



## Why do I need a website?

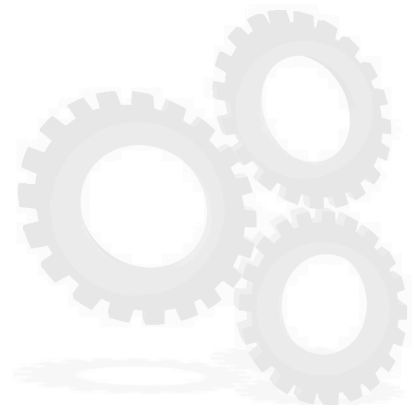
1. **Get New Customers.** By advertising on the Internet and using traditional methods you can attract new visitors to your website. Your website gives information about your company and what you can do.
2. **Inform Existing Customers .** When your customers look at your website they should be proud to be using your services and buying your products
3. **Beat Your Competition.** Having a good website enables you to have a better image than your competitors. Customers will then choose to do business with your company over others.

## What type of website do I need?

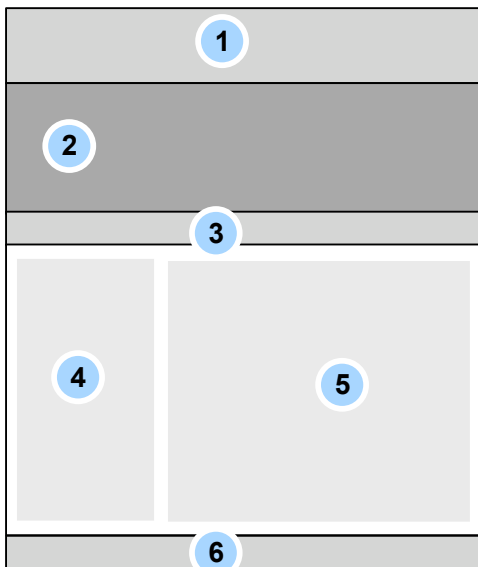
- Easy to use (Your visitors should find it easy to navigate)
- Easy to update (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year)
- Well designed (To give a good impression of your company)
- Helpful support (Fast replies to email and phone calls)
- Reliable hosting (With robust backup)<sup>1</sup>

## How do I get what I need?

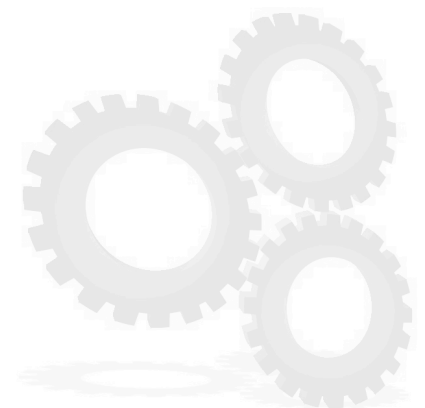
1. View your competitor's websites.
2. Think about your company's image.
3. Get a free demo website.
  - See how easy it will be to update your website.
  - Talk to the designers to develop the design.
4. Get a quote for your website.
5. Order your new website.
6. Choose your domain name and email.
7. Send all your text and images to the designers.
8. View the website and discuss any further changes.
9. Choose a date to go live.
10. Advertise your website.



## An example website design



1. Logo
2. Animation
3. Menu
4. Sidebar
5. Content Area
6. Footer



## Design

Before you buy a website you should always ask to see some ideas of what the design team could do for your company. Most companies will happily provide you with some initial ideas or a demo website.

