the balance careers

Create a Successful Website in 10 Easy Steps

BY **GLENN HALBROOKS** | Updated November 20, 2019

Creating a successful website can take your business to a new level, and your website can serve as an online catalog of your product and service offerings for new and potential customers. Additionally, you can market your business offerings to additional potential buyers by advertising your website online through paid ads, and in print by adding your website address to your business cards, product inserts, email signatures and other relevant items.

Although a successful website isn't built in a day or a week, with a little time and effort, you can create a website for your business and turn it into a moneymaker that keeps your visitors clicking. Start with the following tips to create a successful website in 10 easy steps.

Contents

01 Develop a Brand Strategy for Your Site

PeopleImages / Getty Images

Anyone can build a website and promote it. How does your website fit into your company's media brand strategy? If you don't know, you'll find it more difficult to have a successful website and your site could actually hurt you.

Your website is only one factor in building your media brand on the Internet but you have to clearly identify your site's role in the big picture. Do you want your site to serve as an extension of your traditional media outlet, like an online catalog as backup for your in-person sales efforts, to stand on its own as a source of revenue or perhaps just another way to get your company's name out there regardless of the income potential?

02 Avoid Website Design Mistakes

Ja_inter / Getty Images

Great content deserves a great-looking website. But a successful website relies on more than good color choices and pretty fonts, and first impressions also count on the Internet.

If first-time visitors are bombarded with ads, can't find the content they want or your site's not updated frequently, chances are you're going to lose that visitor forever. Website design mistakes can cost your site visitors, which also decreases your site's earning potential.

03 Premium, Free or Freemium Content?

PM Images / Getty Images

If, instead of selling products or services on your site, you sell content such as instructional ebooks or educational courses, deciding whether to offer [free content, paid content or a mix of both](#) is a crucial step in your site's plans.

Some visitors will turn away from your site the second they see that they have to pay for your content. Offering some free content as a teaser for your paid content can help you build an audience and convert those users viewing your stories for free into paying customers who want to read all that you have to offer. You can offer what's known as *freemium* content, which starts with a free offering that includes a few bells and whistles that the reader can pay for. These add-ons usually cost less and don't offer up quite as much information as a full-priced product.

While most Internet users are used to getting the content they want to read at no charge, a recent report shows more people are opening up their minds and their wallets to sites with paywalls as long as the content is solid. Still, you should weigh all three options carefully to avoid shocking your readers with a big change to your site down the road.

04 Generate Website Traffic

Dong Wenjie / Getty Images

The most beautiful, well-designed website won't bring in any money if you're the only one who's clicking through the pages. Becoming the number one resource readers turn to online takes time, lots of solid content and a long-term plan.

Key elements you can start using on your website right now, such as targeted keywords added into your site's articles, product titles, product descriptions and text links, can increase your website's traffic and get you well on your way. These keywords help readers find your site more easily in search results, and keeps a flow of traffic coming to your site daily.

05 Make Your Site Sticky

Busybee-CR / Getty Images

Site owners often focus on boosting the number of their unique visitors but don't focus on keeping them clicking once they arrive. A successful website doesn't just land that unique visitor hit, the content motivates the user to click deeper and deeper into the site.

Make your site sticky, or make those visitors stick around, by having great product offerings and enhancing your content. Use more appealing photographs, add polls or questionnaires, add a blog with a base of useful articles on subjects relevant to your website's customers, and other items that will maximize clicks and build loyal site visitors at the same time.

