# FUN + EASY

## website planning guide

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## What this guide can do for you

Your website is the cornerstone of your marketing plan.

In this day and age, it is the starting point of any **marketing success.** So you are smart to make this investment which will pay you tons in future dividends.

**Planning your website**

The first step to planning is to understand the various elements that make up a good website; one that give your website visitors (potential clients) an awesome online experience, which make them choose to do business with you.

This easy to follow guide walks you through the main design and layout elements as well as other important factors to consider when starting or revamping your website.

**Your goal**

While going through this guide, keep the website's goal in mind: to attract potential clients, deliver a pleasurable experience, and convert them into paying customers.

# 2 DOMAIN & HOSTING

## Not as scary as it sounds

**DOMAIN NAME:** If you are new to the online world, the first thing you need to do is register a domain name for your business. Domain name registration runs from $10.00 to $15.00 per year and you will need to renew it every year.

**HOSTING:** This is the server where your website "lives" and allows the internet to find and display your website. Hosting can cost from $60.00 to $150.00 per year. The more years you pay, the less your payment will be.

I highly recommend Blue Host and Hostgator (owned by the same company) for their unlimited disk space, bandwidth, and easy to use control panel (similar to a dashboard). Both companies offer domain registration and hosting. If someone else registered your domain or host for you, ensure you have your login info.

**A little note**

You can register your domain and purchase hosting elsewhere. However, we should let you know that there are hosting companies we **don't work** with due to their inflexible control panels. We love easy peasy systems, because you and I have better things to do than worrying about control panels.

Don't worry if this scares you even a little bit; we'll help you take care of it.

# 3 WEBPAGE LAYOUT

## The 3 main layouts

During the planning stage, it is important to have a good understanding of page layout. There are three main layouts you should be aware of:

- **Home page**
- **Inner page**
- **Sales page**

For obvious reasons, your homepage is the most important page to plan when it comes to designing your site.

And while there are other layout options you can explore; these are some of the most common pages.

A great layout provides the best navigational experience which sets you apart from your competitors and brings you more clicks.

# 4 HEADER DESIGN

## Wow your customers!

The wow factor is on the header.

It's the first thing that visitors see when they arrive on your site as it is your focal point; so make it magnificent.

**Your header does two things:**

1. It captures your visitors attention, which makes them want to stick around, so it is important to keep it visually appealing. Creating appeal include no unnecessary, irrelevant items on your site (like flashing things or music, unless you are a musician or an artist).

2. It tells your audience what you are about with a crystal clear message of who you are and **what you can do for them.** Taglines are used for this purpose.

It also sets your website's colour scheme, layout, and tone to achieve a cohesive and visually pleasing look.

# 5 COLOUR THEME

## The colour of emotion

What kind of emotion do you want your potential client to feel when they come to your website?

Is it “meh” or “Ooh-la-la!”?

The proper use of colours and textures, along with shapes and lines add interest to your site’s design, as well as evoke a wide range of emotional responses (both postive and negative).

Understanding them is an important part of successful design projects.

photos courtesy of www.design-seeds.com

Examples:

- Hot and warm hues ignite action, fire, energy, hunger, and excitement.
- Earth tones evoke tranquility, freshness, and health.
- Blues are for peace, serenity, and security.

Whatever colour you choose, it’s best to limit the number of colours to three.

# 6 TYPOGRAPHY FONTS

## Yes! Typography matters in web design

This quote from Smashing magazine says it all:

> "Typography has the potential to go beyond merely telling a story — it shows the user who is behind the website and what you're about."

Depending on the type of business you are in and the feeling you want your customers to experience. The fonts you use and the scale can be business like, tranquil, playful or elegant. Whatever you choose, always keep in mind **readability.**

**Types of fonts:**

- **Sarif font:** With tails such as Times Roman.
- **Sans serif:** Clean without tails.
- **Decoratives:** Fancy (best for titles).

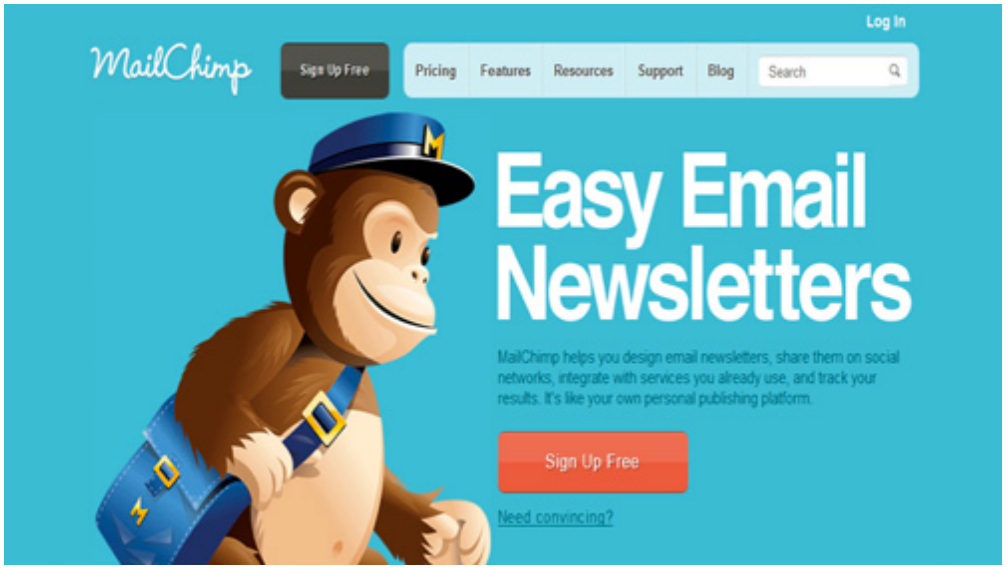
Simple fonts can speak louder.

