What it takes to make a fabulous website

These are the requirements:

1. <u>Good listening skills</u>: You're looking for someone to take your vision and make it into a reality. If after describing your vision to your new website guru, he or she is not on board or can't see what you see, consider other options. You don't want to have difficulty communication right from the start. And if your designer can't see it, how are you going to get it?

Notes:

2. <u>Spectacular Design</u>: Find a designer who does spectacular work. Make sure you ask to see a portfolio of the work they've done so you get a feel for their style. You're investing in your image. Make sure you're gonna be lookin' good.

Notes:

3. <u>Outstanding Development</u>: What functionality do you need on your site? Are you looking for a simple site that shows off your services, or are you looking for something a little more advanced? Do you need to sell products online? Do you run events or classes and would like to provide online registration? Are you an artist who needs a custom photo gallery? Do you have items or services that you're selling as part of a membership? Ask to see a portfolio of the sites developed that include the technology you require. If you're looking at these additional technical

specifications, make sure to discuss what the additional charges are for these upgrades.

Notes:

4. <u>Superior Content</u>: Is professionally written content included in your site proposal, or are you required to provide your own content. Will your website guru proofread your content for you and make suggestions on improvements? Will you be provided with the appropriate keywords to include in your content to maximize your SEO? Will professionally written content include keyword research and use of appropriate keywords? Good content is *key* for SEO.

Notes:

5. <u>SEO Strategy</u>: You're going to want your website to rank appropriately with Google. This requires keyword-rich content and also good keyword-crafted page titles, URLs and meta descriptions that entice your potential client to click through to your site. Or, if you already have SEO implemented on your current site, make sure those page titles and meta descriptions are transferred over to your new site so your current SEO ranking is not affected. This service is not typically included in the base price of a website. Be sure to ask what their SEO strategy is, and what the cost is for that implementation.

Notes:

6. <u>Mobile/Responsive</u>: Having a site that's viewable and functional on mobile devices is now a requirement. This may or may not be included in your website price. Clarify what is included and make sure your site will be viewable on tablet and phone devices, both in portrait and landscape mode.

Notes:

7. <u>Social Media Integration</u>: Be sure that all your social media accounts are linked to appropriately from your website, preferably from the header or footer so they are visible on every page. You want to make sure your clients and potential clients have a way to contact you and a way to show their support by being fans.

Notes:

8. <u>Google Analytics</u>: Will your new website be setup to track all traffic on your site? To determine the effectiveness of your site and content, you need to be monitoring your visitors and watching their behavior so you can respond accordingly. These analytics are key to managing your new website.

Notes:

9. <u>Backups</u>: Backups are critical! It's one of those things you don't even think about until you need it. Make sure your new site includes a way to back it up, hopefully scheduled and automated so you don't have to think about it.

Notes:

10. <u>Redirection</u>: Make sure your redesigned site includes setup of redirection for your old pages where names have changed. If you have a new URL structure in place, or if you've updated your SEO strategy with new URL names, you'll want to redirect the old names to the new names to prevent any "not found" otherwise known as 404 errors. You don't want your visitors leaving your site because they think your pages are all broken.

Notes:

11. <u>Ease of Management</u>: Is your site setup on a platform so you are able to manage it on your own? Is it easy to understand? Will you be able to make minor updates as necessary so you will not have to rely on the availability of your website guru and also so you will not have to pay for every little update required?

Notes:

12. <u>Training</u>: Will you be managing your site on your own? Will training be provided to you so you can learn the steps needed to maintain your new website? This may or may not be included in your website bid. Be sure to understand if training is included and exactly how much you will be learning.

Notes:

13. <u>Ongoing Technical Support</u>: Will you be able to call on your website guru after handoff of your new website is complete. Will he or she be there to answer questions for you when you are stuck or help you fix something that breaks (even if it's your fault)? Will he or she perform regularly scheduled maintenance on your website to make sure it stays secure. This type of support is not typically included in a bid, so be sure to ask what happens next.

Notes:

14. <u>Project Management</u>: Building or redesigning your website is a big project and includes well over 100 tasks just for a basic website. Without good project management, things can fall thorough the cracks or become very disorganized. Understand how your new website guru is going to track tasks, items and issues, and how they are going to communicate with you in that process. Will you be able to monitor the progress?

