



WEB DEVELOPMENT FOR BUSINESS

THE MUST-HAVE ELEMENTS OF A
PROFITABLE WEBSITE THAT
GENERATES LEADS AND VISITORS
INTO PAYING CUSTOMERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	03
2. Web Design	05
3. Content	10
4. Search Engine Optimization	14
5. Website Analytics	18
6. Monetizing Your Web Traffic	20
7. Conclusion	22



1. INTRODUCTION

What used to be a novelty is now a necessity. What used to be seen as supplementary at best is now the dominant form of communication. The Internet is where it's at, and it's now the main channel for businesses for both marketing and customer service.

That means having an online presence is no longer optional for businesses, but a definite must-have. If you're not online, you're a nobody, and your business is practically invisible to most people. Even if you don't directly do business online, being seen there can still be VERY helpful.

Nowadays, creating a website for business is both an exact science and a form of art. It combines visual design with understanding what makes people pay attention, which is what a business needs. However, it's a process onto itself, with many elements crucial that come into play to do this properly.

What follows is an extensive rundown on what you should look for when creating a website for your business and what goes into making it profitable by generating leads and converting visitors into paying customers - which is the ultimate goal, right?

A. DECIDING TO MAKE A WEBSITE

Building an online presence helps a business bring in more customers by providing greater reach and easy ways to market products and services.

You can create social media pages and put up online ads, then work from there.

You may then get to the point of needing original content to post, as well as having a more solid base from which you can grow further; you may start wanting to have a website for your business.

Upon deciding on building a business website, you must consider a handful of factors. For instance, integrating it with your existing social media accounts is crucial, as well as being able to post your original content to give people more reason to visit. But before that, you must decide on who develops the website.



B. DIY OR HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

If you happen to have skills and experience in building your own website, then you can do it yourself by all means.

Remember that it takes significant time and effort, which can take away from managing your business.

You may get hosting from a service that makes building websites in it easier with its own builder, like Squarespace or Wix. Such services let you develop a website with little to no coding and let you customize it with a gallery of design templates.

However, it does come at a much increased cost. The website builder, the content management system in the backend, and the customer service all add to the yearly subscription fee on top of hosting and domain

- and most of the themes they provide are pretty generic and limited as far as functionality.

On the other hand, you can also hire a web development professional who can help you create compelling and strategic websites that convert website visitors to paying customers.

A WEB DEVELOPER SHOULD
BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT
BRANDING, COMMUNICATIONS,
DIGITAL MARKETING, CONVERSION
RATE OPTIMIZATION, CONTENT
MARKETING, AND SEO.

C. HOSTING AND DOMAIN

In order to have your own website, you should have web hosting and a domain name. These two components are the most important and basic of requirements in building a website, so getting them from a reputable service is crucial to success.

■ HOSTING

Web hosting is the service you employ to contain your website and make it accessible over the internet. The hosting service runs servers that clients can lease in order to hold the files that compose the website. Such a service charges a periodic cost, usually monthly or annual, to provide the bandwidth, storage space, and accessibility that makes a website exist.

Once you have hosting, you can then build your website in it, whether you do it from scratch or use a CMS (Content Management System) to serve as the foundation. There are different types of hosting services, namely shared hosting (sharing a server with other websites), dedicated hosting (having a server all to yourself), virtual private server (a server with its own operating system), and so on.

■ DOMAIN

The domain provides the URL (Universal Resource Locator) for your website, e.g. www.mybusiness.com. A serious business website definitely needs a domain name that can be used to direct your audience to it. You certainly want to have it bear the name of your brand, thus making it and your brand memorable.

Having your own domain name can further establish brand awareness, which is important for a business in the long run. Like hosting, getting a domain name from a service demands an annual subscription fee that goes into the cost of running a website. The growth and success of a website can greatly depend on a good domain name, making it one of the most important aspects of your website. This should be short, recognizable, and consistent across all of your online channels so it's easy for your audience to find you with a simple search.

2. WEB DESIGN

The visuals of a website is what people see and interface with whenever they visit, whether to view your content or find information about your business. It's not just decoration, but also the online face of your business, so putting the right foot forward is important to create a good impression.

That goes a long way in establishing trust and even converting people into customers. A website that is neither visually appealing nor functional is effectively useless, only serving as a resource sink that does nothing for your business and may even serve as a burden - leaving the wrong first impression with your audience about your business. But that doesn't make it a lost cause.

Web design covers many visual aspects of your website's development, much of which also covers how it presents content and information that your audience may find useful. If you already have a website, this section may help you further improve its visuals and effectiveness in attracting & converting visitors into paying customers.

You may even turn your website from just something with a landing page and a blog into an online storefront, which is not possible if people don't even want to stick around in the first place. Refining your web design is all about making your website both visually appealing and functional at the same time.

Clean and uncomplicated design is what you should aim for. Adding more stuff in just for the sake of adding them only makes the website look cluttered and distracting. Every element must have careful thought and intent behind it, and whatever is not necessary should be left behind. When it comes to web design, less is always more.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF WEB DESIGN



A. RESPONSIVE DESIGN

The widespread use of mobile platforms, especially for consuming online media, has transformed web design in the past decade. Viewing websites designed only to be viewed on desktops in smaller screens is certainly not preferable. However, mobile-only websites viewed on desktops tend to look off as well. Therefore, it is vital for a website to be optimized for viewing both desktops & mobile.

