

Your

COMPLETE GUIDE

to a winning

WEBSITE



trident
CREATIVE | DIGITAL | PRINT

Introduction

We live in a digital age – this sounds like a cliché. But you'd be surprised at how many businesses still fail to acknowledge the importance of evolving with the turning business tide. Businesses that fail to do so pay the ultimate price and get banished as obsolete relics of the past – Toys R Us being an example of such ignorance.

Having a potent web presence is an absolute must to survive in the current business landscape that seems to shift by the second. However, setting up a website that provides a seamless user experience and adds to your bottom-line requires quite a bit more than just putting together a few webpages.

Apart from functional expertise, it requires a deep understanding of both your business and your customer base.

Within this eBook, we intend to share with you the key elements that you must consider while building a website regardless of industry or business spectrum.

Team Trident



Contents



- 3 Put yourself in your user's shoes
- 4 Don't ignore your competition and select a niche
- 5 Craft a business profile that resonates with your audience
- 6 Develop a thorough understanding of your audience
- 7 Track your customer journey and assess the site map
- 8 Focus on minimising clicks
- 9 Encourage users to spend time on the website
- 10 Do not ignore the wireframe
- 11 Polish your copy
- 12 The simplest design is often the most effective
- 13 Make your homepage count
- 14 Make the fonts and your brand colours work for you
- 15 The do's and don'ts of incorporating animation
- 16 Content is indeed the king – engaging content that is
- 17 Use data to your advantage
- 18 The secret sauce – a robust SEO strategy
- 19 Religiously measure and monitor every KPI
- 20 Optimise your website for conversions
- 21 Conclusion



Put yourself in your user's shoes

Often companies neglect the user experience in favour of blindly designing what they feel is right to represent their business or service on their website. But it's vital that you carry out research on your own company before you design anything and it is essential that you analyse the user experience from your own critical perspective and take notes of your experience whilst exploring the site.

It sounds simple, but if it's a frustrating experience for you, then you can bet it's twice as frustrating for your new customer or prospect looking to learn more about your business.

For some people it might be a difficult task to be self critical of your own website, but your website is your digital home and reference point for customers and prospects, so it needs to be tailored for them.

Here are some questions you should be asking yourself when exploring your website that will help make it more user friendly and ultimately, a more effective marketing tool for your business;

- **Do you know what the business does as soon as you land on the website?**
- **Are you getting to your destination? Was it long, drawn out or was it easy to navigate?**
- **Are you enjoying the experience of your own website?**
- **Is the content engaging?**
- **Are you impressed with the design?**
- **Does it represent your business?**

As a final check, It would be useful to get an impartial friend to critique your website and go through the same process. Going through this experience



Key Points



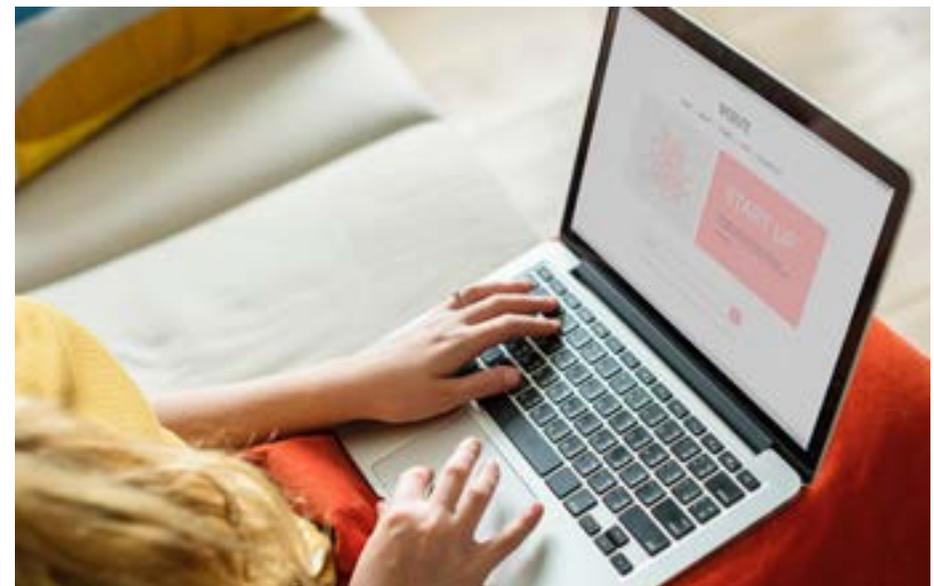
Be a critic and ensure the user is always at the centre of your website experience



