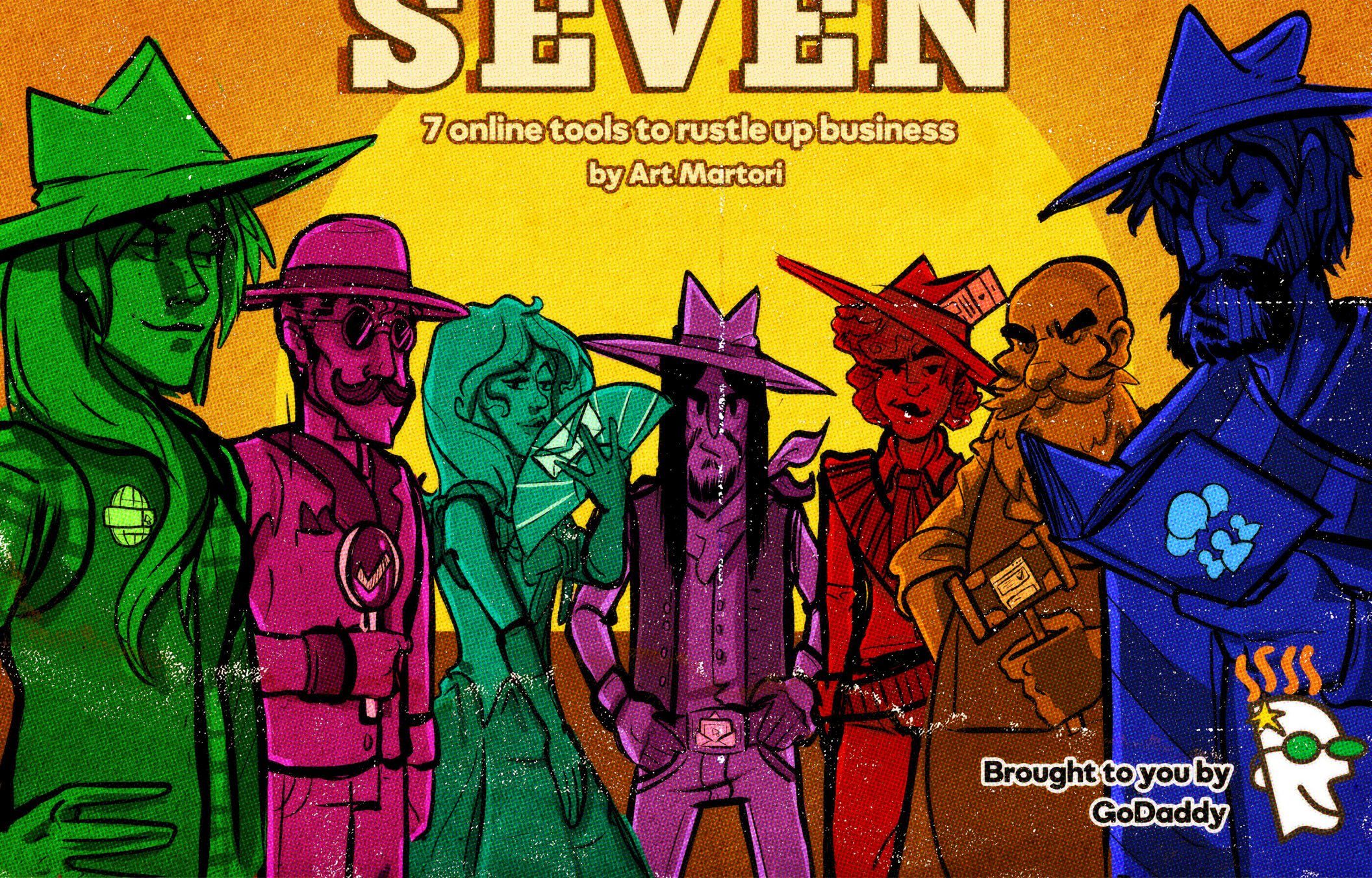


# THE SIGNIFICANT SEVEN

7 online tools to rustle up business

by Art Martori



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# The Significant Seven

**7 online tools to rustle up business**

By Art Martori

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and tricks  
for running  
a better  
business  
online? The  
GoDaddy  
blog has you  
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# Introduction



## Introduction

# Circle the wagons

For today's small business owner, succeeding online can surely be a daunting proposition. You might be firmly established in the brick-and-mortar world, but let's face it: on the internet you're outnumbered. In fact, at the time of this book's publication the internet as a whole included nearly 1.1 billion websites.

So how do you gain an advantage in the face of those overwhelming odds? Simple: bring in some muscle. The following chapters will help you get started with seven online essentials that will boost your online presence into the upper echelons of the web.

**The latest statistics show there's about one website for every seven people on the planet. These days, simply having a site online just doesn't cut it. You need to set up an online presence that works as hard as you do to keep your business ahead of the game.**



## Introduction

# Meet the Significant Seven

Like the villagers in that 1960s Western, *The Magnificent Seven*, you need to enlist some help if you're going to stand your ground online. The following chapters offer a closer look at seven online essentials that can take your online presence from desperate to dominant:

**1. Custom domain.** Picking out a custom domain is where your online identity starts. Don't settle for the freebie that might've come included with your email or another application. Getting the right custom domain takes a bit of thought, but it's crucial to your online success.

**2. Professional email address.** An email address that uses your custom domain will instantly put you a notch above the competition using a free email service. It's the first hint that you're digitally savvy, and it opens the door for all kinds of other branding and lead-generation efforts.

**3. Mobile-friendly website.** Now that you're driving people toward your online presence, make sure they're engaged via a website that looks as great as it performs. It needs to be mobile-friendly, and include a variety of media — like images, videos and well-crafted text.

**4. Search-friendly content.** Not too long ago, putting some punchy text on a web page was all the thought that went into content. But today content isn't just words — and it isn't just for humans. Kick-ass web content shows as well as tells (think video) and is optimized to attract the attention of search engines like Google.

**5. Accurate online business listings.** If you're already in business it's likely you're already listed on sites like Google, Yelp and Foursquare. And if you aren't, it's time to make that happen. But having those local business listings is just the start. You need to make sure they're accurate, and paint a fair and honest picture of your business.

**6. Effective email marketing.** Are you looking at every email you get as a lead? With a working knowledge of email marketing, you'll soon be exploring those leads and making sure people are regularly reminded of what you offer and why it's so awesome.

**7. Active social media.** In the right hands (yours), social networks like Facebook and Instagram can serve as invaluable business tools. In addition to helping you connect with your customers and showcase your products and services, regular use of social media can give you deep insights into people's behavior and how they react to an idea or offering.



A desert landscape at night. The sky is dark blue and filled with numerous stars. A bright, out-of-focus light source, likely the moon, is visible on the left side of the sky. In the foreground, there are sandy, rocky terrain and some sparse, dark desert vegetation. A large, prominent rock formation, resembling a balanced rock or a tall spire, stands on the right side of the image. The overall scene is quiet and atmospheric.

**“I admire your notion of fair odds, mister.”**

**— CHARLES BRONSON,  
THE MAGNIFICANT SEVEN**

**1**

**Custom  
domain**



## 1. Custom domain

# It's your domain

Your domain name is such an important part of taking your business online, we should pause a moment to touch on its basic definition. When we talk about domains, we're referring to the bolded parts of this example:

www.**coolexample.com**

You'll notice there are two distinct parts, *coolexample* and *.com*. You can customize both to hint at things like what you do, what makes you unique and where, generally, you're located.

**One common pitfall.** Inexpensive website-building applications often give you a domain that's not quite custom, like *coolexample.application.com*. Don't let this free solution bushwhack your brand. Take your time and come up with the perfect domain (more on that soon). When you're absolutely confident, go ahead and [register it](#).

## 1. Custom domain

# Extend your domain

Let's go back and look at the latter part of our example domain, .com. That's most often called a TLD or "top-level domain." Another common term you'll hear is "domain extension." There are quite a few domain extensions you've likely seen before, and the most common include:

coolexample.com

coolexample.net

coolexample.info

coolexample.co

coolexample.org

As you can imagine, with the millions of websites out there, competition for domain registration got pretty fierce. Enter a virtual stampede of new domain extensions, known formally as "generic top-level domains." Here are just a few examples:

coolexample.coffee

coolexample.online

coolexample.nyc

coolexample.shop

coolexample.photography

Notice anything? You can use the new domain extensions to make your domain name more specific, geographically and in terms of your industry. With hundreds of these new domain extensions already available for registration, and more rolling out all the time, it's much easier to get a short and memorable domain name that represents who you are and what you do. As we'll see later, this can be a huge benefit.



# Building a personal brand?

If the personal aspect of your online presence needs to be super-easy to find, consider starting with a [personal domain](#) — a custom web address that includes your name. You can attach your personal domain to your own website or direct it to your profile on today's most widely used social networks:

[Facebook](#)

[Linkedin](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Tumblr](#)

Pointing a personal domain at your preferred social profile can be a great solution if you don't need a full-blown website. For example, it's perfect if you're using Facebook to promote a brand, or referring potential employers to your LinkedIn profile.

A personal domain is also a good call if your online presence is still in development. You can still use the domain for email, and then point it toward your website once it's built.



## 1. Custom domain

# How to choose a domain name

Recent studies reveal the average human attention span is a mere eight seconds, equivalent to that of a goldfish. Why does that matter for your online presence? When you tell people your domain, make darn sure **it represents your business and is easy to remember**.

With that established, there are five key points to keep in mind when picking your domain:

**1. Brevity:** If someone is scrambling to write down your domain to remember it, it's too long.

**2. User-friendliness:** Unique punctuation or spellings will frustrate and misdirect visitors.

**3. Keywords:** If you can summarize what you do in a word, include that word in the domain.

**4. Geolocation:** People elsewhere might be doing the same thing, so include your location.

**5. Extensions:** Try addressing one of the above issues with a geo- or industry-specific extension.

**In the first half of 2013, nearly 10 percent of daily .com registrations were limited to five or six characters.**



## 1. Custom domain

# Worksheet: Pick the perfect domain name

Your domain is such a crucial element to your online presence, it's important to put lots of thought into choosing it. Use this worksheet to get your creativity flowing and ensure you're considering the most important points about what you do. For each section, jot down all the words that come to mind.

**Business Industry (e.g., plumbing):**



---

**Services (e.g., unclogging drains):**



---

**Products (e.g., garbage disposals):**



---

**Geographic Location (if applicable, e.g., Denver):**



---

**Words that describe your services (e.g., affordable, friendly, honest):**



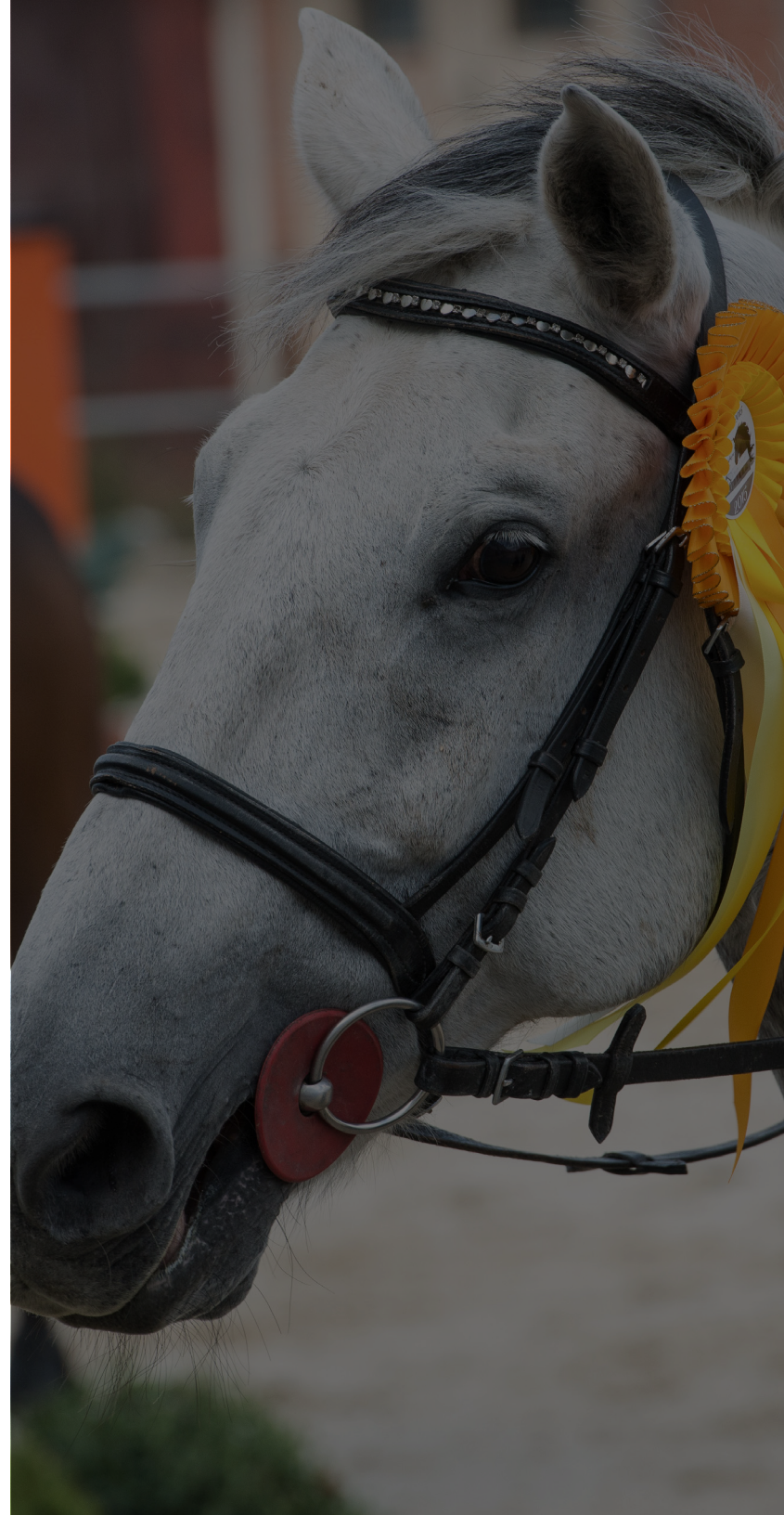
---

Now try combining the words in your list to create short and representative domain names. Remember to play with various domain extensions. Run your names by a few friends, and narrow down your list based on their feedback. When you've got a list you love, you're ready to [search for your favorite names](#)' availability through a registrar like GoDaddy.

