

30

CRUCIAL ELEMENTS FOR A GREAT WEBSITE

By Annette Welsford

CONTENT

	WEBSITE CONTENT	4
	WEBSITE DESIGN	14
	WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY	19
	TAKE ACTION	25
	GET A CRITIQUE	28
	YOUR CHECKLIST	29

In the late 20th century we entered the Age of Technology and the internet explosion has changed the way we market our businesses forever.

Not only do you need a website – you need a good one.

There are websites which are basically online brochures, and then there are websites which generate leads or sales – or both.

The ones which generate leads are those which give your users a great experience – to the point where they take action.

And this is the basis of Google’s primary strategy when it comes to determining which websites are listed on page 1 of search results for keyword searches – and which aren’t. And as most people don’t ever get to page 2 of search results – you need to be on page 1.

If your site doesn’t keep visitors engaged – whereby they visit at least two or more pages and/or take the action(s) you want them to take – then it’s not a good user experience.

This is a very simplified explanation – there’s more to it than these parameters. But your user experience is the key.

I hope you find this list of 30 Criteria for a Great Website to be helpful.

I suggest you print out the checklist at the end and use it to tick off and make notes about your current website.

If it doesn’t meet all the criteria – contact Commonsense Marketing to discuss how we can help you to improve your site and online marketing.



Annette Welsford is the CEO of Commonsense Marketing Pty Ltd, author of a range of books, holds an MBA in Marketing, is a sought after marketing coach and founder of several online businesses.

Commonsense Marketing provides marketing training and mentoring to small business owners, and a wide range of Done For You marketing services for business owners who are skill or time poor.

1300 554 495

info@commonsensemktg.com.au



If you want more marketing tips or to have a chat about marketing your business – then please connect in your favourite way.



WEBSITE CONTENT

As a marketer, I consider content to be the most important element when it comes to websites. Of course web developers and graphic designers will no doubt disagree with me. In the end it's all about giving the customer the information they came here seeking – in a way which is relevant appealing and succinct.



1. ADDRESS THE VISITOR'S NEED IN THE HEADLINE

When someone types in a keyword and lands on your website, they should understand how you can help them solve their problem - at a glance. A strong benefit laden headline on the homepage is critical to validating that the user is in the right place.

Example:

Keyword search: Home Loans Campbelltown

What visitors see on the website: Their exact phrase and repeats of “home loans” in 2 more places.

OUR MORTGAGE OPTIONS
Home Loan and Mortgage Solutions

For the Right Loan for you, Call Us on 1300 700 496!

HOME | COMPANY | SERVICES | FAQs | GUARANTEE | CASE STUDIES | CALCULATORS | BLOG | CONTACT

**Do You Want a Home Loan?
Help has Just Arrived!**

For most of us it was just another night in suburbia... but last night another satisfied customer of Our Mortgage Options sat down to dinner in their new home.

As they talked around the dining table they told each other what their favourite thing was.

"My favourite thing today was coming home from school to my new bedroom." said one of the kids. "I love it!"

You should have seen the look on their Dad's face!

Home Loans Campbelltown

At Our Mortgage Options we find the perfect

Online Enquiry

First Name

Last Name



2. USE BENEFIT-LADEN COPY

Instead of focusing on the features of your services, focus on the benefits. Focus on what's in it for the prospect and the larger problem that they are facing, for example lack of time, trust, service, quality. The goal here is to get them emotionally engaged.

NEED AN Electrician
We'll Keep You Safe!

Lost power?
Need electrical help?
Call 1300 191 330
SYDNEY

Call Us if You Need an Electrician to Arrive On Time and Provide a Great Service at a Fair Price!

HOME ABOUT US SERVICES SPECIALS CLIENTS FAQS TIPS CONTACT US

What is More Important To You?

1. Prompt service, performed at the time booked in or we'll give you \$100?
2. Up front full price quote, no surprises?
3. Quality workmanship with full money back guarantee?
4. No mess or we'll pay for a cleaner?
5. Full safety check to give you peace of mind?