Use our quick checklist to help guide the improvement on your website



Engage a friend to help with your research, they will have a different, more impartial view



2

Don't ignore your competition and select a niche

Key Points

- ✓ Think about how other businesses in your market operate, not just you
- ✓ Research your competition and find out what you like and dislike
- ✓ Learn from your competition and find your niche



It's not completely about researching your own website. Lots of businesses can be single minded when they think about their digital presence, meaning they only think about their own image. The businesses that have this tunnel vision, try their best to get everything about them and their service/products out there for all to read.

But it is imperative to research your competition as well. By doing this you can identify the type of things they are doing well but you can also use this knowledge to differentiate your business from them. You can bet that your customers do their research in your market to find the company they feel most aligns with their needs, so why would you ignore your competition?

By researching your competition you need to look out for the following key things, only then can you really find your niche;

- How do they promote their business? Their services? The tone of voice?
- What key messages are they promoting? Is it price focused or are they service lead?
- What type of imagery have they chosen to represent business? What does that imagery mean? Is it corporate or is it more personal?
- What colours are they using?
- Content - is it easy to understand? Engaging?

Most importantly. If you research the competition, you will identify what you like about what they do but also what you don't like. It's here that you can find the gaps in the market and exploit them for yourself.



3

Craft a business profile that resonates with your audience

There are two main components here that will ensure a potent business profile:

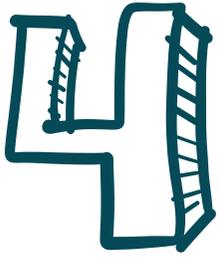
First, you need to understand the core reason your business exists. Many people incorrectly assume that this entails describing your product or service. However, here you try and explain clearly what pressing issues your business exists to solve. Clarity here will ensure that your core message resonates with your targeted audience. We call this the 'Business Why'. This is not about what services or products you offer but what your business purpose is. From this insight, you can use it to form the cornerstone of your business profile, the messaging, imagery and appearance.

The second part entails explaining why a potential customer should choose your business over the competition. This is where you explain if your solution is cheaper, faster, and more efficient than what everyone else is offering. Really evaluate what do you do differently to other people - this refers largely back to our second point in this guide. Use your learnings to identify what do you offer differently and then create a strategy on how to use your USP to promote your business in the best and most appropriate way.

Key Points

- ✓ Find your 'Business Why' and use it at the heart of your business message
- ✓ Find your unique selling point and exploit it - this will set you apart from the competition





Develop a thorough understanding of your audience

Audience profiling is an essential element of your marketing and will ultimately drive the success of your communications via the website (and other channels of promotion).

It forms a vital part of the strategic planning which will shape brand messaging and the creative design of your business. The profiles you identify with that form your ideal target audiences, will help separate the customers who simply have no interest in your brand from the customers who are likely to listen through common and relevant interest. You can't cast the net too wide - be more targeted.

A great model to help profile your ideal target audience is with the **Value Proposition Canvas** which will help you understand your audience profiles on a much deeper level. By identifying your key audience persona's you can tailor your messaging to be more relevant to that audience, focusing your attention to a more detailed audience.



VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS

With this particular model you narrow down the detail that really resonates with your customer audience which covers four main areas;

- **Wants** - what is success to your customer?
- **Fears** - what are the pain points in their role?
- **Needs** - what jobs need to be done?
- **The Substitute** - if they don't use you, where will they go?

After you analyse your customer, you need to analyse yourself. What benefits do you have as a business that can help relieve these issues? This covers three areas;

- **Benefits** - how can we help achieve goals?
- **Experience** - what is it like working with You?
- **Features** - how do we answer business issues?

