



COVID-19 ECOMMERCE RESPONSE GUIDE

WEBSITE WORLD

Here in New Zealand, we're all experiencing the effects of COVID-19.

We've put together a collection of resources and advice to help all small to medium-sized eCommerce businesses get through this time of uncertainty.

Inside this COVID-19 eCommerce Response Guide, we have included:

eCommerce & COVID-19

1. How Your Website Can Help You During a Recession
2. Helping Your eCommerce Business Survive a Recession
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Perfecting User Experience

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3. Best Email Newsletter Subject Line Examples
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5. Choosing Your Product Photography Tools
6. Best Ways to Optimise Website Images
7. Your Guide to Choosing Website Fonts
8. Why Written Content is Important for Websites
9. 7 Essential Things Every Website Needs
10. Guide to Using Images on Your Website
- 11.5 Important Pages You'll Need to Add to Your Website
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Growing Your Website Traffic Via SEO

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2. 8 SEO Tips to Get You Started Today
3. How to Do a Website Content Audit

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4. How to Optimise for Google's Featured Snippets
5. White Hat SEO Strategies to Increase Your Web Traffic
6. Using Heading Tags to Improve Your SEO
7. How to Write a Meta Description & Why They Matter
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Promoting Your Website Through Social Media

1. Does Your Business Need a Facebook Group?
2. How to Grow Your Facebook Group
3. How to Write Brilliant Instagram Captions
4. Free Instagram Analytics Tools
5. Building Your Social Media Marketing Strategy
6. 7 Websites for Finding Memes and GIFs
7. Instagram Hashtags
8. Dealing with Negative Comments on Social Media
9. 12 Tips to Increase Engagement Using Social Media
10. How to Get More Website Traffic Using Social Media
11. Beginners Guide to Using Pinterest for Business
12. Beginners Guide to Using Instagram for Business
13. What is a Call to Action & How Are They Used?
14. How to Choose the Right Social Media Platforms
15. How to Find Great Social Media Content
16. Creating Facebook Graphics Which Get You Noticed
17. 5 Reasons Why Your Business Should Be on YouTube
18. Using Canva to Create Social Media Templates
19. 50 Social Media Post Ideas

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3. 7 Ways to Make Working from Home Easier
4. Creating a Work-Life Balance When You Work from Home
5. Budget Cutting Ideas for NZ Businesses
6. 8 Free Stock Photo Websites

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7. How to Manage Change in Your Business
8. Help on Choosing Your Bulk Email Platform
9. What is a POS System & Do I Need One?
10. Managing Stress as a Business Owner
11. Best Advice on Setting Business Goals
12. 7 Reasons Why You Should Join a Business Networking Group
13. How Webinars Can Grow Your Business
14. Why Every Website Needs Social Proof
15. Reaping the Benefits of Video Marketing for Your Business
16. 16 Business Networking Tips
17. Importance of Having Business Branding
18. Using Videos on Your Websites
19. 7 Top Free Video Editing Software Programs
20. 7 Tips on Writing Home Page Content
21. 5 Ways a Website Can Grow Your Business
22. 10 Ways to Improve Your Website
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1. 50 Home Business Ideas for New Zealanders
2. How to Start a Business Working from Home
3. Sourcing Products for Dropshipping
4. Business Owners Share Advice on Starting a Business
5. Side Hustle Ideas for Your New Business
6. Tips on Choosing a Business Name
7. What is Affiliate Marketing & Is It Viable?
8. How to Set Up a Website in NZ
9. Products to Sell Online That Don't Need Shipping
10. Tips on Creating a Business Plan
11. What Makes a Great Business Logo?
12. Setting Your Wholesale Pricing for Handmade Products
13. Guide to Pricing Your Products
14. Does My Small Handmade Products Business Need a Website?

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#1 How Your Website Can Help You During a Recession

It can be very tempting to cut back on business expenses during a recession. In fact, Business Networking NZ have written an article on Budget Cutting Ideas for Kiwi Businesses which has some fabulous ideas for saving money on your business expenses.

One thing you must do is keep your website online.

Yes, you'll need to pay to do so, but you'll pay even more within the next few weeks and months with:

- decreased online presence
- zero traffic from search engines
- zero SEO rankings
- zero website inquiries
- drop in customer loyalty
- no way to sell via a shopping cart
- fewer ways to share information to your target market
- no way to capture email addresses for newsletters
- lower levels of trust from customers and clients
- less evidence showing your level of expertise within your industry

Your business website is your business' online home. It is where people go to learn more about your offerings, educate themselves on topics within your industry and of course, buy your products or services securely without fear. Without a website, they can no longer do any of those things.

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#2 Helping Your eCommerce Business Survive a Recession

It would be fair to say that the world is changing. People are reconsidering their priorities, changing their spending patterns and reducing their travel. Many people are choosing to work from home and are making financial decisions about their future.

Where does this leave eCommerce based businesses though?

Yes, there will most likely be a decrease in sales., and for some, a significant decrease. Businesses which have only an eCommerce presence though, do have the advantage over a bricks and mortar store. With fewer expenses (ie, no commercial rent), they are better placed to ride out a recession by implementing some well-considered strategies right now.

If seeking out new customers wasn't hard enough, things just got tougher. Customers are (or are about to) tighten their belts on unnecessary expenses. This is completely understandable, and most likely you are doing the same. It doesn't make things easier though, especially when you are relying upon the income your website sales produce.

Then there's the supply issues to consider. With many products being out of stock and delays in shipping, if you are relying upon goods to create your products or for reselling, you'll also be in a difficult position.

With no control over what is happening in regard to the recession, you need to move to controlling what you can. This means taking action now to help your business continue to operate and be in a great position when the economy starts to improve.

- focus on your existing customers - even in good times, it is easier to sell to someone who knows and has a relationship with your business than someone who doesn't. Keeping in front of your customers also means that they are more likely to buy from you when they need it.
- widen your reach - consider posting overseas if you don't already. Target potential customers in different locations than you currently are.
- work on your website - consider giving your website a makeover, improving the content, appearance and usability.

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- grow your product base -start investigating new products and opportunities. Is there a new problem your customers are having that you can solve for them?
- re-purpose existing content - take the time to refresh the written content you already have on your website. Is it still relevant? How can you improve it further?
- build your SEO - your website's SEO is what gets it found in search engine results. We already know that SEO requires ongoing efforts and that does not deliver instantaneous results. This makes it the ideal time to spend time on improving what you have already got to start being found on page one of Google when times get better.
- keep your website live - your website is live 24/7 meaning that customers can visit and shop all the time. Cancelling your website means you lose that ability to sell, be found by search engines and when you do go live again in the future, must start at the very bottom search rankings all over again. All of the work you have done on your website rankings is destroyed by taking your website offline. Keeping an online presence also means you remain on your customer's radars and when they do need something you have; they'll reach out because you already have that relationship with them.
- look for new marketing strategies - as well as being active on social media, adding your business to our NZ only business directory and sending out regular newsletters, look for new ways of reaching your customer base. This can mean getting creative with your marketing approaches and testing things out. For some this could mean traditional paid advertising, but for others, free or low cost methods! Take a read of this article, 32 Free Marketing Ideas to Help Your Business During Tough Times for some brilliant ones!

Finally, networking with other business owners is a great way of sharing and receiving new ideas. Come and join our free Facebook group Business Networking NZ now.

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#3 Why SEO is Important Right Now

SEO or search engine optimisation, are the things you do to help your website rank highly in search engine results. Ideally, this means on page 1 of Google.

SEO consists of three types: on page, off page and technical. It is the on page SEO you have the most control over and the one most likely to bring you the best results. For that reason, we are focusing on explaining why you should spend time on your on page SEO during tough financial times, such as during the Covid 19 disaster.

The content on your website is there to:

- educate
- entertain
- promote
- sell

It's also something a large number of business owners don't think and do much about. We're saying now is the time to start doing so; DIY SEO that is.

Spending time on your website content and ultimately SEO helps boost its presence on the web. If you look at every page as being an opportunity to be found, you can begin to see why it is so important to have content that can be found easily by search engines.

Let's take a look at specific reasons why a financial crisis is a good time to work on your SEO:

1. It will ensure you get your website found through search engine results pages - if you are not paying for advertising, then social media and search engines such as Google will be your main source of website traffic. It's important to note though, that SEO is a longterm strategy, and won't bring you instant results. What it will do though, if done well, will increase your traffic numbers for free when people start seeking your products or services again.
2. It is a solid, well respected and known business marketing strategy - SEO has been around pretty much forever, or as long as the internet has

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been. It is also something all website should have done before all of this too. It is also an ethical marketing strategy, boosting the success of your website online without taking others down.

3. You've got the time - whether you have run out of supplies to make your products, sold out of products or people are not buying your products or services, you'll have extra time up your sleeve. Spend this time on improving the content on your website so your website will be the one ranking at number 1!
4. It is vital for success - even during good times, SEO works. It brings people to your website, growing your traffic numbers and increasing sales. Every website needs it, both during the good and bad times.

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#4 - 32 Free Marketing Ideas to Help During Tough Times

Many New Zealand businesses look to cut costs in tough financial times, a recession being one of those times. Paid advertising and marketing campaigns are often cut first from the budget. This is completely understandable, but it can have a significant impact upon your profit, if this is the main way you are attracting customers.

So, you need to look for other ways to market your business during an economic downturn, like the one we are currently experiencing with the Corona Virus. To help get you started, we've put together a list of free marketing ideas.

32 Free Marketing Ideas for Kiwi Businesses

The aims of any marketing campaigns are to put your business in front of your target audience, begin to build an ongoing relationship, entice them to take the next step and buy or contact you, and let them know about what you can offer. But you don't technically need to pay for advertising to do any of these things.

The bonus of paid marketing strategies are that they are relatively easy to set up, require minimal ongoing effort and produce statistics you can track and analyse. Free marketing strategies though, can require more of your time and energy. They are however free, and when cash flow is down, free is great.

1. follow up on old leads - for whatever reasons, they may not have taken up your products or services at the time, or you didn't follow up on them. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to now. Sending emails and making phone calls to old leads can be slow in terms of success, but it can work.
2. continue to grow customer/client relationships - from replying to their comments on social media, asking for their thoughts and ideas, acknowledging their support of your business and simply keeping in touch, take the time to grow your customer relationships. If you don't, your competitors will.

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3. provide exceptional levels of customer service - going the extra mile will help you keep your customers for longer. A satisfied customer is also likely to bring in new customers, as word of mouth is the best advertising.
4. give something extra of value - this could be support in setting a device up, an increased warranty period or telephone support. It doesn't need to cost your business more, but to be seen by the customer as providing additional value to them.
5. add new content to your website - think of each bit of content on your website as an advertisement. It's available 24/7, doesn't cost you anything to create, and builds your online presence. By providing information which educates and solves problems to your audience, you will become seen as an expert within your industry; and experts are trusted and sought out.
6. think outside the square - why not host a class on how to use one of your products? Or do a demonstration at the local playground of your toys?
7. attend industry events - often there are free in person networking events within towns and cities all around the country. Take the time to visit and introduce yourself.
8. make your employees your brand ambassadors - ask them to help support the business by telling their friends, family and wider community about the business.
9. share other businesses social media posts - share what other businesses are doing on your business and personal pages. Just maybe they'll share yours back.
10. look out for free advertising offers - Bing and Google sometimes offer free money to begin advertising on their platform. Often they do this once you have set an account up, but then not done anything about it for a week or so. Or they may offer a spend \$xx and get \$100 credit sort of thing.
11. customer referral program - ask your existing customers to help share information about your business with their friends, family and community. You could even create a hashtag and ask them to share it.

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12. partner with other businesses - work together to help each other brainstorm marketing ideas and promote each other. Maybe offer to stock their products on your business' website and cross-versa.
13. contribute to online forums - get your name out there by responding in online forums and commenting on blog posts. It's not a place to share your website details though.
14. think about vehicle branding - it doesn't need to be expensive. What about a car door magnet from Vistaprint, or a vinyl decal with your website address?
15. get interacting with your customers - put yourself out there and engage with your customers, in person, online, phone and email. Follow up their product purchases, even from months ago.
16. enter business awards - often they'll promote your business indirectly by sharing your business name and logo. If you do place in their awards, then promotion can be huge too. Even so, you can tell your customers you have entered and ask for their support, such as if there is a public voting scenario.
17. volunteer - if you've got time on your hands, help other business out, or a local cause. Getting your name out there as someone who supports others is great word of mouth marketing.
18. claim your online listings - make sure you've got your social media pages, Google My Business listing and business directory listing. Give yourself every opportunity to be found for free.
19. make videos - they don't need to be flash, just easy to watch. Post them on YouTube under your business account. Try for topics which your customers or clients are already and will be looking for and give them answers, demonstrations and even entertainment.
20. start a business Facebook group - it is yet another free opportunity to build a group of people loyal to your business. Take a read of our articles Does Your Business Need a Facebook Group and How to Grow Your Facebook Group for tips on doing this.
21. start making more graphics - think about using free programs such as Canva to create the best graphics you have ever made. From Facebook posts, Pinterest pins and info-graphics, spend time on making them look

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- mind blowingly amazing and professional. There is a lot of free help online on how to use sites like Canva, if you are a complete novice.
22. write a case study - now is the time to spend a few hours writing up a case study which demonstrates just how effective your product or service is. Use the testimonials you already have as starting points, and contact those customers personally for more information to include in the case study.
 23. look for the best articles in your industry, and make them better - Google will show you the best content or what it thinks is the best content on page 1 on any topic. Find a relevant topic to your industry, research the best articles you can find and then rewrite bits and pieces from them to make your own super skyscraper content. For instance, if you can find an article with 100 helpful points, make yours 115 helpful points.
 24. recycle content - you may already have some great existing content you can re purpose. Why not turn it into an eBook (type it into Word, then save it as a PDF) and email it to your email list?
 25. wear your 'uniform' everywhere - if you have an article of clothing branded with your business, wear it everywhere and not just to work.
 26. sidewalk chalk - if you have a physical store, write on the footpath outside, encouraging people to come in.
 27. FOMO - fear of missing out is a great strategy to use. Tell your customers you've only got a limited time for a specific sale, or only this much stock available.
 28. add calls to action everywhere - be direct and tell people what you want them to do next. On articles, Pinterest pins, social media posts...
 29. create an on boarding strategy - decide exactly what will happen once a new customer or client makes contact with you. What pathway will you direct them down and help them stick around?
 30. offer a free consult - doesn't have to be long, 15 or 20 minutes will work. Take it as a time to identify their problem, explain how you can help and give them some free advice and suggestions for them to take away. Follow this up with an email or phone call within the next few days.
 31. affiliate programs - set up an affiliate program where people promote your business using an affiliate code. If the sale from their code goes

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through, then they receive a small commission from you. Or you could go the other way around and promote other people's businesses for commission.

- 32.add share buttons to your website - if you haven't already, set up share buttons so people can share your articles and web pages through social media. Use a call to action on each page asking them to share it for you.

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#5 - Working from Home During a Lockdown

Monday 23rd March 2020 is a day New Zealanders will remember forever. For a minimum of four weeks, all non essential businesses must close and the only socialisation you can have is with the people you live with. Supermarkets, petrol stations, medical centres and pharmacies will remain open - but nothing else - unless they can work remotely.

Working remotely is now the name of the game. We think it will be bumpy for a while, but New Zealanders are a highly adaptable bunch, and together we'll all get through this and out the other side.

We've put together this guide on the types of decisions you'll need to make, tips on working with kids at home and ways to let your customers or clients know what is happening with your business.

Decisions to Make When Working from Home

Many of New Zealand's small to medium sized businesses either work from home, a warehouse, an office or a hot desk. They often are the owner operator, family operated or have less than five employees or contractors. Consequently, many are already experts in working remotely, arranging couriers to collect from their house and selling products online.

What has thrown a spanner in the works though, is now the kids and partners are also home. Gone is the 9-3 peace and quiet, replaced by continually being interrupted or required to do things, including schooling. We suggest that first you spend time taking stock of what you currently have in place and then make some decisions about your next steps. Here are things you may wish to consider:

- Must do times - are there any tasks that you must do at a specific time? What time will the courier collect from your home? When will you have Skype, Zoom or phone chats with clients? Create a list of these dates and times and block them out in your diary.
- Tools needed - do you have all of the tools necessary to work from home? This can include notifying the courier of a new collection point, getting in courier bags or boxes, making sure you have enough online

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time/internet connection to do your tasks and that you have the right online software and technology.

- Other responsibilities - you'll still need to juggle regular household tasks, but also include looking after kids and older family members.
- Kids - here's the big one; the kids. Until the schools get the online learning up and running, it may be best to simply treat the first few days as a school holiday. Let them chill out, watch TV, play on the iPad and in the garden.

How to Make Working from Home Easier

If you are able to be flexible regarding your working hours, then you will have a huge advantage to those who need to work to a clock. That's because you (in theory) will be able to work when the kids are busy doing something else. Things will get crazy at home, plans won't be able to be completed and changes will need to be implemented. But remember, flexibility is the key here.

- set up a food tray - instead of needing to make snacks all day long, do it once in the morning and the kids graze when they want. Sure, they'll eat everything straight up on the first day. But this will change and they'll start to manage their food choices over time.
- rotate activities - each day, decide on some activities for the day. You could either bring them all out in the morning, or drip feed over the day. Keeping them used on a rotating basis will help keep the novelty going too.
- ask for ideas - kids know what they want to do. If you are stuck for ideas, ask the kids what they want to do. This can give you a place to look for further ideas within their topic area.
- schedule kid times - if you are working from home, you'll not be able to be with the kids at every moment. If you book in time to be with them, encourage them to give you some space when you need to work. You could also set them up with some activities in the same room as you, so they can be close and talk when they feel the need.
- have specific zones - set up a play area, a work area and a learning area. Keep activities related to those areas specific to them. This can help

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everyone set the 'mood' or tone and find it easier to keep to a certain role or task.

Keeping Your Customers Informed

Everyone in New Zealand will be impacted by our nationwide lockdown. There will be a lot of mixed up information out there and likely some panic. What you can do is clearly communicate with your customers or clients as to what is going on with your business. This includes information about:

- how you will deliver orders from your eCommerce shop
- how to contact you
- how you are managing hygiene and safety with products and packaging
- any expected delays with deliveries
- updates to your returns policy if applicable
- updates to markets and other store sales that are now cancelled or postponed

Most of all, let them know what you can and can't do at the moment. Be clear as to whether you are business as usual, have changes or are shut.

Together we will get through this. Kia kaha New Zealand.

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#6 How to Stay Motivated When Times Are Tough

Staying motivated when times are tough is challenging. You've given it your all, but it wasn't enough and now you're facing an even tougher road ahead. While it's hard, it's not impossible to get that motivation back and keep it. Today we're going to share our ideas on common sense tasks you can do to stay motivated even when things look bad.

Tips On Staying Motivated in Tough Times

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. That may be the catch phrase for some well known batteries, but reality is somewhat different. It's human nature to become discouraged when facing problem after problem, and business owners know this better than most. While it's true that we are responsible for how we feel and what we do, sometimes we have some unwanted help from our challenges which makes us feel rotten and unwilling to do anything.

As a business owner, you can't afford to remain unmotivated and without a plan on how you will move forward. Your best choice is to take immediate action when you feel your motivation start to slide, and try out one or more of these tips:

- check your business plan and other goals - take a read through your business plan or mission to see what you are working towards achievement. While right now is probably not the best time to revisit or make changes on it, it should help you to remember why you are doing what you're doing.
- visualise what you want to achieve - your dream may not have come to fruition yet, but that doesn't mean you can't see it! Picture what it would feel like, sound like and look like when you achieve your mission. Visualisation helps us to remain positive and give us the motivation to keep trying.
- have a break - we all suffer from varying levels of burnout, and this can zap us of our energy and desires. Take the time to step away from work

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completely and have a rest before coming back to the problem with fresh eyes.

- take small steps - big jobs can overwhelm us, so break down those jobs into smaller more manageable tasks. Psychologically it helps us feel like we are accomplishing things when we can check off a job, even if it is just a part of one big one.
- ask for help - there's nothing wrong in seeking support or advice when times are tough. Chances are someone has been where you are now and can offer both encouragement and practical steps to take to help you move forward.
- celebrate the wins, no matter how big or small - it's important that you celebrate what you have achieved. Recognise what you have done by marking the occasion in some small way, be it a coffee out or meeting up with friends.
- find your inspiration - do you feel great when playing certain music, reading motivational quotes or looking at photos? Experiment with different things to see what gets you going.

Finally, a great way to get motivated is by checking out the advice of others who've been in your shoes. Take a read of the advice given by our business networking group members on things you can do when starting a business - including motivational tips too!

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7 - 7 Ways to Make Working from Home Easier

If you are running your business from home, or are a contractor or employee of a business for whom you can, you'll understand just how fortunate you are. No commutes, you can work in your pyjamas, and you have no work colleagues to worry about making small talk with. However, each of these points can also be a downside, affecting your productivity and effectiveness.

Now before you think we are anti-pyjamas (which we're not, by the way), we'd like to take the time to explain both the pros and cons of working from home, along with seven ways you can make doing so even easier for you.

Pros and Cons of Working from Home

There are many things for and against working from home. The pros include:

- no commute
- wear what you want
- flexibility in working hours
- more time with your family
- own working environment
- more autonomy
- better work-life balance
- The cons include:
- difficulty switching off from work
- having to supply and maintain your working space
- no or minimal human interaction
- low productivity
- lots of distractions
- lack of understanding by others (when are you getting a real job? etc)

By identifying these pros and cons, we can put into place strategies to improve the good ones and decrease the bad.

7 Ways to Make Working From Home Better

Seven things you can do to make working from home work for you, are:

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- set up a dedicated workspace. This could be a desk in the lounge or the spare room. Having your own space makes it easier to separate work from home time, as well as hopefully keeping things quieter for you.
- know when you work best. Are you an early bird or night owl? Scheduling your work commitments for a time of the day which suits you (and your business) best can improve productivity.
- dress like you are going to work. Wearing clothes that you would wear to a workplace outside of the home gives you a mental push.
- be aware of your distractions. What things distract you the most? Put strategies in place to limit these, such as only checking social media at set times or having a babysitter for the kids.
- plan ahead. Keep a diary or planner of what you hope to achieve each day. Schedule meetings, emails, social media and other activities to ensure you keep on track and on time.
- set regular working hours. They may not be 9-5, but keep regular hours and make sure your customers, clients, friends and family know what they are.
- take regular breaks. We all work better when we're recharged, and you do deserve to take breaks when you work at home!

To learn more about working from home, or to even start up or improve your home based business, take a read of our special resource created specifically for home based businesses in New Zealand.

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#8 Creating a Work-Life Balance When You Work from Home

Working from home is awesome. There's no travel involved, you usually can set your own hours, you can wear 'home clothes' and you don't need to worry about things such as what to do if the kids are sick. But there is one significant pitfall and that is that the line between work time and home time can become blurred. It's easy to happen and it's often not something we recognise is happening. So today we're sharing with you seven things you can do to create a great work life balance when working from home.

7 Actions to Improve Your Work Life Balance When Working from Home

Here are seven things you can do today to improve your work life balance working from home:

- Create a dedicated workspace - are you working in your lounge or bedroom, surrounded by chores which need doing and constant demands from the kids? Set yourself up a dedicated workspace. It doesn't have to be a separate room, although that would be ideal. Instead you could use a corner of a room or even your dining room table as your headquarters.
- Get dressed - while you can certainly work in your pyjamas at home, getting dressed for work gives your brain (and your family) the message that it's work time now.
- Schedule your work and family time - sounds simple but booking time for work and time for family is a great way to ensure you achieve both!
- Take breaks - it's easy to get on a roll with a task and keep working at it, regardless of where you're working. But just like you'd take breaks if you worked elsewhere, it's vital you have coffee and lunch breaks at home too! Move away from your workstation and relax!
- Minimise distractions - once again this isn't isolated to working from home: it's easy to get distracted anywhere! Keep your desk facing away from others, keep your workspace tidy and organised and turn off any devices or accounts that aren't related to your work for the day.
- Get social - spend time catching up with friends outside of work hours. Take time to walk to the cafe for a coffee like you would if you worked

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elsewhere. Also keep socially engaged with others who also work from home. A great way to do that is to network online through an online business networking group.

- Fake a commute - often a commute to work is when we'd catch up on the latest news on the radio, listen to a podcast or psych ourselves up or wind down for the day. Even though you work from home, fake a commute by taking a walk around the block before and after work to help enter or exit your work mindset.

Self-Care When Working from Home

When you work for a boss, it's part of their responsibility to notice when you're getting burnt out, that you take breaks and to send you home if you're sick.

When you work for yourself, you're the one who needs to notice these things!

Self-care involves:

- ensuring you get enough sleep
- take regular meal breaks
- use equipment safely
- socialise with others regularly
- go outside for breaks
- create an attractive workspace
- take sick days
- make and track your own goals

Self-care needs to be a vital part of your everyday routine when working at home. As mentioned above, it's so easy to blur the boundaries between work and family life. Self-care can help you see those boundaries clearly and feel better. When you feel better, you're more productive, making it a total win-win! It's now time to act - what's going to be your first step?

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#9 Budget Cutting Ideas for NZ Businesses

- As incoming sales and inquiries drop, understandably you'll be feeling concerned about how you can keep your business running. We've put together a collection of ideas and suggestions of ways you can lower your business costs:
- make a list of all of your outgoing expenses first - you won't be able to analyse and make cuts if you first don't know what you need to spend. You should also revise your current budget and cashflow forecast too.
- save utilities - you'll always need to keep your electricity, gas and water running. But you can cut back on the amount you use, which will reduce your bills for your utilities. Turn off lights, unused appliances and machinery. Have shorter showers and boil the jug less.
- use less paper - it's time to print double sided on everything, and consider if you really even need to print at all.
- use free cloud tools - if they'll suit your needs, switch your file saving options to free ones such as Google Docs. Or see if you can reduce the amount you have stored in your paid cloud tool so you can move down to a lower priced tier.
- avoid travel - instead of meeting your client in the cafe or restaurant, arrange to meet them via phone or video instead. Not only will you save on the food and drink costs, but transport costs too.
- consider buying secondhand - not everything needs to be brand new for a business, such as machinery, technology and in some cases, the supplies products are even made with. Secondhand products are also GST claimable.
- ask for discounts - many businesses will be in the same boat as you. Ask if they can give you a discount for early payment of their invoices.
- try free marketing ideas - we've written a great article which gives you plenty of free marketing ideas you can try for your business to boost sales.
- ask for a hold on debt repayment - many banks and lenders are happy to change a loan to interest only or even pause payment when a business is having a short term financial issue.

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- pool with other businesses - instead of purchasing something, see if you could borrow it from another business. Or combine your money and buy the item to share between you all.
- shop around for couriers - freight is a large expense for many businesses. Spend some time shopping around and comparing the prices between courier companies.
- piggyback your advertising - join other businesses and take out paid advertising together. Don't forget cross promotion too.
- work on your SEO - a website with great search engine optimisation gets more free traffic from search engines. Working on your website's SEO is well worth doing now, so you'll be found when people start shopping once more.
- shift to a cheaper location - if the rent you'll pay at commercial premises would be cheaper two blocks away, consider shifting.
- try bartering - see if you can swap with other businesses the products and services you need
- ask for multiple quotes - get at least three quotes for work or products you need.

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Store

1. 6 Benefits of Selling Digital Products
2. How to Sell an eBook on Your Website
3. Using the eCommerce Subscription Model for Your Business
4. Ways to Encourage More Reviews on Your Website
5. Why Are Product Reviews Important on a Website?
6. Choosing a Payment Plan for Your Website
7. Increase Sales by Giving Your Product Pages a Makeover
8. Advice on Creating Digital Products to Sell Via Your Website

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Store

1 - 6 Benefits of Selling Digital Products

Selling digital products on your eCommerce store can be highly profitable. We think these are the top six most compelling reasons why you should be selling digital products online:

1. Low overhead and start up costs - you won't need to purchase and store products before you begin, reducing your financial outlay and risk.
2. Always in stock - a digital product can never run out of stock, meaning it will always be available to purchase. There's no stock taking to worry about, and no storage necessary either. It's a good idea to have multiple copies of your digital product stored in different locations, such as portable drives and the cloud to ensure it is not lost.
3. No shipping required - your digital product will be delivered to your customer via an automated download link they receive in an email after payment is confirmed. Our article [How to Sell an eBook On Your Website](#) explains how to upload a digital product and what happens once it sells.
4. World-wide market - a digital product can be delivered anywhere in the world at anytime. Available 24/7, it can bring you a passive income also.
5. Large profit margins - once the costs for creating the product are complete, there are no more, making a digital product potentially highly profitable.
6. Affiliate promotion - with a large profit margin, there is the potential for you to create an affiliate program whereby you give a % of each sale to someone who makes a referral resulting in a sale.

For more information about what digital products you could sell on your website, please take a read of our article [Products to Sell Online That Don't Need Shipping](#).

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Store

2 How to Sell an eBook on Your Website

Turning your knowledge and passion into an eBook to sell on your website can provide you with a passive stream of income.

We're going to explain how to do this in six steps from start to finish. They are:

- writing your eBook
- formatting your eBook
- proofreading your eBook
- creating a cover for your eBook
- loading your eBook to your website
- marketing your eBook

Writing Your eBook

Your first task when writing an eBook is to come up with a topic. Ideally this will be related to your business' industry and be something you know a lot about already. It also needs to be on a topic which your target audience wants to read and learn more about.

Next comes the book title, though some people leave this till last. Identifying it now though can help keep you on track and motivated to complete writing the book.

Then comes the writing. This is also the main stumbling block as to why people either don't start or start and then don't finish their eBook. If you really don't want to write it, consider hiring a ghostwriter to write it for you. Otherwise, you could write a brief outline of your book, split the ideas into chapters and then split each chapter into an introduction, a middle and an ending. The average eBook is only around 35 pages, which is approximately 11,000 words, so it is doable.

Formatting Your eBook

Once you have finished writing your eBook, your next job is to format it. Many people outsource this, as arranging spacing, images and the best file type can be challenging. If you do take the DIY formatting route, here are some tips to help you achieve a great result:

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- white space is your friend
- use a consistent font and font sizes throughout
- insert clear images and diagrams where appropriate
- choose the most appropriate format for your eBook based upon where you are selling it. For instance, a PDF format is fine when selling through your Website World eCommerce site.

Proofreading Your eBook

No one wants to see grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in something they have purchased, or received for free! Spend time re-reading through your writing to identify errors and correcting. It would be useful to also run it through several different spellcheckers too.

You could also offer a free copy to someone in order for their thoughts on your book and some proofreading help. This is a good way to test your eBook before you begin uploading it to and selling it on your website.

Creating a Cover for Your eBook

A well designed and thought out cover will help sell and promote your eBook. While it's not a book a customer will see on a shelf, pick up and look through, the cover will be seen on your website and in promotional materials. It will also be seen on the finished product too.

You could hire a graphic designer to create a cover for you. Or you could use one of the many tools available online, such as Canva to create your own.

Loading Your eBook to Your Website

You'll need to firstly add a shopping cart to your website if you are not already selling online. If you have a shopping page without a cart, then change the page type to 'shopping cart' in the page options. If you don't have a shopping page:

Click [add a new page] under the blue page buttons on the left menu

Click [Shopping cart layouts], select an appropriate shopping page. Shopping gallery is very photo centric, allowing customers to see a lot of product photos

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quickly, with just a small description under each. The other shopping page types have a thumbnail on the left, and a longer product description on the right, possibly with a buy button on the product listing pages.

You will now be presented with [How to manage your catalogue] page. The grey button "Setup" is a good place to start as it list all the steps with links to setting up your shopping cart, simply start at the top and work down.

Next you will need to add your eBook as a product. Head to the Shopping tab and select the button Add New Products. Then select the option Add Digital Document.

Just like you would a physical product, enter all of the eBook product details and price. The one difference is that you will need to upload the eBook file as well.

Once those details are entered, there are further shopping cart options you can work through including:

For your digital product specifically, you will need to edit the Automation - Sell Digital File/Document area if you haven't already linked the product with its corresponding file in the steps above. If you have, then a link to the attached file will be emailed to the purchaser as soon as the credit card payment is successful. If the purchaser pays by any other means, then you will need to email the document yourself manually. Document download links will only work a maximum of 5 times a day to prevent people handing out URLs.

Don't forget that you will also need to set up general shopping options such as freight, currency and payment gateways too.

Marketing Your eBook

You can begin to market your eBook before it launches to build awareness within your audience, as well as after it is available on your website. Ideas for marketing your eBook include:

- paid advertising - this includes social media sites and private websites
- newsletters - sending out to your email list, or paying for an advertiser to send your information out to their list

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- social media - add your eBook promotion to your social media accounts of Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and others
- create a specific landing page to send people to
- add links to it from your blogs and other website pages

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Store

3 Using the eCommerce Subscription Model for Your Business

We take a look at the growing popularity of the subscription model for eCommerce businesses, including:

- what is the subscription model?
- pros and cons of using the subscription model
- choosing the right product
- a look at NZ business The Snobby Collective who are using a subscription model

Do you get your toothbrushes delivered to your home each month? How about a box of pre-planned meals each week? These are two examples of a business using the subscription model to sell their products.

The subscription business model is when a customer signs up to pay for and receive a reoccurring service or product. This product or service is delivered on an agreed upon schedule, often weekly or monthly, without the customer needing to do anything else. Funds are automatically taken from the customer by an agreed method, and the customer has the right to cancel the subscription should they choose.

Many eCommerce businesses are taking advantage of this business model and it is proving popular with customers. Let's take a look at the pros and cons of doing so.

If you're considering using the subscription model for your online store, take a read through the pros and cons of doing so first.

Pros of Using the Subscription Business Model

- regular and predictable income - you know the number of customers who have signed up for your subscription, which means you know the income you will be receiving.
- better customer relationships - you have the opportunity to build better and long lasting relationships with your customers as you'll be dealing with them on a regular basis. This can help you to retain customers for longer.

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- targeted audience - a subscription box of say soap will only appeal to a highly specific audience. This makes it easier to target your promotions, saving you time and money with your marketing efforts.

