✅ The Ultimate Website Checklist for Small Business Owners

Everything You Need Before and After Launch

📝 Introduction

Building a website for your small business can feel overwhelming, especially if it's your first time. That's why I created this checklist — to help you stay on track and make sure your website has everything it needs to attract customers, build trust, and support your goals.

Whether you're doing it yourself or working with someone, this guide walks you through every important step from idea to launch (and beyond). Let's get your website done right the first time.

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1. Planning Phase

Before diving into design or tech, it's important to lay a strong foundation:

- ✅ **Define your website's goal**
  Are you trying to get more leads, showcase your work, bring in bookings, or just be findable online? Knowing your main goal keeps everything focused.

- ✅ **Know your target audience**
  Who are you trying to reach? Think about what they need, how they search, and what will make them trust you.

- ✅ **Research a few competitors' websites**
  Take notes: What do you like or dislike? What are they doing well? What's missing that you could do better?

- ✅ **Decide on must-have pages**
  Most businesses need a Home, About, Services or Products, and Contact page at minimum.

- ✅ **Write or gather your content**
  This includes your business info, images, service descriptions, testimonials, logo, etc. It's okay if it's not perfect — just get started!

- ✅ **Set a realistic budget and timeline**
  Whether you're hiring someone or doing it yourself, plan your time and money so the project doesn't stall out halfway.

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2. Design Essentials

Your site's design is often the first impression people get of your business. Here's what to include:

- ✅ **Clean layout & simple navigation**
  Don't make visitors work to find things. Stick to 5–6 main menu items, max.

- ✅ **Mobile-friendly design**
  Most people will visit your site on their phone — it needs to look great and be easy to use.

- ✅ **Use high-quality images**
  Avoid blurry or generic stock photos. Use real photos of your work or team if you can.

- ✅ **Consistent colors and fonts**
  Stick to 1–2 fonts and 2–3 brand colors throughout. Keep it simple and cohesive.

- ✅ **Clear CTAs (calls-to-action)**
  Every page should lead the visitor toward an action: "Book Now", "Contact Me", "Get a Quote", etc.

- ✅ **Add your logo and branding**
  Use your logo in the header or top-left corner of the site. Make sure your visual identity is consistent.

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3. Content Must-Haves

Good content builds trust and helps your visitors understand what you do. Here's what to include:

- ✅ **Clear homepage headline**
  Explain what you do in plain English within the first few seconds.

- ✅ **About page with your story**
  Share your background, values, or mission. People love to know who they're

supporting.

- ✅ **Services or products explained simply**
  No jargon. Just what you offer, how it helps, and how to get it.

- ✅ **Contact page with all the basics**
  Include a form, email, phone number, and maybe a map if location matters.

- ✅ **Testimonials or reviews**
  Real quotes from happy customers go a long way in building credibility.

- ✅ **FAQ section**
  Answer common questions to save time and reduce hesitation.

- ✅ **Social links or proof**
  Add icons linking to your active platforms — it makes you feel more real and trustworthy.

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4. Technical & SEO Basics

This is the stuff that helps your site get found and run smoothly — and it's not as scary as it sounds:

- ✅ **Use your own domain name**
  Something like `yourbusiness.com` makes you look way more professional than `yourbusiness.wordpress.com`.

- ✅ **SSL certificate (HTTPS)**
  That little padlock icon in the browser means your site is secure. It's essential.

- ✅ **Optimize image sizes**
  Use compressed images so your site loads fast, especially on mobile.

- ✅ **Meta titles & descriptions for every page**
  These help search engines (and users) understand what each page is about.

- ✅ **Alt text for images**
  Write short descriptions for each image — it helps with both accessibility and SEO.

- ✅ **Submit to Google Search Console**
  It's free and helps your site appear in Google search results.

- ✅ **Fast load speed (under 3s)**
  Visitors will leave if your site takes too long. Aim for speed.

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5. Legal & Accessibility

Don't overlook the basics that keep your site trustworthy and usable for everyone:

- ✅ **Privacy Policy**
  Especially important if you're collecting emails, using analytics, or embedding social tools.

- ✅ **Terms & Conditions**
  Useful if you sell services or collect customer data.

- ✅ **Cookie consent**
  If you're using tracking tools, show a simple cookie banner.

- ✅ **Readable fonts**
  Fancy cursive might look cool, but if people can't read it, it's not working.

- ✅ **Good contrast between text & background**
  Make sure light text isn't on a light background, or dark-on-dark.

- ✅ **Accessible image descriptions**
  Use alt text and make sure key content isn't only communicated through visuals.

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6. Launch Checklist

Before you show the world your new site, double-check these essentials:

- ✅ **Test on phone, tablet, and desktop**
  Make sure everything looks and works across devices.

- ✅ **Test all forms (and email responses)**
  Send a test message through your contact form to check delivery.

- ✅ **Check all links**
  Click every link — internal and external — to make sure nothing's broken.

- ✅ **Proofread everything**
  Typos make you look unprofessional. Read out loud or ask a friend to check it.

- ✅ **Install Google Analytics**
  This lets you track how people find and use your site.

- ✅ **Back up your website**
  Before launch, and regularly after. Just in case.

- ✅ **Announce your launch** 🎉
  Share it on social media, with your email list, and even in person!

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7. Post-Launch Essentials

A website isn't "done" the day it goes live. Here's how to keep it working for you:

- ✅ **Set up email capture**
  Offer a freebie, checklist, or newsletter sign-up to grow your list.

- ✅ **Add your biz to Google Maps / Google Business Profile**
  Helps people find you in local search results.

- ✅ **Ask for early testimonials**
  Follow up with your first few clients and ask for a quick quote.

- ✅ **Monitor performance monthly**
  Check traffic, bounce rate, and where people are dropping off.

- ✅ **Plan for updates**
  Even just once a month — add new photos, testimonials, or small edits.

- ✅ **Blog or share updates (if relevant)**
  Fresh content keeps your site active in Google's eyes and gives people a reason to come back.

💡 Bonus Tips (High-Value Extras You Won't Hear Everywhere)

- 🧠 **Prioritize one clear action per page**
  Don't give your visitors 5 buttons to click — one focused CTA per page = better

results.

- ⏱️ **Record people using your site**
  Use a tool like Hotjar to see where people get stuck or click — it's game-changing.

- 💬 **Use your customers' words**
  Talk to real people and note the exact phrases they use — then use those in your headlines.

- 🧱 **Start simple, scale later**
  You don't need every feature on day one. Focus on clarity and trust, then add more over time.

- 🧭 **Plan updates before you need them**
  Keep your site feeling fresh — even a quick tweak or testimonial every month helps.

🎯 Conclusion

Your website doesn't have to be perfect — but it does need to be clear, fast, and built with intention. This checklist gives you everything you need to get started with confidence.

And if at any point it feels like too much, or you're ready to hand things off to a pro — I'd be happy to help. Your business deserves a website that works as hard as you do.

👉 Want to chat about your project? [Reach out here.](#)