**Headlines, titles, and taglines:** This is where you can go to town and let your personality shine through. Just remember that consistency and coordination (put together) can be powerful.

Fonts are not limited to your default fonts; there are thousands to choose from.

# 7 THE RIGHT IMAGE

## The right image can prompt people to buy




It's irrational, I know.  But it's true.

If an image makes your customer feels right, they'll take action.

Your image and other visual elements should support **your main business message.**

**Stock photos**

While stock photos (generic photos available for purchase online) are acceptable alternatives (if used correctly), I prefer to see the human side of a business with real photos of the company's staff  and, in fact, many business owners are following this trend.  If that's not an option, you may want to use a mascot like this super cool **MailChimp** monkey.

But remember, images can either improve or devalue your business brand. It's a trust-building element of your site.

# 8 CONTENT THAT SELLS

## Content is king

When it comes to websites, there is **"content"** and there is **"content that sells".** Your website can be a cash generating machine if done correctly.

Here is the hard truth about websites: You can write all you want, but if it's not increasing sales, it's all for naught.

**What makes your content worth reading?**

**What creates an impact is your story and how you communicate it to your "ideal client" in an easy to read format. The use of the right words in your website copy (in other words content) is also vital in keeping them interested.**

So before you start writing your web copy (content), study your potential customers and **identify** their needs and pain points. You've probably already done market research when you first started your business, but it's worth revisiting it when writing your copy. Your message should create an impact to your ideal client, making them feel like they are in the right place.

Once you truly understand their pain(s) and what keeps them up at night, you will be able to craft content and messages that speak **directly** to your audience; through this, you will establish real connections, making them wanting more.

# 9 BELLS + WHISTLES

## Website tools and widgets you can't do without

One of the reasons we use Wordpress as the foundation (platform) for all the websites we build is because of the readily available Wordpress plugins.

**What are plugins?**

A plugin is a piece of software that acts as an add-on to your website, allowing it to do certain functions such as capturing e-mails through a form. Another example of a must-have plugin is the social media plugin; it allow visitors to share your content with their friends at a click of a button.

**Must-have plugins for your website:**

- Akismet (to keep spammers at bay)
- Contact form 7 (for your contact us page)
- Google XML sitemaps (helps keep Google happy)
- Social shares (encourage your audience to share the love)
- Google analytics (helps you monitor what's working)
- Call-to-action box (to encourage subscription)

# 10 CALL TO ACTION

## In marketing, nothing happens until someone does something

They either buy or sign-up to hear more from you. When neither of these happen, your website fail to do its job.

**By survey, the top three problems for website owners are:**

1. Not enough visitors (website traffic).

2. Bounce (visitors come in and leave immediately).

3. People don't click the buy or sign-up button.

**Websites that sell** will have all the aforementioned elements on their website plus powerful call-to-action, in the form of sign-up forms, or buttons strategically placed on the site telling potential customers to take action. If you've done your job well with your content, they will be happy to sign up.

**Call-to-action** is worth paying attention to if you want to turn "**browsers**" into "**buyers**".

# SUMMARY

## Let's recap...

1. **Domain and Hosting:** Choose the right one that fits your need.
2. **Webpage layout:** Three different layout (homepage, inner page and sales page).
3. **Header design:** Get it right with a professional logo and header which goes a long way.
4. **Colour theme:** Let the colour inspire your readers.
5. **Typography:** Choose wisely. Don't go over three fonts.
6. **The right image:** Avoid impersonal stock photos if possible.
7. **Content that sells:** Know your customers, use magnetic words and craft content that speaks to them.
8. **Bells & wistles:** Website plugins add more functionality and sales.
9. **Call-to-action:** Craft powerful and irresistible call-to-actions that converts **browsers** into **paying customers.**

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# 12 CONGRATULATIONS!

## Thank you for letting me share this guide with you!

Now you are ready to experience...

…the thrill of having a website that is a true reflection of your style and the envy of your competitors (and friends).

If you are already working with us, this guide will help you get a headstart. If not, check out our design and marketing offer to see if we are a fit for your project.

**Our design and marketing plan is right for you if:**

- You are tired of trying different marketing strategies to "make it work" which usually end up with you broke and frustrated because you can't figure out why your website and marketing ideas are not making you money.
- You are ready to play a bigger game and become a professional online entrepreneur with offerings and services that are well presented.
- You are tired of your ho-hum website and want something brilliant and fresh.
- You don't want just another website. You want something more.

When you are ready to make an investment for your business, and wish to work with us to create something that attracts customers 24/7, check the best plan for your project here.

# 13 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi!

I am Imie Belanger. I've been dabbling online since 1988 and built my first website in 2003.

I am not a web designer or programmer. I am a business woman just like you, with a team of designers and programmers working with me. Together, we've been creating websites and marketing concepts since 2008.

**Why is this good for you?**

As an online entrepreneur, not only do I understand web design and marketing, I also understand what it takes to run a business online. So when you become our client, you tap into our multiple talents, skills and experience to create something that makes business sense.

It's one thing to have a pretty website; it's another thing to **make it work for you.** My marketing and project management skills and experience will help you get your website project done on target with less hassle.

Are you ready to stop losing money with your ho-hum website?