# Premium domains & the aftermarket

If there's a domain you absolutely must have but it's already registered, there's a chance you can buy it from the registrant (the party who registered it) as a premium domain. To get a premium domain, you pay the seller's price, and then continue paying the normal registration fee. Typically, there's also a nominal fee for transferring the domain between parties.

When you try to register a domain that's already taken, you'll usually see several alternatives with different spellings or extensions. If that domain is available for sale, it'll be listed as a premium domain. People who register domains with the intent of selling them are called domainers, and there's a thriving aftermarket for premium domains. Imagine if, decades ago, you were thinking about dedicating a website to the Greek goddess of victory. At the time, registering *nike.com* might've only been for your hobby project. But think about how rich you'd be today...





## 1. Custom domain

# Protect your domain

Your domain is at the heart of your online identity. It's critical you protect it. Whether it's malicious activity or some other reason, there are a number of things that can cause you to lose your domain. And if that happens, you lose the centerpiece of your online brand. But fear not. Here are a handful of precautions you can take to keep your domain safe.

**Set up a strong, dedicated password.** If you're using your dog's name as a password for several accounts, you're headed for trouble. Someone shady could guess your password, and then adios domain. Make sure your password includes uppercase letters, numbers and at least one special character. And if you're the forgetful kind, get a [password manager](#).


**Use your own account for domain registration.** You might be tempted to skip creating your own account and instead rely on a trusted friend, employee or your web developer. But relationships can fall apart. People move. You're better off registering the domain in your own account.

**Turn on two-step authentication.** Even if someone gets ahold of your password, you can still keep them from accessing the most important parts of your account. With [two-step authentication](#), they'll need not only your password, but usually an access code that is texted to a phone number you designate. And it's pretty unlikely someone you don't know or trust will be able to get both those things.

**Be careful where you use your password.** It's safe to say that no legitimate business will send you an email that asks for your username and password. This is what's known as "phishing." While many phishing attempts are laughably obvious, just as many are not. If an email has a link that goes to a login page, first make sure the website is authentic and you're comfortable with it.

**Keep your email secure.** Think about how many times each day you use your email. How many of those times were you working with information that you wouldn't want other people to see? And are you one of those people who stores passwords in their email account? Keep your email on lockdown by regularly changing its password. You can even use two-step authentication for it.

# Quick checklist: Get a domain

TASK	
Brainstorm domain names	
Consider different domain extensions	
Complete registration	
Review domain protection	

Time to get a domain: **1–2 hours**

## 1. Custom domain

# Additional resources

Make sure your domain is just right, with these helpful resources:

- [GoDaddy domain search](#): Find the perfect domain name for your small business.
- [New domain extensions](#): Expand your domain search into industry- and geo-specific territory.
- [10 tips for choosing the perfect domain name](#): Follow these guidelines to pick a name that will work overtime for your business.
- [Putting business domains to work for your brick-and-mortar shop](#): Head over to “Innovative Namesville” to learn how industry-specific domain extensions can put your brick-and-mortar business on the map.
- [Getting a domain on the aftermarket](#): Get tips for securing valuable domains currently in use by other people or names that are actively for sale on a marketplace like GoDaddy Auctions.
- [Domain security best practices](#): Protect one of your business’s most valuable digital assets with these five security best practices.



**GET A DOMAIN**



**2**

**Professional  
email**

## **2. Professional email address**

# **Hitch your domain to your email address**

If you've already registered your custom domain, nice work! Now you're probably wondering what comes next. Turns out, you don't have to wait for your website to go live in order to start getting value from your domain.

**Just moments after registering a custom domain, you can use it to set up a professional email address and immediately see a return on your investment.**

Depending on its complexity, it could be a while before your website goes live. But you can start using professional email in your day-to-day business interactions and get a head start. That's because one of the keys to establishing any successful brand is repetition. Why wait?

A person is captured mid-jump, clearing a white picket fence. The person is silhouetted against a bright sky with scattered clouds. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a hazy sky. To the right, a portion of a house with a blue roof and a white picket fence is visible. The ground in the foreground is a dirt or gravel path.

**“I don’t look to jump over 7-foot bars — I look for 1-foot bars that I can step over.”**

— WARREN BUFFETT, CHAIRMAN  
AND CEO BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY



## 2. Professional email address

# Why professional email?

Email from a free provider like Gmail or Yahoo! is great for keeping in touch with friends and family, or other personal business. But try using it in the professional world, and it tells people right away that you're a tenderfoot. With an [email address set up on your custom domain](#), you establish credibility each time you hit "Send." Here's how:

**By helping people find you.** You're essentially handing over a digital business card each time you give out your custom email address. Not only does it let people get in touch with you, it also reminds them about your website.

**By reinforcing your brand.** Every time someone types your email address into a message, they're repeating that domain you so carefully picked out. They're reminding themselves of your online presence, which goes a long way in keeping you top of mind.

**By standing apart from the competition.** A professional email address signals you believe in your business enough to invest in such an important tool. And that commitment goes a long way in letting people feel confident in choosing you over a competitor.

**By extending your capabilities.** With professional email, you're able to [snap in additional functionality](#) like cloud storage, calendars and additional accounts. So when success finds you, you'll be able to leverage the tools that'll help you keep up.

## 2. Professional email address

# Who's more credible?

Imagine you're chatting with a potential customer or client. It goes well, and they ask you for an email address in order to follow up. Here, you reach a fork in the trail. Taking you down a rocky and uncertain path is the free email address, something like `willswagons@gmail.com`. But a professional email address like `will@willswagons.com` leads you toward success.

**While free email certainly has its uses, professional email offers a far more subtle, classy and effective way to establish your credibility.**

**Here are a few of the biggest advantages:**

**It shows you're established.** Everyone's wary of the fly-by-night operation. While many legitimate businesses use free email, it can leave people wondering if you just set up shop yesterday — and might be operating under a different name tomorrow. On the other hand, professional email demonstrates an investment you made in being there for the long run.

**It lets you appear as large as you want.** People want to feel like a specialist is handling their inquiry. And as a small business owner, you might be the only employee. But you can still use your domain to set up multiple email addresses, like `support@willswagons.com` or `billing@willswagons.com`. You'll stay organized and show you're serious about inquiries.

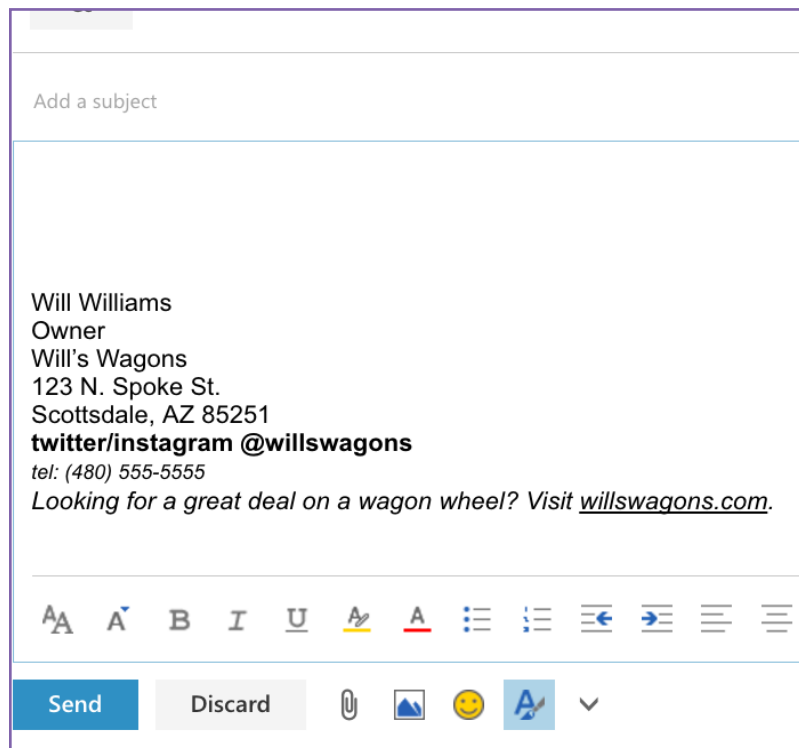
**It helps people stay confident.** Say a potential customer had a distracted moment and crashed their wagon. They need to send you a message detailing the extent of the damage. They're likely a little embarrassed, and might be leery of sending touchy information to a free email address. But professional email clearly shows your identity — and suggests a greater level of security.

**It keeps you top of mind.** When you walk away from that conversation with a potential client or customer, giving a professional email address leaves them with two important things: your name and where to find your online presence. And think of all the places you can strategically place your email address: conversations, business cards, social media... It won't be hard to find you!

## 2. Professional email address

# Your email signature

With business correspondence, a good email signature lets you sign off with a courteous tip of the hat. Meanwhile, a less-than-ideal email signature can clutter your message or cause other issues. Here's an example of an effective email signature:



Now read on to learn about the five characteristics that make it so effective:

**1. Short & uncluttered.** The signature takes up only a small portion of your screen. The address and phone number are formatted on a single line. It also avoids clutter like large images or lengthy quotes.

**2. Everything's there.** If someone wants to reach Will on the phone, they have his name, number and job title. If they plan on visiting him in person, they need only to look at that signature for his physical address.

**3. Related call to action.** It's always good to plug a sale or special event, or just mention your website. Put it at the bottom of your signature and make sure to include a link to more details online.

**4. Social media.** Including social media icons in your email signature lets people get lots more information with a single click. Just make sure they're set up with the right links and you have profiles on each outlet.

**5. On brand.** If you do include colors or images, make sure they match the rest of your online presence. In fact, you can often just include a link to images, rather than files, to ensure they transmit well and are on brand.



## 2. Professional email address

# Get more from your email

Getting an email address that matches your domain is just the start. Where free email is just fine for sending and receiving most personal messages, professional email takes it to a new level. Even at its most basic, [business-class email](#) offers more storage for messages and additional layers of security. But it really stands apart with all the additional tools you can snap in:

**Calendar.** With a calendar attached to your email account, you'll have access to it from any type of device, whether it's in the office on your desktop or on the go with your smartphone. You can also add additional users, so your colleagues are on the same page.

**Additional storage.** Never worry about saving messages again. You can always buy additional storage for a nominal fee and ensure you have enough room to keep important correspondence.

**Additional accounts.** Remember Will's Wagons? Even if you're a one-person business, you can still set up additional accounts to send and receive more specific messages with addresses like *support@* or *billing@*. And if your operation grows to include more people, you can add new email accounts for them on your domain.

**Office 365.** This is a big one. If you have your email through GoDaddy, you can get the [full suite of Office 365 products](#). That means must-have programs like Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Outlook are always available online, so to use them all you need to do is log into your account.

**Online storage.** Your email account also lets you access storage for documents and other types of files. Much like your online calendar, you'll be able to send and share access to anything, from contracts to images, that you upload to your account.

**Specialty features.** Depending on your line of work, there are also specialty tools you can add to make your email an industry-specific tool. For example, if you're a chiropractor, you can make your email HIPAA-compliant and transmit patient information. If you're in real estate or law, for example, add DocuSign to sign and send documents online.