Responsive design is the answer to this conundrum. The name suggests that the website can adjust according to whatever device or window size it's viewed in. With responsive design, the desktop version appears in desktops and the mobile version appears in mobile, making the website viewable in pretty much every device.

This is now the standard by which all websites that wish to remain relevant in this day and age should be judged by. Both desktop and mobile versions of the web design should have consistency between them while still having their own layouts and features that make them fit for their respective devices.

B. LAYOUT

Creating a website layout is all about organizing all necessary elements to make them all visible and usable. "Necessary" is the key word here as less is more when it comes to web design. All you really need is a header with navigation, a search bar, the main body, and the footer. You may add a sidebar if necessary, but that can be left off if not needed.

The most important elements should be put above the top fold of the page, as long as it doesn't create clutter. "Above the fold" is referring to the content that loads on the website before any scrolling takes place - this is the first thing that people see when visiting your website. Web design is usually done from the top down since the very first thing people see when they visit a website is what should make them want to see more of it.

The layout can be made easier with the use of a grid as a guide for placing each elements where they need to be. Proper spacing is imperative to make sure the web design doesn't end up looking too cluttered. Each element should be given enough space to stand on their own, but not too much that they look disconnected from the rest of the website.

A space of around 20-40 pixels between layout elements is usually sufficient. Also pay heed to using alignment and symmetry to your advantage. Aligning related elements make them look more connected to each other. Maintaining symmetry throughout the design helps make everything look visually balanced & using a grid to design makes this much easier to do.

B. COLORS

Most of your visuals boil down to two major elements—colors and images. Your use of both can greatly affect how your web design is executed, especially in relation to your branding. How you pull off your visuals set both tone and expectations for whoever happens to visit your website.

■ USE YOUR BRANDING TO DETERMINE YOUR COLOR SCHEME

In most cases, you want to use the colors that are in your branding. That's at least two colors—primary and secondary—that make up your website's overall color scheme. Then there's also black and white for text and background in the body for your written content.

Branding is its own separate topic, but it does affect how you execute the visuals in your web design. They're not mutually exclusive, but intimately related as your web design will have to be consistent with your branding, from your logo to your style guide to make sure that you are communicating your company message efficiently.

Having a website that is obviously different your core branding can create a disconnect that will keep the audience from seamlessly associating your brand with your website and web content.

■ TEXT AND BACKGROUND

There's also the matter of choosing between black text on a light background and white text on a dark background. Each have their own advantages, and you should find either to be legible and applicable to your web design.

However, do know there's a reason why most websites use black text on a light background. Then again, a lot of people do like the latter as it's easier on their eyes. The key here is to have it fit with your branding.

D. IMAGES

You want to make a good impression with the images you use on your website. A good way to do that is to use faces in your images. Having people in your images can make them more relatable, thus making your website more human as a result. It can be stock images or photos of the people who run your business, which can help you connect more with visitors.

With that in mind, use original images whenever possible. Relying too much on stock images can defeat the purpose of what was mentioned in the previous paragraph, even if you use images of people. It's easy enough for most people to distinguish between original images you've taken yourself and free images that you got from a stock image website.

Whatever images you choose to use in your website, make sure they're of high quality and resolution. You would want them to be at adequate compression and not too big in resolution and file size so they don't impact your page loading speed too much, but they do have to look sharp and legible.

E. TYPOGRAPHY

It can be said that web design is 95% typography. The main purpose of websites and the basic architecture behind it, the Hyper Text Markup Language or HTML, is to present text over the Internet. While it's great to have images and other visual elements on your website, text is still the meat of the content. If the text doesn't look good or isn't readable, then your typography is no good.

All of your web design is focused on supporting the text and its presentation. Readability is the one thing you should always pay attention to. You can choose fonts that look great and position them where you want them, but all of it is no good if you can't read them easily. Therefore, your visuals are meant to give emphasis to the text, and that's where typography can come in to blend in with the visuals while also standing out as the main element.

As far as your choice of typefaces goes, make sure to keep it in three different fonts or less. In fact, two different fonts should already be sufficient. Using too many in one design makes it too tacky and distracting. You can have one to serve as headline and call-to-action text, while the other serves as body text. The headline and call-to-action text should create emphasis, while the body text should be easy to read.

In between blocks of text should be ample white space to separate them accordingly. It doesn't have to be too much space, just enough for the eye to distinguish a separation between them and make it easier for the reader to stay engaged. There should be a line of space between paragraphs so the text doesn't come off as one giant wall of words too tiring to read at all.

F. USER EXPERIENCE

What's more important than a website looking good is being easy to understand and use. User experience or UX has become a buzzword within web design in recent years due to the realization that websites are a lot more about function than just form. While it's great for a website to be aesthetically pleasing, they're not effective if they don't work like they're supposed to.

That's why it's important to only add visual and interactive elements when they're absolutely necessary in order to keep things as simple and easy to understand as possible. The last thing you want is to inundate your audience with superfluous choices that distract them from what they're actually trying to accomplish on their website.

■ UNDERSTANDING USER EXPERIENCE BOILS DOWN TO THREE KEY POINTS:

- ✓ If people can't find what they need in your website, they usually get frustrated.
- ✓ The harder your website is to use, the more people tend to leave (high bounce rate).
- ✓ Poor user experience means fewer return visitors, less referral traffic, and low conversion rate.

