



# *Essential* The Guide to Effective Websites

A website has become an essential tool for conducting business and communicating with your customers. If developed correctly, it can be a cost-effective way to generate sales. It can be a challenge to achieve a good balance between a website that has good functionality and good design. Most websites excel at one and not the other.

*The following guide aims to answer many of the common questions that our clients regularly ask us.*

# The Basics

## Domain Names

Your domain name or website address is your identity on the internet. You therefore want a name that is easy to spell, pronounce, remember and associate with your company. It is a good idea to register the domain name now even if you are not ready to launch the brand to ensure it is available when you require it.

You may want to consider having more than one domain name. If your company has multiple products and services, it may be useful having different domain names which are directed to the same website. Having key word domain names will improve the searchability of your website.

Consider all alternative spellings of your domain name. It may be a good idea to register these alternatives and/or different extensions people may try to use. If you do not register these variations, you run the risk of your competitor registering these names with the aim of directing traffic to their website.

Registration is required on an annual basis. One of the many websites you can register domain names is [www.registerdirect.co.nz](http://www.registerdirect.co.nz). This website offers good value for money and you can easily and quickly pay online by credit card. If you are unsure about registering a domain name, contact Graphic Edge for help.

## Common Website Extensions and Meanings

.com, .co.nz, .biz	commercial business
.net, .net.nz	network-related organisations
.edu, .ac.nz	education institutions
.govt.nz	government agencies
.org, .org.nz	non-profit organisations

## Hosting

It is necessary to choose a host for your website that can handle large volumes of traffic and offers the space, facilities and programming languages that are required for the development of your website. It is useful to consider the statistical reports that the host provides on who is looking at your site and what they are looking at within it. Although Google Analytics code can be added to your website page to provide such reporting.





# Design that Sells

There is generally a trade off between the creativity and functionality of a website. Accordingly the website design needs to be something which can create enough impact without losing the functionality of the website. Internet users have a short attention span. You only have 6-8 seconds to gain an internet surfer's attention before they move on. They will not be prepared to wait long for movies, images, and pages to load.

## 5 Characteristics of an Effective Website:

### 1. Effective Graphics

Your home or opening page should contain a clear explanation of what your website is all about. The home page needs to be attractive, eye catching, intriguing, and fit with the company's branding and corporate image. Many companies have an online image that looks very different to their print and other promotional material. Ensure your brand image works well across new media such as the internet and in more traditional media such as print.

Make sure that your layout is viewable for all screen resolutions and avoid having pages that are too-long and too-wide so that people with bigger screen resolutions do not have to scroll up-down and side-to-side. As a rule of thumb, people are prepared to scroll up and down but side to side is unacceptable.

### 2. Navigational Flow

A website requires a navigational system that is structured to offer users maximum flexibility and freedom to move around. It should be easy for users to find the information they require quickly. A site menu at the top, bottom, or side of each page can be helpful especially for a first time visitor, particularly if your site has a lot of pages. A website with good navigational structure will ensure that visitors have a better experience and a longer visit to your website.

### 3. Compatibility

A website needs to work well across all modern platforms, programs, and devices. HTML standards need to be followed to ensure your website is compatible with commonly used browsers, namely Internet Explorer, Firefox, Mozilla, and Safari.

### 4 High-Value Information Content

Encourage users to spend time viewing your website and to refer back to it by being regularly updated and offering useful information. If a user learns something new from a website, they are likely to go back to it again. An effective website offers more than just providing product and company information and will offer high-value content that visitors can use whether or not they purchase the product.

Useful sections to consider for your website design include:

- About us
- Products or Services
- Contact details and/or forms for users to complete
- Resources and/or links
- Downloads (brochures, movies, articles, application forms)
- News, Upcoming Events, & Timetables

### 5. Response Orientation

Encourage user interaction on your website whether this is in the way of contact forms to complete, movement on the page, or calculators. There needs to be good lead generation and qualification. Make your website active not passive. It is a good idea to include a privacy policy on your website.

Consider whether the website can be a source of revenue such as an online store that may support an existing retail or manufacturing business.



# eMarketing

To ensure you receive as many visitors to your website as possible:

- promote your website address on all material. Have your offline and online campaigns working effectively together.
- consider eMarketing options with pay per click campaigns, banner advertising, or a blog.