**By the end of 2019, more than 2.9 billion people will be using email in their day-to-day lives. That's about a third of the world's population.**

So there you have it — free email accounts are like the humble pack mule. They reliably get the job done, albeit simply and slowly. Meanwhile, professional email is more akin to a speedy mustang. Once you harness all that performance, it's a long-lasting companion that'll give you an edge when and where it matters most.



**Mobilize the productivity of your business with a professional email solution like Office 365 from GoDaddy.**

## 2. Professional email address

# Tips for writing a professional email

Compared with personal correspondence, writing a professional email means you're at your best. Here are six ideas to weave into your own messages:

**1. Subject lines.** They get people to prioritize and even open your messages. So be sure your subject line is brief enough to be scannable, but also includes the most important details. Basically, it's the difference between *Don't You Just Hate Bandits? I Know I Do! LOL!!!* and *Bandits Spotted Sunday @ Tombstone Canyon*.

**2. To the point.** Certainly you can be courteous, but your email should state its purpose in the first few lines. You don't have to be fluffy to be friendly, for example: *While I admit you have a wonderful operation, at present I'm more inclined to join the Clanton Gang*. Keep that rule in mind from start to finish, and avoid numbing readers with a message that's more of a dime novel.

**3. Font & text.** Imagine casually reading an email at your desk. Now, imagine the sender standing over you; shouting the message in your ear. That's how it might come across if your whole message is written with CAPS LOCK! Also worth noting, clowns. If they aren't scary, they're annoying. Special or stylized fonts, like Comic Sans, should be avoided altogether.


**4. Proofread.** *In closing, my fellow compatriots, the keg is accuracy.* Catch that typo? Oops! Errors like that can take people's perception of you from Teddy Roosevelt to Charlie Chaplin. Also, read your message to make sure it makes sense at first glance. If you reference an attachment, did you actually remember to attach the dang thing to your message?

**5. Recipients.** Make double-dog sure the recipients in your message are the same people you want to receive it. It's likely your email application auto-completes addresses as you type. Or you might hit the wrong key. Also, make sure CC is used for recipients of secondary importance, while BCC is people who shouldn't see the other recipients. CC and BCC aren't just extra spaces.

**6. For the record.** Crazy as it sounds, an email you tap out in a few minutes becomes part of the written record of that subject. So, for example, don't write something nasty about someone who's an enemy today but might be a compadre tomorrow. Also be aware if your message could be evidence admissible in court, where yes or no, and do or don't are life-changing typos.



# Quick checklist: Go professional with your email

TASK	
Register domain name	
Get business email that matches your domain	
Select add-ons	
Review best practices	

Time to get a professional email: **Less than an hour**

## 2. Professional email address

# Additional resources

If you have any remaining questions about email, peruse these handy resources:

- [Professional Email from GoDaddy](#): Show the world you mean business with business email that matches your domain.
- [Office 365 from GoDaddy](#): Get the robust productivity suite you love, with GoDaddy's 24/7 support.
- [Free eBook: The Work-Anywhere, Get More Done Small Business](#): This easy-to-follow guide will teach you the fundamentals you need in order to make your small business more mobile.
- [Why email subject lines are the ultimate micro content](#): Learn how to write clever subject lines that beckon readers to click "open."
- [Why you can't afford to skip business email](#): See why professional email matters to online buyers.
- [Manage your inbox and get back to work with these email tips and tools](#): Get practical tips to manage your email inbox and boost your productivity.



**GET PROFESSIONAL  
EMAIL**

**3**

**Mobile-friendly  
website**



### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## Look at the competition

An easy way to see what makes a website successful in your field is through a quick Google search. Just enter keywords related to what you do and make sure to include your location. That could look something like: *blacksmith in Bisbee*.

Now, ignore the listings at the top of your page. People pay lots of money to be there and it doesn't necessarily reflect the quality of their websites. You can also skip past the map listings. These are still important, but we'll get to them later in this book.

Go through the remaining results to see what your competition is doing. If you see a website that particularly strikes your fancy, note the address and which elements made you like it so much. Keep researching until you have 20 or so examples you find appealing.

Some of the elements you're noting might include:

**Colors.** For a blacksmith, obviously, black would be a good color to have on a website, as well as orange or red to suggest fire. A useful tool for determining this for your own website is a [color scheme designer](#), which gives you all kinds of complementary colors if you just pick out the main one.

**Layout.** This term refers to how all your stuff — text, images, etc. — is arranged consistently throughout your website. One of today's

most popular layouts is the “one over three,” which has a large image above three columns. Remember, layouts look different on mobile devices, so pick one that works on a smartphone as well as on a laptop or desktop.


**Pages.** Here we're just talking about all the separate areas that make up your website as a whole. Common pages for any type of site include *Home*, *About*, *Services* and *Contact*. Pages can advertise what you offer, but also educate visitors, generally, about what you do.

**Verbiage.** As you research, pay attention to the words.

Look for terms and phrases that appear again and again in the websites you review. While you don't want to overuse industry jargon, including it sparingly can go a long way in establishing you as an expert in your field.

**Functionality.** How cool would it be if our blacksmith's website had a time-lapse video about making horseshoes? Make sure you're noting any special elements that don't fall into the above categories, as it might be functionality that'd be great for your own website.

Once you finish all the research, look it over again to make sure your notes make sense. It might seem like a bunch of offhand musings right now, but once we get down to the nitty-gritty of building your own website, it's going to become your roadmap and compass.



**“It is not the beauty of a building you should look at; it’s the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of time.”**

— DAVID ALLAN COE



### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## A word about mobile-friendliness

The term “mobile-friendly” means a website is set up to make it easier to interact with on mobile devices, like smartphones and tablets. These devices typically have screens smaller than a desktop monitor and controls are limited, so it’s important websites address these differences.

**By 2014, mobile devices had already surpassed desktop computers as the preferred method of getting online. Today, mobile devices account for more than half of all internet usage.**

Mobile-friendliness isn’t about catering to a select audience. It means meeting the needs of the majority of your visitors.

With a mobile version, the website’s most important elements, like menus and text, are easily accessible on a smaller screen. And since

people aren’t using a mouse, it’s also important they can easily swipe or tap their way through the website, rather than clicking.

“Well, now that’s just great,” you’re probably thinking. “So I have to guess what devices visitors might be using, and then make a website that works for each of them?!”

Well, no. Not necessarily. While you could create one design that kinda sorta works for both desktop and mobile visitors, it’s not the recommended solution. These days, technology allows a website to be responsive. That means it automatically detects the kind of device a visitor is using, and then adjusts everything accordingly.

You don’t need to worry about learning how to [create a responsive design](#) yourself. But you absolutely should keep the term fresh in your mind. It’s going to be a big factor when you’re choosing a website designer or developer or a website-building application.

### 3. Mobile-friendly website

# Map it out

With websites, one of the hardest things can be working up the nerve to get started. And now that we're past that, you're well on your way to establishing an online presence. It might be tempting to get started right away with the build.

## Hold your horses, there, partner! Let's first make sure we know where we're headed.

Each step in building your website is connected. Make sure your website-building project doesn't turn out to be a jangled mess by laying a solid foundation in five basic steps:

**1. Lock in the website's purpose.** Hint: this isn't just letting people know about you. Why, though? If you want people to know about your business, the locked-in purpose would actually be getting them to buy your products or services. If you're running for sheriff, it'd be swaying voters' opinions. Once you have the purpose locked in, that idea guides the rest of development.

**2. Decide what visitors should do.** Now that you know your website's purpose, what will visitors do to help you achieve that goal? For example, people can't vote for sheriff from your website,

but you can direct them to register to vote or get their email for future updates. Create a simple but direct [call to action](#), meaning something visitors can do right now that furthers your goal.

**3. Write your story.** Tell people why you're online (locked-in purpose) and what they should do at your website (call to action). With the basics established, dig deeper and tell people about your history, your values and all the other things that make you special. And if you noted any industry-specific jargon earlier, here's where to start using it.

**4. Round up content.** Check through your files and social media profiles, and see if there are any pictures that highlight what you do. Other content might include links to YouTube videos, technical data or your official logo. (More about content coming up.)

**5. Narrow down examples.** Designing your website (or telling someone how to design it for you) is much easier with examples you like for guidance. Good thing you already took the time to list your favorite competitor websites. You'll only need, say, five at most, so take a bit more time to decide which websites best represent the things you want on your own.



### 3. Mobile-friendly website

# Worksheet: Planning your website

Start to figure out the best type of website for your business, with features that will help you achieve your online goals, by answering the following questions:

**What is your overall objective for your website? Ex. Showcase my landscaping services**

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**Who is your target audience? Ex. homeowners**

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**Where is your target audience? Ex. Miami**

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you want visitors to describe the “feel” of your website? Ex. Edgy, fun**

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**How much information do you want to provide on your website? Ex. As much as possible**

▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you want to interact with customers using your website?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

**Do you want to establish yourself as a thought leader (to build credibility) through your site?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

**Do you want to increase referrals with your site?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

**Do you want to drive business to a brick-and-mortar store?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

**Do you want to collect visitors' contact information?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

**Do you want to sell products or services on your site?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

**If so, do you want to process payments on your site?**

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

Excellent! You just worked out the **purpose** and began to map the **direction** for your new small business website. You'll use this information as you move forward with building a strong online presence.

### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## Who builds it?

When it comes time to build your website, there are a couple of options. You can do it yourself (DIY) using a website-building application, or “site builder.” These range in their ease of use and capabilities. They are usually online applications, and you pay a monthly fee that often includes hosting.

The other route is having someone do it for you, also known as the do-it-for-me (DIFM) method. Again your options vary, from [hiring a freelance website designer](#) to working with a boutique web design firm or a larger [company that offers website design services](#).

As you ponder the DIY and DIFM options, come up with honest answers to these important questions:

**What are my requirements?** Your website might require some things — like accommodating multiple user accounts, processing payments or supporting custom graphics — that fall outside the realm of functional possibility for a DIY site builder. On the other hand, if all you need is a basic online brochure, hiring a design agency would be a waste of money.

**What’s my technical aptitude?** If you’ve got the skill and time to build your own website, great. You’ll need a minimal amount of both to use a templated website builder, a bit more for a content

management system like WordPress, and a fair amount for a fully custom site. If that’s outside your wheelhouse, avoid the frustration.

**What’s my timetable?** Even for the most experienced builder, creating a highly customized website takes time. If you have a looming launch date and require a site with lots of bells and whistles, it’s best to leave the build with someone who has the experience to work quickly. Learning as you go tacks on a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, with a minimal amount of skill, you can crank out a simple website in a matter of hours.

**What’s my budget?** The more customization (and professional help) you need, the more it’s going to cost.

**Warning: Don’t let cost alone drive the DIY vs. DIFM decision. There are many factors to consider when deciding how to build a website, and basing your decision on cost can come back to bite you.**

Of course, there are gray areas surrounding any of these questions. But asking them will put you on track to making an informed decision and leave you more confident in your ultimate choice.





**In the first half of 2016, just over half of U.S. small businesses reported having a website. Establishing your online presence, even a very basic one, gives you a leg up in the business world.**

— SOURCE: CLUTCH

### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## Explore your DIY website options

So you've decided to use a site builder to make your website a do-it-yourself project? Good for you. There are a few routes you can go. Some site builders use templates to give you drag-and-drop functionality but limit customization. Meanwhile, content management systems (CMS) still make it easy to create the basic aspects of your design, but it gets more complicated the more custom you get. Finally, if your goal is to sell products online, an eCommerce site is the way to go.

Let's take a deeper dive into these site builders:

**Template-based site builders.** With template-based site builders such as [Website Builder from GoDaddy](#), you get started by picking a template, or a pre-made design you can modify. Basic template modifications — like adding pictures and text, or swapping out photos — are pretty easy. You start to run into limitations, though, when you attempt big-picture changes. For example, it might be pretty tough (and end up looking not so great) if you tried to divide a page into three columns when the template wasn't designed that way. When you're all done and the site is live, hosting is usually included in the monthly fee you pay.

**Content management systems.** Some of the most popular CMS include WordPress, Joomla! and Drupal. Use them to modify a basic theme via a text or visual editor, rather than dragging and dropping.

**Content management systems open up a world of website possibilities for someone with a little more experience.**

Working with code lets you copy and paste scripts from other websites, such as YouTube or Facebook, to display their content on your own site. You can also quickly add plugins or extensions, essentially compact subprograms that give your website advanced functionality — like taking online reservations or listing real estate for rent or sale — without all the coding. And if you choose WordPress, [GoDaddy Managed WordPress](#) gives you hosting and site management in one plan.

**eCommerce site builders.** If your primary goal is selling online, your website needs to revolve around products. It needs to display them in brilliant fashion. It needs to let visitors easily browse them.



### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## Explore your DIY website options

It needs to make the buying experience personalized and secure. The eCommerce site builder [Online Store from GoDaddy](#) is one such application that covers these bases.

For websites built on a CMS platform, such as WordPress, you can usually use a plugin or custom script for eCommerce functionality. But if retail is your primary goal, build your site around it. We'll take a closer look at eCommerce websites in the next section.

**If visitors feel that a website is unattractive, 38 percent of them will leave right away. Make sure you make the best site you can by choosing a site builder that fits your needs.**

# Choose your best website-building option

	You – Site Builder	You – WordPress	Professional Web Designer
<b>Cost</b>	Avg. \$50 – \$150/year	Free	Avg. \$500 – \$3,000 initial design fee
<b>Hosting</b>	Often included	Avg. \$50 – \$150/year*	Avg. \$50 – \$150/year
<b>Skill Level for Building Required</b>	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<b>Your Time Required</b>	Moderate	More, depending on complexity of site	Minimal to no time, depending on service
<b>Customer Support</b>	Tutorials, help guides; phone, chat support with some products	Support websites*	Varies, fee
<b>Updates</b>	Immediate, free	Immediate, free	Varies, fee
<b>Advanced Features</b>	Not available	Available, fee or technical knowledge required	Available, fee
<b>Mobile Website</b>	Varies, often included	Varies, often included	Available, fee
<b>Website Design</b>	Pre-built templates included	Custom templates available for purchase	Custom design

\*Hosting and 24/7 support included with GoDaddy Managed WordPress

### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## A word about eCommerce websites

With revenue from U.S. online sales expected to reach [\\$523 billion by 2020](#), there's an ever-growing market for you to tap into. It all starts with a solid eCommerce website. And as we mentioned earlier, these sites are purpose-built for retail via a few key features:

**Storefront.** This basically refers to a website designed to most effectively manage products. Visitors are wowed by vivid images and descriptions, while retail-specific technology tracks ordering and inventory for you on the backend.

**Shopping cart.** At the heart of the personalized online shopping experience, a shopping cart lets individuals browse for the stuff they want before making their purchases. Other types of websites are limited to selling one item at a time, with a cumbersome checkout process. [Find out what to look for in your first shopping cart](#)

**Secure connection.** Most eCommerce websites are required to have a [secure sockets layer](#) (SSL), which encrypts sensitive data like payment and personal information. To indicate security, it's why you'll typically see an [https://](#) before the web address to an online store.

**Payment gateway.** When an online shopper checks out, a payment gateway takes the purchase amount from their bank account and deposits it into your own. You'll wind up paying a small percentage of each purchase in service fees.

**Shipping.** Rather than scrambling to set up shipping for each purchase, this feature automatically handles the important details. It factors your item's dimensions and the carrier's rates, and then generates shipping labels for you to print.

**Sales & promotions.** Some eCommerce site builders include a feature that lets you offer a discount or other promotion for your products. It applies these automatically upon checkout, rather than making you figure it out offline.



A photograph of two men from behind, walking away on a horse-drawn wagon. They are wearing straw hats and suspenders. The wagon is filled with hay. They are walking on a dirt path that has some puddles. To the right is a wooden fence and trees. In the background, there are more trees and a building.

**“If you really want to get the best out of your web designer — or any contracted professional — you need to treat that person like a business partner. A trusted, valued, critically important business partner.”**

—WEBSITE DESIGNER LISA STAMBAUGH,  
OWNER OF COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY



### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## Tips for hiring someone to build your website

It's not much different than hiring a landscaper. You have a pretty clear idea of what you want. One candidate might have all kinds of qualifications, but costs way too much for the basic job you need. Another might be cheaper, but lacks experience beyond cutting grass. It's up to you to winnow down your pool of prospective hires. Here are five steps toward doing that:

**1. Set your budget.** Ah, the classic dealbreaker. Don't get lost browsing upscale design agencies if you've only budgeted enough for a modest service. It distorts your expectations (as well as those of anyone listening to you) and can eat up a lot of valuable time. As noted earlier, however, don't let cost alone determine who will build your website.


**2. Start searching.** Remember those nifty websites you bookmarked while figuring out how you wanted your new website to look and perform? Most custom sites will list the name of the designer/design company. Take more notes. Ask website owners you know and trust for leads on web designers. You can also browse online marketplaces like Behance, Coroflot, Upwork, Freelance.com and Elance. These will give you tools for narrowing down candidates.

**3. Check candidates' portfolios.** Can they build a website like the one you envision? Well, have they already? Don't worry yourself sifting through technical-sounding skills and qualifications. Instead, just use your eyeballs to see if you like the work they've already done.

**4. Open up communication.** Send an initial inquiry via their website or profile. The response (when and if you get one) will give you a clearer idea and of how it'll be working with them once you need to relay guidance and feedback during the project. [Get the inside scoop on communicating with web designers.](#)

**5. Read their reviews.** Anyone with any kind of skill and experience will have reviews from real people backing up their claims. Be wary if somebody is advertising, say, thousands of successful builds to date yet can only supply a few positive reviews.

# Quick checklist: Build a website

TASK	
Survey the competition	
Plan your website	
Review your website-building options (see chart and do some research)	
DIY: Site builder or CMS?	
DIFM: Start hiring	

Time to build a website: **1 day to several months**, depending on the complexity of the site

### 3. Mobile-friendly website

## Additional resources

Check out these resources to learn more about your website building options:

- [GoDaddy Website Builder](#): You don't need design skills to build a website with this easy-to-use site builder.
- [GoDaddy WordPress Websites](#): Build a powerful WordPress site fast with our exclusive Quick Start wizard.
- [GoDaddy Online Store](#): Choose your design, drag and drop your product images, and add your descriptions — we take care of the technical stuff automatically.
- [GoDaddy Website Design Service](#): Let our experts create, host and update your custom website.
- [Website development 101 for small businesses](#): Understand the basics of website development so you can choose the right web development company or website designer.
- [DIY or DIFM: Factors for deciding how to build a website](#): Weigh your options for building a website.
- [How to build a WordPress website for the first time](#): From what you need to get started to setting up the WordPress site, choosing a theme, adding content and publishing.
- [How to start an eCommerce website](#): Get options for selling online, including an ecommerce website package and WordPress plugin.
- [How to design a website when you're not a website designer](#): Avoid newbie web design mistakes with this how-to guide.
- [What to look for in a web design company](#): Here's what to ask when hiring a company to design your website.
- [Learning how to code a website](#): Take complete control of your website by learning some basic code.
- [W3Schools](#): Great resource for learning HTML and other website coding skills.



**GET A WEBSITE**

**4**

# **Search-friendly web content**



## 4. Search-friendly web content

# Web content 101

These days, the term content gets tossed around so much, it's easy to lose sight of what it really means. Are we talking about text? Or something to do with search engines? Well, not entirely. Content is a high-level concept when we talk about building websites.

If design is how we arrange blocks of stuff that make up a website, content, then, is the stuff that fills up those blocks. So, yeah, it could be text. And search engines do look at it. But it's much more than that: images, videos, headlines, contact forms, downloads — the list of content possibilities goes on forever.

**Every website is going to have content. That's just what websites do. Where you can set yourself apart in a big way, however, is with content that kicks ass.**

Let's take a gander at how to create content that stands out. There's really not much to it. It just comes down to three main rules anyone and everyone should follow.

**1. Stay on-brand.** We ain't talking cattle here. We're talking about making sure every word, picture and color on your website remains consistent with your business identity. If you have a [logo](#), it should display prominently and its colors should be used throughout your pages. If you have a slogan or primary call to action, make sure it's in your text. You could even go into explaining its meaning and origin.

**2. Optimize it.** We need to talk about search engines for a sec. Don't panic. By following some basic guidelines, you can create web content beloved by both humans and search bots. We'll get to this in greater detail later, but the majority of your work here is going to be keyword research.

**3. Use multimedia.** As we mentioned earlier, kick-ass content is about more than a bunch of words on your pages. Yes, text is a great way to introduce the most important concepts. But pictures and videos, for example, are an easy, effective way to expand upon those concepts. They give your visitors lots more information. They take up less space than lengthy paragraphs. And they look great on a page.



A young girl with long brown hair is lying on her back in a field of tall, green grass. She is wearing a blue straw hat with a wide brim and a pink and white plaid shirt. She is laughing heartily with her mouth wide open. Her legs are bent and her feet are pointing towards the bottom right corner. She is holding a long, light-colored stick or wand in her hands. The background is a soft-focus field of tall grass under warm, golden light.

**“The more you are like yourself, the  
less you are like anyone else,  
which makes you unique”**

— WALT DISNEY



## 4. Search-friendly web content

# Other kinds of content

Speaking of multimedia, don't limit your content to those two mainstays, text and images. Sure, they're important and will appear all over your website. But there are other kinds of content you should consider in order to keep visitors as engaged as possible. This also makes your website as useful as it possibly can be.

You might be thinking that text and images are the only kinds of content you can create on your own. Everything else is best left to creative types. Not true. Read on for a rundown of other types of content that you can easily put together, yourself, with minimal tools and experience.

**Videos.** If your phone has a camera, it [probably can record video as well](#). Videos are a good call for stuff like step-by-step guides, property tours or anything else you want to convey in real time.

**For best results, upload your videos to sites like YouTube or Vimeo, and then embed the code they give you in your pages to display a video player.**

**Graphics.** For stuff that ranges from comparison studies to just lighthearted fun, graphics give an added impact you can only deliver visually. If you're comfortable with programs like Photoshop and/or one of its [more affordable alternatives](#), great! You can create a graphic to illustrate nearly anything. If you're less experienced, do a quick search to find sites that will generate graphics (like memes) online. Or hire a graphic design pro.

**Lists.** OK, technically a list is text. But it's still an alternative to the sentences or paragraphs we're so used to seeing. These days, especially online, people prefer to scan from top to bottom. A list lets you do that, and visually it's an attractive way to break up large sections of text. **Tip:** if you use a numbered list, try putting that number somewhere in a headline.

**Downloads.** Everyone loves free stuff. And downloadable content (usually in .PDF format) lets you offer visitors all kinds of freebies. If you have useful fact sheets or checklists, those are perfect downloads to offer. If someone needs to bring completed paperwork to your place of business, why not let them download and print out those forms?

#### 4. Search-friendly web content

## Other kinds of content

**Hyperlinks.** You can always use hyperlinks within text to direct visitors to more in-depth information on another page of your website or elsewhere online. You could even dedicate an entire page to hyperlinks — titled, say, Resources or Online Info — and have a compact and authoritative library of important stuff like legal statutes, technical specifications, or what have you.

**Quotes.** Still text, yes. But there's a world of difference in how you format quotes and what they get across. For starters, use larger font with quotation marks or italics, and include who said it. Quotes let you offer supporting information and ideas from another point of view. Your sources could be anyone from famous people to satisfied customers.

**Testimonials:** Featuring testimonials from happy customers — whether in the form of written quotes or, even better, on video — works wonders at building a brand's credibility. Ask your customers to leave feedback (in person, on your website, on your Facebook Page, everywhere) and keep close tabs on online review sites like Yelp. Then pepper your website with authentic testimonials.



A group of people wearing cowboy hats are silhouetted against a bright, cloudy sky at sunset or sunrise. They are standing in a line, and their shadows are cast on the ground. The scene is outdoors, possibly on a grassy field or near a fence.

**88% of people trust online reviews written by other consumers as much as they trust recommendations from personal contacts.**

—SOURCE: BRIGHTLOCAL



# How to get customer testimonials

As you already know by now, quotes are invaluable bits of content to put on your website. And quotes from your happy customers are even better for showing how great you are. But how do you get them? Well, you can take either a passive or an active approach.

The easiest thing is putting a contact form on your website that encourages visitors to submit a recommendation or leave their feedback. When these start coming through, pick out the best ones to publish on a page titled something like Testimonials or Reviews.

You could also email people you know are happy about your work to ask them to write you a testimonial, and make sure to mention it's going on your website. You might even offer some kind of incentive or freebie to make it worth their while.

If you've been in business for any length of time, chances are people are leaving feedback about your products or services on review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor. Link to some of that positive buzz from your website.

And don't forget about your social media profiles. You can mine customer testimonials from Facebook reviews, LinkedIn Endorsements, YouTube comments, Twitter mentions and more.



Photo: [Valerie Hinojosa](#)

## 4. Search-friendly web content

# Copywriting basics

You don't need to be some city-slicker on Madison Avenue to write compelling text (or copy as it's called in those parts). The best copy gives readers a clear action to take, and then provides a number of reasons why they should take it. So for starters, know your audience. Think about who's visiting your website, and what circumstances led them there.

People searching online for a lawyer are likely going to be anxious about what the future holds. So right there's an opportunity to infuse your writing with a confident and reassuring tone. If people are looking for someone to fix that darn leaky faucet for good, confirm that fly-by-night plumbers are bad news and be assertive in stating your superior qualifications.

