6 KEY FOCUS POINTS FOR WEBSITE SUCCESS

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How’s Your Website?

Whether you offer products or services, your website is a key sales platform for your business. It’s one of the first things that your potential customers will see when they’re searching for a company like yours online.

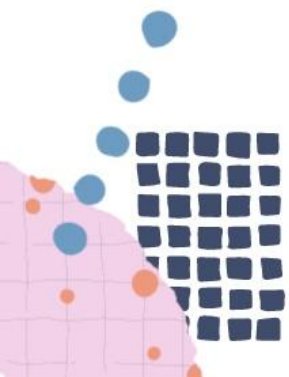
Just like owning a car, it’s important that your website has regular maintenance to ensure that it’s delivering the best possible results.

With regular care and maintenance, you can ensure that your website is relevant to your target audience and that it stands out in your market.

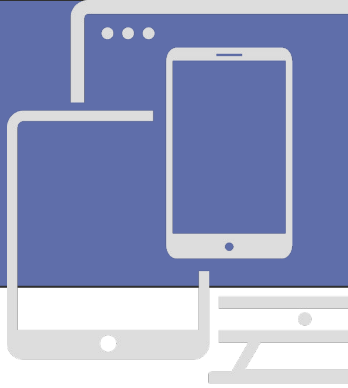
Unfortunately, the “If you build it, they will come” mantra, does not crossover well into websites or any part of the modern business world. It’s not possible to build a website and magically have people find you.

If you don’t look after your website, make it easy to use, and keep it relevant to your target audience, you run the risk of losing potential customers to your competitors.

In this short guide, we’ve put together six key areas that you should focus your attention on, to ensure that your website is operating at the highest level. The great thing is that you can get started with each of these today!



1 Website Design



The design of your website and how it displays across different devices is one of the most important things to get right.

“Responsive Design” is a term that you may have previously heard. It refers to a website design that scales down to suit the size of screen on which it is being displayed. This ensures that no matter what device your potential customer is using to visit your website, they have a great experience.

Why is this important you ask? Well, the average business website will get 40% - 50% of traffic from users on mobile and tablet devices. This number can be as high as 80% for some industries!

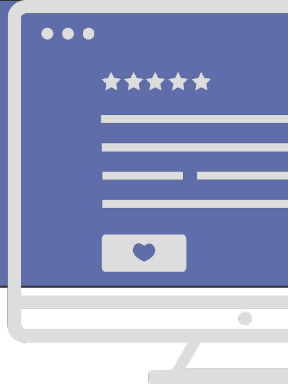
Does it make sense to potentially miss out on half of the potential customers that visit your website, just because it didn’t load well on their device?

Just like other technology industries, the web design industry moves forwards at a rapid pace. A design element that was a great idea and attractive in 2010, may not have the same impact on your website visitors today. It’s important to regularly review and assess your website to ensure that it still has an impact on your target audience.

Updating your website can be similar to decorating your home. Refreshing the colours of your walls or choice of furnishings can have a great impact on the look and feel of your home. The same goes for your website. Giving your website a fresh coat of paint or updating the look and feel, helps to keep you in touch with your audience and take advantage of modern design trends.

TIP: Take an objective look at your website, as if you were a potential customer. Does your website feel like it presents the right message? How does your website compare to your competitors?

2 User Experience



A poor user experience is one of the most common reasons for a visitor to leave your website.

How easy is your website to use for your visitors?

User Experience is quite a vast topic, but here's 5 things that a visitor should be able to do when they reach your website:

1. **Understand your message** - You have around 5 seconds to capture the attention of a visitor when they come to your website. Your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) should explain what you do and who you do it for, and why the visitor should choose you over your competition. The visitor needs to know that they are in the right place.

2. **Easily contact your business** - Whether you want to receive enquiries via telephone, email or a well constructed paper aeroplane, you need to have clear and visible contact details on your website's pages.

