

Top 10 Tips – Creating a new website

Supplied by: Newedge Media Ltd



Building a website for your business can be a significant financial and time investment. Before committing, it is critical that you are clear about your goals.

1. **Laying the foundations** - Get a clear understanding of how the website you intend to have built will work for your business. You may wish to sell products online, allow access to key documents, use the website as a marketing tool or simply to have your contact details published on the internet. Whatever you wish your website to do, make sure you understand that a website can change your business. A website can give you:

- An international presence
- Secondary or primary sales channel
- A place to showcase your products and services
- Direct sales enquiries via email

Don't feel pressured into having to sell online - it might not be right for you – however, a website could provide an insight into your products and services which otherwise a potential client would never receive.

2. **Choosing the right name (domain)** - There is more to choosing the web site address than just replicating your company name. You need to keep the name to be easy to remember and relevant. For example, if your business were European Travel Consultancy Services Limited, then a domain www.europeantravelconsultancyservices.co.uk (or .com) would be rather clumsy. You would be better to look to secure www.etcs.co.uk or www.etcservices.co.uk.

3. **Target the correct audience** - As with all advertising and marketing material, defining your audience is vital to the success of each particular campaign. A website should be no different. Early on in the development you should clearly define who you want to visit your website? What do these people require to see and do on your website? Why will they visit it and come back? How do we contact these people?

Answering these questions will give you a clearer understanding of how the website should be built and what sort of information should be present on it. This will lead to a far more targeted site which gives the content required to the customer.

4. **Make it 'sticky'** - You need to ensure that the content is 'sticky' and that the customers you bring to the site 'stick' around long enough to find out what you do, if it is of interest to them and how they can go about getting it.
5. **Get listed with search engines** - Search engines have been a major buzz word for some time now and their importance to successful websites can be overpowering. When building a website with search engines in mind, you should consider using keywords - what words or phrases do you think a potential customer will type into a search engine such as Google? Also consider the content - search engines look for good content which relates to the subject of each page. Make sure you tell them all about your services and products in as much detail as possible, so there are lots of words to search through.

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6. **Keep it fresh** - Keeping your website up-to-date is vital. You wouldn't give a business card to someone with your old telephone number on it, so why do it with your website.

A latest new page will keep your potential and existing clients up to speed with what is happening in your business. You can showcase new products here, tell everyone about an event you're holding or anything else that a client might find interesting.

Refreshing the homepage every now and again keeps a new and updated image about your business. Don't go stale and have the same welcoming message or image over the years, bring some excitement to the table and give your customers a real treat when they check your website.

7. **Keep it simple** - Probably one of the most annoying things about the internet is how complex some websites are to use. Menu systems that only work if you have a particular browser installed and login and registration pages. If you can simplify the process, then do so. Why have three clicks of the mouse when one will do? This will keep your website visitors happy and give them more time to read about your products and services.
8. **Benefits not features** - If you're trying to sell products and services on your website it's important to talk about what problems you solve with such an item. You may well have the greatest number of pixels in your camera, but does it do anything different? Your customer will be interested in what the product can do for them and how it solves their want or need for something. Only you know why your product or service does this, so don't keep it to yourself.
9. **Market** - This is one area where many companies fall down. They go to all the effort of producing a great website but forget to tell anyone about it. Indexing by itself will not get you in front of your potential customers. Indexing is one of the many marketing tasks that needs a time investment to ensure you are maximising your sites potential. These include off page SEO, such as developing quality link partners. Speak to SEO experts to identify how much you can do yourself and how much you want to invest in third party support.
10. **Stay in touch** - Keeping your customer base informed and up to date brings return business. A simple newsletter once a month emailed out to your customer database will not only do this, but also drive already warm contacts to your website.

You could also allow your customers to recommend a friend to the newsletter or the website. Word of mouth is one of the most powerful forms of marketing, so make it easy for your customers to do this.

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