06 Use Killer SEO to Clobber the Competition
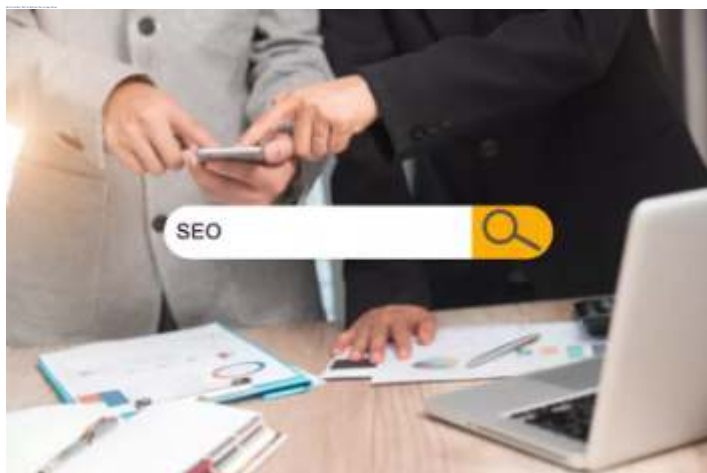
Witthaya Prasongsin / Getty Images

There are billions of websites out there competing for clicks. Landing in the top position on page one of the major search engines is impossible without search engine optimization. Print and broadcast outlets use a completely different approach to target their audiences.

Online, though, content doesn't get read if it's not properly optimized for search. Your site's content writers have to thoroughly understand how to use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques to write your website's content or you'll never gain any traction in search engines' results pages.

07 Generate Revenue Without Scaring Off Your Visitors

Westend61 / Getty Images

When websites first started popping up on the Internet, many webmasters relied on banner ads to support their websites. Then pop-ups, pop-unders, page peels and flashing banners became overused, and started overloading Internet users.

Over the years, new ways of making money with your site have emerged without bombarding your site's visitors with annoying ads. Explore other optio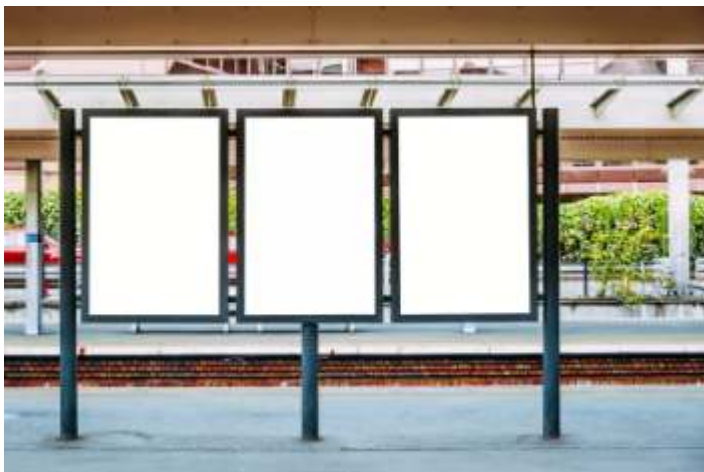ns to generate website revenue besides the classic banner ads, such as selling other peoples' products and earning money as an affiliate seller. You may not get rich overnight, but you will be able to see the results in your bottom line.

08 Show Advertisers What You Can Do for Them

Photography taken by Mario Gutiérrez. / Getty Images

It seems like an easy way to make money. Offer ad space on your site. Put a price tag on it. Wait for advertisers to flock to your site and fork over their cash. But online competition is fierce. Attracting advertisers and convincing them your media site is the one where they should buy space has become increasingly difficult, even for the most successful websites. You have to show a potential advertiser the benefits of online ads and how placement on your site can help them grow their business.

09 Develop a Social Media Strategy

Maskot / Getty Images

Drive traffic to your site through social media. Encourage your journalists to use social networking to keep readers coming back to your site for the latest news. Get site visitors through Twitter and boost your site's awareness on Facebook to bring your site's visitors back multiple times a day.

10 Measure Your Traffic

Qi Yang / Getty Images

Use web analytics tools to track your site visitors' habits as they work their way through your content. Monitoring these patterns gives you a clear picture of what's working on your website and what isn't. If certain topics drive visitors to your site, you know you can increase clicks by giving users what they want.

If you have other areas of your site that are practically ignored, you can decide if you want to alter the content or eliminate future coverage.