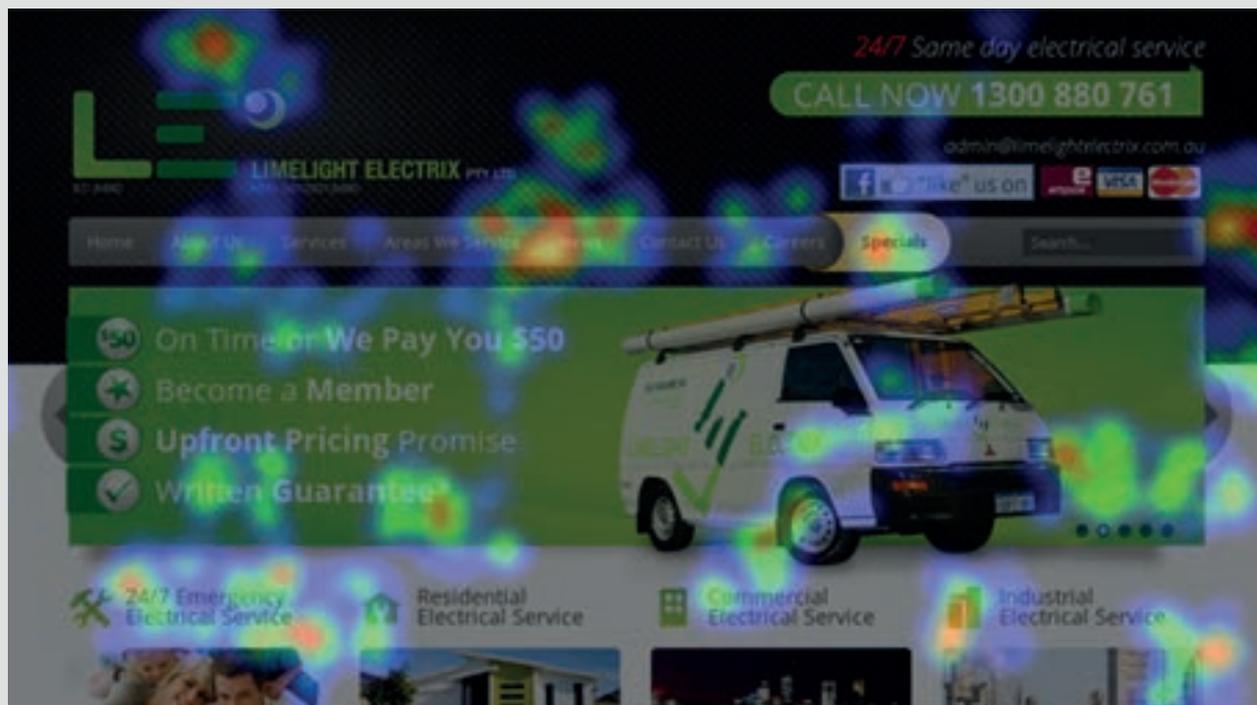
When you call Need An Electrician you get all 5 things, guaranteed.

Call 1300 191 330



3. USE LOTS OF SUB-HEADINGS

Numerous studies on website surfing behaviour (and real time tracking using heat maps) show that people generally look at pictures first, read headlines second, read picture captions third – and then may go on to read the smaller body copy if they're attention is captured. People SKIM – so make sure you use lots of sub-headings to arrest their attention.



Heatmap software tracks how your site visitors move about your site, where they hover, where they click.



4. USE RELEVANT IMAGES

Images are the number one attention grabbing component of any website or social media page – so make sure you use plenty of them, and make sure they're relevant to the context of the page they are on. Add text or a caption to explain or deliver a message, and always add alt text so that search engine bots can index the images.

