

12 ELEMENTS

TO A GREAT WEBSITE

A DEFINITIVE GUIDE
TO A SUCCESSFUL
TRADE WEBSITE



“Amazing! This literally saved me
thousands

Dave - David Ferrari Constructions

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At Tradie Web Guys, we see and hear a lot of 'website horror stories'.

The aim of this book is to help you make better, informed decisions, by understanding key areas and being able to ask the right questions. It's our way of helping you dodge 'digital bullets'.

Matt Jones - Director

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Chapter One

Begin With Clarity

What's your goal?

- Are you looking for a place to showcase your skills?
- Are you looking for a vehicle that can generate you more work?
- Would you like a platform where visitors can get to know you and build a relationship?
- Do you want to educate your visitors?
- Do you want to build a community where you're able to communicate regularly with your members?

Understanding the true motives behind building your website will help you create a product that moves you closer to your end goal.

For example, having a website alone may not be enough to make your phone ring. In order to increase the number of people that see your website, it's likely that you'll need to apply some type of a marketing strategy.

There are various forms of digital marketing, which all serve different purposes. Having clarity around what you want to achieve with your new website will help you ascertain what types of marketing will help you get there.

It's likely that you'll need either one of, or a combination of the following types of marketing strategies.

1 'Search Engine Marketing' (commonly referred to as SEM, PPC, AdWords). These are paid ads on search engines.

2 'Search Engine Optimisation' (SEO) is an organic marketing strategy that doesn't depend on paid ads.

3 Local SEO, which is typically designed to help you show up in local searches.

4 Social Media marketing harnesses platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram and can utilise both paid and organic strategies.

“ If you know what direction you're heading, it makes it much easier for you to:

a.) Hire the right experts.

b.) Work with them to create the correct solution.

In chapter three, we talk more about choosing the right contractors to work with. It's very important that you work with individuals or organisations that not only understand your goals, but

also understand how the strategies mentioned above work together to form a conversion.

A large, stylized, grey letter 'W' is positioned on the left side of the page. It is partially overlaid by a light green circular graphic that extends from the left edge. The 'W' is composed of three vertical strokes and two diagonal strokes, giving it a modern, geometric appearance.

When a visitor lands on your site, you have around three seconds to capture their attention.

Some businesses may have an advantage if they offer an emergency service, such as maintenance plumbing or emergency electrical, however it's still critically important that once a visitor lands on one of your web pages, they are able to clearly and quickly establish what it is you do and how you can help solve their problem. This is one of the reasons why it's important to keep a unique message on each individual page.

For example, if you offer five different services, they should each have their own page. We do this so that when a visitor lands on one of your pages,

they're seeing information specifically relevant to what they've been searching for.

A common scenario would be if a potential customer clicks one of your Google Ads for 'Blocked Drains', they should be directed to a page that is talking about blocked drains.

If they land on your homepage, then they have to go looking for the information and that is considered a poor user experience and will likely result in them leaving your site.

Some great ways to communicate a clear message is by using:

- Bullet points
- Video
- Photos
- Images/graphics
- Headings
- Testimonials/reviews
- Quotations
- FAQ's
- Fonts

This rule doesn't just apply to your website.

When you're creating any kind of content, it's important that you keep the message clear.

If you're posting to facebook, post about one topic. If you're recording a video keep it about one topic. If you're recording a podcast, keep it about one topic. You get the idea.

Chapter Three

Work with the right people

Be wary of 'web designers'

When choosing a company to build your website, make sure that you ask the right questions before engaging them. That tip alone could save you an immense amount of time, money and grief.

Asking the right questions achieves a number of things.

- ✓ It communicates that you have an idea of what you want.
- ✓ It sets a level of expectation.
- ✓ It allows you to test the contractor's knowledge.
- ✓ It will show you if they are good communicators.
- ✓ It will build rapport.
- ✓ It shows that you have a level of understanding on the topic.

When looking to hire a contractor, it's wise to choose a company that not only understands what you do, but also understands your industry and has a good understanding of what your end goal is.