## *Advertising:*

The internet, unlike many other forms of traditional media, is a personal and targeted form of communication. You have the benefit in that you are speaking to the individual rather than the mass. Internet advertising can be an effective way to generate traffic to your website and generate brand, company, product and service awareness.

Common advertisement options you have available include:

- pay per thousand
- pay per click
- pay per action

Banner advertisements are typically pay per thousand whereby your advertisement has exposure on a website which receives a number of visitors. With internet users having a short attention span, it is beneficial to have an advertisement with interaction and/or animation and a strong headline that gains attention. A clear offer and call to action will ensure the advertisement generates a greater number of leads. Advertising tracking software will allow you to track all your online advertising and help you identify which advertising campaigns are the most effective.

Google and other search engines offer advertising. Typically these are pay per click advertisements. As you can set a daily budget which cannot be exceeded and they can be targeted to a certain region, search engine advertisements can be an effective way to advertise. Likewise social media websites such as Facebook can offer pay per click advertising opportunities.

## *Blog:*

A blog or journal can provide the opportunity to share your expertise with a large audience. It can be an inexpensive way to create awareness of your business and can allow you to connect with readers on a personal level. Most blog software offers uncomplicated URL structure, making it fairly easy for search engines to find blog content. It can be a beneficial tool in generating traffic and improving your website search engine ranking.

## *3rd Party Publishing:*

Editorial in e-zines, e-newsletters, or websites can be an effective way to drive traffic to your website, build awareness of your business, and position you as an expert in your field.

## *Advertising Check List*

- ☐ Eye-catching design with clear visual hierarchy
- ☐ Headline that intrigues readers to read more
- ☐ Powerful offer to a specific target market
- ☐ Strong call to action
- ☐ Viewers directed to website or a form to complete
- ☐ Campaign tracked and measured



## Email Marketing:

It is necessary to communicate with customers every 3 month period or less or they are likely to forget about your business. Email marketing can be an effective way to maintain this contact. Email marketing is permission based so you must have permission from your reader before emailing them. Permission may be obtained through a direct mail campaign and/or telemarketing prior to sending your email promotion or newsletter. Give your reader the choice to opt out by unsubscribing from your communications.

Email marketing provides the opportunity to test and measure your campaigns through tracking and reporting tools. You can then better target your communication to what interests your readers. To increase the success rate of your email marketing make sure the readers name is visible and one that is trusted by the reader. Personalise your message by inserting the readers name into the email and summarise your email in the subject line.

## Social Media Check List

Social networking provides networking opportunities online. To keep your social networking activities constructive, ensure there is:

- ☐ A clear strategy with measurable objectives
- ☐ Educational not a hard sell approach
- ☐ Direction of traffic to your website



# Website Animation

Well-designed animation can make your website more persuasive, encourage your reader to spend longer at your website and can encourage them to engage and take action.

### Flash:

#### Pros:

- Small file size of animation compared to Animated Gif
  - Features more extensive than Animated Gif and Javascript.
- Animation can be a full-fledged media experience with audio and without design restrictions.

#### Cons:

- Need Flash Player to view.

### Animated Gif:

#### Pros:

- Will run in any browser and you don't need to download Flash Player

#### Cons:

- Larger file than Flash
- Very simple slide show with limited effects

### Javascript:

#### Pros:

- Small file size
- Compatible with more browsers than Flash and use possible with cellphones and other devices

#### Cons:

- Features not as extensive as Flash
- May not perform as quickly as Flashes

# Search Engine Optimisation

To ensure a website is easy to find in search engines, it is necessary that a website has been constructed in an optimised manner. This means that the website has well-structured pages, with underlying code that is easy for the search engine software to read. The pages of your website should have a title and meta tags with key words and phrases that are relevant to your organisation and industry. By selecting "view source" in the menu of the browser you will be able to see the meta tags of both your website and your competitors' websites. This competitor analysis can be useful in deciding on adjustments to your website meta tags. The Google key word tool will allow you to analyse what the commonly searched terms are for your industry and what key words your website is best optimised to.

Google's Page Rank Technology is based on link analysis (link popularity and link quality) and content analysis (relevance, freshness of content and location plus frequency of keywords). Incoming links to your website are a great source of website traffic. Submit your website URL to the main search engines such as Google. Other search engines are likely to pick up your website URL from these main search engines. Listings in directories will improve the searchability of your website.

## *7 Ways to get your website on the front page of Google*

### 1. GOOGLE MAPS

It is free to list your business in Google Maps and this will help people find your business easily.

