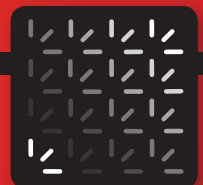# THE CONSUMERS GUIDE TO WEB DESIGN.

READ this report and discover...

1. Why NOW is the best time to get a web presence for your business
2. 4 costly misconceptions about website design
3. 9 proven features of successful websites
4. How to avoid 3 web design rip-offs

fullnoise

THE CONSUMERS GUIDE TO WEB DESIGN.

Friday, 2.23pm.
Blenheim

Dear Business Owner,

Choosing a website designer isn't easy. **WHY?**

You are constantly bamboozled by confusing claims, technical terminology and bad information. It is increasingly difficult to compare 'apples with apples' with irrelevant feature lists and quotes that are all over the pricing map.

How do you ever find a competent, professional web designer?

You start by reading this free consumer guide, crammed packed with all the information that actually matters, when it comes to building a successful website for your business.

You will get huge value from it if you are planning on building a new website, or updating your existing one.

We wrote this guide to help you better understand website design and marketing your business online. With this information you will be able to make an informed, intelligent decision when employing a web designer.

If you have any questions about website design or marketing, you are invited to call us on 03 5777 368. We are dedicated to educating businesses, and happy to help you in any way.

Cordially,

Alistair Bull
The Full Noise
www.thefullnoise.co.nz

Two Shocking Statistics

A report came out from MYOB (accounting software firm) at the middle of last year, with statistics on "The state of New Zealand businesses". It showed that only 32% of NZ businesses currently have a website.

WAIT, yes I said 32%... Only one third of businesses!

And while we are speaking about statistics, here is another for you... Google recently published that **20% of all of the searches were for local search terms**. Terms like "Blenheim Hairdresser" or "Plumber Picton". And that number jumps up to 40% for those searching on a mobile phone.

Here's the thing...
There is, right now, a massive disconnect between consumers and businesses online. While consumers are using the internet more and more to connect and find the information, products and services they want, most businesses (68%) are 10 years behind them.

Congratulations... By planning to get a website, you are putting your business ahead of the curve!

By investing in a website now, you will be one step (or ten years) ahead of 68% of businesses. More importantly, you will likely be ahead of your direct competition.

Lastly, if you build a website which includes the tips outlined in the next section, you will be ahead of 90% of websites that are already online...

4 Costly Misconceptions About Website Design

1. A good website is all about how it looks

No. The design of a website is important but there are other factors which are as or more important.

The quality of the content of your website is critical to it's success, as is the functionality, structure and navigation of your site to help visitors find what they are looking for.

Getting people to visit your website is the first step to a successful website, which can be achieved through SEO - Search Engine Optimization (appearing at the top of Google), advertising and social media.

2. Your website will automatically appear in Google

Not likely. Unfortunately, ranking at the top of Google isn't a matter of flicking a switch.

Google's job is to provide the very best information or answer to a search query.
The first step in doing this is to find out which terms and phrases people are searching for that are relevant to your business.

Then, to help your website to rank at the top of Google for a search term, you need to make sure that it is providing information that is better and more relevant than your competitors.

Google famously has 200 factors it considers when ranking websites in it's search engine.
A competent web design company should have a good understanding of what is important and what isn't to help a website rank on the front page of Google.

3. With social media you don't need a website now

Social media can be a powerful tool to build and engage a following for your business. With the rise of Facebook, Twitter, Google + and the literally hundreds of other social networks, the allure of social media is very strong for local businesses.

For Businesses though, there are two problems with social media:

1. It can and does take a lot of time to plan a social media strategy and create or find interesting content to share with your followers. Consistency in social media is critical to your success.
2. You don't own any of these platforms. If you are relying on Facebook for your presence on the web, what happens if they change the rules, or suddenly lose popularity? Don't believe this could happen? Ask anyone who had a business on Myspace 5 years ago.

Having a website as a 'home base' that you own and control is important. Somewhere that you make the rules and can highlight the information to be most helpful for your visitors. You are also not competing with thousands (100's of thousands) of other people, pages and businesses for the attention of the visitor.

4. Your website is live, you're all done here

Sorry, no. Both Google and your visitors love fresh, up to date content.

By updating your website with fresh articles, offers, testimonials, or reports, you show your visitors and Google that you are keeping up with the ongoing developments in your industry. Consistently adding interesting, useful articles also increases the size of your net for catching your prospects as they drift through the world wide web.

