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The Ultimate Website Checklist for Field Service Businesses

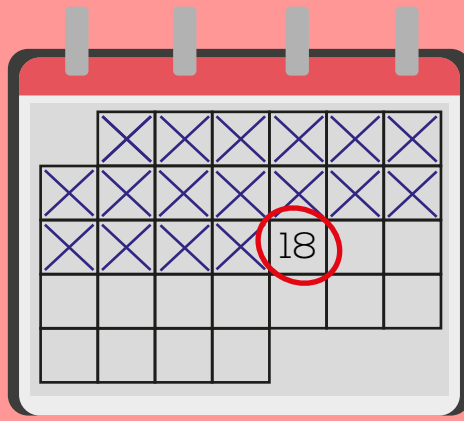


Introduction

Creating a website from thin air, or turning your clunker of a site into a customer-attracting machine, sounds like a daunting task. We admit there are a lot of steps to get from zero to done. That's why we put together this complete checklist of everything that needs to happen to create an effective, modern website that will grow with your company.

You'll find sections of the checklist that address each major decision-point in the website-building process, from deciding on what you want and hiring a designer, to optimising your website for speed and search engine keywords. For some of these action items, you'll find tip sheets in this Kit that will help you get it done right, with a minimum of hassle and expense; for other action items, we included helpful links if you'd like to learn more.

Let's start by...dreaming?



Build the best site step 1: Thinking, Dreaming & Planning

Yes, Step 1 is...thinking about what you want and need in a site, which will help your web design firm get your new site just how you want it. Here's your checklist of what, exactly, you need to think about.

If you have a website now, what do you like most about it?

If you have a website now, what do you like least about it?

If you have a website now, what kinds of comments have you gotten about it from customers?

If you had all the money in the world, what kind of website would you want?

What exactly does your business do?



What are your company's colours? (For example, the colours on your logo, signage, and marketing materials.)

What's the tone of your business communications? (Do your customers see you as funny, trustworthy, playful, serious, premium?)

What would your customers like to be able to do on your website? (For example: Live-chat with a representative, find helpful instructions on DIY fixes, compare prices, schedule appointments, pay invoices.)

Who are your top three competitors?

1.

2.

3.

What do you like *most* about your main competitors' websites?

1.

2.

3.

What do you like *least* about your main competitors' websites?

1.


2.

3.

What makes you different from/better than your competitors? (In other words, what's your Unique Selling Proposition? Do you have the most highly trained engineers, are you customer service-focused, do you offer 24/7 service, do you offer the lowest prices in the area?)

READ MORE: ['Unique Selling Proposition' in the *Entrepreneur Encyclopedia*](#)





What are the top 10 elements you'd like to have on your website? For example: a blog, a live-chat widget, videos, a box featuring your best customer reviews, a scroll of your latest tweets, or a new logo.)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

If you had to narrow these down to your top *three*, what would they be? (These are your *must-have* elements—the 20% of elements you feel would impact 80% of your business.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What's your tentative budget for hiring a designer (and content providers, if you need help with writing and the design firm doesn't supply copy)?



Build the best site step 2: Hiring a Design Firm

The right design firm is a *marketing partner* for your business: They consider what you do, who you're trying to attract, and how your business works to come up with a design that will help you reach your business goals. Some firms offer not only design, but also hosting, copywriting, SEO, and more.

1. Make a list of potential design firms.

Look around online for business websites you like. Sometimes the name of the design firm will be listed in the footer; if so, note the name.



Ask people you know, in person and on social media, to recommend design firms they've had good experiences with.



Search online for design firms that specialise in your industry, or that have created websites similar to what you want.



Check out the website of each firm on your list, especially their portfolios.



Look at each company's social media profiles. Do they seem professional?



Search for customer reviews of the design firms.



