



# Four Keys to a Successful Business Website

A strong internet presence is critical to the success of a modern business. According to HubSpot, 81% of consumers do internet research before making a major purchase, so it is important to ensure that your business is putting its best foot forward online.<sup>1</sup> While you will certainly want your business website to look professional, credible and cutting edge, some of the most important components of your website are the ones that can't be seen. Although these features may not be as exciting as flashy interactive graphics or video capabilities, they are essential to delivering a superior user experience geared toward converting prospects into customers.

Here are four things you should do to ensure your website is prepared to help you achieve your business goals:

## Provide Simple, Goal-Oriented Navigation

When developing a plan for the design of your website, determine what it is you want customers to know about your business and what it is you want them to do when they visit. Determining what your goal is before you begin designing your website will ensure that your site does not become a hodgepodge of ideas with no clear purpose. Is your goal purely informative, or do you want visitors to take a particular action? Perhaps you want them to purchase something or to reach out and make contact with you. Whatever your goal is, it should be reflected in every aspect of the design and structure of your website.

Clear, consistent navigation is essential to helping those who visit your website discover and engage with the information that they're seeking and the content that you want them to find — the simpler the better. Prioritize what's important to your customers and don't make them hunt for it. Burying important links or pages deep in a convoluted navigation menu is a surefire way to frustrate them. Use descriptive writing to make clear what each section of your

website contains. Visitors to your website should be able to quickly grasp how your website is structured, understand where to find what they need and be able to find their way back home from whatever page they end up on.

Don't forget the basics, either. Make sure that critical information, such as your company's mission statement, contact information and other relevant details (hours of operation, physical address and important staff members) are easily accessible. While these are useful bits of information on their own, they also lend a degree of credibility to your website, reassuring visitors that it is connected to a real, substantive business.

## Monitor Visitor Behavior

Understanding what your visitors are looking for and how they behave once they reach your site can help you make the adjustments needed to help them fulfill their goals — and yours. You can keep an eye on what your visitors are doing on your site using analytics tools like Google Analytics.

These tools can give you access to a wealth of information about your site's visitors, including how they reach your site (via search engine, a paid advertisement, a link on another site, etc.), how much time they spend on your site, and what pages they visit most often.

This data can help you identify roadblocks and opportunities and build a foundation for experimentation. For example, if you find that visitors aren't reaching your "Contact Us" page and want to see if making the link to that page larger and more prominent will help, you can compare the before and after data to see whether the change had a positive or negative impact.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics>

## Optimize for Speed

According to KISSmetrics, 47% of consumers expect a web page to load in two seconds or less — and 40% will abandon a site that takes more than three seconds to load.<sup>2</sup>

The most important thing you can do to make your page load faster is to optimize your image and video files for the web. The size of your multimedia content, such as images and video files, plays a big part in website load times. For images, make sure they're as small as they can be without sacrificing quality — think kilobytes (70KB to 100KB) rather than megabytes. Most image editors have a “Save for the Web” option that makes optimizing images easy. For videos, consider hosting them on another platform, such as YouTube or a content delivery network (CDN), and then embedding them on your site. This outsources the burden of loading the content and allows your page to load more quickly.

In general, your website should be as lightweight and efficient as possible in order to best serve its visitors.

## Capture Leads

Your website shouldn't be a one-way street. If you aren't using your website to capture leads, you aren't really making the most of your web presence.

Visitors to your site should have the opportunity to leave behind some bit of personal information, such as their email address or phone number, so you can be sure that

<sup>2</sup> <https://blog.kissmetrics.com/loading-time/>

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there is a chance to reconnect with them once they leave your site. In some cases, this may involve reaching out to these prospective customers personally to engage them further about their needs and how your services or products might be of use to them. In others, you might add them to a newsletter mailing list or an email marketing campaign that showcases your offerings. Ultimately, the goal is to build a relationship by keeping the lines of communication open.

Your website should have a simple, prominently placed form that allows users to enter their contact information — enough that you can be sure you can reach them, but not so much that it feels intrusive or too forward. It's important that you convey to your visitors that this information will be stored securely and not shared with others. Few people will hand over their email address if they expect to receive unwanted spam. Additionally, be clear about what people will get in return. Is it a monthly email? Access to a proprietary report or guide of some kind? The benefit must be explicit and genuine. You don't want users to feel as if they have been tricked into giving up their information.

## Create a Foundation for Success

While it's fun to deck out your website with all the latest bells and whistles, sometimes the least obvious elements are the ones that have the biggest impact. With the right focus, regular testing and key elements in place, you can put your business on a path to improved online success.