Monitoring how your website is working using tools like Google analytics and making changes is important to increasing the effectiveness of your website.

9 Proven Features of Successful Websites

In this section I'm going to give you a 9 point list detailing exactly what is important (and what's not) when it comes to building a website for your business. So your new website will actually work for you and get you the customer satisfaction and sales leads you want.

Let's get started...

1. Do you know the purpose of your company's website?

You would be amazed the number of businesses whose only motivation for having a website is to tick a box. It is something they think they need just because they have been told they need one. They never put much thought into what they want or what they expect their site to do for their business.

You absolutely have to define exactly why you want a website in the first place.

It's not that hard. I bet your website has one of these three goals:

- Make sales directly online
- Generate leads for offline sales
- Provide information for support and backup for your existing clients

You may want two, or all three of these objectives for your website. That's cool. But you do need to prioritise them.

When a visitor lands on your website, what is the main thing you want them to do?

Actually, I'll give you one more hint... When a visitor lands on your website, what do THEY want the most?

Once you have defined the main purpose of your site, you'll have a better understanding of the content that you need to include and how to structure your site.

2. Build your website for your visitor and potential customer

Are you building your site to brag about you and your business, or do you actually want to help your visitor?

Seriously...

How many websites have you been to that go on, "we've been in business scrubbing turtles for 24 years, and we're fully qualified turtle scrubbers, ... here is a picture of the first turtle I ever scrubbed, in 1989".

Heres the thing... A visitor is coming to your site, because they have a problem, or at the least, they have a question.

The job of your website is to *Solve their problem,* or tell them how you can offer a solution for them, fast and hassle free.

What value are you providing for your visitor?

When they land on your website, this is your opportunity to prove to them that you are the perfect choice to help solve their problem, and position yourself as an authority in your field and the only reasonable option to get the job done.

The only way to do that is to understand exactly what it is they want, even better than they do.

Here is a secret trick that some of the most successful copywriters in the world use to get into their customers heads:

Sit down with a pad of paper and imagine this situation...

You are sitting in a cafe or bar or whatever, and your ideal customer is sitting at the table next to you. You can overhear them talking to their friend about the exact problem that your product or service solves.

Now write out their entire conversation.

- What is your Ideal Customers problem?
- How has he come across this problem?
- What does he think his problem is? (it may be different from what he thinks)
- What are his gripes about fixing it?
- When does he need it fixed?
- What are his worries about fixing the problem?
- How will having his problem fixed make things better, easier, less stressful?

Once you have written it out, think about how you can explain to your ideal customer how you can solve all of these issues.

3. Get to the Point

On the web, people have a super short attention span. They become cyber-goldfish... Your website needs to give them what they want to know in 7 seconds or they are gone - Off to find another site that can.

> *WARNING:* this doesn't mean all of your content needs to be short!

It needs to be as long as it needs to be to prove you are the answer to their problem. But it does mean your content can't be BORING. You absolutely have to inject some personality and interest into your content.

Your Headline should be an eyeball-magnet.

It needs to drag them into your site, by YELLING at the visitor, "this is what you want, and we have it".

Their is no room for subtlety here.

No more "Welcome to our website" headlines please… that tells you visitor absolutely nothing. It's wasting their time and valuable attention.

Now you are thinking, 'but that is too pushy'... but you are wrong.

They came looking for your products or services, they have a need... but they don't care about your

business... They care about one thing.... THEM.

They aren't asking you 'What do you do?', they are asking 'Do you do this..', 'Can you help me?' or 'How do I...'.

4. Every page of your website has to have ONE goal that moves them towards your sites purpose.

You need to know what it is, and help the visitor do it with a 'call to action'. To clarify this, the goal for a page about garden power tools, might be for the visitor to go to another page with further information on chain saws, hedge-clippers or lawn mowers. This doesn't mean there can only be one possible action - just that they choose one of the options.

That said, the more choices you give someone, the less likely they are to choose.