2. Contact the firms on your shortlist.

Web design can be a big investment of time and money, so be sure the firm you hire meshes well with your work style, and offers the services you need, by asking them these questions:

What services do you offer? ☐

Do you build websites from scratch or use templates? (Templates can be a money-saving option if you don't need an extensive web presence.) ☐

Can you give me the names and contact information of three of your clients I can call for references? (Then be sure to call them!) ☐

Will you analyse my current website in case some of it can be reused? (You may not need a completely new design.) ☐

Who exactly will be working on my website, and what are their credentials? ☐

How do you work with your clients? (For example, do they keep you updated on milestones, show you roughed-in designs, offer support once the site is live?) ☐

Can you create a blog on the website? (We highly recommend a blog! See our *Blogging Basics* guide in this Kit for more info.) ☐

Will you register my domain name and take care of hosting—and if so, how much do you charge? (If you don't already have a domain, some design firms will take that task off your plate. See the *What's in a Domain name?* guide included in this Kit.) ☐

Will I own the completed website and the domain name? (If so, you'll want to get the passwords and other information for accessing the domain hosting account, web hosting account, and so on.) ☐

How do you handle accessibility? (For example, will people who are visually impaired be able to easily use your website?) ☐

How can we be certain the site will load quickly? (Sites that take too long to load drive visitors away.) ☐

Do you supply images? ☐

What content management system do you use? (You'll want to be able to easily update the content on your own.) ☐

Do you offer training in the website platform? ☐



How will the site look/work on mobile? (For example, will forms be easy to fill out?)

☐

How long will it take to build my website?

☐

How much do you charge?

☐

How do you get paid? (Does the firm charge an hourly rate or a flat fee? Do they expect payment in instalments, up front, at the end? Do they accept bank transfers?)

☐

How many revisions are you willing to do if I would like changes to the design?

☐

What would you need from me to make sure the project goes quickly and smoothly?

☐



Build the best site step 3: Filling Your Site with Content

Whether your website design firm writes your site content, you hire a copywriter, or you do it yourself, the number one purpose of your site's copy is to attract and retain customers. Your site's content is at least as important as its design, so let's make sure it's working for you 100 percent.

1. Know your SEO.

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation, and it's the science (and art) of writing and presenting content in such a way that when a customer or prospect searches on keywords that are relevant to your business, your website will show up near the top of the results. This checklist will get you started, and your research and answers here will come into play later in this checklist. (Also, be sure to check out the *Simple SEO* guide included in this Kit.)

Note that some of these questions will be repeated elsewhere in this guide, which shows how important it is to be clear on the answers!

What exactly does your business do?

What kinds of customers do you work for?

What locations do you service? (Prospective customers will include their location in their searches!)



What's your USP?

List at least ten 1- to 2-word, basic keywords that fit your business:

Some ideas: HVAC, plumbing, electrician, [your location], [area you serve], service, emergency, boiler.

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

Those basic keywords are likely to be highly competitive, meaning many of your competitors are also trying to rank in the search engines for the same keywords. That's why you'll use them to brainstorm ten 'long tail' keywords that describe your business but are likely to be less competitive.

Some ideas: [HVAC + your location], [HVAC + area you serve], emergency plumbing service, low-cost electrician, [area you serve + boiler repair].

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

Do a Google search on the keywords you came up with. What sites/businesses consistently come out in the top 10?

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____



Check [Google Trends](#) and [Google AdWords](#) (you'll need a free account) for your top long tail keywords. How competitive these keywords are, how popular they are over time, and in what areas they're the most popular can give you a good idea of whether they'll work for your business.

Notes on Keyword #1: _____

Notes on Keyword #2: _____

Notes on Keyword #3: _____

Notes on Keyword #4: _____

Notes on Keyword #5: _____

Notes on Keyword #6: _____

Notes on Keyword #7: _____

Notes on Keyword #8: _____

Notes on Keyword #9: _____

Notes on Keyword #10: _____

In the best case scenario, you'll have one relevant long tail keyword for each page of your website.

2. Get the basics down.

It's kind of amazing, really, how many sites there are out there that don't tell visitors what the company actually does. Don't be one of them: Make sure each one of these questions is answered on your website.

What is the full name of your business?

What exactly does your business do?

What's your USP?

What kinds of customers do you work for?

What locations do you service?

