

A lush green forest scene featuring a small waterfall cascading over mossy rocks into a stream. A wooden bench is visible on the left side of the image, nestled among the trees. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees and vibrant green foliage, creating a serene and natural atmosphere.

# CREATING WEBSITES

Build your brand with your website: Our Guide to making it happen

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## Introduction

Your website is your shop-window to the world, it's often the first contact potential customers have with your business.

So, you need your website to be something you are proud to show people, that reflects your business and your ethos. You want a website that appeals to the type of customer you want to work with, one that make your life and your customers life easier. But for many businesses, creating a new website is a painful and expensive chore.

You enter a world of jargon you don't understand, conflicting advice, different pricing structures, over promising and under delivering, lack of proactive advice and worst of all, websites that don't sell your services or work as you intended.

That doesn't have to be the way! With some thought, planning and knowing the right questions to ask, building an amazing website can be within your grasp. A website that has eye catching design, that understands your customers and how they



intuitively want to use the website, and of course, a website that technically works the way it's supposed to.

## Here are some of the most common problems businesses have with their website: Which of these apply to you?

- Your website is outdated and doesn't reflect your brand effectively
- You do not get the sales or enquiries you want from your website
- Your website is hard for you to maintain or simply doesn't work
- The website doesn't integrate with your other systems
- You lose customers to competitors because your website isn't mobile responsive
- Your current web company doesn't communicate with you
- Your website isn't secure and gets hacked
- Your website doesn't get enough targeted visitors
- You haven't got a website

In this workbook we will layout the steps you need to consider when planning your website. By sharing our experience and giving you an Action Plan that will address the common issues, can make building your website faster and easier, giving you greater end results; enabling you to make your business the success you want it to be!



## Strategy and Purpose

"The fight is won or lost far away from the witnesses, behind the lines, in the gym and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights." Muhammad Ali's famous quote about the importance of preparation applies as much to websites as to boxing, although thankfully with less physical exertion or pain.

Taking time to plan and prepare, before you start on creating a wonderful design will pay you back tenfold and more.

The first thing that you should think about when building your website is the strategy you will take and that depends on what you want your website to achieve. Take a moment to think what you want your website to do for you. It may be one or more of the following:

- ◆ Generate Sales Leads
- ◆ Sell via eCommerce
- ◆ Generate Bookings
- ◆ Display your Catalogue Online
- ◆ Direct people to your premises
- ◆ Community Interest
- ◆ Promote Events
- ◆ Provide Statutory Information
- ◆ Point of Contact
- ◆ Recruitment
- ◆ Other...



You may need to dig a little deeper, especially if you are selling online or have multiple objectives.

For example, will eCommerce need to integrate with your accounts package or stock control, or both? How will it interact with your business processes or what process adjustments will you need to make?

Charities often want to reach people who benefit from their service, but also referrers, legacy funders, corporate donors, recruiting staff and volunteers, in addition to providing statutory information. Think through all the things you want your website to do and all the audiences you want to reach.

Once you have established what you want your website to do, then it's much easier to create a website that achieves the goals. This might sound obvious, but you would be surprised how many websites fail because the organisation isn't clear what the key objectives are.



**People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan!**

## Your Values, Vision and Unique Selling Point

Next, its best to understand your business and what you are offering. Then you can look to attract customers who best align with you and your values.

### Values

To identify your Values, think of three words that capture the essence of your business ethos, e.g.

Boldness. Trust. Accountable. Commitment to Customers. Passion. Fun. Loyalty. Spirituality. Humility. Compassion. Honesty. Integrity. Selflessness. Dynamic. Authentic. Progressive

This exercise should take a while and be discussed with your leadership team if you have one. Stay away from meaningless platitudes, if “Professional” or “Service” appear on the list, drill down further to understand what that means to you and your customers.

### Your Values

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Write a line or two about what each word means to you and your team

## Vision Statement

Vision statements describe your company's "why," as opposed to a mission statement which describes the "who" and "what" of your business. They are essential because they reveal a common goal and direction for your team. Craft a compelling vision statement by infusing it with passion, making it inspiring and aligning it with your business's values and goals.

A vision statement should be concise – no longer than a sentence or two. You want your entire organisation to be able to know it and more importantly, understand it.