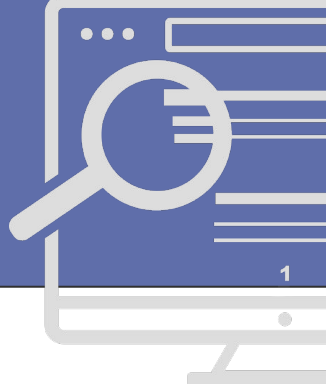
3. **Navigate your site with ease** - Your navigation should be intuitive and easy to use, so visitors can browse your website and engage with your content.

4. **Follow a clear call to action** - Every page on your website should have a purpose for your visitors. If you're looking to generate enquiries from your website, then your Call To Action (CTA) could be an enquiry form or a button that links through to your Contact page.

5. **Review trust factors** - A potential customer is going to be someone who doesn't yet trust you. Trust factors such as awards, affiliations, certifications, case studies, guarantees, testimonials and reviews, can build trust in the eyes of the visitor.

TIP: Take a look at your website and review the above points. Is your website easy for your visitors to use?

3 Search Engine Visibility



It's important that your website is visible in the search engines, so that you can generate success. When we talk about search engine visibility, we're referring to the results that are shown when a prospective customer types a search query into the search engine of their choice.

For example, if you are a florist based in New York, you'll want your website to show up on the first page of the search results for "Wedding Flowers Edmonton".

When your business shows up on the first page, or ideally in the first few results, you have far more chance of someone who is searching for a business like yours, clicking through to your website.

Where is your website currently ranking in Google for search queries that are related to your business?

TIP: Open your web browser in incognito mode. This is important as we want to use a clean version of your browser, without having any search history or preference and not being logged into any accounts - e.g. a Google account.

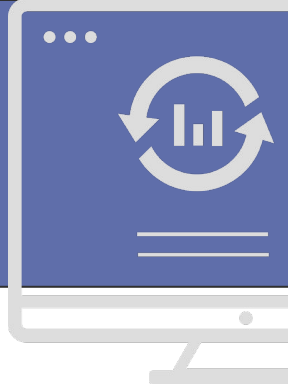
Next, load up a search engine such as Google (be country specific here - so Google.ca for Canada, Google.co.uk for UK, Google.com.au for Australia, etc). In your new Google window, type in search queries that are related to your business. Using the example of a Edmonton based Florist, you might type in:

- Florist Edmonton
- Flower Shop Edmonton
- Wedding Flowers Edmonton
- Flower Delivery Edmonton
- Flowers Downtown Edmonton
- Etc...

Remember you can use abbreviations and relevant suburbs inside your town or city, if appropriate.

Make a note of the results that you find. For any pages where you already rank on the first page of the search results, you're doing great! If you're not, then there's an opportunity for improvement.

4 Conversion Optimisation



Conversion optimisation is the process where you look to increase the percentage of visitors to your website who carry out a specific action - e.g. make an enquiry or a purchase. The conversion rate is defined as a percentage.

Conversion Rate = [Action Number] / [Visitor Number] * 100

For example, let's assume that your website received 5,000 visitors last month and you had 65 enquiries about your services. Using the above formula, we would divide 65 by 5,000, which gives us 0.013. We then multiply this by 100, which gives us our percentage: 1.3%.

So how do you improve this? Here are 5 recommendations that we can give:

1. **Noticeable phone number** - Your phone number should be prominent on your website and easy for a website visitor to find. Consider using a larger font and placing it at the top of a website, where a visitor doesn't need to scroll down to find it.

2. **Primary Call to Action** - Prominent use of compelling text, special offers and buttons help to encourage website visitors to take the desired action that you want, on each page.

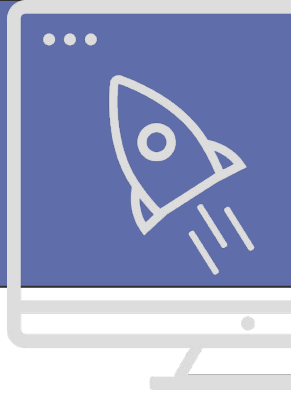
3. **Lead Capture Forms** - Capturing details of your website visitors allows you to follow up with them directly to answer any questions and provide more details on your services.