It's very important to get the design of your website looking good from the beginning. Here are some tips for achieving a good design

- 1. Don't make your website too complicated.** Avoid littering your site with too many options, font sizes, graphics and colours. Make things clean, clear and simple and prospects are more likely to turn into clients.
- 2. Don't overdo it on fancy design work.** Creating a website is about selling your products and services to customers. You are not trying to win design awards. Make it easy to navigate from A to B and go for a smart and professional looking design. The most successful website in the world (Google) is also one of the simplest.
- 3. Avoid heavy use of flash.** Creating a full flash site is like making potential customers sit in a long queue - even before they can read your company brochure! Flash websites are not indexed by search engines and visitors are unable to bookmark them properly.
- 4. Select good images.** Ensure you have chosen relevant, good-looking images that reflect your company ethos. Either use your own digital photos or you can find a wealth of professional high-resolution stock photographs on the web.
- 5. Use a modern design style.** Some web designers are still stuck in the nineties. You need your website to look as though it is new and fresh. This does not mean it needs to be over-complicated. You just need to ensure that it looks smart and professional.
- 6. Choose a smart colour scheme.** Typically a two-tone colour scheme will give the best results. This means that you should choose one colour, for example blue, and then use two versions of that colour for the design of the site. You could have a dark blue background with light blue rollovers for example. Always avoid colours that clash.

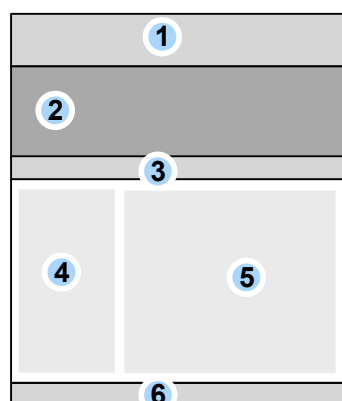
## Layout

The layout and structure of your website is the ‘chassis’ that remains the same on every page throughout the website. This makes it easy for visitors to know where to go on your website.

When a visitor first lands on your website they will make an instant judgement about your company. It is important to have a professional layout. This will encourage visitors to stay and browse and then contact you or purchase your products.

- 1. Display your Logo.** You want to build the brand of your company. The visitor will expect to see your logo at the top of the website. Typically the logo will be in the top left hand corner.
- 2. Make the navigation easy.** You want to make it as easy as possible for your website visitors to find what they are looking for. A clear menu and page structure is important.
- 3. Include standard pages.** The modern website has evolved to include a number of pages that visitors expect to find on every website. The standard pages are: Home / About Us / Services or Products / Contact Us. Also every website should have a Site Map which lists every page on the site.
- 4. Create a Sitemap.** Before you begin getting quotes for your website you should draw up a rough sitemap. This will give you an idea of the number of pages you need and what they will be. When you ask for quotes, your web design company will ask ‘Roughly how many pages do you need?’ and you should have an idea (even if you change your mind later).

A Typical Website Layout



- 1. Logo Header.** To brand the site. Maybe add your phone number in the top right?
- 2. Emotion Header.** Images or a small flash intro to your company. No big downloads though!
- 3. Menu Bar.** Nice and simple, along the width of the website.
- 4. Quick Links.** Extra navigation, an area to highlight the most important pages in the site.
- 5. Content Area.** Where you main text and images will go.
- 6. Footer.** Add copyright, Privacy Policy, Links page and Sitemap.

## Content

Content is one of the most important parts of your website. Visitors will not stay on your website if the text is hard to read.

Search engines also use the content from your website to determine how highly you are ranked in the search results.

Your website content is your sales pitch and should provide visitors with as much information as they need about your business.

### Tips for Writing Your Content

- 1. Use a Sitemap.** List and name all the pages you would like to have on your website. Then list the main points for each page.
- 2. Keep the Content Relevant.** Don't ramble about topics which are not related to your Main Points for each page.
- 3. Use Lists Where Possible.** Web readers often scan pages and lists make it easy to digest information quickly
- 4. Use Headings and Sub-Headings.** By splitting up the text visitors can scan a whole page for the part that's relevant to them.
- 5. Use a Spell-checker.** You should spell-check and grammar-check your text thoroughly. Typos and badly written sentences will send visitors away faster than the speed of light.

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## Domain Names

Before you can have a website you need a domain name. A Domain Name is a unique address for your business, just like a telephone number but with an easy-to-remember name instead of lots of digits.