And if you bothered to jot down your story, as described in the previous chapter, you already have some raw material to get you going. You can look to it for key facts or ideas, or even whole paragraphs, and smooth that text over with the best practices we're discussing right now.

**Research your field.** Go back to the research you did earlier. Review the examples of industry jargon to beef up your authority. Also look for common themes in what the competition is writing. Are they playing up reliability? Affordability? Experience? If you see anything used by several of your example websites, there's probably a good reason.

**Reinforce your brand.** We touched on this earlier in the chapter, but here we're talking specifically about copywriting. If you hang your hat on your decades of experience, mention that often in establishing reasons for heeding your call to action. Tone, too, can become part of your brand. When you hear the phrase "Just do it," who comes to mind?

**Make it unique.** Again, your industry research is going to help here. While we do want to touch on common themes and ideas, we don't want to sound like just another so-and-so. If many of your sites use "Contact Us Today!" as a call to action, why not try "Let's Start Talking" instead? It encourages the same action, but it's far from the cliché phrases you see everywhere.

#### 4. Search-friendly web content

## Copywriting basics

**Vary formatting.** Lists aren't the only way you can (and absolutely should) break up sections of text. For starters, every page should have at least one headline. These aren't page titles, like About Us or Services. Headlines, also called headings, usually live above paragraphs and summarize what's coming next.

**Stick to the point.** In the rapid-fire digital age, shorter is almost always better. Don't write entire paragraphs when a heading or list will do just fine. And remember to keep the focus on yourself. If you want to write about the fastest routes from Amarillo to El Paso, make sure the key point is that you are the best stagecoach driving these routes.



#### 4. Search-friendly web content

## Where to put your content

Once you've established a full-blown online presence, it'll likely include channels other than your website. We're talking about blogs, your Facebook profile, and other social networks like Twitter or Instagram. You don't have to clutter your website with every last bit of content about you.

**Online, people are 95 percent more likely to follow a brand via social networks. Don't count on visitors returning to your website time and again to learn about what you're doing.**

The first thing to think about is whether your content is time-sensitive. For example, if you're running a sale or promotion, it's better to post the details in a Facebook post or a tweet. Who knows when people might find it if you put that information on one of your website's pages?

And if something merits content on your website, it almost certainly deserves a mention on social media. For example, if you devote a part of your law practice to defending cattle rustlers, announce it on social media and include a link to the corresponding page on your website.

Plan on using video to help build your business? Then create content for your very own YouTube channel and share it on your website and social media platforms.

When you start to get comfortable making content, and you've got plenty of it on your own platforms, think about sharing content outside your own sphere of influence. A few ideas include writing [guest blog posts](#), and sharing your how-to videos with trade or professional groups.

# What to put on your about page

Try to find a business website that doesn't include some kind of About page. You probably won't. Leaving out this important piece of your website means you lose an opportunity to connect with visitors, not to mention you're leaving them to wonder who the heck you are. With many sites, like law firms or larger companies, you'll see profiles of all the head honchos. Even smaller operations usually have something that lets visitors envision who they'll be doing business with.

First, think up a few words that describe the best things about you. Then, add a sentence or two that expands on the idea. The result could look something like this:

**Strength** — Val's Vaults are constructed from the strongest steel on the market today. Even three sticks of dynamite can't leave a scratch!

**Security** — With high-security combination locks from Val's Vaults, the craftiest of bank robbers are left scratching their heads in confusion.

**Value** — Once you consider the cost of a successful robbery, it's easy to see how Val's Vaults quickly become an investment that pays for itself.



## 4. Search-friendly web content

# Corralling images

You simply can't overstate the importance of high-quality images throughout your website. Not only should they look great, but also reinforce the message you're getting across with the rest of the content. It's probably tempting to grab some nice images off the internet, and then call it a day. Don't do that.

For starters, they're someone's [intellectual property](#). You should have permission before you use an image, and ignoring this step can land you in real trouble. Getting images also takes some consideration. While finding them can be time consuming, it's well worth the effort when you consider the investment you're making in your website.

That's not to say the only route to beautiful, eye-catching images is hiring a professional photographer. There are actually a couple ways. Both have advantages and drawbacks, but both will get you the images you need to make your website pop.

**Stock images.** There are quite a few websites out there that let you download all kinds of professionally captured images. Sometimes, you need to pay royalties or a one-time fee to use them, but you can often find images that are entirely free. That means you don't have to pay anything to download them. Just make sure to review the specific [details regarding their use](#).

**Stock images are an ideal solution for getting across general ideas or feelings rather than specific details.**

For example, if you're a lawyer, it's pretty easy to find a stock image of a gavel or scale. You just wouldn't want stock images for your attorney profiles.

**Take them yourself.** When you do need more specific images (say, for those attorney profiles) and you don't want to shell out for a professional photographer, you can take your own. Most smartphone cameras these days produce images of appropriate quality for websites. Just be sure your shots are steady, and use common sense. Keep the sun at your back. As you're preparing to shoot, mentally divide the frame into three parts, either horizontally or vertically. Be deliberate about where you place the subject. If you're not confident in your smartphone camera, today you can find a good digital camera for less than a hundred dollars.





**Websites that have eye-catching pictures  
average 94 percent more views than sites  
with dull imagery.**

—SOURCE: [SEARCH ENGINE PEOPLE](#)



# Popular stock images sites

It's always a huge win to save money without cutting corners, and stock images let you do that in a big way. Poke around these websites, and you frequently find beautiful images that don't cost a dime to use. And when you do have to shell out, there are myriad royalty-free images for a modest one-time fee.

**Gratisography.** If you're looking for stock images with more character and flair, be sure to check out [Gratisography](#). You'll find a smorgasbord of visual treats that range from artistic to humorous, and they're all free.

**iStock.** This [mega-site](#) sets the bar for stock imagery, both in scope and in terms of the handshake closeups we so typically associate with these kinds of images.

**Pexels.** The greatest advantage of [Pexels](#) is that everything is free. With that said, what you find most often are shots of office-type settings.

**Shutterstock.** If iStock was Coca-Cola, then [Shutterstock](#) would be Pepsi. This stock-image steadfast offers more than 80 million options, which are easily searchable but can fall on the more expensive side compared with other websites.

**The Stocks.** This [massive resource](#) pulls together more than 20 smaller websites that offer royalty-free images.



#### 4. Search-friendly web content

## Optimize your content

Have you been holding your breath, awaiting the dreaded discussion of SEO? Well, here we go ... but think of it like pulling off a Band-Aid: let's make it as quick and painless as possible, and then you can get on with the rest of your life. For starters, anyone who tells you they know exactly how Google evaluates websites is full of it. Google changes those criteria [more than 500 times every year](#). Just focusing on what Google is doing basically comes down to a game of whack-a-mole.


Getting a search engine to rank your website higher can be an expensive and technically challenging project. But it's well worth the time to make it easier for them to index your site. Indexing means a search engine knows your website and all its pages actually exist. Once your website is fully indexed, you can work on improving its rank little by little. In fact, there are quite a few all-in-one tools for managing SEO. A good one is [Search Engine Visibility](#) from GoDaddy.

Imagine a search engine organizing all the websites in the world by putting them in buckets labelled by what you'll find inside. There's no guarantee you'll always be at the top of any particular bucket. But don't forget to make sure you're in the right bucket to begin with. Use the right keywords in the right places and, ahem! — you'll drop a hint about which bucket is yours.

We're going to keep it simple from here on out. But if you're so inclined you can find all kinds of other [SEO resources](#).

**Today, 93 percent of the time people start their browsing sessions with a keyword search. Make sure to fully optimize your content with keywords and avoid getting left out.**





**Business address/location is the  
primary piece of information sought by  
local searchers.**

—SOURCE: [SEARCH ENGINE LAND](#)

#### 4. Search-friendly web content

## Take keywords by the horns

**Define your keywords.** Can you describe, with one or two words, how someone would define what you do? Start jotting down as many as you can think of. Even if they're similar terms — like eye doctor and ophthalmologist — write down both, as they'll come in handy later.

Now, look back over everything and, based on what you've got, imagine how people might plug these terms into a search engine like Bing or Google. Would they just use eye doctor, or do you think someone might try find an eye doctor? See if you can pad your list with a few more terms based on your assumptions.

**Research your keywords.** Got a list of 15 to 20 terms? Nice work. To see what people are actually using, we're going to plug them into a tool provided free by Google itself. Go to the [Google Keyword Planner](#) and sign in to (or create) your Google account. Go down your list and one by one enter your terms. See how many searches they get, compared to the alternates you jotted down — and anything you didn't. In Google Keyword Planner, tick off **one keyword for each page of your website**, and then download them in whichever format you like.

In case you're curious, Google Keyword Planner isn't the only tool for researching keywords. There are lots of others which are also free. But since Google processes [more than 3.5 billion searches every day](#), it's probably safe to rely on their authority.

**Use your keywords.** OK, so you've written the text for all your pages and picked out keywords, and now you're ready to plug them in. Nice shootin', pardner! Review your keywords one last time, and then assign one — the focus keyword — for the page of your website where it makes the most sense. For example, your top-ranked keyword would be a good call for the home page. If eye doctor appointment came up in your research, it'd make sense for your contact page.

**First, write your content without worrying about keywords. When you have your keywords picked out, go back over the text and insert them where it makes sense. This will keep things sounding natural, rather than like one of those spammy websites.**



#### 4. Search-friendly web content

## Where to put those keywords

Let's talk about where you put focus keywords. Some places we're going to discuss occur throughout the text you've written. Other places are within the metadata. Simply put, that's one of the things that search engines look at. You can find [metadata in your HTML](#), and many site builders make it easy to edit without getting into the HTML.

**If you can't edit metadata (or the thought leaves you queasy), don't worry. Just adding focus keywords to your page text is a huge step up from no SEO at all.**

The first three items on our list are places in your page text. You should definitely add your focus keyword to these places. The last four are in the metadata.

**Page titles.** Not to be confused with the buttons on your navigation, these titles display at the top of your pages. While Home might be the most obvious choice, it doesn't tell us much. Consider something like *Welcome to Your Family **Eye Doctor***.

**Headings.** These headline-style elements are not only great for separating paragraphs, they're also a great place for keywords. Make sure the first heading you have on your page (*the H1*) includes your focus keyword.

**Paragraphs.** Put your focus keyword at the beginning of the first paragraph, and then insert it naturally throughout the rest of the text. Just make sure you don't use it so much that visitors might be confused by what you're saying.

**Title tags (metadata).** If you're using HTML, the attribute is `<title>`. In your metadata, the format would be something like Eye Doctor | Home | Welcome to Your Business Name. First put your keyword, then navigation title, then briefly say what the page is about.

**Image alt tags (metadata).** The HTML attribute is `<img alt="focus keyword">`, and any method you use to add it should include only a few words. Be sure to use the focus keyword, and then, for example, if it's a map, `<img alt="eye doctor location">`.

**Page descriptions (metadata).** To add a description that displays in search results, use the HTML format `<meta name="description" content="Find an eye doctor in Tombstone who keeps your vision sharp">`. See where the focus keyword goes?

**Page URL (metadata).** The page URL (or slug) comes after your domain name in the URL for a page: `http://coolexample.com/eye-doctor-home`. Use hyphens for spaces in your focus keyword.

#### 4. Search-friendly web content

# Worksheet: Content creation for websites

Use this Content Creation Worksheet to navigate through the process of creating content for the five core pages you need to make your business shine online: Home, About Us, Products/Services, Testimonials, and Contact Us.

## ► Get Started

Website Address (domain name) \_\_\_\_\_

### Design Objectives

Choose a website design that reflects and supports your answers.

What is the objective of your website? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is your target audience? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you want them to feel about your website? (e.g., professional, edgy, fun) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a business logo? \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP: If yes, choose colors for your website that complement your logo.**

### Content Development — Five Page Website

The five basic pages every business website should have:

☐ Home

☐ Contact Us

☐ Testimonials

☐ Products & Services

☐ About Us

## ► Home page

On your home page, you want to include the top things visitors need to know in order to decide to do business with you.

Who are you? What do you do/sell? Why should I trust you? How do I contact you?

Describe your business in one short sentence (tagline).

Describe your business and what's great about it in just a few sentences.

**Call-to-Action.** What is the one, most important thing you want your visitors to do before they leave your site? Be clear, concise and tell the what you want them to do. Examples: Call for a quote • Schedule appointment online • Watch our demo • Sign up for a class • Donate now • Email us for a free quote

**Primary Contact Information.** Include one primary way for customers to contact your business on the home page; typically, this is your phone number. Your "Contact Us" page can include all of the various ways to contact your business.

