



10

10 Questions
to Ask About
Your Web
Design Project

What's Inside

When your business needs a new website, deciding what you want is sometimes the hardest part. You know you need a website, but do you know what you want it to do? How you want it to look? It's okay if the answer is no.

Today, effective websites must be equipped with content management systems, SEO strategy, conversion rate strategy and much more. That's why we created this road map for starting your web design project: 10 questions that will help you establish what kind of website you need, and show you how to find an agency that can deliver it.

This ebook will help you and your marketing team get started on your website and navigate the many decisions you'll have to make before you can launch your new site.

Ready? Awesome. So are we.
- The SeeSmart Team



**“Ask the right
questions, know
your path.”**

1

What are your objectives?

What do you want your new website to accomplish?

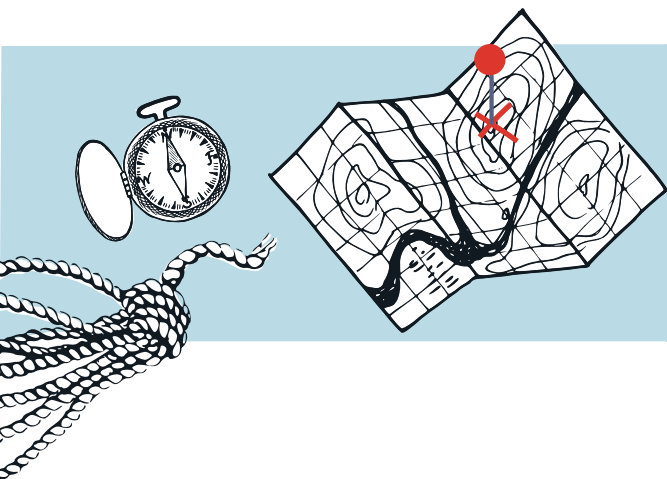
All good strategies first start with outlining clear, measurable objectives. A new website is an investment and therefore should have an ROI. However, this investment should be made in order to accomplish strategic goals. The following are not good reasons to invest in a new website: It's the 21st century. Everyone else has a website. We need a new "look".

Before you can start your web project, you must determine the goals behind your new site or redesign. Your website is a tool, not a billboard. It's a big investment, and if you're not putting it to work for you, you're not maximizing your investment.

- **Improve Sales**
- **Increase Web Traffic**
- **Boost Conversions**

Just as you set monthly and yearly projections for your business, you should consider how much you want your website to improve sales, attract prospects, increase website traffic, and boost conversions.

Once you have determined the business goals of your site, your web team can help you reach these goals by setting targets for unique site visitors, SEO ranking, domain authority, time on site, and more.



“Your website is a tool, not a billboard.”

2

How does your website represent your brand?

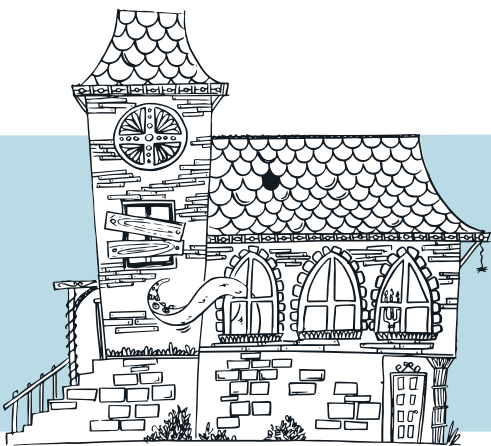
You've spent years building your company's brand

and your website needs to be the ultimate representation of it. Your website should not only represent your brand's position, but also its personality. A website is one of the most visible elements of a brand's presence and is a make or break opportunity to connect with customers.

The basics include using the correct color palettes and design elements. But there are also more subtle elements to consider, such as the user experience. If your site is confusing or frustrating to navigate, then your customer just had a bad experience with your brand.

A website's content (copy) is as important as the graphical design elements. In order to accurately portray your brand, your website's content must speak in a tone that accurately represents your brand's personality. Tone and personality aside, your website must clearly and compellingly state your brand's value proposition.

You wouldn't meet clients in a messy office, or do business in a dirty storefront with broken windows. When people visit your website, make sure that their first impression is more like an attractive office, a comfy chair and a hot cup of coffee.



“You wouldn't meet clients in a messy office, or do business in a dirty storefront with broken windows.”