## Your Vision Statement

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## Unique Selling Point

With your Values and Vision clear, add your product or service into the mix to discover your Unique Selling Point (USP.) What sets you apart from the competition and why will people buy from you?

Put yourself in your customer's shoes. All too often, entrepreneurs fall in love with their product or service and forget that it is the customer's needs, not their own, that they must satisfy.



Step back from your daily operations and scrutinize what your customers really want. Suppose you own a coffee shop. Sure, customers come in for coffee and cake. But is that all they want? What could make them come back again and again and ignore your competition? The answer might be quality, convenience, the décor, the vibe, location, reliability, friendliness, cleanliness, courtesy, or customer service.

Remember, price is never the only reason people buy. If your competition is beating you on pricing because they are larger, you must find another sales feature that addresses the customer's needs and then build your sales and marketing around that feature. Don't try to compete with Amazon on speed of delivery, look to find a niche where you can beat them, such as expert advice or personal service.

If you aren't sure what your USP is, then you can ask your best customers why they buy from you. And don't get discouraged if your USP is not 100% unique, as long as it marks you out from the herd.



## Your Unique Selling Point

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## Target Market

Once you have your Values, Vision and Unique Selling Point, you can start thinking about your target market and who your ideal customer is. The more niche you can make your website the better it will perform.

Spend some time thinking about your ideal customer, who will align with your vision and share your values? Creating ‘Buyer Personas’ is a good strategy. Sometimes called Ideal Customer Profiles (ICPs.) Begin by building up a profile of your perfect customer. This step should take some thought and ideally detailed research. The more detail about their profile, interests and motivations you understand, the more likely you can build a website that engages and converts them.



Consider the following and add in other criteria to suit your organisation to identify your ideal customer profile:

- Age
- Sex
- Domestic or Business Customer
- Geography
- Education
- Job Title
- Primary Buying Reason
- Secondary Buying Reason
- What social media do they use?
- What are the pains they are experiencing?
- What are the symptoms of that pain?
- What tone of language will appeal to them?
- Length of Sales Cycle
- What is their Budget

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2. ....  
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When you have got as much detail as possible, give the ideal customer a name, get inside their head and think what information they will want to buy from you.



You might identify two or more ideal customers and that's fine. Create additional personas and ensure the website directs them down different customer journeys, with different sections for different customer types.

If your answer is "But I want EVERYONE to buy from me," go back and try again. If you try to appeal to everyone, you end up appealing to no-one. Yes, everyone CAN buy from you but who is most LIKELY to buy from you and who do you MOST want to sell to.



Remember if you attract the wrong customers, they take up your time, cause you problems and lose you money. And they refer their friends, who will do the same!

Keep in mind that whilst customers are likely to be your primary audience, you may have other groups you want to appeal to. Recruitment is a lot easier if your website appeals to potential team members, you may want a referral network, internal or external stakeholders or funders may need to be considered. It's important the website caters to all the target markets, not just creating sales. This will need to be factored in.



## Outline Specification

Now you have a clear understanding of your service and your ideal customers, think about what you want the website to do. What information will customers want and what does it need to do to make your life easier and your business run more efficiently?

- Is it going to be information only?
- How will people contact you?
- Do you want them to visit your premises?
- Will you sell online?
- Do you want to take bookings?
- Will you provide an online Quote?
- Does the website need to integrate with Sage, Xero or Stock Control System?
- How many Sections, Sub Sections, Products and Pages will you need?

You can pin down the exact specification with your chosen agency but the more thought you put in upfront, the more successful the project will be. It will also help you in the next stage of choosing your agency, because you need to know they can handle your project.



## Budgeting

When you start discussions with an agency, you won't get far before they ask about your budget. You will reply by saying you don't know! This is because either you really don't know or more likely because you don't want them to price to your budget.

This strategy is completely understandable but does not help either the agency or you. Can you imagine going to an Estate Agent...

You : I want to buy a house

Agent: What's your budget?

You: I'm not telling you

Agent: How do I know what sort of houses to show you!

You get the idea. Having an idea of a realistic budget is essential, you may not know exactly what it might cost but have a ballpark idea. Share the figure with your agency, you have your ideal customers and they will – or should – have theirs. If you aren't the right fit for each other, its best to get that uncovered early on.