As we touched on in the last chapter, if the goal for your website is to generate more leads, your web designer needs

to build the site with that in mind.

It's not uncommon to find extremely good web designers that have no idea when considering the other parts of the 'digital ecosystem'.

Just as it's important to be *asking* the right questions, it's also equally important to be *asked* the right questions.

Imagine visiting a doctor for a checkup and he, or she not asking you questions about your health. It's the same thing. If your web designer is not asking you the right questions, then you're likely to be misdiagnosed.

A good web design company will have some kind of 'scoping session', where they can learn about your company, your goals, your tastes, the features you require, etc.

“ Questions aren't an annoyance,
they're a necessity.

Here are some good questions to ask a web designer before you engage them.

1. *Are you familiar with the work I do?*

If they don't understand what you do, it's going to be a steep learning curve for them...which you'll inevitably end up paying for.

2. *May I see some similar projects that you have completed?*

It's worth using past projects as a reference tool, so you can check out the type of work they have done for companies in similar professions.

3. *My goals are XYZ. How will your product help me get there?*

This question give you an idea of how well they understand the role of the website in the 'digital ecosystem'.

4. *How will the website help me convert visitors to clients?*

Do they understand how to make your website convert? Do they know how to capture visitors details?

5. *What platform will you be building my website on?*

Be wary companies that use their own unique platforms/website builders. It's their way of *tying you to them*, meaning every time you want to make a change, you're obligated to get them to do it for you.

6. *What Call-To-Actions (CTA's) do you suggest we use?*

Do they understand what is going to appeal to your customers?

7. *Will I be under any contracts & am I free to leave at any time?*

This is important because you should only be working with them because they offer a good service.

Don't get tied into unnecessary contracts.

8. *Will I own the rights to everything on completion?*

Don't sign up to a deal that leaves your new website under someone else's ownership.

If you've paid for it, you should own it!

9. Please disclose and explain any ongoing fees to me.

Some companies will have ongoing fees, which often take care of things like; hosting, support, security, backups, etc. This is not a bad thing, it's just important to know what they are, so there's no surprises.

10. Do you offer support? If so, what does it include?

It's wise to invest in a company that can support you when you need it so that you're not on your own.

11. Do you offer high quality hosting? Please provide me with the details.

Quality hosting is paramount and it can literally make or break a website's performance. Make sure it's fast & hosted locally - preferably across multiple locations. There's more about this in chapter eleven.



Chapter Four

Books *are* judged by their covers

“You don't get a second chance at a first impression!”

Your website is a direct reflection of your company, so it's important that its design showcases your professionalism.

Having a great looking website is paramount, for in today's digital age, it is most likely going to be the first place that a potential visitor gets to meet you.

Statistics tell us you have three seconds to capture your visitors attention on a website, so it's very important that your website's layout and visual design are working together to promptly convey your message.

Having a poorly built, ugly website has the same effect to a customer as if you showed up to a customers home out of uniform, unclean,

with no deodorant on.

Of course you would never do that, however there are a lot of companies out there that are doing the equivalent with their website.

Simplicity is key when we're talking modern websites.

Gone are the days of cluttered, busy and technical websites. Today a website is simple to navigate, easy to read, visually aesthetic and it communicates your core messages throughout.

It should also serve as a lead generating machine, in order to help you grow a marketable database.

The aim of the game is to make your visitor's experience as smooth as possible.

Have contact forms on your website and put a visible phone number on the page.

Make it easy to be contacted.

Chapter Five

Make it easy for yourself

Let's face it, managing your own website is a daunting prospect.

It's an entirely new 'technical' skill that we have to learn, which means one more distraction that's going to take us away from what we 'should' be doing. Regardless, websites are non negotiable. You simply must have one if you want to compete in a modern landscape.

So make it easy for yourself!

Contrary to common belief, websites don't have to be complicated. In fact, many solutions are available today that make them extremely user friendly. No coding required, limited skills needed to make modifications, and a fast learning curve.

