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Ensure Your Website Makes the Right First Impression

By [Stefanie McLeod](#) in [Advertising & Marketing](#) [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#) [Web Development](#)



As the ad slogan goes, “you never get a second chance to make a first impression.” And, regardless of your industry, that impression will most likely be your business’ website. Research shows that **81% of consumers** and **94% of business buyers** conduct online research before they make a purchase. So what does this mean for you? Whether you’re B2B or B2C, your website will provide the first impression—so make it a good one.

- **WIIFM?** When visitors are determining whether to patronize your business, they have one big question your website needs to answer: What’s In It For Me? Regardless of your industry, your site’s content should illustrate your purpose succinctly and focus on the benefits you offer to your customers, including why a customer should use you over your competition.
- **Don’t take search engine visibility for granted.** Search engine optimization (SEO) is a vital tool for guiding traffic to your website. If your site plays by a search engine’s rules (like Google), your site will be rewarded with higher organic (not paid) rankings. The better you abide by these rules, the higher the rankings and the greater your chance of being on the first page of search engine results for certain queries. With only 5% of web traffic making it past the first page of results, you need to incorporate SEO best practices into your site to be successful. A combination of keyword optimization reflecting popular terms related to your industry and business offerings, building inbound links to your site from other established sites and providing a good user experience in your website (so visitors stick around) are some of the basic moves when developing your site to increase its visibility and traffic.
- **Strike a balance between creativity and best practices.** You want your website to feel fresh to visitors and, especially if your business is in an artistic field, showcase your business’ creativity. However, there are some design and user experience guidelines you should keep in mind, too. Your content should be helpful, informative and scannable for the majority of web users who are searching for the highlights of the site. Resist the urge to add too many distractions: limit functionality and opt for a simple, easily navigated site. Utilize dark text on plain, high-contrast backgrounds, as people read black text on white backgrounds faster.
- **Have a clear [call to action](#).** Once you’ve successfully driven visitors to your site... now what? If you want them to sign up for a newsletter, view products or be informed about a promotion, you need to give visitors a clear action to perform. Otherwise, website users won’t be sure what you want them to do. Be careful to keep your call to action simple—“more” doesn’t mean “better” in this case.
- **Social media require lots of work.** Building your social media presence across platforms is a must for any business. But don’t make the mistake of adding Twitter, Facebook or Instagram buttons to plug your social pages if you don’t have the followers or the content to make an impression. More customers may actually think twice about frequenting your business based on your lack of followers and outdated social content. Build the content, earn the followers from loyal customers and then advertise your social media presence to a larger crowd.
- **Make your website seamless regardless of device.** While many consumers still use a personal computer to access the internet, smartphone use has [eclipsed desktop use](#) as the main way people access the internet. By 2017, more than 63% of mobile phone users will access online content through their devices. It’s integral that your website has a responsive design and fluid layout so all consumers have a seamless user experience, regardless of how they found you.

In our internet-driven world, there’s no lack of businesses vying for the same customer base. It’s not only vital to have an online presence but one that leaves your visitors (and potential customers) with a positive impression of your business.



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