Make sure you DO NOT use other people's images without obtaining permission first. There are plenty of royalty free photo sites where you can acquire free or low cost images to use legitimately. Check out our [blogpost](#) for more tips on using images effectively, and where to find them.

OUR MORTGAGE OPTIONS

WHAT TO EXPECT WITH THE REFINANCING PROCESS

- 1. OUR INTERVIEW**
We meet and discuss your needs, present the most likely loan of best fit and then if all is good, we start the application process.
- 2. LOAN APPLICATION LODGED**
Your loan application is lodged with the lender along with all required supporting documents.
- 3. CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**
IF THE LENDER IS HAPPY within **2 – 3 DAYS** we receive conditional approval from them.
- 4. VALUATION REPORTS**
Valuation reports will arrive within **3 DAYS**.
- 5. UNCONDITIONAL APPROVAL**
Once the lender receives satisfactory valuations, **UNCONDITIONAL (FULL) APPROVAL IS GIVEN**. We then let you know you are approved.
- 6. MORTGAGE DOCUMENTS**
The lender will send you a copy of the mortgage documents within **5 days**. sign where indicated and return them to the lender.
send documents within 5 days.
- 7. LOAN SETTLEMENT**
BETWEEN 2 – 3 DAYS after you have returned the mortgage documents, the lender will liaise with your existing lender to arrange the refinance.
- 8. CONGRATULATIONS**
And that's it! Break out the bubbly and toast your new mortgage!

We created this infographic for a client's site to visually explain a complex process



5. MAKE YOUR CONTENT INTERESTING

What do you think is more interesting to read?

A website that uses line after line and paragraph after paragraph of text?

Or a website that puts thought into understanding the most important elements of text and visually representing these in icons, infographics or diagrams?

There has been a strong growth in diagrams called infographics. This is a way of arranging and sorting data and then presenting it visually in a simplified manner.

Well prepared copy will be succinct, provide relevant and useful information, be presented in a visually appealing way (eg: bulletpoints, indents etc) and supported by headings and graphics.

6. HAVE AN INFORMATIVE ABOUT US PAGE

People buy from people, not companies – unless you've spent millions on building a trusted company brand. The About Us page is usually the second most visited page on a website – because people want to know more about who is behind the company name – if they have credibility and authority, if they will like them and trust them. This page needs to be about you and your team, your values and what people can expect when they buy from you.



Melbourne client Justin Morris was told by a property developer customer that he chose his business over all other Melbourne plumbers because of the information provided on the About Us page. He was drawn to his family values and ethics and knew that Justin was the kind of person he wanted to deal with.



7. USE VIDEO

33% of people prefer to watch [video](#) than to read text. In fact it's higher amongst men. Use video to introduce yourself, to explain the benefits of your service, to explain a complex process, to document a customer case study or testimonial.

Not only does it provide people with the opportunity of seeing who they'll be doing business with, it is a fantastic tool for driving traffic to your site.



Brisbane client Kraudelt Painting used an iPhone to capture a series of "action shots of their team at work. We added before and after photos, titles and a voiceover to create a powerful little video which showcases their work and attention to detail. It's generated hundreds of views and is a great source of new traffic to their site.

8. ADD A BLOG

A blog is the best way to keep your site fresh, relevant and indexed. It's the perfect tool for writing short articles on topics of relevance to your target market. Sometimes they don't know what they don't know – so if you add new articles (at least once a month) about issues they may face, on changes in your marketplace, new products and services you've introduced, how to do things, etc – then you will increase the time they spend on your site .

A blog is a "must have" component for improving search engine visibility. Every time you add content – share it with your social media followers and your email list. You can mix it up with video, text, infographics to enhance appeal and usability.



Your Guide to Email Marketing: Part 4 – Writing Emails

Did you know that 1.9 billion non-spam emails are sent every day and the average office worker receives 121 emails per day? That's a lot of competition for your attention in people's inboxes. Yet even with the rapid rise in alternative forms of communication – such as messaging and social media posts – email is...