Being realistic is important, you would be amazed how often I've heard people say they want to compete with Amazon or eBay, then give a budget of a few hundred pounds. You think I'm joking but I'm not!

Be open about the budget and be sensible. If two agencies quote you £8,000-10,000 and a third quotes £2,000 that should ring alarm bells. Or vice versa. Have they understood your specification, can they really deliver?

There are several factors that can affect the price, not least the brand positioning of the agency.

Will it be a bespoke design or a template? A bespoke design will obviously cost more and takes time to design and build but a template will be cheaper and quicker. Do beware though, many templates included lots of extra code that are not really needed, and this can slow the website down badly.

Some agencies reduce costs by allowing for only one design and limited design revisions, this keeps the price down, but you need to be aware you might not be 100% satisfied with the result.

Functionality is one of the two biggest drivers of cost increases. Adding eCommerce, booking systems, integrations, etc will all make the price jump from a “static brochure” style website. Think carefully what functionality you need and plan what may be required in phase two or three. Having an open discussion with your agency is best.

What you think is complex, might be straightforward, especially if you can get a plugin on Open-Source software, such as WordPress (see the next section for more on this). Vice versa, a phrase all web designers dread is a client saying, “Surely it only takes 5 minutes!” we just know this is going to be complex and expensive.



The other big cost driver is content insertion, putting a single page of content into the site is one thing, doing 10 pages is fine. If the website has hundreds of pages of content, each of which need laying out, this can hike the cost of the website up enormously. One solution to keep costs down might be for your agency to put in say 20 pages then train one of your team to add the rest. \*

The more you can be clear on your strategy, aims and budget, the better you will be able to match yourself with the right agency.



\*Note from the Search Engine Optimisation team. If you think a solution is to cull loads of content that is on your existing website, then do be prepared for a massive drop in Google rankings. They don't like content being removed. There are ways around this, especially if the content is out of date or no longer needed but please do take advice and handle with care!

## Choosing Your Agency

There is a lot to consider when choosing your agency. Do you like the style of their work, do you get on with their team, and most importantly, can they demonstrate they can get the results you need, within your budget?

An early question should be, “What will my website be built in?” Open-Source software, such as WordPress means you can add new features into your website by buying Plugins, such as Booking Systems, eCommerce, Diaries etc. The worldwide user-base is constantly developing and upgrading the software and its security. It also means that if you fall out with your website developer, you can easily find another to support you. Shopify is a great alternative for eCommerce.

If you have a proprietary software solution, it means you are tied to that developer and cannot move to another. Proprietary solutions may give you more flexibility, in that the developer can make the back-end process work exactly as you require but unless your budget is £100,000+ you may be better going the Open-Source route.



When choosing your agency, remember design is important and it needs to be right. But that is just one factor in a successful website. Many people will look to build their website with the design at the forefront of their mind and find a company who will build them a beautiful website, but then they don't get the results they hoped for because the customer journey is confusing, or they find themselves ranking lower on the search engines and getting less business as a result.

It cannot be stressed enough that finding a developer who will take User eXperience (UX) and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) into account, as well as design and functionality, when building a website is of utmost importance.

You also need to know where the website will be hosted – more detail on this in the hosting section. Server speed and capacity will have a major impact on the speed of your website, which affects Google rankings and useability. Make sure you know who is responsible for the hosting and what support is provided.





## Questions to ask

- Can you see examples of work like your requirement?
- Do they talk about Customer Journey or User Experience?
- Will they do a Competitor Analysis and highlight areas you can outperform?
- What software is the website built in?
- How long have they been trading?
- Will they provide a Project Manager?
- Is the price fixed in advance or on an hourly rate?
- What are the payment terms?
- What happens if you don't like the design they do?
- Can you update the website yourself?
- If so, is training for your team included?
- Can they provide or recommend professional photography, copyrighting or video?
- Is there a support team if the lead developer is away?
- Is GDPR taken into consideration?
- Can they offer hosting, security and technical support?
- Can they support you with SEO and other Digital Marketing?

Ask lots of questions and check they are the right fit for you. As a general rule, I'd recommend choosing an agency that is big enough to cope with your project but small enough that you will be an important client.

