SunSeeker Studios

Growth-Oriented Web Design & Digital Marketing

Six Website Mistakes That Are Costing **You** Clients!

Optimize Your Website, **Connect** With More Prospects, **Scale** Your Business!

First edition - August 2017

Sam Beeton

Contents

Attention To Detail and Why It's Critical.

With the cut-throat levels of competition on the web today, even seemingly tiny flaws in your business's digital presence can mean the difference between a making a sale, landing the client… or not paying the bills this month.

Web users today are becoming more -savvy all the time, with the average user **visiting around 89 websites per month**, according to Nielsen Research. This refinement of users' browsing preferences means an ever-increasing demand is being placed on businesses to provide not only stand-out aesthetics, but also flawless functionality to users of their website or app.

It's no secret that a sleek, professional and (most importantly!) functional website is **crucial to every small business's success**, however it's all too common to see an-otherwise fantastic small business going down the drain due to some critical errors on their website.

In this report, we will discuss six of the most common design and functionality mistakes to look out for with your own website, and how to manage them if they do happen to rear their ugly heads!

So, without further ado, let's dive on in!

1. Layout Issues

Layout problems are perhaps the easiest of all to identify, even to those with no tech experience.

Despite being so easy to spot, it is unfortunately all too common to see a small business website with major design and/or layout issues proudly staring their users in the face!

With the rise of "Do it yourself" website builders over the last few years, many small business owners dive head-first into building their own website with little to no actual planning, thinking it's a fantastic way to save some money during the already costly start-up phase of their business.

Unfortunately, due to their lack of web design knowledge, their website ends up being poorly constructed, with little to no **information hierarchy,** conflicting colour schemes, and no regard given to mobile responsiveness.

Common layout issues to keep an eye out for include:

Incorrect use of text/font sizes and fonts

Amateur designers often make the mistake of using multiple font types and varying sizes throughout their website. However, this results in a messy, disorganized appearance to the website, and should be avoided wherever possible.

It is generally recommended that you use no more than 2 different font families throughout your website, to ensure maximum readability.

I also generally recommend against using **"Serif" or decorative style fonts** as these can result in readability and accessibility issues for users who may be vision impaired or otherwise unable to read these less-clear font families. Instead, opt for a simple, "Sans-Serif" font, which allows for easy readability on the web.

Uneven spacing or heights of elements

Often easy to miss, small height and spacing errors can have a serious effect on the overall professionalism of your website. This is where a **professional designer's** eye will really come to the forefront, picking up even the tiniest of alignment issues and easily correcting them before your customers have a chance to even see it!

Too many colours, or a conflicting colour scheme

Think electric pink with flashing green banners – 1985 anyone!?

We see far too many small business websites that have employed no **cohesive colour schemes** throughout.

At best, this results in a mismatched, sloppy appearance to your website, and thus business. At worst, highly contrasting or fluorescent colour schemes will actively drive users away from your site.

Working to a **design brief,** including your businesses main colours combined with subtly contrasting CTA (call-to-action's) will ensure your website fits your business's branding profile flawlessly, and represents your as the professional organization your customers are looking for!

Broken or dead links

Dead links are highly frustrating to users; How many times have you gone to follow a link, only to receive the dreaded **404 error**?

Bad Juju!

Ensuring a thorough link-checking procedure is regularly carried out on your entire website will ensure dead links are caught if they do happen to slip through the cracks!

Poor page layout

Although these DIY website builders are marketed as an "easy solution" to hiring a professional web designer, the truth is that no piece of software can make up for the years of real-world experience and skills that an expert designer brings to your project.

By hiring a trusted professional web designer, you'll guarantee that your business's digital presence is intricately planned and precisely laid-out to optimize for your set of business goals.

In fact, the time and cost taken to first begin designing your own website, only to run into problems requiring you to hire a designer, will far outweigh the small upfront costs of letting a professional handle the job from the start!

2. Non-Responsive Website Design

With over 50% of users now accessing the web from mobile devices, it's impossible to avoid the fact that your website needs to cater to this dominant market if you're serious about your success.

Enter responsive design, where your website is developed using a fluid, "responsive grid" layout, that allows the site to detect your user's' device screen size, and rescale to fit accordingly.

Essentially, think of the screen as a container, and your website content as water inside that container. A responsive website's content will rescale, re-stack and re-organize smoothly according to the size of the screen. A non-responsive site will simply appear at full-size, usually cut-off by the smaller screen size.

As the name implies, responsive design begins in the planning phases of your website, where content and layouts are carefully designed and prioritized to maximize user-experience across all devices.

This is another area where DIY website builders often fall short, as the designer is often unable to access the source-code of the website in the event of any responsive layout issues, and are therefore limited to the capabilities of the software.

Working with a professional web designer is the best way to ensure your website layout stands out across all device formats, whilst offering razor-sharp functionality to your users.

3. Functionality Issues

You've been searching the web for days to find a photographer to capture your best friend's upcoming wedding. You've been scouring social media, reading reviews and researching the best local businesses to handle this trusted job… FINALLY you come across a small local photography business.

