Introduction

Websites are generally the first point of contact with your customers AND potential customers – so it's important to get it right! It'll improve your business's customer service and hopefully, your bottom line.
It can be a tough gig creating and developing a great website that works properly AND looks and feels right.

Source: http://www.kristinaustin.com/blog-articles/10-tips-for-a-great-website/

1. Be clear and concise.

When it comes to creating content, it's vital that you cut straight to the chase. Don't bore your customers – give them what they are looking for straight away. Even though you might think that more looks better – less is more in this case. In saying that, it's important to fill your website up with great content, just make sure it's relevant. Having said that, Google likes pages with at least 300 words. And for blogs, it's liking 500-1500 words.

2. Pick a colour palette and stick to it!

There's nothing worse than heading to a website that looks like someone had a color party with random colors all over the place. Your color palette should complement your corporate identity (logo). Add these colors to your background, headings and menus so that your website flows and 'feels' like you. When adding images, this rule doesn't have to apply too strictly but it's always important to select images that both reflect the user (not you) and suit your color palette. Just watch that the color palette you choose doesn't go against user accessibility standards (ie: grey on grey, white on light grey, etc)..

3. Learn to love headings and subheadings.

BIG and bold headings need to be used throughout your website. Headings show your visitors what's important on your site and help them navigate through the website.

4. Make sure there's plenty of space.

It's super important to use paragraphs and add space within your content. Studies show that white space on a website will allow your visitors to visually understand what's going on. It's much harder to read stuff that is all clumped up together right? If there is too much on a page, split it up into 2 pages or cut it down. It might seem hard to cut down words but can be quite easy when you put yourself in the shoes of your client (not your own – because everything about your business is important isn't it? Just not to the client)..

5. Make sure navigation is easy

Create a clear structure ('information architecture) for your website before youstart building it – to ensure everything people might want is well and truly within 3 clicks (or they're gone). Once you've done your IA, the best way to make sure that it's incredibly easy for your visitors to navigate through your site is to use menus. Top menus work best and now you can even have floating menus that stay in view when you scroll down the page. Side menus are a bit 'old fashioned' – a bit of a left over from sites of the 90's and early 2000's. Bottom menus tend to 'age' your website..

6. You must include a blog.

Mmany reasons why businesses should include an active blog on their site – it proves your smarts and let's people get to know how you think/operate which can drive new business or media opportunities. But most importantly, Google LOVES them – blogging helps you become alive on the net. It won't work overnight, but with regular blogging you will see your business move up the ranks of Google search.

7. Include calls-to-action on every page

It is, after all, a tool to help you drive your business forward. At the end of every page, include a strong call-to-action that directs your customers to contact you. Make sure you include a 'contact us' page on your website as well and keep it regularly updated!

8. Link as much as you can

Links are a great way to help your visitors navigate through your website. It's also important to provide links to your social media platforms. And if you don't have social media sites set up for your business, do it now.

Make sure they work & check them regularly.

9. Alway check spelling and grammar.

Nothing is worse than incorrect spelling on a professional website. It makes your business look incompetent and careless. Use spell check. If possible, make sure you get another set of eyes to look over your content and website. You'll usually find the mistakes. Or if you're redoing your whole site and you've written pages and pages – print it out and read it line by line – backwards. Your brain can't fill in the blanks that way (it's an old proof readers trick).

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10. Make sure your site is fast

No one is going to wait around for your website to load, that's just the nature of the internet. So make sure it's up to speed! Images are often the culprit of slow websites due to their file size – if yours are too large, use www.webresizer.com to make them smaller.