Once created, your value proposition will play an important role in your keyword strategy, sitemap, navigation, and your homepage design as well as informing site-wide design and copy writing. It will also be the lens through which you monitor performance and plan improvements.



Key Points

- ✓ Identifying your ideal target audience is important. Understanding that audience is vital.
- ✓ Be targeted with your business communication, don't overstretch.
- ✓ Use the Value Proposition Canvas, it's really useful!

5

Track your customer journey and assess the site map

It's imperative that you put in the effort in unearthing what exactly your client is looking for when they land on your landing page. Intimate knowledge of their problems and motivations will help guide you here.

Too often businesses get caught up in designing the "perfect" website, failing to acknowledge what may seem perfect to them may not work for their customers. When designing your website it is crucial that you let your customers' preferences lead the process.

As a business, your only objective is to provide your clients with a seamless solution to their problems. Make sure to take into account key factors such as which pages perform well (or underperform) and the underlying reasons for that. A thorough page-by-page technical analysis will help you determine this.

Lastly, choosing the correct keywords goes a long way in determining your long-term success – a correct keyword strategy puts your website in front of the correct audience. Understanding the core reasons for your business's existence will help you ascertain the most relevant keywords.

Key Points

- ✓ Find out why people visit your website
- ✓ Design your website for your customers and put them first
- ✓ Don't stand still. Analyse your page performance and make improvements





Focus on minimising clicks



Key Points

- ✓ Make your user journey quick and simple with minimum clicks
- ✓ Easy navigation is vital, so don't overcomplicate this
- ✓ Create simple navigation breadcrumbs, they're really useful!



We have all been to websites that bury the information we need under layers and layers of pages that are utterly useless. Even if you have the perfect keyword strategy, forcing your users to go through a "click-a-thon" is one of the easiest ways to sink your website's ranking.

Once the user arrives at your homepage, they should know exactly where they can find the information they're after. Here's what you can incorporate within your web-design to keep the customer journey short and seamless:

- Simplify the primary navigation panel i.e. you don't need to offer countless navigation options.
- Secondly, make sure the navigation panel is at the top of the page but it is also a good idea to incorporate navigation in your website footer aswell.
- One of the easiest ways to ensure user-friendly customer experience is to let the users know at all times where they are while they browse your website. This can be done by using breadcrumbs throughout your website – except the homepage.
- Make it easy for users to search for anything by including a prominent search atop the page.
- It's a good idea to include useful links within the content on each page. Ensure they're prominent and descriptive.

7

Encourage users to spend time on the website

The more time a potential client spends on your website, the higher the probability you will win their business. The question is how to achieve it?