Take a look at this screenshot:
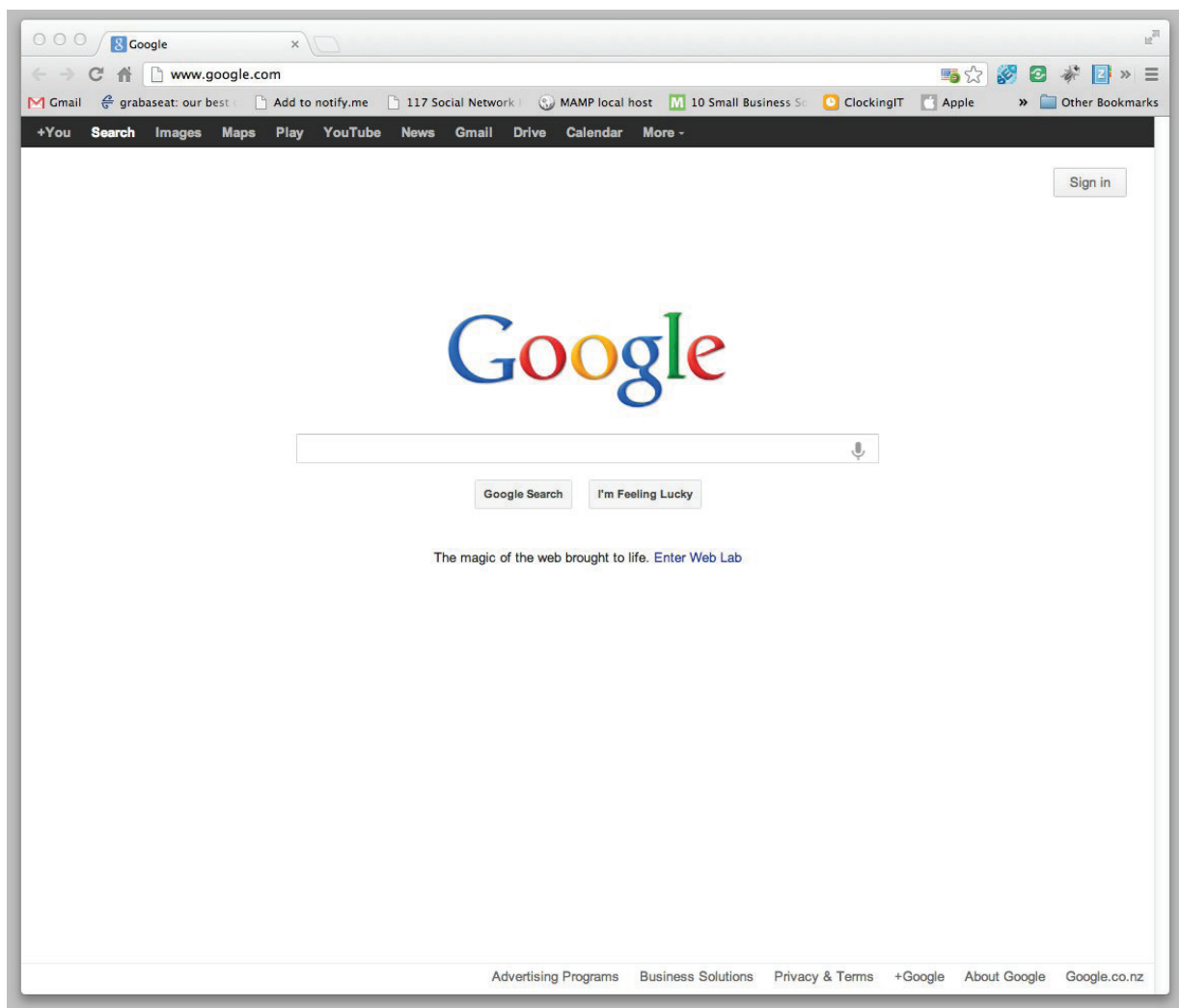
What do your think the call to action is on Google.com?

Another example is Amazon. On first view, it looks as though it breaks the rule of one goal for the front page. It has so much on the page, it seems cluttered. Except, right in the middle, with plenty of space around it is their flagship product, and... "Order now".

Or, to the left, you can use the menu to find exactly what you came for. Their main purpose of the page is to find what you want fast and easily, OR while you're here, buy the Kindle.

Every single page needs to have a single goal. Ideally, leading your visitor through your website by the hand to the ultimate goal - clicking the 'buy now', or the 'contact us' button.

5. Call to action

A call to action could be one of a number of things that engage your visitor and ask (tell) them to take that action we just talked about.

The secret to calls to action is to tell the reader exactly what you want them to do next, and then give them a reason why.

- Give them a reason (that they care about)
- Give them specific instructions
- If at all reasonable put a time limit on the action

Here are a couple of examples of Calls to Action:

- "Go to our Facebook page and click the like button, to get insanely useful web marketing tips delivered right into your Facebook feed"
- "Buy a poster from us today and save 40%"

6. Getting visitors to come back

I'm going to tell you a dirty little secret that no one wants you to know...