You need to know they aren't taking a massive punt that they can deliver your enormous project, which they are not equipped for. Equally don't be the filler project that they squeeze in between their important clients.

## Agreeing the Specification

When you approached the agency, you had your outline specification of what you want the website to do, e.g. is it eCommerce or information? How many sections etc. Now it's time to work with your agency to agree a detailed specification.

The more detailed the specification, the less room there is for error or disagreement later. If the project is complex, you may want to consider paying for a specification. This is when you engage the agency to create a specification document, detailing exactly what will go into your project. It sounds weird, as you probably expect this to be done for free, but sometimes it's in your best interests to pay for this stage separately.

The advantage for you is that your agency will then know upfront what the detail is and can then get a proposal on the exact specification, this will reduce the requirement to build in contingency budgets, thus saving you considerable sums. This really is only recommended for bigger projects, say over £25,000. Below that the contingency will be less than the specification document.

The specification is to protect both you and the agency. It ensures you get what was paid for and it keeps the project on track. You may hear your developer refer to "Mission Creep". This is where the client has 100 products in the specification but that pushes to 200 later in the build process. Or the client says, "Can I just add another few pages and some more functionality."

It's the nature of development projects that new ideas come along during the process, but these can seriously slow down the core project, if you are not careful. It can also inflate the cost beyond your initial budget. Plan as much as you can and if you think you need to change the specification once the project is underway, have an open conversation with your agency, they may have ideas how you can better achieve your revised goals.

## A guide to building a website that works for you

Don't be shy in asking questions until you get the specification correct and agreed. Ensuring you will get a website that meets your requirements in full is essential.

Once the specification is agreed and you have signed the proposal, it's time to get started on the first steps of the website.





## Creating your website

### The User Experience

Now you may think the next step is the design of the website, colours, images etc. But hold on, before we get to that we need to think about the user's experience through your website. What information will they need and what do you want them to do next?

The starting point is to work with your agency to create a Site Map, they should be able to offer valuable advice about what works best in your industry. What pages will the website have and how will those pages interact with each other? The Site Map determines the Navigation and therefore the User's Journey through the website.

The jargon for this part of the process is the User eXperience, or UX. It's also called The Customer Journey. Please bear in mind, you may have more than one user group, e.g. If you are a charity, you want to include pathways for clients,



client referrers, volunteers, corporate funders, and employees. A recruitment site will want separate paths for Employers and Job Seekers.

How will your products or services sub-divide? E.g. Kitchens or Bathroom, Home or Garden, Men's Shoes or Ladies Shoes, Motor Boats or Yachts, Domestic or Commercial.

## What are the pages and/or sections you want on your website?

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You might need to use sub-sections if you have a wide range of Products or Services. Take the time to map out how customers will find what they need.

Next, get your agency to Wireframe the key pages, typically the Home, Section Header and Product Pages. Block out the layout of the website, so everyone knows the format. This ensures that when you pass the structure over to the Designers, they make your planned Customer Journey look wonderful, instead of creating a visual masterpiece that visitors can't use!

The navigation should be clear and intuitive. Don't try to be clever, put things where people expect it to be: Home on the left – Contact on the right. If you want telephone calls, put your number prominent in the top right, where people expect it to be.



You can support the navigation by using Sign Posting on the homepage, to direct visitors where they want to go. This is where you send customers directly to the additional information or products they want. Alternatively, you can direct your different Buying Personas down the relevant paths. This is often best done with a picture or icon, and one descriptive line of text.

### **Is there an immediate Call to Action? Hint: there should be!**

- Book Now!
- Start Now!
- Reserve Your Place!
- Shop Now!
- Get a Quote!

If you don't know what you want them to do next, how is your visitor supposed to know? Understanding how people are making buying decisions will drive the layout of your website and improve its effectiveness.



## Designing The Website

Now comes the exciting bit, where you pass everything over to the designer. If you have given them a good briefing on your Values, USP, brand, logos and colours and your ideal customer it's much easier for your designer to design a website that appeals to your target customer. Colours, fonts, and logos can have a huge impact on your website, so discuss this carefully with your designer.

Remember, when visitors first arrive at your website, they don't know you and your logo means nothing to them. Focus on the customer, their problems, and motivations. Research shows you have 2.6 seconds to demonstrate you understand their problem or desire and that you can offer the solution. Only then will they stay on your website.

