

# ***What makes a Good Business Website?***

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## ***Your Online Presence***

The very first two things to understand when one builds or has a business website built is that the website is not about *YOU*, and that you need to learn how to 'advertise your advertising'!

A website is the shopfront on the internet to your business. The idea of a website is to drive potential future customers and past visitors to learn about *your business* and see *what your business has to offer THEM!* An age-old marketing term applies that you need to *solve their problem!*

A good quality website needs to be bright, attractive, very well planned and laid out; it must be very easy for every visitor whether *old* or *new* to *read* and to *navigate*.

A website needs to not only attract visitors but it needs to *hold their attention* and drive them to visit other pages on the site and work for that business owner 24 hours a day 7 days a week! However, unlike newspaper advertising the business needs to promote it; you cannot rely solely on people finding it via www searches.

It needs to give them what they want to see and that is information, an answer to their problem or their search for a product.

## ***Searchers Want Information Fast***

When your potential visitors go to the internet to complete a search for a *product* or *service* they are not spending their time looking to be entertained! They are going to the internet to seek out *INFORMATION* and they want it *FAST*.

If your website opens too slow or the general information is not displayed quickly and it is not easy to find; for example if you make the visitor *work* by making them scroll down or click a button before he sees anything he likes or is interested in, they just leave and go to another website.

If they have to try to figure out what it is you are selling and that information is not in front of them in seconds, or they cannot find your contact details, like a phone number, again they are just going to go to the next web page in the search list.

A well planned and set out website will have all the information the visitor needs to see the second they open the website, it will present and tell the story about your business immediately!

## ***Advertising Your Advertising and the Dreaded Search Engine***

While a search engine like *Google* can make or break an online business, most businesses still need to promote their business in a variety of ways, while still using their website to introduce themselves to potential clients.

Nevertheless, for this paper we will stick with some basics of how we can attract the Search Engines and promote your business on the World Wide Web.

We mentioned that a website is not about *you*; a website is about:-

- THE VISITORS
- THE SEARCH ENGINES
- THE BUSINESS

A website must be built to attract the *visitors* by selling the *business* (information) but it also needs to attract the *search engines*. If the search engines cannot find your website it may be a total waste of time unless other forms of promotion are heavily invested in.

A good business website will have a balanced combination of usability, visuals (images), conversion (good quality content and *lots* of it) and *Search Engine Optimisation* [SEO] techniques, most of which are part of a good website anyway with no need for expensive, tricky manoeuvres which Google frowns upon anyway.

***Let us look at a few of these features that create a balanced and attractive website to both visitors and search engines.***

### ***Well Planned and Clean Website Design and Layout***

One of the most important elements of a well-designed business website is to have a clean, crisp and uncluttered layout. This type of open uncluttered design immediately improves the business credibility and makes it very easy for the visitors to find what they are looking for.

If there is additional advertising it needs to be kept out of the way of the information you really want the visitor to see. We generally keep advertising off important pages like the *contact page* and *main product* pages, though this is not imperative.

### ***Sensible Navigation***

Your navigation structure should be very visible and must group together similar topics, services or products, and more importantly make logical sense. Using a drop-down menu displaying the topics and pages allows the visitors to select from more of the pages or topics that a website offers.

## ***Contact Details***

It is vital that the *Business Phone Number* and optional *Contact Details* need to be placed on every page a number of times.

The contact business phone number will be placed more than once on every page; the idea is to give all the visitors the opportunity to contact the business! A common spot to put the business phone numbers is in the top right-hand corner in the website banner and in one or two other places down each page, remembering visitor's will scroll down, we do not want them to work or search for the contact phone numbers to the business.

The business email address and street address should also be prominent.

## ***Google Maps***

If your business is a shop front, set up in an industrial area or a little hard to find placing a *Google Map* with additional directions on the site is an advantage. *Google Maps* will also help in SEO of your website.

Once a visitor has found your website and like what they see, they may wish to visit the business premises. Make it easy for those potential customers to find the business. While it is essential to allow the visitors to navigate the website the same is true when search for a business address.

It is essential to supply the guess and visitors with a variety of ways to contact you. Remember is not about you it is about *them* so *let them choose* how they want to engage with you.

## ***Calls to Action***

A call to action is to help drive the visitors to do something and do it right away.

*Statements like:-*

- Book an appointment! Do it today! Call Now!
- This special ends soon!
- Our people are ready to talk!
- We can have a represented at your door today!
- Book a table! Place an Order!
- Download a menu / voucher / product catalogue
- Sign up to mailing list
- Tell them what your business can do for them! Do not make it hard for them to make up their mind!

Each page on the website should have a very clear call to action that is easily accessible through a variety of ways. Always make it *easy* for the visitors and future customers. Make every statement clear and keep it logical using language your customers can relate to.

## ***Trust and Credibility Symbols and Media***

Awards, copies of industry icons or symbols as a member, letters of recommendation and club or association memberships related to the business are all good options for visitor recognition of your credentials. Especially helpful for SEO are links to those associations websites and even more so if you can have links on their website to yours.

