

7 Sins of Small Business Websites



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How effective is your small business website at creating new business? Today's economy makes it more crucial than ever to maximize your business online. Avoid these seven sins, and you'll take a big step forward. Get more business building tips for your small business website at www.websiteblueprint.com.

1. Bad Navigation

Ever gone to a website and been overwhelmed with the drop down menus and confusing navigation? Consider your customers when building or recreating your links or navigation. The process of finding anything a customer may need on your website should be no more than one or two simple clicks away. As a reference, find someone that calls themselves "tech challenged," then ask them to go to your website and find a few items that would be important to your customer base. If your test dummy can't find the information, it's time to simplify the navigation process.

2. No Opt-In Email Marketing

A website that does not include opt-in email marketing is just an online business card (not an online marketing tool). In order to build business with your website, you need to get visitors into a sales funnel. The only way to get prospects into that sales funnel is to persuade them to give you their email address in exchange for something of value – most often, a special report or piece of helpful information. When someone arrives into your physical location/business, wouldn't it be great if you could find a way to stay in touch with him or her even after they leave? That's the power of incorporating opt-in email marketing into the online side of your business.

3. Too Much Information

Unless you run an e-commerce site where you sell products online, your website is simply a marketing tool to move forward the sales process...not to close the deal. That's why you don't want to overwhelm your visitors with an over-abundance of information. Just provide enough so that they get the basics of what they want to know, so they feel it's necessary to contact or visit you for more information. Avoid too much text. Make sure your website copy is written in short paragraphs and bullet points wherever possible.

4. Not Enough Information

A website isn't a business card. It should be like a brochure on steroids. If you don't offer enough basic information, the visitor may feel you're not important enough to visit or call you. If you can go through your

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website in less than a few minutes, you probably need to add some more content. Just remember the points you read in #3 and you'll find the right balance of information for your customer or prospect.

5. Lack of Google Juice

If your small business website doesn't appear on the first page of Google for the proper search terms, you've got a serious lack of Google juice. There are many unscrupulous SEO (search engine optimization) companies that promise all types of claims to get you on top of Google. Ignore them. Take care of the basics and you'll do well. This means to make sure that you add your business to Google maps (for local search), that you have good content on your pages that include keywords that prospects would use to find you, and that your website has unique titles and descriptions in the HTML for each of your website pages.

6. Outdated Information

Every month, you should go through each page of your website and make sure that you don't have any old information. Nothing can make you look less professional than having outdated content on your site. You may also want to have an employee do a run-through as well. Many times you may overlook something that they may catch.

7. Understanding Social Media

Blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter are a few examples of social media that can build up your website presence. Best of all, they are all free to setup and use. No matter where you share information about your business and website address, it will help extend your brand and name recognition. You don't have to be a social media maven, but it's one of the free ways that you can get out the word and drive more consumers to your website, store, and business.

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