Ensure that the designer understands that "Form Follows Function". That means making sure that they stick to the brief of the wireframe. It's not unknown for designers to "interpret" the wireframe in a way that makes the website look lovely but misses or hides important functionality. Removing a "Buy Now" button might make the site look pretty but it won't sell widgets!



A classic example of the battle between design and UX is that designers love the “hamburger” menus, that is the three-line dropdown you get on a mobile website, then they bring it to the desktop version. It is minimalist, it doesn’t distract from the wonderful imagery they have created.



However, from the UX viewpoint, Users can’t find the information they want and buy from your competitors, but the design looks great!

Balancing Design vs Customer Journey is vital, if you want to get customers, as well as being featured highly on your web designers’ portfolio!

When the design comes through, remember to look at it from a customer perspective, not your own. It’s a good idea to get the opinion of other key team members but don’t design by committee. You will end up taking ages and get a final design that is bland, characterless and appeals to no-one!

Be open to ideas and the designer’s expertise but don’t be shy about asking for clarification or saying if you don’t think something works. You need to be proud of your website and working in collaboration will get the best result. Good designers will be open to honest feedback.

## Gathering Your Content

This is without doubt the biggest problem for most websites. Every website that is delayed stumbles at the Content stage. Gather a group of web developers together and I guarantee that within 10 minutes they will be discussing the problem of getting content from clients.

Plan your content early and be realistic about what you can do. You may have a good camera on your iPhone, but professional photography will generate more sales. Can you shortcut the process by getting great images from your suppliers? Will stock images work or will they fail to separate you from your competition?



Have you got the time and experience to write pages of compelling copy, or should you hire an expert? Will video enhance your website and how will it be created?

The more thought you put into what content your customers will want to see before buying from you, the smoother the website build will go and the more effective it will be in delivering your strategy.

Think about the imagery you will use and the headline. Remember you have only a few seconds to grab their attention and persuade them to read on.

Ensure that your image or images, the Headline and the Strapline, will appeal to your Buyer Persona. This stage is vital, get it wrong and 99% of visitors are gone in under 8 seconds!

The Headline and Strapline should instantly show visitors that you understand their problem and that you can provide the solution. Remember at this stage the website is all about them, not about you and your company.

Think about your headline and strapline. Think about your persona's key problem and motivation and match this with your Values and USP:

Headline

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Strapline

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Take time now to think about your content and where you will source it:

## What Text and Pictures do You Need?

- Top Banner
- Sign Posting Sections
- Sub Sections
- Products
- Services
- About Us
- Recruitment
- FAQs
- Contact



Remember that most good stories have a Hero and a Guide. The Customer should be the Hero in this story, and you are the Guide. They are Luke Skywalker, you are Yoda. They are Batman, you are Alfred the Butler. They are Starsky and Hutch, you are Huggy Bear (one for the older reader there!). They have the problem, and you should be the informed source providing the information to get them to the next place. Don't be the hero in someone else's story!

There will be a time to talk about you, and that's on the 'About Us' page, not on the 'Home Page' (unless you are a famous face!). But even then, it's about your customer, not really about you. It's about telling a story that will build trust, showing you are the trusted expert, letting them start a nurturing relationship that enables them to buy.

When you get to the About Us, show your team in uniform by the sign-written van, give them a picture of your premises, tell them your Management Team credentials. Show a personal face and build trust.

### Where will you source images?

- Professional Photographer
- Take them yourself
- Friend or team member who is a photography enthusiast
- Ask your Suppliers for pictures
- Stock Images from a paid Library like [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com) or [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)
- Stock Images from a free Library like [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com) or [www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com)

Remember that people buy based on emotion, so having pictures that appeal to your Personas on an emotional level will be important, especially in Banners, Section and Sub Section headers. If you are selling products then enlarged, zoom shots or different angles will improve conversions.

NB. If your plan is to “borrow” them from other websites, then be prepared to be hit by copyright notices and large fines. Content Libraries, such as Getty Images, track their images via hidden code, then demand payment for use in arrears, often running into thousands of pounds.

