



# Ultimate Website Buyer's Guide

How to find the right web designer and get an effective website, even if you know NOTHING about web design



# Table of Contents

---

## **1 Know What You Need 5**

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3 Types of Business Websites         | 6 |
| What Do You Need Your Website to Do? | 8 |

---

## **2 Hiring a Web Designer 9**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| DIY vs. Freelance vs. Website Company                    | 10 |
| Finding the Right Web Designer                           | 13 |
| Top 10 Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Website Designer | 13 |
| Making the Final Choice                                  | 17 |

---

## **3 Making the Web Design Process Easy 18**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| What Every Website Needs to Succeed       | 19 |
| Understanding the Website Design Process  | 23 |
| You Just Launched Your Website. Now What? | 28 |

# Why Getting a Website is So Hard



## How do you get a great website if you don't know the first thing about them?

As a business owner, you're a smart, capable person. You know the ins and outs of your business and your industry. You know that an effective website is important for your business, but here's the problem: you didn't go to school for website design. You're an expert in your field, but you don't know anything about coding or graphic design.

In any walk of life, there's an obvious solution when you lack the expertise to do something yourself: you hire someone else to do it for you. Now the question becomes: how do you find the right web designer? Who should you trust to take on one of your business's most important assets? Plus, in the back of your mind you're thinking: how do you avoid getting taken advantage of and overpaying for your inexperience?

Because of that nagging doubt, many business owners default to what they consider the safest option: go with the lowest bidder. Sometimes it works. Too often, it's a nightmare.

I've heard more horror stories than I can count of businesses stuck with inexperienced web designers who can't deliver what they promised or are impossible to get a hold of. They may finish the project, but it's not what you wanted. Worst case, after months of grueling back-and-forth, they never finish the project at all. Regardless, the time and money you spent is wasted.

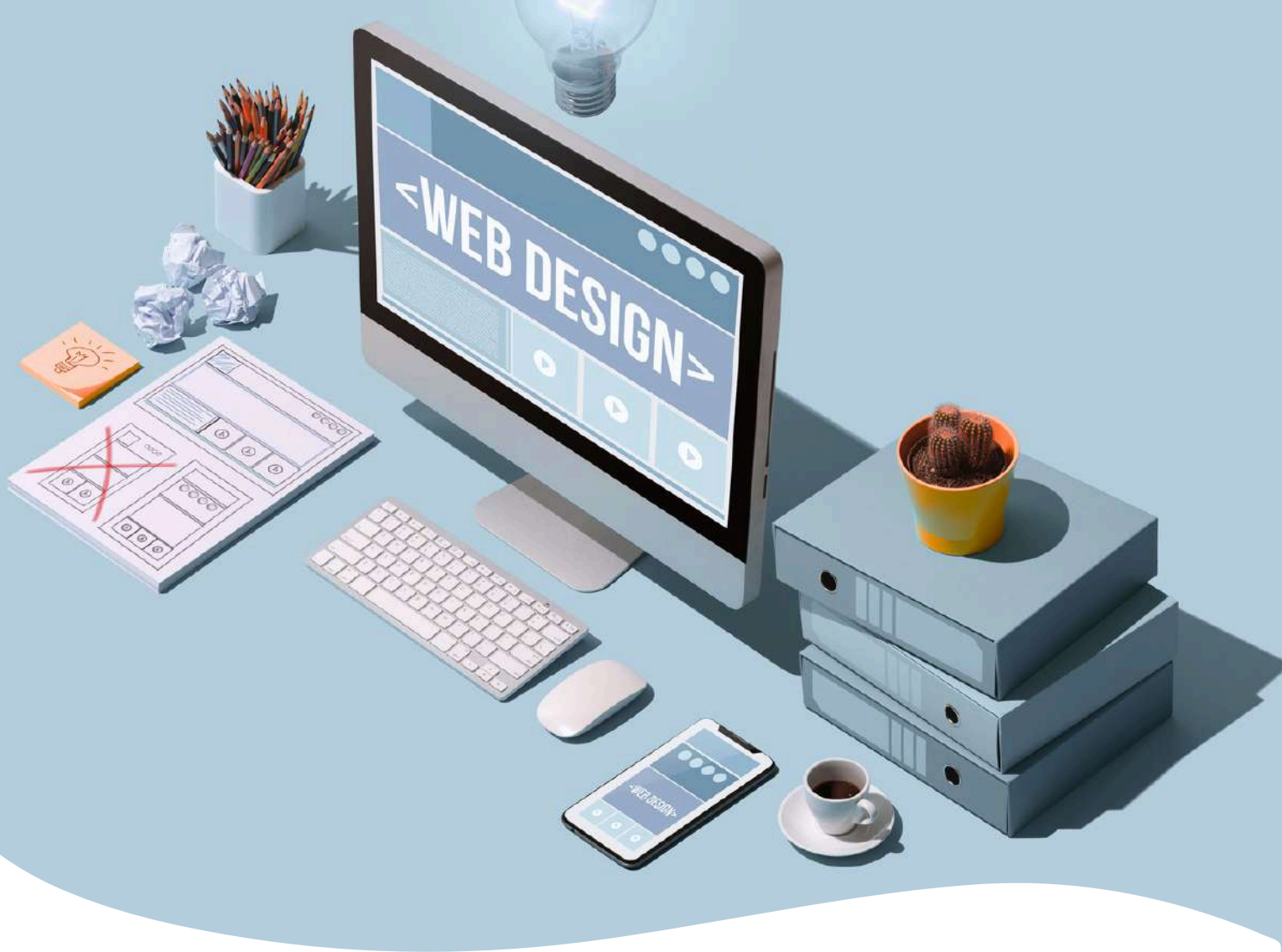
If you've been burned by a web designer in the past, it makes you understandably wary of starting the process over again. How do you avoid your next website project becoming a nightmare?

## This guide is about making it easy for businesses to get an effective website.

In the following pages, we'll walk through:

- How to make sure your website achieves your goals, even if you know nothing about website design
- How to identify and hire the right web designer for your project
- What every website needs to succeed
- The 4 simple steps of any website process

Let's get started!



