

Top 10 Tips to Create a More Effective Website

1. Make sure your visitors can find your contact details on your website easily - don't make them search for the "Contact" link. Give a telephone number wherever possible, and as well as a form, show your real email address so people can contact you that way if they prefer - many people are suspicious of filling in forms. (But make sure your email address is protected so it can't be harvested by spammers.)
2. Many website owners feel shy about displaying testimonials on their website. But these are an important factor that can tip the balance between a potential customer choosing you over a competitor. So, don't be shy - if you have great feedback from your customers, make sure you let everyone see it.
3. Don't include a blog on your website if you don't have time to keep it up. You don't have to write all the time, but keep it regular; even if you write just once a month - which for some business sites is perfectly appropriate - that's fine, provided that it is once a month. Today, people expect a website to be up to date - it shows you're alive and active.
4. Integrate social media. If you don't blog, including social streams on your site (your tweets or the latest activity on your Facebook page, rather than just the badges) is an alternative way of showing you're active and dynamic.
5. When crafting your website text, put yourself in your site visitors' shoes. What information are they looking for, and what do they need to know that will convince them to choose you over one of your competitors? Provide this information right upfront. Take care to focus on the benefits, and not the features of whatever it is that you are offering - what's in it *for the customer* to choose your product or service?
6. Include a Google map. If you have a real-world store or office, make it easy for people to find where you are. Also, include any useful information about public transport or parking.
7. Include a meta description. This is the short piece of text (not more than 160 characters) describing your site that the search engines display in their list of results. This needs to be as engaging as possible as real people will read it, and it's this that will make them decide whether or not to click on the link to your website. You can include information such as opening hours or telephone number in the description, and if you include your main search terms in the description as well, they will show up in bold in the search, making your description look immediately relevant and appealing to the person searching.

Depending what platform you use, there may be a built-in way to add a meta description (as there is with Wix), or you may need to add an extension (for WordPress, you can use the All in One SEO plugin or WordPress SEO by Yoast).

8. Include an FAQ page. The job of a "frequently asked questions" page is to remove any potential objection or doubt a potential customer may have in their mind that is preventing them from contacting you, hiring you, or buying your products (or whatever it is that your website aims to do). You'll want to include all possible details (terms, refunds, how it works, etc...) on the FAQ page - it'll cut down on your time answering basic questions via phone or email, as well.
 9. Have a mobile version of your website. More and more people are surfing the web on the move, and this includes making purchases. So you need to make sure your site is legible on all sizes of screen, if necessary implementing a special "responsive" or mobile version of the site for those accessing it via a smartphone. How you do this again depends on the platform you're using; many systems have inbuilt mobile versions or responsive templates available.
 10. Allow people to share your content. If people want to share your content, make it easy for them; include "send by email" links, and "Share" buttons so they can post your content to their own Facebook or LinkedIn networks, or tweet it.
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Brought to you by Alannah Moore, author of [Create Your Own Website Using WordPress in a Weekend](#).

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