

## How to Create a Successful Small Business Website

By Alain Houle, president of Alco Web Design LLC

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Designing and publishing a successful website means doing better than your competitors. Sure enough, experts and information are available but time and money is usually an issue for small business owners. The reality is that 90 percent of what you need to know boils down to just a handful of key tips that can put your website on top of the search engines results.

This article provides free, simple, and comprehensive information, hints, tips, and tools that will allow you to create a successful website. If you have time to learn, this article will show you how to get the best of your website and how to run a successful internet business.

**Type of website:** Take the time to clearly identify the purpose of your website. What is it for? Who is the audience? Do you want to keep in touch with existing customers, attract new ones, provide information, or sell on-line? What do you want to do? If it is not clear for you it won't be for your visitors.

**Web pages text:** A useful and content rich website will convince your visitors about the seriousness of your business and will invite them to return to your website. Plan ahead and don't make your content an after fact. Work and rework the text of your web pages, especially your home page.

**What pages are needed?:** Your main page will be used to provide a quick snap shot of your business and of your website. Your about us page will provide detailed information about your company, key individuals, etc. Your links page will link to partners, affiliate, or other resources. Your FAQ page will answer common questions. What other pages will you have?

**Good web page layout:** Keeping your page layout consistent, simple, and standard will help visitors finding what they need and come back to your website. Think thoroughly about the navigation through your website. If you can, use a horizontal navigation menu and use the full width of the page for the content of your website. Keep it simple, make it easy.

**Overall look:** What do you want your website to look like? Is there something on the Internet you like or don't like? What colors do you want to use? How do big companies with unlimited budgets do? How do your competitors do? Be careful, copying the work of others is illegal. What can you do better?

**Pictures, logos, and artwork:** Find pictures, logos, and artwork for your web pages. Save time and money by scanning printed documents you might already have. Use a digital camera and take your own pictures. Many websites including Microsoft offers great royalty free pictures.

**Proofing everything, take your time:** Your website affects the image you project. Typos and careless mistakes immediately label you as sloppy and unprofessional. Pricing errors might be costly. Click on every button and double check everything. Make sure everything is perfect and fully functional prior to go live.

**Your website designer knows very little about your business:** Are you working with somebody on your website design project? No matter how good your website designer is, he or she knows very little about your business. Your input is VERY critical to the success of your

website. Be EXTREMELY concerned about the results if you are not deeply involved with the design of your website.

**Provide constructive feedback:** Work closely with your web designer and play an active part in the review process. Be honest, clear, and specific. Make suggestions, be picky: This is your business, your website.

**Domain name and hosting:** Get your hosting and domain name registration from a reliable quality provider. These days, small business packages are available for less than \$25 per year. Shop around.

**Building website traffic:** Congratulation, you are on-line. This is a very important first step but now you need visitors. Good news, several traffic building techniques are very simple and can be implemented for free.

*Alain Houle*

**Alco Web Design** - <http://www.alcowedesign.com>

N1337 Westgreen drive  
Greenville Wisconsin 54942  
920-850-4642  
[staff@alcowedesign.com](mailto:staff@alcowedesign.com)