**“The ultimate goal is to give somebody something that they didn’t know they wanted, but once they saw it, they had to have it.”**

**- Mindy Grossman, CEO of Weight Watchers**



## Chapter 1

# Know What You Need

# 3 Types of Business Websites



Imagine walking into a random car dealership and saying, “I need a new car.”

“What kind of car are you looking for?” the salesperson responds.

You shrug. “I don’t know. Just something that will get me from Point A to Point B.”

The poor salesperson is left to guess what you want. Are you looking for a sports car or a minivan? Should it be gas, electric, or hybrid? Do you like blue or red? Without more information, there’s little chance of finding the right vehicle for you.

No one buys cars this way. Yet it’s how many people try to buy websites.

“I need a new website. I just don’t like my old one and I want something fresh.”

You don’t want your web designer trying to guess what you need. Not only are you likely to end up disappointed by the results, but it makes the chances of a smooth, easy web design process practically zero.

The first step to getting a good website is to know your goals. In other words, what do you need your website to do for your business? Your goals will determine the type of website you need.

While there are millions of different variations out there, most business websites have similar goals that fall into three basic categories:

## 1. Brochure Websites

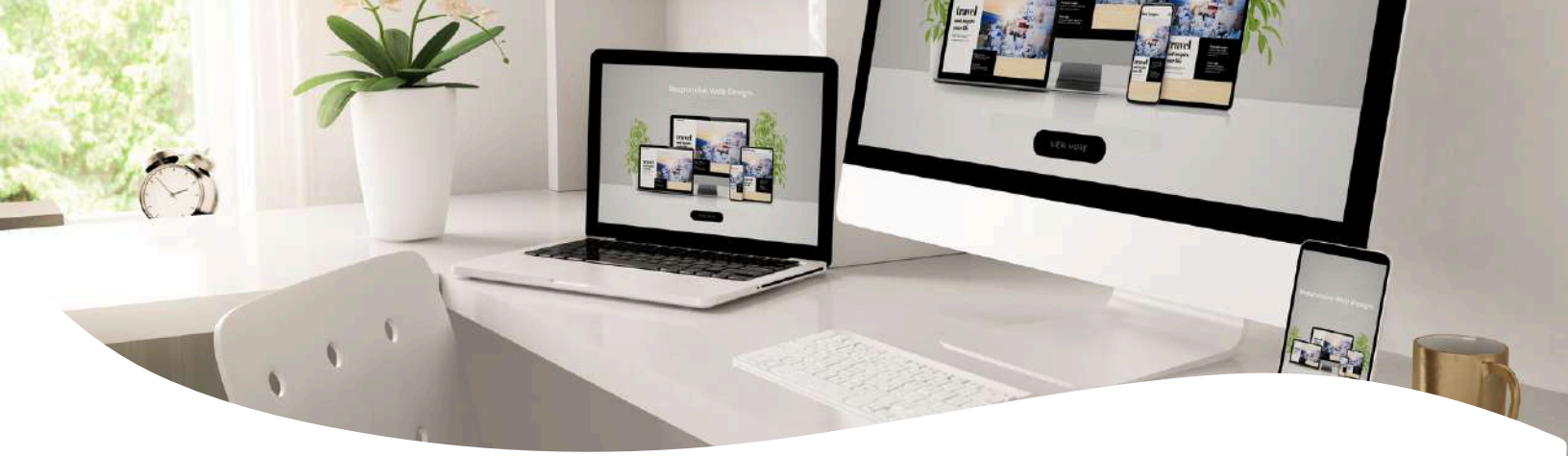
These are simple, small websites that share basic info about your business—like a digital brochure. They look nice and help establish credibility, but they don’t drive many sales.

Too often, businesses stick with brochure sites when they’ve outgrown them. While it’s an okay starting point, your website should do more than just look good—it should sell and deliver real results.

**Goals:** Brand awareness, validation

**Best for:** Businesses just starting out who want to get their name out there; businesses with limited budgets.





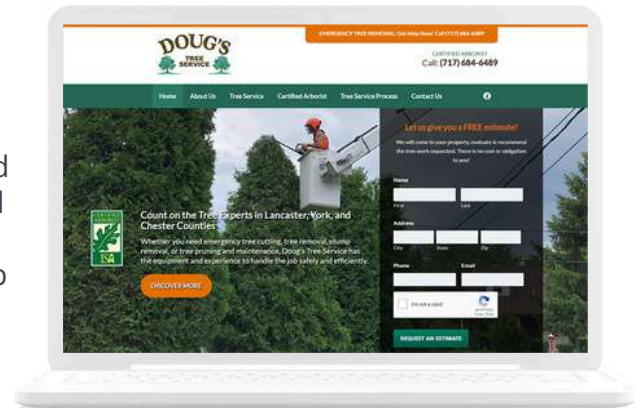
## 2. Lead Generation Websites

For most small businesses, a better option is a lead generation website that educates visitors about your products or services and gets them to take action.

Done correctly, it convinces visitors to say, “I’m interested in what you have to offer,” and take the next step toward the sale. This could be requesting a quote, scheduling a consultation, downloading a resource, or even picking up the phone and calling.

**Goals:** Generate qualified leads; educate & nurture prospects

**Best for:** Businesses with a long or complicated buying cycle; businesses selling anything that can’t be bought on-the-spot.

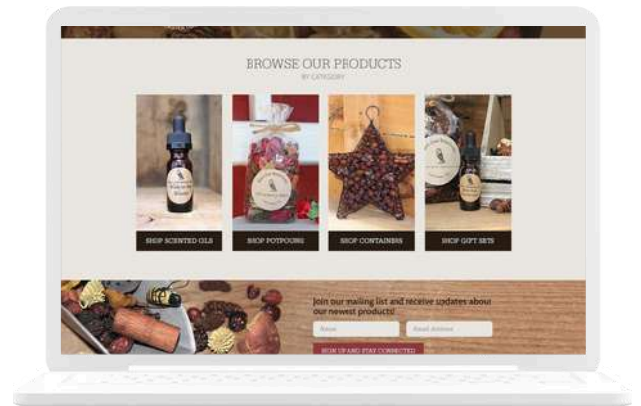


## 3. Online Sales Websites

Also known as e-commerce websites, online sales websites are designed to drive sales. Because they involve setting up a shopping cart, online payment, and multiple product pages, e-commerce websites are typically larger and more expensive to create than lead generation or brochure websites.