Has the business ever featured in a local newspaper or other news or media website? Any media coverage of your business is creditable, and it may be worthwhile asking your local free newspaper to place an editorial in their paper about your business promoting you website. This is just one way in which you can 'advertise your advertising'.

Display these logos and credibility symbols prominently on your website to show that you are good at what you do!

## ***Fast Loading Websites***

How long it takes for the website to open once a visitor clicks on the site from the search browser is very important, as a website must open *quickly*. When a website takes longer than a few seconds to open it will cost you visitors.

People searching online are looking for information and they want it *now* and if the site takes too long to open the visitors just leave!

A fast loading website is extremely important for usability and large images on the home page or clever graphics, although they may be somewhat impressive when they open will slow your website down. Besides the fact that taking so long to open will greatly diminish the 'impressiveness' of the picture or graphic most searchers will not be impressed anyway if it distracts them from what they want; information about your products and services and how to contact you.

At *AML Websites* and *Stacpoole Internet* we use a basic html text code compiler to build our clients websites, we do not ask a programme [like *Word Press* or *Dupla*] to build it for us. This means a whole lot less code [generally only about 25%] in the file that the browser has to read to open and display your website, adding to the effectiveness of the websites *SEO* and to its opening more quickly than programme built websites.

## ***Social Links and AML-AM***

Social pages like *Google Plus* and *Facebook* give others the option to interact with your business. With *AML-AM* you have the option to have an additional web page plus multiple advertisements and thus extra relevant links to your website. These may not attract that many visitors but because *Australia My Land* and its associate websites are well listed on searches these links are major *supplementary SEO* factors pushing your website higher in search lists.

## ***Website Pages***

*The basic pages any good business website should have are:-*

- Home Page
- Services/Products: a one page overview then one for each
- Gallery: show plenty of photos of your products or team in action providing your services
- Frequently Asked Questions [faqs]: content can be reiterated; we find this page second most found page by Google when there is good content
- Testimonials: yes - online searchers want to see you are genuine
- About Us: people want to see *who* they are dealing with
- Contact: give them different options to contact you easily
- Location: important where there is a shopfront or service  
*note: do not place home addresses online for family security*
- Site Map: a must for the sake of *Search Engines*; it is the first page they look for to see what content is on your website. By the way a html site map is fine.

## ***The Contact Page***

*Described or displayed on the contact page you will have:-*

- Office or Shop Address: including open times or business hours
- Phone numbers: may be office and mobile numbers
- Office Fax (not so common these days)
- Email - Essential
- A Google Map with directions
- Additional driving directions where necessary
- Links to social media profiles; these will also be placed on every page on the website
- Any other important piece of contact information

## ***Multiple Locations***

When a business has a number of locations, a web page needs to be created for each location a custom landing pages for each of address or state would be required.

## ***About Us Page***

Though we say the website is not about *you*, there still needs to be an *introduction* of you and your team, something to give visitors a feeling that they can get to know you and that they are dealing with *real people*.

*The About Us page therefore tells a story about:-*

- Yourself: tell a story
- The Business: an overview of identity and history including years in business and the development of it
- The Staff: who is on the team
- Business Achievements: Awards and Projects
- Place of Business: why your regional presence is helpful to your potential clients
- Images: yes - pictures of yourself and staff [you are *not* ugly!!]
- Links: internal links to other pages on the site relevant to the description line

*Other About Us Pages:*

- Disclaimers Page
- Terms and Conditions

### ***Testimonials Page***

Testimonials are very important. Not only do they tell the visitors that you are a credible business but they also assist with the search engine searches (SEO). All testimonials will have some *keywords* and *key word phrases* that relate to your business and the search engine look for these phases and that helps drive the website forward in the search lists.

Testimonials also assist to show that you are a genuine service and business and as there are big fines for false testimonials [it is policed by the way] testimonials by real people are important.

*Just as a note if someone makes a comment to you about your service you can ask if you can write that down as a testimonial and then after confirming with them their comments you can use that. You do not have to **make them** write something, as long as they have first said it to you [do not put words in their mouth] and they confirm what you wrote was what they [generally] said and they can confirm that to a board of enquiry if need be.*

Also include links to your business profiles on review websites such as *AML-AM*, Google Plus, Facebook or others and also encourage your visitors and customers to leave reviews on these sites.

### ***Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ'S) Page***

Like the testimonials page the FAQ'S page assist with the search engine searches (SEO). Content from other pages can be reiterated on this page in the form of answers to questions.

Thus all FAQ questions will contain *keywords* and *key word phrases* that relate to your business and the search engines look for these phases and that helps drive the website forward in the search lists.

As mentioned we have found this page as the second most found page by Google (behind the home page) when there is good content on it.

A list of 10 to 30 questions and answers is a good guide.

### ***Products and Services Pages***

These are pages that describe the products and or services the website is promoting. There should be a one page overview then one page for each product or service offered by the business. The first overview page will often be the first found by Google as it has more variable content on it as far as they see it.

Every product and service will need to have its own page and each page will be linked to the other product and services pages.