### 2. DIRECTORY LISTINGS

Listing in popular directories, will help you to improve your your page ranking.

### 3. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Well-constructed website pages, with title, keywords and website copy relevant to your industry, will ensure your business' listing is highly ranked in the search engines.

### 4. VIDEOS

Name videos with key words, title, phrases, and key tags that are descriptive to your business.

### 5. PHOTOS

Any images on your web page will have a higher ranking if the images are optimised for a search engine with words, title, phrases, and key tags that are descriptive to your business.

### 6. PAY PER CLICK ADVERTISING

Paid advertising will mean your business is listed at the top or right-hand side of a web page with a sponsored link.

### 7. PRESS RELEASES

Submit press releases to 3rd party websites and direct traffic to your website.

## *Site Maintenance*

It can be frustrating to visit a company's website to discover that their content is out of date. There is little cost involved in keeping your site up to date and it is definitely worth the effort. Your web site can be kept-up-to date by either:

- Contacting your website designer to make changes on an ad hoc or regular basis. If you do not have many updates, the structure of the website is changing regularly, or do not have the staff available to make updates then this may be the best option. This option will be much cheaper initially and may work out to be cheaper in the long run if there are few updates.
- Investing in a content management system allows you to update certain content by simply updating a form within the administration area of your site. This option is typically more expensive initially.

# Copywriting

Copy-writing is often a last minute consideration or even worse completely neglected and often provided from a number of different sources and writers. As a result the copy has an inconsistent tone, quality, and direction. This inconsistency doesn't help build trust amongst potential customers.

Online copy needs to be different to copy for print and mass-media advertising. The internet is a personal and targeted medium and the copy needs to reflect this. The voice of the writer should be personal, friendly, honest and sincere. It needs to sound more like a conversation between two people rather than an announcement from a company.

Considering internet surfers' have a very short attention span and you only about 6-8 seconds to gain their attention before they move on, it is essential to make sure the copy is relevant and interests and intrigues them enough to want to read more. The voice of the copy-writer should have strong and unique character which differentiates your company from the competition.

Copy needs to include keywords to improve search engine optimisation and it needs to be easy for the reader to navigate with clear headings and sub-headings so they can quickly find the information they are interested in. Remember that we pick out what we wish to read by the headline.

## Online Stores *8 Tips for Success*

### 1. SIMPLE NAVIGATION

Make the shopping experience simple. Products need to be categorised in a logical, easy to find fashion. Allow users to create accounts for ease of repeat ordering and checking status. Make the shopping cart clearly visible.

### 2. ENCOURAGE IMPULSE PURCHASE

Suggest related products, associated linked products, and limited time offers. Consider offering free shipping for larger purchases.

### 3. EXPANDABLE

Sign up for a hosting package that can grow with your online store.

### 4. TRACK MARKETING

Track the effectiveness of your marketing by establishing specific codes that differentiate each promotion.

### 5. BUILD CREDIBILITY

A professionally designed website will build user confidence. Add a Contact Us page, About Us page, and list your business policies. Include testimonials from satisfied customers.

### 6. SPEED IS EVERYTHING

Internet browsers have a short attention span. Online shopping needs to be a fast shopping experience.

### 7. LET USERS BE IN CONTROL

Provide tools that let users control their shopping experience in the way they browse products. Consider providing sorting by price and number of items per page.

### 8. INFORM CUSTOMERS OF SPECIALS

Encourage repeat purchases and keep past customers informed of specials and new products.



# About Us

Graphic Edge specialise in branding and marketing solutions for new and traditional media. We are based in Mt Eden but work with a range of clients throughout New Zealand and Australia.

## *3 reasons why Graphic Edge is your best choice*

### **1. An integrated approach.**

The team at Graphic Edge have expertise in the fields of sales and marketing, graphic design, and website development. With such a wide perspective and understanding of your needs, we are able to provide creative solutions that stand out amongst the clutter of advertising and solutions that are functional and effective at achieving your sales objectives.

### **2. Reliability.**

We will meet your deadline every time with quick turnaround. We listen to what you say and will help you get things right the first time, with you being kept up-to-date throughout the project.

### **3. Professionalism.**

Our workmanship is of the highest quality. We offer experience and follow the ethical and professional standards of our industry. We continually seek to do things better, to save time, money, and help improve your business.

*Your complimentary copy of the Essential Guide to Effective Promotion was brought to you by Graphic Edge.*