**Goals:** Direct sales

**Best for:** Businesses selling products that customers can buy right now (ex. retail, software).



Some websites will have elements of all three types, but knowing your goals will help your website designer create the right type of website for your business.

# What Do You Need Your Website to Do (That It's Not Doing Now)?

Explaining your design preferences can be challenging. After all, as a business owner, you're an expert in your business — and probably not an expert in website design. So you may feel at a loss because you don't know the first thing about responsive design, UX, or visual hierarchy.

But like buying a car, you don't need to be a gearhead to know what benefits or outcomes you need the car to provide. For example, you might not know what size engine you need, but you know you need a car that gets better gas mileage and holds at least four people.

When it comes to building a website, ask yourself this simple question:

**What do I need my website to do that it's not doing now?**



## Practical Exercise

On a sheet of paper, write down:

- **5 things that frustrate you about your current website**
- **5 things that you want your website to do that it's not doing now.**

Based on those lists, determine your goals for your website, and what type of website you need (brochure, lead generation, online sales)

Your answer could include things like:

- **I need it to be easier to find information about my newest products.**
- **My current website doesn't have any pictures of my completed work.**
- **I want to be able to make updates myself.**

Again, think about the goals you want your website to accomplish, as well as the things that frustrate you about your current website. Your answers will give your web designer enormous insight into how to design a website you'll love.



## Chapter 2

# Hiring a Web Designer

# DIY vs. Freelance vs. Website Company



Once you know what you need from your website, it's time to figure out who's actually going to do the work. The right web designer will be able to understand what you need and work with you to deliver a great website. Choosing the wrong web developer, however, can lead to the nightmare process you're trying to avoid.

When it comes to choosing a website designer, there are three basic approaches:

- **Do-It-Yourself (DIY):** These are simple online builder tools like Wix, Squarespace, and Weebly. They allow just about anyone to build a website without any coding knowledge by providing pre-built templates that you can customize to your business.
- **Freelance:** Freelance web designers can run the gamut from independent professionals to your friend's kid who happens to be good with computers. Most often, freelancers are part-time web designers, each with his or her own unique skills and experience.
- **Website Company:** Web design companies and agencies are professional organizations that specialize in building websites. While they may vary in size, most website companies will have multiple people that provide a range of web design expertise.

Which type is right for your business? Here are a few big factors to consider when making your decision.

## Factors to Consider

### Price

Of course, price is always a factor, but it's one of the least useful when searching for the right web designer. If price was the only consideration, everyone would go with the DIY option. It's always going to be cheaper because you're doing the work yourself.

Cheaper doesn't mean it's the right choice for everyone, though. After all, mowing your lawn and getting groceries yourself is cheaper too, but there are plenty of reasons why people use lawn care companies and meal delivery services.

Likewise, there are plenty of reasons to pay more to hire someone to design your website. If you want to find the right web designer for your business, you have to look beyond price.

### Convenience

How much time and hassle are you willing to invest when it comes to getting a new website?

While DIY builders are easy to use, their downfall is that you're doing it yourself. All the time and all the hassle lands on you. If you're like most business owners, you're wearing too many hats already. Designing a website may not fit on your to-do list.



Hiring someone may be a better option if you lack the time and energy to tackle it yourself. Just continue to think about how much involvement you want to have. A professional web design company can take the lead on the project and save you a lot of hassle, while a less-experienced freelancer may need more direction and oversight from you.

### **Skill Level**

You want to make sure that whoever is designing your website has the skills to get the job done right. The last thing you want is to have to repeat the whole process.

With DIY websites, that person is you. If you're tech-savvy and comfortable building your own website, great. Most business owners, however, are experts in their fields, not in website design.

With freelancers, there is a huge range of skill levels. An experienced freelancer may be highly skilled and even specialize in your industry. Your friend's kid may only know the basics.

Either way, the problem with a freelancer is that you're dealing with one person, and a single person can't be good at everything. For example, they may be a brilliant designer, but terrible at copywriting. Or their designs look great, but they are awful to navigate.

The advantage of a larger web design company is that you can have multiple people with different skill sets working on your project. So you may have a designer, a copywriter, and a programmer all bringing their expertise to your website.

### **Needs & Expectations**

Think about the goals you identified earlier, and what you want out of your website.

If your business is just starting out, and you're looking for a simple brochure website, a DIY builder might be a good fit. Unfortunately, most DIY builders have limited features, lack the flexibility to fully customize your design, and simply don't cut it when it comes to security, hosting, and search engine optimization.

If you're a growing business and you want a fully custom web design, you need to hire someone. Consider a freelancer if you have a small or specialized project. Just keep in mind that most freelancers are part-time, meaning they're doing your project on nights and weekends. Getting in touch with them and getting your project done on time may be a challenge depending on their workload.



Hiring an established website company will give you a reliable partner with the resources and expertise to meet your needs. If you're looking for a professional, custom website design, there's no substitute for a good web design company.

### Pros & Cons

|      | DIY Builder  | Freelancer   | Website Company   |
|------|--|--|---|
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-cost</li> <li>• Easy to use</li> <li>• Fast to get set up</li> <li>• Great for simple websites</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget-friendly</li> <li>• You can find a specialized skillset to fit your needs</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger team with range of expertise</li> <li>• Capacity to finish your project on time</li> <li>• Can manage the project for you</li> <li>• Reliability</li> </ul> |
| Cons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have to do all the work</li> <li>• Templated sites with limited customization</li> <li>• Lacks features, security, and SEO options</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and quality of work vary widely</li> <li>• May be hard to reach</li> <li>• May take longer to finish projects</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most expensive</li> <li>• May not be worth it for small, simple projects</li> </ul>  |

# Finding the Right Web Designer



Assuming you decide to hire someone to build your website, how do you find the right web designer? What should you look for, and how do you compare options?