What are your business hours (including holidays)?

How can people contact you?

Does your website have a blog, a resources page, a press page, or a FAQ?

What are your prices? (You don't *have* to list prices on your site, but it can be an advantage in discouraging tire-kickers and bargain-hunters if that's a problem for your business.)

3. Write the basic copy (or have it written) and add it to your site.

Now that you have an idea of what information customers will be looking for on your website, it's time to get writing. Here's a checklist to make sure your copy has everything you need.

All the elements in 'Get the basics down' (above) are included on the site. ☐

The most important elements (like contact information and hours) are easily visible on the site. ☐

The copy is written in a voice that matches your business's communications style. ☐

Any links in the copy (for example, to your appointment scheduling calendar or other pages on or off your site) are working correctly. ☐

The SEO keywords you chose earlier appear in headers and throughout your copy. (Choose only one keyword to use for each page! See the *Simple SEO* guide for more details.) ☐

4. Add a blog.

A clean, basic website with information about your services and your contact info is a nice virtual business card for your business—but if you'd like to turn your website into a customer-attracting machine you'll need to add more content. A blog is the perfect solution: Search engines show preference to websites with frequently updated content, you'll have more opportunity to use your SEO keywords, and blog posts can educate your customers while positioning your company as an expert.

READ MORE: ['5 Reasons HVAC Companies Should Have a Blog' on the Commusoft Business Blog](#)

Here's a checklist that will help you get your blog up and running in no time. Also be sure to use the *Blogging Basics* guide and *Editorial Calendar Template*.

Ideas for your blog name:

READ MORE: ['How To Come Up With A Blog Name: 10 Effective Ways To Choose a Name For Your New Blog' on Successful Blogging](#)

Who will your blog be targeting?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Estate agents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business customers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Homeowners | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Will blog comments be open or closed?

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| Open | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Closed | <input type="checkbox"/> |

READ MORE: ['To allow blog comments or not? Here's what the data shows' from OptInMonster](#)

If blog comments will be open, who in your company will be responding to them?

Post ideas (try to brainstorm at least 20):

1. _____	11. _____
2. _____	12. _____
3. _____	13. _____
4. _____	14. _____
5. _____	15. _____
6. _____	16. _____
7. _____	17. _____
8. _____	18. _____
9. _____	19. _____
10. _____	20. _____

Top five post ideas to start with:

Idea #1: _____

Idea #2: _____

Idea #3: _____

Idea #4: _____

Idea #5: _____

How will you market your blog/posts?

Email newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>
LinkedIn	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinterest	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email to relevant industry magazines, local publications, and industry influencers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pop-up on website directing visitors to the blog	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEO optimisation of blog headlines, posts, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blog URL on business cards and other print collateral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Create a FAQ.

A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page serves the same purposes as your blog, with one extra benefit: It keeps you from having to deal with the same questions over and over from customers and prospects. Here's what to consider.

What are the top ten questions you receive from current customers?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What are the top ten questions you receive from prospects?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What are the top ten questions your engineers hear from customers in the field? (If you don't know, ask them!)

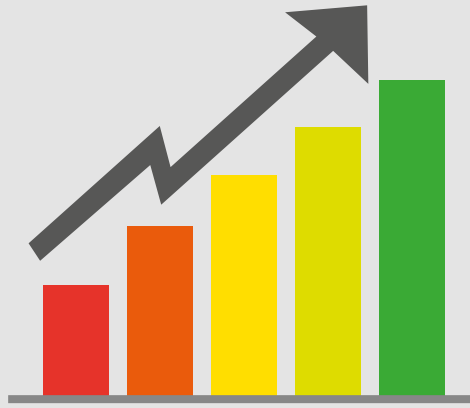
- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What are the top ten questions your office staff hear from customers and prospects? (Again: If you don't know, ask them!)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What will you call the FAQ page? (The Social Media Today website argues against using the overused, vague term 'FAQ' in favour of something like 'Support Centre'.)