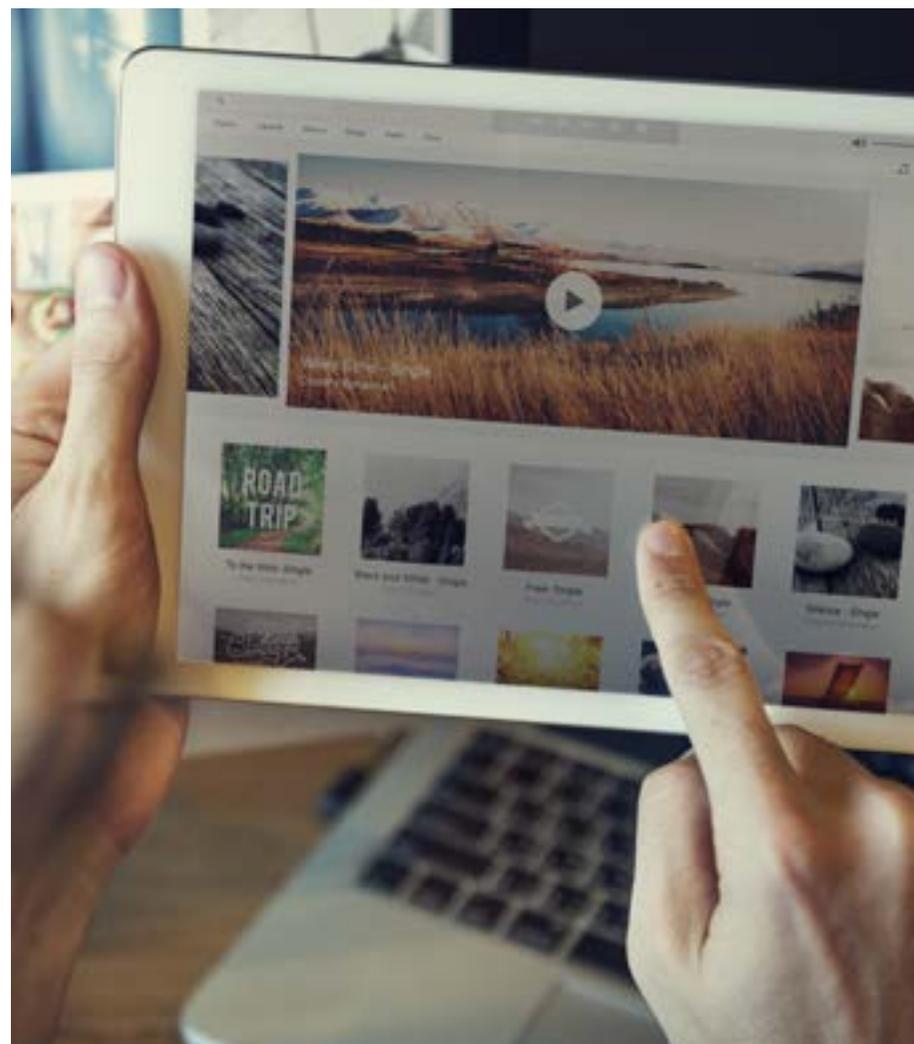
Naturally, when a user arrives at your website they have a purpose and most likely they are looking for answers to a query. You should try and incorporate a design that is intuitive; meaning even if the user is not entirely sure what they're looking for, they should be presented with several options or responses based on their on-site activity.

A good analogy here would be a sharp salesperson asking the right questions to ascertain the customer needs and then offering relevant solutions based on those answers.

A great way of getting your users to stick around on your website is by creating a deeper level of engagement whilst they are on the site. Look to incorporate videos in the most appropriate manner for your brand. These could be how-to style guides, informative brand pieces about your business or a showcase of all the great work you do. You aren't just restricted to video however, insightful blog articles are a great way to get people onto your website to read your thoughts around relevant market subjects.

Key Points

- ✓ Create an intuitive design that encourages exploration and leads your users to important areas of your website
- ✓ Have engaging content on your website that is relevant to your audience and encourages repeat visits



8

Do not ignore the wireframe



Just the way architects make blueprints before commencing the actual construction, a wireframe is made before starting to build a website.

A wireframe is a very important part of the web design equation; it gives you a structural and visual understanding of how and where each design element fits. More importantly, it saves you extra work and allows you to pivot should changes be required.

Again, a clear understanding of your client needs will help you decide what elements must be incorporated and how they should function within the overall design. There are plenty of easy to use tools such as *frame box*, that should help you come up with a wireframe that you need.



Key Points

- ✓ Planning your website design starts with a wireframe, create one and use it
- ✓ Remember, it's easier and more efficient to make changes in the wireframe than it is on the actual website

9

Polish your copy

Copy is a term used to describe the content on your website. It is vital that each word that goes onto your webpages is playing an active role in convincing a prospective client that your business offers the best solution to their problem.

No words should be wasted. Many a time we make the mistake of insisting on copy that is "creative"; it is crucial to understand that sales copywriting is not about exhibiting your literary prowess, its only goal is to win business – pure and simple.

Evaluate each word thoroughly and be ruthless. If a word is not contributing to making a sale, get rid of it. Each word you choose should portray a very clear message i.e. it should establish your authority, a strong connection with the customers and should let them know why your business is the best choice to sort their issues.