Unfortunately, getting quotes from web design companies often isn't an apples to apples comparison. It's more like comparing apples and zebras.

One web company can easily be five times more expensive than another, but that doesn't mean you're getting the same thing. One could be a fully custom web design with special features and programming, while the other is a bare-bones template website with minimal personalization.

Again, think of the car analogy: a Smart car and a Lamborghini are both 2-seater vehicles, but they are vastly different in terms of form, features, and function. No one looks at a supercar and asks why the price tag is 10x more than an econobox.

Comparing price alone isn't enough. Instead, you have to look at the capabilities, experience, and benefits each web designer offers. Here are some key questions you should be asking.

## Top 10 Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Website Designer

### 1. What experience do you have?

Building a website is an investment. You want to know if you're putting it in the hands of a rookie designer or a seasoned web design company.

You also want to make sure they are reliable. We get calls from far too many businesses looking for a new web designer because their current one takes forever to make updates, or won't return their phone calls.

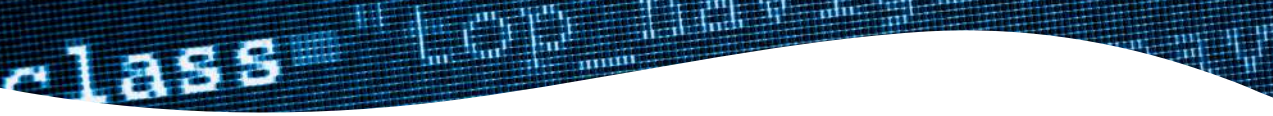
**Look for:** an established web designer or web company that you trust will be around for the long-term.

### 2. Who will be performing the work?

While we do all our work in-house, many web design companies outsource work to freelancers, offshore developers, or even college interns. This can cause inconsistency and major quality issues.

With a web company, you also want to know if you're dealing with a one-person operation or a larger team.

**Look for:** a web company with the expertise to complete your project in-house.



### 3. Do you have a portfolio of other work similar to my project?

A good web designer should be able to show you examples that demonstrate they can do the type of work you're looking for. These could be designs from other companies in your industry, or websites that have a similar feel or features.

**Red flag:** If they're hesitant to show you a portfolio of their work, run away. A web designer that doesn't stand by their past work won't be a reliable partner for you either.

### 4. How long will my project take?

It's important to align your expectations on the timeline with your web designer. If you have a deadline, make sure they can hit it.

Even if you don't have a hard deadline, never leave the timeline open-ended. A good web designer will provide a project schedule or give you an idea of how long your website project will take.

Typically, a new website takes us about 90 days from start to finish. It may be longer or shorter depending on the complexity of your project and how much back-and-forth happens during the process. A small, simple website may launch in as few as 30-45 days, while a large, complex project may take 6 months or more.

**Look for:** a web designer who will set a project timeline and can meet your hard deadlines.

### 5. How much will my project cost?

This is a big one for most small businesses because you don't have an endless marketing budget. But because web designers usually custom quote each project and the prices vary so much, it's hard to compare apples to apples.

How much a website costs depends on what you need and who is creating it, but here are a few rough estimates for reference:

|                               | <b>Brochure Website</b><br>(Basic - 5 Pages) | <b>Lead Gen Website</b><br>(Typical SMB Site, 10-15 Pages) | <b>Online Sales Website</b><br>(Larger Site with Product Catalogue) |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>DIY Builder</b>            | \$100-\$500                                  | \$250-\$1,000  | \$500-\$5,000   |
| <b>Freelancer</b>             | \$500-\$2,000                                | \$1,000-\$5,000  | \$2,000-\$10,000+   |
| <b>Website Design Company</b> | \$3,000-\$6,000                              | \$5,000-\$15,000   | \$10,000-\$50,000+  |



When evaluating a quote, make sure you understand exactly what's included (and not included) in the price. Also, ask your web designer about their fee structure: is it a fixed cost, an hourly estimate, or a monthly recurring fee? Regardless, make sure there will not be any hidden costs at the end of the project.

**Look for:** a web designer who is transparent about their fee structure and what's included in the price

## 6. What does the web design process look like?

You should ask this question for two reasons. First, you want to understand the major milestones of the project. You'll know what to expect, which makes the project much more likely to run smoothly.

More importantly, you want to know that they have a defined process. If they don't, you're in for a messy nightmare of a web project.

**Red flag:** Don't hire anyone who doesn't have a defined website process.

## 7. How much time do I need to spend on the project?

One of the big reasons business owners are hesitant to start the web design process is they just don't have time. Especially if you've had a web project go wrong in the past, you know it can be a huge drain on your time and energy.

However, an experienced web design company can take charge of the project and keep it moving without burdening your schedule. At minimum, expect your web designer to ask for your input and approvals, especially at the beginning of the project.

**Look for:** a web designer that's comfortable letting you be as involved — or hand's off — as you want.

## 8. What happens if I don't like the design?

Getting the look of your site right can make or break your relationship with your web designer. After all, you deserve a website that you can be proud of.

Will they work with you until you are happy with the design, or do they limit the number of revisions you can make?

**Look for:** a designer who will spend the time to learn about your business and work with you to get a site you love.

## 9. How do I make changes?

Websites are not a set-it-and-forget-it thing. Regular updates and maintenance are vital to a healthy, effective website.



If you want to make updates yourself, make sure your website is set up to allow it and your website company will help support you. If you don't want to make the updates yourself (let's be honest, most business owners don't), your web company should handle those for you.

**Look for:** a web designer that makes it easy for you to make updates yourself OR responds fast to make updates for you.

### **10. Will my site be optimized for Google?**

Getting a new site doesn't automatically mean it's going to rank #1 on Google.

