

TOP10 - Things to do BEFORE you build a website...

Keyword Research

If your idea is a new one or there aren't many people doing it then this is vital. No point trying to optimise your website for a search term no one is looking for. This is how we do it;

- i. Find three websites similar to the one you want to build and which sell or offer the same services as you in your area. These sites will also be on the first page of Google.
- ii. Use Google Keyword Suggestion Tool and scan each of these three URLs (web addresses) to find out which words Google suggests.
- iii. We download all these phrases, strip out the duplicates and then forward to the client and ask them to indicate which ones aren't appropriate. We then use Wordtracker to discover more information about each phrase. How many times a month it is being searched for and how many competing websites there are.

Domain Names

Choose a domain name which is also a popular search term. If a certain phrase stands out from the keyword research (Lots of searches and not much competition) we choose that and register the .co.uk and .com as domain names. For example Sports Prescription Glasses and Carp Baits Online we also use this handy website www.start.biz which is free to check if the domain is available and more importantly if there are any existing trademarks on the phrase/name.

Content

Write your text based around your keyword report. The most important page of your website will be the home page as it will be visited most by search engines, so choose three general search terms from your keyword report which best describe your business, and write your text around these (around 250 words). For your other pages repeat the process but choose more specific search terms or whatever the page is about. Or if budget isn't an issue use a copywriter to do this for you it will be money well spent.

Hosting

Choose fast web hosting with web statistics. Google has finally admitted that the time a website takes to load has an affect on how it is positioned within the search engine results. Also if you go for choose slow hosting it will annoy your website visitors. Quality hosting will also give you access to web statistics which will tell you what people are typing in search engines to find your website.

Images

Use the best photographs/images available. If you are selling products then make sure they look good. A photograph taken by yourself is better than nothing at all. But if you have the budget use a professional photographer, you can always use royalty free stock images we use Istock or if you are selling a particular brand there will probably be good photographs you can get from the manufacturer.

Market

Design your site to appeal to your market. If your site is to appeal mainly to women then make sure the site is in pale colours. For men it's generally the opposite - black and reds, blue and yellows. If your market is to both sexes then something in between. Sounds obvious but if it is a fun product then lots of photos and an illustrative style will work best. If you are a firm of solicitors then you will need a more professional look. Once you have your design - show it around to as many people as possible which are similar to your target audience and invite feedback. Don't make any assumptions about what people will do or think you maybe surprised. We work on the rule that an eight year old should be able to find what they want quickly.

Reason to Contact

Have a reason for people to contact you. Don't expect that because people have found your website they will automatically ring or fill in your contact form. You need to give them a reason to get in touch straight away, preferably on every page. So for example if you are selling products you could have a banner which says register for money off vouchers or if you are a marketing company - register here for free marketing tips.

Reason to Call Back

Have reasons for people to re-visit your website. If you email your new customers with a newsletter, point them in direction of new products or services, offers, free information, etc. the more reasons the better.

What type of site?

Static site - A web designer will build this for you and to alter it you will need to ask them to imake changes.

CMS (Content Management System) - A site which allows you to add new pages, text, images, meta data, add video, etc. eCommerce - Built with selling products in mind. We use Zen Cart

Web Application - Something unique to your business and built specifically for you. Before going down this route have a look round to see if software exists to do what you want. If you do go this route make sure you have in black and white what you expect from your web developer.

What are you expecting?

What are your expectations? Who will manage the site? If you choose an eCommerce site - how much do you expect to sell and are those expectations realistic? Who within your company will update the site and have you allowed time for them to do this? If you are in a really competitive market then it is likely you will need to invest heavily in Search Engine Optimisation to get the site ranking well.

If your product or service is really specific and for a particular location then a well built site with the correct meta data will probably rank well within a few weeks.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10