**Products/Services Section.** Include a short bulleted list or a few photos of your products and services on the home page, and then add a link to the full product/services page to view all. List general categories of products or services. Example: Specializing in Residential Glass Services: Dual Pane Glass Replacement, Custom Showers and Mirrors, Glass Shelves and Tabletops, and more...

**Sign Up Form.** What information do you need to collect? (i.e. email, name, phone, etc.). Tip: The less information you require, the more sign ups you'll get.

How will you motivate visitors to sign up? Very briefly describe why your visitors should sign up and include this with your sign up form. Example: "Sign up for exclusive deals and VIP access to special events."

**Credibility.** Include one customer quote or review on the home page and link to the testimonial page for visitors to read them all.



## ► Products/service page

List the general categories of products/services you offer.

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Describe products/services in more detail:

Name of Product	Brief Description
Hot Rock Massage	the body mind and spirit

Based on your business, you may want to include:

- ☐ Product images.\*
- ☐ Pricing
- ☐ Payment options
- ☐ Return policy, warranties or guarantees
- ☐ Shipping options and timeframes

**NOTE:** If images are too small or you don't include enough product angles, visitors may abandon your site and purchase elsewhere.

## ► **About page**

Describe your business in a few short paragraphs. How did you start it and why?  
What do you do differently than other businesses? Get personal, get passionate.

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Other things to consider:

- ☐ Photos of yourself or your staff
- ☐ A biography on your expertise
- ☐ Company or product awards
- ☐ Testimonials or specific quotes from your customers.

## ► Testimonials page

Increase visitor confidence and trust by adding recommendations, quotes and testimonials from your customers. Ask top customers to write a few sentences about your products and/or services.

Take advantage of ratings & review sites — join (it's free to list your business) and encourage customers to rate your business. Do a little research to find which ones are relevant to your business.

## ► Contact Us page

How do you want customers to contact your business? \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Hours of operation \_\_\_\_\_

Physical address, directions, map to location \_\_\_\_\_

Email (Look professional. Make sure your email address matches your website address.) \_\_\_\_\_

Depending on your business, you may want to add contact “categories.” For example:

Product Returns — send to P.O. Box


Billing Issues — email us at [billing@mycoolnewbusiness.net](mailto:billing@mycoolnewbusiness.net)

Customer Support — call (800) 555-1212

**Tip:** Choose the most important way for customers to contact you and put it on every page of your website. Most importantly, add it prominently to your home page.



# Quick checklist: Create basic web content

TASK	
Collect multimedia	
Write page text	
Select keywords	
Optimize page content	

Time to create your content: **About a day per page**

## 4. Search-friendly web content

# Additional resources

For a leg up in creating and optimizing your web content, look to these helpful resources:

- [Search Engine Visibility from GoDaddy](#): Let us help you optimize your website for Google and other search engines.
- [How to do SEO for small business websites \[ebook\]](#): Learn the ins and outs of search engine optimization for small biz websites.
- [Write your own damn website content](#): Craft compelling website copy with these tips from a pro.
- [Website writing that pops](#): Here's how to use unique, colorful language that speaks to your audience.
- [5 tips to take copywriting by the horns](#): Get five fundamental tips for getting website writing right.
- [How to write the perfect About page](#): Motivate visitors to learn more about your business with an About page that stands out.
- [How to use images on your website](#): Look at a few guiding principles for using pictures and videos on your website.
- [Seven places to find royalty-free images](#): You don't have to pay big bucks for great images. Look here first.
- [10 ways to improve Google Keyword ranking](#): Apply these SEO best practices to drive more qualified traffic to your website.
- [Eight dimensions of a perfect keyword](#): What makes a perfect keyword? Here's what.
- [How to use keyword research to drive search traffic to your website](#): Learn the basics of keyword research with this video.
- [Roundup of awesome SEO tools for small businesses](#): These SEO tools can help your business show up in search results.



**BOOST SEARCH VISIBILITY**

**5**

**Accurate online  
business listings**



## 5. Accurate online business listings

# What's your 20?

Search engines make money by being useful to people. And one of the biggest ways they remain useful is by letting people find stuff. That includes businesses. Online business listings are like digital phone books. They let people know where you are and how to reach you, and often include other information like a description and even reviews of what you do.

There are a number of ways online business listings appear, well, online. Obviously, you can submit them yourself. Or someone else might. Search engines, too, can create business listings as they sift through all the information online.

**Remember that you don't have to submit your own business for listings to show up online. But it is your responsibility to make sure listings are accurate.**

## 5. Accurate online business listings

# What's your 20?

So whether or not you like it, eventually your business is going to get listed online. It's almost always a good thing, so long as you keep track of where you're listed and what they're saying about you. For example, if you change physical locations, it's important to make sure all your online listings include the latest contact details. Also, keep an eye on user-submitted information. If it's not accurate or unfairly negative, act quickly to get it updated.

With that in mind, let's cruise through a few of today's top listing sites:


**Google.** Submit your business to [Google](#) and you show up not only in search listings but on the super-useful Google Maps. Once you claim your listing, you can edit most information, and submit stuff like photos and a description of what you do.

**Yelp.** Most commonly associated with restaurants, [Yelp](#) actually lists all kinds of businesses. It displays your location, photos and the oft-dreaded reviews. The nice thing is that Yelp lets you respond to reviews as the business owner.

**Thumbtack.** When folks need some type of service, from piano lessons to drywall hanging, they can send a request to [Thumbtack](#). You get an email if the request is for something you offer, and then you can hash out the details with the customer on your own.

**MerchantCircle.** One of the largest sites for business listings is [MerchantCircle](#), which lets people search for all kinds of businesses listed geographically. They also offer you a number of add-on services, such as paid advertisements.

**Foursquare.** People who love a business often aspire to become its Mayor on [Foursquare](#). That's just one aspect of this most social of listing sites, which also offers users a popular smartphone app for searching and checking in at businesses.

A woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a denim apron over a black tank top, smiles while holding a small dark bowl. She is in a pottery studio with shelves of various ceramic pieces in the background. Another person with dark hair, wearing a colorful patterned dress, is seen from the back, looking at the woman. The scene is brightly lit by a large window on the left.

**Google says local searches lead 50% of  
mobile visitors to visit stores within  
one day.**

— SOURCE:  
[GODADDY BLOG](#)

## 5. Accurate online business listings

# Get listed

Go ahead and search online for your business name. Chances are, it came up on a few websites. And if you're disappointed to see you have very few listings, don't be sad. It's just a matter of setting them up.

**If you don't have time to set up and manage business listings on multiple sites, don't throw out the idea. There are all kinds of applications, such as Get Found from GoDaddy, that make it a heckuva lot easier to manage online business listings.**

Now that we've established where you are (or want to be) listed, it's time to get into how you get the most out of your efforts.



## 5. Accurate online business listings

# Get listed

**Claim existing listings.** If you see your business is already listed online, it's crucial to claim those listings. Most of them have a link somewhere that takes you through the steps for establishing yourself as the business owner, which then lets you add or update information. Don't just assume listings will always be accurate and fair. It's up to you to manage that.

**Add new listings.** If you want to be listed on a particular site, the easiest route is just searching for, say, "How do I get listed on Google?" or wherever you're looking to get set up. Among the top results will be a page that takes you through steps similar to claiming an existing listing. The nice thing is that you'll ensure the information is accurate before it goes live.

**Focus on categories.** Every listing site will ask you to choose one or more categories for your business. Don't rush through this part. Think hard about what your primary category should be, and then add secondary categories where appropriate. Don't use too many, though. Categories help people looking for you, sure, but they're also big with search engines.

**Manage your listings.** If you thought going through the above steps one time was rough, it's probably a good idea to get a tool to help out. There are numerous applications that let you enter your information one time, and then it gets you listed on the sites you select. If you don't use one of these applications, just be prepared to stay on top of things manually.

# Tools for herding online listings

You might be anxious about tracking down all the places you can list your business and then setting up listings for each one. If so, it's time to take a serious look at the tools that can help you cut down on time and frustration.

**Get Found.** Offering one of the best price points, [Get Found](#) from GoDaddy lets you add and manage listings on all the most-frequented sites like Google, Yelp and Foursquare. It also provides nimble options for brick-and-mortar and mobile operations, and those that are online only.

**Yext.** With a focus on hyperlocality, [Yext](#) gives you access to more than 30 sites. You can set up and update listings from a single platform, and also add cool details like photos.

**Moz Local.** Enter your business information once, and [Moz Local](#) sends it to five main aggregators: Infogroup, Neustar Localeze, Acxiom, Factual and Foursquare.

**Universal Business Listing.** With access to a broad variety of outlets, [Universal Business Listing](#) sends your information to places including search engines, 411 directories, social media, GPS navigation systems and mobile apps.

**Localeze.** If you're running a brick-and-mortar business, you should take a close look at [Localeze](#). It links to more than 100 outlets.



## 5. Accurate online business listings

# Double-check your listings

If you haven't done so already, it's time to see what comes up when someone searches for your business. Start by keeping it basic. Just plug your business name into a search engine, and see what comes up. This is how people are going to look for you in real life, so it's good to get a feel for their experiences.


You can also perform a [scan of all the listings online](#) at many of the websites for listing-management applications. As you review your listings, pay close attention to a couple of important areas:

**1. Accuracy.** Here we're just talking about the facts. Imagine what's going to happen if someone looks over the listing and then tries to use the information provided to contact your business. Will they really arrive at your business? While it's open? Will calling your number ring through or will they get a disconnected tone? For starters, make double-dog sure your physical address, phone number and business hours are correct. Also look at alternate contact methods, like your email and fax, if you use them.

**2. Fairness.** Your business description and reviews are going to leave people with an impression that'll either make them want to contact you, or avoid you altogether. If somebody else submitted a description of your business, that was nice of them. But make sure it's entirely true and consistent with your brand. And pay close attention to what people are saying about you in their reviews. Sometimes you can request to have especially nasty or unfair ones removed. If not, it's a good idea to respond as the business owner.

# Quick checklist:

## Manage online business listings

TASK	
Search online for your listings	
Scan all available listings	
Review management tools	
Modify or set up listings	

Time to manage online business listings: **1 to 4 hours**



## 5. Accurate online business listings

# Additional resources

Ready to wrangle your online business listings? These resources will help:

- [Get Found from GoDaddy](#): Manage your online business listings from one nifty dashboard.
- [Use online directories to promote your business for free](#): Get a handful of best practices for using Google My Business and other online directories.
- [Use universal business categories to get found online](#): Make it easy for people searching for businesses like yours to find you by leveraging universal business categories.
- [How to set up online reviews on your WordPress website](#): Tutorial for setting up the WP Customer Reviews plugin.
- [How to dominate local SEO](#): Pull ahead of your local competitors online with these common-sense tips.
- [Bring customers in with micro-local SEO tools](#): Here are three things you can start doing now to help make sure the potential buyer on the street becomes your customer.



**GET FOUND**

**6**

# **Effective email marketing**

## 6. Effective email marketing

# What's an email marketing campaign?

There's a big difference between sending out emails willy-nilly and executing an email marketing campaign. It's the difference between checkers and chess. With an email marketing campaign, everything you do is [driven by a goal](#). And to reach that goal, you're paying close attention to who gets emailed, when they get emailed, and what goes into those emails. You aren't just saying hello to everyone in your address book. It's about reaching a targeted audience with content tailored to produce specific results. Sound intimidating? It's not that hard. It basically comes down to five big-picture concepts:

**1. Strategy.** What do you want people to do after they read your email? Just saying, "Hi, I have a business!" isn't going to get many results. So dig deeper. If you want to move inventory, consider sending out coupons, promotions or other discounts. If you need to promote an event, set up your email marketing campaign to strategically lead into that event. Also think about who's getting emailed. If you have someone's email address because they contacted you about dentures, your email about teeth-whitening isn't going to be very useful.

**2. Content.** There's a world of difference between a marketing email and business or personal messages. A marketing email needs to look sharp. It needs to sing. People should want to open and read it. Really think hard about your [subject line](#). Imagine sifting through your own inbox. What does it take to get you to open an email instead of trashing it or setting it aside for later/never? And what does it take to keep you reading?

**Whether it's clever or serious, your email should be short and get right to the point.**

**3. Design.** When you create the body of your email, use some of the tricks you learned for creating content for your website. Again, just a bunch of paragraphs aren't that exciting. Keep it on-brand, and be sure to include a variety of formatting and media. But don't go too crazy. A cluttered email quickly gets ignored. Focus instead on creating a clear call to action with a link to your website. Also, make it easy for people to [opt out of your campaign](#) and make sure your contact information displayed clearly in the email.