Unfortunately, many website companies fail to do much — if any — search engine optimization. And it's nearly impossible to get your site to rank on search engines if it's poorly designed to start with.

Ask your web designer what optimization they include, and consider additional SEO services, if they offer them.

**Look for:** a web designer who includes SEO best practices into your site from the very beginning.

# Making the Final Choice



Asking the questions above gives you a good way to logically compare the options and eliminate those that don't fit your needs. But when it comes down to making the final choice, how do you decide on the right web designer?

**Go with your gut.** As much as we like to think of ourselves as logical, people make decisions based on emotion. When it comes to choosing a web designer, go with who you like and who you trust the most.

How can you tell if they're trustworthy? Look for a web design company that cares about your business as much as you do.

That goes beyond just getting to know your business or your industry. Those are table stakes. If you want a great partner, look for someone who will proactively make suggestions and who is willing to tell you NOT to spend money if it doesn't make sense.

You should have a long-lasting relationship with your web designer. The last thing you want is to be stuck with a slimeball who sounds like a sleazy salesman — even if he's promising the cheapest price. When it comes down to the final decision, go with the web designer you like and feel you can trust.

**“Follow your instincts.  
That's where true wisdom  
manifests itself.”**

**- Oprah Winfrey**



## Chapter 3

# Making the Web Design Process Easy

# What Every Website Needs to Succeed



One of the biggest questions we get from business owners is: “What should I put on my website?”

If you ask most web design companies what makes a great website you'll get one of two things.

The first is a laundry list of features. You must have a blog. You need testimonial videos. It must be responsive. At the end of the list of 37 “must-have” elements, you're overwhelmed with technical jargon and can't figure out what's really most important.

The second is a list of vague best practices like “simple design” and “great content.” They're not wrong, but they don't give you a practical vision for how to turn your website from a dud into a money-making machine.

We've tried to boil down all the features and best practices of website design into three actionable tips that will help you focus your discussions with your web designer and make your next web project easier.

1. **Show potential customers how you can make their life better**
2. **Establish trust that you can really help them**
3. **Make it easy to do business with you**

## 1. Show potential customers how you can make their lives better

Visit three-quarters of small business websites out there and you'll find a section that sounds a lot like this:

*ABC Pest is the leading pest control expert in Yourtown, PA. We specialize in residential and commercial insect control. Our team of highly experienced professionals is committed to providing exceptional customer service you can trust. If you're looking for a reliable exterminator, give us a call today!*

It's dull. It's generic. And the harsh truth is: **your customers don't care.** You think you're telling them why they should do business with you, but all you're telling them is how great you think you are.

This is the critical (but shockingly common) mistake that most small businesses make: they spend WAY too much time talking about themselves and forget to talk about their customers, and what's in it for them.

People are visiting your website because they have a problem: their roof is leaking, they want to lose weight, or they want something fun to do this weekend. Whatever it is, the fact that you have exceptional customer service isn't telling them how you solve that problem. It's not going to convince them to buy.

When you talk about what you do, talk about how it makes your customer's life better. Show how you solve their problem and — even better — paint a picture of the future. What is their life like after you've solved their problem?

For example, if someone has termites in their home, don't tell them you have the most experienced technicians. Tell them you can get rid of the termites and prevent them from coming back, saving thousands of dollars in home damage. You're solving the immediate problem (termites) and painting a picture of the future (no costly home repairs).

So again, if you want a website that brings in customers and makes you money, STOP talking about yourself and START talking about your customers and how you make their lives better.



## Practical Exercise

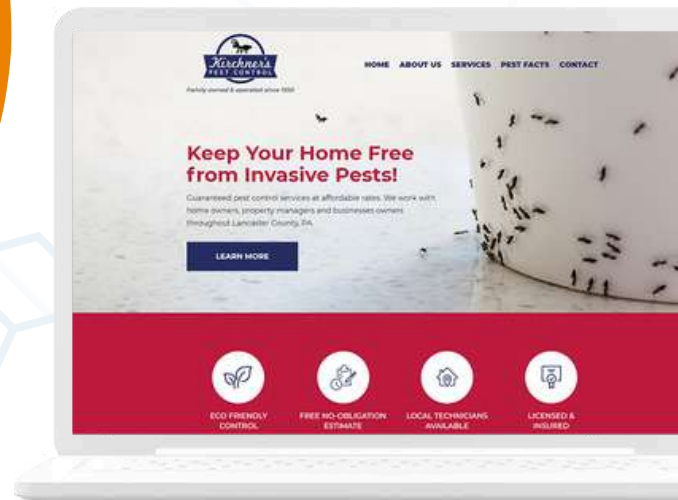
Pull up any page on your website:

- **Count the number of times you use the words "we" or "our."**
- **Then count the number of times you use "you" or "your."**

If the we/ours outnumber the you/yours, you're probably talking about yourself too much.

## Solve Their Problem

Your website — including your headlines, copy, and images — should all speak to your customer's problems. Just look how this pest control company reminds you of your problem with the creepy-crawly image and immediately solves it: "Keep Your Home Free from Invasive Pests!"





## 2. Prove that you can really help

You could have the greatest product in the world, but few people are going to believe you unless you can back it up. Years of infomercials have made most of us skeptical. When you tell people you have the solution to their problems, they're going to want proof.

There are two basic ways to do this:

1. **Build trust**
2. **Demonstrate authority**

### Build a Website that Builds Trust

People do business with people they know, like, and trust. Your website needs to build trust with your customers.

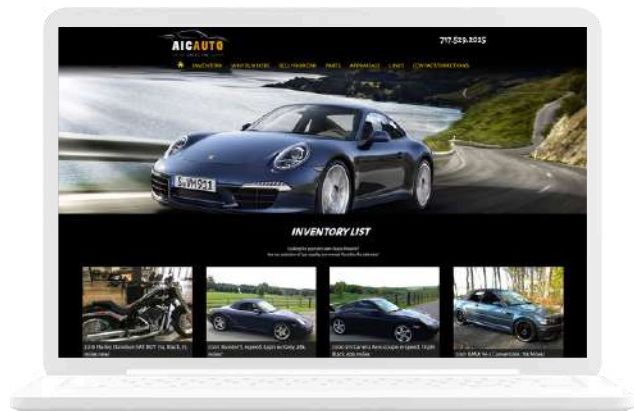
The good news is: if your website is talking about your customers (not yourself) and how you can help them, you're probably already building trust. You're proving that you understand them and empathize with their pain, which creates trust. As you build your website, make sure your content tells your customers that you "get it" and you care about their problems.