You can make your website's user experience better by keeping in mind a few crucial principles.

■ HICK'S LAW

Hick's law is a principle stating that adding another choice logarithmically increases the amount of time it takes for a person to make a decision.

That means it actually takes up to about 10 times as long for someone to choose between, for example, 5 options as opposed to just 4 options. If there are 6 options, it takes a hundred times as long compared to just 4 options.

Perhaps you may be thinking that this is an exaggeration and it may actually not be that bad. But if you can remember the last time you stood in front of a fast food counter with your mouth agape, you should then realize how hard it can really be to make your mind up when you're presented with a myriad of choices.

While most would think of being able to choose as freedom, it may also become one's prison of their own making if they end up not being able to make up their mind. You can help them along by only presenting options that they really need to choose from. That means your website should have little to no fat in terms of the information you present.

With this in mind, you may realize just how important it is to present as few options as needed in order to have users be able to efficiently move through your website. If there's any point where your users end up being frustrated, they may decide to leave your website altogether.

The more people leave, the higher your website's bounce rate, which has a negative effect on your search engine optimization. The worse your SEO is, the even worse your website will perform. It creates a compounding effect that can turn your otherwise beautiful website into a ghost town.

Of course, those options have to be presented as clearly and concisely as possible so they know right away where to look at click. After all, it won't matter how few choices you present if they can't find them in the first place.

■ THE 8-SECOND RULE

When presenting options on your website, think of the 8-second rule, which states that you can hold a person's attention for a maximum of 8 seconds. That's two seconds less than the attention span of a goldfish, as it is popularly known. Then again, goldfish don't have as many distractions as people do, especially these days with all the things that are fighting for our attention in our daily lives.

Keeping in mind the 8-second rule, in conjunction with Hick's Law, can help you design your website's user experience better. Being able to help your users make decisions in your website quickly and easily is all about making options as easy to distinguish and get results from as possible. This can be achieved through four steps:

1. Use visuals over text. It takes time to read text, but visuals speak louder than words. You can use images, infographics, and so on to get points across more quickly. Whenever possible, use text only when you really need to. A 1000-word blog post with no images but explains everything clearly is still not as effective as a 500-word post that has images to illustrate what is being explained.

2. Don't test the user's patience. When a user clicks on something, the result must take place as soon as possible. That means you should have really quick page loading speeds, as well as buttons and navigation options that lead users immediately to the intended destination with no additional prompts or diversions. What they see and do should immediately be what they get.

3. Have an on-boarding process. First-time users of a website have to figure out how to use it. If you happen to have a website that does certain things that most other websites don't have, like some form of online service, then you should have tooltips or brief tutorials that tell them where everything is. Once they've been briefed on what each element is for, they should be well on their way.

4. As previously mentioned, less is more. Keeping your web design simple and minimalistic helps users be able to interact with your website with few to no distractions and hangups. This point cannot be emphasized enough. A clean and simple user interface that maximizes functionality with as few elements as possible makes for efficiency and good user experience.

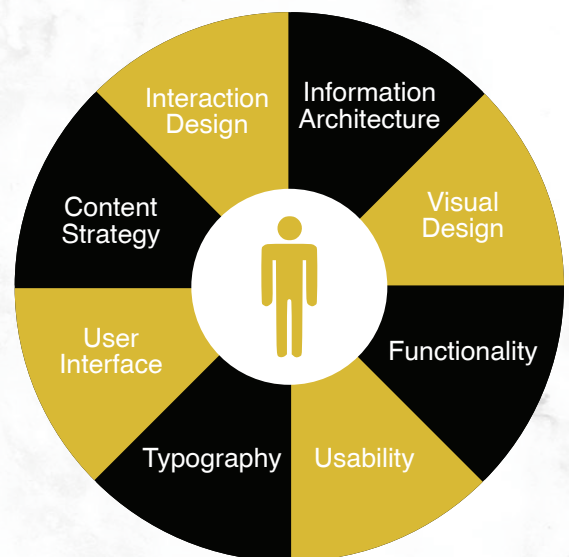
■ CRITERIA FOR GOOD USER EXPERIENCE

Having good user experience on your website boils down to four things—readability, responsiveness, clear navigation, and performance. We've already discussed the importance of the first two factors.

Readability is from having good typography in your web design, using up to two fonts that are clear and easy to read, as well as evenly spaced to present information clearly. Meanwhile, responsiveness is all about the website being able to adapt and conform with the device or screen size it's being viewed in through responsive design. If it doesn't look right on either desktop or mobile, it won't feel right.

Clear navigation is all about putting good visual design together with Hick's Law and the 8-second rule. A navigation menu on top of the website with easily readable options is the standard, with up to 6 options at most if possible. If the options requires a drop-down menu for more options, make sure to categorize them properly and make the drop-down snappy and easily clickable.

Finally, there's performance. In the case of websites, that usually means page loading speed. The slower a website loads, the more it tests the users' patience. You can ensure good website performance by doing four things—getting web hosting with fast servers, using as few images as possible, have good image compression, and minimizing the use of plugins.



3. CONTENT

A website without content gives people no good reason to visit. A website without updated content gives people no good reason to come back. A business website shouldn't be just about selling products and services, as well as providing contact information. It should equally be about providing valuable content that people can get interested in, and positioning yourself as a trusted source of information in your industry.