Conversion rates on the internet SUCK!

I'm being completely serious, they are terrible. In the internet marketing industry, they shoot for a conversion rate of between 0.5 and 1%.

In other words, they aim to make a sale to 1 in every 200 visitors to their sales page!!!

Imagine if you only made a sale to every 100th person to walk into your shop!?

THE GOOD NEWS...

Websites for local or real world businesses seem to have a **much** better success rate than that.

I won't go into all the reasons for it, but basically, if you are Googling "Blenheim Electrician", you are more than likely looking for an electrician because you need one, rather than just aimlessly surfing the internet killing time.

Moving on.

Getting visitors to your website can be hard work. Local websites don't get thousands of visitors per day, purely because they are targeting smaller populations and only so many people in the population are looking for your product or service at a given time.

So now you have visitors on your site, you absolutely *have to make the most of them*.

"Ok, sure, obviously, but how do I do that?"

Exactly the same as with offline sales. A return visitor or customer on the web is cheaper and much more valuable than plugging away with a steady stream of new visitors who have zero connection to your business.

How to lure visitors back to your website...

I am a firm believer in "giving before you take" - in grabbing your visitors attention by giving them something of incredible value straight off the bat. And then, when they want more, asking them for permission to send them more of what they just enjoyed.

How? Ask them for their email address, postal address or even their phone number. Or how about inviting them to a free seminar.

Statistics and repeated tests prove sign ups increase dramatically if you give value before asking for details.

This is driven by reciprocity. People have a sort of internal balance in their heads. You know how when a friend buys you a coffee and you have a mental tab that it's your turn next time. That's the psychology that is at work here.

If you give your visitor value straight up they feel they owe you something.

And of course, if you gave them some excellent content that really hits home with them... Then of course they'll want more. They'll happily give you their email address.

Once you have their permission to contact them, you can send them invitations to come back to your website for new content or sales offers.

7. Content is King

It is an overused saying in marketing, but it is 110% true.

The content of your website is critically important to its success.

But all too often it is thrown together at the last minute to fill out the new web design.

Content effects how your website is ranked in the search engines. Even more importantly, your content effects how helpful your site is to visitors and whether they convert into leads.

Your web designer should help you with organising your company information and prioritising what information goes where on your site.

BUT...

Your designer doesn't know your business. They don't know your customers needs and wants like you do.

You need to take ownership of compiling the content for your website.

Tips For Great Content...

All content on your site should be created for your customer.

Your perfect customer is one who is already having a conversation in their head about your product or service. Your job is simply to join that conversation.

Great content for your website is answering any questions they have, and teaching them anything and everything they need to know in order to do business with you.

Highlight benefits.

Listen. This is hardly news... Everyone in sales (and hopefully anyone in business) knows about talking benefits instead of features.

But so many people fall into the old habits of talking about features and specifications rather than explaining the results the customer will actually get.

Take this for an example...

In 2001, electronics companies were selling 4 gigabyte mp3 players... Apple came along with the iPod and simply said '1000 songs in your pocket'.

Ask yourself, what are the true benefits of your product or service?

If you're getting stuck, think in terms of time or hassle. What are the biggest problems in your industry and how do you fix them?

Keywords.

Lastly, in the hierarchy of importance for content, is including keywords into your copy. As long as you are writing customer focused content, you likely have included relevant keywords naturally.

We'll discuss keywords in more detail in the next section.

8. Help people to find your site (in the first place)

The "Build it and they will come", philosophy doesn't exist on the web (if anywhere).

Your job is to help people find your site.

The first, simplest and most neglected way to get people to your site, is to tell them it exists.

- Email your existing customers or clients
- Advertise your web address
- Announce your site on social sites like Facebook and Twitter
- Run a competition

The options are almost endless. Every communication you have with your customers or potential

customers, is another opportunity.

The important thing is to not just give them the address, but to give them a reason to take a look. Offering a free report (like this one), special online offers or just rock solid content (how to's, tips and tricks).

So now you have worked hard to tell your existing customers and connections about your new website, there are two more options to get new visitors to your website and learning about your businesses products and services.

Search.

What keywords are your potential visitors and prospects going to use to find your website?

Find out by searching for your business in another city or even country. (I use large cities in the US or UK). Take a note of the keywords and phrases that you search for. See if you can get some friends or family to do the same. As often times we are too close to our own businesses or industry and use jargon that a customer wouldn't understand or use themselves when searching.

