



20 Things Your Website Should Do and 5 Things It Shouldn't

Is your small business website effectively pulling in visitors, keeping them around and converting them to customers? If your website is a little more than an online placeholder, it's time to start putting it to work so you can grow your business and take advantage of the huge potential consumer base for the online market.

Today's consumers are accessing your website from their desktops, laptops, and also from their smartphones and tablets. This checklist will help you make sure that your site is doing what it should for your small business – increasing your profits.



Your Website Should:

1. **Look Professional** - Sloppy, plain or homemade-looking websites are a visitor turnoff.
2. **Have a Private Domain Name** - Even if you're using a WordPress.com, investing the few dollars a month in a web host and domain name tells visitors you're serious about your company—and makes you more trustworthy.
3. **Be Secure** - If you accept online credit card payments for products or services, your site must comply with the requirements of the Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council (PCI DSS).
4. **Have a Memorable Domain Name** - Make your private domain name something easy to remember. Preferably the name of your business.
5. **Contain Your Business Name in Text** - Search engines can't index words from your logo image. Make sure your company is findable.
6. **Contain Your Business Address in Text** - Once again—no text, no search indexing. Local search results are more important than ever, so your address should be prominent.
7. **Have Your Company Phone Number in Click-to-Call Format** - With so many people looking up businesses on smartphones, offering a one-touch way to contact you will bring you more customers.
8. **Make Contact Info Easy to Find** - Search engines aren't the only ones that need easy access to your contact information. Make sure visitors can get in touch with you quickly and conveniently.



9. **Tell Visitors What You Do at a Glance** - Through images, succinct descriptions or both, visitors to your site should be able to figure out right away what your company does.
10. **Highlight Your USP** - Your unique selling point (USP) lets visitors know why they should stick around and do business with you, instead of click back to the search results. What makes you stand out from the competition?
11. **Show Off Customer Testimonials** - The best way to tell people how great your company is is through someone else's words.
12. **Invite Visitor Feedback** - You can learn more about what's working and what isn't on your website—and get more testimonials—by having a feedback form for visitors.
13. **Speak to Your Visitors—Not Your Ego** - Your website content should focus on how you can benefit your customers, instead of how awesome you are.
14. **Offer Fresh Content** - Keeping your site updated makes both visitors and search engines happy. An integrated small business blog is a great way to do this.
15. **Contain Keywords** - Natural SEO (search engine optimization) strategies are essential in getting new visitors to your website. Make sure you understand [Google's Panda and Penguin updates](#) for the best effectiveness.
16. **Make it Personal** - You don't have to share your favorite colors or foods, but including the names and bios of business owners and staff on your website gives things a personal touch.
17. **Link to Other Websites** - Outbound links can help improve search engine results and make you look like a valuable resource.
18. **Have Other Websites Link to Yours** - Inbound links carry even more search engine juice.
19. **Make Checkout Easy** - The more steps customers have to go through to buy something from your website, the more often they'll abandon their carts. Don't make them jump through hoops for an online purchase.
20. **Connect with Social Media** - Place [social sharing buttons](#) prominently on your website for increased reach.

Your Website Should Not:

1. **Have a Lot of Bells and Whistles** - Like every widget and form you can find stuffed onto your home page. Clean and to the point works much better.
2. **Use Flash Animation, Moving Text, Fancy Cursors or Music** - These things are unnecessary, annoying to most visitors and slow down your loading time.



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3. **Post Images Without ALT Tags or Text Captions** - Because search engines can't read images and descriptive text helps to increase your rankings.
 4. **Have Dead Links** - Ones that lead nowhere or to an error page. Check your links frequently to make sure they still work.
 5. **List All Your Products and Services** - Don't do this in one long, continuous scroll. Break things up naturally and use smart navigation to help visitors find what they need.