But making content for your website is more than just writing a short blog post about whatever topic you fancy at the moment. There has to be focus on what you make the content about and what it's trying to achieve.

There should be thought and care put into your content, and that can be done by having a definite strategy that's specific to your needs.

A. FOCUSING ON A TARGET AUDIENCE

Running a business means choosing a target market, so you most likely already chose your niche. But you may be able to get even more specific with a target audience for your website, especially if you plan to post original content regularly (which you should).

For example, let's say your business sells hair care products for men who are very much into grooming. That description alone may still be quite general, so you would want to hone in even more to find out your specific target audience.

The way to do this is to collect data on your customers and look at specific traits within your main demographic. You can both track your customers and directly ask them about their preferences to gather the data needed for this process.

Once you get a big enough data set, you can then determine which traits make up your customer avatar—a detailed profile of your ideal customer that neither makes assumptions nor shoehorns people into a stereotype or predetermined category.

That customer avatar is who you should cater your website to, from the design to the content you'll be providing your audience with. When done right, having a character avatar to help you focus your website on a niche can bring a lot more people in.

B. CONTENT STRATEGY

Your web content must be unique, relevant, helpful, and have your brand's voice. If you just post content that many others have already done, then there's not as much reason for people to tune in since they've most likely seen it all before. You have to find an angle that most others have not traipsed into before so your content offers something others don't.

Creating your own content is all about providing free value to your audience, which then gives you more authority in your niche. It shows that you care about them and you're willing to help them without expecting something in return right away. That can then eventually convince people to convert and be your customers.

There must also be variety. If all your content looks the same, nothing really stands out and people will not pay attention as much. Having different types of content on your website brings more people in and keeps them interested in what you have to say.

Then there's the matter of having as many people as possible see your content. The key to good content marketing is taking your content to the people at the right time, so having a social media following and a posting schedule can help.

C. EVERGREEN CONTENT

There are many different types of content you can create in order to keep your website updated. With how much effort that's put into making content, you would want for it to remain fresh for as long as possible. That's where evergreen content comes in.

Evergreen content is content that is always relevant, regardless of when it is viewed. It is timeless and always helpful, making it able to gather clicks and views even well after it had been first posted. It can also be remarketed every now and then to bring in even more views.

Creating evergreen content should be the foundation of your content strategy. The great thing about it is that you can make any type of web content evergreen by making sure the information you put in them is useful and relevant over a long period of time.

D. TYPES OF CONTENT

The blog post is the most basic and versatile type of content you can post on your website. It can simply be an update on your products or services, a guide on how to use them, an article on why they're good for their intended purpose, or so on. This is the most straightforward type of content to both create and consume.

It doesn't even have to be directly about your business, but on a topic related to your niche. Articles on your niche can make up the bulk of your web content, and they can be used to build up a core audience who have the same interest. They're the ones you can most likely convert into paying customers.

The list, also colloquially known as the listicle, is any sort of article that enumerates items from a specific category. It can be a top ten list, a list of dos and don'ts, or simply a list of things that are related to each other. The Internet is full of such lists because they tend to be engaging content that gets people clicking and reading.

Interviews add a human element to your content, as well as lend you more authority in your niche, when you conduct an interview of someone who is respected in that field. Such content puts a magnifying glass over what your business, field, and target market are about and gives your audience a glimpse into what goes on behind the scenes. Helping people understand more about your business can build more trust and authority.



Infographics
Charts or
Graphs



Email Newsletters
Tip Sheets
Surveys



Interviews
Q&A Session
Quizzes



Press
Releases
Social Media



Slideshares
Memes



Original Research
Dictionary



Videos Podcasts
Webinars

Case studies are another type of content that can help build authority, showing the science and statistics of what goes on in your field. It also can show how businesses affect people and vice versa, thus letting audiences get a closer look at the psychology and sociology in business. This can help make a business look more mindful and in touch with its customers.

Those case studies may be supported by infographics, which visually represent data in a digestible manner. Infographics can help regular people understand what seems to be complicated at first, letting them better see the scale of a set of data through a comparison with something that's more commonly known. Good infographics can help businesses explain more of their side of things better to audiences that may find it hard to comprehend at first.

Business blogs tend to not run editorials and opinionated posts, especially critique, due to the nature of business. However, you can write what's called a white paper, which is more on your philosophy in a given issue. It can be about how you run your business or how you tackle a certain subject. It gives people a look into the mindset behind your business, which they may find enlightening. Do take note that writing such a post takes thoughtfulness and a deft touch.

If you want to be able to present even more information to your audience, you can write ebooks about subjects you have authority in. For instance, this ebook you're reading now is telling you much about web development for business, and it may be helping other people understand how to make websites for their own businesses as well. Ebooks are good for gaining more authority in a niche and a particular subject matter because they provide so much value.

Finally, there's video content that can greatly improve a website's content marketing. The power of video has taken over the Internet over the past decade, and you can harness that power for your website by making your own videos about your products and services, as well as how you do your business.

D. TYPES OF CONTENT

One of the main reasons why you would want to have a website is for content marketing. You create and distribute your own original content on your website that is helpful to your target audience and relevant to your niche so people have a reason to visit your website.

