples/API/> and [http://www.oddcast.com/support/examples/practical\\_examples/](http://www.oddcast.com/support/examples/practical_examples/)

## IX. DO NOT DEVALUE SITEPAL'S POTENTIAL BY IMPLEMENTING IT POORLY

SitePal, for all of its merits and features is only as good as its implementation. If implemented well, SitePal can produce [impressive results](#) for its users by improving site traffic, sales conversion, brand awareness, brand differentiation among other benefits. However, if implemented poorly, SitePal won't live up to its full potential.

You should take the following issues into account when implementing SitePal effectively:

- **How SitePal will be used on your site** – the role and/or function of your SitePal. Will it be used for promotional purposes, for pitching your goods and services or just for a “wow, that's cool” factor? SitePal is good for many things but you must understand what you intend to use it for in order to see real benefits from it.

- **Where SitePal will be used on your site** – will it appear on the home page or in a specific section or sections of your site? Position within your site and its placement on the web page are key variables when implementing your SitePal. Your SitePal should be visible to a user yet not obtrusive to their experience.
- **How SitePal will integrate into your existing site design** – are you going to artfully “graft” your SitePal to blend seamlessly into your site’s design or are you just going to “shoehorn” it in? SitePal works best when time and thought are given to how it will work with your site’s design.
- **How often will you update your SitePal to keep it messaging fresh and unique** – will you keep the both look of your SitePal updated and its messaging fresh or will you let them go stale? SitePal will quickly revert to a novelty on your site if you don’t make the time or effort to keep it constantly updated with new messaging.

Although SitePal was designed to be easy-to-use and compatible with virtually all websites, it *will not* implement itself. If you are wary about or uncomfortable with the prospect of properly implementing SitePal there are many [consultants](#) available who will be glad to help you.

## **X. DON’T PANIC! THE ANSWER IS PROBABLY IN THE USER’S GUIDE (A.K.A. THE HITCHHIKER’S GUIDE TO SITEPAL)**

Believe it not, chances are that 95% of the issues that most users face when using or implementing SitePal can be answered by reading the existing documentation. To that end, the team at SitePal has invested a significant amount of time and resources to giving SitePal customers access to professional quality documentation.

So when facing a problem, why not try read the [Site User’s Guide](#)?