You can check your Domain Name at: [www.toolkitdomains.co.uk](http://www.toolkitdomains.co.uk)

Your website and email services will both use your domain name. For the website your Domain Name would be used as: [www.mycompany.co.uk](http://www.mycompany.co.uk) and for email you would be: [jane@mycompany.co.uk](mailto:jane@mycompany.co.uk)

Normally companies choose their company name followed by either [.co.uk](http://www.greataccountants.co.uk) or [.com](http://www.accountancy2000software.com). However some prefer a generic name or the name of their product for example [www.greataccountants.co.uk](http://www.greataccountants.co.uk) or [www.accountancy2000software.co.uk](http://www.accountancy2000software.co.uk)

### Domain Name Suffixes

As well as [.co.uk](http://www.greataccountants.co.uk) and [.com](http://www.accountancy2000software.com) you can also choose from [.net](http://www.greataccountants.net) / [.org](http://www.greataccountants.org) / [.org.uk](http://www.greataccountants.org.uk) / [.eu](http://www.greataccountants.eu) / [.biz](http://www.greataccountants.biz) / [.info](http://www.greataccountants.info) / [.tv](http://www.greataccountants.tv) / and many others.

Some business owners choose to register several suffixes for their domain name. You are allowed to register as many variations of a domain name as you like. These other names can all forward to the main website.

### Domain Name Costs

Typically a domain name will cost around £10 to £20 per year. Often you will be required to register a domain name for a minimum of two years. As with everything you get what you pay for. The cheapest domain registration services will only secure the domain name for you.

A complete domain name package might include; Domain Name Forwarding (for example from a secondary domain name to your main domain), DNS services (for setting up hosting), Email services (for setting up email accounts), website hosting (for hosting your website) and many other services.

### Setting up Your Domain Name

If you are setting up a new website for your business it's probably best to ask your web design company to register the domain name at the same time. If you already have a domain name then you will easily be able to transfer the name to your new website provider.

### Who Owns the Domain Name

You can check the registered owner of a domain name by using a free Whois tool such as Domain Tools. <http://whois.domaintools.com>

Although you will own the domain name most people ask their website provider to be the 'Admin Contact' and to manage the technical side of things.

## Updating Your Website

A Content Management System (known as a CMS) is an online control panel that will allow you to update your website from any computer in the world. Using a username and password you can login and update your website at any time of day or night.

A website with a CMS will make it easy and affordable for you to add new pages, images, products, or downloads to your website. It will also give you cost savings because you are able to make changes without employing your web designer at his expensive hourly rate.

The system will give you control over the website content whilst still ensuring that you cannot damage the website. The website design and layout will still need to be created by your web designers at the start of the project.

### **Choosing a Content Management System**

You will want to test-drive the CMS provided by each web designer. You should ask them for a demonstration of their CMS. It should be straightforward to provide you with a username and password to test this online.

### **Once you have access to the CMS you should think about:**

1. Is the CMS easy to use?
2. Could you use it every day to update your website?
3. Can you easily add new pages, images and files to your website?
4. Can you upload word files, pdf files, audio and movies?
5. Does the system offer all the features you need?
5. Can you edit all the elements of your website? You will need to be able to edit each page and also the Menu, Sidebars, Footer, Search Engine Meta Tags and Search Engine Descriptions.

### **Accessible Content**

It is important that your website can be read by a range of users. Computers can use speakers to read website content to users. This can only be achieved if your website has been designed to be accessible.

Websites that are not accessible include those created in Flash and those created using images only (text is written on the images).

## **Advertising Your Website**

It is crucial to advertise your website if you want to increase your customers. Although some people will find your website through links, emails or offline marketing (eg leaflets) most serious customers will come through advertising.

When most people start a new website they immediately think they must work on optimisation to get to the top of the search engines, however this can be a costly and unreliable process. Instead you can pay a small amount per click to attract targeted leads to your website. This is a much faster and easier path to generating new business.