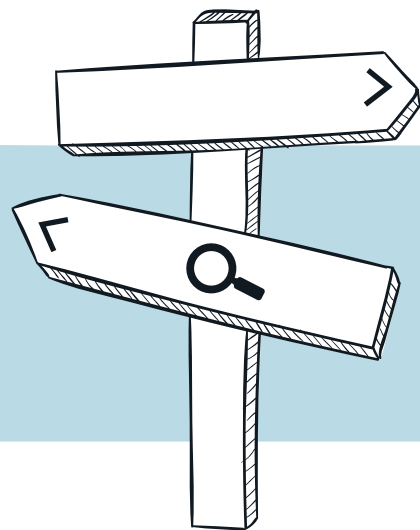
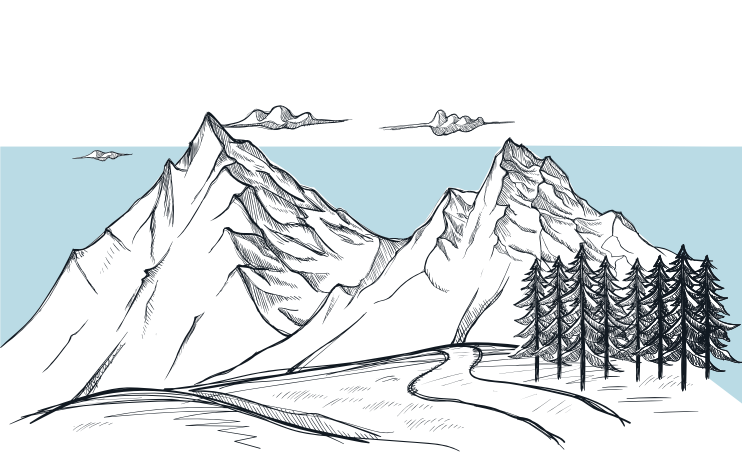
3 What's your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy?

Search Engine Optimization is the practice of improving and promoting a website in order to increase the number of visitors the site receives from search engines. Specifically, an SEO strategy seeks to improve a website's rankings on search engine results pages for their target keywords.

Any web design firm worth its salt should be able to provide a basic SEO foundation when building your site—in fact, we believe it's irresponsible not to. A comprehensive agency will provide ongoing SEO services that continuously improve your search engine rankings, driving targeted traffic to your site month after month.



“75 percent of users never click past the first page of results”





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SEO helps your website rank well in search engines. When you rank well for important keywords your website receives more targeted search traffic. When you have more targeted search traffic on your site you're likely to have more sales.

A proper SEO strategy will address basic onsite optimization such as updating page copy, titles, page descriptions, URL structures, image tags, internal linking, etc. Additionally this strategy should include a plan for monthly content creation that helps consistently add new content to your website and build inbound links.



4 What's your conversion strategy?

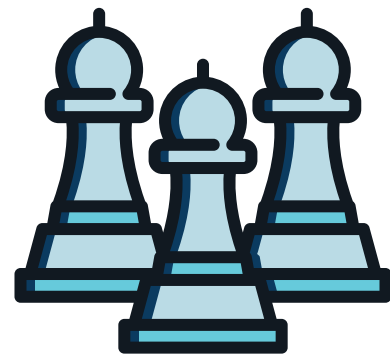
What's the goal of your website? Really, think about it.

Do you have a website simply because you know you need one, or is your website part of a comprehensive marketing strategy designed to drive leads/sales? A conversion occurs on a website when a user "converts" from simply a website visitor to either a lead or sale. Conversion means different things depending on your business: if you sell products online, a conversion is a purchase. If the goal of your website is to get someone to call you for an estimate, a conversion is a phone call. If you want people to contact you for more information or fill out an RFP, then a conversion is filling out a form.

What matters is how that web visitor goes from visitor to conversion. Your website should act like a funnel, deliberately guiding visitors towards a page where they will convert. A carefully planned strategy for converting leads is something websites often lack.

We're going to show our port city roots and use a fishing analogy here: your site should function like a lobster trap. A lobster trap is designed so that the lobsters can easily find their way in, then they're enticed further and further into the trap.

Now, your customers aren't crustaceans. But the idea is that you want to make it very easy for them to find their way to the page where they convert, and then make it hard for them to leave until they have completed the conversion.



