

A white line graph with three circular markers is positioned diagonally across the upper half of the image, separating the yellow top section from the black bottom section. The line starts at the bottom left and trends upwards to the top right.

# BUILT TO PERFORM

WHAT MAKES A WEBSITE GREAT  
AND HOW TO GET MORE OUT OF YOURS

# Let's dive right in.

A lot of thought goes into the design of a new website. And while the average person doesn't overtly consider performance, psychologically it drives everything they do on your site. Over the past 15 years, we've discovered the best ways to make your website perform for you. And the truth of the matter is that it's actually quite simple.

## Design vs Usability

The best website is the one that works. It sounds simple, but when we first meet with clients, they always want to talk about design and features. But when it comes to your site's users, that's actually low on their priority list.

Have you ever heard the phrase "if a tree falls in the woods, and no one is around to hear it, does it still make a sound?" Well, updated for the modern web era, we can ask "if a website has an amazing design, and tons of features, but isn't easy and intuitive to use, will anyone use it?" According to Google's own research (and their search rank algorithm), users care more about how easy a website is to use—how easy the information is to find—than whether it has a cool, trendy design.

A website that's Built to Perform considers usability first, and design second. This is called the **User Hierarchy of Needs**. You can get there by having these key features:

- Mobile-friendly design
- Fast load-speed
- Easy to understand
- Clear call to action
- Minimal choices for the user
- Solve a problem for them

If your website doesn't have this, that's the only place to start, because any marketing attempts will fail by comparison. If you're driving a lot of traffic to your site, but they struggle with anything at all—waiting for pages to load, hard to find information, copy that doesn't explain what they need to know—users are going to bounce from your site. The best way to convert users to customers, is a well-developed path of actions that you want them to take...and then get rid of everything else. The more you stray from the 5 key features, the less usability your site will have.

The best way to judge usability is to have people outside of your company, who have never been to your site, attempt to achieve defined tasks. You are too close to your own brand, with too much industry knowledge, so your site may seem easy and intuitive to you or your employees. But users may have a harder time than you think, and there's plenty of data to back that up.

# Design Still Matters

Remember what we said at the beginning? Usability first, design second. We never said design last. Design still matters. But it matters just as much to your brand as it does to your audience. For the majority of people, your website is the first introduction they'll get to your company. And a well-designed site will set the initial expectations for your brand. The personality of the website can be anything—strong and professional, playful, personal, edgy—just like with people. But it's important that the personality of your site matches the personality of your brand, and that it stays consistent across all of your marketing efforts.

## Findability

This may not be a term you hear a lot, but it's one that should always be top-of-mind. A well-intentioned site is useless if no one visits the page. And while marketing is a big part of that, a site that's Built to Perform will compliment those efforts flawlessly. There's a lot to a site that a non-developer doesn't know about, but a good designer is always thinking about.

The list is vast, but here are a few key factors that assist in *findability*:

**SEO** - it's not just a buzzword. This will decide how easy it is for organic search traffic to feed users to your site. And it's more than just keywords: Google uses over 200 data points in its search algorithm and a well-designed site takes these into consideration throughout the entire design process.

**Open Graph** - Nowhere near the household term SEO is, Open Graph Tags allow you to customize *how* your site shows up when people find it. You can style what people see when your site is shared in text messages, on social media, and even what information is displayed on Google search pages. And without them, you have no control over what potential customers are seeing.

**Fresh Content** - You may not know this, but the more often your site is updated, the better it will rank. Remember, humans aren't the ones making these decisions, robots are. To a robot, a site that hasn't been updated in two years is seen as outdated, and will get replaced by one that is more current. Outdated information may not be quality information, and quality is key. Whether you write blogs, update images, or even just reword sections of the site to make them appear fresh, this is where constant maintenance becomes important to your findability.

# Are you Built to Perform?

The only way to know is to get your website audited. You can do it yourself, using the information above, but a professional website audit will serve you far better. Being Built to Perform is something that will set you apart from your competition, but it's not for the faint of heart—this is for people who are ready to take action! If that's you, contact us today to get your complimentary website audit.

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