WEB SITE DESIGN
CONSIDERATIONS

Your website is the virtual front door to your business and an integral part of your marketing strategy. In many cases, it is the first experience people will have with your brand.

But when someone comes to your website, what type of first impression does it project?

- Is your site welcoming and professional?

- Can visitors quickly find what they are looking for?

- Does your website turn away prospective customers because it is confusing and doesn't make your visitor feel as if you understand their needs?

In order to develop your website so that it helps drive inbound leads, you must first understand your target audience. Start by putting yourself in your target audience's shoes and thoroughly understand:

- Why they are searching for a solution?

- What do they need?

- How can you help them?

Your website should introduce your business to the target visitor in a way that relates to them and encourages them to dig deeper into what you have to offer. When scanning your content, the visitor is subconsciously asking "what's in it for me"? If your website doesn't answer that question or convince them, very quickly, that you understand their needs, they will look elsewhere.

Having a well-developed, professional web presence is a requirement for gaining new customers and establishing credibility. To make your website attract, educate and encourage visitors to learn more, avoid the following website design mistakes that keep your visitors from connecting with your business.

NINE WEBSITE TIPS

1. Your homepage is all about you

People need to quickly figure out what your business is about, what you have to offer and whether your business can help them. A clear headline that speaks to your visitor's challenges can stop them from hitting the back button and encourage them to find out more. You must be clear and concise to engage visitors within a few seconds or they will be lost to you.

Writing in a way that your target audience understands and associates with is not easy, and you may not have this skill in house. As business owners, we are often too close to our businesses to objectively view what makes our clients appreciate what we do, so the content ends up focusing on your company without relating it to what problems you solve and why you are the best option for them. Remember, your web site is about your customer and not just a soap box for you to tell to world how great you are.

Tip: If you struggle writing about the problems you solve, have someone interview you about your business, what you do and how you help people. A fresh ear can pick out those nuggets that will help form your most compelling message.

EXIT STRATEGIST
BUSINESS EXIT PLANNERS

Exit Strategist
Level 1, 2A Pacific Rise, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060
Mob: 021 533 139 | ross@exitstrategist.co.nz | www.exitstrategist.co.nz

2. Content Organisation

More isn't always better and content organisation is critical to keeping people on your website. Businesses that have a wealth of content struggle with presenting it in a way that is clear and easy to navigate around. Remember that visitors don't understand your business as well as you do and visitors want access to information quickly without spending unnecessary time searching for it or getting lost in the maze of your web site. Make it easy for them to get to know you.

Organise your content to be clear and educational while demonstrating that you are an expert in your field. Never forget that you want to engage with them so it is important for you to be easily contactable directly for information.

Tip: Review, review then review your content and decide what is important to the main body of the website and what could be used as blog posts. Peel back the layers to expose who you really are and ditch the fluffy stuff, honestly, it's just disturbing noise to your prospective customer. Keep the content in your main pages simple, defining your products and services in terms people understand and how it benefits them. Stay away from your industry jargon.

EXIT STRATEGIST
BUSINESS EXIT PLANNERS

Exit Strategist
Level 1, 2A Pacific Rise, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060
Mob: 021 533 139 | ross@exitstrategist.co.nz | www.exitstrategist.co.nz

3. Navigation

Visitors should be able to find what they are looking for quickly. Navigations must be intuitive and simple with no more than two 'clicks' of a mouse. In today's market, most users are searching from a smartphone or tablet and may be shown alternative navigation schemes. When it comes to website navigation, simple works best.

Tip: Have friends or family navigate your site to make sure you have your content organised for your target audience, and that is makes sense, everyone will have a point of view but listen and learn.

4. Content

If users are met with a wall of text you have immediately thrown a barrier in their path and will most likely lose them. To capture attention, you need to make your content highlight the key words and phrases to make it easy to scan the points of interest. Crowded text, tiny fonts and minimal white space all discourage people from scanning.

Tip: Make use of headings, bullets and colour. Write shorter paragraphs. Use interesting, legible fonts that are easy to read. Bold important content to draw the eye. Font size for the content body should be 14 pixels or more to make it easier to read on any device. Include enough white space on the page to make the content stand out, remember, more isn't better, it's just more!

EXIT STRATEGIST
BUSINESS EXIT PLANNERS

Exit Strategist
Level 1, 2A Pacific Rise, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060
Mob: 021 533 139 | ross@exitstrategist.co.nz | www.exitstrategist.co.nz

5. Text

How do you get across what you do and how the viewer can benefit from your service in as few words as possible? Now that's your challenge! There's a fine line between too much and too little content on your web pages. Many believe all you need is a couple of messages with images and you are all set. They see Apple and Nike and want to copy their minimalist look. Unfortunately for most small businesses, we're not instantly recognised so until we are we need content to explain what we do. For whom and what benefits we provide, otherwise visitors will go elsewhere to find the information they need.

Tip: A text heavy page makes finding the right information difficult. Many businesses try to cover everything they do on the homepage and end up with clutter. It's important to present your information in an engaging and simple way to ensure you keep the attention of your visitors. Make your messages clear and concise.

People need to land on your website and quickly determine if you are the right solution for them. Use bullets and headlines to get your message across. Question everything you do and you will find over time that you will use less and less text.

6. Images

Visual cues are an important element of your website design. However, irrelevant, overused stock photography or low quality images are distracting. Images should be used to illustrate your message so the visitor can understand the context without having to read every word of the text.