5 Do you want a responsive site?

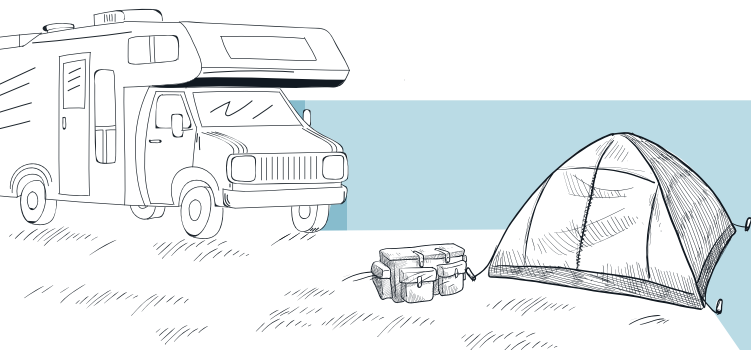
Smart phones are the first thing many people look at when they wake up and the last thing they look at before falling asleep. We used to refer to mobile as “the third screen”—that is, after TV and computers—but really, it’s time to start thinking of it as the first screen.

A responsive website adjusts or “responds” to the device it’s being viewed on. Whether you’re on an iPhone, iPad, Kindle, laptop, or desktop computer, a responsive website will adjust and display correctly. If your site isn’t designed to expand and contract to fit a variety of screens, you’re limiting the number of people who spend time on your site, and thus the number of leads you get through your site.

Isn’t that expensive?

Yes. We’d be lying to you if we said otherwise. Responsive sites are very labor intensive to build and will cost you more than a typical “brochure” style site. However, consider that among smartphone users, 74 percent have made a purchase based on a mobile search, and a whopping 95 percent have used their phone to find local businesses, deals and information (Google, 2011).

Responsive design ensures your site will make the leap right along with the latest and greatest device advances the future has in store for us.



“Responsive design is the key to future proofing your website.”

6 How will website traffic be measured?

There should be exactly zero guess work involved with your website.

Total visibility into how well it's - working or not working - is essential, so Google Analytics should be installed on any website you launch.

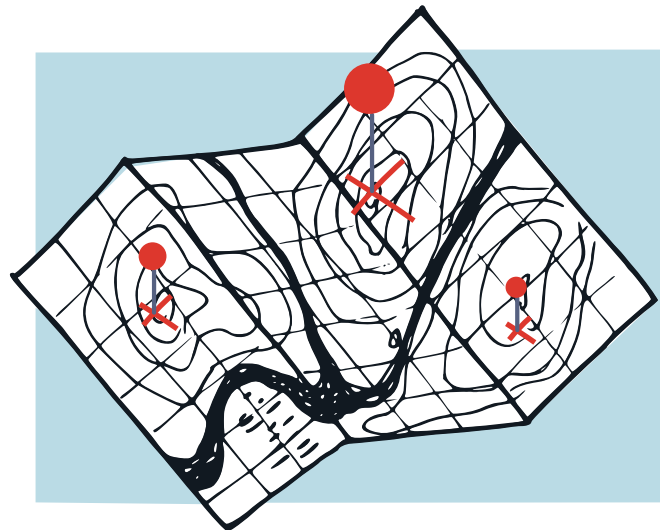


Google Analytics is a service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics and reports about the visits to a website.

If you've read this far, you know that putting a website online without an inbound marketing strategy won't get it found—you need a comprehensive traffic driving strategy for that. And once you have a traffic driving strategy, you need analytics to measure how well it's working—or not working.

Google Analytics will provide data on which pages people spend a lot of time on, and which pages they don't. If you're going to make the smartest possible choices about marketing your business online, you need to harness analytics to inform your decisions about SEO, conversion rate optimization, user experience and design.

When you have complete analytics in hand, you are empowered to keep doing what's working and adapt the things that aren't. Adapting and experimenting are key to developing a powerful website, but if you aren't armed with a good understanding of your analytics you're walking blind.



7 Will your site have a blog?

There are three major reasons to incorporate blogging into your website:

SEO

Sites with blogs have on average 434 percent more indexed pages than sites without blogs. The more optimized, high quality indexed pages you have, the better your search rankings (Hubspot). What's more, search engines love new content. If you are pumping out frequently updated content that uses your target keywords and is correctly optimized for search, you can boost your SEO ranking more than you could with a site that just has static content on it.



Thought Leadership

Blogging is a great way to establish yourself as a leader in your field. Writing posts about issues in your industry allows you to position yourself as an expert, showing visitors to your site (i.e. potential sales leads) that you're an authority.

You may think you don't have anything to blog about, but the fact is that by simply being yourself you have plenty of valuable expertise and perspective to bring to a blog. Do you have an opinion about an issue in your field? Did you solve a tricky problem at work today? Can you think of some frequently asked questions that you get from clients? Those are all examples of great material for blog posts.



Social Content

When you start creating content of your own and sharing it on social media, you're providing value. That's one of the top things you can do to gain a highquality following on social media sites. Plus, creating your own content gives you built-in material for sharing on social media, and when people like and share your content, that means that your site gets more clicks.