The more visitors your website gets, the more chances there are to convert them into actual customers. Not only does this increase sales, it can also save you money on marketing costs and instill more customer loyalty by providing them more value through your content.

Content marketing, when done right, also increases brand recognition and awareness. Good original content can add personality and voice to what may have come off as a faceless brand. It makes your business look more human, thus becoming more relatable to your audience.

■ CONTENT STRATEGY

But content marketing is not about just pushing content down people's throats without a second thought. There must be a content strategy in place to make sure the content you're making is relevant to your audience. You can then market that content in an optimal manner.

Publishing and sharing your content at peak hours is crucial to get as many eyes on it as possible. If you post and share when there's not a lot of people online to see it, then you're just wasting that content. Perhaps you can then reshare it later on, but it won't be as fresh and not as many people will care to see it.

But content marketing doesn't have to happen only outside of the website, but also within. Internal links and plugins that show recommended and related posts can help show more of your other content to your audience. This also helps keep people in your website longer, giving you more chances to convert them.

■ EMAIL MARKETING

Even in this day and age, email marketing still holds a good bit of water. Perhaps it's not as powerful as it once was, but it still works as a major way to do digital marketing, and email lists are still a valuable source of leads.

Email marketing is a great way to bring in a loyal audience as the people who opt in and register for your email list pretty much express their interest in seeing more of your content by doing so. This is not something that will bring your traffic up overnight, but it's a good long-term strategy that can pay off as time goes by.

The real hard work is delivering good quality original content to your email subscribers on a regular basis. Your content strategy should always factor in your email marketing to make sure that they stay loyal.

■ SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The power of social media has democratized digital marketing for businesses, both big and small. Social media marketing has a fairly low level of entry, is accessible through many devices, and lets just about anyone build and interact with an audience easily.

With social media marketing comes the need for proper social media management. That includes scheduling posts in peak hours, responding to messages, moderating and replying to comments, and so on. Maintaining a community in your social media channels can be hard work, but it's worth the effort as it's a great way to interact with your audience.

Aside from sharing your web content, you can mix it up by putting up different kinds of social media posts to keep your audience engaged. For instance, funny GIFs and memes are always popular and can show that your business has a light-hearted side, which people can appreciate.

You can also post videos, either from other content creators that are relevant to your niche or your own original videos that are helpful and entertaining. Making your own videos is a whole different ball game with its own challenges, but it can greatly help build trust and authority in your brand.

You can also put up surveys and polls to learn more about your audience and further engage with them. It shows that you're interested in interaction and feedback, and they'll most likely be glad to tell you what they think and are interested in.

If you have the time and the tools, you can also do live video streams to show more of the behind-the-scenes happenings in your business. You can also show off your products and services in your online broadcasts, talking directly to your audience.

You can also post stories on Facebook and Instagram to show more of your day-to-day activities. This lets you become more relatable to other people and show that there are human beings behind your business.

■ CONTENT REMARKETING

There's also content remarketing, which is re-sharing old content when the opportunity arises. This can breathe new life to content you've shared before in the past. While this may sound like recycling, it shouldn't be done on a whim.

For example, a post that was published for a holiday or an annual event may be shared again for the occasion. You can also have something like a "Throwback Thursday" post to show your audience an old post they may be interested in for one reason or another.

4. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Bringing people to your website can be done in various ways. Organic traffic is brought in by making people aware of your website through marketing, but it's not the only way they can discover it. In fact, for a lot of websites, organic traffic isn't its biggest source of views, although it does tend to bring in more return visitors.

Search traffic comes from people finding your website in search results when they're looking for something in a search engine. Being able to harness that search traffic is a key to success. This is perhaps the biggest source of traffic for many websites, so it cannot be overlooked.

Making your website more visible in search engines results in more search traffic, and that's where search engine optimization, or SEO, comes in. By making your website, its posts, and its pages optimized for search engines, they can appear in more search results. The higher your pages rank in search results, the more likely it is for people to click on them when they show up.

There are three main forms of SEO—technical SEO, on-page SEO, and off-page SEO. Mastering these three can help your website to bring in a lot more traffic.

A. TECHNICAL SEO

This is the most complicated part of search engine optimization, and it's what makes the whole process less than savory for most people. However, getting this covered can pay dividends down the line with lots of search traffic going your way.

Technical SEO is optimizing your website for crawling and indexing by search engines, which gives them a map of your whole website and how it's structured. This makes it easier for search engines to see pages and content in your website so they can add them to search results.

It's not just about telling the search engine what's in your website, but also optimizing the infrastructure of the website itself so the search engine won't get confused with what's inside it. That's what makes it technical, and there are a lot of steps and moving parts to it.

The following is a checklist of what you should do for the technical SEO of your website:

1. Specify a Preferred Domain

You can do this in both Google Search Console and WordPress (or in most other popular content management systems). It should indicate whether your website has www in front of its main URL or not as the www and non-www versions are seen as different from each other. You should check with your domain provider on which is predominantly used by your website.

2. Optimize your Robots.txt

The Robots.txt file resides in the website's root directory. It tells the search engines which pages they can crawl and index.

3. Optimize Your URL Structure

Having messy URLs for your posts can negatively impact SEO. A good URL structure is descriptive and tells people what that page may be just from what it says. Search engines like URLs that have keywords in them that can be used for pulling up search results.