Cons of Using the Subscription Business Model

- high risk of churn or cancellation - your customer will sign up to say they want your subscription, but may cancel it a few months down the track. You'll need to think of ways to keep them interested and paying for it. Or you could do what The Snobby Collective have done, and charge for a multiple months subscription in one payment.
- nerves in signing up - many of us get concerned about signing up for things that are going to cost us money. What if we don't like it? This is quite a big obstacle to overcome initially.
- boredom - if you send the same products each time, people will get bored. How will you overcome this?
- timing - if you're sending out a product every third Monday, you need to have all of your ducks in a row. If you're late, customers may run out of products and will have two deliveries too close together, for instance.

You've decided that selling a subscription sounds good, but which of your products should it contain? Remembering that your subscription will only appeal to a small number of individuals, should it contain your most popular products, your most expensive products or completely unique products to what you already sell on your website?

There are three important things to consider here:

- Niche - the highly specific product you are focusing on selling to a highly specific group of people.
- Value proposition - the value a customer sees in what you are selling them.
- Aesthetics - how your subscription product looks when your customer receives it.

Having taken into consideration these three points, choosing a product to include in your subscription should become clearer. It needs to appeal to your

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target audience, they must see it or something related to it as valuable and they must like the look of it.

How The Snobby Collective Uses a Subscription Model

Paul Harris runs his coffee website The Snobby Collective using Website World's CMS. Along with coffee brewing gear, reusable cups and gift boxes, he also sells one, three, six and twelve monthly coffee subscriptions.

We asked Paul to share some insights with us as to why and how he uses the subscription model for his business.

What made you want to sell using the subscription method?

Our goal is to make a difference in the lives of coffee producers and their communities. To do this we need to take people on a journey. A journey of insight, understanding and change.

A subscription model allows people to have regular coffee deliveries, the buy-in of not missing out on the next part of the journey, learning about the trials and triumphs of the communities and the partners in the coffee value chain that have made it possible.

A monthly celebration of people before profit.

How do you overcome customers objections to purchasing a subscription?

One month teaser. It helps our customers sample our service without obligation or the hassle of cancelling their subscription if it's not for them.

Also, by having set blocks of 3, 6 or 12 month options, it's a set and forget. Budgeting is easier as there is no recurring bill to forget, just a friendly reminder that your subscription has finished.

What do you see as the value you are providing your customers?

We save our customers time.

We are professional coffee geeks. We seek out NZ's best specialty coffee roasters, the best ethically sourced coffee currently available and ship it to your door.

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We take the guesswork out by supplying the roasters recommended recipe for brewing (always filter as that is our market and gets the best out of the single-origin coffees) meaning you're getting the best out of your beans, which equates to value for money.

How do you take advantage of having the ability you have to build a relationship with your subscription customers, versus a one-off purchase from your site?

A lower carbon footprint. We offer free shipping of anything in our web store when shipped with your subscription. Using the code "nextsub" means it's clear to us and our customer when these items will be shipped.

Thanks so much Paul for taking the time to give us an insight into your business. If you're ready to start selling using the subscription model, consider using Website World. Here are four tips about how our CMS can help you with your subscription products:

1. Use the "Repeat Order Service". The repeat order service automatically creates a draft order immediately after submission of the initial order. The customer selects the repeat interval. At the repeat date, the draft order will be submitted, and the process begins again. This is great for home or restaurant food replenishment, retail stock replenishment etc, as it gives the customer a chance to cancel or make changes to their order at any stage. The assumption in this process is usually that payment is made on account, via an accounting system like Xero, that may tally up weekly/fortnightly orders and take a monthly payment. In any case an invoice is sent to the purchaser each time the order is submitted, with the option to pay by the usual method of payment. The obligation remains with the merchant to confirm orders have been paid, or meet their terms of engagement, before fulfilling an order. Orders will simply show as unpaid in our system, until marked as paid in Xero, or actually paid by some other means.
2. If you run some sort of online membership service, consider using our membership widget. Our membership widget will allow new members to signup and pay for immediate access. Thereafter, it will

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send them a reminder near to their expiry date asking them to renew their membership. This sort of approach works best with 3 month, 6 month or 12 month terms, where renewal is not automatic.

3. If you want a set and forget payment plan, such as gym membership, then you are best not to use the shopping cart for this process. The best way to setup a recurring payment plan, is to find a payment provider such as stripe or PayPal who have special features for managing all of your subscription payments. Each of them will allow you to add some "widget code" anywhere in your website. Inside our website builder CMS, you can paste this code as HTML. This is a very simple interface, with all management of subscriptions taken care of by the payment provider.
4. You may also consider using our shopping cart to offer customers their first month payment. Thereafter, you can set up a recurring payment plan in an accounting system like Xero, and use their methods of payment, and their reconciliation system to manage that.

We are happy to migrate your current website to our platform or give you the opportunity to build from new. Grab your free trial today.

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Store

4 - Ways to Encourage More Reviews on Your Website

Product reviews are one of the best sales tools you can use, as these statistics show:

88% of online shoppers use reviews when deciding what to buy

63% of online shoppers are more likely to buy from a website which has product reviews enabled

70% of shoppers check reviews before making a final purchase

Providing your website visitors with social proof for your products is only a good thing, even if some of your reviews are negative. The challenge is though, getting your customers to come back at a later date and give you that review. However, it's not impossible and we've put together a list of seven ways you can encourage more product reviews being left on your website.

7 Ways to Get More Product Reviews On Your Website

Once you have enabled product reviews on your website (read our article [Why Product Reviews Are Important & How to Enable Them On Your Website](#)), there are several things you can do to encourage customers to leave a review. Here are seven of them:

1. Position them so they are easily noticed - while by default your product reviews and star ratings are located under the Buy Now button for a product, it doesn't mean that is the only place you can have them. Consider setting up a page specifically to list your product reviews on, or even creating graphics and banners to display them throughout your website. As reviews get noticed more, customers feel a sense of urgency to add their own reviews to them.
2. Reward reviewers - when someone leaves a product review, respond to it and offer them a % discount on their next purchase from your website.
3. Email post purchase reminders - one of the great features of our product review widget, is that it can be set to automatically email reminders to customers to review their purchase. Sent out a set

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number of days after the purchase, the customer simply clicks on the email link to leave their star rating and comments.

4. Share reviews on social media - create social media templates using Canva to showcase your reviews, and share them with your wider audience.
5. Respond to every review - it's vital that you show your reviews that you appreciate the effort they have made in leaving their review. Write a personalised comment for every one you receive, and remember to thank them for their review.
6. Consider product sampling - if you haven't yet got many reviews on your website, consider offering free samples to your target market in exchange for a review. This strategy works for seasonal products, product launches and helping nail down your specific target audience.
7. Add a call to action - let customers know that you would like them to review the product they have purchased. You can add a call to action on the product page, the cart or checkout, and the emailed order receipt.

We recommend reading our articles [Why Product Reviews Are Important & How to Enable Them On Your Website](#), and [Best Ways to Manage Negative Reviews Online](#) for further details about product reviews.

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5 - Why Are Product Reviews Important on a Website?

Product reviews help customers make decisions about which product will best suit their needs, and whether your business is the best place for them to purchase the product from. A review provides social proof, which is important because:

88% of online shoppers use reviews when deciding what to buy

63% of online shoppers are more likely to buy from a website which has product reviews enabled

70% of shoppers check reviews before making a final purchase

But as well as benefiting your customers, product reviews benefit your website too by:

- helping improve product descriptions - when selling a product, we often get too close to it and may miss out information. Letting your customers review a product helps improve a product description as they are likely to add information important to buyers you may not have even thought of adding. You can use these reviews as quotes in your descriptions, as well as in other promotional activities.
- creating user-generated content - there's nothing better than new content from a source other than your business.
- improving your SEO - new content on a page helps improve your search engine ranking as it shows Google it's being updated, let Google show reviews in its search results and start to rank for keywords containing (product name) review.

Some website owners are concerned with the thought of receiving negative reviews, and this can happen. However, there are benefits of receiving negative reviews as:

- 30% of customers assume product reviews to be fake if there are no negative reviews
- 68% of shoppers trust reviews more if they see both good and bad reviews

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- 95% of customers suspect censored or fake reviews if they don't see bad reviews

Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Website

#6 Choosing a Payment Plan for Your Website

As payment plan options are continually being developed, many website owners struggle to decide which is the best option for their business. Should they offer all the available options, or select only one? Do they ask their customers what they want, or make the choice themselves? We discuss what the benefits of offering a payment plan are, what your choice options are and how to choose the right one for your business.

Benefits of Offering a Payment Plan on Your Website

For a business owner to want to offer a payment plan, there must be benefits for either their business, their customers or for both. Payment plan providers state that there are benefits for both parties, with common benefits including:

- customers can purchase items and use them now, paying the purchase price over several payments
- suggestions that offering a payment plan to customers can increase both the quantity of sales, plus the total purchase price
- the business doesn't need to handle payment collection from the customer; the payment plan business does that
- many payment plans work both online and instore
- no cost to sign up for customers
- opportunity for increased conversions due to reduced cart abandonment
- you get paid the amount in full and don't have to chase payments

These benefits don't come without one disadvantage, which the payment plan businesses are quick to say is covered by increased sales, and that's you must pay a merchant fee for every sale you make using that payment plan.

What Are My Website's Payment Plan Options?

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Payment plans are a relatively new option, whereas a business you sell the goods to the customer, who then pays the payment plan company the full cost of their purchase in split payments. The payment plan company pays you the full amount upfront, charging the customer interest or a fee if they fail to meet a payment. To use a payment plan, a business must first sign up to have an account with them. The customer also needs to have an account too.

There are four payment plan options currently available to Website World customers:

- Laybuy

offers customers the chance to split their purchase price into six weekly payments. There is no additional charge to the customer if their total purchase cost is paid in full within the timeframe. If it isn't Laybuy will charge them a fee.

offers merchants the opportunity to increase their customer base, the number and dollar amount of sales, reduce fraud risk and receive the full purchase price up front from Laybuy, minus a merchant fee.

- Oxipay

offers customers the opportunity to pay their full purchase price over four fortnightly payments. There are no fees or additional costs for the customer unless they fail to make a payment on time, when a fee will be charged.

offers merchants the full cost upfront for the customer's purchase minus a merchant fee, reduces fraud levels, encourages larger orders and an increased customer base.

- PartPay

offers customers the chance to pay 25% of the purchase cost over four fortnightly payments. They pay 25% at the time of purchase, with the remaining three 25% payments split over the next six weeks. There are no fees or additional costs unless the customer fails to make a payment on time, when they will be charged late payment fees.

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offers merchants the full payment price upfront minus a merchant fee, lower fraud risks, opportunity to increase sales quantity and price. This is a NZ owned company.

- Afterpay

offers customers the ability to purchase something now and pay for it over four equal fortnightly payments. The only additional fee charged to the customer is if they fail to make a payment on time. It also lets customers use their app, plus purchase both instore and online.

offers merchants an upfront payment minus a merchant fee, reduced fraud risk and the opportunity to increase sales in price and quantity.

How to Choose Between Payment Plans

You've decided to add at least one payment plan option to your website. The choice is now, which one(s) should you sign up for a merchant account with?

There really is no hard and fast rules about how to make that decision. But here are a few questions to ask yourself and find the answers to:

- what % is their merchant fee?
- which payment plan are your customers asking for and/or using?
- do you want to work with a well established payment plan business, or a new one, or you're not bothered?
- when do you get paid the full purchase price, minus merchant fee?
- what is their returns policy?
- how large is their customer base?
- how easy it is for a customer to sign up with them?
- what do you need to do or provide in order to sign up as a merchant?
- is it supported by your website platform?

You can learn more about the payment plans and payment gateways we offer our CMS users by taking a look at our Payment Gateway information page.

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Website

7 - Increase Sales by Giving Your Product Pages a Makeover

Your product pages are ultimately where customers decide to purchase a product from your website. They use several pieces of information from your site to make this decision, including:

- photos
- price
- product description
- page layout
- headings
- page colours
- calls to action
- reviews and testimonials

A quarterly review of your product pages gives you the opportunity to identify what is and isn't working, plus make any adjustments to improve sale numbers. To help you do this, we've put together a comprehensive list of things for you to work check and work through. Then we're explaining what the benefits are of regularly updating your product pages, and share some tips on improving the design of a product page.

6 Key Product Page Areas to Review & Adjust to Improve Sales

1 - Important Things First

Put your most important information at the top of the page. Don't assume customers will read to the bottom to learn everything about a product.

Immediately explain what the product is, and what the benefits to the customer are.

2 - Answer Questions & Overcome Obstacles

To encourage a customer to purchase a product, you first need to know why they are needing the product in the first place. What is motivating them

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towards purchasing your product and what is holding them back from buying it right now? You can address both of these points through text in the product description, photos of the product in use or diagrams explaining how the product works and helps the customer.

3 - Use Calls to Action

Be really specific and tell your customer to purchase the product now. Buttons saying 'Buy Now' or 'Add to Cart' leave your customer in no doubt what the next step they should be taking is.

4 - Check Your Photos

In a physical store, your customer could pick up and examine every part of the product. On your website, they've only got your photos.

Include photos of your product from different angles, in different colours, in use and in close-ups. This gives customers the opportunity to visually learn as much as they can.

5 - Showcase Reviews & Testimonials

The benefit word of mouth has on increasing product sales can never be underestimated. But what if your customer doesn't know anyone who has used your product? That's where displaying product reviews and testimonials pays dividends. Providing social proof helps address concerns they may have about both the product and your business.

6 - Upsell and Cross-Sell Where You Can

The customer is on your product page to find out more about the product or to buy it. Your main goal is to encourage them to add it to their cart and purchase it via the checkout page. However, you can also give the customer other options if the product isn't exactly what they want, or to add an additional product to their cart.

Upselling is where you make a suggestion to the customer that they may want to consider another product which offers them more features or benefits. This is generally a product which will cost them more money. Cross-selling is when you give suggestions of other products which would compliment the product they are looking at now, and they buy another product in addition to it.

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Benefits of Updating Your Product Pages

An optimised product page provides the best possible amount of information a website visitor needs to make a decision about their purchase. In saying so though, it can be a large amount of work to review and then update your product pages.

As a busy eCommerce business owner, you may feel your time is better spent elsewhere. We believe though, that the time you spend refreshing product pages will pay dividends in the future for your business. Not only can these changes improve the SEO of the product page and have it rank higher in search engine results, but they can also increase conversions from website visitors. An updated product page also reduces the number of product returns and refund requests as they know exactly what they need to know about the product before they buy it.

Improving the Design of a Product Page to Increase Sales

Unless you are or employ the services of a web designer or developer, you'll need to use the available features your website platform offers to improve on a product page's design. This means using simple web design features such as:

- white space
- photo sizes and placement
- headings (h1 and h2)
- bold and coloured text
- call to action buttons
- persuasive text placement

Remember that for a website, good UX or user experiences are key to success.

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Fine Tuning Your eCommerce Store

#8 - Advice on Creating Digital Products to Sell Via Your Website

Creating and selling digital products is a great way to boost your business' profitability. As more people spend time online, they are continually looking for content which interests and helps them solve a problem. Your digital product could be the solution to their problem, and one they'll be willing to pay for.

From smartphone apps through to eBooks and videos, there are endless possibilities available for you to create and sell digital products from your website. Today we're going to walk you through the process of choosing the best type of digital product for your business, and tips on their creation.

7 Types of Digital Products to Make & Sell

There are plenty of different types of digital products your business could create and sell from your website, including:

1. Written - while eBooks are the most well known, other examples of written products include newsletters, templates, worksheets, blogs and reports.
2. Video - whether you feel confident in front or behind a camera is irrelevant: anyone can make and sell a video. You could present a webinar, share a screenshare or make a slide show of pictures while you record audio to match it.
3. Audio - think audio courses, lectures, podcasts and guided meditations. People love being able to multi-task by listening to something while doing something else.
4. Stock photography - if you have great photos, people will buy them.
5. Digital artwork - a good side line for graphic designers is to make and sell digital art.
6. Patterns - if you knit, sew or crochet, why not make your own patterns and sell them online.
7. Games - if you're a coder, make and sell online games.

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How to Choose Which Digital Product to Make & Sell

The types of digital products listed above may have sparked some ideas regarding what you will create and sell. But like with all products, before you start anything, do your due diligence first. This includes:

- identifying the specific niche for your product - nail down the exact niche you want to sell your product for. Like with a physical product, a digital one still needs to solve a problem for the customer.
- researching the product niche - spend time finding out who your competition will be, what they sell and how customers respond to their products. Ask your target audience what type of digital content they would pay for and why.
- brainstorm product ideas - you've seen what's happening in and what people think about digital products in your niche. Now is the time for you to take on board these observations and opinions to create a list of possibilities for your business. Remember that a product needs to solve a customer's pain point in order for them to purchase it.
- test your preferred product idea - there will be one idea which reaches out to you and still seems viable after your research. Write out your ideas more fully for this product and then once again, take it to your target audience for feedback.

Tips On Creating Digital Products

You've confirmed the digital product you will be selling, making now the time you need to start creating it. While you do though, there are a few things you should be doing which will help you sell it. For instance, you need to be spending time building up your newsletter subscription list so you can promote your upcoming product. Secondly, create great free content on your site so potential customers can see the value of your content - a bit of you try before you buy.

Here are our tips on making digital and downloadable products to sell from your website:

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- appearances matter - just like with physical products, how your digital product is presented is important. The problem is though, it's digital, not physical. This means product photos are out. Instead you'll need to rely upon a mock up of what the product contains (templates, photos etc), a cover, people using the product and lots of custom designed graphics.
- DIY or outsourcing - making the product yourself is going to be the cheapest option. If you can, use the skills you already have, and if necessary, learn how to do the ones you need by don't have. Outsourcing what you can't do, or don't have time to do is also an option.
- test and test again - ask friends, colleagues and your target audience to test out your product and give feedback upon it.
- revise and test again - take the feedback you received to once again edit your product and make it perfect.

If you are thinking about making and selling a digital product online, consider using NZ's best digital product selling platform: Website World. Our eCommerce website platform is ideal for selling and promoting digital products, and you can [grab yourself a free 30 day extendable trial](#) too. With affordable monthly hosting and an NZ based support team, we're here to help you make your online business a success.

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The Art of Online Sales

1. Your Guide on How to Write Product Descriptions
2. Using Product Bundles to Increase Website Sales
3. Tools to Help Remove Product Photo Backgrounds
4. How to Speed Up Your Customer's Buying Decision
5. Free Freight & Other Tips to Increase Website Sales
6. Easy Ways to Increase Sales Through an eCommerce Store
7. Increase Sales Through Colour Psychology
8. How Great Website Photography Can Raise Your Sales
9. Beginners Guide to Using Calls to Action
10. 5 Steps to Writing Killer Website Content
11. Writing Persuasive Website Copy Which Sells

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#1 Your Guide on How to Write Product Descriptions

Like all the other pages on your website, your product description provides an opportunity for your website to be found and ranked by search engines. This means that when writing your product description, you need to consider two things: firstly it needs to convince the reader to buy your product and secondly, it needs to be found by search engines so someone can read it!

It can be a chicken and egg situation in deciding which of these two things you should concentrate on first, so today we're explaining how to do both - at the same time! We're also going to list the characteristics a great product description has, plus show you how to write product descriptions which really sell!

What Makes a Great Product Description?

The goal of a product description is to ultimately sell a product. It gives the customer enough compelling information and photographs for them to want to buy it immediately. Inside a great product description, you will find:

- reasons why the customer needs the product
- how the product solves the customer's problem
- information on the product's features
- the benefits the product provides the customer
- great photos showing the product
- headings and sub headings
- easy to read text
- the product's sizes, colours, shapes, weight and any other characteristics

A great product description is also specifically written for your target audience. That means you need to know who will be buying your product. This helps you include all the information they need to make a decision, use the right type of language and the best product photos. Let's take a look at further tips on writing your product description.

Tips on Writing a Product Description Which Sells

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You know the things you should ideally include inside your product description. We say ideally, because it's not always possible to include them all, every time. Just aim for as many as you can and you'll do great! Now that you're ready to start writing, here's what you've got to do:

- Know your customer - called your buyer persona, you really need to understand the person who is going to buy your product before you can begin to write the description for it. This includes things such as their age, gender, interests, budget, likes and dislikes, where they live, if they are buying it for themselves or someone else and what problems they have that your product will solve for them. This knowledge will help you know which words and type of language to use in your description.
- Know your product - if you aren't convinced it is the best thing since sliced bread, how will you sell it? This means you need to know inside out the features and benefits of your product. You must be able to accurately describe how the product will make life better or easier for the customer and explain why they need to buy your product and not your competitor's. Use your insider knowledge of your buyer persona to tailor the benefits to your customer.
- Use your brand voice - you've worked hard to create a great brand people recognise and love. Your product descriptions need to continue to use your brand's voice in the words you use and the way the web page looks. If suddenly your description doesn't reflect what your customer already knows about you, they'll be confused and unlikely to purchase your product immediately.
- Use bullet points - bullet points make scanning a web page easy. Yes, you're going to spend a long time writing a great description, but the truth is that not everyone will read the whole thing. Instead they will read the bits which are pertinent to them. Using bullet points helps you direct their eye to the important stuff.
- Use SEO - search engine optimisation are the things you do to help your product description be found and ranked well by search engines like Google. The easiest way to do this is by using on page SEO, which includes things such as your meta tags, keywords, headings, image names and the text you write in your product description. Keep reading down for more specifics on how to do this.

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- Use great photos - a picture paints a thousand words - so what's a bad photo going to do when selling your product? Nothing. If you are reselling a product someone else has made, they may provide you with photos of it. Use your own judgement as to whether you think they portray the product in it's best light or not. Often you'll find a photo of the product in use makes more sales than one on a white background. Take a read of our article [How Great Website Product Photography Can Raise Your Sales](#) for more information and tips on taking awesome product photos!

How to Actually Write Your Product Description

You know what's got to be in it and read the tips about writing a product description. Now it's time to actually write it and we're going to explain how to do just that, step by step.

- Find your product keyword. This could be the brand name of the product or a description of it. The perfect keyword would ideally have a lot of people searching for it, but not a lot of websites trying to rank with it.
- Write an attention grabbing title which is short and to the point. Make it unique and descriptive. Include your keyword in the title. It looks best if you use a capital letter for the first word in the title like this: Blue Baby Shoes for Newborns.
- Write the introductory paragraph. It's here you need to grab your customer's attention by explaining to them the major benefit to them of using it. use your keyword once in it.
- Write the middle paragraph. Here's a good place to use bullet points to explain the features and additional benefits of using the product. This can also include information about how the product works, what it looks like and it's unique features. Don't forget to use your keyword once in this too!
- Write the final paragraph. If they've made it this far, chances are your customer is interested in buying your product. This paragraph seals the deal by summing up the major reasons why they need it and giving them a call to action or CTA. The call to action tells them what to do next, which is to buy the product, so make sure you tell them to do just that. Yup, you also need to include your keyword in this paragraph too.

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- Write the meta description. This is the blurb which shows up on the search engine results pages. Aim for it to be around 150 characters (letters and spaces), include your keyword and a call to action. You need to explain why people should click through to learn more about your product.

How to Write a Product Description Which is Found By Google

Your final job is to make sure that the description you've written is optimised well for SEO, particularly on page SEO. Well, chances are if you've followed the step by step guide to writing your product description, you've already done it! But just to make sure, let's look at the on page SEO things which should have been included:

- keyword - aim to have it make up around 1.5% of the total text you use on that page. Include the keyword in your heading, meta description and body of text.
- meta tags - these include the page filename or URL end piece, your meta description and your page heading. Take a read of our article [How to Optimise Your Web Pages Meta Tags](#) to learn more about using these.
- write enough - aim for at least around 300 words per product description. Yes, it sounds a lot, but it gives a search engine a good amount to index and for you to convince your customer to purchase your product.
- photo filenames - Google can't 'read' images, only text. If you save your product photos with meaningless letters or numbers, it does nothing to help that product. For instance, save a photo with a name like blue-woollen-baby-booties.jpg and not 122323.jpg.
- 100% unique - don't copy someone else's product description from their website, or even use the one provided by your product supplier. Write your own!

We've written two more eCommerce articles which you may be interested in. They are [Strategies to Speed Up Your Customer's Buying Decision](#) and [Free Freight & Other Tips To Increase Website Sales](#). Remember that by using one of our website templates, you are already providing your customer with an

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exceptional shop to use and buy products from. If you're not, then come and get started with a free website trial today!

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#2 Using Product Bundles to Increase Website Sales

As an online retailer, you're always looking for easy ways to increase sales on your website. Offering product bundles to your shoppers is the perfect way to do just that! In this article, we're going to explain what product bundling is, the types of product bundles you could use, and how to use them in your eCommerce store.

What is Product Bundling?

The large retail chains do this well - let's look at Mc Donalds for instance. You can buy a Big Mac alone, or save money and buy a Big Mac Combo. Yes, you pay more overall, but you get more and at a discounted price than if you were to buy each item individually. Insurance companies do the same. Purchase your home, contents and car policies through them to get a combined discount.

Product bundling is when you offer customers a group of complimentary products with a discount. It could be a large and small suitcase, or a box of chocolates with a red rose. Often used during holiday times, it can be used as a year-round tactic to increase your sales.

Customers like product bundles because they see themselves as saving money. They get products they wanted and get a great deal at the same time. Sure, you're going to get customers that only wanted the one item buy that one item. But you'll also going to get customers who only wanted one item, but who agree on the spot to purchase more because you offered a discount and they love a bargain! Because of this, you increase your average value order and make more profit, even though you wouldn't get as much as you could have if you sold the products individually. After all, they may have only brought one...

Types of Product Bundling & When Should You Do Which One?

There are a few types of product bundles you could offer your online customers. They include:

New product awareness - let your customers know about your new product by including it in a bundle with an existing product.

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Slow moving stock - add a slow selling item to a popular one and piggyback on its popularity.

Holiday time - people love a bargain when shopping for Christmas or another holiday. Why not give them one by bundling a few different products together, then promote it as a way to buy a gift for multiple people on their list - and save money!

Subscription box - a popular way to sell products monthly. A subscription box lets your customers order what is often a mystery box once per month, quarter etc, and for you to add a range of products to it depending on sales. Simply add a subscription box product, name the type of products people can expect to receive based around a theme and start selling!

Promoting Your Product Bundles

One of the easiest ways to promote your products is to set them up as individual products. Then you treat them just the same as you would other products. Creating a category for only product bundles gives shoppers an easy way to find the bundles, but you can also add them to another category too. For instance, you could include your chocolate box and red rose bundle in the Valentine's Day, product bundles and chocolates categories too.

When it comes to the marketing of your product bundles, the same strategies as you would market your other products apply. You can find out more information on that by reading our articles [What is Inbound Marketing](#) and [How to Speed Up Your Customer's Buying Decision](#). Other tips on marketing and creating bundles include:

- emphasise the savings a customer will get. Point out how much money they would save buying the items altogether than individually.
- use product photos to display the options. You can even add some text on the individual item product description promoting the bundle with a link to the bundle itself.
- use social media to ask your audience what bundles they would like.
- use the information you have already on what is and isn't selling on your website. Bundle popular products with less popular ones to help you clear stock.

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- bundle main products with accessories. For instance, a laptop with a laptop bag and mouse.
- include a free item with your bundle.
- aim for at least a 5% to 10% overall discount with your bundle, than purchasing the items individually.

Finally, you will need to have an awesome product description for your bundle. Take a read of our comprehensive article [Your Guide On How to Write Product Descriptions](#) today!

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#3 Tools to Help Remove Product Photo Backgrounds

Removing the backgrounds from your product photos can seriously boost their visual appeal! A clean product image says a thousand words, looks more professional and will result in a better selling rate. Without resorting to paid software to edit your product photos, we've found some great free online tools you can use instead!

Free Photo Editing Tools to Remove Product Photo Backgrounds

When running a shop online, the quality of your images is absolutely critical. Poor quality product photos don't sell your products and look terribly unprofessional. Thankfully there are some great free online photo editing tools you can use to remove the background from your product photos.

We found many 'free' tools required you to pay to download the edited photo and/or to remove the watermark. So, while we tried lots of different software examples, we're only sharing the two ones below which actually were free, worked well and required no sign ups or software downloads. Here are the results we achieved:

- PhotoScissors Online

Quite easy to use, simply upload your product photo and then use the red editing tool to show which bits you want to remove and the green to show which bits to keep. Here's what we got:

- Malabi

Malabi does an automatic background removal for you first, then you have the ability to touch it up. We found the result from the automatic removal was quite good! There are upgrades to their free editor you can purchase for more features.

Paid Tools to Remove Backgrounds from Product Photos

Having only found two free background remover tools online which gave a good result, we decided next to find out more about some of the paid options. Many have a free trial, allowing you to test out their product first. Others will

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let you do the editing, but not download the image until you pay for it. The advantage of using a paid tool is that you could reasonably expect that the end result would be of a higher quality and the software easier to use.

While we haven't tried out these tools ourselves, they've gotten good reviews online. Here are some paid versions you can investigate further:

- Pixc
- Color Experts International - offer a service where they'll remove the background professionally for you
- Clipping Magic
- Background Burner
- Fotor Background Remover
- Autoclipping

If you're using your photo to take your product photos, there are some great photo editing apps you can download and use which will remove the background. They include:

- Change Photo Background - for Androids
- PicsArt Photo Studio - for Androids
- SuperImpose - for iPhones
- Switch & Cut Me In - for iPhones

For some great tips on taking of product photos, check out our article on [How Great Website Photography Can Raise Your Sales](#).

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#4 How to Speed Up Your Customer's Buying Decision

Your eCommerce website exists to sell your products online, as well as building up your brand's authority. It makes sense then that you want to increase your sales, which we have discussed in our previous articles [Free Freight & Other Tips To Increase Website Sales](#) and [Easy Ways to Increase Online Sales Through An eCommerce Store](#). The next step is to then work on speeding up your customer's buying decision. Ideally you want them to purchase your products on your site now, not after searching online for alternatives. After all, once they leave your site, they may not come back! Today we're discussing the reasons why people buy things, plus share ways you can help them decide to purchase from your website faster.

What Makes a Customer Want to Purchase Your Products?

In order to speed up your customer's buying decision, you first need to know what motivates them to purchase from you in the first place. As often your website is all a customer has to make that decision, it's important that it looks great and is easy to use. Images and photos are perfect for this and we share some great tips on how to use these successfully in our article [Guide to Using Images on Your Website](#). But what other factors are in play when it comes to deciding to buy? Well, they can include:

- lower prices than competitors
- brand name recognition
- replacement of product
- basic need like food
- convenience, as it's easy to buy now
- fad or innovation as 'everyone' has one
- compulsory purchase, such as a school uniform
- scarcity, as there is limited supply
- emotional needs
- fear, so must have product to be safer
- indulgence
- empathy

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- peer pressure
- addition
- impulsivity

Ways to Speed Up Your eCommerce Customer's Buying Decision

Now that we know some of the reasons why customers buy products, you can use this information to encourage them to buy faster. There are several strategies you can try, including:

- limiting the availability of stock on your site by showing the number of an item you have left
- demonstrating to your customer through videos, photos, text and testimonials how buying a product will improve their life now
- have a discount with a clear end date
- use social proof to show that 'real people' received benefits from buying and using your product
- show alternative products, explaining what your product offers which the others don't
- provide lots of additional information via internally linking to other pages on your site, showing why the customer should trust you
- make your product options and pricing simple, as too many choices makes decision making harder
- a range of payment options, including buy now and pay later
- use loyalty points to encourage repeat purchases
- reach customers in multiple ways, such as on social media, email newsletters, blogs and other web content

For more help in increasing eCommerce sales, don't forget to check out our helpful blog articles and sign up to our free monthly newsletter.

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5 Free Freight & Other Tips to Increase Website Sales

One of the key areas eCommerce website owners monitor is the amount of online sales they make. While this number can vary depending on seasonal changes, SEO or the products you sell, there are things you can do to increase website sales. Let's check them out!

Easy Ways to Increase Website Sales

When it comes to increasing sales through your online shop, you first need to have the traffic coming to make those sales. If you're not getting enough traffic organically from search engines, check out these great SEO tips first. Once you've got your SEO sorted, here are some other tips on how to increase your online store sales:

- Free Freight - one study showed that 73% of online shoppers said that being offered free freight was a crucial part of their buying decision. If their products were sent for free, they didn't have to spend time deciding whether the shipping cost was acceptable to them or not. Offering free freight when the order reached a set limit helped to increase the quantity of a sale too.
- Limited Stock - showing customers either the quantity of a product left or the words 'limited quantity' gives customers a sense of urgency. It makes them feel that if the product is in short supply, it's popular and they better buy it quickly to avoid missing out. There is one thing to be aware of: you need to be honest in your quantity listing. Called bait advertising, if you deliberately mislead customers about the availability of stock, you can face serious financial penalties.
- Social Proof - you can praise your products all you like, but your word is not as powerful as your existing customers. Having social proof such as reviews and testimonials on your website shows potential customers that others think your products are great too.
- Product Photography - a picture speaks a thousand words. Your product photos can make or break sales on your website. Aim for a white backdrop, natural lighting and a clear photo of your product. If you have photos of your customers using your product, that's great too and

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they're well worth including on your website. For more tips on improving your product photos, check out our article [How Great Website Photography Can Raise Your Sales](#).

- Pricing - the pricing of your products can either decrease or increase website sales. Now we're not just talking about the cost of a single item here, but instead offering options for product upgrades, buying multiples of an item and offering discount codes. For instance, if you sell a phone with 32MB of memory, give the option for the customer to upgrade to 64MB of memory without needing to move to another product page. Offering a discount when a customer buys two or more of the same item, can increase the size of the orders you receive. Also promoting a discount code through social media or emails can encourage people to visit your store and make a purchase too.
- Fast Delivery - the downside about ordering online is that you have to wait for your purchase to be delivered. What if you could get it delivered to the customer faster? Would this be something they'd want? Yes, and research has shown that 44% of online shoppers would trust a brand more if faster delivery was possible. The issue for sellers is that if this costs more, they either need to charge the customer more for shipping or include it into the item price.

For more great ways to increase website sales, take a read of our article [Easy Ways to Increase Sales Through An eCommerce Store](#).

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6 Easy Ways to Increase Sales Through an eCommerce Store

Are sales through your eCommerce store not doing as well as you'd like them to be? We've put together this collection of tips to help you easily increase online sales through your website.