8 What's your content creation strategy?

When you start working with an agency on an SEO strategy, you'll hear the buzzword "content" so often that it can lose its meaning.

Content is just that - all the text, photos, and videos that live on your website. Having fresh content - i.e. a site that is regularly updated - is key to ranking well in search engines. This means that you need to be creating new content on a weekly or monthly basis. This is where lots of people start getting scared.

Creating content is intimidating for a few reasons:

I don't have time!

We can handle this one. We'll work with you to create a content calendar and come up with a strategy for how you can fit content creation into your schedule. We even can write the content for you - all you need to do is approve it.



I don't know how!

Again, this is one we can tackle together. The barriers to entry for content creation are lower than ever - it's easy to start blogging, posting photos or creating video. Our training sessions will have you posting like a pro in no time - or, if you'd prefer, we can take responsibility for updating your website and blog with fresh content every month



I can't come up with fresh ideas every week!

You have more ideas than you think. Our blog coaching session will help you brainstorm a list of ideas and put them into a content calendar that will help you plan your content months ahead of time. Our SEO specialists will ensure that all of the content we are building together supports your site's overarching SEO strategy



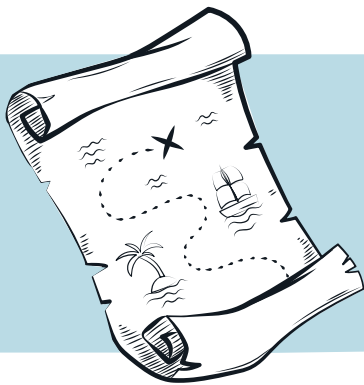
9 How will social media be integrated?

Social media for business has one goal: to drive people into our website, where they may eventually become leads.

Your social strategy should always keep this in mind. We don't treat social media as a separate entity—we know that it is there to support your sales engine, a.k.a. your website.



If you have spent time on Facebook, Twitter and other sites, you know that social media is fun for connecting with people and learning new things. However, if you want social media to help you increase revenue, it needs to be consistently driving users into your site. We work with you to optimize your social media profiles to support this relationship, and integrate your social media accounts with your new site. Your site visitors will become your social media followers, and vice versa, your social media followers will become your site visitors.



“Social followers will become website visitors.”

10 Will your site have a content management system?

We believe that you should be empowered to make simple web updates to your site. Not only because creating fresh content is important, but also because your site should be a resource for your customers. We strive to give you the flexibility to quickly update your site with news or other important information - weekly specials, holiday hours, closings for weather, etc.

A content management system (often referred to as a CMS) is the interface in which you create and update your website content. We build our blogs and many of our websites in the Wordpress CMS and provide training so that you can update the site yourself. We are happy to make these small updates for you, but many of our clients find that it is quicker and more cost-effective to learn how to update the CMS so they can make changes themselves.

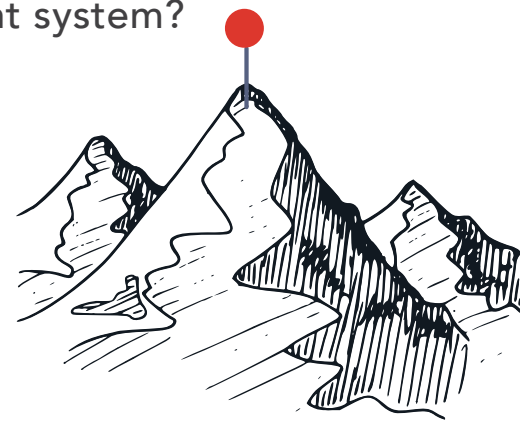
We were founded on the principle that growing businesses need flexible websites that provide a lot of bang for the buck. That's why we actually teach you to use your new CMS, rather than billing you every time you want to make an edit to your site. We provide blog trainings as part of our blog package, and we'll work with you until you feel comfortable making changes on your own. We're always here to help.



10 Questions to Ask Before Starting Your Web Design Project

Phew, you made it! Now you're armed with ten questions that will help you refine your web strategy and get prepared to launch this exciting project. The 10 questions are below. Take this sheet, tear it out, mark it up and make it yours. Heck, bring it with you when you meet with web design agencies. It's your roadmap to website success.

- 1 What are your objectives for your new website?
- 2 How will your website represent your brand?
- 3 What's your SEO strategy?
- 4 What's your conversion strategy?
- 5 Do you want a responsive site?
- 6 How will the website traffic be measured?
- 7 Will your site have a blog?
- 8 What's your content creation strategy?
- 9 How will social media be integrated?
- 10 Will your site have a content management system?





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