4. **Testimonials / Reviews** - Testimonials and reviews are important trust factors that help visitors to trust that you can deliver a great service. These should be featured on your home page, important service pages, and even as Case Studies.

5. **Online Chat / Help** - Offering a live chat service allows you to connect with website visitors in real-time and answer any questions. You can also have a help knowledge base or frequently asked questions page.

TIP: If you aren't currently collecting data on the number of visitors, you can setup a free Google Analytics account and start tracking the number of visitors you receive to your website.

5 Website Speed



With website speed, first impressions really do count. A slow website will harm your business. You have around 5 seconds to capture the attention of your website visitor, otherwise you run the risk of them leaving and visiting a competitor's site instead.

Delivering a fast website experience allows you to build trust with your visitors, keeps them engaged with your content, and helps them understand what you do.

Website speed is a ranking factor with the major search engines. A faster website, not only provides a better user experience but also benefits your search rankings.

The speed of your website will usually come down to the following factors:

- **Quality of your hosting company -** Cheaper companies that offer "unlimited" services for less than the price of a coffee each month, aren't always the best option.

- **Size of your website -** The size of code elements that make up your website, any images that you use on the site, videos, etc. The smaller the better here.

- **External requests -** In an ideal world you want to try and minimise any external requests for content. By this, we mean embedding content such as an Instagram feed or Facebook content. These load last on your page and can cause slowdowns.

- **Optimisation -** There are optimisation methods that can be carried out on your website and also at the server level (by your host). With good optimisation techniques in place, your website will load faster.

TIP: You can check how fast your website loads by going to a website such as https://gtmetrix.com or https://tools.pingdom.com. Simply type in your website address, choose the test location nearest to you and start the test.

If your website takes longer than 2 seconds to load, there's some room for improvement here.

6 Website Security

Whilst not specifically related to sales on the front-end, the security of your website is vitally important. If your website were to be hacked or go offline, you can instantly lose credibility with both existing and potential new customers.

You might ask why would someone care to hack your website in [industry] and [location], because they shouldn't consider you to be important... and it's a good question to ask!

Malicious attacks on websites are not just about stealing data these days. Many attacks can also be aimed at using your website to send out spam emails or adding in malicious content that is designed to enhance the reputation of another website.

What can you do to keep your website secure? We recommend the following:

- **Keep your website software updated -** Your website may have regular core updates, security fixes or plugin updates available. These can usually be managed and updated through your admin dashboard. Installing updates and security fixes helps to keep you protected from possible exploits and malicious attacks.

- **Backup your website!** - It's always a good idea to backup data. We all know someone who has lost family photos or important documents after a computer crash. The same type of issues exist for your website. Your hosting company may provide backups, but you need to have at least two other backup solutions that automatically backs up your website regularly and saves this data with a secure third party - e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive or Amazon's S3 service.

- **Use strong passwords -** Your password is the front door key to your website. Using an insecure password runs the risk of a malicious attacker breaking in and causing havoc. Use your browser's built in password generator that will produce a random password that can then be saved immediately. You can also use a website such as https://strongpasswordgenerator.com to generate a strong password (letters, numbers and special characters). Passwords should be updated regularly, at least every 3-6 months.

- **Use a password manager -** In today's modern world, you should never be sharing passwords via email or similar methods. You'll also find that strong passwords can be quite difficult to remember! Thankfully there are password manager tools such as BitWarden, Password, LastPass and Dashlane, which will help you securely store and use your passwords. You can also try https://onetimesecret.com/ to send secure notes that disappear after a certain amount of time.

TIP: Log-in to your website and check to see if there are any updates that need to be actioned. Make a note to do this at least once every 2 weeks.

Summary

We hope you've enjoyed our short guide on the 6 Key Focus Points for Website Success.

By focusing on the 6 sections that we've walked you through above and carrying out regular maintenance on your website, you can keep your business moving forwards.

We've got some additional tips and ideas that we'll send you over the next few days, with some more insights on the above topics.

If you have any questions in the meantime, or would like to understand a little more about anything in our free guide, please get in touch.

Hope you have a great day ahead!