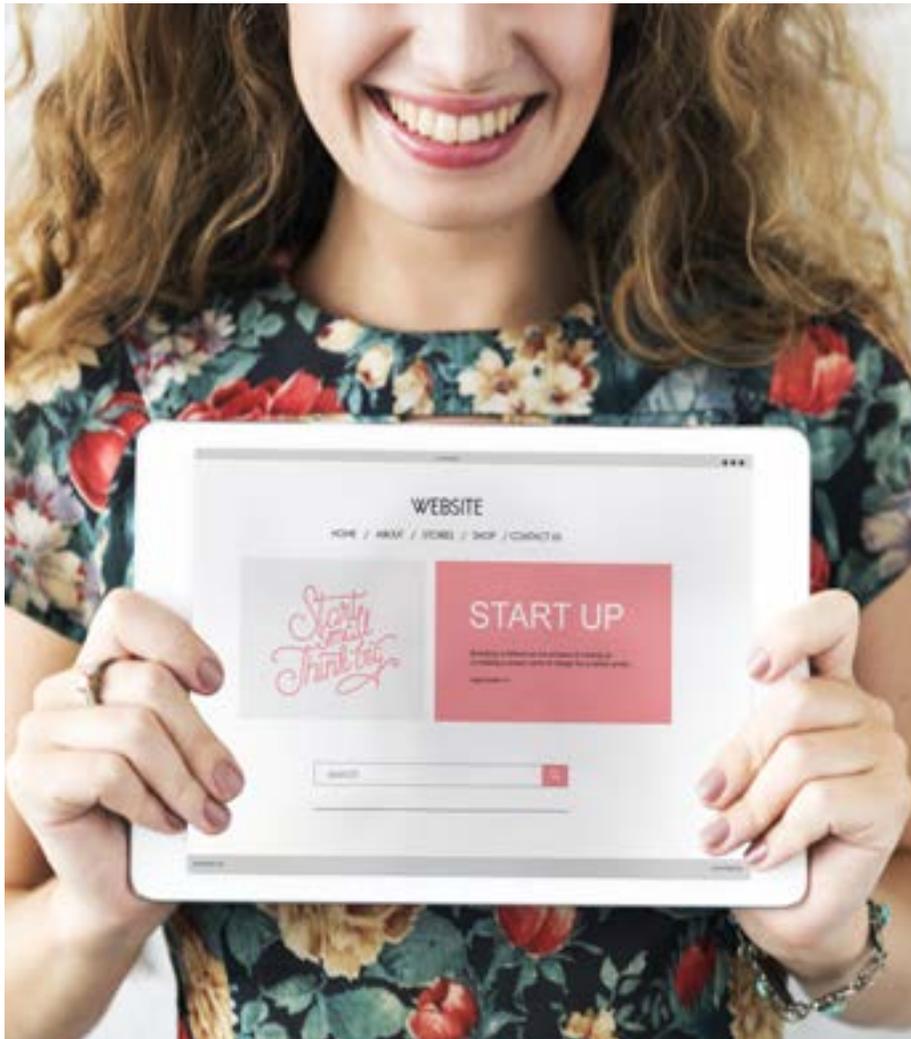
Key Points

- ✓ The right copy will help you win business
- ✓ Be clever, concise and to the point. A wordy website is boring and your users will leave
- ✓ Your tone of voice should talk to your audience, it's here where you will engage with them better



10

The simplest design is often the most effective



There's ample evidence that simplicity wins. Apple's constant insistence on keeping its product design simple and clean (i.e. without any unnecessary bells and whistles) played a huge role in making it a trillion dollar business.

It makes sense to incorporate elements that portray your brand persona, however, the overall design process and key User Experience (UX) elements should be guided by users' needs. Understand that the user's only purpose to visit your website is to find a solution to his problem and each design element should assist the user in achieving that.

Websites that score poorly on user-experience often fall short on correct font usage and graphics. When it comes to fonts, it's best not to exceed 3 fonts in 3 sizes. Also, employ graphics judiciously; not only do some graphics make the website slow, but it can also get quite confusing for the user.