### Products, images, description

If you are listing products on your website, whether as a catalogue or for eCommerce, then you need to be planning your content even more carefully. You can spend a lot of time and money driving targeted to your website, only to lose the sale due to a blurred picture or an incomplete description.

Getting great images is key, talk to your supplier or hire an experienced product photographer.

When it comes to the descriptions, where possible, make them unique to your website. Stand out from the masses by bringing your passion, experience and expertise to the product description. Rather than just saying its an XYZ 25cm widget, state why it is a great widget, when it works best and any tips for fitting or maintaining it. Also highlight any issues to watch out for, or say when the XYZ 50cm widget might be a better investment.

As we've discussed, you won't compete on delivery times with Amazon, you don't want to compete on price if you can help it. So, use expertise as your secret weapon, and make those descriptions sell!

Typically, you will need a Product Title, a Short Description and a Long Description. You may need technical info and sizing too. Think about where this information is held and how it can be produced. If it's in your Stock Control or your accounts system, can it be accessed or better still, integrated.

### Shipping

You only need think about shipping if you are selling products, but if you are, it is critical. Most modern eCommerce software will give you no end of options, so it's a case of what works best for you. That said, there is still a lot to consider.

Are you UK only or Global? What about Highlands and Islands, will you ship there, and will it be extra? Next day, three day or standard. Will you offer Gift options? Is shipping included or will it be free on orders above £50, £75 or £100.



Getting your shipping right is important, especially if margins are tight. Get it wrong and you could actually lose money each time you make a sale. Don't over complicate it but do give it careful thought and set your prices accordingly.

## How will Video Help?

A video is an excellent way of explaining your business to your target market. In video, you can provide the audience with more of a feel for your brand and even provide demonstrations. By embedding your video into your website, you can provide easy access to visual information for your audience.

Video can also give you the opportunity to start building a personal relationship. People buy from people and video is a great way to start to get your personality across.

## What Video do You Need?

- Home Page Explainer Video
- Product demonstrations
- Service information
- Recruitment History and Objectives
- User Guides
- Other



## What type of Videos do you want?

- Corporate Promotional
- Individual speaking to camera (Talking Heads)
- Whiteboard animation
- Cartoon Animation
- Drone Images
- 360 Walk-throughs (Tours of your premises)



## Where will you source videos?

- Take them yourself
- Friend or team member who is a video enthusiast
- Ask your Suppliers for videos
- Professional Company
- Stock Images from a free Library like [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

## Written Copy

The way Google, Bing, or any other Search Engine rank your page is based on the information they discover, and their bots can't see pretty pictures, just text and code. Therefore, if you want good search engine rankings, you need keyword rich text on your website, especially the Home page, as this will determine where the website will rank on their results page.

Most people are visually dominant, and when creating their website, the visual effect is the only thing that matters. It's important it looks great, but your website should not be void of any text, for two reasons. Search Engines and Non-Visual Users.



You may be a highly visual person but not everyone is. Remember that different Personas need different levels of information to buy. You may be a Big Picture person and not want reams of written content, but if your customer is a detail person, who needs to fully understand before buying, you may lose sales if you don't give the minutiae they need.

Creating compelling copy is an art form, so consider bringing in a professional who can create the content for you. They will also help you by viewing your company with a fresh pair of eyes, looking as a prospective customer might. They will ensure that you avoid or at least explain, any industry jargon.

### What copy do you need?

- Home Page
- Section Descriptions
- Sub Section Descriptions
- Products
- Services
- About Us
- Recruitment
- FAQs
- Contact and Directions
- Other

### Where will you source copy?

- Write it yourself
- Team member
- Professional Copywriter



## Tips for your content:

1. Ensure what you're posting is truthful – you should certainly present yourself in the best possible manner, but it must be honest.
2. Your content should also be unique – originality is so important, especially from a search engine optimisation perspective to keep it ranking higher.
3. Make sure everything is up to date – posting regular content is essential to encourage a steady flow of traffic to your website and making sure everything you post is as current as possible will really help.
4. Collect all the information together in one place. Use a Dropbox [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com) account or similar to put all the files together, then you can share this with your colleagues and web developers.

## Calls to Action

It's often said that only 1% of people visiting your website are ready to buy. Most are gathering information, alas never to be seen again. So, it's vital you maximise the response from everyone you can, wherever they are in the buying process.