A trustworthy website isn't just about content; the design matters too. In fact, studies show that 75% of people make judgments about a company's credibility based on visual design alone. If you want to build trust and credibility, you need a website that looks professional.

For instance, if you were looking for a luxury used car, which website seems more trustworthy? It's the same business, but the newer design feels more credible.



Before



After



## Demonstrate Authority

Demonstrating authority is all about proving you know what you're doing. That you're the expert. It doesn't mean you should endlessly brag about yourself, or act like an insufferable know-it-all. But it does mean that your website should provide proof that you can do what you claim.

Here are a few simple ways to do this:

- **Testimonials:** People naturally tend to trust customer recommendations. Studies have proven that positive reviews influence buying decisions. So whether it's quotes, video testimonials, product reviews, or full case studies, put testimonials from happy customers on your website.
- **Examples of your work:** A picture's worth a thousand words, and when it comes to proving your expertise, there's no substitute for showing the results. If you have a visual product or service, add a gallery to your website to showcase successful work. Before/after shots can be especially powerful.
- **Awards/Certifications:** If you've earned any awards or special certifications, you may want to list those on your website, especially if they're from well-known sources. Don't let them overpower your message, but use them to reinforce your capability to help your customers.

Building trust and demonstrating authority create confidence in your customers' minds that you can really help them. By providing proof to back up your claims, you make it more likely that your prospective customers will buy from you.

## 3. Make it easy to do business with you

The reason you have a website in the first place is to help you get more business. Yet it's remarkable how many websites actually make it *hard* for people to become customers.

And here's the thing: no one wants to work hard if they don't have to. We're naturally drawn to the path of least resistance. If your website doesn't offer an easy solution to their problems, your visitors are going to search elsewhere.

The key to making your website easy for your visitors is: **don't make them think**. They shouldn't have to figure out what your business does or guess what the next step is. Make it painfully obvious, so they don't have to expend brainpower puzzling over anything.

Here are a few practical ways to apply this principle:



## Keep the design simple

When it comes to website design, too many businesses fall into the trap of “more.” More text, more pictures, more buttons, and fancy effects. What you’re really getting is more noise. Your website design doesn’t need to “wow” your customers. It needs to guide them to the answers they’re looking for as efficiently as possible.

Just take a look at this Before/After from a local dairy farm. The earlier website is congested, with way too many buttons, colors, and options. The new site remains vibrant, but simplifies the color schemes, navigation, and calls to action. other visual distractions.



Before



After

## Use Obvious Calls to Action

Calls to Action (CTAs) prompt your visitors to do something like “Call Today,” “Buy Now” or “Get a Free Trial.” It may seem counterintuitive, but people don’t tend to take action unless you tell them what to do.

It may seem obvious to you that you want people to buy your product, but unless you put a “Buy Now” button on your website, they’re not going to do it. Your customer can’t read your mind and they don’t want to try. Again, don’t make them think.

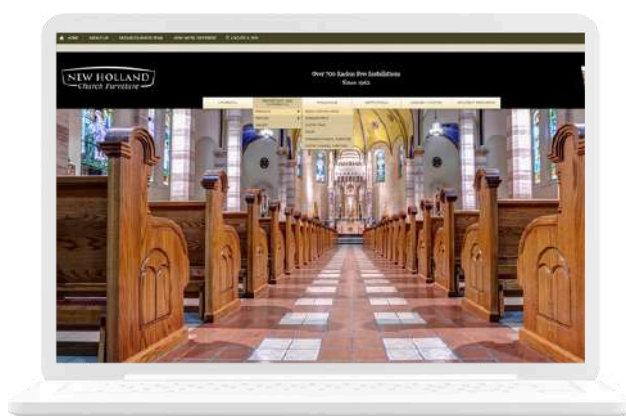
When you add calls to action, make them as direct as possible using clear, active language. For example, “Call Today” is more direct than “Learn More” or the dreaded “Submit.” Your CTAs should also stand out visually. Use large text or brightly-colored buttons that catch the eye, and don’t surround them with other visual distractions.

[Schedule a FREE Website Review](#)

## Streamline navigation

Most websites have WAY too much stuff in the navigation menu. Especially if your website has been around awhile, it's prone to the Frankenstein effect. Every time you add a new page, you add it to your navigation, and over time, your menu becomes an unwieldy monster that makes it impossible to find what you need.

Just take this Before/After example from a local church furniture company. Before, each navigation choice had two drop-downs, with the same products repeated multiple times. On the new site, we simplified the navigation to group all the seating products together, eliminating the need for confusing, tiered menus.



Before



After

## Make contact info easy to find

One of my biggest pet peeves is when I go to a website and can't find a phone number — and I'm not the only one who feels that way. Studies show that nearly half of your website visitors will leave if they can't find your contact information.

Missing contact information not only makes it hard for customers to do business with you, but it also makes them question your credibility. People are hesitant to trust a business if they don't feel like they can reach you when needed.

As a best practice, we recommend adding your phone number in your top navigation and full contact information in the footer of your website. You should also have a dedicated Contact page that repeats your contact information and includes a CTA that encourages visitors to reach you.

If you want a successful website that wins customers and makes you money, stop worrying about whether it's got fancy sliders or slick hover effects. Instead, make sure your messaging clearly shows how you make your customer's life better, back it up by building trust and authority, and constantly ask your web designer: does this make it easy for my customer to do business with me?