Tip: Take the time to search for unique, quality images for your website or take your own. If you purchase stock photography, buy the right size and resolution to ensure the image is clear and not distorted.

EXIT STRATEGIST
BUSINESS EXIT PLANNERS

Exit Strategist
Level 1, 2A Pacific Rise, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060
Mob: 021 533 139 | ross@exitstrategist.co.nz | www.exitstrategist.co.nz

7. Call-to-action

Once your website has your visitor's attention, you must ask them to do something. People don't want to think – they want to be guided. If you leave them confused or frustrated or overwhelmed with too many choices, they will leave because it was unclear what you wanted them to do. Your goal is to draw your prospect toward you by motivating them to engage, usually by simply giving them something relevant for nothing.

A **call to action** refers to active copy that elicits an immediate response such as to watch a video demo, download a useful tool or sign up for your mailing list. Although we are focusing on their use on your website, calls to action are used in all types of marketing activities including advertising and email marketing. Some familiar ones are:

• Join our Email List

• Download your Free Guide

• Request a Free Consultation (or Demo, Estimate or Quote)

• Register for a Webinar

• Buy Now

Writing an effective call to action isn't easy and requires you to understand your audience well enough to know what will drive them to action.

Of all the mistakes small business make when preparing their web site, the most common mistake is not having a 'call to action' that guides the visitor through the inbound marketing funnel. In fact, 70% of small business websites have no call to action and many more make blunders that cost them a conversion. Without a highly visible, relevant call to action to help your website visitor know what to do next, all that traffic you drive from your inbound marketing efforts is wasted.

Ten Tips for 'Call to Action'

1. Define a clear objective for what you want your visitor to do and create your call to action to drive that outcome.

2. Be clear about why the offer is valuable to your visitor – what's in it for them? Give your target audience a reason why they should take the desired action.

3. Create a sense of urgency and take advantage of everyone's fear of missing out. Deadlines will encourage people to act sooner than later.

4. Use strong, action-oriented verbs and avoid "click here" whenever possible. Your call to action needs to catch the reader's eye quickly.

5. Use contrasting colours with your strong, action-oriented verbs to create call to action buttons that ensure it isn't missed on the page.

Exit Strategist
Level 1, 2A Pacific Rise, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060
Mob: 021 533 139 | ross@exitstrategist.co.nz | www.exitstrategist.co.nz

EXIT STRATEGIST
BUSINESS EXIT PLANNERS

6. Put calls to action on every page but make them relevant to the content on the page. In your blog posts, have offers that align with the topic that is being discussed. This way your post works to lead the visitor to your offer.

7. Place your call to action where it is most appropriate for your offer. Not all CTA buttons need to go "above the fold" (since we're never sure exactly where it is anymore given the many devices being used).

8. Don't confuse your visitor with multiple competing calls to action in the same location. If you are driving visitors to a landing page, that page should have one specific action. Too many options will paralyse your visitor into taking no action.

9. Create short forms and ask only for the information you need. Depending on the offer, you may need more information but try to avoid asking for anything you absolutely don't need.

10. Include the same call-to-action from the page in your meta description tag. This call to action will appear in search engine listings and will encourage searchers to click through to your website from the major search engines.

Don't leave it to chance that the visitor will figure out what they are supposed to do and actually do it. Understand the goal of your website and create compelling offers for your visitors that help convert new visitors into leads and potentially new customers.

Tip: Determine the primary goal of each web page and create your call to action to achieve that goal. Understand the buying process of your target audience and provide them the right call to action at the right stage in the process. If someone is just starting their research on a potential solution, asking them to buy is premature. However, giving them an educational piece may be just what they are looking for.

8. Contact Page

A contact page is a must but don't make your visitor search for it. Put your phone number where it is clearly visible and make it click to call for mobile visitors. Don't expose email addresses on websites due to harvesters, but instead use web forms, which in many cases are instantly populated by the prospects own computer settings, which will help people contact you via email without the risk.

Tip: Use simple forms that are clearly targeted at what the person may want. Title the forms appropriately so people know what to use them for. Want more information? Need an estimate? These forms help people take action and make your call to action clear.

9. Mobile friendly

Google now gets more search queries in the U.S. from mobile devices than it does from web browsers on PCs. So, if you think mobile friendly websites aren't important, think again. Ever land on a website that hasn't been optimised for mobile devices? Do you try to stretch the screen so you can click on the navigation and find what you are looking for or do you leave and find a website that is easier to use? Giving visitors a mobile friendly experience can be the difference between a new customer and one that never knows how your business can help them.

Tip: Make sure your WordPress website is using a mobile responsive theme. Most newer WordPress themes have included

responsive technology. If you have a WordPress website and it is not mobile responsive, time to switch your theme to one that is.

Your website is no longer just a brochure that you send people to when they ask for more information but the central hub of your web presence. Review your website for these mistakes and correct them to ensure your website works hard for your business.

Search Engine Optimisation is a process of understanding the word choices prospects use when searching for a product or service relating to your channel. SEO is one of the first tasks you should undertake when developing your web site because it will identify the words and phrases you will need to include in the body of the text of your site.

Having a pretty website is simply not enough if people cannot find you because you are buried in the back of nowhere. Careful consideration is required to ensure you are easy to find, and through good design you are very visible in a search.

Tip: present a list of your top twenty competitors web sites to a professional SEO provider and let them do the analytics for you. You will be surprised at the results and this will improve your chances of success.