They do exist, however you'll need to find a developer that can set you up with such a solution.

As the name suggests, a 'Content Management System',

or CMS is designed to give you flexibility over your website. Our CMS of choice is 'Wordpress', which occupies 20% of the worlds websites at the time this book was created.

The reason that I share that with you is because if you plan on getting a website built, would it not make sense to get it built using a program that developers right across the globe are familiar with?

There are many tools that plug into wordpress that make it very manageable for even the most non technical person.

We like to use wordpress because we don't believe in making our clients totally dependant on us.

If they want to update images, copy, blog posts, or whatever it may be, we believe they should be empowered to make these changes on their own. Of course there's support if required, however for the better part, they're equipped enough from the regular training we provide to get in there and get their hands dirty, without doing too much damage.

Make it easy for yourself by investing in solutions that you can learn to use and is supported globally.

There are many other advantages of using a CMS like wordpress.

For example, there are plugins (which are programs) that connect to your website that can show you how your website's SEO is performing. You can also connect charts to your dashboard, which can tell you things like, how many visitors you're getting to your website.

The internet is not going anywhere and nor are websites, so you may as well embrace the change and learn a new skill.

Chapter Six

Be mobile friendly

“As the world becomes more connected, we become less patient.

Our demand for information is met via the devices that we carry and now more than ever everything is at our fingertips.

Not too long ago, it was common practice to conduct internet searches, solely from the desktop computer in your home, or office. However as technology advances, the way we search for information has evolved.

With such a large number of searches now coming from a mobile device, it's no wonder that our *friends* at Google now favour websites that are considered 'mobile friendly'.

The logic behind that movement is that if people are going to be using mobile devices more for searching the internet, then companies should be accommodating them by having a website that offers the best mobile experience.

There's two types of 'mobile friendly' website options.

1

There's the 'mobile site', which is basically a version of a website that has been built specifically for a mobile device.

Your visitor will effectively be sent to one of two separate websites, depending on the device they are searching from.

So where a search from a desktop computer will return one version, a search from a mobile device will return a separate, compressed version.

2

The other solution is 'Responsive Design', which takes the content from your website and scales it to fit the screen size of your device.

So regardless of whether the search is coming from a phone, a tablet, or a desktop computer, the content is the same, it's just modified to fit the screen you're looking at.

According to Google, responsive design is the preferred option.

Here's an example of why mobile friendly websites are so important.

You're doing the groceries and you receive a phone call from your wife telling you that the sewer in your home is blocked and it's surcharging. You have dinner guests coming over in 3 hours, so you need to get it fixed ASAP.

Do you:

- a.) finish your shopping, drive home, jump on the internet and search for a local plumber, or
- b.) Pull out your mobile phone, search for a plumber and have them meet you at home.

Now here's the catch.

If the plumber that I'm looking for does NOT have a mobile friendly website, Google's algorithms won't give it preference in a search that's come from a mobile device.

It will favour mobile friendly websites.

“The bottom line is, if you don't have a mobile friendly website, you're not in the race.”



Chapter Seven

Create and enjoyable experience

“Most us at some stage have left a website because it was painful.

The content was full of jargon, the navigation was confusing, the pages were slow to load, etc.

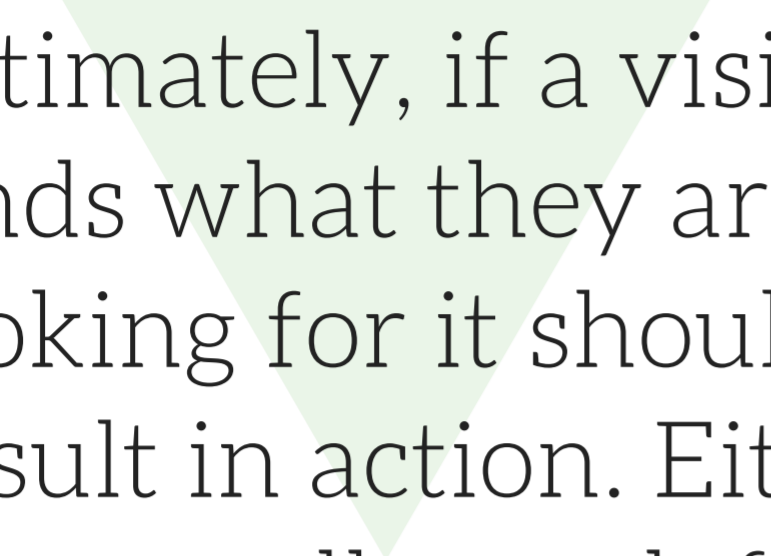
At the end of the day, if your visitors don't have a good experience on your website, they're likely to go elsewhere, so it's important that when you build your website, you're doing it with them in mind.

