

THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS EVERY WEBSITE NEEDS

Did you know it's no good having a beautifully designed website if the navigation and user experience is not right, and if search engines (Google and others) are not happy and therefore, not ranking you well?

After many years working with businesses on their websites here is my top 10 must-have list:

1. HAVE YOU CLEARLY EXPLAINED WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO?

Through succinct descriptions, and great images, visitors to your site should be able to know instantly what your company does and what makes it stand out from your competition.

2. DOES YOUR TEXT TALK TO (NOT AT) YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Your website content should focus on how you can benefit your customer, instead of how awesome you are.

3. DO YOU HAVE GREAT IMAGES?

A great website needs great images that are relevant, visual and engaging. They also must be optimised correctly, which means the file must not be too big, allowing the site to load quickly. I recommend header images under 200 kb, hero images under 100 kb and all other images under 50 kb. Unsplash is a great website for free images. Check it out at <http://unsplash.com>

4. IS YOUR BUSINESS NAME, ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION IN TEXT?

Search engines can't index words from images. Make sure your company name and details are findable by always having them as text, and hyperlinking email addresses, phone numbers and location addresses.

5. IS YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION EASY TO FIND, AND ON EVERY PAGE?

Don't make visitors have to search your site to find out how to contact you. Make sure they can find you, on every page, quickly and easily.

6. IS YOUR WEBSITE RESPONSIVE?

Did you know over 50% of search queries now come from mobile devices? Make sure your website "responds" and changes to a better user experience when people view it on their phone and tablet.

7. HAVE YOU TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF SEO?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is about making sure your keywords (the words or phrases that describe your business) are in the right places and are on every page. Yoast is great at helping you with this. Check it out at <https://yoast.com>

8. DO YOU HAVE AN SSL?

This is the little green padlock you see in the browser. It used to be only needed for eCommerce sites but now Google wants one on every website and sees it as an integral part of your website's security.

9. DO YOU CHECK REGULARLY FOR BROKEN LINKS?

Broken links resulting in an error message are very off putting for visitors. Regular checks are critical. I use Online Broken Link Checker. Check it out at <http://www.brokenlinkcheck.com>

10. DO YOU DO REGULAR UPDATES ON YOUR SITE TO ENSURE IT IS SAFE AND SECURE?

Website hacking is a serious problem. Make sure yours is safe by doing monthly checks, updates and backups, and also use software that monitors and advises any problems. I use wordfence on all my sites. Check it out at <https://www.wordfence.com>

I hope this helps to improve your website performance, ranking and visitor numbers.

Tammy Dodd is the owner of Websites4smb, a web development company that specialised in designing and building websites for small and medium-sized businesses, including the new site for ALNA.

Contact Tammy on tammy@websites4smb.com.au or visit <https://websites4smb.com.au>