READ MORE: ['How to Create Useful FAQ Pages' on Social Media Today](#)



Build the best site step 4: Checking, Optimising, and Tracking your New Site

Your website is done, and it looks amazing: It's in your company colours, it boasts all the features and widgets you wanted, it has customer-grabbing content, and it's consistent with your brand image.

Before you unleash all this wonderfulness on the world, first be sure your site is optimised to do exactly what you want it to do. Here's how to tweak, polish, and perfect the site so it will attract the right customers, retain readers, and encourage repeat visitors.

1. Optimise your SEO.

Earlier you chose the keywords that will help your website appear at the top of search engine results when customers are looking for someone who can do what you do, and you made sure those keywords appear in your blog and other website copy.

There's more to using keywords than including them in copy, though. You'll also want to use them:

In the meta description of each page of the site.

In the image 'alt' tags.

In the URL of each page on your site.

(Example: yourcompany.com/emergency-hvac-service or
yourcompany.com/contact-cheshire-plumber)



(There's more on all of this in the *Simple SEO* guide in this Kit.)

2. Optimise your website's usability.

Ask several friends or customers to take a look at your new website, read through every page, and use all the features. Ask for their feedback on:

- Can they tell straight off what your company does, what areas you serve, and what you offer that competitors don't? ☐
- Can they easily find their way around the site? ☐
- How many clicks does it take them to take common actions like booking an appointment or contacting you? ☐
- Is the text (font, colour, size) easily readable? ☐
- Do the forms work (such as newsletter subscription forms and contact forms)? ☐
- Is it easy to schedule an appointment with you? ☐
- Does the site load quickly enough? ☐
- Can they see right away what your hours are and how to contact you? ☐
- Do they have any questions that aren't answered in the FAQ? ☐
- Are there any topics they wish you'd covered in your first few blog posts? ☐
- Do all the widgets work, such as chat or voicemail widgets? ☐
- How does the website look on smartphones and tablets? ☐
- What's their overall impression of your site? ☐

3. Optimise your speed.

The slower your website loads, the more visitors will drop off in search of a speedier solution. Here's how to make sure your website is blazing fast.

Run your URL through [Hubspot's website grader](#), a free service that will check out the speed of your site (along with SEO, mobile responsiveness, and security) and make suggestions for improvement. ☐

Results:

Plan of action:

Run your URL through [Google Pagespeed Insights](#), a free service that checks for site speed and offers suggestions for fixes. ☐

Results:

Plan of action:

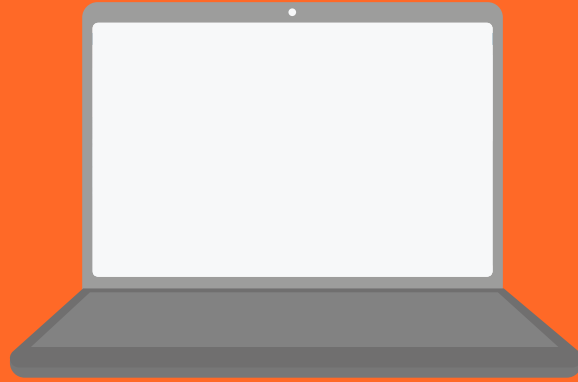
4. Optimise your content.

Get yourself a free [Google Analytics account](#) so you can check out how many visitors your site is attracting each day, where they're coming from (such as social media, search engines, or links from other websites), and what content is the most—and least—popular. It will take a while to gather any meaningful insights on a new website, but keep checking back as your site ramps up so you can figure out what to do more of, what to do less of, and what needs tweaking.



Results:

Plan of action:



Build the best site step 5: Celebrate—and Keep Digitalising

You did it! Seriously, it's *done*. You now have a modern, mobile-friendly, SEO-optimised, lead -generating website that will work for you 24/7. Of course you'll keep updating and tweaking as you gain insights from all the tools we mentioned here—not to mention customer feedback—but for right now, you can sit back and bask in the glow of a job well done.

And then—keep digitalising your business to increase your results. Start by [taking a tour of Commusoft](#) to discover how our field service management software can help you attract and retain customers, save money, and get more jobs.

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