Once you have a list of keywords, you can analyze them with the Google Keyword tool. It will tell you which of your keywords are searched for the most, as well as suggest other related keywords.

https://adwords.google.com/o/KeywordTool

With your final list, make sure the keywords are included in your website content.

You don't have to (and shouldn't) add them all to every page. You are better off having different pages for different keywords/topics.

Advertise

Now here this is the section you probably skip over, as it is suggesting you spend moolah. But don't be too hasty. Advertising on Google or Facebook (or elsewhere) can be an effective and affordable way to get targeted visitors to your website.

Before you launch into spending serious money to get folks to your website, make sure you aren't throwing money away.

Please don't bother paying to have people land on the front page of your website. That is a fast way

to waste some serious money.

Since you are paying out your hard earned cash, you absolutely need to have a goal for them. Create a specific offer with a compelling call to action, to make sure you capture as many of the visitors as possible.

9. Notice I haven't mentioned anything about design yet?

Design is secondary to the function and content of your website. I'm not going to go so far as saying design is unimportant, it is important... but you can't start designing a website until you know who it is aimed at attracting, and what content is to be highlighted.

Actually, functionality and content IS DESIGN. Unfortunately most people consider design to be only about how it looks.

Take Google.com for example. Possibly the most boring design in the world... It's a mostly empty page with a giant text box in the middle.

Remember how I said that you want One goal per page? Those guys at Google are clever (hey, most of them have a PhD), and they know that they can't help you until you put something into that search box. Once you tell them what you are looking for, they can find it for you..

The Key Points For A Successful Design...

It must be **attractive and professional**. While the content is the most important thing on your website, the design is still the first impression a visitor gets. It doesn't matter if you have the best content in the world if the visitor clicks away immediately because your site looks awful.

Simple and distraction free. Your design must not distract from the all important content or calls to action.

Generally it should **appeal to your ideal customer's tastes**. Obviously a website that appeals to teenagers, is unlikely to appeal to retirees.

Okay, once your design has made a first impression good enough to get the visitor to read on and learn about your products and services, it needs to get out of the way and **not distract from the all important content**.

The design should also highlight and reinforce your calls to action.

How To Avoid 3 Web Design Rip-offs!

1. Exorbitant hosting fees

Hosting fees are the charges for the running of a server to keep your website live on the web. Essentially they cover the costs of storing and transferring the files that make up your website to other computers that wish to view your site.

In the past, costs of data storage and bandwidth were expensive, but as with your computer's hard drive and broadband connection, these costs have dropped significantly over the years. However, many web designers have not dropped their hosting rates to reflect their reduced costs. They are charging in excess of $50 or even $100 per month.

Now to be completely clear, there are occasions that this is warranted. For very large websites with a lot of data (such as video or images), or websites that get a lot of visitors (thousands per day) for example, but it is completely unnecessary for the average local business website.

Be sure to check any hosting fees included with a website quote. If they seem high, query whether they include the maintenance of your website as well as hosting.

2. No access to edit your website

All modern websites larger than one page should now be built on a Content Management System (CMS) which enables you (or anyone with the login details) to add or edit the content on your site.

In the past websites were built entirely in html (the coding language of the web), which meant that the only people who could edit your website were web designers. And you got to pay them for the privilege.

Avoid this situation by asking your web designer which CMS your website will be built on and what you will and will not be able to change on your website once it is live. You should also receive some documentation and/or instruction on how to manage your website.

3. Bait and switch

You will have seen a number of companies offering super low prices for a website. Sometimes they do this by just offering a really basic website with limited functionality, but often these companies offer

you one (very low) price to do a job, but then continues to add further charges until the true cost is similar to or more than their competitors.

In web design this can happen when you are offered a website dirt cheap, but are charged excessive amounts for changing and updating anything in the future. In other situations you may be offered a rock bottom price for the base website, but are charged extra for 'additional functions' like photo galleries, adding video, Google analytics etc.

Avoid falling in to the 'bait and switch' trap by asking about any ongoing and charges for 'extras' before you start.

Thanks

Thanks for reading our Consumer guide. You should now have a good understanding of Website Design and the things you should be aware of when choosing a web designer for your business.

If you have any further questions about web design or marketing your business online, you are invited to call us on 03 5777 368.

This guide is produced for you by The Full Noise - Web and Graphic designers, and web marketers.

If you found it helpful, please share it with anyone you know will get some benefit from it.

For practical customer-getting tips on branding and marketing your business:

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