

The Contractor's Ultimate Blueprint for a Website that Generates Leads

Your Website: The key to easy leads

It's a fact:

97% of people go online to search before they make a decision about purchasing a local product or service.

Your customers are online, and they're looking for you. You probably know you need a website, and maybe you already have one. But do you know how to use your website to capture the hottest leads?

The internet is the first place people go when they need to solve a problem.

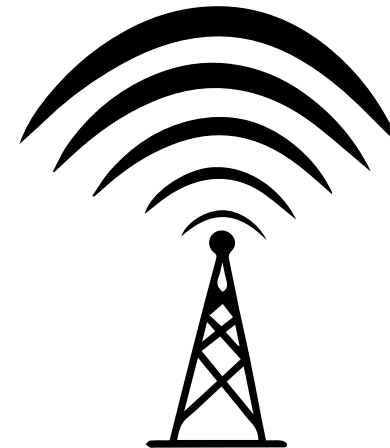
Nancy wants a bathroom remodeled.

Tom needs his deck refinished.

Lisa is ready to build her dream home.

The moment Nancy, Tom, and Lisa turn to the internet to search for answers to their problems, they are primed for purchase. They are feeling their pain, thinking about how to solve it, and are ready to put their money in the capable hands of a professional who can help.

But only if they can find you, and they like what they see.



Elements of a Great Website

To attract visitors and turn them into customers, your website needs to meet the standards of today's digital marketplace, or you're losing out on a big piece of the pie. Set your website up using these website best practices, and the leads will come to you.

1. Attractive

When a potential customer lands on your website, it only takes 1/10 of a second for them to decide whether they like your website or not. And if visiting your website is the first interaction a person has with you and your business, you need to make a good first impression.

Based entirely on their first glance at your website, your customers will decide if you are:

- professional
- experienced
- trustworthy
- hireable

55% of people spend 15 seconds or less on a website.

If your website visitors don't like what they see in those first few moments, you stand a very good chance of losing them.

The most attractive websites don't have to be sleek, flashy, or tricked out. You don't have to have a website design budget equal to six months of your operating budget, either.

Your website only needs to have a few simple design elements dialed in to inspire trust, confidence, and professionalism.

Seven elements of an attractive website:

1. Plenty of Whitespace

The empty space on a webpage is known as whitespace. It's the blank space between graphics, images, columns, paragraphs, margins, and other elements.

Using plenty of whitespace makes text more readable, lets images and graphics stand out, and keeps visitors from getting overwhelmed.

2. Simple navigation

Visitors to your site should be able to quickly find the information they need. If they want to know how to contact you, what services you offer, or look for more information on your blog, your navigation menus should direct them to the right place. Menus should be simple, well organized and easy to read.

3. Easy to read text

Your entire site should be easy to read on devices as small as a smartphone screen, and as large as a desktop monitor.

Don't: many different fonts, overly stylized fonts, too many colors, dark background, light text, non-contrasting colors, huge paragraphs with no breaks.

Do: No more than 2 font types, light background with dark text, 2-3 colors sitewide, small paragraphs with many headers.

4. Quality Images

If you aren't using pictures and images on your website, you are missing a big opportunity to make it more attractive to visitors, and to connect with them on an emotional level.

Best Practices:

- Only use pictures you have a legal right to use (no screenshots from google images!). Use
- Source high quality images with good resolution
- Don't overwhelm the page with images

5. Intuitive Layout

Don't try to reinvent the wheel with your website design, or get "tricky" with its elements. Your professional business site needs to be functional first, not confusing for prospective customers.

Put the menu bar along the top where visitors would expect to find it, and use commonly accepted titles such as 'Products & Services,' 'Contact Us,' and 'Blog.'

6. Cohesive Styling

There should be a clear connection from one page to the next on your site. Your fonts, styling, colors, and other visual elements should be clearly defined and repeated across the entire site. Don't use one font on the main page, a different font on your about page, and a third font on your blog.

7. Consistent Branding

Your website should reflect that brand on every page, in every post, and on every picture. Use the same logo on your website that's also on your business cards, coffee mugs, and stationary. If your logo is navy and maroon, use those colors throughout your site. Take a moment to edit your images before you upload them to your website with your logo, or the name of your business.

Websites designed with these visual elements in mind will attract visitors and keep them on your site, where they can spend more time learning all about you, your company, and the services you offer.

2. Responsive Web Design

There's no question that people are shopping and searching for information on their smartphones and tablets. If you want to compete, you have to have a responsive site.

Responsive web design means that your website automatically adjusts to look good on every device from a desktop to a smartphone.

Think your customers aren't looking for your website from a mobile device? Think again...