Three Ways to Increase Online Sales

When it comes to increasing sales through your online shop, there are three ways you can do this:

- attract more customers
- increase the number of repeat customers
- increase the quantity they order

But how exactly can you get these three things to happen? The good news is that sometimes it's the simple changes which can make all the difference. This means that rather than paying a large marketing bill, tweaking things within your ecommerce store may be the solution you need. Let's discuss some of the simple steps you can take today to begin to increase your online sales.

How Can I Increase Sales Through My Website?

Your website is often the only thing a customer sees before purchasing products from you. That means they rely on the information you provide to decide whether or not you can help solve their problem. If your competitor has done a better job than you, chances are you will lose the sale. Here are some of the easiest steps you can take today to start increasing your website sales:

- use calls to action - these tell the visitor what to do next. This helps them to move more easily along their journey with you as a customer. Use short phrases such as Visit Our Online Shop Now or Sign Up for a Discount.
- write clear headlines - a headline is often the only thing a visitor to a page will read. If it clearly tells them what the page content contains, they can make an instant decision as to whether to read further or not. If the heading confuses them, they won't read on at all.

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- keep your navigation simple - having a lot of tabs on your main menu can make it look cluttered. Using drop down sub menu tabs tidies this up and makes the site more appealing and easier to use.
- consider whitespace - whitespace helps your site look more appealing to the user. By spreading your elements out around your page and removing ones you don't need, you actually make the page easier to use, which increases conversion rates.
- use your own photos - while most stock images are of a high quality, they are generic and can be used by anyone. If you have photos of your products being used by customers, those are the best to use as they have the highest conversion rate.
- use social proof - reviews and testimonials show potential customers that you can be trusted and that your products are liked by other customers.
- offer free freight - one of the main reasons people abandon their shopping cart is that they don't want to pay the shipping cost. By offering free shipping, you remove that obstacle.
- loyalty points - offering customers loyalty points when they make a purchase helps encourage them to shop with you again.
- affiliate points - why not encourage your existing customers to find you new customers? For each new customer they refer to you, they receive affiliate points they can use to buy more of your products, which you know they already like buying.
- multi product discounts - encourage customers to buy more than one of a product by offering them a discount on the second and subsequent items.
- free freight when the order is over a certain amount - this encourages customers to purchase more items to get them sent for free, which increases the amount they order from your store.
- multiple payment options - having a variety of payment options at your checkout increases the likelihood a customer will make a sale.
- AdWords campaign - yes, this does cost you money to get the traffic to your site, but the traffic you do receive will be highly targeted and more likely to purchase your products. This will mean you will have to learn (or

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hire someone) to create the ads, choose and use the right keywords and write the message.

- follow up existing customers - you already have their email address and details of what they ordered. Now is the time to send them a follow up email offering them a special promotion code to return to your store and purchase again.
- VIP groups - set up a VIP group where you offer members special products and prices. Asking for an email address in return for letting them join your VIP group also gives you the option of emailing them regular newsletters too.

Attracting People to Visit & Return to Your eCommerce Site

Recently we wrote an article about the pros and cons of SEO and AdWords. Both can help bring traffic to your website and are valid options. Which one (or both) you use depends on your individual business circumstances. Another thing to consider is the colour scheme you use when designing your website. Website colour psychology plays an important role in how customers perceive your website and products. This in turn affects your conversion rate. To help keep customers on your website for longer and help them achieve your ultimate goal of a sale, creating a sales funnel for your website is worth while doing.

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7 Increase Sales Through Colour Psychology

There's more to website colours than just picking ones you like. In fact, the very colours you use (or don't use) can help increase website conversions. With plenty of research having been done regarding the psychology of colour within websites, it pays to ensure you are aware of the facts before you start designing your website.

Today we're going to explain what colour psychology is and using it can increase website conversions. Let's get into it ...

What is Colour Psychology?

Colour psychology is all about how we react to different colours. Each colour guides us towards feeling a certain way or do a certain action. Different colours mean different things to people, with our culture, religion and past experiences playing an impact on this. Here's a quick look at how some colours make us feel:

- Green – comforted, happy
- Red – excited, desirable
- Yellow – stimulated, cheerful
- Blue – professional, optimistic
- Purple – powerful, reliable

Colour Tips to Increase Website Conversions

There is no 'perfect colour' for a website, but you can do your best to nail some down. It all boils down to knowing your target market well. Say you sell cosmetics via your website. With women being your main audience, shouldn't your website use a lot of pink? Actually, no. Research has shown that only a small minority of women claim pink is their favourite colour. While the colour pink does represent feminism, if it doesn't sit well with your audience, it won't encourage sales.

That means you need to look carefully at your audience. Even interview them if necessary. Find out their colour preferences and what looks best to them. Remember though, that you still need to work with the colours within your

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brand, such as your logo. If you find that your customers prefer other colours, you could even change your brand colours.

When choosing your website colours, consider these tips:

- Men like the colours blue, green and black. They dislike brown, orange and purple.
- Women prefer the colours blue, purple and green. They dislike orange, brown and grey.
- Blue helps to evoke feelings of trust and stability.
- Yellow can cause people to feel threatened, as it is a colour used in warning signs.
- Green brings forth feelings of peace, nature, the environment and creativity.
- Orange creates urgency, which encourages people to act on impulse.
- Black portrays luxury and good value.
- A younger audience prefers brighter colours, while older audiences show a clear preference to the colour blue.
- Colour meaning differs between countries. If you are targeting China, white is a colour of mourning, not purity. While in Brazil, purple is a funeral colour, not a regal one.

For more information about choosing your website colours, please refer to our article [How to Choose a Colour Scheme for Your Website](#). If you need help picking your colours, we recommend you check out our favourite service providers.

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8 How Great Website Photography Can Raise Your Sales

As the old saying goes, a picture can tell a thousand words. Great website photography will surely be worth a million! The photographs you have on your website are, along with the text, what your customer will use to decide whether to purchase from you or your competitor. Today we're going to discuss what makes a great website photo, give you some tips on taking those photos and share some great sizes for website photos.

Why is Great Website Photography Important?

Product photography is the most effective way you have of promoting your products online. You can use your product photos in social media post and on your website to increase brand awareness and demonstrate how great your product is. Your website photos need to be top quality because:

- Photos will be the first thing a visitor sees and help them decide if they are in the right place or not
- Great photos are more likely to be shared on social media
- Product photos go hand in hand with excellent product descriptions
- Detailed product photos lower your product return rate as customers can see exactly what they are buying
- If your photos are better than your competition's, this will impact upon your customer's decision-making process

Tips on Taking Fabulous Website Product Photos

A great website photograph is one which is of a high quality, offers alternate views of the product, lets the customer zoom in on the photo, utilises lifestyle photos, keeps photos consistent with one another and up to date. To help take great product photos, try out these tips:

- Use a white backdrop – put your products in front of a white background to help reflect light back at your product and show your product's colours accurately. A white sheet, wrapping paper or even a white wall can work quite well.

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- Take photos near a window – using natural light in photos is not only easier, it also looks better in photos. Position your backdrop so the window is on one side of it.
- Use a light reflector – on the side of your backdrop opposite the window, use a piece of white shiny card to reflect the light back onto the other side of your product. This stops shadows forming.
- Take photos with different angles – these give your customer the ‘feel’ of your product and helps make their purchasing decision easier.

Sizing Product Photos for Your Website

Photo file size can vary significantly. The larger the file size, the slower a web page will be to load. In order to keep your website loading quickly, you’ll need to optimise its file size. If you read our article [Best Ways to Optimise Website Images](#), you’ll get links to a range online software options which will help you do this. In terms of website photo image sizes, consider using these:

- 1200px wide - great for full screen images, or product zoom images
- 960px wide - great for full page width images,
- 600px wide - great for half page width images.
- 320px wide - great for category thumbnails and 3+ columns in our drag and drop editor.

The ratio size of your images do not matter, but you need to be consistent, as any variation in ratio will look terrible in a list view.

Our templates allow you to set preferred sizes for different areas within the website. These are usually set as a maximum height/width, but you might set any dimension, and auto crop the images to maintain ratio.

Remember that great content and great photography work together to bring you the result you want from your website. If you need some help designing your website or taking your product photos, check out our list of [Solution Partners and Consultants!](#) They’re experts in their fields and will get you sorted quickly and affordably.

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9 Beginners Guide to Using Calls to Action

Ever been asked if you're using calls to action and not known what to answer? Maybe they're something you've heard of, but don't know what they are? Or you could be using them, but with mixed results. As well as showing you some examples of them, we're going to explain:

- What calls to action (CTA) are
- Writing & Using CTA on your website

What Are Calls to Action?

Calls to action or CTA is a sentence or an image which tells your website visitor what to do next. This could be to check out a specific blog, download your eBook, sign up to your mailing list, put your product into their shopping cart or even send you an email. The trick is to craft a CTA which is so appealing, your visitor is compelled to follow your instructions.

What Makes a Great CTA?

There are four things which make a clickable call to action. They are:

- Noticeable – it needs to be seen by your audience. Making it small or using the same colours as the rest of your copy just won't be seen. Read our article [How to Choose a Colour Scheme for Your Website](#) for advice on great colours to use on your website.
- Compelling Text – click here or submit just won't cut the mustard. You need to create copy which makes people want to click. This means using actionable verbs and jargon free phrasing to get their attention.
- Known Factors – you need to tell people exactly what they will get when they click on your link. This removes the unknown and increases click rates.
- Specific Landing Page – while a CTA can lead to any website page, creating a specific landing page on which people arrive after clicking your CTA gets better results.

Writing & Using Calls to Action on Your Website

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When it comes to designing you call to action, it will most probably be a button or a clickable button or graphic. You will need to consider your CTA's:

- Size – if it is big, it will be noticed.
- Space – the white space around your CTA helps it get noticed. Crowding it with other text or images makes it hard to get noticed.
- Location – research has shown that the top left of a page is the best place to put your CTA.
- Contrast – using colours and fonts which are different from your usual ones help your CTA get seen.
- But don't forget the text you use in your CTA either. Research has shown that it is equally important! Our tips are:
 - Use verbs – prompt your readers to act
 - Use numbers – this helps tell readers exactly what they'll get when they click, as well as increasing click rates
 - Short & sweet – 90-150 characters is a good length to use

Avoid terminology – keep things simple and avoid using technical words. Instead choose words such as review, why, insights, analysis, questions, answers, top and best.

Great Examples of CTA

Here are a few of our favourite CTA examples:

- Get the world's best marketing resources right to your inbox! Join more than 817,000 inbound marketers! - HubSpot
- Click here to try it free for 21 days! – Beauty Product
- Launch. Do not press. (an image of a button below a person with a rocket pack) – Huemor
- Get today's specials sent to you now. Please send me today's specials. I love a good deal! – Aquaspresso
- Are you doing SEO wrong? Enter your URL to find out. – QuickSprout
- Claim your free trial. – Treehouse
- Limited time offer! Start a blog today and get \$297 in free blogging bonuses! (with a timer countdown clock) – Blogging

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#10 5 Steps to Writing Killer Website Content

Ever heard the phrase organic traffic? It's the visitors to your website which come from search engines. They come to your website because you have website content which ranks high in search results. It is the goal of almost every business website to get a lot of traffic, which is why there is always a lot of chat about SEO or search engine optimisation. The question of the moment would be then, how do I write website content which ranks high in search engines?

5 Important Steps to Writing High Ranking Website Content

Of course, there are more than five ways to write content for your site which ranks on Page 1 of Google. But there are five important ones we think you should know.

1 - Understand what search engines want

Search engines like Google have one job. They want to provide the best search results to users so that they will continue to use their engine. That doesn't mean that you should write for search engines though. Just understand that if you don't have great content, they are not going to want to put your URL on their Page 1.

2 - Write for your target audience

Who is it that you want to read your website pages? They are the type of people who you want to aim your content at on each page of your site. This means use the vocabulary, tone of voice and subject matter which they would be happy to read.

3 - Create great headings and titles

Research has shown that 80% of people will read the headline on your website page or blog, but that only 20% will read any further. If you fail to capture the reader's interest straight up, they presume the rest of your copy will be uninteresting.

4 - Provide amazing well researched content

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Having 100% original copy on each of your website pages is important. We're not talking about ideas as that would be impossible, but rather the text itself. Copy and pasting text from other websites or using the product descriptions you were given from your supplier is a big no-no. Instead, craft your own text using some of the points they have used, rephrasing and re-ordering it. Research as much as you can for each page too. It's important not only to give your visitor content they find interesting – it needs to be accurate too!

5 - Use longtail keywords

Small businesses often find it hard to rank their pages because they are using the same keywords as large companies which have money to burn. A great keyword strategy is to use longtail keywords, which are the phrases or sentences people type into search engines to find specific content. For example, for the keyword restaurant, a longtail keyword phrase would be 'Mt Wellington affordable Chinese restaurant.' Yes, it will not be searched for as often as the word restaurant is, nor even the words 'Auckland restaurant.' But you are more likely to rank on page one and be found some of the time, which is better than never ranking at all.

For more specific advice on search engine optimisation, head over and check out our SEO tips. Remember though, that our content management system will do all the SEO work for you, making high ranking website content even easier.

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#11 Writing Persuasive Website Copy Which Sells

Websites are there to sell your products or services, but they do have a significant disadvantage to a physical store – people can't see, touch or feel anything – other than emotion. The emotion is what is going to sell your products, so you need to write persuasive web copy. Nielsen research showed that 79% of website visitors actually only read headlines and scan for keywords, which makes it even more important that you pay particular attention to what you put on your pages and how you present it.

Tips On Writing Website Content Which Gets Read

As most visitors to your website are only going to scan your pages, you need to make it easy for them to do so in such a way that your key message gets across.

- Use bullet point lists
- Highlight keywords in coloured or bold font
- Use one idea per paragraph
- Have meaningful sub-headings
- Start with the conclusion at the beginning of each page

What Makes Web Copy Persuasive?

When you are writing product descriptions or information on your services, there are some guidelines which you need to follow to convince people to firstly read it, then buy from you.

- Write like you talk.

A great one sided conversation between you and your website visitor is what needs to be happening on each of your pages. It can be tricky to make your writing sound like talking when you are directly typing it, but you can try recording what you want to say, then play it back and transcribe it.

- Give both the benefits and features

When describing your product or service, not only do you need to tell your audience why something is so great, but what makes it so great too. Write the

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benefits first and then the features. For instance; (Benefit) Your information won't disappear from your loaded internet pages if your connection drops (feature) because our database has an asynchronous connection preventing it from doing so.

- Put important information first

Not everybody will make it down to the bottom of your page, so you need to have your most important information at the top for them to read it first. They will want to know at a glance that you can help them, then want to know how you can do it and possibly then want to know more about you.

- Use carewords

Carewords are the words which everyone is looking for. They are the everyday words we use, rather than the fussy or embellished words people use to describe themselves or their products. For example, if you wanted to buy a plane ticket, would you search for 'cost effective flights' or 'cheap flights'?

Try to make your website text as simple as you can. Don't over think things or complicate your copy with scientific or fancy words. Although it can be hard at first, the more you practise writing copy which sells, the better you get at it.

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Understanding the Jargon

1. What is Website Hosting?
2. What is a Landing Page?
3. What is a Google Algorithm Update?
4. What is Website Ranking?
5. What is Upselling and How Do I Do It?
6. What is Inbound Marketing?
7. What is a Bounce Rate & How Can I Change It?
8. What Are Sales Funnels & How Do I Create One?
9. What is Content Marketing?
10. What is a Domain Name & How Do I Choose One?

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Understanding the Jargon

1 What is Website Hosting?

Website hosting is like renting a house. You pay money for your website to 'live' inside a web host's server (your rental property). Your domain name is not your website hosting, but rather the number on your website's letterbox within your web host's server. Just like renting a house, if you don't keep up to date with the hosting fees, your website can no longer be visited by people (you get evicted). This can happen even if you own your domain name, as that is simply the address (or number on the letter box) of your website, not the property itself.

Understanding More About Website Hosting

Website hosting is a service offered by web hosts (like us) which lets you put your website on the internet. You pay us to rent space on our server (which is like a computer connected to the internet). We store your website files on our servers, link them to your domain name. When people want to visit your website, we show them it (we let them get past the letter box and into the lounge of your property). What we don't let them see though, is the private backend or CMS of your website (your property's bedroom) - only the front, like you're seeing now. When you pay to host your website with us, it takes up a tiny spot in our servers, meaning there are many other sites also stored in the same servers.

Let's break it down another way:

- you have a domain name, but no hosting. This is like having a letter box, but no house. You can give visitors your address, but once they get there, they can't come in.
- you have hosting, but no domain name. You can live in a fabulous house, but you don't have an address to give to people, so no one can visit.
- you have hosting and a domain name. People can find and visit your house - everything is awesome!

It's up to you to choose the right website hosting package for your website. Our hosting packages come in a range of prices, with each one allowing your website to have a set number of visitors, orders, bookings and email addresses

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to use per month. Generally speaking, the more traffic you get to your site and the bigger your site is, the more space it uses up in our server. Your website then takes up a bigger space, so we charge more rent to host it.

What Does a Web Host Do?

Website World are a web host. This means that all the files, wording, design and images associated with your website are stored on our server. When someone enters your domain name in a web browser (or clicks on the link to it on a search engine results page), we will send all the front end information of your site back to their browser so they can visit your website. We also provide at least one email mailbox with each of our web hosting packages too.

As a web host, it's our job to keep your website online and secure 24/7. To do this we ensure our servers are well maintained and running at all times. We also keep our servers working quickly, which lets us show your website to your visitors in a matter of moments, rather than making them wait for it to load.

Your next step in learning more about hosting is to visit our [Web Hosting Fees & Information](#) page. If you still have questions, don't forget you can send us an email too!

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Understanding the Jargon

#2 What is a Landing Page?

There's often a lot of confusion about what a landing page is. The truth is, a landing page is a page you have specifically created for a set purpose and which you direct a set audience to. While any page on your website could be called a landing page, digital marketers refer to a landing page as being a standalone page with one focused objective - your call to action.

Often you'll find that a landing page is not created with organic traffic in mind. Instead traffic is directed there through other means, such as Facebook ads, AdWords campaigns or links in emails. Because the content has been created for a very specific target audience, a landing page also has a higher conversion rate than other website pages.

Aren't Home Pages & Landing Pages the Same Thing?

Once again, this is where it can get confusing. Your home page is a page which you do want people to land upon. It may be where you send people from your paid advertising campaigns and social media, plus get general organic traffic too. But your home page is not a highly targeted piece of content. Here are the main differences between a home page and a landing page:

- A home page:

has a general target audience. For example, you sell baby clothes and your target audience is pregnant women, new mothers and grandparents.

has plenty of links to other pages on your site. This could be through the menu, hyperlinks in the text, links on images and even social media links. The links are there to help them navigate through your site and interact with your business.

has a lot of general content. It describes your business and what services or products you sell. For example, your website sells fruit, so you talk about all the fruit you sell.

may have a general call to action, but often doesn't.

- A landing page:

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has a highly targeted audience. For example, you sell baby clothes, but you want to promote a innovative bib design. Your target audience is mothers of 9 month old babies who have severe reflux.

has no links as your goal is to get them to convert. Links are distracting, so you don't want them to follow any as this takes them away from your call to action.

has highly specific content on it which relates only to your conversion goal and call to action. For example, your website sells fruit, but your landing page only contains content about apples - why to buy them, how to buy them etc.

has a specific call to action, such as sign up to my newsletter or order now. A landing page almost always has a form contained within it too.

What Should My Landing Page Look Like?

A great landing page has several key features. They are:

- Page titles which relate to the advertisement copy which sent visitors to it
- Headings which are clear and concise
- Perfect grammar and spelling
- Uses trust indicators such as testimonials or reviews
- Has strong call to action text
- Has easily identified and clickable CTA buttons
- The important content is above the fold - so they don't need to scroll down the page
- Contains videos and images which directly relate to your text copy
- Matches your brand colours, fonts and styles

Are you ready to create your landing page? You are able to do just that here with our Website World CMS. If you haven't got a site with us, sign up for your free trial now. If you are with us, login and get started. If you'd prefer to hire someone to do it for you, we have a great bunch of web designers who can help!

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Understanding the Jargon

3 - What is a Google Algorithm Update?

Each year, there are over 400 different algorithm updates made by Google. Each has the potential to affect the ranking of your site in its search engine. Today we're looking at what an algorithm is, why they are changed and what may happen to your website after an algorithm update.

What is a Search Engine Algorithm?

Google's aim is to provide its users (which is not you as a website owner) with the best possible search engine results. They do this because they want people to choose their search engine over their competitors. The more people who use it, the more exposure for Google Ads users who pay for their advertisements to be shown in Google search engine results pages (SERPs). The more traffic advertisers receive, the more likely they are to continue to pay Google for ads.

In order to provide relevant results, Google uses an algorithm. A search engine algorithm is basically a set of rules which tell the search engine what to do when scanning a website and returning results to a query. While no-one knows exactly what rules are set for an algorithm or how many algorithms there are, they are generally looking for information about:

- the keywords you've used on your site and where you've put them
- organic naturally occurring links to your website from other sites
- the level of mobile responsiveness your site provides

The exact details of what Google look for are unknown, except to Google that is. But it is widely recognised that there are over 400 things. It's also acknowledged that Google performs minor updates to its algorithms at least once a day and up to 500 times per year. Mostly these are minor updates which don't affect a lot of websites, but some a major and cause organic search engine traffic to drop. These updates are made to continually help improve the results a user receives when using the Google search engine.

What Happens During a Google Algorithm Update?

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When a search engine changes its algorithm, the changes and effects can be major or minor. As a website owner, the most common thing you will see is either a drop or a rise in your search engine rankings. That is, your website will either feature more or less in search engine results. This will result in your website having more or less organic traffic from Google. Obviously, it's the lack of traffic which we notice the most and which is the most upsetting.

The downside is that Google doesn't publicly announce the specifics of what they have done. Instead the SEO experts will do some testing and analysing to figure that one out, but this can take months. What Google will occasionally do is release is that they have made an algorithm change and the date on which it was done. The date is important to know, as you can use this to identify which update affected your website, and as time goes by, use the research about that update to correct your site's SEO.

MOZ keeps a track record of Google algorithm updates, along with information about what each update affected.

What to Do If You Are Affected By An Algorithm Update

The trouble with algorithm updates is that they are out of our control. There's actually nothing you can do to stop them happening, to try and beat Google at its own game. What you can do though is follow good SEO practices, add great content regularly and keep your website relevant for your target audience.

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Understanding the Jargon

4 What is Website Ranking?

Everybody wants to be found by search engines, but many of us are not clear on how it all actually works. How does Google choose which websites to show first? Why is my competitor's website coming before mine even though we sell the same products? It all has to do with how your website is ranked. Let's delve deeper into what website rank actually means.

What Is Website Rank?

The terms website rank and page rank are actually not the same thing, though they are often thought of as being. Your website rank is most likely referring to your Alexa ranking, which is actually your traffic ranking. Alexa is an enormous global website which measures the amount of traffic going to your website. The problem is though, unless you are a really popular website, you are unlikely to even have a ranking on Alexa unless you install their tracking metrics onto your site. This traffic data is then compared to others you are given your website ranking. Our current Alexa ranking shows we are the 855,028th most popular website in the world.

Traffic data and ranking is not all that Alexa can provide you with. You can also see information such as which countries visitors come from, search traffic numbers, search engine keywords used, sites that link to it, which pages visitors view, which websites they arrived from and audience demographics. All of that information can be seen for free about your site, if you rank or if you have installed their tracking data.

What is Page Rank?

Google PageRank is measured and controlled by Google. It is based upon the number of sites which link to yours and a Google algorithm. However, it is the quality of the links which counts in determining if your website page shows before another in Google search engine results. Google has publically said though that their PageRank is not the most important metric which website owners should use to measure themselves against. It is also not a major factor for SEO, but in saying that, good quality backlinks can still help raise your

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PageRank. You can check your PageRank on PR Checker, but like Alexa, small websites are unlikely to have a ranking at all. Our PageRank is 5 out of 10!

How Can I Boost My Website and Page Rankings?

Raising your website ranking and being more easily found by search engines is called Search Engine Optimisation or SEO. You can do this by:

- Using Keyword Phrases – while it is important to use keyword phrases (the words people use to find content like yours), it still needs to be read well, like someone talking to you.
- Monitoring Keyword Density – keywords are important, but over using them will get you ranking lower than others using them carefully on their web pages.
- Naming Your Pages – Give each web page a name which accurately describe what it is about
- Use search friendly graphics – Your images need to be given <alt> attributes such as your keywords, as Google cannot ‘read’ pictures.

If you are wanting great SEO, then firstly have one of our websites and secondly, reading our SEO tips gives you a lot of ideas on improving it yourself or finding a professional to do it for you!

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Understanding the Jargon

5 What is Upselling and How Do I Do It?

Upselling is a sales technique where you encourage a customer to purchase a product which offers them additional features or benefits, and at a higher price. It's like offering the customer an upgrade to a product they were going to buy anyway, which benefits both you as the seller and them as the customer. You could also up-sell by offering add ons which work well with the product in order to make a larger sale.

What Are the Benefits of Using Upselling?

The aim of upselling is to ultimately make a bigger sale. Yes, this can seem sleazy or pushy if done incorrectly. However, it doesn't have to be. Upselling can actually provide benefits to both you and your customers because it:

- helps to build relationships with customers - you are showing them how they can get more value from you, helping them feel better about purchasing from you.
- is much easier to sell to existing customers than find new ones - you've already got the customer on your website, so selling them an additional or upgraded product is cheaper and easier than attracting someone else to your site.
- offers customers a wider range of products, along with additional convenience and flexibility if they want it
- increases the level of customer satisfaction
- can improve your ROI or even help lower the prices of your products

How & Where Do I Upsell on My Website?

The most logical places to upsell on your website are on the individual product pages and on the shopping cart. You can also use images to upsell too.

When using our CMS, you are able to set up product promotions and auto suggestions for individual products or categories. This will display options for customers to consider when they've added a product to their cart.

You could use the linked products feature as well or try a buy two get one free or half price incentive.

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Common Upselling Strategies to Try

Upselling is all about using words and images to have customers purchase an upgraded or additional product. It's easy to spot when a website is trying to upsell, and many customers find this annoying. The secret to success then comes at being upfront, honest and providing something of such great value that they can't say no!

Here are some of the most common upselling strategies you may want to try:

- FOMO - the fear of missing out is brilliant. Creating urgency by setting a deadline, or showing there are limited products left does increase sales.
- Because - one study showed that when you use the word 'because' in an upsell, it has a 94% uptake. This is compared with 60% without using it.
- Knowledge - never underestimate the power of knowledge. Tell your customers why they would benefit from purchasing this product as well....
- Largest - if the product they want comes in different sizes, why not offer them the largest size?

We recommend reading our article [Strategies to Speed Up Your Customer's Buying Decision](#) as your next step in increasing your website sales.

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Understanding the Jargon

6 What is Inbound Marketing?

Wouldn't it be great to have a way of attracting new customers to visit and then return to your site? Today we are discussing what is inbound marketing and how you can use it to attract more visitors to your website!

What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing is an online marketing method aimed at getting people to your website. It focuses on the creation of amazing website content that your target audience wants. The theory is that by providing the specific information to your target audience exactly when they want it, they will then be easier to convert into being one of your valued customers.

It is a more affordable and long-lasting way to obtain new customers, as you are not having to pay for ongoing advertising! Traditional advertising requires you to continually pay for the ad in order to keep getting traffic to your site. With inbound marketing, the content you put on your site remains there for as long as you want it. You don't need to pay anyone to get visitors to that page, as it is found organically via search engines.

Inbound marketing works by you attracting the type of person to your website who is most likely to buy your product or service. To get them there, you must give them the exact type of content they want when they want it.

3 Marketing Funnels of Inbound Marketing

Inbound marketing has four distinct parts to it. Each of these parts is called a funnel, in that you want the visitor to move through each part in order to achieve your website goals. They are:

- Attract - you want to firstly get the customer to your website. This is done by them finding your site through search engine results, or seeing a Facebook or social media post which directs them to your site.
- Engage - they're at your site and your job is to turn them into leads. This means getting their email address so you can contact them. This is quite hard, because the information you give them needs to be so amazing

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that they will happily share their email address with you in order to receive more of it.

- Delight - it's time to exceed their expectations and continue to provide them with outstanding content and support to keep them loyal to your business.

How to Use Inbound Marketing for Your Website

With inbound marketing, it's all about creating something so great that the customers come to you, rather than you chase them. To get you up and running, here's what you need:

- know your target audience well - what do they want to learn about?
- create wonderful content - from videos to articles, the content you create and provide your audience with is crucial! If you struggle with content creation, or don't have the time, we suggest using one of our recommended copywriters.
- create email marketing campaigns - once you capture your audience's email addresses, you need to have the content to send them!
- be active on social media - it's a great way to drive traffic to your website and engage with your audience.
- check often on how you are going - use Google Analytics to see what's happening with your website traffic

For more information on inbound marketing, check out HubSpot's website - they are a wealth of knowledge on this topic.

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Understanding the Jargon

#7 What is a Bounce Rate & How Can I Change It?

One of the key metrics in Google Analytics is your website's bounce rate. Often the numbers, which are in percentages, are high and this gets many website owners worried for two reasons. Firstly because they don't really understand about what a bounce rate is and secondly because they don't know what to do about it. Today we're going to discuss both of these points for you.

What is a Bounce Rate?

Google Analytics defines a bounce as being the number of single page sessions on your website. This means when someone arrives at your website, they only visit the page they land on before clicking elsewhere. Your bounce rate is therefore the percentage of all visits to your site in which a visitor only looked at one page.

Where lots of people become concerned is when they see they have a large bounce rate. Depending on the type of site you have, this could be a bad thing or a good thing. It's bad if in order for your website to be successful, you need people to visit multiple pages. But it's good if you only have a one page site, or it's a page you would expect people to only view alone.

What Does It Mean if I Have a High Bounce Rate?

There are several reasons as to why you are seeing a high bounce rate for your site. They could include:

- the visitor did not find what they were looking for
- your meta description inaccurately described what the page was about
- you failed to include a call to action on the page
- they didn't like something about your website - colour, loading speed, font, images etc
- the visitor found all of the information they were looking for
- the quality of the page was low

Let's take a look at what bounce rate you should be aiming to achieve for your website.

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How Can I Lower My Bounce Rate?

Before you make any changes to your site, take the time to analyse which of your pages have high and low rates. See if you can nail down the reasons why, which may include:

- the design of the page
- the layout of the page
- colours, images or fonts used
- the copy on the page
- the ads you have used to get people to that page
- types of calls to action
- the traffic sources for each page

Once you have a better understanding, you can take the steps to begin reducing the bounce rate of one or many website pages. Different things you can try to lower the rate include:

- adjust your ads to attract the right sort of traffic
- change your keywords
- include hyperlinks within your text to other pages on your site
- add easy to spot calls to action, such as buttons or large text
- check out and fix the usability of your website
- ensure your site is optimised for mobile and other devices
- add images and videos to engage visitors
- offer live chat support

If you're really concerned about your bounce rate and would like some support, we suggest contacting one of our SEO professionals or web designers to help you out.

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Understanding the Jargon

8 What Are Sales Funnels & How Do I Create One?

An online sales funnel is a marketing tool we can use to sell products and services to our customers via our website. It's the group of steps we take to turn prospects into customers. Another way of thinking of it is as a business plan, taking web visitors from the I don't know you stage to the let's do business stage. Why is it called a funnel? It's because the biggest number of prospects are at the top of the list and as we work downwards, we funnel out the prospects. Take a look at this image of a sales funnel for a clearer understanding.

You will see that the number of leads we work with are biggest at the top. As we move down each step of the funnel towards the sale, the number of leads shrinks. Before you get onto building a funnel, you need to know whether or not you should be using one.

Should I Be Using Sales Funnels?

The truth is, using a sales funnel is not for everyone. Some business owners don't believe it works for their customers. Others prefer to think of the buyer's journey as a cycle, rather than a downwards funnel. This makes this a useful tool, but not one which suits everyone.

- Using a funnel can help you to:
- follow up on good leads
- develop a relationship with your customers
- tell your prospects what problems of theirs you can solve

It's a great tool to help ensure you don't miss out on any stages of the buyer's journey.

What Are the Parts of a Sales Funnel?

The sales funnel image above is a complicated one. A smaller business can use a three part funnel with good results, which is what we will concentrate on using and making from here on. In a three part funnel, you have the:

- top - focused on bringing awareness of your brand to your target audience. This is usually done through posting and being active on social

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media, plus having a regular blogging strategy. The content you create for both social media and your blog needs to be aimed at your target audience, giving them what they want and need. This positions you as the expert in your industry, which raises the level of trust they have in you. Read our article on creating website content for more help in doing this.

- middle - moving those people from prospects to leads. This area is all about building those relationships with your audience. It's a culling of those who aren't good fits and begin to show them how you will solve their most burning problems. This can be done using blogs and also through newsletters too.
- bottom - converting your leads into customers. Now you're ready to start selling to a specific audience. You've built up that trust and now is the time to get them to buy your product or service.

Each part of the funnel has a specific job. The online funnel on your website needs to move people through the funnel with minimal effort from you.

Guide to Making a Sales Funnel

So, how do you make a sales funnel? There is plenty of advice out there on how to do this, much of it conflicting. But here's a four step method we've found useful.

- Identify your target prospects - this involves knowing exactly who your ideal customer is.
- Filter out your prospects - just because someone fits your customer demographic, it doesn't mean they will purchase your product or service. Here is where you filter out the prospects who fit your customer persona, but are less likely to become a paying customer.
- Work on creating your funnels - what steps are you going to do to attract people to your business and move them towards becoming a paying customer/client? An example of this is writing a regular blog, sharing it via social media, ask visitors to your blog to sign up to your newsletter and then send them emails to get them interested in your product or service.

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- Establish your funnel -this is where you work through the steps or levels of your online funnel. Start at the bottom and know what your ultimate goal is. Then for the middle, work on how you will build that relationship. For the top, work on getting prospects to know about you.

The key to a successful sales funnel is to know what your target audience wants, get their attention and deliver on your promises. A website built with Website Builder is perfect for creating an online sales funnel on. Get started for free with your DIY website today!