## 6. Effective email marketing

# What's an email marketing campaign?

**4. Distribution.** If you need to send emails out to 100 people, are you really going to send out those messages one by one? To effectively run an email marketing campaign, you need a purpose-built tool like [GoDaddy Email Marketing](#). They let you target an audience via distribution lists, comprising recipients you want to reach with a specific kind of message. They also handle a lot of the stuff we just discussed, such as capturing email addresses, creating beautiful designs, and including important elements like opt-out links.

**5. Analysis.** You can always adjust things on the fly, say, if inspiration strikes in the middle of the night and you know you have a better subject line. But we're talking about making sure you have the best return on your investment. Any good email marketing application will let you know things like how many people opened your email, how many unsubscribed, and which email addresses weren't valid. And look at how close you got toward reaching your goal. Did you move that inventory? Did more people show up to your event?

**It may be that less than 33 percent of recipients actually open your email. So don't get frustrated if calls aren't pouring in right away. And don't lose focus on creating strategic, meaningful campaigns.**



## 6. Effective email marketing

# 12 must-know email marketing terms

Once you get the hang of kicking-off an email marketing campaign, you'll probably want to keep exploring. As you look around at other applications and resources, you're going to see the same terminology again and again. Get a head start by learning a dozen of the most common email marketing terms.

**Bounce rate.** The percentage of your emails that are undeliverable. Running less than 5 percent means you're doing pretty good.

**CAN-SPAM.** Short for *Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography And Marketing Act of 2003* (more on this later).

**Click-through rate.** The percentage of recipients who click the link within your email to go to a landing page.

**Conversion rate.** The percentage of recipients who heed your call to action. It's a good overall measure of success.

**Drips.** Pre-written messages sent at key times during the customer experience, such as after they make a purchase.

**Hook.** A catchy line that appears in the first few sentences of your email. It lets people know the point of the message.

**Landing page.** A page on your website you link to from an email. It might have more information or let people make purchases.

**Open rate.** The percentage of your emails that actually get opened. This is another good measure of a successful campaign.

**Opt-in.** Also called subscribing, opt-ins are when people give you permission to send them email marketing materials.

**Opt-out.** Also called unsubscribing, opt-outs mean people request you no longer send them email marketing materials.

**Signature.** You know this one! It's a block of text you use to sign off in a message, and often includes contact details.

**Subject line.** Displaying in recipients' inboxes, this all-important headline entices people to open your message and read it.

**On average, email marketing yields a return on investment (ROI) of about \$44 for every \$1 spent. If you think an email marketing campaign isn't worth the time or money, think again!**

## 6. Effective email marketing

# Choose an email marketing application

Once you decide to fire up your own email marketing engine, shopping for the right application can really be a headache. There are specialized products for almost any industry you can think of (even [doctor's offices](#)). To winnow down your search in a big way, focus only on applications. There are a passel of email marketing services you'll find online. But considering what you get for the money, DIY applications are definitely the way to go. Now that you've made that decision, here are some criteria to help you pick one out:

**Evaluate cost.** Budget-minded applications, like [GoDaddy Email Marketing](#), give you big-league features for a few dollars per month. Always remember ROI. Email marketing takes work, and nobody likes working for free. Make sure your application is going to pay for itself — and then some.

**Look at features.** If you aren't familiar with HTML, a point-and-click editor is one feature you absolutely need. Analytics, too, are an important tool for letting you measure success without crunching a bunch of numbers. Many feature-rich applications, such as [iContact](#), offer analytics, a point-and-click editor, and a number of pre-built templates. Just make sure you need every feature you're paying for.

**Check on integration.** Get another addition to your tool belt, not something that has to stand alone. Integration means your email marketing application syncs up with many of the other resources in your digital arsenal. For example, it's nice to be able to share your messages on social media. And some integration-friendly applications, like [Campaign Monitor](#), even let you make contact forms for your website to capture addresses and build lists.

**Read the reviews.** You know how the old saying goes: if something seems too good to be true, well... Before laying out a chunk of change for an application, see what other people have to say about that solution. If your choice consistently garners great reviews, you'll feel a lot more confident in your investment. Also check what people are saying about any specific features you need from the application.

**Try a demo.** Before you pull the trigger and make that purchase, try on your application for size. This is going to give you information that you'll never get from a review, like how easy it is to log in and click around the interface. Many of the most popular applications will let you start with a free trial. Take advantage of this, and if you're still left unsure, see if they offer some type of money-back guarantee.

A white computer mouse is positioned on a light-colored wooden desk. The background is out of focus, showing a desk lamp with a warm glow and several sheets of paper. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Email campaigns generate 6x more click-throughs than tweets.**

—SOURCE: CAMPAIGN MONITOR

## 6. Effective email marketing

# Build an email list

So you've decided to run your own email marketing campaigns and you're narrowing down your list of possible applications. You might've even taken a crack at writing content for a few messages. You're off and running! Now, who are you going to send those messages to? If you hear crickets chirping right now, it's time to put some serious thought into building email distribution lists, or *distros*.

**It's super savvy (and ethical) to email only those people who legitimately might be interested. While current U.S. laws don't require recipients to subscribe to your lists, in some regions it's downright illegal.**

There are a few best practices to follow for building distros, and we'll get to them in a sec. For now, let's just look at the basics of rounding up addresses. But, first here's what NOT to do: buy email addresses. Slick advertising-speak makes this sound like a great idea. But c'mon, think about it. These are people who've never heard of you. Why would they want to hear from you?

**Using contact forms.** Your website should absolutely include at least one contact form, and all the site builders we discussed previously make it a snap to create them. When you do, include a check box labeled something like *Send me email updates*. When you review people's submissions, see who left the box checked, and then save those email addresses. Building a list this way can be as simple as copying those addresses into a spreadsheet.

**Integrating marketing applications.** If your marketing application plays well with your site builder, you can use it to build all kinds of contact and sign-up forms. A marketing application will let you be more purpose-oriented in what you design. It can automatically build distros for you based on who opts in, and it'll let people indicate their email preferences. Once you create a contact form with your marketing application, just copy the code it gives you into your web pages.

**Exploring other methods.** Ever seen one of those boxes on a web page asking for your email address? Tools like [SumoMe](#) make it painless to add that feature to your website. To encourage people to hand over their email addresses, try giving them perks. Those might be discount coupons or even one of those digital downloads we talked about earlier. Add-ons like [Easy Digital Downloads](#) can turn a WordPress website into a freebie-delivering machine.



## 6. Effective email marketing

# List-building best practices

As promised, now we're going to dive deeper into how you should target email recipients. You need to be sure people want to get your emails. Sending unwanted messages can really tick people off who otherwise might do business with you and, worse, get you labeled as a spammer. You also need to show you're deliberately sending out emails, and not some bot churning out garbage. Once you raise suspicion, it's a time-consuming mess to convince everyone you're legitimate. Just stay on the straight-and-narrow from the start by making sure you get yes answers to these questions.

**Are you getting consent?** Don't be sneaky. Make sure people know they're opting in to your email marketing list. And clearly display a message explaining what that means. You might even send a few follow-up drips now and again to make sure people are still on board.

**Are you making it easy to opt out?** People change their minds, and that's just fine. Don't make it a hassle to unsubscribe from your distro. Email marketing applications make it easy to offer one-click opt-outs. If you're doing things manually, follow up right away on unsubscribe requests.

**Are you minding all the rules?** CAN-SPAM isn't the only set of rules to familiarize yourself with. Make sure you're aware of any additional requirements that internet providers or domain providers tack on. For example, they might want you to identify and authenticate your messages.

**Are you fixing problems?** Like unsubscribe requests, any hiccup with your email marketing operation demands immediate attention. For example, if messages bounce back because the addresses are invalid, remove them right away from your lists.

# A word about spam

Anything that falls on the wrong side of [CAN-SPAM](#) rules is generically called spam. You know those messages: some Nigerian prince is pleading for assistance, or maybe an online pharmacy is trying to sell you dubiously labeled medication. These are the cattle rustlers of the email marketing world, and nobody can stand them. That's why the best practices we just went over are so important to keep in mind.

Most email applications like Gmail or Outlook make it easy to report messages as spam, instead of just deleting them. And if your marketing emails reach someone who doesn't want them, chances are they're going to holler for the sheriff. Get enough of these kinds of complaints, and you get labeled a spammer. And pardner, you don't want that to happen. It's a long, hard road to re-establishing your reputation.



## 6. Effective email marketing

# Plan your first email marketing campaign

Nice work on keeping up as we've meandered through the world of email marketing! Seriously, there's so much to it that many companies employ full-time email marketing managers. Keep in mind though, our discussion so far has only touched on the tip of this revenue-producing iceberg. There are lots of [other fantastic resources](#) on this subject, which can propel you to getting better and better at email marketing.

But right now it's about time to talk about launching your first campaign. The following six tidbits are geared toward keeping you upright as you toddle toward marketing mastery.

**1. Establish your goal.** Like we said before, just telling people about your business isn't the greatest goal. Moving inventory is more focused, but dig a little deeper. How many additional units are you hoping to sell as result of your campaign? Putting hard numbers to your goal helps tremendously when it comes time to analyze a campaign's success.

**2. Define your audience.** Getting people to opt in is just the start. Look at your list and see if there's any way to further classify recipients. What are they like? What do they want from you? Figuring out this stuff can help make your goal-setting more realistic. It also lets you tailor content that's more likely to resonate with your audience (and get read).

**3. Stay on schedule.** Setting start and end dates for your email marketing lets you measure its impact on your real-world operation. If your goal was to sell more stuff, you can check sales figures against the duration of your campaign. And obviously it's not a good idea to continuously pump out marketing emails like a bot would.

## 6. Effective email marketing

# Plan your first email marketing campaign

**4. Vary subject lines.** This can be as basic and scientific as you want. On one hand, you can [vary subject lines](#) at random in the hopes that mixing things up will yield better results. At the other end of the spectrum is what's called A/B testing. Note which emails use a subject line, analyze their results, and then switch to the more effective subject line.


**5. Double-check content.** Nothing can sink an email marketing campaign like a typo. All those hours of work. All that money you spent. Out the window, because you joyously proclaimed *Sell Coming Up!* instead of informing people of next month's clearance event. And while you're checking for typos, scan your distro for obvious errors.

**6. Think like a recipient.** Send yourself a test message, and imagine you're seeing it for the first time. Did the subject line make you want to open it, or does it beg to be trashed? As you read the content, ask yourself if it's clearly asking you to do something. Click through all the links to make sure landing pages are set up correctly.

Ready to go? Don't stress about launching your first email marketing campaign. You got this! The information we've gone over in this chapter will help out tons with your first one, and lay the foundation for future success.



# Quick checklist: Get started with email marketing

TASK	
Review glossary of terms	
Shop for applications	
Build an email distro list	
Check best practices and spam rules	
Plan your first campaign	

Time to set up an email marketing program: **Less than 1 day**

## 6. Effective email marketing

# Additional resources

Ready to take a crack at email marketing? Leverage these additional resources:

- [GoDaddy Email Marketing](#): Create and send beautiful, business-boosting emails in minutes.
- [Unleash the Power of Email Marketing \[eBook\]](#): Step-by-step guide for using email marketing to grow your business.
- [Get repeat business with email marketing](#): Find out how to build your email list and create a captivating message to keep subscribers engaged.
- [4 email marketing basics for small businesses](#): Heed these fundamental tips to turn subscribers into customers.
- [How to define your email marketing goals](#): Consider five questions before you start sending customer emails.
- [Why GoDaddy Email Marketing and WordPress are meant for each other](#): See why this is a match made in marketing heaven.
- [Create your first email newsletter in 30 minutes or less](#): Use GoDaddy Email Marketing to create an email campaign in less time than you thought possible
- [Beginner's guide to starting an email list](#): Learn how to get and keep subscribers. No experience required.
- [Use your website as an email list building machine](#): Get plenty of website-based list-building ideas, from opt-ins to pop-ups.
- [How to automate your email marketing](#): Here's how you can employ some strategic tech to automate your email.
- [33 email newsletter ideas you can use right now](#): No inspiration? No problem. Download this list of creative newsletter ideas.



**START MARKETING**

**7**

**Active  
social media**

## 7. Active social media

# It's not just for millennials

For a lot of us, mentioning social media brings to mind memes, trolls and twenty-somethings glued to their smartphones. Well, OK, that's kinda true. There's certainly a superficial aspect to it all, which can leave busy small business owners wrinkling their noses. But there's also quite a few substantial reasons to leverage social media. That starts with forming more meaningful connections with your public.

**More than 72 percent of internet users are on social media, and that number is growing fast. Something as simple and easy as a Twitter account gives you access to a huge audience you might otherwise be ignoring.**

When we talk about more meaningful connections, we're talking about engagement. Nobody has the time to knock on doors and chat with people about their business. But when you're active on platforms like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, you can float all kinds of ideas to a huge audience, and then check on their reactions. You're establishing a give-and-take that lets people feel included in what you're doing.