People are using their

- 80% of internet users own a smartphone
- 25% of smartphone owners aged 18-44 can't remember the last time their phone wasn't next to them
- 47% of internet users own a tablet
- Americans spend more digital media time (51%) on mobile devices compared to desktop (42%)
- 25% of internet users only access internet on mobile device

Google Loves Responsive Sites

Want to win with Google and show up in the search engine results? Then your website needs to be responsive.

In December of 2014, Google announced that websites they consider to be "mobile-friendly" would be given preferential treatment.

Google knows that internet users want to have a positive experience when they are using their tablets, smartphones, and other mobile devices, so websites that perform well across various devices are going to rank higher on Google's Search Engine Results Page (SERP) than those that don't.

How to tell if your site is responsive

1. Use a tool, such as Google's Mobile-Friendly Test
2. Talk to your web designer
3. Ask the support team of your website builder
4. Hop on your smartphone (and tablet) and check it out for yourself

3. Well Organized Information

If you tried to put all of the information you have about your business onto one web page, it would be pretty difficult to read and digest for people.

Search engines would be confused, too.

That's why your website will be organized into different web pages. Your website may have some of the following:

- **Home page** - a summary of who you are and what you offer
- **About page** - an opportunity to provide an overview of the history of your business and what makes you stand apart from your competition
- **Services page** - a place to list the services that you offer including a brief summary or description of the service

- **Testimonials page** - a place to put referrals and recommendations from previous customers, may include photos
- **Blog page** - an opportunity to update your website with new content that educates and entertains your customers
- **FAQ page** - an opportunity to provide answers to the questions you are most frequently asked about your business or services
- **Contact page** - a place to list every available way customers can get in touch with you or find your business, including addresses, maps, email, and phone

Organizing your website into different web pages makes your website easy to use, easy to understand, and is crucial to SEO.

Use Keywords to Help You Get Found

When you organize your website, give each page a specific topic. This is how the search engines decide if your website, or page, is relevant to what the searcher is looking for. Choosing keywords that your customers might be searching for helps google decide if your pages will answer the searchers questions.

Think of keywords in the way your customers would search when they solve their problems.

- "Plumber, San Antonio"
- "Landscape in Seattle"
- "Best finishing carpenter in Boulder"
- "how to replace carpet"
- "how to finish a basement"
- "remodel contractor"

Keywords help your SEO.

Keyword Best Practices

What is the best way to use keywords so visitors to your site understand what each page is about, and to help your SEO efforts?

Pick a primary topic for each page.

This topic will determine your keywords, or phrase, that you will focus on. Don't try to touch on too many subjects on one single page of your website, or it will be confusing for search engines, and visitors to your site, to determine what that page is about. There is no reason to shove reviews and testimonials on to your services page. Separate your topics and organize your site pages.

Write for humans.

When you create the content for this page, convey to your human audience what your page topic is about. Don't write for search engines, create content for the people who will be visiting your page.

Don't get tricky.

Search engines know if you are trying to be sneaky with your keywords. You wouldn't have a conversation with a real person in which you mentioned that you were the "best plumber in Santa Fe," fifteen different times. Stuffing excessive keywords into your webpage will not help your SEO, and will get you penalized by Google. Stick with natural writing that includes synonyms and terms related to your keyword, and Google will reward you with higher search rankings.

4. There's Testimonial Page

A testimonials page on your website is crucial. If your website doesn't have this, you need to add it pronto.

Today, a review or testimonial found online holds the same weight as a word-of-mouth recommendation from a trusted friend.

Here's what consumers have to say about online reviews:

- 27% of consumers use online reviews to determine which business to use
- 58% of consumers trust a business with positive online reviews
- 72% of consumers trust an online review as much as a personal recommendation

Consider your testimonials page your own personal "brag book." Ask your clients for a testimonial as often as you ask for a referral for more business.

Use images to back up your testimonials. Pictures are a powerful way to communicate with people. They convey emotions and tell stories in an instant. As someone who provides a service, pictures are also a wonderful way to showcase your talent and the work that you've completed.

5. Calls-to-Action (CTA)

It's not enough to simply get people to your site. In order to turn them into leads, and eventually into customers, you have to tell them what to do.

Your secret weapon that turns visitors to leads is... a call-to-action.

A call-to-action (CTA) nudges visitors to take the next step toward becoming a lead. They usually look like a button of some kind that tells you to:

- Contact Us
- Subscribe to the Blog
- Subscribe to Email Newsletter
- Get a Quote
- Follow us on Social
- Share us on Social
- Print a Coupon
- Read other blogs

Think of what is the appropriate next step for a visitor on that web page, and include a CTA that will get them to take that step.



Want even more exposure?

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