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Understanding the Jargon

9 What is Content Marketing?

Content marketing is when a business makes a strategic decision to create and share content targeted at a specific audience, with the aim of increasing a business' profits.

Content marketing is about providing useful and relevant information to your target audience on topics within your industry. In other words, it is about education and not selling.

Yes, you are doing this to increase help grow your business' clients or customers, but you are not actually pushing your products or services to them. Simply by providing helpful content, you:

- increase your online visibility
- develop a relationship with your audience
- become known for providing expert advice
- are seen as a leader and professional within your industry
- encourage regular and repeat visits to your website to see your new content
- build an engaged and interested audience

By doing all of these things, acquaintances become firm supporters of your business = increased profit.

Moving Through the Content Marketing Sales Funnel

If you choose to use a content marketing strategy, there is a journey your audience will work through. A top down approach, the majority 75% will be at the top of the funnel, actively looking for information. Around a quarter or 23% will be starting to develop a relationship with you. The final 2% are ready to take action as they know trust your business. stage:

We recommend reading our article [What is a Sales Funnel and How Do I Create one for further information.](#)

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Understanding the Jargon

10 What is a Domain Name & How Do I Choose One?

A domain name is simply your website name. It's the address of your website on the internet. It will always stay the same, unless you change it or don't renew it.

A domain name can be any unique combination of letters or numbers, but is usually only letters. It doesn't have to be the name of your business, but most likely it is.

You will have to 'buy' or register your domain name and renew it each year in order to retain ownership. Prices can vary to register a domain name between domain registers (the companies which sell domains) and the suffix or ending part of the domain you would like, .com .co.nz or .nz for example.

A domain name is not the same as a URL, but a part of it. This is because a URL will contain your domain name at the start, but after it will contain information about a specific page on your site. For example, your domain name is `www.mydomain.co.nz` and a URL for your website may be `www.mydomain.co.nz/my-product` with the `my-product` part showing that it is another page on your site. A URL can be shared to help people find a specific page without having to look through your website to find it. A URL is also what is shown in Google search results too.

What Can I Do with a Domain?

There are four things you can do with a domain you have registered and own. You can:

- do nothing, simply own it - this is a strategy some domain traders use, purchasing domain names they think will be valuable in the future.
- use it for a website
- use it for an email account
- use it for a website and an email account

It's important to know that a domain name isn't a website. To get a website, you will need to build one using our free drag and drop website builder link the

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domain name to it and pay for hosting. Read [How to Make a Website](#) for more information on how to build your site.

How Do I Choose a Domain Name?

There are a lot of schools of thought about how to choose a domain name. Some people believe it should contain a keyword, others that it should be the name of your business. But we believe that when choosing a domain name, the most important things are that it must be:

- short - between 6 to 14 characters
- easy to spell
- easy to pronounce
- brandable
- made of letters
- unique

As a part of choosing your domain name, you will also need to decide on the suffix or extension at the end. This means choosing from .com, .co.nz, .nz, .world, .net etc. One of the best ways to protect your domain is to purchase the relevant domain extensions as well as your main one. This will prevent others from taking it and using it for their own website. You can easily redirect traffic from these extensions to your main website for free.

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Perfecting User Experience

1. How to Check the UX of Your Website
2. Website Usability: How Easily Can a Customer Use Your Website?
3. Best Email Newsletter Subject Line Examples
4. How to Write an Email Newsletter Which Gets Read
5. Choosing Your Product Photography Tools
6. Best Ways to Optimise Website Images
7. Your Guide to Choosing Website Fonts
8. Why Written Content is Important for Websites
9. 7 Essential Things Every Website Needs
10. Guide to Using Images on Your Website
11. 5 Important Pages You'll Need to Add to Your Website

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Perfecting User Experience

#1 How to Check the UX of Your Website

Usability testing (UX) is all about finding out if what you have can be used easily and meets the needs of users. There are many different tools which can be used to help you:

- increase customer loyalty
- retain customers for longer
- save money
- understand how people use your website
- keep visitors on your website for longer
- increase conversion rates

By checking your website's usability, you can identify and fix problems to increase user satisfaction. You can learn more about what UXD is in our article [What is User Experience Design & How Can it Help Your Business](#).

What Does Great Website UX Look Like?

Good UX is

- Useful - will your products or services, and your content be useful to users?
- Usable - how easy is your site to use?
- Desirable - does it look good & display your brand image and identity effectively?
- Findable - can users find what they need on your site, & is it found by search engines?
- Accessible - can those with disabilities use your site effectively?
- Credible - does your site and content look professional and trustworthy?
- Valuable - what value does your site contribute to your bottom line and customer satisfaction?

5 Ways to Check the UX of a Website

To check the user experience of your website, you need to become the customer. Thinking and behaving as a customer isn't always easy. You've got to pretend you haven't invested your time and sweat into building your website.

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If you can look through and use your website as if it was the first time you saw it, (and without any emotional attachments to it), you'll do well. Here are five ways you can check the user experience of your website:

- Content Scanning

Can you scan the content, or do you need to read all of it to find exactly what you are looking for? Research has shown that the majority of website users will scan a page to find information. Using bullet points, plenty of white space, bold text and headings makes content easy to scan.

- Customer Questions & Feedback

What are your customers saying about your website? This includes not just general feedback, but also common questions about products or information they can't easily find. Your customers or website users can give you plenty of great information to help you improve your website's UX. The questions they ask can help you identify areas which are not clear, and if they can't find specific information, you may need to look at your menu structure.

- Visual Hierarchy

Is the important content at the top of the page? This can mean using graphics to highlight key calls to action or information you want noticed first. It can also include the use of headings, large and bold text, as well as buttons. Is your most important information noticed first?

- Conversion Rates

Out of all of your website visitors, how many completed the checkout or conversion process? What percentage followed through on the sale verses how many still have an open cart? When visiting a product page, how many added it to their cart and where did they go next? Google Analytics is a good tool to help you see what's happening using their Behaviour Analysis report.

- Customer Navigation & Interaction

Where do people go on your website? What things do they click upon, how far down the page do they scroll and Also called heatmaps, these are online tools which record the mouse movements, clicks and time spent on pages by

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visitors. Crazy Egg and Hotjar are two of these tools you can use to learn about how visitors move throughout your website.

Next Steps After Assessing Your Website User Experience

After you have completed your UX testing, it's time to organise your findings into:

- needs urgent attention
- can wait
- should be outsourced to designer or writer
- needs further analysis

Like a to-do list, this will help you work through your findings to improve your website's UX.

In addition, here are some general things you can do to improve the user experience of your website visitors (from our article [Website Usability: How Easily Can a Customer Use Your Website](#)).

- Check that you have all of your contact information listed
- Find out your page speed
- Provide extra information where appropriate
- Make finding your way around your site intuitive
- Use white space effectively
- Choose colours which work well together and can be seen easily
- Use calls to action

If you need assistance checking the user experience of your website, we suggest contacting one of our recommended web designers, or engaging the services of a UX designer.

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Perfecting User Experience

#2 Website Usability: How Easily Can a Customer Use Your Website?

How easy is your website to use? Customer usability is often overlooked and it shouldn't be! If your website is not user-friendly, then your sales may be suffering. Today we'll look at the characteristics of a user friendly website and steps you can take to make your eCommerce site easier to use.

What Does Website Usability Mean?

Website usability refers to the experience a person has when visiting a website. This includes things such as the content, colours, text size, font, page speed, menu layout and page layout.

If someone is unhappy with the way your website works, they will go elsewhere. As an eCommerce site owner, this means lost sales as customers visit other website which are appeal to them better.

What Makes a Good User Experience?

User experience, also known as UX, must deliver value to those using your website. The user experience honeycomb created by Peter Morville demonstrates this well:

- Useful - will your products or services, and your content be useful to users?
- Usable - how easy is your site to use?
- Desirable - does it look good & display your brand image and identity effectively?
- Findable - can users find what they need on your site, & is it found by search engines?
- Accessible - can those with disabilities use your site effectively?
- Credible - does your site and content look professional and trustworthy?
- Valuable - what value does your site contribute to your bottom line and customer satisfaction?

What Are the Characteristics of a User Friendly Website?

What does a website with good UX contain? For the ultimate in usability, a website should have:

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- mobile and device responsiveness
- simple & intuitive navigation
- a clearly identifiable logo and brand identity
- super fast loading speed
- search functionality
- clear calls to action
- easy to scan content with headings and bullet points
- text which is balanced with media (images, videos, graphics)
- capabilities to share content on social media

If a web visitor cannot intuitively use your website, they will leave. Next, we'll look at ways you can improve the UX of your website.

7 Ways to Make Your Website More User Friendly

A website with good UX is easier to achieve than you may think. Here is a list of seven things you can do to improve the usability of your website:

Contact information - be sure that your contact page has not only a contact form, but also details of how visitors can contact you! Email addresses and phone numbers are essential.

Check your page speed - if your website takes longer than 2 seconds to load a page, it's too slow. Consider upgrading your plan or switching to a better website host.

Provide extra information - sometimes visitors want additional information than is on your website in order to make a decision. Give them that information either somewhere on your site, or as a downloadable guide.

Make navigation intuitive - have the menu bar in plain site and limit the number of options on it.

Use white space effectively - having white space around your text and images makes it easier to scan. Using headings and bullet points increases the amount of white space a page has, also improving scanning capabilities.

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Choose colours wisely - you'll want to use the same colours as within your brand guidelines, but too many colours or colours used in the wrong places won't make your site easy to use. In general, darker colours should be for headings, while light and bright colours for buttons and calls to action.

Tell visitors what to do - known as calls to action, this is when you lay it out for a visitor what you want them to do next. Big clickable buttons or text telling them what to do next is required!

It may be useful to conduct an audit of your site's UX either yourself or using one of the many free tools which can be found in a Google search. For help in making improvements on your site, we suggest contacting one of our recommended web designers.

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Perfecting User Experience

3 Best Email Newsletter Subject Line Examples

Imagine a world where every email newsletter you set had a 100% open rate? Is that even possible? Well, probably not to be honest. But that doesn't mean you need to accept newsletter open rates of less than 10% as your lot. Most of the time, the email subject line is the deciding factor as to whether someone opens your email or deletes it.

Often though, the email subject line is very often added with little thought. While no one suggests that you spend as much time crafting the perfect subject line as you have the newsletter, giving it more attention would be advantageous.

In this article, we are sharing a list of some of the best email subject line examples for you to gain inspiration from. We'll also share our top tips on how to write high performing subject lines with you too.

Best Email Subject Line Examples

We've hunted high and low for examples of great email newsletter subject lines. Here are a few of our favourites:

- The timer's going off your cart!
- What did you think? Write a review
- Rock the colour of the year
- Don't open this email!
- What can you afford?
- As you wish
- The deals that make us proud (unlike our nephew, Steve)
- Top 10 under \$10
- Introducing our latest (product, service, feature)
- Rough day?
- Make room in that closet
- This disappears at midnight
- How to (do something)
- You're in our family. Now let's be friends
- We finally did it..we finally...

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- A new product you won't pass on
- Steal these ...
- Since we can't all win...
- Quick favour?
- Invitation from (company name)

Yes, you can take any of these and use them for your subject line. But what would be better is knowing how to create your own fabulously unique ones yourself.

How to Create Amazingly Successful Newsletter Email Subject Lines

The list of subject lines above all have a few things in common: they are attention grabbing, honest, brief, attack pain points, spark curiosity or promote fear of missing out. A great subject line is one to which the recipient responds positively to and does what the sender wants them to do.

To increase your newsletter open rates, you may want to consider some of these characteristics of high open rate subject lines:

- Urgency - make people act fast by using limited time wording
- Brief - many readers check their email on a mobile, so 50 characters or less is best practice
- Call to action - tell readers what to do next
- Single word - a single word is edgy and different, so gets noticed
- Specific - focus on one or two things
- Numbers - when numbers are used with words
- Trust - deliver exactly what you offer in your newsletter to build trust and increase open rates next time
- Question - get your readers thinking
- Funny - people love humour
- Clever - wit and nods to well-known references are always appreciated
- Offers - what can you offer the reader?
- Personalisation - use their name, their preferences and their location to your advantage
- Relevant - they signed up to your subscription list for a reason: send them emails related to that reason

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For more help on writing newsletters and increasing your open rates, take a read of our article [How to Write an Email Newsletter Which Gets Read](#).

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Perfecting User Experience

4 How to Write an Email Newsletter Which Gets Read

Email newsletters are a great marketing tool to attract new customers and keep your business in the minds of your existing or previous customers. The issue is, so many newsletters are left unopened or deleted upon arriving in an inbox. How do you:

Get your newsletters opened and read?

Get the links in your newsletters clicked upon?

Like with any content, you need to give your readers what they want. To do this, you need to know your target audience really well, and this means creating a buyer persona for them. Once you know their specifics (age, location, gender, likes, dislikes, finances etc), you can target your content to specifically meet their needs. Doing so will help you improve your open and click through rates.

Today we're going to focus on three things: characteristics of high performing email newsletters, how to set your newsletter out and content ideas for your newsletter. We'll also share two free tools you can use to check the effectiveness of your email subject headings.

Characteristics of Email Newsletters with High Open & Click Through Rates

What does an email newsletter which gets opened and read have that mine doesn't? The key characteristics of a successful newsletter are:

- sent on a regular basis
- are easy to navigate with white space, images and headings
- have accurate subject lines and headings, not click bait
- use a reliable bulk email platform
- include a call to action
- are personalised to the reader
- contain 90% educational and 10% promotional content
- shorter, rather than longer
- use time sensitive offers

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If you think about how many emails you receive each day, and what motivates you to open or delete them, you can understand some of what your mailing list is feeling. In conclusion, a great email is short, gives the reader exactly what they want in a format they can navigate easily, and where you clearly tell the reader what to do next.

Tips on Designing Your Email Newsletter

Before you choose a newsletter template or decide upon its design, write your content first. It is far better to have an email designed just for the content, as it looks and performs better. It's also a good idea to use the email template the same each time you send a newsletter. Take a read of these tips to help you design your next newsletter:

- use a mobile friendly bulk email solution
- keep your text short and to the point
- put important things at the top
- use white space effectively
- choose colours and fonts which match your brand image
- use great images
- use buttons to help you with your calls to action
- use section headings to space your content out

Most importantly, before you hit the send button, send a test email to yourself so you can check it looks and performs how you want it to.

What Newsletter Content Do Readers Enjoy?

As mentioned earlier, the specific content that you add to your email newsletters must be targeted at your audience. This means it needs to contain information that they specific want and enjoy reading. Obviously though, you want to keep it related to not only your business and industry, but to also meet the reasons why your audience signed up to your email list in the first place.

Exactly what content you add will depend on your audience's preferences but remember that each newsletter you send should have a goal, and this is what you will use your calls to action for. Generally, it involves clicking from the newsletter through to your website to perform a specific action. It could be to learn more about a new product or service, or to sign up to an event.

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Examples of newsletter content include:

- photos of recent events
- employee focus blurbs
- snippets and links to blogs
- interesting facts related to your business or industry
- focus on one of your customers
- contests
- special deals and offers
- events of interest
- list of recent accomplishments
- product reviews
- company news

Now are you ready to send your newsletter? Nope. There is one more thing you need to know about: how to write an email subject. This is the first line people will read when your newsletter arrives in their inbox. If it is dull, your email won't get opened. If your subject line makes too many promises or is not an accurate description of what the email contains, it will be opened but future emails won't be.

The ideal email subject line uses the 4U method:

- urgent - need to open the email now to avoid missing out
- unique - has different content to emails you've sent in the past
- ultra-specific - is based around one specific topic
- useful - will have lots of relevant information

There are some great free email subject testers available online, which you can enter your subject line in and they will give you an indicator of it's possible performance. Both SubjectLine and CoSchedule are useful tools for this. You can also take a read of our article [Best Newsletter Email Subject Line Examples & How to Write Them](#) for further advice too.

Once you have sent your newsletter to your mailing list, you can also share it on your social media platforms. Take a read of our article [50 Social Media Post Ideas for Businesses](#) if you're stuck on ideas about what you could post on social media.

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5 Choosing Your Product Photography Tools

Your product photos are often the deciding factor as to whether someone purchases your product from your website or not. To take amazing product photos, you need the right tools. Some of the most commonly used product photography tools include:

- Camera
- Smartphone
- Tripod
- Light box or tent
- Backdrop
- Lighting
- Photo editing software

Let's look at the uses, pros and cons of each of these individually.

Using a Camera for Product Photography

Even though technology has evolved, the humble camera remains a popular option for product photos.

Whether you're using a point and shoot or a DSLR, as long as the camera specifications suit your needs, you'll be fine.

These include things such as connectivity and how it downloads photos, the pixel quality, memory, if it can take HD videos as well as photos and the type of software it uses.

Pros include low cost, easy to use and good results. The cons are that it requires additional work to download and edit the photos onto another device, and some cameras can be very pricey, or bulky to carry around.

Smartphones & Product Photographs

Since everyone seems to have a smartphone today, this is the most common tool people use for their product photography. The quality of the camera within the phone has increased significantly, and most phones have photo

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editing software too. A phone is also convenient and lets the user upload the photo directly from their phone to their website too.

Pros include easy to use, multi-purpose tool, and takes good photos. The cons are that depending on the level of detail required in your photos, a phone camera may not be the best choice.

How Tripods Help Improve Product Photos

Tripods help by holding the camera or smartphone steady or in one position while taking product photos. They are also good for helping you capture a time-lag photo series. Some are traditional models, requiring a flat surface to be used, while others have adjustable legs which make it more versatile.

The pros of using a tripod are that you don't need to hold the camera yourself, the camera remains in the same position and takes photos without wobbles.

The cons are that it's an additional expense, you need to select a tripod which is compatible with your camera and surface it will rest upon.

Product Photos Using Light Boxes or Light Tents

Light boxes and light tents help take great product photos in two ways: provide good lighting and a clear backdrop. They are either a tent or box shape with three walls, a roof and a floor. When you put the product inside one, you can take a photo with a white background and with no shading. It also stops reflections and helps keep all of your photos uniform.

The pros of light tents and boxes are they are easy to use and portable, cheap or you can build one yourself and they provide you with consistent themed photos.

The cons include being restricted to what's available to purchase, unless you build your own, and not all products will fit inside a one.

Backdrops for Product Photos

A backdrop is positioned behind a product to help set a mood, add interest to the photo, include props or make photos consistent with one another.

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Backdrops can be made of vinyl, cardboard, a sheet, paper or fabric. They can be of any colour and design, but traditionally are white.

The pros are they can be made to any size, and are cheap to buy or make.

Cons include that they need to hang against something, such as a wall or between poles, and usually need to be set up and put down for each photo shoot.

Choosing Lighting Sources for Product Photography

Great lighting always makes photos look better. You've got two options: natural or artificial. If using a light box or tent, it will most likely come with LED lights. If not, you will need to select and then position the lights yourself. You'll need at least two identical artificial lights positioned on either side to avoid shadows, or put the product as close to a natural light source as you can.

The main pro of using lighting is that it makes your products look so much better.

For cons, there really are none, other than the purchase of artificial lighting and needing to practice using your chosen lighting source to get the best result.

Using Photo Editing Software for Product Photos

Unless you are a professional graphic designer or photographer, you're not going to have access to many of the paid photo editing software options. There are however, a lot of free photo software options you could use, including:

- Pixlr
- Gimp
- TouchRetouch
- Clipping Magic

Some software is cloud based, others require downloads to your device or are apps. Like with everything, there's a learning curve, but once mastered, it is a great skill to know. Photo editing software can remove backgrounds, add special effects, change the photo size and edit colours.

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Pros of using photo editing software are that it makes photos look better, you don't need to get the photo you take perfect and there are many free options.

Cons include needing to take the time to choose and then learn how to use the software, may not be connected to your smartphone and you need to be prepared to pay for additional features not in the free options.

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#6 Best Ways to Optimise Website Images

Images are essential for every website. They help to sell your product or service and make your website look great for your visitors. Unfortunately, they also use a lot of downloading bytes, which can cause your website loading time to be really slow. A slow loading website is not only likely to be ranked lower by search engines, but also annoy your visitors so much that they click on to another site without waiting for yours to finish loading. Luckily there is something you can do to speed up the loading times for your photos and that is to optimise your images.

What Type of Image File Should I Use?

There are three main types of image files used online; GIF, JPEG, PNG.

JPEG is the most common image file used on websites and is mostly used for photos as they shrink in size well without losing a great deal of quality. It is not suitable for line drawings, logos or graphics as they can look quite bitmappy.

GIF has a small colour range, so is not used for photos but can be used for animations. Images can be compressed using GIF, but not as small as a JPEG.

PNG files are great for logos or line drawings on a website because they compress without turning your image bitmappy. Not great for photos though as they cannot make files as small as a JPEG can.

Do not use TIFF nor BMP formats for images, as the filesizes will be too large. Do not use PDF formats for images, even though your designer might provide this file type, it's designed only for printing, and won't render on a website in the way you want an image to appear within the content.

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How Do I Optimise Images for My Website?

Image compression can be done through a range of paid and free online or downloadable software options including:

- IrfanView - Our all time favourite for sharp images with low file sizes
- Smaller Animals - A great little program for reducing whole directories of images in 1 go, and/or adding watermarks to images.
- TinyPNG – If you have PNG images to shrink, TinyPNG is great. Not only is it free, but it can also help you with partially transparent images too.
- JPEG Reducer – a free way of optimising JPEG files without having to download any software.
- Shrink Pictures – another way of compressing image files for free without downloading software.
- Shrink O’Matic – For JPEGs, PNGs or GIF, try Shrink O’Matic, another free tool.
- Photoshop – a great software purchase if you are wanting to do a lot of image editing.
- GIMP – the free equivalent of Photoshop.

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#7 Your Guide to Choosing Website Fonts

There are literally hundreds of different fonts available to use on your website. How do you choose which ones to use, and are there any which are more suitable than others? The power the typography can hold on your website is huge, and we're not just talking about the words which it makes. Read on to find out how to choose the right font and learn about some popular fonts you might want to consider for your site.

6 Tips on Choosing Your Website Fonts

The saying beauty is only skin deep can refer to fonts too! There are many different components to consider when choosing your font and here are six to get you started:

- Follow what your brand guidelines say in regards to font use. If you haven't got any brand guidelines, read our article on the Importance of Business Branding first!
- Use fonts which match your brand's tone. For instance, a handwritten style font may suit a pet sitting service, but not a retirement village business.
- Aim for three fonts: primary font (the most visible one, used in headers), secondary font (the main text on your page) and accent font (used for specific purposes, such as a call to action). Each font should be unique, but they should work together well.
- Consider load times - if you are choosing a font which you import from Google Fonts, think about the load time it will have. If a website doesn't load quickly, users will often move to another one. Keep your uploaded font usage to a minimum to ensure fast loading.
- Size - headings and titles should be larger than paragraph text on your web page. At Website World, each of our text types have been pre-determined to make this easy for you, but you can manually adjust them if required.
- Readability - to be of any use, the fonts you choose must be readable! Ask others for their opinions on your font's readability, as it's not just you that will be reading your website.

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The website Typewolf is a great resource when choosing fonts. It lists common fonts and their alternatives, different classifications of fonts and look books to help you choose fonts which compliment each other.

Popular Fonts for Websites

A website font has to do two things. It must be readable, and it must work with your brand. As the best ecommerce solution for your business, we recognise that your website needs to use these fonts, which is why we offer a range of preloaded fonts, plus give you the ability to upload other Google fonts too. Here are a few of the most popular fonts we've seen used on websites:

- Arial
- Helvetica
- Times New Roman
- Times
- Verdana
- Courier
- Palatino
- Georgia
- Bookman
- Comic Sans MS
- Arial Black
- Karla
- Rubik

Remember that with our CMS, you have the ability to import Google Fonts for use on your website too. Visit our comprehensive help website for details on how to do this. For further inspiration on fonts others are using, be sure to check out our recent Go Live sites now.

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#8 Why Written Content is Important for Websites

Not only is the written content on your website a huge factor in search engine rankings, but it also is vital when it comes to website conversions. Along with the usability or UX of your website, the written content plays a significant role in the success of your business online. Take a read of our articles Website Usability: How Easily Can a Customer Use Your Website and How to Check the UX of Your Website for more information on how you can improve your website usability.

We're firstly going to explain the reasons why you would want to improve your website content. Then we'll share some tips on how to write highly successful content for your website.

Why is Written Website Content Important?

When we refer to written website content, we mean:

- page headings and sub headings
- image file names
- written content on the front end of your website
- SEO meta tags - menu buttons, meta title, meta description

Basically, if it is text that you can alter (except for code), then it is written website content.

There are two main reasons why it is worth putting the time and effort into writing your content:

On page SEO - search engines use written text to identify what a page is about, so they can show the most relevant pages to queries through their search engines.

Conversions - once a visitor has arrived at your website, it is up to you to keep them there. Your goal for their visit could be to collect their email address, sell them your products or services, or simply have them read and share your content. The written text on your website plays a large role as to whether or not they will do any of those things.

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To achieve great web content, you need to give your visitors what they need, want and crave, plus write it in such a way that search engines will rank it highly.

A good way of thinking about what great web content looks like is to see it in an anatomical structure:

Brain - is your content informative, practical and educational?

Skeleton - how is your content organised? As a whole, does it make sense?

Muscle - does your content pull in visitors and make them want to keep reading?

Heart - is your content resonating with your readers? Does it entertain them?

Keeping this structure in your mind will help you when planning and writing your web content.

How to Write High Converting Written Website Content

What makes great website content?

As mentioned above, following a structured approach towards the planning and creation is a good idea.

However, that's not all there is to know when creating great website content with high conversion rates.

We'll start with the golden rules of writing web content:

- Know and understand your audience - your content needs to impress, engage and attract your target audience. This requires you to have an in-depth understanding of who they are, what they are looking for and what they will engage with.
- Set your page up to be easily scanned - web visitors will rarely read every single word. Instead they will use headings, bullet points, images and bold text to help them find the exact information they are looking for.
- Keep important information at the top - think of your page as an inverted triangle. All the important information needs to be kept as close to the top as possible.

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- Use short sentences and small paragraphs - short sentences and paragraphs are easier to read and understand.
- Be descriptive - often all that a visitor has to go in is what your text says and your images. By being descriptive, you have the power to convert them into purchasing from or contacting you.
- Keep language simple - avoid jargon at all costs.
- Use different media - videos, photos and graphics all help readers digest your content.
- Use internal links - keep readers on your site and encourage them to look at other pages by using internal links.
- Add calls to action - if you don't clearly tell visitors what to do, they won't do it. Calls to action using text, buttons and graphics will ensure they get your message about the next step loud and clear.
- Aim to achieve an emotional impact with your audience - in order for your reader to want to take action or/and share your content, they need to feel something.

While these are great tips on creating content your visitors will love to increase conversions, they don't really cover the SEO side of things. We'll cover that one next.

Tips on Writing Your Content for Your Website to Improve SEO

Search engine optimisation, or SEO, are the things you do to help get your website found and ranking on search engine results pages (SERPS). Great SEO helps your website to rank highly, which means more organic (free) traffic. This results in more sales, or whatever your goal conversions on your website are.

To write amazing content which search engines love, don't write for them: write for your target audience first! This might seem counter productive, but when you think about a search engine's main goal (provide the most relevant content to a search request), it makes sense. Other points to note include:

Do your keyword research - you may think you know what people are using to find businesses like yours, but in reality, they are using other words and phrases. Keyword research will tell you not only what keyword they use in search engine searches, but also the average number of searches per month and the level of competition for a keyword.

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Use headings wisely - there are a few different page headings you can use. Headings are given a number depending on how important they are: 1 means the most important, moving to 2, 3, 4 and so on as importance decreases. Search engines take note by looking at which headings you've stated as being important when ranking pages in their SERPs. By default, your heading 1 or H1 heading is the main page title. Only have one H1 per page. The other headings will most likely be H2 or H3 depending on how long your content is.

Use keywords in headings - search engines take note of what keywords you use in headings, as to them, a heading is like a summary of what the page content is about.

Monitor keyword usage - keyword stuffing is when you use a keyword again and again throughout your page or website. In the past, this strategy used to work, in that it made search engines rank your page high in its SERPs. Nowadays though, it is seen as being negative and will likely have your website ranked very low in SERPs. Aim for around one to three percent usage of keywords in your text.

Use synonyms - to avoid keyword stuffing, using the same words over and over again, use other words which mean the same or similar thing.

Where to Next for Your Website Content?

It's time to get writing! Grab ideas from others within your industry, and seek feedback on your own writing from those you trust. If writing just isn't your thing, you can also look into hiring someone to do it for you, or delegate it to another person involved in your business.

Our article, [How to Create a Content Plan for Your Website](#) is a great help too. It explains what a content plan is, how it can help you and the steps to take to implement one for your website.

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#9 – 7 Essential Things Every Website Needs

Some may be small; others large and noticeable.

They're all essential though, and play a role at ensuring your website is effective and meets your goals.

In this article, we look at seven of the most essential things a website needs and how to get them.

7 Website Essentials Your Site Needs

Your website can be a powerful tool, helping you to grow your business. To be effective, it requires these seven key website essentials:

- Key Pages - your website doesn't need to be a cookie-cutter of your competitor's, but it does need to contain at least three key pages: Home Page, About Us Page and Contact Us Page.
- Good Quality Photos & Graphics - a picture says a thousand words, and you'll want to ensure that your website photos say positive ones. High quality images play a large role in both attracting and keeping visitors on your website. Read our article to learn about Finding Stock Photos for Your Website.
- Fast Loading - if a page on your website takes three seconds or longer to load, then your visitors will go elsewhere. Page loading speed is a key factor Google uses in its website ranking criteria too.
- Mobile Responsive - another key criteria Google uses when ranking websites for its search results is whether or not the website is mobile responsive. With the continued popularity of using our mobile phones to search for information, a website needs to be able to be used and viewed correctly on a variety of devices. If your website isn't responsive, change it to one that is. We'd love to host your website!
- Good Website Design - a website needs to not only look good but be easy to use as well. When you are designing a website, taking into consideration user experience design helps you to make people 'fall in love' with it. Take a read of our article What is User Experience Design and How Can It Help Your Business to learn how to do this.

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- Social Media Links - we all know that social media plays a huge role in getting traffic to a website. But it should also go the other way too. If you have your business' social media links on your website, visitors who found it search engines, for example, can then begin to learn about your business in other ways.
- Calls to Action - once you've got a visitor to your website, you need to give them a strong call to action or CTA. This effectively makes it clear to them what you want them to do next, such as contact you, sign up to a newsletter or purchase a product. Read our article [Beginners Guide to Using Calls to Action](#) to learn how to do this.

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#10 Guide to Using Images on Your Website

Images such as graphics and photos are fantastic tools to use on your website. But you need to remember that with most websites measuring around 800px by 1200px, your images need to be relative to it's size. Images offer many benefits to a website, including:

- making a website look appealing, so visitors stay longer
- helping your products or services be remembered
- showing your products in use & explain how they work
- creating a solid online presence for your brand

There are some downsides to images, one being that they can slow down the loading of your website. While our servers are quick and will provide your visitors with fast loading pages, it's still important you optimise all of the images you use on your website.

Optimising Your Website Images

Optimising an image simply means saving it in a web friendly format and an image of a suitable file size. There are two file formats you can use for your website:

JPEG - this is best for photos

PNG - this is best for logos and images created by a graphic designer

When you save your images, you can choose which file type it is by right clicking in the drop down box where you enter the filename. It's a good idea to give an image a meaningful file name, such as bluebabybib.jpeg not 343232.jpeg as it helps with your website SEO as search engines can 'read' text, not images.

In our CMS, we have two image sizes (what you see on your screen):

- the original size of the image you uploaded, which may be reduced depending on the template you are using and where the image is going. Here are the standard image sizes we use:

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Where there is no default image size, you'll be automatically suggested an maximum image size of 960x960 pixels. You can however override this by selecting the button Change Default Image Sizes.

- a 320x320 pixels thumbnail image. This is only used in galleries, product lists and directory listings where there are a lot of images on a page.

Where things can get confusing is that image size and file size are two different things. The image size, which is the size the image shows on your screen, is different from the file size. However the two are related when it comes to image optimisation and generally the smaller the better for both.

The file size is the amount of data or information saved within an image. There are many websites online which provide free or paid tools for you to shrink the file size of your images including Image Optimizer, Optimizilla and Kraken Image Optimizer.

The aim when optimising your images is not to reduce the quality of the image, though in some cases this does happen, but to shrink the file size.

Once you have optimised your images, simply upload them to the CMS and your website.

Uploading Images to Your Website

When it comes to uploading images onto your website, there are multiple ways to do this. They include:

Dragging images from your computer into the open web browser you are using to work in your CMS. Our system will then automatically import these images. This can be done in different areas of your CMS such as with Galleries and Products. To be able to drag the image, you will need to have the file open where the image is saved and then click and hold on the image to bring it over to the text 'Or drag & drop a photo here (JPEG, PNG or GIF).

You can drag a photo into your CMS wherever you see the image icon. The image will then automatically upload your image. Or you could click on the image icon to have access to additional controls over how your image looks, such as cropping and rotating.

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You can use an image you have previously uploaded. It will be found in the Image Wizard, under the tab All My Images.

Using the Image Wizard, you can upload a new image file using Upload File. Simply choose the Browse button and it will open access to your computer files, from where you can select an image. Click on the image and then back in the CMS, click on Upload. You are then given the option of editing your image and how you would like it to appear on your website, depending on where you are uploading it.

In the Image Wizard, you can copy an image which is hosted on another website. Using the Firefox browser, simply right click on the image you want and select the option which says Copy Image Location. Then paste that image URL into the Import Image box. You can also enter the URL of the page the image is on, but this may upload every image on that page.

It's important to remember though that you should be optimising your images before uploading them.

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#11- 5 Important Pages You'll Need to Add to Your Website

A great website does wonders for your business. It's the place search engines send visitors to, where you build your brand awareness and sell your products or services. As you start to build your website, you'll need to think about the pages to add to your website. Then comes the harder question: what do you put on them? Today we'll discuss the five most essential pages a website needs, with a quick run through of what to include on them.