# Personal domains and social media

Before we get any further into all the ways social media can boost your business, let's revisit the subject of [personal domains](#). Remember those? Domain names based on your name that you point to a social media profile. It's a cinch if you're using one of these profiles for your website, or if your website is still under construction.

A personal domain is also a big way to increase your brand awareness. If people tend to look for you rather than searching for your business (say, if you're a photographer), [see if your name is available](#) as a domain. You can then direct that domain to your social media profile, making it easy to find you online.



## 7. Active social media

# Social listening

For a business owner, social media lets you be a fly on the wall as people hold conversations about all kinds of things. Post something about your operation and see what happens. For example, if your bakery is now offering rhubarb pie, post some nice pictures. Now, did anyone comment on your photos? What did they say? [Keeping an eye \(or ear\) on social media](#) can give you some pretty deep insights, like how rhubarb is Kim's favorite but Larry is deathly allergic to it.

**Don't just settle for a passive approach to social media. If people's comments indicate there's something better you could be doing, do it. And let people know you're doing it via your profile.**

When you post anything on social media, be sure to include a link to your website. It's a sure bet for increasing traffic. And when more people visit your website it not only builds brand awareness, but can also give you a little boost with search engine rankings. When someone shares your rhubarb pie photos, they're also encouraging all their friends to check you out online. If something you post happens to go viral, hang on! There's no telling how much that'll boost business.

Speaking of spying, social media also lets you [snoop around on the competition](#). Check out the profiles of competing businesses to see what they're doing. Now, ask yourself if that's something you could do — or do better. Again, the key here is remaining active. If the bakery across the street is tweeting about lowering their prices, check your own to be sure you're staying competitive.





**“Facebook was not originally created to be a company. It was built to accomplish a social mission — to make the world more open and connected.”**

— MARK ZUCKERBERG



## 7. Active social media

# Don't try to be everywhere

While you can't overstate the value of social media, you can sure overindulge in it. If you set up profiles on every last social network you can find, chances are you'll hardly have enough time to remain active on all of them. And what's the use of a profile that just hangs out without any followers or activity? It's like a blacksmith who has 50 hammers, when one or two would suffice. The rest are just sitting around, collecting dust.

With that idea nailed down, let's look at a few ways you can get the most from your social media activity.

**Find your customers.** An easy way to start is just by checking for names you recognize on a social network. You can also ask, either verbally or via contact forms, where your customers are on social media. There are also more techy ways to find your customers on social media, but let's keep it simple for now. Once you know where your customers are, take a close look at those social networks for your own profiles.

**Pick your favorites.** Like a dusty hammer, an unused social profile is nothing more than a waste of valuable resources. If you discover your customers are online across a broad array of social networks, only pick a couple that you like best. It'll let you get the most out of the effort you're putting into social media. Your

customers, too, won't be disappointed when they find you on a social network you really don't use.

## Spend your time only on the social networks where your customers spend their time.

**Regularly post content.** On social media, people are downright ravenous for fresh content. So keep serving it up. The thing to keep in mind, though, is quality over quantity. Images or videos taken with your smartphone are powerful ways to vary the thoughts and ideas you're sharing. When you regularly post content on social media, you're constantly reminding people that you're out there.

**Monitor any feedback.** Don't just post a few words or pictures and then call it a done deal. Go back to your posts hours and days later to see if anyone shared them, or left comments or other feedback. That's free market research just waiting to be collected, so take a few minutes each day to check on your profiles. And remember to take action when it's appropriate. If people are asking for something, give it to them.



## 7. Active social media

# Comparing popular social networks

There are a passel of social networks out there, and reviewing them all can sure make your head spin. But before you get all worked up over TweetBooks and FaceLinks, take a quick gander at this handy chart. It gets right down to the meat and potatoes so you can more easily pick out the right social media sites for your business.

With so many social media platforms available, it's hard to decide which sites provide the biggest return on your time and money investments. Use the following chart to compare five of the largest social media platforms to help determine the most effective social media sites for you and your business:

	TWITTER	FACEBOOK	LINKEDIN	INSTAGRAM	PINTEREST
Number of active users worldwide	313 million	1.71 billion	450 million	500 million	110 million (U.S. only)
Business application	Separate account for business	Business page separate from personal account	Company profile page separate from personal/professional profile	Separate account for business	Separate account for business
Relationship	Followers	Followers	Connections	Followers	Followers
Engagement opportunities	Likes, Retweets, Mentions, Replies	Likes, Shares, Comments	Likes, Shares, Comments	Loves, Comments	Pins, Likes, Comments
Key demographics	<a href="#">Popular among the college-educated and the under-50 crowd.</a>	<a href="#">58 percent of American adults use Facebook, and 70 percent of them visit it daily.</a>	<a href="#">Users are more likely to be ages 30 to 64 (rather than 18 to 29) — unlike any other social platform.</a>	<a href="#">53 percent of adults ages 18 to 29 use it.</a>	<a href="#">80 percent female; 50 percent are under 40</a>
Paid options to boost visibility	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

## 7. Active social media

# Top 10 best practices for posting and engaging

Social media is a beautiful thing when it comes to extending your reputation to the digital world. Just remember, the reputation you establish online is going to carry over into the offline world, as well. So when you're actively posting and engaging customers, it's best to imagine you're physically right there in front of them, and act accordingly. Sound tricky? It's not. Here are 10 of the best things anyone can do to maintain spotless presences on social media:

**1. Be friendly.** Actively look for new people to invite to follow you. And if you get requests inviting you to follow, don't ignore them. Verify it's a legitimate contact, and then respond to the request as soon as you can. Ignoring someone on social media can hurt feelings in the real world.

**2. Be graceful.** This starts with the quality-over-quantity rule for posting. Don't be a bore. If you're posting more than a couple times a day, rein it in a little. Also (and this might go without saying), make sure your posts are friendly, respectful and won't otherwise offend anyone.

**3. Be accurate.** If your posts are fraught with typos, misinformation and other erroneous content, it's going to tarnish your reputation. Think about it: how confident can people be in doing business with you when proper use of *their versus they're* seems to be a huge challenge?

**4. Be appropriate.** Everyone loves a good laugh, but make sure your posts are appropriate in their subject matter and tone. For example, people looking for a good lawyer aren't going to factor in knock-knock jokes when it comes to their searches.

## 7. Active social media

# Top 10 best practices for posting and engaging

**5. Be present.** People aren't always going to reach out directly with questions or comments. If someone leaves feedback or a query on a post, check to see if it needs a response. If someone says something nice about you, that deserves a reply or at least a like.

**6. Be relevant.** Establish your credibility by linking to relevant articles in your posts. And if you have anything coming up that people should know about — like sales, promotions or events — post about them in a timely manner so people can follow up with you.

**7. Be varied.** Pictures, videos and [even memes](#) let you make a point without relying solely on words. While some ideas are best conveyed with text, in many other instances visual content can connect with an audience in ways that words cannot.

**8. Be savvy.** Know how people are finding you online. For starters, it's usually a good idea for posts to subtly tie-in links to your website. Also make sure your website and email signature include links to your social media profiles.

**9. Be inquisitive.** Everyone loves being asked their opinion. Simply posting a question — like *What are your favorite fall colors?* — can spark a meaningful discussion that yields all kinds of valuable information you can use to tailor your business to customers.

**10. Be sure.** The internet is full of horror stories about people who are too quick to post [what they think is funny](#) or appropriate. Don't be that person. Make sure what you're about to post isn't inflammatory and avoid struggling to extinguish flames down the road.

## 7. Active social media

# Top 5 worst practices for posting and engaging

Like a bad traffic accident, people just can't look away when someone has a [social media meltdown](#). Even if it's not a full-blown detonation, it's still easy to make missteps when you aren't thinking about what it's like to follow you. But fear not. The main things to avoid aren't complicated (or numerous):

**1. Don't be inappropriate.** You're on social media to drive business. Don't forget to stay on brand and keep things relevant. Social media profiles for your business aren't appropriate venues for rambling or inappropriate posts.

**2. Don't be everywhere.** We can't go over this too many times: regular activity is the key to getting value from social media. Don't spread yourself too thin by setting up more profiles than you can regularly monitor and engage.

**3. Don't be needy.** Like posting too often, inundating followers with requests to like this or follow that is quite the faux pas. It's better to be subtle than too needy. Nobody wants their social media experience to be a salesy hassle.

**4. Don't be lazy.** Seriously. Double- and triple-check for typos and other errors. And don't get lazy by automating posts or purchasing subscribers. Yes, you can do this. But should you? No, not unless you want to appear spammy.

**5. Don't be confusing.** Save the cat memes for your Facebook profile, not your business page. And if you don't have a profile dedicated solely to your business, set one up. It's too confusing when you mix personal activity with business.

[Get more social media don'ts.](#)



## 7. Active social media

# Social media management tools

After going over the best and worst practices for social media, you might be left feeling like it's just too much work. One profile, let alone several, could leave you feeling like it's best to avoid the whole enchilada. Before you give up on the idea, consider adding a social media management tool to your belt. One of these can help you check off several important boxes on your social media to-do list:

**Managing profiles.** One of the most useful features of applications like [Hootsuite](#) is a single dashboard that lets you view multiple profiles. Forget about clicking around several websites. It's all right there in one place.


**Scheduling activity.** Once you really dial in using social media, tools including [Buffer](#) let you schedule activities like blog posts, and tweets. Your followers will get into the habit of engaging on a regular basis.

**Monitoring conversations.** [Social Oomph](#) is one of a few tools that keep track of when you appear in social media conversations. You'll always know whenever you're mentioned, followed, retweeted and so forth.

**Review metrics.** If you're the number-crunching type, applications like [Audiense](#) give you a robust suite of analytics. You get insights into important areas like key influencers, competitors' activities and best times to post.

**Integrate networks.** Nifty gadgets like [IFTTT](#) let you tie together activity on different social networks. For example, you can set it up to send out a tweet whenever you publish a new post on your blog.

# Quick checklist: Get social

TASK	
Set up profiles	
Check on competition	
Review best and worst practices	
Write some posts	
Consider additional tools	

Time to get started with social media: **A few hours**

## 7. Active social media

# Additional resources

Let these additional resources give you a helping hand with social media:

- [Free social media guide for small businesses](#): Step-by-step guide for growing your small business using social media.
- [The dos and don'ts of social media marketing for SMBs](#): Avoid these common social media mistakes. #MustRead
- [10 social media content commandments for SMBs \[ebook\]](#): Download this free eBook from our friends at Likeable Local to get the most out of your social content.
- [No shame — do social media on your terms](#): Learn how to stay sane while building an audience through social media.
- [Ultimate guide to Facebook Live for business](#): Ready to start using Facebook Live? Here's your comprehensive guide to get started.
- [Attract new business with Facebook](#): Check out useful tips for using Facebook for business to engage your customers and create loyal fans.
- [Everything you need to know to put your business on Instagram](#): Here's what you need to know to achieve business success on Instagram.
- [Twitter for people who hate Twitter](#): You don't have to love Twitter to make it work for your business. Here's how to get started.
- [Pinterest marketing drives shoppers to your business](#): Use these methods to connect with new customers on Pinterest.
- [Time-saving social media tips](#): From scheduling posts in advance to repurposing content, get hacks for shaving hours off your social media to-do list.



**GET SOCIAL**

**Into the sunset**



# Checking off the Significant Seven

Give yourself a big pat on the back. Taking the time to educate yourself about online business tools puts you a big step ahead of your less-savvy competition. You might've decided to utilize only one of the tools we discussed in previous chapters. You might be using them all. Either way, before you ride off into the sunset let's skim back through everything to make sure your online presence is as strong as it can be.

Run through the following 10-point checklist to see if there are any areas you could shore up:

Y   N	Have you picked out a custom domain for your website?	Y   N	Does your website content include a variety of media?
Y   N	Did you already set up email on your custom domain?	Y   N	Are you confident people can find you online?
Y   N	Did you pick out a site builder or developer?	Y   N	Are you sure your online listings are accurate?
Y   N	Does your website have clear calls-to-action?	Y   N	Does email marketing leave you feeling confident?
Y   N	Have you checked your website for mobile-friendliness?	Y   N	Are you sure you're getting the most out of social media?

When you feel good about all your answers, add up the number of times you picked Y.

0 - 4	You could be having a better experience. Give us a call for a little help.
5 - 7	The finish line is close. Go back over one area until you've got a better handle on it.
8 - 10	Watch out, internet! There's a new sheriff in town. And that sheriff is you.

As you take your online presence to the next level and beyond, find more great resources on the [GoDaddy blog](#).



A person with long blonde hair and a cowboy hat is riding a horse through tall grass at sunset. The person is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and dark jeans. The horse is galloping, and the rider is looking back over their shoulder. The background is a dense forest of evergreen trees. The text "The End." is overlaid in the center of the image.

**The End.**