Key Points

- ✓ Remember, simple design is effective design
- ✓ Simple yes, sparse no. You still need the user experience at the centre of your design
- ✓ Pick 3 fonts and 3 sizes, it'll help give your design a point of difference but won't be confusing

11 Make your homepage count

Retailers go to great lengths in making sure that their storefronts and display windows put up a dazzling show. And it makes perfect sense; a grey, boring storefront isn't going to excite you enough to walk through the door. Your website's homepage works in the same way.

The images, text and the colours you use – they should all work in unison to let potential clients know that your business is the perfect choice to provide them with a solution they are looking for.

Each element on your homepage should portray an aura of trust, reliability, and expertise. An important point to keep in mind is to avoid using image sliders because it has been shown that they can contribute to higher bounce rates.

We often assume that customers know what to do. In most cases, they need to be pushed to take action. That is where a strong CTA (call to action) comes into play. Make sure that throughout your homepage assets (copy and images) there is a strong CTA asking the users clearly what to do. Keep it short, relevant and mention what the user stands to gain if he completes the action. E.g. Signup now to our email list to get 10% off your first order!

Key Points

- ✓ Make your homepage sing! It's the first thing they see and you need to make an impression.
- ✓ Be careful, don't choose style over substance. It doesn't work like that, your users wonder will quickly disappear if they aren't finding what they're looking for.



12 Make the fonts and your brand colours work for you



We have talked about it before and will stress it again – each element of your website should contribute to win business and to create a seamless user experience including your brand colours and fonts.

It's best not to complicate things. Speaking of user experience – they should easily be able to identify the copy from headlines and choosing a separate font for each is the way to go.

Colours play a key role in impacting customer psychology and play an important part in establishing a connection and driving action. We recommend limiting the website colour scheme to 3-4 colours. Apart from your main brand colours, there should be one for buttons and other key areas such as email forms.



Key Points

- ✓ Don't complicate your fonts. Pick complementing styles between headline, sub copy and body copy
- ✓ Use of colour is important but don't go overboard, 3-4 colours is perfect

13 The do's and don'ts of incorporating animation

There are a lot more cons to adding animations than there are pros. To start off, animations take time to develop and can hamper your search rankings by slowing down the website. Secondly, you'd be hard-pressed to find a way animations aid directly in the sales process. Moreover, animations also present an additional challenge of device compatibility.

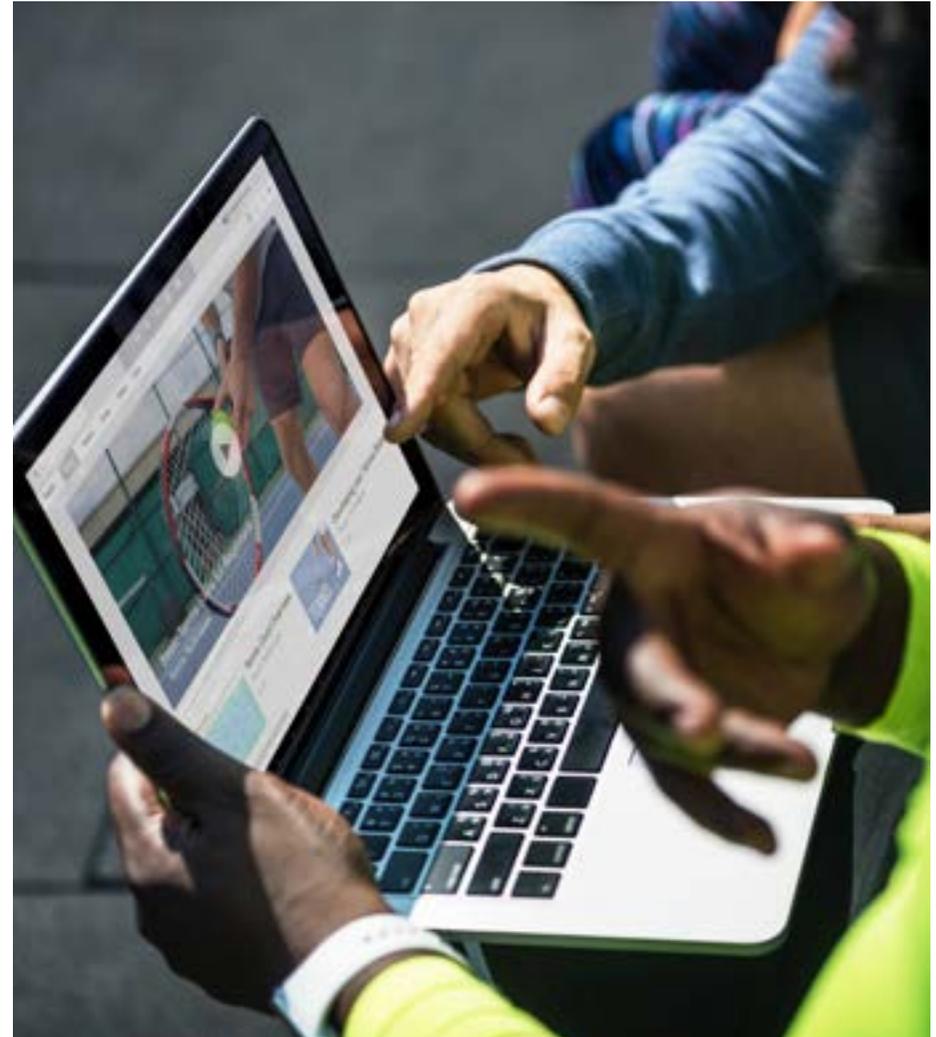
Again we'd like to draw your attention to the fact that your website's core objective is to provide information and solve customer problems – everything else is secondary. The only instance which justifies the use of simple animations is when they add to user experience such as aiding in navigation.