5 Essential Pages You'll Need to Add to Your Website

There are five pages every website needs. They are:

- Homepage
- About Page
- Contact Us Page
- Services or Products Page
- Privacy Policy Page

Then of course, there are plenty more to consider. Terms and conditions page, a blog, a testimonials page, a FAQ page or even a gallery: the list keeps going on. Let's work through what to include on these five must have pages you'll need to add to your website.

What Does a Homepage Need?

Your homepage is usually the most visited page on your website. It needs to quickly tell visitors what you do and grab their attention. It also needs to quickly direct people where to go. Of great importance is the homepage appearance, as visitors will make an instant decision about your business in the first few seconds of arriving on it.

Content for an About Page

Your about page or about us page tells visitors who you are, what your business does and what makes you great. Here is the place to include awards, achievements and add photos of staff. It will also need to quickly direct people to the products or services you sell and how to contact you.

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What Should a Contact Us Page Contain?

Here is the website page to include your email address, physical address (if you are a business which customers visit), phone number and even a contact form. Local businesses such as hairdressers and restaurants can also include additional location based information. Adding a map and written directions about how to find you, names of local suburbs and landmarks can help raise your search engine results too.

Writing Your Services or Products Page

Here is the place to list your products or services. Describe what makes your products/services great, how they work and include professional photos of them if appropriate. If you are taking orders through your website, you'll also need to include a shopping cart. Head over to our ecommerce section to read more about how to do this.

If you are a services based business, consider using one of our FAQ or sub menu style pages, so you can break up your services list into several detailed pages. These pages can be targeted to a different service keyphrase and make great SEO targets. For online shops, your category and product pages are automatically indexed.

Creating a Privacy Policy Page

Here is the page where you need to tell visitors what you are doing with any information you collect. You need to make a list of the info you collect, how it is used, how they can get a copy of it and if it will be shared. It's also important to explain the other policies you have to keep your business and website visitors safe.

When it comes to writing your website copy, check out our article [5 Steps to Writing Killer Website Content Which Ranks High](#). It's full of helpful DIY website writing advice for when you've chosen the pages you'll need to add to your website.

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Growing Your Website Traffic Via SEO

1. Beginners Guide to SEO
2. 8 SEO Tips to Get You Started Today
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Growing Your Website Traffic Via SEO

#1 Beginners Guide to SEO

SEO or search engine optimisation are the things you do to help your website get found and ranked highly in search results. SEO is often something website owners put into the too hard basket because it seems too complicated. The good news is though, that SEO is something we can all do at some level on our websites, and the way to get started is to understand what is SEO and how it works. Today we're going to share with you just that!

What is SEO?

As mentioned above, SEO (or search engine optimisation) are the things you do for and on your website with the goal of increasing your traffic from search engines. There are three main types of SEO, each with their own individual components.

- Off page SEO - these are the things you do which are not directly on your website. A large component are links or backlinks from other websites to your website. Obviously you can't add a link to someone else's website; they need to do that themselves. But you can publish a piece of content so great on your website that they will want to share a link to it from their site. You can also add your business details to a free business directory too. The theory regarding backlinks is that Google sees a link as a recommendation for a website. If someone links to your site from theirs, then they must think your site is worth sharing. In the past though, people have overused this SEO strategy and brought thousands of links from other sites, hoping that the more links they have to their site, the better Google will think their website is. While this did work years ago, nowadays Google sees it as spammy and will rank your website lower. Another thing to consider with a backlink is the quality of the website the link is from. You only want a link to be from a reputable and high quality website, as that is the sort of traffic you would want to receive.
- On Page SEO - this refers to all of the things you do on your website to improve its results in search engine rankings. That means on page SEO is the content you write for your site's visitors, the file names you give

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your pages and images, image alt tags, title tags, page headings, page sub headings, anchor text, meta descriptions, keywords and internal links. You can learn more about many of these on page SEO tasks by reading our article on optimising your meta tags. On page SEO is the easiest of the three SEO types to do, as you have complete control over what you add to your site. It does take time and effort to learn how to do, and the results are never instant. It's also something you need to keep doing and for every page on your website too!

- Technical SEO - technical SEO is best left to the experts. It involves the usability of your website through both the design and the technical things which keep it going. Because of this, it's not often something individual owners can edit, unless they are web developers. When a website has great technical SEO, it is easy for the search engine spiders to crawl and index content within a site. The elements of a website which technical SEO is concerned with include it's speed, if it is mobile friendly and how it has been built.

Getting Started with Your Website's SEO

The next question is, where should you start with your SEO? The answer is, with your website content; your on page SEO. By this we mean the things that a visitor would see when looking through your site. The content on your website is one very important factor search engines analyse when deciding where they are going to rank your website in their search results.

To help you get started with your web content, take a read of our article [Your Guide On How to Write Product Descriptions](#). It explains the key things a product description needs to be found by search engines and sell your products! Next read [How to Write a Meta Description](#) to learn how to entice visitors to click on your link within a search engine result. Finally, our [Guide to Using Images on Your Website](#) will explain how to use photos to assist with your on page SEO too!

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#2 – 8 SEO Tips to Get You Started Today

The doing of SEO is can be pretty darn intimidating for most website owners. While there are just three types of SEO, there are plenty of little pieces which make those up. It's also something we need to actively remain doing as it's not a 'do once and forget about it' thing. SEO is also not something which provides instant results. The results of what you do today may not be seen for months, or even years. It's this point which can be so disheartening for people, making them believe that SEO is a waste of time and money. But the results of a well planned and executed SEO website strategy are with waiting for and are your best option in growing your business' online presence.

8 Quick & Easy SEO Tips

Search engine optimisation is a complex thing. But that doesn't mean it's impossible or too hard for you to do. We've put together a list of eight SEO tips you can do for your own website, even if you've never done any SEO before!

- Make sure you've signed up to Google Analytics. This is a free tool which you can use to analyse the traffic your website receives. It will help you know what's working and what's not in terms of the SEO work you do. It also gives you data about what visitors do on your website and helps you make decisions about the type of content you provide and how you provide it on your website.
- Use SEO friendly URLs or filenames. This means including the keywords for that page in its filename. For example, <https://www.mywebsite.co.nz/skipping-ropes>. Remember to use a hyphen and not an underscore in your filenames as Google likes those best.
- Do your keyword research. What you find will shape the content and the wording you use throughout your website. Keyword research goes hand in hand with knowing your target audience too, as you need to use the same wording and tone they are. After all, you need to be using the same words within your website that your audience is using to find your business using a search engine!

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- Write unique, engaging and helpful content for your website. Aim it at your target audience, not a search engine. After all, Google isn't going to buy your stuff, but a person will!
- Add internal links to other pages on your site. Called anchor text, a hyperlinked word or phrase linking from one page to another within your website helps search engines to move easily throughout your site. It also helps direct visitors to other related pages, encouraging them to stay for longer on your site. The best anchor links use keywords and are related to the content on the page they are linking too.
- Add a blog and post regularly. A blog provides fresh content on your site and encourages search engines to come back and check it regularly for updates. Each blog post you write offers new visitors another way to find your business. It's like an advertisement, ready and waiting to help your customer and be found 24/7. It's important to remember though that a blog shouldn't be about promoting your products or services. Instead it should be focusing on providing useful information that your visitor can use and in which you can demonstrate your competence and experience within your industry. It is ok to give a call to action at the bottom of your blog post directing your visitor on what to do next though.
- Use social media well. While social media sites don't provide any useful links from their sites to yours, and they're not something Google uses to rank your site with, social media is something it pays attention to. For instance, if a page of yours was being liked and shared around Facebook, Google is probably going to notice. So make sure that each page of your website has a sharing social media icon on it.
- Use meta tags well. Meta tags are things like your page title, headings, meta descriptions and filenames. This means writing unique and engaging meta tags for each page, which contain your keyword if possible. Read our blogs on optimising meta tags and writing meta descriptions for more specific advice.

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Growing Your Website Traffic Via SEO

#3 – How to Do a Website Content Audit

Simply put, a website content audit is looking at all of the content on your site, identifying the ways it can be improved, checking for missing sections, finding what is working and the sections that are the most popular with your visiting traffic.

Once you've completed your content audit, you'll be in a better position to improve your content, which can improve the user experience and how your site is ranked by search engines.

Manual or Online Website Content Audit Tool?

Just like you have the choice to send a letter by post or by email, you have a choice between completing your content audit manually or using an online software tool. Both can provide you with answers about what's good and what's not on your site. However there are pros and cons to both:

A manual content audit is time consuming, but is specifically tailored to your website. It also provides the human element, which can never be replaced by machine. You also need to know what you should be looking for and where to find it. A significant bonus is that you are able to analyse the specific parts you want, and won't be bombarded with a lot of surplus data.

Online software will do the auditing for you in a matter of seconds, which does save on time. You're presented with a large volume of results though, many of which you may not consider important. That's because the software has been pre-programmed with specific things to look for.

It's a personal choice as to which method you use (we prefer the manual option!), but the types of things you should be looking for remain the same. They include:

Heading tags - H1, H2, H3

Meta descriptions

Images

Broken links

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- File names
- Word count per page
- Number social shares and comments
- Content topics used
- Audience visits
- Inconsistent branding
- Outdated content
- Missing or poor calls to action

As we are fans of manual content audits, we'll explain how to do them next.

Undertaking a Manual Website Content Audit

Yes, it takes time, but so do all good things! A manual content audit helps you understand exactly what is and what isn't on your website. Here's how you can do one:

Have a plan - know the reasons why you are undertaking an audit and what you hope to achieve from doing so. Are there specific areas you want to focus your attention upon? When will you do the audit?

Make up a spreadsheet - a spreadsheet is a handy way of recording what you have found and what you have done about it.

Start looking through your website and checking each page for the individual points you are focusing on. Record the details down on your spreadsheet - which is shortly to become your new to-do-list.

Once you've got the data entered into your spreadsheet, it's time to analyse how your website is placed. Where are the areas you need more content? What is working well for your website now? Which areas do you need to fix up? Prioritise your findings into a to-do list and start working your way through it.

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#4 How to Optimise for Google's Featured Snippets

In short, they are a spotlight on specific information within a website page that directly answers the question they asked Google.

Google selects the best possible snippet from a website which directly answers the question of the user's search query. Often this includes a long-tailed keyword phrase. It always comes from a website page which already ranks within the top ten results.

It is displayed at the very top of the page above the organic search results, directly below the paid advertisements. It is therefore called being at position zero.

What Information Does a Featured Snippet Include?

The text, videos, lists, tables and images (if appropriate) within one of Google's featured snippets is directly taken from the content within a website's page. The snippet itself is found at the top of the Google results page, directly underneath the paid advertisements. There is a single line bordered box around the content of the snippet too, along with bold text containing keywords and phrases within the search, plus a link to the page from which the snippet's information came from. Sometimes you will find that the image and the text are from different web pages or websites, and in this case, Google will link to both sources.

What Are the Benefits of Having a Featured Snippet?

As the featured snippet is appears at the top of the page in position zero, it gives you three major benefits:

1. Plenty of free traffic - a featured snippet simply by the position it is on the search results page is clicked upon more times than another other organic link on the page. This even includes the number one result, which traditionally is what website owners want to achieve.
2. Improved brand awareness - more people see your brand in search results, which results in more people knowing about it and building relationships with it.

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3. Increased trust - people who see you are ranked highly by Google are more likely to trust your brand, especially after visiting your website and seeing the high quality content you have within it.

We believe that the goal of every website should be to rank for as many featured snippets on Google as they can. We'll walk you through how to do this next.

How to Optimise Your Website for Each Type of Featured Snippet

As featured snippets answer a question asked in a search query in either a paragraph, list or table format, your website page will need to do the same. Here are the basics of what you'll need to include for each:

- You will need to use either bullet points or numbers in your list
- Put the question as the heading
- Answer the question using 40-50 words
- Optimise for Paragraph Featured Snippets
- Use wording in your heading which contains:
 - Who is ...
 - What is ...
 - Comparisons ...
 - Why is ...
 - How is ...
- Answer the question using 40-50 words
- Put the heading as a question
- Optimise for Table Featured Snippets
- Include the question in your heading
- Put your data into a table
- Optimise for Video Featured Snippets
- Include the question within the heading
- Optimise the video's description using the question and other long-tailed keywords
- Include a script of the video for closed captions

Next, we'll move on to some more general tips on optimising for featured snippets.

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Tips on Achieving More Featured Snippets

To increase the possibility that Google will choose your web page to display as a featured snippet, consider:

- Using specific keyword/search intent which provides answers for one of these things: 1. going somewhere, 2. knowing something, 3. doing something, 4. buying something
- Being concise in your wording, as the average snippet length is 45 words.
- Use question based headings
- Follow on-page SEO guidelines to rank the page on page 1 of Google
- Put the most important information at the top of the page

In conclusion, a featured snippet will only come from a page which is already ranking in the top ten results. To have one of your pages ranking there too, great content and SEO practices are needed. Check out our article [8 Easy SEO Tips You Can Do Today](#) to get things started.

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#5 White Hat SEO Strategies to Increase Your Web Traffic

If there was a 'good guy' when it came to SEO, it has to be the white hat. Filled to the brim with strategies recommended by search engines such as Google, white hat SEO helps you to rank your website without fear of being blacklisted or losing rank.

In this article, we're defining what white hat SEO is, plus explaining how you can use some of the most common strategies to increase your website traffic for free.

What is White Hat SEO?

White hat SEO, one of three different SEO types, uses the practices recommended by Google to raise the ranking of websites within search engine results. It's not trying to trick or outsmart a search engine into ranking you higher, but rather following good practices over the long-haul.

It's using organic techniques such as unique written content, site usability, linking within your site and focusing on providing what your audience wants, not a search engine.

White Hat SEO Strategies to Increase Your Website Traffic

When using white hat strategies, there is no risk of your website being penalised by search engines. Here are five white hat SEO techniques you can use on your website to increase your organic (free) traffic:

- Create unique and top quality content - aim for a word count of at least 350-400 words per page. Include one focused keyword per page, at least one link to another page on your site and use headings and meta tags well. Take a read of our article [How to Optimise Your Web Pages Meta Tags](#) for further information on how to do these.
- Ensure your website is mobile friendly - Google places a huge emphasis on providing its users with mobile friendly websites in its search results. All of our websites are mobile friendly, and we're be happy to move your existing site to our CMS.

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- Get yourself a Google My Business account for free - it's not on your website, but rather something you can do to assist Google to know more about it. Your website will appear more regularly on Google SERPs (hopefully) when you have it.
- Do your keyword research - the words and phrases you think people are using to find websites like yours can be considerably different from what they are actually using. Keyword research is the process of identifying exactly what they are using so you can include those keywords within your website content.
- Optimise your images and files - search engines cannot read images, so when naming your photos, graphics and files, give them a name which is made of words (even better - with keywords).

For more information about SEO, check out our ever-growing list of DIY SEO resources.

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#6 Using Heading Tags to Improve Your SEO

Heading tags, also known as page headings, are a misunderstood part of SEO. Because of this, they are often incorrectly used or not used at all. However, they are easy to implement within each page on your website and can help improve the SEO of your website.

What Are Heading Tags?

John Mueller from Google said, "We do use H tags to understand the structure of the text on a page better."

A heading tag is an HTML (web code) section on a web page which tells search engines that a piece of text is a heading or title. The code which surrounds a heading tag tells the search engine that the text is more important than other text on the page. The HTML code looks like this <h1>, <h2>, <h3> etc. The number in the code tells search engines which headings are the most important, with the smaller the number, the more important the heading is. Depending on the settings in your CMS for font and font size, the more important headings should be the biggest in size for the web visitor. Google has said though that the actual physical size of a heading is not taken into consideration for SEO, just the tag.

<h1> is used for the page title and should only be used once on a page. Using it more than once can be detrimental to your SEO, confusing search engines as to what the most important part in the page is. In the Website World CMS, an <h1> is automatically generated for you, so no action is needed.

<h2> is the heading tag which is great for using as your second and third sub headings.

<h3> is recommended for when you have over 1,000 words on a page and it would be positioned further down, near the bottom.

<h4> onwards are generally not used, but you can if you would like to.

How to Use Heading Tags

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In the Website World CMS, you have control over the heading tag you want to use for a specific subheading. As mentioned above, <h2> and <h3> are the main ones you will be using. How you convert your ordinary title into a heading tag depends on the page type and the editor you are using.

For a blog or when using the Tiny editor, highlight the sub heading and then select Paragraph - Heading 2 or Heading 3.

When using the drag and drop editor, highlight the heading and then click on the H and then select Heading 2.

How to Write Heading Tags

There is plenty of conflicting information about what text should be included in a heading tag. We believe though that a heading tag should be written firstly for the visitor to your website. It needs to tell them what the page or a paragraph is about. Web visitors do not read every bit of text on a page, but they do use headings to help them skim it and find the pieces they are interested in.

Yes, you should be adding keywords and phrases to your heading tags, but not stuff them full of keywords. For instance, in this blog, our keyword phrase is heading tags. We have included it in our headings, but have written the headings to help readers explain what each paragraph is about and so that the headings make sense.

For more help with understanding, using and writing heading tags, the Search Engine Journal website has a useful article well worth reading. You can also contact our recommended SEO experts too for extra advice.

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#7 How to Write a Meta Description & Why They Matter

A meta description is one just one of the meta tags you can use to help improve your website's SEO. They are a short descriptive paragraph of around 120-150 characters which is shown in search engine results, which is positioned underneath the meta title. It looks like this:

Meta descriptions are like the blurb on the back of a book. They give a snippet of what you can expect to read about should you choose to click through to that web page. This is the final hurdle you need to pass with your SEO and it's also the place where many website owners let themselves down. Today we're going to discuss why meta descriptions are important and share with you the best practice when it comes to writing them.

Why Are Meta Descriptions Important?

Your meta description is one of six different meta tags which you can use to assist with your website's ranking in search engines. (For information about the others, please read our article [How to Optimise Your Website's Web Pages Meta Tags](#)). Its main purpose is to increase the number of times people choose to click through to your page after seeing it in their search engine results.

Google has said that they do not use the content of a meta description when factoring their search engine algorithm (how they decide where to rank your website in their search results). However, the behaviour of people who choose to click through after reading your meta description is a factor, which is called your click through rate. We also know that the meta description is the most important factor in increasing your click through rate from a search engine's results page.

So, while what you write in a meta description won't directly influence how Google ranks your site, it can affect your site in other ways.

How to Write a Meta Description Which Increases Your Click Through Rate

There are several key features which you need to include in every meta description you write. They are:

- give each page on your site its own unique meta description

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- include the page's keywords - you'll find search engines sometimes highlight these in bold in a description
- use around 120-150 characters per description
- include a call to action, telling the reader what to do next. E.g: read this to find out more now!
- give a short synopsis of what the page is about and the benefit the reader will receive by reading it

Where Do I Put My Meta Description?

In our CMS, your meta description has a specific place to go. You can find it by clicking on the blue SEO menu button, then choosing the page type it is for: web page, category or blog. Clicking on one of these will open a grid box where all meta tag information is to be entered and saved. Just like when you make other changes on your site, don't forget to publish it.

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Growing Your Website Traffic Via SEO

#8 SEO and AdWords

Two terms which are heard a lot are SEO and AdWords. Both are significant players in the SEO or search engine optimisation arena, which is all to do with getting your business found by search engines. Both have their pros and cons, as well as being able to do different things for your business website. Today we're going to look at the differences between them and help you make the decision about which one (or both) to use.

What is SEO?

SEO or search engine optimisation is the work you do on and for your website to help it rank higher in Google and other search engine results. There are three types of SEO - on page, off page and technical. We've taken care of all the technical and provided a great SEO friendly platform for you to use for the other two types. What we're going to talk about today, is the on-page SEO, which is the content you include on your site and your meta tags.

The advantages of using SEO for your site include:

- Cost effective - you can create content and optimise your site for SEO without having to pay for it to rank on page one of Google.
- You'll have great content - as well as search engines liking having fresh quality content on your site (which they'll reward you for), you also have useful and interesting content for web visitors too, which encourages them to visit your site again.
- Build online credibility and status - when your content ranks high organically (without you paying to get it on page one of a search engine's results), you build your credibility in that area. Organic results also receive 75% of all the clicks too.
- Long term solution - the great thing about SEO, is that it is a long term solution. That's not to say that once you rank high you'll stay there forever, as SEO is an ongoing thing.

The disadvantages of using SEO are that it is:

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- time consuming - it requires a lot of effort to improve the ranking and positioning of your site in a search engine.
- It's ongoing - search engines change their algorithms often, sometimes as many as 400 times in a year! This means SEO is never finished and it's something you need to keep working on.
- Hard to measure return on investment

What is AdWords?

AdWords is a paid advertising service run by Google. It works like an auction. You make a bid in advance of the price you are prepared to pay for your ad to be shown in Google's search results. Then when your keyword is searched for, your bid goes up against all the other advertisers who are wanting their ad to be shown for that keyword too. Theoretically, the higher your bid, the more prominent your ad is and the more clicks to your website you will receive.

The advantages of using AdWords are:

- Relatively easy and quick - you can start getting results almost immediately.
- Pay as you go - there is no large outlay for advertising. It is a pay per click service.
- Specific targeting - your ads will only show for the people who have used your specific keyword.
- Control - you can stop and start advertising whenever you like.

The disadvantages of using AdWords are:

- Higher bounce rate
- 25% click rate - 75% of clicks in search engines are through organic searches, not paid ads
- Short term - once you stop paying for ads, your traffic from them stops

Which is Best for Me: AdWords or SEO?

This depends on your individual business, your plans and needs. If you have a new website or one which isn't ranking well, a short term fix is to use AdWords. For a long term solution, SEO is best. You can read our SEO tips to get you started or contact one of our SEO providers for more assistance.

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2. How to Grow Your Facebook Group
3. How to Write Brilliant Instagram Captions
4. Free Instagram Analytics Tools
5. Building Your Social Media Marketing Strategy
6. 7 Websites for Finding Memes and GIFs
7. Instagram Hashtags
8. Dealing with Negative Comments on Social Media
9. 12 Tips to Increase Engagement Using Social Media
10. How to Get More Website Traffic Using Social Media
11. Beginners Guide to Using Pinterest for Business
12. Beginners Guide to Using Instagram for Business
13. What is a Call to Action & How Are They Used?
14. How to Choose the Right Social Media Platforms
15. How to Find Great Social Media Content
16. Creating Facebook Graphics Which Get You Noticed
17. 5 Reasons Why Your Business Should Be on YouTube
18. Using Canva to Create Social Media Templates
19. 50 Social Media Post Ideas

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Promoting Your Business Through Social Media

#1 Does Your Business Need a Facebook Group?

Most businesses already have a Facebook page. They use it to reach out to their target audience, sharing products, services, events, news and entertainment. It is expected by customers that a business all have a Facebook page, and such pages will appear in search engine results. They are mostly used for business promotion. It can be hard to get your page posts in front of your audience without paying for it because of Facebook algorithms. Minimal work is required to create posts and engage with an audience.

A Facebook group though is more of a collaborative place. People interested in a specific topic join together in a group which is sponsored by a business page. It is a place of discussion rather than selling. Group posts will usually appear more often than a page post because of Facebook algorithms, making a greater chance that your content will be seen by your target market. They do involve more work by an admin and moderator than a page does.]

The benefits of hosting a Facebook group by your business includes:

- increased personal engagement with your audience - you get the opportunity to become a face and not a business name.
- immediate feedback
- ability to announce special offers to members, promote FOMO
- provide value to members, which builds their trust in you
- be able to give focused calls to action
- establish yourself as an expert in your industry

Let's move onto discussing the ways you can improve your group to build your brand's presence.

Facebook Group Strategies for Businesses

The aim of posting in a Facebook group is to increase the number of people who see and engage with your posts, plus follow your calls to action. To achieve this there are a few things you'll need to do, including:

1. Engage with members

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Start conversations or jump into existing ones. Take the time to showcase yourself as the expert in your industry and become the go-to resource everyone needs. Respond to questions, ask questions and keep conversations moving. Welcome new members to the group.

2. Keep things on track

Spam is never fun for anyone, so make sure you keep a tight grip on unwanted self promotion. Make sure there are clear group guidelines for members to follow and engage the services of a group of moderators and admins to help keep things under control.

3. Check out your group insights

Once your group has 250 members, you'll be able to view insights on membership growth, engagement times and posts. These will help you in developing a strategy to run your group at optimum levels.

4. Learn more about your customers

Your Facebook group is a great place to learn about what your customers like and dislike, what they are saying about your products, services and industry. They can even help you identify new products or gaps in the market, plus gaps in the market.

For further advice, take the time to read our article [How to Grow Your Facebook Group](#).

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Promoting Your Website Through Social Media

#2 How to Grow Your Facebook Group

Many businesses large and small are using Facebook groups as a tool to market their businesses. Today we explain the benefits of having a business Facebook group, plus ways you can increase membership numbers and engagement levels.

Benefits of Building Your Facebook Group

A Facebook group is a private or public group set up by an individual or business within Facebook. Usually there is a business page associated with the group, and the group focuses on information related to that business' industry. You can take a look at the Facebook group we operate; Business Networking NZ.

Running a business Facebook group which has high membership numbers and an engaged audience can help your business:

- promote your brand at low cost
- engage at a personal level with your audience
- partake in personal conversations with individual customers
- receive useful feedback
- gather information on which products/services and content your audience responds best to

As with all Facebook posts, algorithms can play a role. It is believed that group posts are seen more often than page posts, which results in higher levels of engagement and visibility. But there are also things you can do to grow your Facebook group and we're covering those next.

Tips on Growing Your Facebook Group

It makes sense that you focus on ways to grow the number of members and their engagement within that group, as groups such as these are a useful marketing strategy. We've done some research and made a list of things which can help you achieve both of these things:

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- Set clear expectations for members - lay out what the rules are regarding posts, the purpose of the group and the types of content that you expect will be shared within the group.
- Moderate your group - this means deleting posts which break the rules, removing troublesome group members and referring when required on posts.
- Encourage discussions - let members make their own posts about issues within your industry. Allow other members to step in and offer advice, as well as making comments yourself.
- Promote your group - as well as through your business Facebook page, promote your group on other social media platforms too. You may even wish to use paid advertising if you are not prepared to take the organic growth approach.
- Run polls - polls seem to be highly effective ways to grow member engagement. Ask a question, then have members respond.
- Offer exclusive content - if your group lets people get something there that they can't get elsewhere, they'll join to avoid missing out on it.
- Build a sense of community - work on developing relationships within your group by regular posting and commenting.
- Experiment with different post types - discover which posts your audience responds best to. Live and recorded videos, polls, posts and memes are just some of your options.
- Have good admins and moderators - these are the backbone of your group, helping to ensure it runs smoothly.
- Research the group for topics - what seem to be the pain points for group members? What topics are they continually posting about? These could offer ideas for future posts.

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#3 How to Write Brilliant Instagram Captions

Is your Instagram feed getting any love? Social media can be a sad place to be if you put in all this effort, and still never get the results you want.

Instagram is a growing social media platform known for its beautiful images and catchy captions. It's the captions we're focusing on today, explaining what exactly they are, the benefits they can provide and how to write brilliant ones.

What Are Instagram Captions?

An Instagram caption is the text which accompanies the image on a post. Like Facebook, Instagram is a highly visual platform and the images you choose to use play a large role in how successful you are on the platform. However, the accompanying text is also important, because that is what your audience responds to next once you've caught their attention.

As well as using the captions as an opportunity to describe the image and add context to it, you can also include hashtags, emojis and tags. There is a limit of 2,200 characters, which is around 330 words per caption.

How Does Using Instagram Captions Help Me?

We read an interesting article which discussed the belief that captions will become a deciding factor as to the success of an Instagram account. They based this upon the fact that the number of likes a post are now hidden, making captions grow in importance. Captions help build relationships and start conversations with followers. They make your audience connect with you in a way an image can't on its own. Captions also specifically lay out to your audience what you want them to do next, which is why including a call to action is so important. Therefore, the benefits of using captions on Instagram for your business are:

- being able to explain the content of the image you used, helping explain detailed information
- increasing the visibility of your posts by using hashtags, as people specifically use hashtags to search for content
- show your brand's personality and grow a loyal following

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- give a human aspect to your business by using emojis
- give specific calls to action to your audience

What Makes a Great Caption on Instagram?

- Let's take a look at what turns a ho-hum Instagram caption into one of the best:
- attention grabbing first line
- clear call to action
- well presented and visually appealing text with white space
- consistent brand voice
- regular posting schedule, even to the day and hour
- sticking to specific topics and themes

How to Write Super Instagram Captions

By reading the criteria listed above, we already know what a great caption needs to contain. But how do you actually write one? These tips will help:

- Put the important information first - only the first 125 characters are shown in any caption, so make sure you put the important stuff first.
- Storytelling - tell a story about your brand, such as product history or an employee.
- Space your text out - paragraphs and new lines are your friends. Just like on a website page, your text needs to be visually appealing and easy to scan.
- Clear CTA - make sure that you clearly tell your audience what you want them to do. Often this is something like "Click the link in my bio" as you cannot add clickable links to your captions.
- Ask questions - when you ask questions, you increase post engagement because people want to answer you with a comment.
- Use hashtags - use hashtags which are relevant to your industry and are being used by other users. Take a read of our article on using Instagram hashtags for more help with this.
- Show your brand's personality using emojis - whether you like them or not, emojis play a large role in social media posts. They grab people's

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interest, personalise your brand and help break large chunks of text up. They can also increase the rate of engagement a post gets!

- Use @ mentions - tagging other Instagram users increases active engagement and gets your posts in the feeds of others who aren't necessarily following you.

If you're going to get serious about your Instagram captions, it makes sense to monitor how successful you are by using an Instagram analytical tool. Take a read of our article on [Free Instagram Analytics Tools](#) to find the best one for your business.

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#4 Free Instagram Analytics Tools

Instagram's popularity with both users and businesses continues to grow.

The question is though, how do you know if it is a successful business generating tool for you?

In this article, we look at some of the most common free Instagram analytics tools which measure aspects such as engagement, website visits, profile visits, post performance, engagement rate, follower growth rate, hashtags and reach. We also look at the reasons why you should be checking up on your Instagram account's analytics.

Metrics to Measure On Instagram

To make the most of your chosen Instagram analytics tools, you need to identify the metrics you are interested in following details about. These can include:

- number of followers - follower growth rate
- hashtag trends - which hashtags are rising and falling in popularity, new hashtags
- conversions - how many sales have resulted as a direct result of an Instagram post
- audience metrics - age, gender, location and when the audience is online
- impressions - how many people see each of your posts
- engagement rate - metrics such as comments, likes and saves

Each of the Instagram analytics tools are different, recording different things and providing different ways of doing things. To help you understand which one(s) are right for you, we take a look at some of the most popular ones next.

Popular Free Instagram Analytics Tools

There are plenty of analytics tools available for Instagram, though the number of free ones is decreasing. We're hoping the following remain free or still offer some free services:

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- Instagram Insights - from Instagram itself, this tool lets you see insights from your business account.
- Hashtagify - gives you a free daily hashtag search where you can see results on popularity trends over the last week and month.
- Socialbakers - offering a free performance report, you can see how successful your profile is to your competitors.
- SocialStats - providing multiple different analytics, all for free.
- Later - as well as letting you schedule posts, the free plan also gives you some free analytics, including three months of tracking of Instagram stories. It also tells you what the best times are to post to help you boost engagement.

Why Do I Need to Check My Instagram Analytics?

With over 200 million people using Instagram each day, it is a powerful website traffic generation tool business owners cannot ignore. But simply posting regularly or liking the posts of others just isn't enough. You actually need to understand how your account is doing to get the best results. Checking your analytics regularly allows you to check:

- you are targeting the right audience
- driving the right traffic to your site
- understanding the best times to post
- finding opportunities to brand engagement
- see which ads are working effectively

Take a read of our article [Instagram Hashtags: What Are They & How Do You Use Them?](#) for more details on using Instagram.

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#5 Building Your Social Media Marketing Strategy

A social media marketing strategy is a plan of the activities and content you are going to share on your social media channels.

This includes information about:

- topics
- phrases and sayings
- memes
- images
- website links
- post engagement tactics

It also includes details of your goals, target audience, budget, dates and times.

What Information Does a Social Media Marketing Plan Need?

When writing your social media marketing plan, you will need to ask yourself these W questions:

- who is your target audience?
- age and gender
- location
- financial details
- likes and dislikes
- needs and wants
- problems they need solving
- why they use social media
- information they like and dislike
- what platforms does your target audience use?
- where do they spend their time?
- how often do they use social media?
- why do they use social media?
- what devices do they use?
- what goals or challenges do they have?
- how much time do they spend on social media?

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- why do you want to spend time promoting your business on social media?
- to increase website traffic
- raise brand awareness
- improve search engine ranking
- make more sales
- get new leads
- provide another avenue for customer service
- what information are you wanting to share with your audience?
- jokes and memes
- images
- behind the scenes
- blogs
- products
- testimonials
- recommendations
- videos
- live shares
- tone of voice, colours and text to match your brand image
- when are you going to share information with your audience?
- times and days
- seasonal events
- special sale dates

Once you have collected all of this information, it's time to get building your social media strategy!

How to Create an Effective Social Media Strategy

We've made a list of eight steps to follow to help you build your social media plan:

1. Set SMART goals

These are goals which are:

- specific
- measurable

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- attainable
- relevant
- time specific

2. Understand your target audience

This means creating specific audience personas, as well as researching which platforms they are using.

3. Find out more about your competition

Conducting an in-depth analysis of who your competition are, what they are doing on social media, the platforms they use, who engages with their posts, the types of posts which get high levels of engagement and the topics they cover can help you find areas where you can step in and dominate.

4. Identify what is and isn't working for you

Conduct a social media audit on your business. Identify the things that are and aren't working and if your audience is using the same platforms.

5. Work on your social media profiles

If you haven't already got social media profiles, create accounts on the channels your audience is using. If you do, now is the time to improve your profiles, and close accounts on the channels you will no longer use.

6. Research potential content

It's time to spend a fair amount of genuine research hours scrolling through social media! Look for things which inspire, entertain and engage you. Asking your audience for ideas on the types of content they would want to see is also a good strategy.

7. Create a content calendar

Now is the time to put all of your information together and create a calendar which includes information about the content you will post, as well as the content to be posted. The 20/80 rule is worth following, where 20% is business promotion posts and the remaining 80% is entertainment or education based posts.