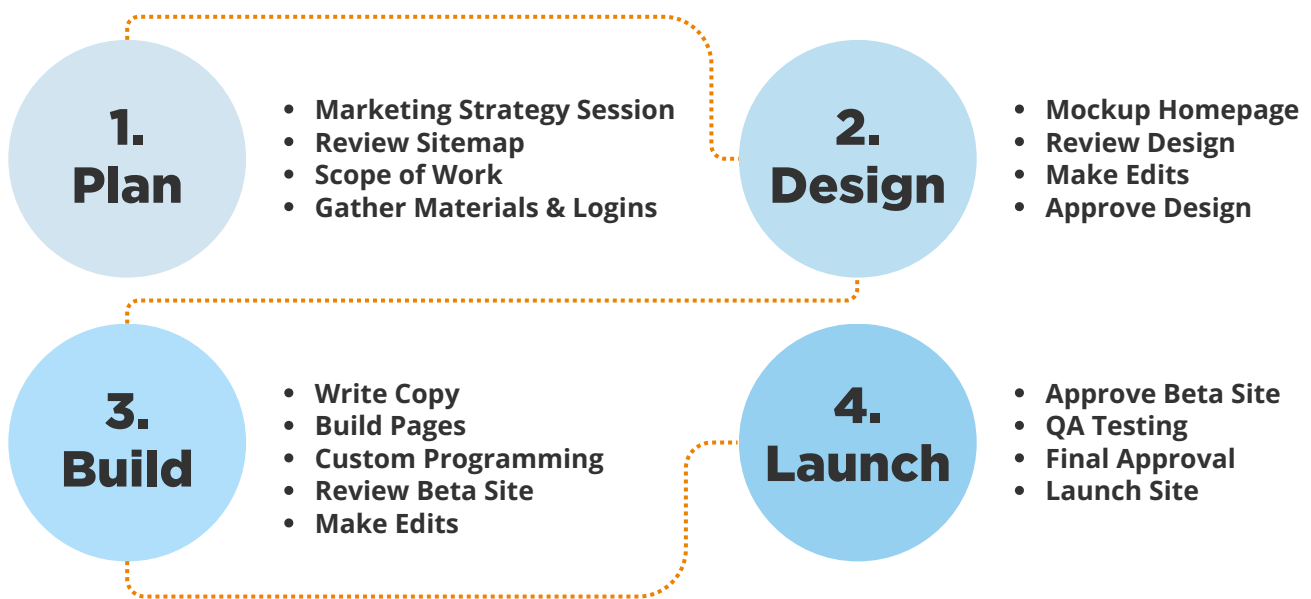
# Understanding the Web Design Process



Now that you know what goes into making a successful website, what are the steps to actually make it happen? Especially if you don't have an experienced web design company managing the project, it can seem like a convoluted mess. There are too many steps and too many moving pieces.

We've simplified the process into four simple phases that apply to every website we create. Knowing how the process works and what's involved in each step will help you stay aligned with your web designer, so the project goes smoothly.

For each phase, I'll review what's involved, the deliverables you should expect from your web designer, and what's required from you to keep the process moving.




## 1. Plan

Planning is arguably the most important part of the website process, but it's the one business owners are most likely to try to skip. Building a website without a plan is like building a house without a blueprint. It's doomed to be a disaster.

### What's Involved

First, your web designer needs to learn about your business. Most web designers start out with some sort of a discovery meeting where they ask questions about your business. We take it a step further and conduct a full Marketing Strategy Session.



Not only do we gain a deep understanding of your business, your customers, and your goals, but you get a chance to clarify and document your marketing strategy, which can improve the rest of your marketing too!

Once everyone's clear on strategy, your web designer should put together a project plan for your site, including a sitemap and a description of the work to be done.

The last piece of the planning phase is gathering the necessary materials and access to your site so design work can begin.

### **What you should get from your designer**

- A proposed sitemap outlining the structure and pages on your new website
- A scope of work describing what they are delivering and when

### **What your web designer needs from you**

- Information about your business
- Content or materials you'd like on your website (logos, pictures, existing copy, etc.)
- Login credentials for your website, domain, etc.

## **2. Design**

The design phase is all about establishing the look and feel of your website. Based on what they discovered in the planning phase, your web designer's job is to create a design that fits your business and appeals to your customers.

### **What's Involved**

Your web designer will create sample designs for your website. These could be mockups, wireframes, test pages, mood boards, and more — whatever helps you visualize what your new website will look like.

While your web designer might nail it on the first try, normally you'll have a few rounds of revisions where you can tweak the design. This can be one of the most challenging parts of the process because it can be hard to explain what exactly you don't like. If you're struggling, try providing your web designer with concrete examples from other websites.

### **What you should get from your designer**

- Design sample for approval
- Opportunity to make changes to the design

### **What your web designer needs from you**

- Timely feedback and approval
- Examples of what you like/don't like

### 3. Build

This is where coding begins. Your website designer will turn your approved design into a working, functional website.

#### What's Involved

First, your web designer will create the framework for your website. Think of this like building the walls, floors, and ceilings for a house. Once the framework is in place, they can build each page (or room) of your website.

While this is going on, a copywriter should be writing all the site content. A larger website company like us will write all the copy for you. Otherwise, you may need to supply it.

If your website requires any special features or custom programming, your designer will tackle it during this phase. Finally, they'll review the working site with you and make edits before finalizing the website for launch.

#### What you should get from your web designer

- A way to follow your website's progress. We provide a working beta site so you can actually click around the site as it's built, but other web design companies may provide status reports or static screenshots.

#### What your web designer needs from you

- Timely feedback and approvals
- Website copy (if they don't include copywriting services)

### 4. Launch

You've been through planning, design, and building—now it's time to launch your new website!

#### What's Involved

Before launch, your designer should review the entire site to ensure every page, link, and detail looks great and works properly. Once you give final approval, they'll handle the technical setup to make your site live.

A good designer won't vanish after launch, either. As users interact with your site, you may find small tweaks or updates you want to make.

#### What you should get from your web designer

- A chance to review the full site before launch
- A heads-up when the site goes live

#### What your web designer needs from you

- Final approval

# You Just Launched Your Website. Now What?



Congratulations, you just launched your new website. You're done! Time to lay back and relax, right? Not so much.