4. Redesign Navigation and Website Structure

As discussed in the previous section regarding user experience, clear navigation and good structure is good for your website. It also lends to good SEO, which is another reason why you should pay heed to them.

5. Add Breadcrumb Menus

A breadcrumb menu is a set of links at the top or bottom of a page that lets users navigate to a previous page (usually the category page) or to the homepage. It helps users navigate without having to press the back button on their browsers, and it helps the search engines know more about the website structure. Google likes breadcrumb menus, and so should you.

6. Structured Data Markup

Structured data is code in web pages that helps search engine crawlers understand the context of your content. It lets search engines understand your data in a language they can understand.

7. Check Your Canonical URLs

Indicating your canonical URL is a simple way for Google to know which version of a page it should index. It's similar to specifying your preferred domain, but doing this in addition makes things even better.

8. Optimize Your 404 Page

An empty 404 page does nothing for your website and serves only as a dead end. A 404 page that has the same web design as everything else in your website gives users a way to keep looking around your website without having to just click on the back button on their browser. It can also show alternative pages that they can check out, which improves your website's user experience.

9. Optimize your XML Sitemap

The XML sitemap is the search engine's main tool for listing all your website's posts and pages. Make sure to exclude tag pages, author pages, and other pages that don't have original content in them.

10. Add SSL and Enable HTTPS

Websites with SSL certificates tend to be safer, which makes both search engines and users trust them more. It used to be a necessary step only for ecommerce websites, but it has since gained traction for all other types of websites. Adding an SSL and enabling HTTPS for your website is now a necessary step for technical SEO.

11. Have Quick Page Loading Speed

Search engines like websites with fast performance since it makes for good user experience. As you can see from this list, SEO has a lot to do with optimizing your UX like this.

12. Mobile Friendliness

This can be achieved by having responsive design, as previously discussed. Search engines prefer mobile-friendly websites as users are more willing to use them.

13. Consider Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP)

AMPs are something Google has been pushing recently to make mobile web browsing faster. AMPs have HTML code that's basically a cut-down version of normal HTML, making them even quicker to load. AMP pages are only accessible through Google and other AMP providers like Twitter. It's not easy to implement, but as it's starting to catch on more, you may want to get onboard this upcoming trend.

14. Check Pagination and Multilingual Settings

These two are advanced technical SEO tasks that you should only get into if they actually apply to your website. Pagination is the automatic breaking up of a long page into multiple shorter pages without creating duplicate content issues. Meanwhile, multilingual websites are what they sound—they're websites that are available in multiple languages.

B. ON-PAGE SEO

On-page SEO is everything you can do to make your content more visible in search engines. If you've seen SEO guides online about keywords and metatags, that's on-page SEO. It's basically a set of things you do with every piece of content you post on your website to make them visible in your chosen keywords' search results.

The following are procedures and practices you can implement in your content to take your on-page SEO to the next level:

1. Start the Title with Your Keyword

The title is one of the most important factors in on-page SEO. It's what readers and search engines first see in your content, so make sure to have your target keyword right on it, preferably at the very beginning. The closer the target keyword is to the start of the title, the more the search engines will prioritize it.

2. Add Modifiers to Your Title

Add other words to your title to support your keyword to make it unique and rank for long tail versions of that keyword. Words like "best", "review", "guide", "top ten", the current year, or so on help make your titles more interesting.

3. Have SEO-Friendly URLs

As discussed in technical SEO, having a neat URL structure makes your website more visible to search engines. Add your keyword and whatever modifier that fits the content to the URL while keeping it short can make it more attractive. Search engines like shorter URLs, so make sure you clean them up.

4. Wrap the Title in <h1> Tag

Search engines prioritize the proper use of highlight tags in a website's code. Most content management systems like WordPress automatically add the <h1> tag to the title, although you should double-check if your theme is doing so properly.

5. Wrap Subheadings in <h2> Tags

Subheadings should be formatted as "Heading 2" whenever possible so they stand out.

6. Mix Up Your Content with Multimedia

Having only a wall of text, no matter how well-formatted, can be boring to look at. You should add images, videos, and other visual content to make it more interesting.

7. Put Your Keyword in the First 100 Words of Your Content

Aside from the title, search engines like content that mention the keyword right there on the first paragraph. Always find a way to write your chosen keyword on the first 100 words of your post.

8. Add Outbound Links

Outbound links that are relevant to your content help search engines understand more precisely what the content topic is. It also shows that your website is willing to help other websites as well.

9. Add Internal Links

Add around 2 to 3 links to other posts on your website. Not only does it make those posts more visible to search engines, but it also helps readers see more of your content.

11. Optimize Your Images

This is not just about having proper compression and good quality. You can also optimize the file name of the image so that the keyword appears on it, which helps with the SEO of that image. You can also add the target keyword to the image's alt text to optimize it further.

12. Use Social Sharing Buttons

Social shares make your content more visible on social media, and search engines pay attention to that as well. Having social sharing buttons on your posts help users easily share that content on their social media profiles.

13. Post Longform Content

Search engines prioritize longer content in search rankings, thus the SEO adage "length is strength".

14. Work to Boost Dwell Time

This is all about making your content interesting for as long as possible. The more time your audience spends on your website to consume content, the higher it's ranked by search engines as it usually means people like your content.