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8. Testing and evaluating your strategy

Once your social media strategy has been going for a while, spend time looking at how effective it has been. This means tracking your data using analytics, testing campaigns, recording down what has and hasn't worked, undertaking surveys and plenty of observation!

Promoting Your Website Through Social Media

#6 – 7 Websites for Finding Memes and GIFs

Finding memes and GIFs to post on our social media accounts seems like a never ending job. Aside from using ones you've seen others in your industry or from pages you follow personally, it is incredibly time consuming and darn right frustrating looking for ones to use.

Using memes and GIF images has become a popular way of engaging with your social media audience. We've put together a list of seven websites to make your search for GIFs and memes much easier.

Are you ready to make meme and GIF image hunting a thing of the past? Awesome, because here are seven websites which have everything you need in one place:

- Giphy - the most famous of them all, Giphy has organised it's content by date, reactions, entertainment, sports, stickers and artists. You can also use their search box to look for specific content too.
- Reaction GIFs - a clear and easy to use list of images to look through, as well as a great inbuilt search function.
- Make a GIF - if you want to make your own GIF, then this is the site for you. It has both a free and a paid option.
- Imgur - if you've got hours to devote, or simply want to browse, this is the meme website for you! There are thousands of options here!
- Kapwing - a meme generator as well as a place to find existing GIFs, videos and memes, this site is well worth a look.
- Quick Meme - needing a meme in a hurry? Quick Meme is the website to find it.
- Tenor - a lovely website with a great search box feature to help you find all the GIFs you've ever wanted

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We hope you have as much fun looking at these seven websites as we did!

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Promoting Your Website Through Social Media

#7 - Instagram Hashtags

Instagram hashtags can put your posts in front of a wider audience and increase the number of your followers. They can also help increase post engagement and build a recognisable brand image. There's a right way and a wrong way of using Instagram hashtags, and today we'll explain:

- what are hashtags
- benefits to your business of using hashtags
- how to use hashtags successfully
- where to find the performing Instagram hashtags
- top 100 Instagram hashtags in 2019

We'll also share with you some New Zealand businesses who are using hashtags as a part of their Instagram strategy.

What Are Hashtags?

A hashtag # is not only used on Instagram. No one actually can pinpoint down the exact origin of the hashtag. It's first use in technology was in the 1960's in the USA when it was fitted onto the first Touch Tone phone pad. It was known as the octothorpe initially, which then changed names to become the pound symbol. The problem came when the # symbol began use in Britain as they already had a pound symbol £. So they called it a hash.

The first use of a hashtag on the internet was in Internet Relay Chat or IRC. IRC, which was created in 1988, was a network where users communicated with each other through channels. Each channel started with a # followed by the subject they were talking about. For example, #England was a channel where people talked about England.

When Twitter came along, Chris Messina, a user of Twitter, suggested that they use the # to group and organise discussions.

Well, that idea didn't go down well with the founder of Twitter Evan Williams. He told Messina he was wrong and the # was too technical and would never become popular!

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People did use it though, but it wasn't until 2008 that using a # in Twitter became popular. Twitter acknowledged this in 2009 by hyperlinking # in Tweets to their search results for #. This continued to raise the use of hashtags in Twitter!

Since then, the use of a # has spread to other social networking sites including Instagram. We'll discuss the benefits of using them next.

Benefits of Using Hashtags on Instagram

When using hashtags on Instagram, you can receive multiple benefits, including:

- being found by an audience specifically interested in what you have to say
- ability to build a community outside of your regular followers
- boosting your industry specific credibility and authority
- increased awareness of your business

To reap these benefits, you do need to have a hashtag strategy in place, and that's what we'll cover next.

How to Use Hashtags Successfully on Instagram

Hashtags are clickable phrases or topics which are added to Instagram posts. Businesses add hashtags to help people find their content, while users use hashtags to find content they are interested in seeing. When a hashtag is clicked on, they are directed to the specific gallery feed for that hashtag. Hashtags can also be added to a business' profile bio.

A great Instagram hashtag strategy will be well researched and planned. This will require you to:

- organise your hashtags - keep track of the hashtags you've used, how often they were used, and which ones were the most successful. This can be done on an Excel sheet.
- find the best hashtag number - 91% of top brands on Instagram use seven or less hashtags per post. That works for them, but you need to check that it works well for your business too. Do some trials to find your magic number.

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- start small and focused - just like with keywords, the popular hashtags have plenty of competition. Start your strategy using the less popular hashtags which are highly specific to your brand, and you'll grow an engaged audience quickly.
- check out others in your industry - what hashtags are they using that they've had success with?

Then comes the time to start creating your hashtags. Hashtags are best kept to 140 characters or less. In saying that, you should:

#keepitsimple – short and sweet is key to being noticed and remembered

#dont #use #lots #of #hashtags– this is really annoying and off-putting

#searchforkeywords – research the keywords others are using

#promoteyourevents – hashtags are great for event promotion

Finally, you'll also need to decide upon the type of hashtags you want to use. Having a range is far better than having all of your eggs in one basket. The different hashtag types are:

- branded hashtags - these are specific to your business and are up to you to create
- location based hashtags - perfect for eCommerce businesses to promote their physical stores, but also useful to tell customers which products could be used where
- entertainment hashtags - think humorous and engaging, rather than a way to increase your follower numbers
- mass appeal hashtags - you're competing with the big boys, but a hashtag which appeals to a huge audience can work. Think very common phrases and words here.
- timely hashtags - related to a specific season, day or month
- trending hashtags - these could be the hashtags people are using at the moment, and can be related to current events
- niche hashtags - specific to a highly targeted audience
- special even hashtags - usually used for sales, discounts and contests

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As well as developing your own specific hashtags, it's great to be able to get a head start on your campaign by researching what the most popular tags are. We'll show you how to do this next.

Finding the Most Popular Instagram Hashtags

You could spend hours looking through Instagram and Twitter to see what's being used. Or you could use one of these handy hashtag research tools instead:

- Hashtagify - finds, analyses and lists popular hashtags for you to choose from
- TagsFinder - has a specific NZ area for local hashtags
- Keyword Tool - uses Instagram Autocomplete to find top hashtags
- For Display Purposes Only - a very easy to use hashtag finding tool
- Hashatit - searches not only hashtags in use on social media, but can also find keywords, URLs and @mentions

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#8 Dealing with Negative Comments on Social Media

Social media is a necessity for businesses nowadays. Unfortunately, it's not always a positive experience for everyone. Negativity on social media is real and can have serious impacts upon a business, it's employees and owners. While you can't stop it, you can choose how you manage it.

We asked members of our online networking group for their suggestions on ways to manage social media negativity, which we're sharing today.

One of the great things about social media is that you can reach large numbers of people without a lot of effort. A downside is that these same people can also be reached by people sharing negative opinions or comments about your business. What matters more than their comments is your response and we asked several NZ business owners for their suggestions on how this can be done:

It's hard not to take everything personally, especially when you've put your heart and soul into your business. I read somewhere "It's business, don't take it personally; And if it is personal, then it's not business" Treating it as business removes the emotional responses. Acknowledge ALL feedback and comments, good or bad.

Keep going. There are plenty of trolls, if you are on solid ground with your subject matter, there's nothing to apologise for and there will always be detractors, often those closest to you.

Trolls exist...finding fun in potentially destroying your hard work. Delete and forget quickly, never engage. Then there's the customer you failed for whatever reason, make good as best you can... You may have to lose to save face. Customers matter, trolls do not.

The worst thing you can do is to delete negative comments because this makes you look unprofessional and like you have something to hide. Respond in a calm and professional manner. Invite them to contact you privately to discuss and resolve the issue.

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Take the emotion out of your reply when replying to negative comments, keep it professional, ask them to private message you the details rather than having them rant and rave for the world to see.

Take time away from the computer to think about how to deal with it. Don't take it to heart and think about this, that if it's price related they are not your ideal customer.

Investigate and document findings, why the client left a negative comment, what happened behind it, set a preventative process/strategy in place - if the negative comment was deceptive? If it's from a well-natured client, take it as an opportunity to win more.

If you make a mistake own it without laying blame elsewhere!! I recently made a HUGE mistake with a Wedding order and by owning my mistake, genuinely apologising and speaking with them directly we dealt with it and moved on without negative feedback impacting my business. I was gutted at making such a mistake on a special day like this but it could've been a whole lot worse if I'd laid blame or ignored it.

Don't argue with bad feedback. If you're going to respond it needs to be mature and reasoned - not argumentative. Also, remember some people will never be happy! I found this to be the case when working in the ecommerce business; no matter how much we tried to please some people, they weren't satisfied.

Everyone makes mistakes. It's OK to admit you had a bad day, to apologise, that you didn't meet expectations. However, sometimes the negative feedback can be invalid, or relate to mismatched expectations, misunderstandings. Best not to argue, accept you have lost a customer. Arguing won't win the customer back. Best to treat those that leave with respect, and others reading along, will value that respect, and possibly see the wood through the trees. Take time before responding to ensure your response is calm.

Always thank them for their comments and give a positive statement back about how their valuable feedback is helping the team to improve on their services. I love bad feedback, it is what makes us grow. When commenting try not to have what I call "writers rage" and fire back quickly. Take the time to

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methodically think about your response. Hide their comment until such time as you are prepared to respond then put both back on :)

A common theme is that you take the time to respond appropriately to negative comments, and we think that's great advice.

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#9 – 12 Tips to Increase Engagement Using Social Media

With many businesses using social media as their main marketing strategy, they want to do all they can to get their content in front of their audience. It's well known that social media posts which receive high levels of engagement are organically shown to larger numbers of people. Therefore, businesses are continually looking for ways to increase engagement levels on social media to increase their number of conversions and sales.

The problem is, there is no magic wand they can wave to get more of their audience commenting, liking or sharing their content. What works for one business, doesn't for another, and the same goes for audiences. While trial and error is a valid strategy to find out what does work for your audience, there are some other tools you should be using, including:

- creating and referring to your buyer persona
- checking historical social media data
- asking your target audience what they want
- finding out what others in your industry are doing to increase engagement

Creating the content to share can be time consuming, as can engaging with your audience's comments. If your business allows, it is worth considering hiring a social media manager to help you. But initially you will need to do this yourself, and below are 12 tips to help you get more comments, likes and shares on social media.

12 Ways to Increase Your Social Media Engagement

With the number of social media users predicted to continue to rise, it's vital that businesses are able to reach their audiences effectively upon it. A key factor in this success is having content which receives high levels of engagement from their audience. Here are 12 tips to help you achieve this:

1. Be humorous - social media is predominately a tool people use to be entertained. They don't want to be sold to, and promotional posts are not likely to win you any friends. The key is to stay within your industry when making jokes and sharing memes.

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2. Create great visuals - Instagram and Facebook users love visual content. Use tools such as Canva to create visuals which are original, light on text, and contain high quality photos.
3. Ask relevant questions - people respond well when they're asked for their opinion. They also love to answer quizzes and polls.
4. Provide incentives - as you'll know, competition posts get lots of comments and likes because people want to win the prize. But there are other incentives you could use such as keeping a leader board of points (where set points are given for a task) or even voting for their favourite charity to help it win a donation.
5. Post videos - people enjoy watching videos, making this a great complementary strategy to posting images. They tend to receive more views and more engagement. Videos you have made are best, but you can also share on topic ones from others too.
6. Use trending hashtags - hashtags help people find content they are interested in following. When you use them, you increase the chances of being found and followed by new audience members. You can create your own hashtag for your business, but a good way to get started is to research what the popular hashtags in your industry are, and use them initially to build your following. The Hashtagify Me tool lets you find current hashtag trends, while Twitonomy lets you find trending hashtags in a specific niche.
7. Share your fans - if you sell a product, ask your customers to send you photos of them wearing it. You can then share these on your social media channels. People will often share photos of themselves and people they know.
8. Show yourself - people love to see the people behind a brand. Share photos and other tidbits about the people behind your business.
9. Be consistent - stick with using your brand imagery, colours and fonts. Keep to the same style, the same industry related topics and the same tone of voice for all your posts.
10. Ask for feedback - whether it is reviewing your product, or sharing their opinion on a current news item, feedback is usually freely given.
11. Share statistics - a surprising statistic is a great way to get someone's attention, have them comment and share the post with others. Be sure

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to state where the statistic is from, but a link to it isn't necessarily needed.

12. Post at the right times - find out exactly when your audience are online, and schedule for posts for then to reach the largest numbers possible.

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Promoting Your Website Through Social Media

#10 How to Get More Traffic Using Social Media

Social media can play a large role in the amount of website traffic you receive - if used correctly. It is estimated that worldwide 2.5 billion people have social media accounts. Many of these people use social media on a regular basis, making reaching your target audience easier.

Today we're sharing some strategies to help you increase your website traffic using your social media channels, as well as how to turn this traffic into customers.

5 Ways Social Media Can Increase Your Website Traffic

You have spent money and time building up your social media followings. Posting regularly, engaging with your audience and providing content they want to see is hard work. But is there more to this than just building a relationship with your audience? Yes. Its about moving your followers from your social media accounts to your website by:

Checking you are on the right channels - is your target audience on the channels you are using? As well as targeting channels which traditionally have your audience as users, you could ask your audience which ones they use.

Fill in your profiles completely - people do read the about sections of your profile to learn more about your business and what it offers. Make sure you include the correct URL so people can visit your website too.

Share your website content - this could be individual products or blogs, where you share a short blurb, a photo and a link to the page in a post.

Use calls to action - CTAs tell people what you want them to do next. On a post, make sure you spell it out clearly what you want your audience to do - look at the sale products now, or read this article to understand more.

Focus on visual content - social media is by default a visual medium. Posts which have attractive and unique images are engaged with more often and get more attention. If a follower likes the type of visuals you share, they are more likely to click through to your website for more of the same.

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Turning Your Social Media Traffic into Sales

Once your referred traffic has arrived, you need to turn those clicks into sales. This is easier said than done, but not impossible. Having come from your social media channels, they are already a warm lead. This means that your website efforts should be to build and grow upon that relationship, and not spending time on introducing your business all over again.

One of these ways is by creating a sales funnel specifically aimed at your social media traffic. This is when you create content which will walk your visitors from their arrival point right through to your checkout page. This could involve a landing page, an automated newsletter or a series of articles on your website.

Now is the time to also take a look at how your website looks and functions. Does it look attractive? Do all the links work correctly? Is it easy to navigate? Take a read of our articles about User Experience Design and Website Usability to learn more about improving these two areas to increase sales.

Finally, make sure you have a way of measuring and tracking the visitors to your website. AWStats is an open source web analytics tool which every one of our CMS built websites has access to. Located on our servers, it records details about your website traffic. Take a read of our article [What is AWStats](#) to learn more about what it is, how it works and how you can use it to monitor your website traffic.

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Promoting Your Website Through Social Media

#11 Beginners Guide to Using Pinterest for Business

The truth is out there: using Pinterest for business brings you in new web traffic. While most business owners agree, few are using this visual social media platform to its fullest. Sure, it requires a different set of skills than posting on Facebook, but the potential benefits are huge!

Research shows that there are over 200 million monthly users of Pinterest worldwide. They're looking for ideas relating your products and services, and if you're not there, they can't find you. Items on Pinterest are often displayed highly in search engine results too, giving people an additional way to find your business.

When we started researching to write our guide to using Pinterest for business, we found that there was plenty of information available, but it was for mostly businesses in America. So, we decided to create this guide specifically for NZ businesses, like yours! We're going to explain what Pinterest is, the benefits of using it, how to set up a Pinterest business account, and how to use Pinterest effectively as a NZ business owner.

What is Pinterest for Business?

Pinterest is a visual social media channel in which individual people and businesses can set up an account in. You could say it is like a giant search engine, where people who have an account can search for images called pins, on any topic under the sun. Another way of looking at it, is as a giant bulletin board or bookmarking tool. Upon finding an image or pin they like, they can save it within their account, creating boards of pins.

You can have two kinds of Pinterest accounts: personal and business. They both work in the same way, but the business account, also known as Pinterest for Business, gives you additional features including:

- analytics of your Pinterest boards
- ability to create paid ads
- can include links to your website with your pins
- can create rich pins

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Pinterest uses a range of different vocab which users need to understand. Here are the main ones which will help you understand how Pinterest works:

- Pins: pins are what images are called when you upload them to Pinterest. Pins can also contain a title, a description and a link to the original website, all of which you add separately when pinning.
- Pinning: pinning is the term used when you are uploading images to your Pinterest account.
- Re-pinng: a repin or repinning, is when you 'take' an image on someone else's board and post it to one of your boards. It still remains on their board, just makes a copy for yours. The content and links (plus credit) to the original pinner remains the same.
- Pin: not to be confused with the plural, a pin is a bookmark you place on an image when browsing the web. You 'pin' it to one of your Pinterest boards to keep it from getting lost. Some websites have taken advantage of Pinterest's free Pin It browser button and added the code to their website, making it easy for you to hover over an image and then Pin It!
- Pinner: someone who has pinned a pin to Pinterest!
- Boards: these are like files of your pins. You can create as many as you want, giving each board it's own unique name to help you decide what to pin within it. For instance, you can have boards on specific topics or types of images to help you organise your pins.
- Secret boards - these are boards which only you can see, or those you've invited to see them.
- Group boards - these are boards which have many different pinners sharing content to the board.
- Rich pins: these are special pins for which their owner has added additional information to. Rich pins are free to get, but require you to add meta tags to your website.
- Promoted posts: these are pins which a business has paid to promote, or in other words, pins which are ads.
- Shop the Look: Shop the look are a collection of special pins which help people to find and buy products in the home decor and fashion industries. You need to apply to use these types of pins through the Shop Style Collective.

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- Pincodes: a pincode is like a barcode. You put your pincode on things people see offline, such as packaging or displays. People then scan your pincode using the Pinterest app and they are sent to your Pinterest account.
- Feed: this is a collection of pins from boards and users you have followed, plus ads and pin suggestions

Next, we'll move into discussing the benefits your business can get from using Pinterest.

What Are the Benefits of Using Pinterest for Business in NZ?

If you're still needing some convincing as to why you should go to the effort of using Pinterest for business, here are some great facts to consider:

87% of pinners have brought something directly because of Pinterest

there are 200 million monthly users

Pinterest drives 3.8% times more sales than other social media platforms

Both service and product based businesses can benefit from using it

93% of pinners use Pinterest to plan what they are going to buy

72% of pinners find out about new brands and services by using Pinterest

If the above facts weren't enough, then what about these benefits?

Pinterest sends plenty of traffic to other websites

Pins give you an inbound link (no follow) to your website

Pinterest has high levels of engagement

Pinterest makes it easier for people to find and buy your products (using less steps in the process)

Next we'll show you how to set up a business account for Pinterest.

How to Set up a Pinterest for Business Account

If you already have a personal Pinterest account, it's possible to turn it into a business account to get the additional features only available to businesses. Or

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you can set up an additional account separate to your personal one. Here's how to do both:

Set up a new business Pinterest account - logout of your personal account first (if you have one). Then visit the signup page where you'll be asked to enter your email, create a password, plus enter your business name and details.

To change your personal Pinterest account to a business one, login to your account and select the convert option in your account settings. Then you go through the same motions as in a business account setup, where you verify your domain and so forth.

How to Use Pinterest Effectively in NZ

Pinterest is a wonderful visual social media tool. It can also be an incredibly time waster, just like Facebook. Logging in and being greeted with your feed leads to one click, which leads to another, followed by searches on topics you weren't even planning on looking for! So you need to have a plan, and thankfully, we've got one for you:

- Set up your Pinterest boards - as public (or normal) boards are the ones your audience can see, you need to set these up first. It's fine to have secret boards for collating your ideas, but they're not going to be of any benefit at driving traffic to your website. This means being strategic in the setting up of your boards, naming them with appropriate titles which include keywords. Then each board needs a great description written for it too.
- Pin content to your boards - using a graphic design tool such as Canva, or the Pin It Button, pin things to each of your boards. Aim for 5 unique pins per board to get you started. You can pin things such as blogs, products and tips. Many businesses create Pinterest graphics for each pin, like you would for a Facebook post. Aim to add at least one new pin per board per week.

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- Engage with other pinners - search out for other businesses and individuals who have boards on areas your business is interested in. Comment, like and repin their pins.
- Include a link to your Pinterest account on your website with your other social media icons.

Tell everyone about your new Pinterest account. Refer website visitors to specific boards and pins inside blog posts or other pages. Share links to it on your other social media channels too.

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Promoting Your Business Through Social Media

#12 Beginners Guide to Using Instagram for Business

Instagram is one of the world's most popular social media platforms. With a focus on photos, it is ideal for showcasing a business' products or services to a wide audience. Using Instagram for business marketing can be incredibly effective because:

200 million plus people visit an Instagram profile at least once per day

60% of people say that they learn about new products on Instagram

1/3 of the most viewed Instagram stories are from businesses

6 in 10 adults have an Instagram account

over 80% of Instagram accounts follow at least one business

over 500 million Instagram accounts are active on a daily basis

In this article, we're going to explain more about what Instagram is and how to use it effectively as a tool to drive traffic to your website.

Introduction to Using Instagram for Business

Since its introduction in 2010, Instagram has quickly grown to one of the world's favourite social media platforms. Building influence on Instagram (by getting followers, getting likes and then getting comments) results in an increase in visibility and customer loyalty.

As a business, you can use Instagram to:

- reach a new range of followers
- encourage followers to visit your website
- run competitions
- sell products through Instagram Shopping
- tell your brand story
- increase your online visibility and customer loyalty

It's free to set up and use Instagram for business. Just remember that as Instagram is a photo based platform, most of your posting will be done via a smartphone. Rather than have us walk you through setting up an account,

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we'll leave that to Instagram itself: their instructions can be seen on their website.

You'll next need to set up a business profile. It's important that you choose a business profile and not a personal profile. This is because it offers you business owner tools, plus the ability to link it to your business' Facebook page. Instagram has a handy video to watch demonstrating how to set up this profile.

Once your profile is up and running, then comes the fun part of creating content to share. As a visual platform, your content needs to be attractive, follow your branding rules, be creative and be unique.

Creating Content for Instagram

Like with other social media platforms, one of the hardest things is the creation of regular content to share with followers. Videos, graphics and photos are easily uploaded to a business account. The issue is though, what they should contain! You have a few types to consider:

Custom imagery - photos you stage to showcase your products or services. Flat lays come into this category.

Selfies - a brand built around photos of yourself and your team can help increase followers and engagement. Customers always want to know what you are doing and it helps them build a rapport with you.

Stock images - sometimes you may not have any photos to share, so in this case can use a variety of stock images, such as from Unsplash or Pexels.

Graphics - from quotes to memes, graphics are always a popular post on Instagram

Then once you've decided on an image strategy, it's time to start snapping photos with your phone. The Huffington Post asked a group of Instagram pros for their tips on taking great photos, and here are a few of them we felt would be useful to share with you:

- make a plan of what you want your feed to look and be like - then follow it!
- use natural light where possible

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- have a clear point of interest in every photo
- shoot photos at different angles
- use props
- remember to use white space
- get up close and personal with your subjects
- take the time to set up your photo - quality over quantity
- avoid overexposing your photos
- follow the rule of thirds - you can turn on your phone's grid feature to do this

As to what your graphics, videos and photo subjects should be, here's a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- product photos
- behind the scenes
- repost user generated content
- employees or yourself!
- seasonal posts
- quotes
- local events
- video tutorials
- inspirational images
- project ideas
- stop motion video
- flat lay of what's in your bag
- meals you are eating
- your outfit
- coffee or cafe outing
- DIY projects
- sneak peeks
- pets
- outdoors
- books you've read

How often you post on Instagram is up to you. Once a day, three times a week: whatever works for your business and target market is your best option.

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Using Hashtags on Instagram

There's one more thing which a beginner to using Instagram for business must know, and that's hashtags. Hashtags (or #hashtags) help make your content easily discoverable by people you are not even targeting. They are a way of organising photos and images into similar groups. Used by Instagrammers to find and share content of a similar topic, an effective hashtag strategy is a must to get your posts out in front of new followers. Your business profile will let you analyse the effectiveness of the hashtags you have used, including details of the number of impressions, reach and how people found you.

There are three kinds of hashtags you can use:

- branded hashtags - a hashtag unique to your business, such as your name, tagline, product or brand identity.
- community hashtags - help to build a sense of community by using a specific hashtag. They are more general and unrelated to your company.
- campaign hashtags - designed to be short lived, campaign hashtags are for specific events such as product launches or sales. These hashtags are not used once the campaign is finished.

Hashtags are usually added at the bottom of any text you have included in your post. Some people choose to hashtag in their comments, rather than include it in the post. One thing to be aware of is that seeing multiple hashtags is can be off putting and distract from your message. Being particular in the hashtags you use is a better idea. Instagram has a limit of 30.

When it comes to choosing hashtags, you could:

- check out what your competitors are using
- create your own hashtag and promote it
- test out hashtags to see how popular they are and if they are attracting people from your target audience
- use a hashtag tool to find some, such as Keyword Tool for Instagram Hashtags

In conclusion, remember that the aim of Instagram is to direct people to your website. So, you want to make sure you have a great website for them to

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#13 How to Choose the Right Social Media Platforms

Knowing which social media platforms are the most popular with New Zealanders, helps businesses know which social channels they should be using. In this article, we will share details on the leading social networks, and information on how to choose the right ones for your business.

What are NZ's Most Popular Social Media Channels?

As of January 2019, the most often used social media platforms were:

- Facebook - 57.4%
- Pinterest - 24.42%
- Twitter - 8.76%
- Tumblr - 2.89%
- YouTube - 2.52%
- Instagram - 2.25%

In New Zealand, most of the information a business receives regarding social media platforms comes from overseas. The problem with this is that it is based on statistics about people who don't buy our products or services, and who often have very different preferences. For instance, channels such as Reddit and WhatsApp are not understood well by NZers, so they are not used. Yet, many overseas social media experts recommend they are included as a part of your marketing strategy.

Knowing what's used by locals helps you decide which platforms you will focus your attention upon. However, just knowing the statistics isn't enough. You need to know which channels your target audience are using and use those specific ones yourself.

Identifying Which Social Media Platforms Your Business Should Use

We've all got our personal favourite social media channels, and our choices of these will usually vary depending on demographics such as:

- age
- gender

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- location
- education
- career
- likes and dislikes
- finances
- availability
- content preferences

Because of these factors, you can make generalisations about the type of people who use a certain channel. American internet researchers in have collated information based on 'adult internet users' in the USA. While not NZ based, it does feature a large number of participants, so is probably similar to what we may see here in NZ (while this was the most recent research we could find, it was completed in 2015 so things will have changed):

- Facebook - 66% men and 77% women are users, usage drops at age 65, rural communities use it less than urban and suburban communities
- Pinterest - 16% of men and 44% of women are users, most users are aged between 18 and 49 years of age, and tend to have higher incomes.
- Instagram - 24% of men and 31% of women are users, and most users are under 29 years old.
- LinkedIn - 26% of men and 25% of women are users, most aged between 18 and 64 years, and live in an urban or suburban community.
- You could also a tool such as Buzzsumo to find out what content gets your competition a lot of engagement on social media. Or try Sprout Social to find out more about your current follower's demographics.

In conclusion, your business' best social media platforms are those which your target audience are using. Be sure to back up your choices with data before making any decisions and if you need help, contact a social media professional.

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Promoting Your Business Through Social Media

#14 How to Find Great Social Media Content

Social media is a fabulous way to get the word out about your business, but the majority of what you post should not be related to your business. Instead it needs to be 'social' in a way and engage and entertain your audience. Finding great content can be tricky, which is why many businesses create their content to share on Facebook and other social media sites. But if you are not feeling creative, here are 9 places where you can find ideas for your Facebook or Twitter pages.

9 Great Places to Find Social Media Content

- Pinterest

Pinterest is a website bursting full of visual ideas to share with your fans. Using their search feature, you can find images which would interest your audience and then follow the Boards created by others. As people update their Boards often, they can be a great source of new inspiration.

- Buzzsumo

Buzzsumo lets you search for the most popular and shared social media content by content or domain name. By using Buzzsumo, you can take the guess work out of choosing topics or posts which have the potential to go viral and enjoyed.

- Your Blog

Creating your own content via blogging is a fabulous way of getting traffic to your website. Rather than waiting for Google to find it, share it on social media yourself and get the traffic rolling to you.

- Scoop.it

Scoop.it is a giant content curation search engine which you can sign up to for free. Once you are logged in you can enter in some keywords and it will show you a large range of content suitable for sharing on your social network. They also have a paid feature where it will let you post that content directly to your social accounts.

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- YouTube

Video gets a great result on social media, so use YouTube to find new and interesting content to engage your audience.

- Reddit

Reddit has an enormous audience who continually load new content onto the site. Although it can be tricky to navigate the subreddits or topic pages, there are plenty of new content ideas to be found here.

- Google Alerts

If you sign up to Google Alerts, it will email you recent content which has been posted online related to your chosen keywords. This is a great way of keeping up to date ahead of others about what is happening in your business niche and sharing it with your audience first.

- Buffer

While Buffer is a Twitter scheduling tool, it also has a feature which will suggest post ideas for you. Most of the Tweets are ones which are extremely popular and have gone viral.

- BizSugar

Small businesses will find BizSugar great when looking for any business related content and as it is arranged by topic and popularity, it is easy to navigate too.

Once you have your new social media content, remember that displaying it for your audience in an attractive and eye catching graphic is just as important, so don't forget to read our blog about how you can create amazing graphics for Facebook too.

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#15 Creating Facebook Graphics Which Get You Noticed

Graphics play a huge role in social media with up to 60% of all social media posts made up of pictures (Kim Garst). With that staggering figure, if you are posting more text than graphics, your messages are likely to get lost amongst all of the other posts demanding your audience's attention.

How Do I Create Facebook Graphics?

Creating great graphics for your Facebook page is a lot easier nowadays because of the large number of websites offering online graphic creation software which pretty much does the work for you. There are plenty of both free and paid graphic creation websites, such as these popular ones:

- Canva

Canva offers a large number of free images, as well as free grids sized correctly for both Facebook posts and timeline covers. At US\$1 for each of their paid images and grids, it's not going to break the bank if you can't find the perfect free one either.

- PicMonkey

PicMonkey helps you create great graphics by providing the chance for you to add frames and text to your photos, as well as the software for you to edit your photos for free. There is a paid option too, which gives you access to additional photo editing features and graphics.

- LivLuvCreate

LivLuvCreate helps you to create quotes for your Facebook posts by providing you with a range of images to choose from (or you can upload your own) and then put them onto one of the layouts they offer. You can then add text on up to three areas of the graphic and add borders or edit the photo if necessary. Creating and sharing Fan Fiction is also very popular on LivLuvCreate.

- Quozio

Quozio is a very easy way of creating great looking quote graphics. You simply write your quote and who wrote it, then choose the image you would like with

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it. Quozio also has the bonus of having a lot of free pictures to choose from too.

What Sort of Facebook Graphics Get Noticed?

Have you ever had or seen a social media graphic go viral? There are some key features to be aware of when you are creating your graphics. These include:

- Be Consistent

Use the same fonts, colours and logo on each of your graphics. This will help your graphics to be easily recognised by your audience, which encourages more interaction and sharing. Also posting a certain type of post at the same time every week works well in obtaining a regular following.

- Use Frames or Grids

Frames and grids help your images look more professional and give order to your images. If you have some text you'd like added, it is easy to add on top of it using Canva or one of the other graphic making websites.

- Edit Your Photos

Editing or filtering your photos can give you outstanding results. Filters can help you give consistency to your images and are a great way of making your text stand out. If you use the same editing and filtering techniques, it is also a great way of keeping your graphics consistent.

What other online graphic creation websites have you used before? Have you found any great tutorials on using them you'd like to share with us?

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16 – 5 Reasons Why Your Business Should Be on YouTube

YouTube was the brainchild of three former PayPal employees during 2005 and then it was sold to Google in 2006. It remains a part of Google's empire and with over 4 billion videos watched every day, it is a great way to get your business out there and noticed by your target audience. It is one of the top three most powerful search engines along with Google and Facebook and is often overlooked by businesses when choosing where to run their marketing campaigns.

Why Should My Business Be on YouTube?

- Huge Streams of Traffic
- YouTube Helps Raise Your Status on Google
- Easily Develop Rapport with Your Audience
- Videos Are Easy to Make
- Build Your Brand and Authority
- YouTube Has A Large Worldwide Audience

As a business owner, it is essential to have your products or services in front of your clients or customers. However, it is really hard to do that without spending a small fortune on advertising. But with over 1 billion people visiting YouTube each month and more than 100 hours of videos being uploaded every 60 seconds, it's a great source of large traffic volumes.

YouTube Is Owned by Google

Google is one of the major search engine players around, so it makes sense that you utilise all their other business too. Google is now showing video results in search engines, especially ones which have been uploaded onto YouTube. It also increases the authority of your website in Google's eyes through linking to it.

YouTube Makes It Personal

Having a website and being active on social media is a great way to get known, yet they both lack the personal touch. By uploading videos of you and your business you are moving from being just a photo to being a real person and

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building rapport with your audience. This makes it more likely that they will then approach you when they want something you sell.

Being A Video Star is Easy

You can get making and uploading your videos at relatively little or no expense. Most smartphones have a camera and many computers have one built in. A webcam is cheap to buy, with a reasonably good quality digital video camera not too pricey. Sure they may not look that great at the beginning, but as you become more experienced you can start using video editing software online, such as WeVideo or Magisto to improve them.

Become the Number One Person

How people view your brand is important, so give them some positive ideas through your own videos. Becoming an authority on your products or services is easily achieved through using YouTube. Not only are you increasing the number of avenues that you can be found at, you are also showing that you are the expert they can trust.

Are you on YouTube? If not, what's stopping you?

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Promoting Your Business Through Social Media

#17 – 50 Social Media Post Ideas

What's the hardest thing you have to do for your business? For most of us, it's finding things to post on our social media platforms. From Facebook to Instagram, LinkedIn to Twitter, coming up with fresh new post ideas is darn near impossible sometimes.

Then there's the time that goes into creating content, engaging with your page likers and keeping tabs on what others in your industry are also doing. It's completely understandable that finding things to post about on social media is often put into the too hard basket.

Until now, that is. We're sharing 50 of the best social media post ideas to make things much easier for you.