Those who are ready to buy need directing swiftly to the information they need to decide if you can help, or to Book, Buy or Contact you. Tell them what to do next, don't assume!

- Call Now for priority booking
- Reserve Your Place Today
- Buy Online
- Complete the Form



The more options you can provide people to buy, the better. Telephone, Email, Form, Online Purchase. Different people like to buy in different ways, so support them and let them buy how they want to.

The biggest increase in profitability you will generate from your website is not from the 1%. It's from the 99% who are interested enough in your product or service to visit your website but who are not ready to buy.

Starting a conversation with those 99%, who are your future customers, is where the uplift will come from. And to do that you need to get a bit creative. Asking them to subscribe to your newsletter is not going to work. When did you last sign up to a newsletter?

You are going to need to give them something of value that will prompt them to interact with you, something of value. And as they are browsing your website to get information, then further information is likely to be what's of interest to them.

- Download an eBook
- Order your free Sample – or low cost “taster” product
- Subscribe to your YouTube channel
- Early-Bird Discounts
- Attend your Webinar
- Schedule an online demonstration
- Book a Sales call
- Live Chat with your Helpline
- Get your Estimation Guide



## A guide to building a website that works for you

Taking the time to create the content you require here is going to take thought and effort, but it will be worth it. The more value you provide, the more you set yourself apart from your competition and reinforce the message that you are the trusted experts.

Calls to action must feature throughout your website to encourage your target audience to move along in your sales funnel. Considering this will help you to craft specific calls to action that can be placed strategically around your site.

What you then do with this information is for another time, but the follow up is the most important part of online marketing. Plan your responses, send them information, send them samples, provide them with value. Don't spam people with pointless newsletters. Create a trusting relationship and move them along your sales pipeline.



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## The Development Stage

Once you have approved your design and provided content, the developers must do their thing. This stage can be frustrating as you wait for the website to appear. It's a bit like building a house, the foundation takes ages, but then it suddenly pops into being.

The site will take shape and the content will get put in. You should agree regular catch-ups with the Project Manager, but don't be tempted to rush things or test functionality that hasn't been completed. Patience is a virtue, but ensure agreed deadlines are being kept. And yes, that does mean you providing any additional content that is needed, as well as the developers writing the code!

## Mobile Responsiveness

This should be taken as read these days, but your website must be mobile responsive. This means that your website must be able to work fluidly across all platforms, whether that be a desktop, tablet or smartphone. Plan with your developers how it will look and work on smartphones, then ensure you test it thoroughly before going live.

NB. Conversion rates for some websites have crashed since smartphones have become the primary viewing device. It's hard to fill out complex forms on a phone. The best way to get around this is to think what the device was first designed as... a telephone!

**Make sure your number is prominent and clickable.**

## Digital Marketing

The website should be progressing nicely, and you are into the final stages. Now it's time to think back to your strategy! For most that means getting more sales and/or enquiries, increasing engagement will be central for pretty much everyone.

That means thinking about your marketing, and you need to do two things before you go live. If you have a pre-existing website, you need to be looking at protecting your search rankings. Even if the website isn't great, Google will have ranked it and you need to think how best to carry those listings over. Much of a Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) transfer is technical, so you need to talk to your marketing team, to get redirects set up, meta data transferred over etc.

Whether you have an existing site or not, getting goal and conversion tracking set up, via Google Analytics, is vital. You need to know if the website is achieving your objectives or not, and if not, why?



Having a plan to market the website after launch is sensible, and you should be working with your digital marketing team on your strategy. Typically, SEO, paid search Ads on Google or Bing, Facebook/Instagram Ads, social media and Email Marketing make up the foundation of your campaign. You need to decide, which tools work for you. However, except for the two points above, they typically get implemented after launch.

## Testing and Launching

It's nearly time to pop the champagne cork, but keep the bottle on ice a while yet. The website looks ready to go, but better to check everything prior to launch, rather than wait for the complaints to come in. Your agency should be doing their Quality Control checks first – we have a 45-point list, covering from checking on multiple browsers and devices, testing payment gateways, through to removing the “no-robots text” which tells Google you are ready for them to look at the site.

Then it's time for you to give your approval before the site goes live. There *should* be no down time, but if you are doing eCommerce, it's recommended you suspend orders briefly, whilst the switchover happens.