### **Google Adwords (Pay-Per-Click or PPC)**

We recommend and personally use Google Adwords to advertise our business. We have found the system to be very easy to use and to deliver excellent results. You simply set a budget starting from £10 per month and setup your keywords for example "Physiotherapy in Brighton" and then tell Google to send visitors to your website. Within 24 hours you will be receiving new visitors to your website.

You only pay when visitors click on your ad (and therefore sees your website) so you know that your money is being well spent. Your first campaign can be setup in about 30 minutes and will give you guaranteed results.

### **Statistics**

It is a good idea to ensure that your website comes with a statistics package for monitoring your website visitors. Using this you will be able to see which pages visitors look at most, where visitors are going and what they are downloading. You will then be able to modify your website appropriately.

Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you're doing, but nobody else does.

**- Stuart Henderson**

## **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**

An important reason to update the content of your business website regularly is that it improves your visibility on the world's search engines, including Google. How search engines view your website has a major impact on visitor numbers and new leads.

Google uses 'Spiders' to search the web. A Spider is an automated program that methodically clicks on every link in the entire web cataloguing every page it finds. This catalogue is then used to determine where your website is listed in the search results.

SEO is a means of improving the number and position of your website's listing when keywords are typed into a search engine, thereby improving the number of visitors to your site from search engine results. If we were talking about the high street, SEO would equate to the provision of large numbers of prominently placed adverts for your shop in places where your core audience would be most likely to see them. The goal here is to attract high numbers of the right customers.

### **Getting listed with the Search Engines**

When you create a new website it is invisible to the world because it is not listed in any search engines. As soon as you start to advertise your website, or other websites link to yours then Google will find and index your site.

### **Regular Updates**

Once you are listed in Search Engines they will revisit your website on a regular basis to see if anything has changed. How often the search engines visit your website depends on how often they think you update it – if Google visits your websites once a month but nothing has changed then it will only come back in the future once every two months for example.

*"The more you update your site, the higher your ranking with Google."*

The site needs to be active if it is to produce the optimum results for your business. That means that it should be a constant work in progress, incorporating regular updates, whether about products or services, company news or industry developments.

If you keep adding new content to your website this will also increase the number of phrases in your content that search engines will use to display results.

### **Links.**

An important factor that determines how popular your website is with Google are inbound links. The more websites that link to yours the higher rating you will get. Be careful though because the search engines are clever at spotting websites that are built solely to link to other websites so we do not recommend using these services. Simply ensure that other companies in your industry are linking to your website where possible. Also ensure that any online PR you can attract has links to your site.

## Domain Names

There are four types of email account that you can setup for receiving email. We would normally recommend either POP3 or IMAP for small businesses.

It is much better to have your email hosted under your own domain name (John@xyzaccountants.co.uk) than to have a free email address (xyz\_accountants@yahoo.co.uk). This is because (1) it will look a lot more professional to your customers and (2) you will never have to change your email address in the future.

### Free Accounts

Typically these would be with hotmail.com, yahoo.co.uk, tiscali.co.uk or another similar free service. You can subscribe to a free email account online and users are often provided with free email when they sign up for a broadband connection. To check your email you would log in to a website with your username and password. These services are funded by advertising whilst viewing your emails.

### POP3

This is the most common form of email account. POP3 email mailboxes are provided under your own domain name giving your business a professional look. You can setup Outlook, Outlook Express, Apple Mail or many other programs to collect your email and store messages on your computer. POP3 mailboxes can cost anything from free to £10 per month, depending on the features.

### IMAP

Offering many of the same features as POP3 but including more advanced features such as online webmail that synchronises with your computer mailbox. In addition you will also get an integrated address book and company calendar. IMAP mailboxes can cost between £2 per month and £15 per month depending on features.

## SPAM/VIRUS BLOCKERS

You should ask your email provider if they support Spam/Virus blocking at the server side. This is very important as it ensures that spam and viruses do not even reach your computer. We recommend you have anti-virus software on your computer but having server-side blocking means that bad messages do not even reach your computer.