User experience should be at the forefront of every website as it will directly influence your visitors decision to stay on the site. A website results in an enjoyable experience when it allows the visitor to find what they're looking for quickly and painlessly.

It's not uncommon to see scenarios on a website that make customers jump through too many unnecessary hoops. Things like, too many fields on an enquiry form, pages with no contact details, pages with no relevant call to action, etc.

The best way to approach user experience is to put yourself in your visitors shoes.

- ? Would you go through those steps in order to get that result?
- ? What steps could you possibly eliminate in order for that visitor to get the same result?
- ? Is this relevant to what your visitor is looking for?



Ultimately, if a visitor finds what they are looking for it should result in action. Either a phone call, a web form, a download, etc.

If they have opted in for something on your website, they have done so for a reason. They want whatever it is you're offering...so give it to them.

It's also important to recognise that what you think might look good, may not be in the best interest of your website's performance.

Hopefully by this stage, you've asked the right questions and as a result employed a web designer that has a good understanding of what is needed from a conversion point of view.

A good web designer will take what you have to say onboard and work it in with their experience to reach a common ground.

It might occasionally result in them shutting an idea of yours down, however keep in mind, if they know what they're talking about, then they should have the experience to back up their decision.

It's also important to try new things and explore alternatives. Split testing is a great way to draw comparisons between what is working and what is not.

One of the reasons we insist on using a platform that is easy to make changes to is because we like to have the flexibility of trying new things, to see what works best.

Chapter Eight Content is King

Before we dive into why content is important, let's discuss some common types of content. Often when we think of content, we immediately think of what's written on our website, however *content is everywhere*.

- Written (websites, blogs, eBooks, magazines, newspapers, press releases)
- Social media (Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest)
- Video Streaming (Snapchat, Facebook Live, Blab, Periscope)
- Video (Youtube, Vimeo, Facebook)
- Television (free to air, Netflix, cable, Apple TV)
- Audio (Radio, Podcasts, audio books, music)
- Electronic (email, newsletters, forums, webinars)

As you can see, we're literally surrounded by content all day, every day, so it's important when we create content, that we're cutting through the noise. There are many reasons why we would create content, however I've chosen to highlight these two specifically.

Firstly, to educate & inform

Content should be created to educate your audience. If you're not adding value to them, they're unlikely to consume it. If we use the website as an example,

a visitor is coming to your site to get access to information, relevant to a product or service that you provide. Home renovations, burst pipes, lawn maintenance, etc.

Secondly, to leverage search engines

Search engines allow a way for your content to be found.

Content shouldn't be made for the search engines, however it can certainly be made with them in mind. If you're planning on

your content being seen by others, there are ways you can 'optimise' it so that when people are searching for it, your content has a chance of appearing in that search.

Here are some key principles to follow when creating content.