Certain animation within the exploration of your website will aid the user experience, especially if your business is trying to appeal to a more playful audience. It's also useful if you want to highlight certain parts of the website content to create an eye-catching experience and point your user in the right direction.



Key Points

✓ Consider animation in your design carefully
- it's not for everyone



14

Content is indeed the king – engaging content that is



Put simply, engaging content is something that adds value to your potential and current clients. It is one of the most important factors that will ensure low bounce rates, increasing the likelihood of winning more business.

Now valuable content could take many forms depending on your customer base and the industry you are operating in. For instance, if you sell car wheels; having a blog about auto maintenance is an easy and effective way to offer useful information to your audience and educate them about your product.

Another form of this is to offer short eBooks or industry relevant reports in exchange for their emails, this is called gated content. Not only will it add value to the users, but their email also gives you a much larger canvas to engage, educate and sell. Similarly, quick videos and competitions are a great way to keep your audience happy and will make them want to spend more time on your website.

Key Points

- ✓ Make your content memorable, relevant and engaging
- ✓ Consider regular content streams to encourage return users. Blogs are a great way of doing this.
- ✓ Gated content is a great way to capture new leads and drive your business forward

15 Use data to your advantage

Designing and setting up a functional website is only half the equation. Quite a few of us tend to miss the other half, which is to thoroughly understand how the user interacts with your website.

It is crucial that you put in the hard yards here. You must analyse each section and page of your website with respect to traffic and user interaction. Employing tools such as Google Analytics is an effective way to gain insights into aspects such as traffic source, quality, frequency etc.

Thorough data analysis also helps you gain key functional insights into your website. If there are any technical issues hampering your website, data will help you diagnose such issues and sort them out before they mutate into something more pressing.

The other element of data gathering is growing your email list. As explained earlier, this allows your business an extra opportunity to convince prospective clients.

To get a better understanding of what works, we recommend observing what your competition and industry leaders are doing. Also, signing up to their email lists and newsletters is a good starting point.

Lastly, strategically include pop-ups to drive action. If the reward is enticing enough and you have made it easy to share information, the user is more likely to surrender their email.



Key Points

- ✓ Analyse the performance of your web pages regularly. If they aren't performing, change something
- ✓ Google Analytics is a great tool to monitor your website performance and gain vital insights
- ✓ Sign up to your competitor mailing lists and learn from them
- ✓ Pop-ups can be annoying for users, but used strategically they can be effective



16 The secret sauce – a robust SEO strategy



Key Points



SEO takes time. Be patient and trust in your keyword strategy



Maximise SEO potential by emphasizing your keywords across your website design but don't overdo it



Each design element plays an important role when it comes to building a well thought out and intuitive website. However, it wouldn't be wrong to conclude that none of it would matter if you don't have a strong SEO strategy in place.