You click through to their website contact form… fill it out… and…. Nothing…. The form freezes. Do not pass go, do not collect $200.

So, What's your next move? Well, if you're like most people, you leave their website and give your business to a (savvier) competitor!

This is just one simple example, however it's an issue that is, again, far too commonly seen on small business websites. It's of critical importance that your website is well constructed from the ground up, and this includes the core functionality of your on-page elements such as:

- Contact and signup forms
- Image galleries/sliders
- Broken or auto-playing videos
- Lack of, or broken search function/s
- Inaccessible content
   A professional website will be thoroughly tested on a regular basis to ensure complete functionality of all components. This has the on flow effect of reducing time overheads and need for extensive "damage control" when discovering a previously unknown fault.

4. Slow Page Speeds

Believe it or not, a 1-second delay in page load time equals 11% fewer page views, a 16% decrease in customer satisfaction, and 7% loss in conversions, according to a **report by Aberdeen Group.**

Yes, this means you and your website!

Website speed performance is clearly a critical factor to your customers, and rightfully so, after all, we go online for the convenience, right? If we are forced to fight our way through poorly constructed websites simply to pay for a product or service, there's little motivation to do so. Instead, we (read: your users) will simply navigate away from your website, and likely onto a competitor.

 Beyond your customers, pagespeed is a key factor used by **Google** when ranking your website in SERP (search engine results pages).

Optimizing your website's page speed can be best achieved through the following strategies:

Optimize images

It's common to see amateur websites loaded with massive, oversized images that consume enormous amounts of resources each time a user loads a page. Now, don't get me wrong – this is more of a balancing act than a hard-and-fast rule. And therein lies the confusion for amateur designers…

You see, it's not always possible to use a low-resolution image (such as large "hero section" style pages, which feature a high-resolution header image.) In these instances, how do you manage efficient page loading, whilst serving high-quality images?

This is where the balancing act comes into play.

Whilst there a number of technical elements to consider, a skilled designer will primarily balance image quality with image size to strike a perfect equilibrium between aesthetics and website performance.

Other techniques that your web developer will employ include:

- Page caching,

- Serving images via a CDN (Content Delivery Network)

- Minifying source code wherever possible

5. Copywriting Errors

Writing is a challenge for almost everyone, but writing quality website sales copy is a seriously rare talent!

Unfortunately, copywriting is simultaneously one of the most difficult aspects for an amateur to get right, and the single most commonly neglected aspect of small business websites.

As impressive as your Shakespearian skills may be, when it comes to writing content that converts users to buyers, it's almost **always best to let a professional handle the task for you.**

This will ensure that your copy is developed in such a way as to subtly guide and compel the user towards the end-goal of the interaction – a sale, signup, or purchase in most cases.

In addition to optimizing your website's sales funnel in text-form, a professional copywriter will also ensure your **website is SEO** (search engine optimized).

This will involve analyzing your keyword list, and developing the content around these core search terms.

Furthermore, the copywriter will optimize the text layout for SEO (search engine optimization), ensuring all heading and text structures are correctly formatted.

6. Poor Quality Images or Graphics

Although we spoke briefly about images earlier, this guide wouldn't be complete without discussing the flipside of oversized images - Inferior quality images.

Often, people are so excited to start creating their website, that they fail to consider their image content until it is too late. Then, they're forced to scramble around trying to find any images that are even slightly relevant, simply to fill space. This results in poor quality, stretched, grainy, or simply irrelevant images strewn across your websites homepage.

This throws up an immediate red flag to a prospective customer, who will instantly begin to question the validity and trustworthiness of the business. Think about it: if the business can't even take the time to produce a decent image for their products or services, how can the customer trust that the offering itself is of good quality?

General guidelines for using images for web use include:

- Using .JPG or .PNG file types for website images.

- Resize images to fit required dimensions to eliminate unnecessary image data

- Name and title images according to SEO best practices

- Serve content via a CDN (content delivery network) wherever possible

   Ensuring your images are all correctly sized and organized prior to commencing a web project will ensure the design and development process is smooth and efficient, whilst ensuring your website represents your small business professionally, providing an outstanding user experience and ensuring ongoing business from your customers well into the future.

The Bottom Line

It's a dog-eat-dog world on there on the web, with business owners faced with the constant battle between managing limited budgets and ensuring they are marketing their business effectively. Implementing a professional web presence is one of the most effective, and cost efficient methods to market, automate and scale a small business in any industry, however it's critical to ensure you are representing your company in a professional light if you're going to achieve and maintain an edge over your competitors.

By working with a **trusted web design agency** to implement and maintain the above techniques in your own website, you will ensure that your customers are being provided with a stand-out user experience, which translates into more sales, more signups, and more clients returning to do business with you in future!

I sincerely hope this report has shed some light on some common conversion-killers seen on small business websites, and will allow you to differentiate your website from the competition and be seen!

Until Next Time!

Sam Beeton

Creative Director
SunSeekerStudios.com

SunSeeker Studios

Growth-Oriented Web Design & Digital Marketing

Visit Us Today!

SunSeekerStudios.com

info@SunSeekerStudios.com