50 of the World's Best Social Media Post Ideas

No longer will you need to struggle coming up with ideas to share on your business' social media accounts. Try one of these 50 ideas instead:

1. Quotes - from celebrities, thought leaders, or clients
2. Polls - ask a question and invite people to reply
3. Workplace - share photos of your workplace, including yourself at work
4. Answer questions - if you have an FAQ page, share a Q & A from there
5. Employee profile - introduce your team members
6. Fill in the blank posts - I would _____ if I had the day off, etc
7. Blogs - share blurbs and links to blogs on your website
8. Products - share examples of your popular products in use
9. Industry news - what's happening in your industry?
10. Product videos - how your product works, or simply showing it from all angles
11. Customer reviews - let others know what your customers said about your business
12. Quick tips - short tidbits or hints which will help readers do something
13. Interview a customer - let them share how they use your product or service

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14. Share community events - if it's happening locally and related to your industry, share it
15. Seasonal info - if it's hot, share tips on how to cool down etc
16. Customer of the month - share something neat about what one of your customers has done
17. Events or training - let your audience know what you've been up to recently
18. Statistics - industry grabbing facts and statistics in a graphic form are always interesting
19. Multi choice question - which product colour do you like best -a,b or c?
20. Newsletters - share snippets from or even the entire newsletter you just sent out
21. Books - if you've read a great book related to your industry, tell your audience about it
22. Shout out - eaten something great from a local business? Do a shout out about it
23. Milestones - share milestones about your company - time in business, sales, new staff member
24. Social media platforms - let your audience know about your other platforms and what you post on them
25. Mailing list - ask people to join your mailing list and share the benefits of doing so
26. Say thank you - thank your audience for their support
27. Memes - an old favourite
28. Links to free resources - give the links to where you have some free resources to help your audience
29. Job listings - if you're hiring, let your audience know
30. Historic days - on this day in XXXX: tell people what happened in the past
31. Promote an event you are hosting
32. Image scrambles - take a close up of one of your products, and ask people to guess what it is
33. Business successes - celebrate with your fans on things you have accomplished
34. Ask for feedback - would you like to learn more about X?

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35. How to videos - create a short video which explains how something you offer works
36. Product reviews - share links to reviews of your products
37. Regular series - at the same time each week, host a Q&A, post a video or a new blog post
38. Share a survey - set a survey and ask people to complete it
39. Reshare your popular posts
40. Host a giveaway
41. Funny photos - share a humorous photo with your business logo on it
42. Pinterest - check out Pinterest for photos to share, but remember to credit the creator
43. Recommend a tool - if it's useful to you, share it with your audience
44. Day in the life - give a recap of what it's like to be you or an employee
45. Ask for advice on an industry related problem
46. Random posts - what you had for tea last night, something funny which happened during the day etc
47. Caption this - grab a photo and ask for caption suggestions
48. Promote another business
49. Truth or fiction - give a statement about your business and ask followers to say if it is true or false
50. Weekly round-up - make a list of the week's highlights: blogs, products and events

Now that you've read our 50 ideas for social media posts, start using them! For more help on ways you can increase social media engagement, take a read of our article [12 Tips to Increase Engagement on Social Media](#) now.

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3. Help on Choosing Your Bulk Email Platform
4. What is a POS System & Do I Need One?
5. 1Managing Stress as a Business Owner
6. Best Advice on Setting Business Goals
7. 7 Reasons Why You Should Join a Business Networking Group
8. How Webinars Can Grow Your Business
9. Why Every Website Needs Social Proof
- 10.Reaping the Benefits of Video Marketing for Your Business
- 11.16 Business Networking Tips
- 12.Importance of Having Business Branding
- 13.Using Videos on Your Websites
- 14.7 Top Free Video Editing Software Programs
- 15.7 Tips on Writing Home Page Content
- 16.5 Ways a Website Can Grow Your Business
- 17.10 Ways to Improve Your Website
- 18.How to Create a Content Plan for Your Website
- 19.Choosing the Best Hosting Plan for Your Website

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Awesome Resources for Your Business

#1 8 Free Stock Photo Websites

Not everyone can afford to purchase the rights to stock images. Thankfully though, there are plenty of great websites which have free stock images you can use. When we say free, we're meaning that they don't cost you any money to use. What they will most likely have though, is licensing terms attached to each image. The licensing terms will tell you what you can and can't use the image for, whether you need to give credit for the image and where you can use it. Take a read of the article [Understanding Stock Image Terminology](#) for more information on image licensing.

Let's take a look through eight great websites which offer free stock images.

- Unsplash

Organised by collections, Unsplash offers hand selected photos for personal and commercial use. Photo collections are varied, and there's a little something for everyone here.

- StockSnap

Free from copyright restrictions, StockSnap offer a large variety of photo collections available for download and use.

- Pixabay

A great advantage to using Pixabay is that they offer a range of photo sizes for downloading, so you don't need to manually resize them as often.

- Kaboompics

Handy feature with Kaboompics is that they tell you the Hex code of the main colours of the photo you are downloading.

- Reshot

Offers some unique and quirky photos. Reshot state they focus on quality over quantity when it comes to their images.

- Foodiesfeed

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Foodiesfeed specialises in free stock photos of food and now we're hungry!

- Gratisography

Gratisography is the place to go when you want "the world's quirkiest range of stock images."

- Picography

A wide variety of free stock photos, some of which are not found elsewhere, can be found on the Picography website.

Remember that when using stock photos, even if they are free, there still may be terms and conditions you must follow. To learn more about this, take a read of the Business Networking NZ article, Understanding Stock Image Terminology next.

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#2 How to Manage Change in Your Business

Change is all around us and it's the same for businesses. Some people are better than managing change in their business than others, for no other reason than that's the kind of person they are. The issue is that change management is something which needs to be done well to avoid unnecessary consequences.

Once you have identified that changes are or need to occur in your business, it's time to step up to the plate and make the process go as smoothly as possible. Today we're going to share some great advice we received from business and accountability coach AJ Pipe on how to identify that changes need to be made, and tips on how to manage those changes effectively.

Identifying Changes to Be Made in Your Business

Sometimes it's just a feeling. Other times you know because someone told you. Or it could be you've seen the hard facts written in your bank statement! The truth is, we should all be looking carefully at our businesses on a regular basis to find ways we can make things easier, better and more profitable.

We chatted with AJ Pipe, New Zealand's business and accountability coach for her advice on identifying if change is needed in a business and what to do about it.

"A really good time to make changes in your business is once you have your numbers from the previous year look at your profits in relation to your turn over.

Big changes could be cutting the fat to make your profits more robust. It is better for you to have a \$20k TO from a \$5k spend, then a \$50k TO from a \$40k spend. Cutting the fat also help with reducing stress and creating more time. Other big changes can be taking on staff, so you maybe able to take some time away from your business and introducing a policy of product development.

The main thing to do is make a decision of what you're going to focus on changing & research it. i.e. before taking on a business partner get an

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understanding of business structure obligations and what each person will be bringing to the table.

One of the services AJ offers is a monthly accountability and business coaching group, where she'll work with business owners on both the identification of changes, plus how to best manage them. If you need help in this area, we recommend you chat with AJ today!

How to Best Manage Change in Your Business

Whether it's planned or not, managing change successfully in your business is an important task for you to master. To help you do just that, here are some great suggestions to try out:

- know the strengths and weakness of your team members - not everyone responds the same to a situation. Learn which team members can handle certain tasks and give those to them. If they need support to master the required changes, provide it!
- explain the changes to everyone clearly - now is not the time to keep your employees and others involved in the dark. Tell them what is happening, explain what is required from them and what they can expect to occur. This helps everyone get behind what's happening.
- provide support - give everyone the resources and equipment they need to help you implement your changes.
- be present - this means giving your employees the space to implement the changes, but being there to assist when they get stuck. You should also check up to see what's happening and give support if necessary.
- remain as calm and stress-free as possible - things do turn pear-shaped. Expect that there will be bumps in the road, which will help you to relax and not panic.
- make well-informed decisions - analyse what's happening and then make the best decision you can with the information you have.
- write the changes down - have a plan on how you will implement the changes, solutions on what to do if things don't work and how you will measure the success of these changes. You should also set a time frame for the assessment and implementation of the changes too.

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Finally, completing a business plan in which you state the changes to make and how you will make them is a great idea. Take a read of our article [Tips on Creating a Business Plan](#) to make this process as smooth as possible.

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#3 Help on Choosing Your Bulk Email Platform

When it comes time to choose your bulk email marketing platform, there are plenty of choices. MailChimp, Mad Mimi, Constant Contact, Converter Kit, AWeber are just some of the options of email software which is separate from your website. Or you could pick a bulk email solution which was included with your web hosting plan.

In this article, we're discussing how to pick the bulk email platform which best suits your needs.

How to Pick Your Email Marketing Platform

In order to select the best bulk email solution, you first need to identify what features you need in one. As a small to medium sized business, chances are that you'd rather have a free service, than a paid option. So that's your first feature. Here's a list of other features you need to decide if you need or not:

- autoresponders
- image library
- pre-designed email templates
- customisable email templates
- your preferred type of support
- A/B testing
- linking with social media
- multiple users permitted
- integration with your website
- number of subscribers you can have for free vs paid
- cost of service
- list management
- email tracking
- landing pages
- GDPR compliant
- importing and exporting tools
- sending time - automatic or manual
- ease of use

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Next, we'll give you a quick rundown of the differences between some of the popular newsletter marketing software available.

Features of Popular Email Marketing Software Platforms

Let's take a look at some of the most popular email marketing solutions available:

- Website World

All of our web hosting plans include our bulk email software free of charge. This means you only need to manage one bulk email platform, as you have access to our email software by logging into your website CMS. Keeping everything together is much easier and only requires you to master one type of software, not two!

The default email template is easy to customise and uses the same drag and drop editor as our website templates do. The number of emails you can send is related to your web hosting package, automated emails can be created, email statistics are easy to understand, and all of your eCommerce information on your site is available at your fingertips. This stops you from having to import data to your email platform, as it's already there!

- Zoho Campaigns

Zoho Campaigns is a part of the popular Zoho network, and integrates with its other features. You can import subscribers from the Zoho CRM, carry out A/B testing, automate your emails, set up autoresponders, use the drag and drop editor to create your own templates, or use the pre-designed ones, and measure the campaign success with real time analytics.

- GetResponse

Like Zoho Campaigns, email marketing is only one of the features GetResponse offers. In its email marketing software, features include free stock images, pre-designed templates, set up autoresponders, segment your contact lists, and track your open rates using its analytics.

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- MailChimp

MailChimp is one of the most well known bulk email platforms in NZ. It links with many website platforms, can set up automated emails, offer email personalisation, create retargeted ads, A/B testing, contact segmentation and product recommendations.

- AWeber

A paid email service, AWeber provides a drag and drop editor, the ability to create emails from your latest blog posts, email automation, split testing, integration with some online tools, email tracking and analytics, and contact segmenting.

- Drip

Drip offers a paid bulk email solution, which integrates with different websites, offers email automations, tracks opening rates and other analytics, and allows contact segmentation.

- Constant Contact

Constant Contact is a paid bulk email platform, which offers a drag and drop editor, real time reporting and analytics, contact segmentation, an image library, email scheduling, pre-designed templates and app integration.

- Mad Mimi

A paid bulk email platform, Mad Mimi offers users the ability to send autoresponder emails, measure analytics, perform split testing, integrate with multiple apps, and has minimal customisable email templates.

Which platform your business chooses to use for its bulk emails and newsletters will depend on the features you need it to have and the quantity of emails you have to send. But usability is also important - and with time in short supply, it makes sense to use only one platform for both your website and email solutions. That way you only need to master one type of software!

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To do so, be sure to use our CMS to build and host your website upon, to make use of our free bulk email solution too!

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#4 What is a POS System & Do I Need One?

As a retailer, what do you use as your POS system? Or are you looking into finding out if a POS is necessary for your business? A POS or point of sale system has been replacing traditional cash registers throughout the world as business owners recognise the multiple benefits it offers them. In this article we are going to explain in detail what a POS system is, the benefits of using one and how to identify if your business should consider using one.

What is a POS System?

A point of sale system is used by small right through to large retailers across NZ and throughout the world. It can be defined as the place where customers purchase products, but is more accurately identified as a combination of software and hardware built to allow the retailer to sell to a customer, and record the details of the sale. Managing the transactions made through your website, it can keep track of your stock, accept a variety of payment methods and help with achieving customer satisfaction.

The software for a POS system can be installed on your computer, or it can be stored in the cloud. The POS system we provide for our customers is a cloud based system, where it is connected to the CMS of your website.

Hardware for a POS system includes the physical equipment needed within your store to sell a product. This includes the barcode scanner, a cash drawer, register screen and receipt printer.

When it comes to deciding which POS system your business should use, there are a few questions you'll need to consider and answer:

- what is the cost?
- will it suit and meet my business' needs?
- do I need to sign a contract?
- are there any additional fees?
- do I need to install any software or perform regular maintenance?
- is the hardware included or is extra?

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Make a list of the must haves for your POS system, chat with other retailers about what they are using and recommend, plus meet with the vendors themselves to hear how their option can benefit your business. Next we're looking at the main benefits your business can have from using a POS system.

Benefits of Using a POS System

The type of POS system your business will use depends on the industry you are in, and your requirements of such a system. Business owners have found that using a POS system provides them with many benefits, including:

- saving time - you are able to track the delivery of orders, identify when products are running low and see how many have sold, plus calculate tax and identify your profit margin.
- reduce errors - when a price is edited, it is done so throughout the entire system.
- sales reports - allows you to analyse what is selling, what isn't, and your stock levels to help make decisions on where you're going next.
- inventory management - you can see at a glance what your stock levels are.
- make accounting easier - all your sales are in one place, ready for importing into your accounting software.
- employee management - if each employee has their own login, you can see their individual sales and identify when they are meeting sales targets.
- faster checkout - a POS system gives customers a faster checkout process, which makes them happy and you more productive.

Next we look into how to know when it's time to start using a POS system in your business.

Do I Need a POS System?

Should your business use a point of sales system? A general guide would be, if you are struggling to keep track of sales and stocks manually, then yes you need one.

A point of sale system will make life easier for you and your employees - and ours is free for our customers too! Our free POS system offers you:

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- synchronised inventory
- unlimited users
- can use any printer
- all devices and bar code readers supported
- multiple payment options
- order fulfilment
- synchronised vouchers
- low stock count monitor

Check out these features on our POS System information page, and to get started - just have a website with Website World!

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#5 Managing Stress as a Business Owner

Show me a business owner who's not stressed and we'll show you 49 who are...

Running a business is no walk in the park, with the majority of new owners trying desperately to keep their heads above water. It is possible to lower these stress levels and run a business effectively, and that's what we'll show you today.

Why Do Business Owners Get Stressed?

In order to manage stress, we first need to know what it looks like and what are the causes.

Signs of stress include:

- low or no energy
- headaches and sore necks
- insomnia
- upset stomach
- sore muscles
- often sick with colds
- loss or increase of appetite

For a business owner, leading causes of stress include:

- finances - not enough money, trouble managing cash flow, creating a budget and paying bills
- staffing - having to hire staff or contractors, plus managing and paying for staff
- administration - overwhelmed with paperwork
- industry compliance - not knowing about or having the skills to meet industry compliance
- clients and customers - customer service, complaints, finding time to support them
- websites - building, maintaining and creating content for a website

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- taxes - knowing what and when to pay taxes, plus finding the money to do so
- time pressures - being super busy and having to or feeling like they have to do everything themselves

Let's learn about some of the ways we can manage stress.

5 Tips on Managing Stress As a Business Owner

Working long hours and having plenty of responsibilities can play havoc on the body and mind. When stressed, you are unable to perform at peak level, which as well as causing long term health issues, also lowers the quality of work you can do for your business. Stress management should ideally begin before you even become stressed, but is not often the case. Once you've noticed you are under some stress, it's important that you get on top of it right away. Here are five tips to help you lower those stress levels:

- Ask for help - no one can do everything alone. If you are struggling, ask for help! Business coaches, mentors, virtual assistants and even family may be able to help reduce your workload, or help you find better ways of doing things.
- Get active - you may not feel like it, but when stressed, getting active can really help you feel better. Take a walk, join a club or head to the gym. Getting out and about helps you clear your head and reduce the amount of stress your body feels.
- Delegate - whether this is outsourcing or giving work to a staff member, be sure that you share the load.
- Start saying no - it's perfectly fine not to do everything or be everything to everyone. Start saying no to things you don't want to do, are unable to do or know someone else could do.
- Take time to unplug - you don't need to be available 24/7. Set some clear boundaries as to the times and days you can be contacted for work, and stick with them! This may be turning off your phone and not heading to social media during those times.

For more advice on running a business, take a read through our great range of business related articles, all written specifically for NZ business owners!

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#6 Best Advice on Setting Business Goals

Setting business goals is something every business owner should do, yet it's something we often stick in the too hard basket. Yet goals can help us move from point A to point B, keep us motivated and help us achieve more. Today we're going to share some fabulous advice from our NZ business networking group members (and you are welcome to join our free group too!). We'll follow this up with our own top goal setting tips.

NZ Business Owners Share Advice On Business Goal Setting

A huge thanks to our NZ business networking group members for sharing their advice with us to pass onto you:

"A reasonable plan implemented is better than a perfect plan never implemented. A dynamic plan is best." - Kim White, The Winners Circle

"Make goals that are achievable, but not so achievable that they don't require planning and effort. Review them 1/4ly, make sure they're still realistic, if they're not, what's changed. Goals are to keep you motivated, so there is no point getting to the end of the year and realising that you've underestimated your business's potential (for whatever reason) and you've coasted (this might lead you to be over ambitious next time) which leads to the other end of the spectrum, you're falling far shorter than your mark and you get demoralised and lose the love that you had when you started. Think of regular goal reviews as preventative maintenance for your business health." - Paul Harris - The Snobby Collective

"Start from the top and work down. Make sure your goals fit your long term strategy. This isn't just a strategy for your business, it's for the lifestyle your business will give you. Thinking of this first will help set better goals for the short term, knowing those goals and their long-term motivation will help to establish better decision making processes in the day to day. What's your long term (5 year +) vision? > Where do you generally want to be next year? > What specific and measurable goals will you have for this year to get to next year? > What actions need to be made to get you there > 90 Day Action Plan to get it on the move." - Chris Mercer, MBP Advisors + Accountants

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"Set financial and business growth goals and then use your accounts to measure success and evaluate your KPI's. Your accounts contain a wealth of information and can help keep you motivated as you can see clear results, or lack thereof. Read our blog on management reports." - Geoffrey Hughes-Bus, Hughes Judd Accounting Ltd

Top Tips On Setting Business Goals

Your business goals help give you direction on where you're going and what you should do next. They help to keep you motivated and moving forward in your business journey, plus can help you make decisions in the day to day running of your business. Where we often get stuck though, is the creation of these goals. Here are some of our top tips to get you started:

- complete a SWOT analysis - this means identifying your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- make your goals SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely
- commit to your goals - this can go as far as declaring them aloud, writing them down, or engaging the services of an accountability coach who will keep you on task
- celebrate each success - no matter how big or small, it's important to recognise the successes you have in reaching your goals
- make sure every goal is linked to your business plan - if you haven't already got one, write a business plan. Your goals need to be related to your business plan to keep things moving the way you have decided they should.
- break bigger goals into smaller goals - often a large goal can seem unachievable, so break it down into manageable chunks
- define who is responsible for it - in a smaller business, you may be the one who is responsible. But if you have employees, why not give them a goal or two to achieve?
- identify the resources you'll need - make a list of the resources, be it physical or knowledge, that you will need to achieve each goal, and go get them!

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Remember that setting business goals is only half of your job - you also need to review them frequently. In a goal review, identify your progress, any changes that need making and revisit your timeframe. For more help on setting goals, we suggest you read our article called [Tips on Creating a Business Plan](#), which has a lot of useful goal setting information within it.

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#7 - 7 Reasons Why You Should Join a Business Networking Group

Everyone's talking about them, but how can joining a business networking group help you? Surely you can manage by using Google to find answers, chatting with friends and reading books? Well, yes you could choose to do just that. However, when you join a business networking group you not only make life easier for yourself, but you also build up both your own and your business' credibility. Then there's the amazing leads and referrals too...

7 Reasons Why To Join a Business Networking Group

Dairy farming is huge in New Zealand and while farmers do everything they can to keep their stock warm and dry, cows also help themselves. In cold weather, you'll often find them huddling together to preserve body heat. They support and help one another to get on with their job of making milk. Birds also work together for the benefit of the group. When flying long distances, a flock will form a V shape, with the leader taking the brunt of the wind and weather, helping the followers fly using less energy. The leader then moves to the back and another steps up to carry on.

While we don't network with other business owners to keep warm or preserve energy, we do for these seven reasons:

Secure New Clients or Customers

Word of mouth is a powerful marketing tool. A customer/client is more likely to contact you if your business has been recommended to them. In a networking group, you build up a relationship with other business owners and employees. They learn to trust you, like what you offer and are more likely to not only use your business, but to recommend it to others too.

Gain Business Knowledge

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You can't be an expert in everything. It's not always possible to find what you're looking for knowledge wise online. Most information is based on doing business overseas. Joining an NZ based networking group ensures the assistance you receive is applicable to running a business in NZ.

Solve Problems Quickly

There's nothing like advice from someone who's been there and done that to get you back on the right track. Rather than spending hours hunting for answers, ask your peers. They're going to be able to give you much more relevant and helpful advice.

Share & Give Feedback on Business Ideas

Sharing your experiences and knowledge with others is a great way to give back to the business community. It's an incredibly useful resource to bounce ideas around in, receive feedback as to their viability and to also share your ideas on what others are considering doing.

Contribute to the Business Community

All too often, when starting up and running a business in the early stages, you can feel like you are continually taking from others. While this is a great benefit of belonging to a network, it's also nice to be able to give back to others.

Build Valuable Relationships

Developing positive working relationships with other NZ businesses is one of the greatest business tools you can have. From genuine referrals and leads, to support when you need it, business relationships also make you feel like you are not alone (so important if your business is home based).

Grow Your Business Support Network

A great way to promote your business is through collaboratively working with other businesses. When you're an active member of an online network, others see you as not only being a credible source of assistance, but also someone they trust. Growing beneficial relationships is what business networking is all about!

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#8 How Webinars Can Grow Your Business

Everybody seems to be talking about webinars online, but do you actually know what they are and how they can help grow your business? Let's explore what a webinar is, the three main types of webinars and the benefits that hosting a webinar can offer your business.

What Is A Webinar?

A webinar is a live online seminar where you and your viewers can interact with one another. The fact that attendees can interact with you is key here, because if they cannot ask you questions, it is called a webcast. They are a great way of sharing information and educating your viewers. Research has in fact shown that up to 95% of video content is remembered by people, compared to around 10% when they are reading text (Bombora.tv). So webinars are definitely one way of increasing the chances of you and your business being remembered!

There are three main kinds of webinars you could host. They are:

Lead Generation Webinar

This is where you sign somebody up to your webinar by collecting their email address. You can then use their address to contact them offering your products or services, as well as using their email address to give them information on how to attend your webinar.

One-Off-For-Profit Webinar

This is the type of webinar where you can charge a fee of anyone who wants to attend. These webinars generally focus on one specific thing and this is not the place to market your other services or products.

Webinar Series

If you have a large topic to cover, hosting a series of webinars works well. This type of webinar provides the most value to your attendees and has them coming back to you for more. You can also charge for these webinars.

Why Should I Host A Webinar?

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There are plenty of benefits to hosting a webinar and all of them have the result of helping you to grow your business. These include:

You can establish credibility in your topic, easily becoming the expert in your field

- Allows you to promote your brand or business
- You can reach more people than you usually would in a short period of time
- Quick lead generation and sales

A great way of building your mailing lists

You can host a webinar using either a free or paid webinar software program. Some of the most popular ones are:

- Google + Hangout
- Zoom
- Skype
- Click Webinar
- Mega Meeting

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9 Why Every Website Needs Social Proof

Social proof on your website helps visitors make a decision as to whether or not they'll do business with you. That's because people trust other people just like them. It's like jumping on the bandwagon; if they see that others are already purchasing and using your products or services, then they'll want to as well.

As a marketing strategy, it ranks high on the importance scale. That's because social proof can:

- convey trust and authority
- grow credibility
- boost your SEO rankings

This means that having a variety of examples of such proof on your website is a great idea! This can take the form of:

- written and video reviews and testimonials
- case studies
- customer names and company logos
- ratings
- seals of approval
- download and purchase counts
- listing the number of customers
- photos from customers
- sharing buttons with share and like counts

But in order to have such proof displayed on your website, you need to first ask your customers and clients to give it to you!

Tips On Collecting Social Proof

Website World have a great article on 7 Ways to Encourage Website Reviews which you should take a read of. In terms of asking for social proof, you could try:

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- sending out a survey to new clients or customers - ask them for their thoughts on their purchase. Encourage replies by offering a future discount for completed surveys.
- encourage posting on social media - create a hashtag your customers can use when discussing your products. These help you track what is said about your brand online.
- give free products to influencers - if they have a large audience which you consider as part of your audience type, ask them to review one of your products.
- ask in person - if you are giving away samples at an event, ask for immediate feedback on them!

Make sure that you thank every reviewer for sharing their thoughts, and in the case of negative reviews, explain what you have put into place to avoid a repeat of their problem in the future. Take a read of Website World's article [Best Ways to Manage Negative Reviews Online](#) for more details on how to do this.

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#10 Reaping the Benefits of Video Marketing for Your Business

Everyone is using video marketing; or are they? Actually, those using video marketing are the odd ones out. More businesses are sticking with traditional forms of marketing such as print, digital ads or social media. So why are we continually hearing about video marketing and being told to use it?

It's popular because it works. We're hearing about it, or seeing examples of it in action, because it works. We're being told to use it because, well, it works.

The biggest issue regarding its use is a lack of knowledge. In this article, we'll explain specifics about:

- what video marketing is
- the benefits of using video marketing
- the reasons why video marketing works

What is Video Marketing?

Video marketing is using videos to promote your business' products, services, features or people. This includes explainer videos, live events, how to videos, corporate training videos, entertainment videos and customer testimonial videos.

Smartphones have a big role in the rise of video marketing popularity and usage. As we've become a more technological society, our smartphones are continually with us. The video tool is therefore with us all the time, and we're often recording moments in our private lives with it. This has then progressed to sharing these videos with our business followers, and when they got great reach, to creating purpose made marketing videos.

Benefits of Video Marketing

When you are time and resourced pressed, the last thing you want to add is more pressure. We think though, that the significant benefits of adding videos to your website and social media accounts, are worth it! Five benefits of video social marketing are:

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- Videos can increase conversion rates - by having a video demonstrating how to use the product, along with some great photos and written description, website visitors are far more likely to purchase it than if there was no video.
- Videos make emotional connections - when you can connect emotionally with your target audience, they are more likely to become loyal followers of your brand. Videos help you connect by providing a human face and music.
- Video decreases bounce rates - when a visitor opens up a page on your website and then watches the video on it, they remain there for longer. This sends a signal to search engines that the page has good content, so it can rank higher in search results.
- Videos encourage social shares - a video has more chance of going viral than a web page does. Easy to share and fun to watch, videos go viral.
- Videos build trust - by putting yourself out there in a video, you can begin to earn your customer's trust. Your own and your brand's personality shine through, and this helps them see beyond the photos and text on a website.

Why Does Video Marketing Work?

There are a few theories as to the reasons why video marketing works, including:

- helping you stand out from your competitors
- giving more information to a customer in a short period of time
- increasing brand awareness
- improving levels of engagement from customers
- positioning you as the expert in your industry
- attracting attention to your business
- being fun and interesting to watch

Check out Website Builder's article on Using Videos On Your Website for tips and advice on adding videos to your website.

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#11 - 16 Business Networking Tips

Face to face networking is very traditional. From working breakfasts to drinks after work, physical networking has been on the scene for many years. A recent arrival is online networking, where business owners and their employees meet, help and support others online. Needless to say, both forms of networking provide multiple benefits for businesses. In order to make the most out of your networking opportunities, we've put together a collection of 16 business networking tips for you.

- Join the right networking groups - more is not better when it comes to business network groups. Be selective and only join groups which are targeted at likeminded members to you.
- Mingle with others - inside an online networking group, it's much easier to chat with members you have never met before. In a face to face group, not so much. It's important that you get to know others in the group, and they you.
- Avoid self promotion - while it's more acceptable to discuss your business in a physical network, avoid doing so in an online environment. No one likes being spammed.
- Be supportive of other group members - you don't need to solve all of their problems, but offer advice if you can. Empathy and the sharing of experiences can also go a long way in building relationships within a network.
- Never follow up unless asked - whether it's via email or PM, it's not okay to send a cold follow up to another member unless you are asked to do so.
- Be active - online, comment in the group on a regular basis. In person, chat with other members.
- Give quality leads and referrals where you can - once you've built up relationships, refer leads to other members you trust.
- Share information - rather than thinking of it as giving information away for free, consider it as a way of building up your reputation amongst members so you become their go-to person.

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- Take time to know other members - ask questions about your fellow members. Discover what makes them tick and what their business is about.
- Use member's first names - people like to know you see them as important.
- Remember eye contact - look people in the eye, in person and not online that is!
- Keep a hand free - once again something only needed for personal networking, and so you can shake hands with other members when necessary.
- Dress professionally - while online this is not important except in your profile photo, dressing appropriate forms a great first impression.
- Ask lots of questions - you'd be surprised at what you learn by asking questions of other members, rather than talking about yourself.
- Be positive - it's fine to be having a bad day, but don't be negative within the group. Others will quickly begin avoiding interacting with you.
- Bring a friend - invite other likeminded business owners and employees to join the networking group with you!

If you are a NZ business owner or employee, please consider joining our free online business networking group. Created specifically for NZ based businesses, we're a friendly bunch of experienced and new business owners and would love you to join us!

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#12 Importance of Having Business Branding

When you have a business, you have a brand. Your brand is your face to the world: a visual representation of who you are and what you do. It is what people use to recognise and develop loyalty to your business.

Understanding Business Branding

There's more to your business' branding than your logo. We asked Janelle from Inkee Press to explain it for us:

"Branding is important for businesses of all shapes and sizes. A big mistake I see too often is small businesses only investing in a logo design that they slop onto a poorly designed business card and think that's all that's required to build a brand. They have no consistency or authenticity and end up making their business look unprofessional and clumsy.

So what is branding if it's not a logo and some colours? Your brand is how your client or customers see you, from the way your logo looks, the colours you use, they way you speak on social media, and the over all experience your customer receives.

Your vision - your voice - your visuals = your brand

In this day and age, you're competing not only with local businesses but on a global scale, so having a consistent brand identity needs some serious attention.

People share and talk about the brands they love, they won't talk about a business that they can't remember.

Branding is important to your business because it creates trust, builds value, improves recognition and in turn, connects you to your customers on an emotional level."

6 Reasons Why You Need Great Business Branding

You know that branding builds trust between you and your customer, but there are plenty of other reasons too, including:

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- building recognition of who you are and what you do
- helps set you apart from the competition
- tells people what kind of business you are
- helps generate referrals
- let's customers know what they can expect from your business
- following your brand guidelines helps you to stay constant in your message to the world

For your business branding to be successful, you need to use it well! Next we'll explain what your brand guidelines should contain and how they can help you to use your branding like an expert.

Your Brand Guidelines: What Are They & How Do You Use Them?

Your brand guidelines are a collection of rules regarding how your brand works. Also known as a style guide, brand standards or brand book, they include information such as:

- your mission statement
- tone of voice
- where your logo can be used
- colour palette
- font styles and where to use them
- business card and letterhead designs
- examples of image style and photographs which work with your brand
- your brand's history and vision for the future
- key values and personality of your brand

A professional graphic designer can help you create your brand guidelines, so be sure to use their services if you are unable to create your own brand style.

Using your style guide is relatively easy, if it has been made correctly. Before you do any work on your website or social media, refer to your guidelines as to what you should do. Your style guide will explain where you can use certain imagery, what size it needs to be, the type of wording it should include, and give you examples of what your work should look like.

If you are still trying to decide upon your brand style, take a read of our article [Popular Website Colour Schemes](#) for some extra advice.

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13- 7 Tips on Writing Home Page Content

Once you've designed your website, understandably making it live ranks as a top priority. But before you do, it's well worth spending some time writing your home page content and making it perfect. For most websites, the home page is the one which receives the most traffic. If it fails to make a good impression both with the way it is presented and the information it contains, visitors will go elsewhere.

There are several things you can do to improve the content on your home page and today we're sharing seven ideas with you, plus details on how to write SEO friendly home page content.

7 Tips to Help You Write Exceptional Home Page Content

Not only does your home page content need to satisfy the needs of Google and be SEO friendly, but more importantly needs to engage your visitors. Here are seven ways to help you do that:

1. Create a great heading - your home page heading needs to tell visitors what your business offers them. Aim for it to be short, sharp and focused.
2. Describe the benefits - be right upfront and explain the benefits your business offers to your visitors immediately.
3. Use keywords - no, keywords are not dead. You should be using your main keyword for the home page in it's heading, meta tags and page text.
4. Use a call to action - what is it that you want visitors to do upon reaching your home page. Spell it clearly out to them, be it in text, hyperlinks, graphics or buttons.
5. Use your visitor's words - just like the rest of your website copy, you need to use the same vocabulary as they do. Write naturally, like you would if you were speaking directly to them, in the words they would use themselves.
6. Break it up - web visitors are scanners. They look for the information they need by quickly scanning the page. If they don't find it instantly,

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they'll go elsewhere. Help them find the content they are looking for by using headings, sub-headings, bullet points and short paragraphs.

7. Add testimonials - social proof is just one of the ways you can build trust with your web visitors. Give it to them on the home page and show them right from the start that you are worth doing business with.

How to Write SEO Friendly Home Page Content

Before you write it, you need to know what SEO friendly home page content is. Well, in short, it's text which is found and ranked highly by search engines. It is text which explains to Google (and your visitors) what it is that your business has to offer. It contains your keyword phrase, answers key questions your visitors have and tells them what to do next.

Therefore writing it isn't that much different than how you would write SEO content for your other pages - except for one thing. Your home page content needs to be exceptional!