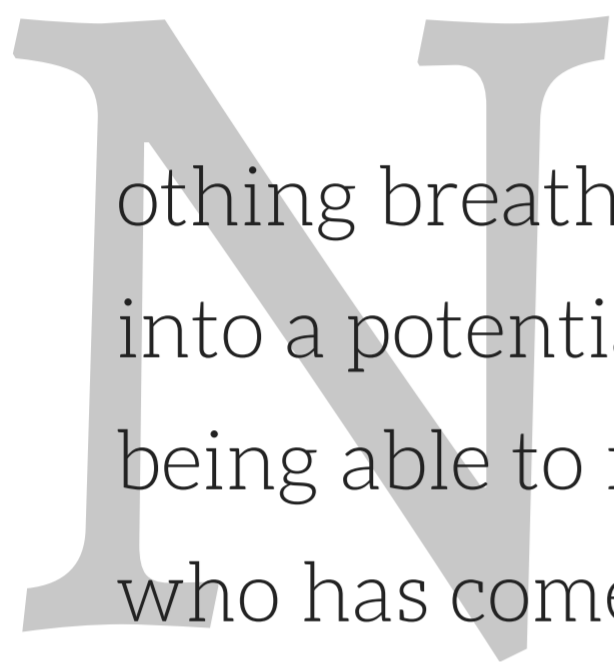
- Keep it relevant.
- Don't mix your message. One topic per piece of content.
- Don't use too much technical speak, or jargon.
- Talk about the benefits, not so much the process. For example, no one cares how you clear a blocked drain, they only care that their sewer will no longer overflow.
- Try to address the following; who, what, why, when, where, how.
- Use bullet points, sub headings, categories, etc.
- Use different mediums. Eg, written copy with images; video on a blog post, etc.
- Plan it out (strategise).
- Don't over sell.
- Use a relevant call to action.

Chapter Nine

Social proof



The reason social proofing works so well, is because it builds trust and enables *potential clients* to resonate with *current clients* with similar stories.



Nothing breathes more confidence into a potential customer than being able to relate to someone who has come from a similar situation as them.

Take testimonials for example. They're an extremely powerful conversion tool if they are used correctly, because they have the ability to eliminate doubt, while at the same time building rapport.

Regardless of what you personally think of testimonials, the bottom line is they work and they convert. Statistics tell us that a potential client is twice as likely to engage your services, if they've been able to relate to some sort of social proof.

Sure, you see a lot of scenarios where testimonials look fabricated and in many cases they may well be, however if done correctly, they have the potential to work wonders for you.

Here are some reasons why some testimonials don't work.

- They could be too scripted.
- There's no credibility.
- They don't have a photo, or a logo to accompany them.
- It's been clearly fabricated.
- It's not relevant.
- It's too long.

Here are some things you can do to make them convert better

- Keep it short and sweet.
- Make it relevant to that person and what you did for them.
- If it's written, use a photograph to accompany the testimonial.
- Don't over script it. Bullet points are much better.
- Keep it to one specific point. If you did multiple projects or tasks with them, record multiple testimonials.
- Don't over edit. Make it real.
- If it's a video, make sure the sound and the lighting is good.

When obtaining testimonials, you need to make the process as simple as you can for whoever you want it to come from. If it's a written testimonial, I recommend creating the testimonial yourself, emailing it to your customer and asking them to approve it and make any necessary amendments before sending it back.

I teach this method for the following reasons.

- I can create a relevant testimonial to their job.
- I can keep it short and sweet.
- They don't have to create the testimonial, they just need to edit it and approve it.
- It doesn't take up a lot of their time.
- I can get a fast response.
- The customer always appreciates proactivity.

How you choose to obtain your testimonials is up to you at the end of the day, however what's important is that you do it.

Testimonials work, so make them a part of your process.

Chapter Ten

Lead people to the next step

“If you want people to take action, lead them down the right path.”

Typically, someone will visit your website to receive information on the goods and services that you offer. Once they've found the information they require, it's your job to make sure that they're led to the following steps, which will more often than not be one of the following:

They're ready to purchase

If they're ready to purchase, you need to have a system in place that shows them how. Is it an online booking form, is it booking over the phone, or can they purchase directly from the website? You need to guide them as directly as possible to whatever path you want that person to take.

They need more information

If a customer is not ready to purchase, there's a good chance that you have not made it easy enough for them to purchase from you or not effectively communicated the value of your service or product.