Notes:

We think these are pretty important, too…

1. <u>Small Business Experience</u>: Can your website guru understand your struggles to be able to effectively identify your current problem? Is he or she asking the right questions? Can he or she help you develop a solution that is the answer to your needs? Speaking with someone with small business experience will make the process so much easier for you and will allow you to brainstorm and draw from another resource with similar experience and a fresh perspective, rather than having to create the entire solution on your own.

Notes:

2. <u>Marketing Assistance</u>: Does your website guru have a marketing background? Will he or she be able to help you communicate your message with a little pizazz? If marketing is not your forte, make sure you are getting assitance with those "grab-you" campaign titles, or a tagline that effectively communicates your service or product. How you market yourself and your business is critical to your success.

Notes:

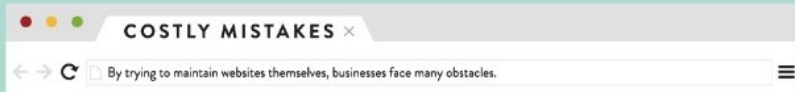3. <u>Passion</u>: We believe in doing business from our hearts. In our opinion, this is the most important thing to look for in people who you do business with. If the only reason they do what they do is to make money, they likely do not have your best interests at heart. Connect with the people you do business with at a level that makes you comfortable trusing them with the image of your business.

Notes:

THE BIG PROBLEM
WITH SMALL-BUSINESS SITES

COMMON SMALL-BUSINESS WEBSITE MISTAKES

Websites are a critical meeting point between small businesses and customers. Maintaining an optimized site is crucial to acquiring new customers, building credibility and nurturing client relationships. Yet, today, almost 1/3 of small-business owners maintain their websites themselves, neglecting key site functions that consumers want, like mobile optimization, social network integration and user-friendly design. Here, we look at the costly mistakes small-business owners make when they try to maintain their own websites.

COSTLY MISTAKES ×

By trying to maintain websites themselves, businesses face many obstacles.

NO CALL TO ACTION

Without a main call to action, customers won't know why they are visiting the website or what your company has to offer.

93% of small-businesses' sites do not display contact email addresses.

49% lack any phone numbers on their home pages.

Poor Design

By taking design into their own hands, small businesses cause themselves headaches and risk having poorly designed sites.

41% of small-business owners who plan to improve their websites, say design/aesthetic is the top choice of action.

0   100%

Time-Consuming Updates

When you maintain your site yourself, you run the risk of wasting time you could be using to cultivate business.

64% of business owners find the time necessary to update the website a major challenge.

25% say the cost of maintaining the site is a big hurdle.

No Metrics

Without metrics, businesses are unable to track their progress, their reach, or their customers' habits and needs.

75% did not use analytics tools to measure their websites' performance.

60% do not feel they have the tools needed to make sense of their site analytics or take action to resolve issues.

POOR SEO

Discoverability is important, helping potential customers find your company.

26% of small-business sites cannot be found in online searches because their websites earn a Google Page Rank of zero or have no Google Page Rank.

With keyword data, meta descriptions, and page titles, your site can stand out amongst the rest.

NO SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

By allowing your customers to share their experiences with your brand via social channels, you're enabling information about your business to reach people you might not have otherwise targeted.

Lack Facebook widgets **91%**

Lack Twitter widgets **94%**

Lack Twitter links **83%**

NO MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

SORRY! This website isn't optimized for mobile devices.

Most people today look at websites on their mobile devices. Without the technology to engage this group, small businesses are missing out on key consumers.

0   100%

60% do not have mobile websites or know if their websites are mobile-capable.

No Designated IT Person

Without designated IT help, small businesses risk security breaches or costly mistakes. By going to the professionals, IT help is included with your website.

44% of small businesses have been cyber attacked.

A single **cyber attack** costs **$8,669.48** on average.

Small businesses may not be as tech-savvy as larger companies, or they don't have the staff to provide for a full-time IT person.

Give your clients and customers the tools they need to interact with your business, and ensure you don't make these same website mistakes. Check out MyCase's newest ebook, *Keys to a Successful Website*, to learn more. Focus on what matters, and leave the website to the professionals.

PRACTICE MORE AND MANAGE LESS.

SOURCES: YODLE | NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION | SITEAPPS | VSPLASH

MyCase