Once again, start with your headline and first sentence. Studies have shown that it is the first five to 25 words which are the most powerful on a home page at promoting your business. Then remember to:

- use keyword phrases
- correctly identify the heading as an h1, h2 or h3
- give your graphics and images useful filenames
- provide a clear call to action
- complete your meta tag information

For more advice on improving your website's (and your home page's) SEO, take a read of our articles [Understanding What is SEO](#) and [8 Easy SEO Tips](#).

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#14 - 5 Ways a Website Can Grow Your Business

Have you noticed that selling through Facebook is getting harder? Your posts aren't being seen by your page likers and you're forever responding to PMs and comments trying to make that sale. Wouldn't it be great to simply set something in place which will do all the hard work for you?

You need a website!

Today we're sharing with you five ways that having a website can significantly grow your business and give you back your time to work on your business, not in it!

5 Ways a Website Can Grow Your Business

There are plenty of benefits of having a website and we've explained more about why you need a website in our article [Does My Small Business Need a Website](#). Having a website does make life easier and automate sales for you, but it also grows your business. Let's look at the five ways it does this:

1. It increases your visibility - having a website gives your customers another way of finding you. Chances are that you use Google to help you find what you're looking for. Well, your customers do the same and if you don't have a website, they can't find you.
2. It makes you seem more legit - by having a website, customers take you more seriously. It shows you are a legit business and someone they can trust.
3. It saves you money on advertising - when you have a website, you don't need to pay for it to be found by search engines. When done well, your site will appear in Google searches for free!
4. It shows you're trustworthy and knowledgeable - by having a website, you demonstrate to your customers that you are in for the long haul. You're professional and trustworthy, and the content you have on your site shows visitors that you really know your stuff in your industry too.
5. It makes buying your products easier and faster - selling through Facebook requires you to be there to take their order and organise how

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they will pay you. A website does the job automatically and you get paid without having to do any selling!

There's no need to sit on the fence any longer about whether or not you need a website. You do and you can get started for free today! We're New Zealand's top free DIY website builder and other than your domain and hosting, there's no other costs to worry about. Get your free trial started today and remember, we're always here to help you too.

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#15 - 10 Ways to Improve Your Website

Fact: if you make something better, it works better. The same can be said for websites. If you identify the ways your website could be improved, along with the benefits doing so could bring, then it makes sense that you should do those things.

Website improvements can vary from things such as speed, design theme, mobile responsive, colours, font size and website platform. Today we're going to discuss 10 things you can do to improve your site and the benefits doing so would most likely bring.

10 Things Which Can Improve Your Website

Being the creators of New Zealand's top eCommerce website platform, our goal is to improve the user experience for each visitor to our customer's websites. Here are 10 ways in which you can achieve this for your website:

1. Use white space - users of a website will scan a page to find the information they want, rather than read every word. By using white space, you are making it easier for them to find what they are looking for, which in turn encourages them to stay longer on your site.
2. Check your website speed - a slow loading website will do two things: be ranked lower by search engines and visitors will click elsewhere as they don't want to wait. Make sure your website is hosted with NZ's fastest web host - us!
3. Create useful content - well designed graphics help attract attention and make a website look appealing, but it's the content on the page which is often overlooked. The text you have on a page not only provides search engines with something to index (which then raises your search rankings) but also your visitors with information and entertainment.
4. SEO - making sure your website is SEO friendly is a must if you are relying on search engines to send traffic to your website. By improving your site's SEO, you can potentially gain a lot of organic traffic. Take a read of our SEO Resources for help in understanding and doing your own SEO.

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5. Use clear hyperlinks - make sure that the text you hyperlink to other pages within and out of your website can be seen easily. This can increase traffic to other pages on your site by your visitors, as well as help search engines move around your site.
6. Use bullet points - like white space, the use of bullet points makes your content easily scanned and read. This improves the user experience, meaning they are more likely to stay longer and return in the future to your website.
7. Fix any broken links - it is really annoying when you click on a link to be greeted with a 404 page missing error. If you do delete a page or change its URL, make sure you redirect it to a live page. This helps with keeping people on your site longer, as well as improving your SEO.
8. Menu organisation - is your menu easy to use? Does it make finding specific things on your site easier? Make sure your menu is user friendly to help people navigate throughout your site.
9. Headings - not only does each page need a main heading, but sub headings throughout the page should also be used. This helps with search engine rankings, as well as ease of reading a page.
10. Use clear calls to action - be specific as to what you want a page visitor to do. Use words and buttons to clearly explain what their next action should be. This increases the rates of goal meetings on your site, and helps prevent confusion among visitors.

We recommend taking a read of our article [What is User Experience Design & How Can it Help Your Business](#) for further help on improving your website.

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#16 How to Create a Content Plan for Your Website

For many businesses, their content is the main tool they are relying on to bring traffic to their website. Used to inform, educate, entertain and sell, it makes sense to create and stick to a content plan for your website. In this article we are walking you through how you can create a plan for your business website.

What is a Website Content Plan?

As known as content marketing, a website content plan maps out what content your site will get during the year. This includes information such as:

- blog topics
- new products
- page and product re-writes
- special events and discounts
- types of images
- keywords and phrases

Basically, if it is on your website, or going to be, then you need a website content plan. Not only does this mean knowing what content you are going to add, but also the existing content you are going to edit. A good website should never remain static, but should grow and adapt according to the target market's preferences.

Steps to Creating Your Website Content Plan

In order to create great website content, you need a plan. At the heart of this plan is your business and it's target market. This means if you haven't created a business plan or identified any goals, do that now! Then you can move onto the next steps of:

- research your audience - what information do they want and what will they need? How will they move around your website? Where will they arrive and where do they go next? What are the specifics of your audience (age, gender, finances, likes, dislikes, hobbies etc)?
- analyse your content - what content do you have on your site already? Which pages are getting a lot of organic traffic from search engines?

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Which pages receive traffic from other pages in your site? Which pages are not performing well in terms of ROI? What is old outdated content which needs revising? What links no longer work? Create a schedule of what pages to revise and when.

- plan your year - when are you going to have a sale? What special events or celebrations will your business be using/promoting?
- create a list of topics you believe your audience would like to read about. Prioritise them in order of importance, identify the best time of the year to publish each one and from here you can write a list of when to write each blog.

Finally, you can combine your new pages or articles list with your list of pages and articles to revise into one master schedule.

Writing Your Website Content

After you've created your content schedule, next comes the actual writing of it. This is where many people start off with a roar, then stop after a month once life and work kicks in. For others, they become overwhelmed with it, and fail to start at all. Or they want to do it, but struggle with the writing and need advice. Here are some suggestions on how to overcome all of these issues:

- create a plan for each page or blog you will write. This includes identifying the keywords, title, image and resources you will use to write the content with.
- keep all your information in one place, such as on Google Docs. This allows you to share with others if needed, plus gives free cloud storage to ensure your information is not accidentally deleted.
- use storytelling and not storyselling. People don't want to be given the hard sales push. Tell a story about how someone benefited from using your product or service.
- use good SEO strategies, but write for people too. This means writing for both search engines and your target audience. For tips on this, check out the article [8 Easy SEO Tips to Get You Started Today](#).
- give your readers a call to action on each page. This can be to tell them to read another page, buy a product or contact you to learn more.

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For additional support in creating a content plan (or writing the content), seek help from a copywriter!

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#17 - Choosing the Best Hosting Plan for Your Website

Keeping your website online and loading quickly are two vital things a business needs. The right hosting plan will achieve both of these, but you need to select one first. Choosing a hosting plan for your business website requires that you know or can make accurate assumptions about the amount of traffic it will receive, the number of pages it has, how many email addresses you require and other hosting features. Then there's the information about the host itself you'll need to find out, including their uptime, loading speed, server locations and support offered.

We're going to look at each of these points in detail to help you select the best hosting plan for your business website.

Considerations When Selecting Your Business Website Hosting Plan

Before signing up to a hosting plan, we're assuming you've done your due diligence about the hosting provider. For instance, finding out about their server locations, up-time, website loading speeds and support they offer customers. This is important to know because these features can affect the hosting product and service you receive.

For example, at Website World we offer:

- up-time rates of around 99.99% for published content and 99.9% for dynamic content such as shopping carts
- website loading speeds using our dynamic CDN, with a loading speed over five times faster on average than WordPress, when comparing both platforms in the same hosting environment
- servers located in Auckland, Sydney, San Francisco and Amsterdam
- support for our customers via phone, email and in a Facebook support group

Then it comes down to what your business website needs in a hosting plan. This can include points such as:

- an affordable cost

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- do they offer a discount for hosting when purchased for 12 months at a time? Is there a referral program where you can get a % of your hosting cost reduced? How many hosting packages do they offer which would suit you?
- the number of pages needed
- how large is your website? Are you hosting videos on it? Is it image heavy?
- the amount of traffic it will receive
- what is the average number of daily visits? Do you have peak traffic times when you need hosting for large volumes of people, such as when you upload new products or host a sale on your site?
- how many email addresses you want to use with your domain
- if a content management system is included in the cost
- if a booking calendar is needed
- a booking calendar is useful to let your clients or customers book an appointment with you
- if a POS option is offered
- how many products you want to sell
- whether you want to be able to use it for your bulk mail also (and how big your lists are)
- are you using an outside bulk mail provider such as MailChimp, or do you want to reduce costs and use the one provided with your hosting?
- the security of the website and if an SSL certificate is included
- do you need to offer digital downloads or files?
- is a membership or password protected area on your site required?

Once you've nailed out what you need in a web hosting plan, it's time to pick the right one for you. At Website World, we offer a range of hosting plans ranging from a one page placeholder website right through to receiving 3000 orders per month via our CMS. We're also happy to customise a hosting plan specifically for your business! Get in touch with our support team today to discuss more about why we believe we are New Zealand's top web host provider.

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Starting a New Business / Getting a Website Started

1. 50 Home Business Ideas for New Zealanders
2. How to Start a Business Working from Home
3. Sourcing Products for Dropshipping
4. Business Owners Share Advice on Starting a Business
5. Side Hustle Ideas for Your New Business
6. Tips on Choosing a Business Name
7. What is Affiliate Marketing & Is It Viable?
8. How to Set Up a Website in NZ
9. Products to Sell Online That Don't Need Shipping
10. Tips on Creating a Business Plan
11. What Makes a Great Business Logo?
12. Setting Your Wholesale Pricing for Handmade Products
13. Guide to Pricing Your Products
14. Does My Small Handmade Products Business Need a Website?

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Starting a New Business / Getting a Website Started

#1 - 50 Home Business Ideas for New Zealanders

Whether you're looking for a way to supplement the income from your day job, or work from home while raising the kids, starting a home based business has never been easier! Your first step is to decide upon an idea for a business and then to check it's feasibility. We've written a great article on How to Start a Business Working from Home which walks you through the steps of researching your idea, checking your competitors and sourcing your products. Today though, we're going to share with you some ideas for home businesses you may want to look into.

50 Ideas for Home Businesses in New Zealand

The easiest way to find an idea for your business is to think about your skills and what you like to do. If you're a great sewer, then why not make toys or clothes for children. A mechanic could work from home fixing lawnmowers or small engines. A teacher could tutor children after school hours. A photographer could create a website and market their services online from home. The possibilities are endless! We've made a list of what we think could be great ideas you could pick up and run with from home - but remember to do your research first before you get started!

1. Bookkeeping
2. Virtual assistant
3. Blogger
4. Baby or kids clothing shop
5. Social media manager
6. Housesitter
7. Pet minder
8. Childcarer
9. House cleaner
10. Affiliate marketer
11. Trainer or mentoring
12. Translator
13. Flat lay photographer for social media images
14. Graphic designer

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15. Party planner
16. Cooking classes
17. Cosmetic or soap maker
18. Author
19. Gift basket creator
20. Writer
21. Tutor
22. Small appliance repairs
23. Online shop
24. Cake decorating
25. Makeup artist
26. Hairdresser
27. Transcription services
28. Gardening
29. CV writer
30. Family history researcher
31. Call centre remote operator
32. Product reviewer
33. Data entry
34. Online video creator
35. Artist
36. Make wedding favours
37. Drop shipper of products
38. Upstyler of old furniture
39. Web designer
40. Online course creator
41. Podcaster
42. Travel consultant
43. App developer
44. Proofreader or editor
45. Yoga or fitness instructor
46. Music instructor
47. Stock photographer
48. Clothing alterations and tailoring
49. Jewellery making

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50. Dog walking

That's 50 ideas to get you thinking about the perfect home business for you! Remember that every great business needs a website and you can start one for free today! Also check out the articles [5 Ways a Website Can Grow Your Business](#) and [Does My Business Need a Website](#) for more information too!

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Starting a New Business / Getting a Website Started

#2 - How to Start a Business Working from Home

Thinking about starting up a business working from home, but not sure where to start? New Zealand has many successful home based businesses and there's no reason why your one can't be the next! We're in the business of helping other NZ based business owners grow and we'd love for you to come along with us - for free! We're going to share with you the steps to take when starting a work at home business, including how to navigate the selling of your products.

Brainstorming Home Based Business Ideas

Many stay at home Mums (and Dads) choose to handmade products they themselves love and find useful. This is one of the easiest and quickest type of business to get off the ground. But before you take the leap, you have to narrow down your focus. Think about:

- what product(s) would you like to sell?
- what are you good at making?
- who do you think will buy your products?
- where will you sell your products?
- how and when will you make your products?
- where will you get the materials for making your products from?

Answering these questions will help you in both in the planning and building of your new business.

Researching Your Product Ideas

You've nailed down some handmade products you'd like to sell for your new home based business. It's time to do some R&D or research and development for them now. This is a very important step because it will let you know if your business ideas are going to be successful. Researching involves you looking around at products like yours. Find out if they are being sold, who is selling them, how much they are selling for and how they are being sold (Facebook, website, markets etc). You are trying to find out the answers to:

- are people willing to buy my product?

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- how much would they pay for my product?
- can I make enough profit selling my product?
- is my product already for sale somewhere else?
- what makes my product better/different than one already for sale?
- where are my competitor's products being sold?
- can my product be shipped NZ wide, worldwide or only locally?
- what is the cost of shipping?

Next comes the development of your products. You've probably already made a few, but now is the time to refine them further. Are there any ways in which you could reduce the cost of the materials you use? Could you make them faster by doing something different? What colours, sizes and any other options will the product be available in for purchase? How are you going to package the product and what is the cost of this?

From here, you should be thinking about writing a business plan. Yes, we know it's probably not something you want to do, but it's going to help you build a sustainable business you will be proud of. Every business needs one, big or small, including your working from home business! There are lots of free tools online you can use to write your business plan. One of the easiest we have found is available free on the Ministry of Business' website.

Choosing Your Business Name

Now we're heading into the really fun stuff. Picking your business name is important. It's what your customers are going to know you by and how they are going to find you online. To come up with a name, brainstorm all your ideas on a piece of paper. It doesn't matter what you write, as often just seeing words written down will spark an idea. Some parents name their business after their child, others after their product. Some invent a new word altogether for their business name. It's up to you, but take your time. It's probably worth sharing your ideas with your friends and family to see what they think and if they have any other suggestions.

Once you've narrowed down the possibilities, it's time to check that your business name isn't being used by someone else. ONECheck is a quick way of searching to learn if your name is a registered trademark, the domain name availability, social media account availability and if it is a registered company. If

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you use the same or a similar name to another business, you can get into trouble legally. So it's best to be 100% original and choose a name which is not used or registered anywhere.

Decide on Your Business Structure

This step involves making some decisions about how your business will be structured. In NZ, there are three common structures you can use - sole trader (which is what most home based businesses are), partnership or company. Being a sole trader is the cheapest and fastest option. As your business grows, you can change the structure into a company or partnership. You can find out more about your business structure options on the Ministry of Business' website, including info on getting a business number and registering your business.

Get Your Domain Name Sorted

Your domain name or URL is the address someone enters into a search engine, like Google, to find your business. It's your web address and to have a live website on the internet, you need a domain name. Your domain name is unique - no one else can have the same as you. You can also use your domain name for an email address too.

When choosing a domain name, you are best to stick with your business name - which is why you used ONECheck to see if it was available. If you are selling only in New Zealand, choosing a .co.nz or a .nz suffix on the end of your domain name is best. This shows search engines (and your customers) that you are based in NZ. If you are selling worldwide, then a .com may be more appropriate.

Short domain names are best, as are ones which are easy to spell and don't have any hyphens or characters in them. It's best to purchase your domain name from the same place where you are going to have your website hosted. We recommend Website World, who are a NZ owned and operated business, for your domain name purchases. As well as selling domain names, they also can host your website and have a free website builder for you to design your new website with.

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Get Your Website Sorted

Next it's time to get your eCommerce website sorted (eCommerce just means that it's an online shop). Website World offer monthly hosting starting from just \$10, but you don't need to pay anything until it goes live. They also have a free 30 day trial where you can design your new website and load your products without paying a cent. You can get your free website trial going now and if you need more time, they can extend it for you for free too!

When you are building your website, as well as doing the design work, you also need to think about the content for it. A simple eCommerce website should have these pages:

- home page
- about page
- shop page - where your products can be broken down into categories
- contact page
- terms and conditions page
- website privacy page

You'll also need to think about SEO or search engine optimisation, to help your website be found by Google and other search engines. We'll help you with this another time though.

Get Your Social Media Sorted

Social media sites such as Instagram and Facebook are ideal places to showcase your products and gain new customers. Sign up for business accounts on the sites your potential customers are already using. Spend time creating regular posts, sharing photos and engaging with your audience to build up a following. Make sure you include links to your products on your website so customers know how to buy them. It's also important that on your website you have links to your social media accounts, plus a way for customers to share what they see with their friends on social media.

Now you've got your business up and running, it's time to work on your marketing to get your name out there! Joining a free online business networking group is one way you can promote your business and get help if you get stuck. We suggest joining the Business Networking NZ Facebook group,

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which is just for NZ business owners of all sizes and business types. Make sure you grab your free directory listing on the Business Networking NZ website too!

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#3 Sourcing Products for Dropshipping

Drop shipping is a way to sell products to customers online without ever having to buy the products first. Drop shipping is a popular way for new business owners to start an eCommerce store when they don't have the money to purchase or the space to keep stock. Like with all businesses, there are risks and for drop shippers, one of the biggest is suppliers. Today we're sharing tips on how to find manufacturers or wholesalers who will drop ship their products on your behalf, along with choosing which products to list on your website.

Finding Trustworthy Drop Shipping Companies, Suppliers & Wholesalers

Once you've already identified the type of products you want to sell, who you will be selling them to, it's time to source your suppliers. As a drop shipper, while you won't need to pre-purchase or store the products, you still need to someone who will do so on your behalf. This can be hard for three reasons:

- some manufacturers or wholesalers won't dropship
- there are some who will take your money and not send the product
- the product is sent, but it is not as described

As the seller, you are the one responsible for getting the product to the customer. You're also responsible for the product being the same as you described it. Any issues with the product, you must deal first with the customer and then with the team who sent it on your behalf. This can be very difficult, especially if they are in another country and language is a barrier.

Your best bet is to spend a considerable amount of time to complete due diligence at the beginning when choosing your suppliers. Here are our tips on how to find reliable drop shippers:

contact the manufacturer directly, and ask them who their wholesale points of contact are

subscribe to a drop shipping directory, some of which charge an annual fee

ask for references from current and past resellers who use the supplier

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- search Google
- ask for recommendations from others in business networks you are a member of
- visit trade shows
- order from your competition to see how the product is packaged and where it's from

To get you started on your product search, here are a few well-known drop shipping resources for you to investigate:

- SaleHoo
- AliExpress
- Doba
- Wholesale Central
- MegaGoods
- Dropshipper.com
- Wholesale2B
- Dropship Direct
- Sunrise Wholesale
- InventorySource
- National Dropshippers
- Worldwide Brands

If you are keen to continue forwards with a drop shipping store, Website World has a free DIY website builder for you to create and host your own eCommerce store. Head over and grab your free website trial today.

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#4 Side Hustle Ideas for Your New Business

If you're looking for a way to make more money, chances are you're looking for a profitable side hustle.

A side hustle is a job or activity which is outside of your main job or activity, which makes you money. A side hustle business lets you work when you can, giving you the benefits of running a business while retaining your main income.

Many small businesses initially start off as a side hustle and can quickly become profitable and a full-time business.

We've put together a great list of ideas to help you choose your business side hustle.

Choosing a New Business Side Hustle

Considering a side hustle is likely to become a full time business at some stage, it pays to choose one which you are passionate about, right from the start.

Here are some of our favourite side hustle ideas for you to consider:

- Virtual assistant - help others keep on top of things by offering VA services in your spare time.
- Blogger - start up your own blog focused on a specific niche and create a following. You can then sell website advertising, share affiliate links and create your own courses.
- Reseller - if you love hunting through Op Shops, why not sell your bargains on your own website?
- Affiliate marketing - why not recommend the products and services you love and get a kick back from doing so?
- Teach online - set up a website promoting your teaching services, and use a platform like Zoom to teach from.
- Make things - if you have a craft or talent you can make, start selling what you can create on your own eCommerce website.
- eBooks - write and sell your own eBooks.
- Ghostwriter - if you love writing, write for others who can then use your words under their own name.

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- Bookkeeping - if you are good with numbers, consider helping out those who aren't.
- Dog walking or pooper scooping - get fit and get paid at the same time.
- Dropshipping - create a website and sell dropshipped products.

For more business side hustle ideas, take a read of our article, 50 Home Business Ideas for New Zealanders.

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#5 - What is Affiliate Marketing & Is It Viable?

If you're looking for a way to start earning money online, but without selling any products or services, have you considered affiliate marketing? Today we're going to discuss what affiliate marketing is, whether it is a viable business idea and how you can get started in becoming an affiliate marketer.

What is Affiliate Marketing?

"Affiliate marketing is the process of earning a commission by promoting other people's (or company's) products. You find a product you like, promote it to others and earn a piece of the profit for each sale that you make." - Smart Passive Income.

Basically, this boils down to affiliate marketing being the sharing of a product online with your followers, and when they purchase it (or click on a link to find out more about it), you receive a financial reward.

There can be as little as two parties involved (the merchant and the affiliate), or up to four. They include:

- the merchant - this is the creator, the brand, the retailer or the vendor of a product. It could be a huge company like Nike, or a small one person one who is selling an eBook. Anyone can be the merchant: you just need a physical or digital product to sell.
- the affiliate - also known as the publisher, an affiliate can be a single person or a company. They are the 'person' responsible for the marketing of the product, and it's their job to convince the potential customers to buy this product. The marketing could be done by reviewing the product, creating a website specifically promoting the product, via social media or writing articles about the product. They receive a financial reward when customers purchase the product using their affiliate link.
- the consumer - this is the customer who purchases the product and makes the affiliate system work. The consumer is marketed to by the affiliate, who may or may not disclose that they are financially incentivised to promote the product. As they click upon the affiliate link,

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they are tracked by the merchant's software so the correct affiliate is compensated for any sale.

- the network - a large network which acts as a go-between for the affiliate and the merchant. They can focus on attracting merchants, then finding affiliates to do the promotion. The network also takes a cut from the merchant to do so, and will pay the affiliate directly for any sales. The network also tends to have hundreds or thousands of products on its database too, such as ClickBank or Commission Junction.

Next we're looking into whether it could be a viable business idea to earn you a regular income.

Is Affiliate Marketing a Viable Business Idea?

The next question people ask is, can I make any money from being an affiliate marketer? In theory, yes. The internet is full of stories about affiliate marketers making hundreds and even thousands of dollars a day. But like everything, there is no such thing as a free lunch. The people who have been successful have not become so overnight, nor have they set their marketing on autopilot to await the money to arrive.

You could say there are three kinds of affiliates:

- the odd one who has made millions
- some who have been making enough to meet their goals
- most who are making a big fat zero

We don't know how you'd go as an affiliate, and we're not in the affiliate industry ourselves. But if you've got the time and means to start up as an affiliate, it's worth considering giving it a go.

The pros include:

- low cost or free to start
- no product or service needed to be created
- no stocking or shipping of products
- can be managed from anywhere, including as a work at home business
- potential for passive income
- can be added to an existing business

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The cons include:

- it's hard to get enough traffic to your site to make enough income
- people can highjack your affiliate link
- no control over the service or product quality provided to the customer
- lots of competition
- customer belongs to the merchant, not you

Interested? Let's find out how you can become an affiliate marketer next!

How to Get Started as an Affiliate Marketer

The best place to start is at the beginning and that's by following these five steps:

- Choose an affiliate network or merchant(s) to associate yourself with - Check that they sell the types of products you want to promote, and what commission they will offer you.
- Find the right affiliate products - stick to a specific niche and become the expert in that industry. It may be worth you purchasing the products to check that you are happy with their quality before you start promoting it. By doing this, you can also do a review.
- Use social media to get traffic to your site, to promote traffic to the merchant's site. On your site you can include content such as reviews, unboxing videos and the pros and cons.
- Identify the type of marketing you want to do. This could be paid such as ads, or sending newsletters to your subscription list.
- Always disclose that you are an affiliate. It won't cost the customer any more money to purchase using your link, and it shows you are honest in your dealings.

Popular affiliate networks you can look into signing up to include:

- Amazon
- ShareASale
- Wide Markets
- Click Bank
- Commission Factory

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- Avangate
- Avant Link
- MoreNiche

We wish you the very best of luck!

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#6 - Tips on Creating a Business Plan

A great business plan helps guide your decisions throughout the year, keeps you focused on the big picture and can help you keep on top of your financial concerns. Simply writing down your ideas for your business for the year helps you to stick to your vision and get everyone associated with your business on the same page. It's also a useful document to share with financial backers or banks to show them where things are and where they're heading.

One of the major issues is that creating a business plan can seem incredibly overwhelming. Where do you start, what information does it need and exactly what do I write? We'll share our top tips on writing your plan with you today, to make things much easier!

Make Writing Your Business Plan Easy with These Top Tips

The time has come to create a strong business plan. Here's how you can make this an easier and more successful process:

- know your target market - you need to write your plan with your audience in mind - both the ones you are selling to, plus the ones you are wanting financial and other support from too!
- know your competition - specifically list who they are and what they do. This will help you identify the ways you can improve your products or services, plus give you a point of difference.
- be realistic - this is in terms of both financial estimates and time spent. It's better to underestimate profit and not have spent money planning on having it, than be hugely in debt at the end of the year.
- explain your ideas - by explaining your ideas, you are able to show others how you will overcome obstacles and demonstrate success.
- include visuals - things such as graphs, charts, photos and diagrams can help to explain your thoughts and share your ideas with others.
- use statistics - back up your plans with statistics from within your industry.
- show your specific goals - be clear in what you want to achieve. Remember the acronym SMART when it comes to goal setting!

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- keep things simple - your business plan doesn't need to be hundreds of pages long. Stick to the facts, avoid unnecessary content and seek help if you get stuck.
- use a template - there are plenty of free templates available to help you create your business plan. Business.govt has some great ones which are worth checking out.

Every business should have a business plan, regardless of what they do and how big they are. If you are needing some help in writing yours, please seek the support of a professional business coach or planner.

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#7 Setting Your Wholesale Pricing for Handmade Products

As a product reseller, it's important that you set your wholesale pricing strategy at a level which is fair for both you and your resellers. The wholesale price of your products needs to cover you for what the materials cost you, any other overhead costs, your time and make you a profit. Today we discuss how to calculate a wholesale price for your handmade products which works for everyone.

Setting a Wholesale Price for Your Handmade Products

Often retailers who make their own products initially price them at a low level, which doesn't allow them to set an acceptable wholesale price. This means the RRP or recommended retail price must then be raised to a level at which customers do not want to pay. The best thing to do is to set a wholesale price right at the start, even if you're not planning on reselling your products.

Setting a wholesale price is done by factoring in:

- the cost of materials it took to make the product
- the time it took for you to make the product - you need to be paid for your labour, so set yourself an hourly rate
- the cost of overheads as a percentage per product, such as electricity, sewing machine depreciation, website costs and rent
- the profit percentage you wish to make

In an ideal world, your wholesale price should be 25% of your retail cost, excluding your profit. This means you receive a 100% profit when reselling at the wholesale price. For example, you make a teddy bear for \$5 and then sell it to a retailer for \$10. You covered your costs of \$5, plus got \$5 in profit. The retailer will then sell the teddy bear on to the customer for \$20. Yes, they in theory get a bigger profit than you, but the ideal with wholesale pricing is that you sell more products at a cheaper price, which raises your income.

When setting your wholesale price, you also need to do your research. This means:

- checking what others are selling similar products for

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- asking your target market what they would pay for a product like yours
- seeing if you can obtain materials for your product at a cheaper price
- asking prospective retailers what they would sell it for

It's standard practise for most resellers to add a 100% mark-up on your wholesale prices, so be aware that you may make less profit than you wish. While you are aiming for a 100% when reselling, if this can't happen, be sure to identify a minimum profit percentage you are happy to have instead.

For further information on product pricing, be sure to check out our two articles: [Pricing and Margins](#) and [Guide to Pricing Your Products](#).

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#8 Guide to Pricing Your Products

You're at the stage where you need to price your products, but how exactly is this done? Pricing is one of the hardest things business owners face: too low and you won't make any money and too high, and you won't sell any. We'll share with you some common pricing strategies, along with some misconceptions regarding pricing you should avoid following.

What to Know Before You Price Your Products

Creating a pricing strategy which works for your business should be done early on in the start-up stage. It's not a do it once and forget task though. Regular pricing reviews are required to ensure you can maintain and/or increase your profitability. You also need to undertake some research and be clear on a few things, including:

what your costs will be - this includes the fixed costs, such as electricity and phone plans, and direct costs, such as the materials you used when making your products or delivering your services.

- who your customers are - learn about your potential customers. Find out if they are after the cheapest price, or the best value. Will price play a role in their buying decision? Do they buy products or services at lot or high end price points?
- market position - where about's in the marketplace do you want your business to sit? Top end, the cheapest, middle of the range?
- what your competitors are doing - what do they charge for their products or services? Are there any add ons they offer? What position do they take in the marketplace? How are customers responding to their pricing?
- your level of profit - how much profit would you like to make? Remember that as well as materials, you also need to cover yourself for your time too.

Deciding On Your Pricing Strategy

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There are many different pricing strategies which you can use to price your products or services. We're going to walk you through several of them, helping you to decide which is the right strategy for your business:

- Cost based pricing - this involves working out the total cost it takes to make the product, and then adding a percentage mark-up. $\text{Cost} + \text{Mark-up \%} = \text{Price}$. Note that 50% mark-up is standard in the retail industry.
- Competition based pricing - based upon what your competitors offer, you mark your price above, at or below market value.
- Dynamic pricing - as demand rises, prices go up. Uber is a good example of a business which uses dynamic pricing.
- Keystone pricing - you add a flat 100% mark-up to all of your products.
- RRP - if you are reselling products, you may be given a recommended retail price to sell them at.
- Margin -if you want to earn a set margin per product, say 35%, then there is a formula you will need to use: $\text{Margin} = (\text{Sale Price} - \text{Product Cost}) / \text{Sale Price}$
- Value based pricing - this means your pricing is based upon the level of value your customers see your product offers. For instance, your actual costs for a product are low, but because customers see a high value in your product due to scarcity or just how good your product is, you can raise the price of your product.
- Bundle pricing - will you sell multiples of the same product for a discounted price? Or sell products which can be used together for a discount, such as a bowl and a spoon?
- Loss leading - this is when you promote and sell a product at or below cost price, with the aim of selling other products in conjunction with it. This is generally best in physical retail stores than online.
- Psychological pricing - the numbers you use in your pricing can help buyers feel less pain about parting with their money. When a price ends with a 5, 7 or 9, more items are traditionally sold.

Identifying Your Wholesale Price

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Your wholesale price is what you sell your products to other retailers at. They then mark up their purchase price to become their retail price. Traditionally the wholesale price has been 50% of the RRP, or recommended retail price. To work out your wholesale price though, you need to calculate the cost of goods manufactured (COGM). The COGM is the amount it has cost you to make or buy the product. It is worked out by:

Cost of materials + cost of labour + overheads and additional costs = COGM

Remember though, you still need to make a profit on your wholesale price too, and a good number to aim for is 50%. It can be a balancing act to work out a wholesale price that is still low enough that a reseller will make their 50% profit and that customers will be happy with the RRP.

For more information, we suggest you read the article Pricing and Margins by Website World's CEO Reuben Jackson.

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#8 Does My Small Handmade Products Business Need a Website?

Using Facebook to advertise and sell your products through is a common strategy for Mums running a business from home. It's free, you can grow an audience of followers and can use the messaging system to take orders for your handmade products.

Chances are though, you've noticed some problems with selling through Facebook:

Facebook control who they show your content too. While you may have 500 page followers, a post may only be seen by 20 or less of those people.

Facebook own your business page, not you. You have limited control as to what you can post onto it and Facebook can remove your posts too.

It's hard for customers to find your products. There's no easy way to search through Facebook to find specific items to buy.

Orders need to be taken manually by you. Customers can't place an order automatically like they could on a website.

It takes up so much time to post regularly, engage with your followers and manually accept orders from customers.

To be seen, you're going to need to pay for Facebook advertising.

It does have some pros though, which are not to be sneezed at. It is free, it's used by millions of people worldwide and you can run a small business through it, but with limitations. However, to:

- make your business more profitable
- reach a wider variety of customers
- control what you show others
- automate the buying and selling process
- accept payments with credit cards or LayBuy
- give you back time to spend with your family
- you need a website for your business!

Why Should I Get a Website?

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To sell more, reach more customers, and grow your business, you need a website. Here are eight reasons why you, as a Mum in business, need a website:

- You are in control of it
- Your customers expect you to have a website and to be able to use it to buy your products
- It's easy to build a website and add products to it
- You can offer a range of payment options, which customers really want - LayBuy, PayPal, PoliPay, internet banking
- Your competitors have websites
- Your website is open 24/7 and you don't have to be online to make a sale
- Your handmade products will be found in Google search results
- It's cheaper and more profitable than Facebook advertising

Hundreds of Mums like you have used our free website builder to create their own website. We'd love to offer you a 30 day trial to get you started. As we're based in NZ, our support team are available when you need us and we also have a free Facebook Website World support group too.

Don't forget that networking with other mums in business is also important. Come and join the free Facebook networking group Business Networking NZ for some help in growing your business!

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