Each product and service pages will have a full description of the product and service offered with images and where required links to other pages

Each page will have substantial content describing the product or service and these pages are great for linking to external websites with relevant products or services but which are not your competitors.

### ***Gallery Page***

The gallery page will show images with jobs in progress or completed.

Each image will have an *alternative* <alt> and *title* <title> tag describing the images which additionally will be seen by *Google* as content and thus help *SEO*.

The gallery is an important page because it shows the visitor real images of who you are and what you supply.

There are a number of different galleries that *AML Websites* offers so please contact us if you would like to try something different from your *Photo Gallery* and we can show you samples of our clients' galleries or try something new.

### ***Site Map Page***

The *Site Map* is not just a list of pages for the sake of visitors but more importantly it is for search engine robots to find all your pages easily.

A html site map is fine despite the 'warnings' from so-called experts using online analyst programmes telling you your website does not have a site map. The reason they say that is that these procedures are programmed to look for the *XML* type sitemaps that *Word Press* and other website building programmes generate. We do not use those programmes therefore we use a more search engine friendly *html* sitemap.

Having a number of pages on your website with good quality images and content will attract the search engines and changing or adding new content on a regular basis will keep the Search engine spiders interest in your website.

## ***Responsive Website Design for Mobile Users - Mobile App***

It is imperative that a *mobile app* or *mobile responsive website* be developed in conjunction with all new websites [and to upgrade older sites] as it is now a search engine requirement. *Google* has stated that you must go with a *mobile friendly* approach for mobile and tablet devices or your website may be penalised.

Today mobile devices are used more commonly not only in Australia but all over the world. Therefore, it is essential that any newly developed website or older website be mobile friendly. More and more future visitors to a business website will come from mobile devices and we must cater for this as *Google* has.

We have found a custom-developed *Mobile App* by our associate *Professor Ary Pitoyo [JustuKlix]* from the *University of Yogyakarta* to be the most visitor friendly business mobile version website for our clients.

This *Mobile App* has easy to follow links not only to website pages but especially to *phone* or *email* the business right at the top of the home page. The mobile app ensures that the website is easily read no matter what the technology the visitor is using. We can build in *Responsive Web Design [RWD]* if requested however this is more expensive, almost double the price, and in our opinion not as effective as the *JustuKlix Mobile App*.

## ***Getting Great Results***

If you need better results from your website simply talk to us about how we may be able to assist you. The results we have gained for our clients with increasing success over the past 11 years has given us confidence in what we do despite the many challenging and continuing changes in the industry and the sometimes frantic efforts for us to keep up.

As web builders who have been in the marketing arena for over 40 years each we find that there is still a lot of genuine negativity towards getting a website. And to be blunt the offers of FREE websites, that eventually the business owner often has little 'ownership' of, is just one of the many 'scary movies' that continues to put busy people who have enough work for now off worrying about a website of their own.

What people who are busy now without a website do not realise is that their scene is changing and the NEXT time they are short of work, as the cycle always happens, they will find it almost impossible to get back to being busy again. It is when you are busy that you need to be prepared for when you are not, otherwise in the time you lose playing 'catch-up', you go broke!

The other issue is that most web builders and developers know little about **MARKETING**, which is the reason for the website in the first place. It appears to be more about "see how good a web builder I am" rather than selling the services and product of the business who employs them, and usually they still charge way too much.

Then there are the amateurs who know little about either or both web building or marketing!

So it is difficult for a business to trust someone with their information and dollars to get online. I continue to hear stories of businesses being charged in excess of \$500 a month for 'hosting and promotion' that amounts to worth less than \$20, no wonder owners are confused as they simply do not understand why they are paying so much but are told they "HAVE to".

We just have to be able to continually assist our clients and educate them as best we can! A good web developer will educate his clients about what he/she is doing for their business by means of their website, not just look clever!

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## ***Summary***

A business website needs to have plenty of good quality content and a number of pages allowing the website to be found in a number of searches in order to be effective. *Search Engines* list web *pages* and where multiple pages are listed under a single search on page one [something we have regularly achieved] our clients are able to compete in the marketplace. Of course the competition and how much money they throw at their websites can have an effect on our results but we are holding our own in nearly all cases.

***Consider the primary purpose that your website serves in the decision-making process of your desired customers***

**They are visiting your website to:-**

- look for your type of product or service
- find your phone number
- look for your physical address
- buy a product or service
- book an appointment
- looking for your opening times
- compare your website to other websites offering the same service or product
- download a brochure or similar document

The idea is to make it as easy as possible for the visitors (future customers) that are finding your website to navigate the website. The site needs to be interesting, informative and colourful, have calls to action and make the visitor look for more!

Make it easy for your customers to do all of these things and you will have a great website gaining better results.

Remember a website is about the:-

- **THE VISITORS**
- **THE SEARCH ENGINES**
- **THE BUSINESS**

A website must be built to attract the visitors, sell the business idea and attract the search engines. A good business website will have a balanced combination of usability, visuals (images), conversion (good quality content and lots of it) and *Search Engine Optimisation* [SEO] processes.