C. OFF-PAGE SEO

Much of off-page SEO is basically link building. It's the process of getting mentioned and linked on other websites to increase trust so your website ranks higher in search results. Search engines place a lot of stock in incoming links from other high-ranking websites, so off-page SEO is great for lifting your website up higher once you have technical and on-page SEO covered.

But it's not just link building, but also any sort of promotion of the website that happens outside of the website. Mentioning your website on guests posts and comments, earning backlinks on other high-ranking websites, adding links to the description of your YouTube videos, promoting your website on social media, getting mentioned by other content creators on their content, and so on are all off-page SEO.

There are three main types of links when it comes to off-page SEO:

- ✓ Natural links are editorially given without you asking for them. They're the links you earn by networking with those website owners and being an authority in that niche.
- ✓ Manually-built links are what you get through deliberate link-building activities, which include guest posting, asking for content creators and influencers to link to your website, having customers link to your website, and so on.
- ✓ Self-created links are what you get by adding your website to online directories, forums, blog comment signatures, and so on. Much of this are old-school off-page SEO tactics that have since fallen out of favor by search engines, so be careful with these.

The conversation on off-page SEO has shifted from link building to link earning in recent years. Search engines prioritize links that seem to be added by other people, thus it has become less about guest posts and more about mentions.

It has become more about being noticed and appreciated by other people instead of only you linking to your own website everywhere. Therefore, networking with other businesses and influencers in your niche is now a big part of off-page SEO.

5. WEBSITE ANALYTICS

Once you have your website up and running, your content marketing in full swing, and your business fully in-tune with it, you want to be able to track its progress. Collecting real-time data and measuring performance are what website analytics are for.

Analytics let you know how many people are going to your website, what channels are bringing in the most people, from what locations they're from, which pages are getting the most visits, how long people are sticking around, and so on. You get to see patterns and connections in your website that you otherwise may have missed if you don't have analytics to track them.

Information is power, and being able to know how your audience behaves can help you improve your website and its content to cater to their preferences and needs.

A. HOW TO SET UP ANALYTICS

Having more than one analytics tool tracking your website is good as there may be disparities between different analytics. Relying only on one may end up with you getting the wrong data without you knowing. The two tools you should set up are the analytics in your content management system and Google Analytics.

The former is easy enough to use as it's usually a plugin that goes with your CMS, like Jetpack for WordPress. As for Google Analytics, which is available for free, you'll need a Google account, then you'll have to register your website into the tool. The most complicated part will be adding a tracking code to the head of your website so Google Analytics can track it.

You will be given instructions on how to do this by Google. You can also look for help in the support forums in Google Analytics and elsewhere to find more information on how to get started, as well as other people's experience in getting started.

You don't need to watch your analytics like a hawk all the time, but you'll want to check it at least once a week, and maybe more if you're on a campaign. If you're trying something new, you can check them every 24 hours to see if there are changes and patterns you can learn from.

B. WHICH METRICS TO MONITOR

When using analytics to track your website performance, you may be inundated by the sheer amount of data, which can be overwhelming for most people. Upon opening an analytics page, you'll immediately see charts, graphs, and numbers everywhere, and beginners may not know where to look first.

Here are some of the metrics most people will want to pay close attention to:

■ UNIQUE VISITORS VS. RETURNING VISITORS

Not all web traffic is the same. It's good to have many people visiting your website, but sustaining that level of success relies upon having a loyal audience that keep coming back to your website for your content and business. The more people who are loyal to your brand, the more chances you get to converting them.

Think of unique visitors as your reach, and your returning visitors as engagement. While the latter analogy is not exact, it can be close to it as people would only ever return to look at your content if they're engaged by it. With that said, you can't get more return visitors if you don't get a lot of first-time visitors in the first place.

The key is turning many of those first-time visitors into returning visitors, and that can only be done through good content and good user experience.

■ AVERAGE SESSION DURATION AND BOUNCE RATE

It's not enough that you're getting a lot of visits as you want a majority of those visits to be of quality. You want them to stick around and not close your website within just five seconds of visiting. You want them to be engaged by your content and come back for more.

If most of your visitors are coming in, only to close the website a few seconds later, that means they're not really consuming the content you're delivering. That's due to either the content not being engaging enough or the visitors having been led there with expectations that didn't match the reality presented in the website. It can also be due to bad web design or bad user experience that makes them want to leave quickly.

If you see short average session durations and high bounce rates, you know something has to change. You'll have to find out and isolate the problem, then remedy it and see if that improves those metrics. If not, then it may be something else entirely.

■ DEMOGRAPHICS, TRAFFIC LOCATIONS, AND REFERRAL CHANNELS

You should then see who your visitors are, where your web traffic is coming from, namely from which countries and from what online channels. Knowing where your traffic comes from can give you an idea what you should change or remove in order to take advantage of that incoming traffic.

Your main demographic should dictate the tone, style, and focus of your content. What works for 18-35 year old males may not be what works for 35-55 year old females. You may also be surprised by what other crowds other than your intended demographic may be enjoying your content, like kids. If that does happen to you, then you may want to shore up the language in your content.

If you're running a local business that gets most of its customers in your general location, then you would want to have most of your traffic coming from your own country. But if you're getting a lot from other countries, that indicates a potential for expansion or at least the type of people that get attracted to your content. That can open up a myriad of possibilities.