A good way to give people more more information, while NOT overloading them is via an automated email sequence, or by putting

them on some kind of newsletter distribution.

Keep in mind, they have come to your website because they are interested in something you offer. Make sure you have a way of obtaining an email address, which is most easily done by exchanging it for something of value to them, like a video course, or an eBook (like this one).

In this scenario, you are leading your customer down the path of joining your database, so you can communicate with them in the future.

They're not interested

If they're not interested, it's important you find out why.

Otherwise, how can you learn from the situation and make changes.

Yes, it's often hard to confront the truth, but what's a better outcome?

- a.) Getting valuable feedback on how you can improve your conversions, or
- b.) Continuing on the same path, making the same mistakes.

If someone is not interested in any of my proposals, I always call them to find out why. By doing that, I can potentially offer an alternative, while also learning how to improve my business.

Chapter Eleven

Security & performance

Having a website is one thing, however having a website that runs optimally is another.

You can have the world's most beautiful website, but if you neglect security and performance, then it will eventually let you down.

In this chapter, we're going to talk specifically about:

- Quality hosting
- Managed updates
- Regular backups
- Analytics & reporting

To be fair each of these topics deserves their own chapter, however at the end of the day, they all come down to safety & performance.

Quality hosting

Website hosting is the elephant in the room. Every website needs to be hosted somewhere, however there seems to be a stigma out there that 'cheaper is better'.

Folks, cheaper is not always better!

Some of the things to look for include:

- ✓ A fast load time.
- ✓ Local servers.
- ✓ Local Support.

66 It's important to compare apples to apples with hosting. Don't be fooled into thinking that cheaper is better, in my experience, that has never once has been the case.

Managed updates

Your website needs to be regularly updated. Wordpress, for example will often update their platform more than twice a month. You need to make sure that when that happens, your website is updated to the new version.

Plugins get updated too, so you need to make sure that the plugins you're using are also current, otherwise you're at risk of getting hacked.

It's smart to invest in a hosting provider that can manage your website updates for you.

Don't assume that because a company advertises that they provide 'managed hosting', that it has anything to do with them managing your website's updates. More often than not it means they only manage their own server.

Questions to ask a potential provider

- ? Do you offer a service that keeps my website running the current CMS (content management system) version?
- ? Does your service manage plugin updates?
- ? How often do you run these updates?

Regular backups

You should be running regular backups on your website and those backups should be stored in a separate place. Reason being, if something happens to your website, there is a version available that can be restored.

By keeping your backups and your website in the same place, if something goes wrong, you'll lose everything in one hit. It would be like keeping your house key and your spare key on the same keyring.

To give you an idea of frequency, we choose to run daily, weekly and monthly backups for websites we manage.

Questions to ask a potential provider regarding backups

- ? Do you run regular backups?
- ? How often do you run your backups?
- ? Where are your backups stored?
- ? Have you ever had to restore a backup from a previous version?

Analytics & reporting

If you have a website, wouldn't it make sense to keep an eye on how it performs?

There are reporting tools available, which can help you

keep an eye on how your website is tracking, however probably the most essential of them all would be a free one from our friends at Google.

Google Analytics is a very comprehensive analytical program that gives you an amazing overview of what's happening on your website. Things like:

- ✓ How many visitors you've had to your site.
- ✓ Where your visitors are located.
- ✓ What devices your visitors are using.
- ✓ If you have pages that aren't responding, or errors.

Google Analytics connects to your website, allowing you to track and monitor what's happening so that you have a metric to improve on.

Chapter wrap up

If you have a reliable host that offers you support, runs regular backups and keeps your website updated, it's unlikely that you'll experience security problems like 'hacking', or 'malware'.

Typically, hackers are not targeting you specifically. More often than not, they're looking for weaknesses in things like, old wordpress versions and

outdated plugins, so that they can instal scripts of code that do things like; displaying ads, or sending promotional emails to subscribers.

By keeping on top of the things we've spoken about in this chapter, you'll radically minimise your chances of experiencing any problems.