Many business owners look at the website as the end goal, but your website is actually the beginning of your marketing journey, not the end. A website isn't a magic pill that's going to fix all your problems and instantly bring in customers. Even the greatest website in the world won't do you any good if no one sees it.

Once you have a great website, you need to get people to see it. You need to drive traffic to it. **You need to do MARKETING.**

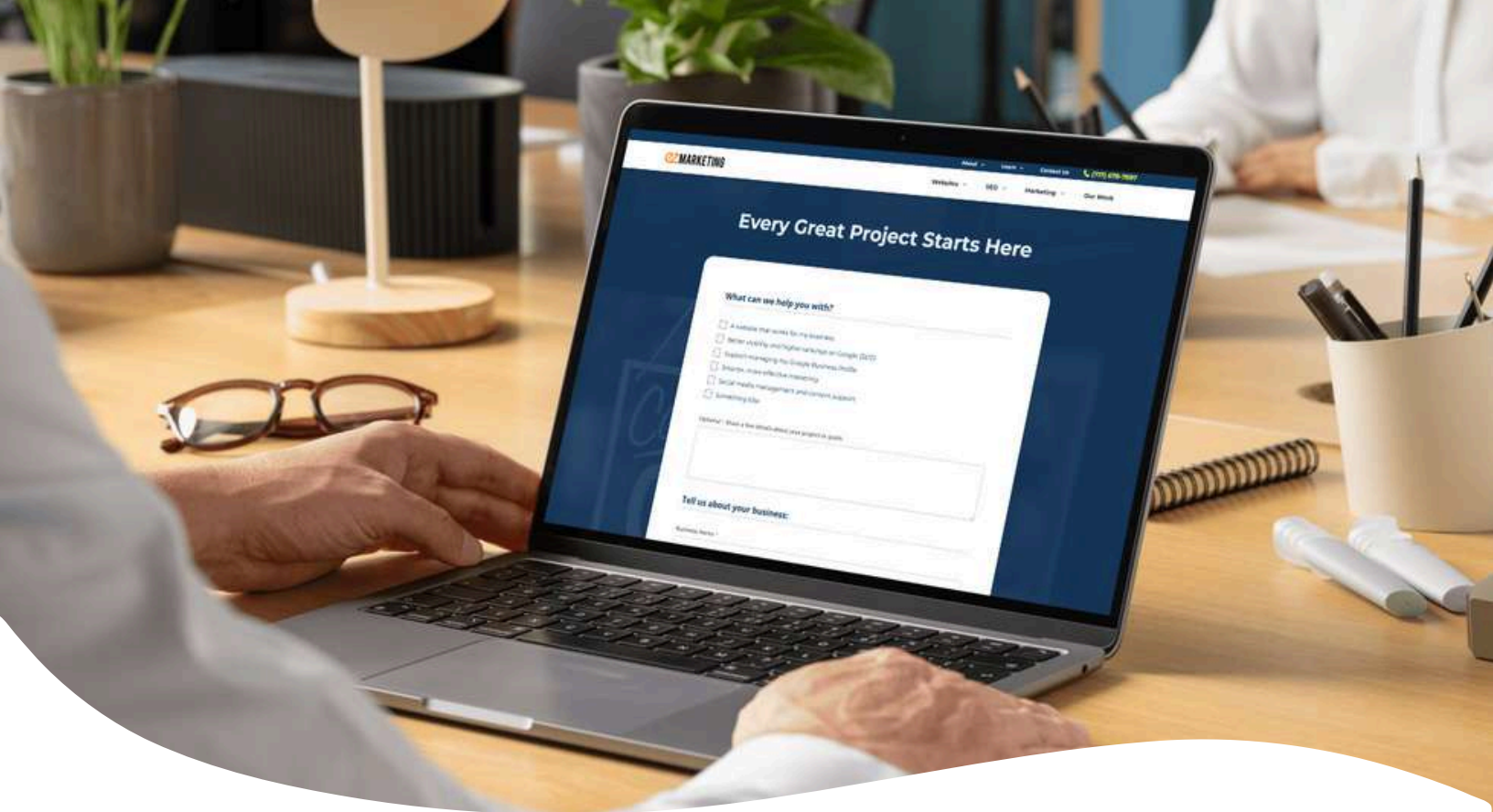
There are many, many different types of marketing that can drive people back to your website. Here are a few of the most common:

- **Search Engine Optimization:** Rank on Google so people find your website when they're searching online. Keep in mind that even if basic SEO is included in your website design, it's a one-off job. True SEO is a long-term, ongoing process that lasts well beyond your initial website launch.
- **Google Ads:** Pay-Per-Click ads from Google can display on search pages or on sites around the Internet to promote your business, products, and services.
- **Email Marketing:** Email is a simple and cost-effective way to reach your existing customers to promote website content, specials, new products, and more.
- **Social Media Marketing:** Platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn provide a huge opportunity to reach new prospects and introduce them to your company.

Regardless of what types of marketing you choose, your website remains at the center of all your efforts. Every ad, email, or post should contain a link back to your site. Then it's your website's job to convince prospective customers that you're the solution to their problems and they need to buy.

Your website can and should be your best salesperson, but only if you invest in driving people to it. Don't spend all your time and money building a great website, only to have it sit idle. You couldn't afford to do that with an actual salesperson, so why would you do it with your website?

When you combine a great website with effective marketing, that's when it truly shines.



**EZ**MARKETING



# Turn Your Website Into Your Best Salesperson

If your website isn't your best salesperson, you're doing something wrong. Maybe your website is ugly and outdated. Maybe you don't have the right message. Or maybe you're just not doing enough marketing to get your website in front of the right people.

Get a website that attracts customers and makes you money!

Visit [www.ezmarketing.com/schedule-a-consultation](http://www.ezmarketing.com/schedule-a-consultation) to schedule a free, no-obligation marketing consultation.

ezmarketing.com | 717.291.4689