Once the site is live, final Quality Control checks and at last you can get the bottle out of the ice bucket and let the cork fly!

## Hosting and Maintenance

This is the behind-the-scenes of the website and what keeps it running smoothly, no matter the quantity of your traffic. If your website is eCommerce and you have a promotion on, your website must be able to cope with increased traffic volumes.

Page loading times are important, if Google thinks your website runs slowly it will rank your page lower in their results pages. Test load times yourself here:

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>



Ensure your website has an SSL certificate, the little gold padlock in the browser, next to your web address. It used to be the case that only eCommerce websites needed one. In the post GDPR world, Google will mark your website as “Not Secure” and push you down the ranking if you don’t have one.

How and where is your website backed-up? Are you responsible? Or your web developer or the hosting provider? Remember you tend to get what you pay for, and with hosting it’s worth paying a bit extra for security.

## Questions to ask:

- How often is the website backed up?
- Is an SSL included?
- Will the website have a fast loading speed?
- Who owns the server and where is it based? – you need this information for GDPR reasons
- What Cookies are on the website? – GDPR again
- Who is responsible for Security Updates and Plugin updates?

(GDPR is the General Data Protection Regulations, technically since Brexit, it's the Data Protection Act of 2018)

## Updating the website

When it comes to maintaining your website, you may wish to be able to edit and update your website whenever you like, or you may want it all to be done by your developers so that it's one less thing to worry about.



If you are going to update the website, you will need a Content Management System (CMS) and/or a blog. You also need to check that CMS training will be provided, or you could be left frustrated that you can't update the website how you want to.

A blog is often the best way to keep your website updated with Events, Industry News, Offers, Promotions, Corporate Responsibility and Human-Interest stories. Hopefully you and your designers have spent time mapping out the User Journey and creating a great design, especially on the Home Page. So, it's not a great idea to change too much there.

However, Google (other search engines are available) likes fresh content, more specifically keyword-rich, unique content that is regularly updated. And it likes it best on the Home page! Users too like to see the website is up to date and being maintained.

Thus, a blog is the best way to balance the design & user journey vs the need to keep the website updated for users and improve your search engine position.



How often should you update the blog? Well, as often as is realistic. Weekly is great, fortnightly is good, monthly is fine. Less than that and both Google and visitors might think the website is outdated. If it's going to be done infrequently, it might do more harm than good!

If you think it's going to be less than once a month, then it may be best to either outsource or forget the idea completely. A blog that is six months out of date makes customers think you don't care.

### Ongoing Technical Support

We've all been there haven't we! When we are planning to buy something and all through the delivery process, the customer service is fantastic. But once the purchase is complete and the money has been banked, getting support when things need fixing or adjusting results in the rustle of driftwood.

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The best way to avoid that is to buy into a Support package, which will guarantee you ongoing help, but get an agreement as to what support is offered and how long you have to report any bugs before you start getting billed.



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## Conclusion

Like most projects, the key to a successful website you are proud of is putting in the preparation work. Be clear on what you want the website to achieve, who you want to attract and how you will attract them.

Choose your web partners carefully, are they the right fit for your project? Ask lots of questions and make sure you understand the answers, there is loads of jargon in development and it can be confusing.



Plan, but bear in mind the quote by Eisenhower, “Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.” Which means, events will blow your plans off-course, but if you know what you are trying to achieve, commit realistic resources and keep the objectives in mind, the outcome is far more likely to be the desired one.

# About Daneswood

Since founding in 2003, Daneswood has worked with a huge number of clients, who have required work on their websites, whether that is a new build, a re-design or a just tweak here and there.

We create elevating websites that focus on your unique story to showcase your values through a balance of great design and an understanding of your visitor experience, to achieve your goals and vision. All projects have a dedicated Project Manager to ensure designers and developers work closely with our digital marketing team, to optimise the websites and get them to rank higher on the search engines.

This integrated method provides our clients with more sales and enquiries from their websites. Daneswood holds a wealth of knowledge and experience amongst its dedicated team, and we strive to offer our clients the best possible service and support. If you have any questions regarding your website, please contact Daneswood today.

Regards Nigel Wilkinson  
Managing Director



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