Simply put, SEO (search engine optimisation) is a set of practices with two key objectives.

1. Improve your website's ranking in search results
2. Put your business in front of the right audience.

There are several elements to consider for a thorough SEO framework. To start off, stay away from any "black hat or grey hat" SEO practices. In essence, such practices are bad and can spell disaster for your website when it comes to search engines. You must stick with the guidelines laid out otherwise the search engines will heavily penalise your website.

Another important aspect is choosing the correct keywords. By that we mean choose keywords that are relevant to your industry and your potential clients are most likely to plugin while searching for a solution. A good starting point is to observe what keywords your competition is ranked for and build from there.

Lastly, strategically include these keywords throughout your website copy, headlines and other content assets such as blogs and lead magnets. This will help pull up your website when relevant keywords are plugged in for search. Be advised though; unnecessarily stuffing keywords will get your website penalised. Your content still needs to be engaging afterall!

17 Religiously measure and monitor every KPI

Our gut and intuition are useful tools; however, when it comes to setting up a website there's no better tool than hardcore data, which will help you evolve and improve.

Setting up a website is an endeavour that requires quite a bit of time, financial resources and of course, a lot of patience. It is important to understand that any web project (a website or otherwise) is more of an evolution rather than a one-time project.

That means you need to uncover the optimum iteration of each element to make sure that your website performs at its functional peak and delivers the expected results. A/B testing is a protocol that will help optimise your website.

It involves taking a certain element and testing two different versions of it, measuring the results and implementing the one that outperforms the other. It is crucial that you employ A/B testing with each element of your website i.e. important webpages, headlines, body copy, hero images, and pop-up variations.

A/B testing has shown to have profound effects both from a functional and business perspective. Here's what we mean.

More often than not you'd be surprised by the results that come up. You may think that a certain element (e.g. a hero image) does a better job at communicating your value proposition and resonates with your clients however a completely different version may offer you much better results.



Key Points

- ✓ Once your website is built and underway, don't down-tools. Monitor performance and evolve.
- ✓ A/B test certain imagery, messaging and promotions to see which ones perform better



18 Optimise your website for conversions

Key Points

- ✓ Adopt a mobile-first strategy, especially if your profiles tell you that they spend 90% of their time on their phones.
- ✓ Be single minded in your design and main messaging - don't complicate your website
- ✓ Speed is held in high esteem, don't slow your website down



Any action that you want your visitors to take is called a conversion. How your website is designed plays a key role in determining your conversion rates. Here are some important factors to keep in mind

- **Follow a mobile-first philosophy:** Everyone carries a smartphone today. It is fast becoming a central point when it comes to web browsing, content consumption and making purchases. So it is crucial that each element of the website is optimised to provide a bug-free user experience to your visitors. Moreover, all major search engines place significant importance on whether a website functions well on mobile.
- **Follow Hick's law:** This essentially states the more options we are given, the longer we will take to make a decision. The same goes for web design; an overly busy design will confuse your visitors and add to bounce rates. You should strive to keep your navigation as simple as possible – cutting out any items that don't assist your visitors
- **Don't ignore the load times:** Consider this – a mere 1-second increase in page load time can dent your conversion rate by more than 7%. We live in a world that is perpetuated by instant gratification. So make sure your website is not trying your visitor's patience by slow load times. Constantly strive to find and sort out any functional issues that may be adding time to load times.



Conclusion

Although a short eBook is not nearly enough to do justice for the topics in this guide, however, this document will act as a good starting point to develop your understanding and will give you a greater knowledge of what constitutes building a Winning Website.



If you have found this guide useful and would like to talk with us about how we can help you bring your website to life, let's talk today.



+44 (0) 1455 557766



enquiries@wearetrident.co.uk



wearetrident.co.uk

