



7-POINT WEBSITE CHECKLIST



1. IS A WEBSITE REALLY FOR YOU?

There was a time when many people used to think “*I need a website*” but did not ask themselves what they wanted one for. Take some time to consider the purpose of the website and what the content will be, this is essential to making sure you promote your company and make sure your visitors find it valuable. Whilst it can be more cost effective to create a Facebook page or use a Twitter account to spread your message, they do not offer the flexibility a website can give you. Determine what is critical for your business first, start simple and build from there.

2. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE CALLED?

If you decide a website is for you then you will need a domain name. Take some time to consider the most suitable name for you, choose something that is readable and can be remembered. The more unique your domain is, the less likely it will have already been taken or get confused with other businesses. You will also need to choose the domain extension, ‘.com’ is easy to remember and familiar. You will need to register the site, but it is most cost effective to buy this together with the website hosting, details to follow.

3. WHAT DO YOU WANT THE WEBSITE TO DO?

Websites can be built using a variety of tools, you can code them from scratch, use a website builder tool or, most preferably, use a content management system, CMS, which will allow the website to be easily updated. There is a learning curve to using all these tools and when time is at a premium it can be beneficial to work with someone to help you through the first steps and get you on the right path. You will need to decide what the website will be used for – will it just be a place for people to see what you do and make contact; will it be a place to host a regular blog and details of your projects with high end imagery or will it be used to book events and showcase vlogs or podcasts? Whatever you decide will have a bearing on how the site is designed and it is easier to do this from the start than to change direction halfway through.

4. HOSTING YOUR WEBSITE

You have decided on a name for your website and the tools you want to use, the next step is to find a hosting company. Your website needs to be stored on a server which is accessible over the internet and for that you will need a web hosting company. There are hundreds of companies out there that offer these services, which can be daunting, especially with all the different features and prices they offer. It is best to use suppliers that have an **online chat facility** for quick support if you need it. Other worthwhile features will include paying for website **backup** and **virus** and **malware protection**.

5. PLAN AND DEVELOP CONTENT

As a minimum, make sure your website shows your business contact information in a prominent position – there is nothing more frustrating than having to search for an email address or phone number and it could cost your business if it cannot be found quickly. It is also worth considering adding a photo of yourself as people buy from people. Also consider the following:

- Who is your audience?
- What will the pages be called and how do you want to structure the website?
A small-scale website will typically need a home, about and contact us pages.
- Do you want to add a blog, an online form, or a booking system?
- Will you want to integrate your social media accounts?
- Do you have existing video and audio you want to use?
- Are you going to be selling your products on the website?
- Do you have any special requirements that are not available off the shelf?

6. LOOK AND FEEL

Once the content is decided upon, then you will want to consider how the website will look. You might have a logo, that will need to appear. You may have a set of brand colours that you want to be used. If you are stuck for images or illustrations, then they can be purchased, or you can check out free stock libraries to source some interesting copyright free images, for example, 'Pexels', 'Pixabay' or 'Unsplash'. It is important to lay the content out in a clear and concise fashion but also make the site appealing. If you have your own photography, great, just make sure the files are at a high enough quality to be used.

7. ALL DONE, NOT QUITE

When you are happy with the website, think about whether you want to add analytical tools to track who is visiting and what pages they are staying the longest on, Google Analytics is the most used for this. Once the site is live you will then need to make time to add new content regularly. Make sure your links are still working and keep the website up to date. Scheduling in some time each month to do this as it is especially important, if your site is not working correctly, you could lose business. It is also important to so that the site doesn't drift down the rankings in Google.

**CONTACT ME TO FIND
OUT HOW I CAN HELP...**



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