A lot of times, people are not typing your URL on their browser by themselves. Most of them are likely clicking a link on search results, on another website, or on social media to get to your website. You'll want to know how much of that traffic is coming from those sources so you know what to focus on to get better results.

The best you can do to take advantage of this information is to adjust your content strategy according to fit the referral.

6. MONETIZING YOUR WEB TRAFFIC

Building up web traffic can be a long-term process that takes a lot of hard work and dedication, as well as a fair bit of expense since you're paying for domain and hosting, as well as people to help you run your website if you wish to not lose sleep in doing everything yourself.

You know you're doing well once you have a decent amount of traffic coming in from various channels and the numbers in your analytics look good—at least a 2% click-through rate, below 30% bounce rate, average session duration of around 2 to 3 minutes, and so on.

Stacking the deck to your favor is always a good idea, especially when it comes to your income stream. Finding a good way to monetize your web traffic can certainly help you grow your business while still getting even more eyes on you. It's like a gift that keeps on giving.

There are various ways to do this, and you can stick to whatever is most optimal for you over time. Here are some of the most common ways to monetize your web traffic:

A. ECOMMERCE

This is perhaps the most obvious method, and involves the most investment of money, time, and effort. It's basically starting an online business, and it's a process onto itself even if you already run a physical business.

Not only do you have to put up the online infrastructure to display products and receive orders and payments, but you also have to set up the logistics necessary to deliver the goods to your customers. Also, ecommerce is an incredibly competitive market, so getting into it is quite a commitment.

B. AFFILIATE MARKETING

Affiliate marketing is touted as one of the quickest and most popular ways to make money from your website. However, this is only good if the products you endorse through this method doesn't take away from your own business if you happen to be selling the same products or services yourself.

This method is only good if your business model doesn't involve the selling of products or services.

Find a product or service you would recommend, then endorse it on your website to your audience with links to product pages on the website you wish to be affiliated with, like Amazon. That website will give you affiliate marketing links that let people purchase that product or service while also automatically indicate you as the affiliate marketer.

From every purchase made through an affiliate link, you earn a commission from 30% of the price to as high as 70%.

C. PAY-PER-CLICK ADVERTISING

The most well-known PPC advertising service is Google, which most websites use for advertising. Google AdSense is for publishers to show ads on their website, while Google AdWords is for businesses who wish to advertise their products and services on the search engine.

Google advertising is the most popular not only because it's the biggest, but also because its advertising system is very simple to use. For instance, with AdSense, you're given a code that you can paste onto your website's code to show the ads. The AdSense algorithm then figures out what your website is about and shows advertisements that are of the similar niche.

When someone chooses to click on the ad, you can earn anywhere from \$0.50 to \$5 for each click. This gets better as you get more traffic to your website, adding up to hundreds or even thousands of dollars each month.

D. SELLING AD SPACE

You can cut the middleman and sell ad space on your website. This is great if you're a website with considerable traffic as other businesses and websites will recognize that you can give them extra attention by having their ads on your website.

You can earn depending on how much traffic you get per month, and it gets even better if your website gets traffic from different sources. It's usually quoted as an amount per 1,000 impressions (CPM). Let's say it's \$5 CPM and you get 100,000 visits a month. You can sell that ad for \$500.

The better your website does, the more you earn from selling ad space. Of course, the inverse is also true—if your website doesn't get a significant amount of traffic, then you earn little to nothing.

You can also sell ad space on your website for a flat fee. Name your price based on how much you think your website is worth relative to what the competition may be charging. You can then get paid upfront at the start of each month.

E. ACCEPTING SPONSORED POSTS

Once you've built up steady traffic and have a community around your website, you can earn by helping to promote other businesses by featuring their sponsored content. This form of native advertising is great as you serve as a direct advertiser for a price with no one else in between the deal. A common way of doing this is the advertorial, which is part content and part advertisement.

Of course, it must be disclosed right from the start that it's sponsored content as it's most ethical to do so. As long as you do that, your audience will recognize that you're advertising them and not just passing it off as just a recommendation. Not disclosing and being found out is a surefire way to lose trust.

F. FLIPPING YOUR WEBSITE

This may either be a last resort or actually your whole business model. If you're not aware of it, there are businesses out there that earn from making websites, build traffic for them, then sell them. They do a lot of what has been discussed in this ebook for website after website and make web development their business.

7. CONCLUSION

Building and running your own website for your business takes a lot of time, effort, and resources as it involves a lot of moving parts and hoops you have to jump through. But once you've put in the thought and work involved, you'll have something that can serve as your online base of operations where all your online activities can be focused around.

While you may have your social media accounts to market your business, there's nothing like having a website to call your own. You get a lot more control and customization with a website, so you can mold it to your own image and have it represent your business on the Internet.

Once you truly understand what goes into developing and maintaining your website for your business, you'll get a better handle of digital marketing as a whole. It also opens doors to other opportunities, like ecommerce and content creation. All of that and more can be done by having your own website.

There may be a lot more details to web development for business that may not be contained in this ebook, but everything you've just read should be more than enough information for you to get started. You should then be able to learn more as you go along and find your own way of doing things with your own business website.

As you continue to learn about web development, especially for business, you may still have some questions. If you need answers related to web development or need help in creating and maintaining your website, feel free to reach out to us at contact@lioneyecreative.com.

Thank you very much for reading!