[Read full story »](#)



Noticed a Spike in Website Visits Recently?

Have you looked at your Google Analytics reports lately? If not – I suggest you do so, because they contain a wealth of useful information about your website and website visitors. You can use this information to plan content, traffic strategies, reveal visitor demographics, track conversions, see keywords, conduct experiments and track which sites are...

[Read full story »](#)



Your Guide to Email Marketing: Part 3 – Building Your List

In Part 3 of our Series – Your Guide to Email Marketing – we move onto building your list. (Here's Parts 1 and 2 of the series – Your Guide to Email Marketing – Part 1: Getting Started, Your Guide to Email Marketing – Part 2: Tools) How big should your list be? Some...

[Read full story »](#)



9. USE TESTIMONIALS

You can talk about how brilliant you are until the cows come home – but it’s what other people say that really counts. Testimonials (ideally in video format) of other real customers using your products and services are the social proof that people who don’t know you will be looking for. This breeds confidence by seeing that other real people are happy with you.

Feedback

If I was to engage a business to work with me, I'd want to know if their customers would recommend them. I'm sure you feel the same way! Here's some feedback we've received about the services provided by Commonsense Marketing that might help you decide if we're right for you. You may also want to check out our [case studies](#).



John Nisa
Inspire Concrete CEO
Designer and Builder of Inspiring Concrete Drives, Paths, Patios | Draftsman

John Nisa, [Inspire Concrete](#)



Online Real Estate Business – Robyn and Chris Marsden



[Supaflex Waterproofing](#) -Greg Herbert



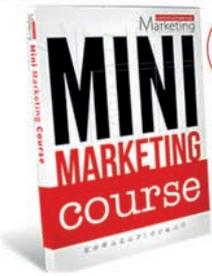
Personal Travel Manager – Zora Abbot

"My name is Paul, and I run a small I.T. support business for home and small business users in my local area (Melbourne). I found I was really struggling with my marketing and generating new leads. After spending countless nights looking online for help, eventually I found Annette ..., and called her the next day. I spoke with her for close to 30 minutes and realized she was the right person for me. She had a great portfolio of work I could see and had worked with many service-based businesses.





Get Help Now!



free!

Send to Me Please!

Recent Posts

- Your Guide To Email Marketing: Part 4 - Writing Emails
- Noticed A Spike In Website Visits Recently?
- Your Guide To Email Marketing: Part 3 - Building Your List
- Your Guide To Email Marketing: Part 2 - Tools
- Your Guide To Email Marketing: Part 1 - Getting Started
- Have You Got A Social Media Content Calendar?
- Finding And Using Images

Our Favourite Event

Showcase a variety of testimonials. Video, audio, written. Show images of the clients to demonstrate that the testimonial is authentic. Use testimonials about different aspects of your work or to demonstrate a variety of results you've achieved for your clients.



10. USE GUARANTEES/SECURITY SEALS TO REMOVE RISK

An outrageous iron-clad guarantee - or series of guarantees - go a long way to reducing risk and building trust. Your guarantees need to be specific and benefit laden, not generic. We guarantee our work is not a guarantee. You need to specify for how long, and what you will do if the customer is not happy.

The screenshot displays four guarantee cards on a website. The first card is orange and titled "100% ON TIME GUARANTEE", with the text "We guarantee to arrive within 10 minutes of our confirmed time or take \$100 off your invoice." The other three cards are grey and titled "Fixed Price Guarantee", "Quality Guarantee", and "Cleanliness Guarantee", each with a "Read More »" link below the title.

11. INCLUDE A PRIVACY PAGE

If you've got any type of form on your site - even just a contact us form on your Contact Us page - you need to include a Privacy Page which spells out how you keep people's information secure. The text should also refer to tracking cookies. This is a mandatory requirement if you intend using any form of advertising to drive people to your site - eg: Google PPC, Bing PPC, Facebook PPC etc.

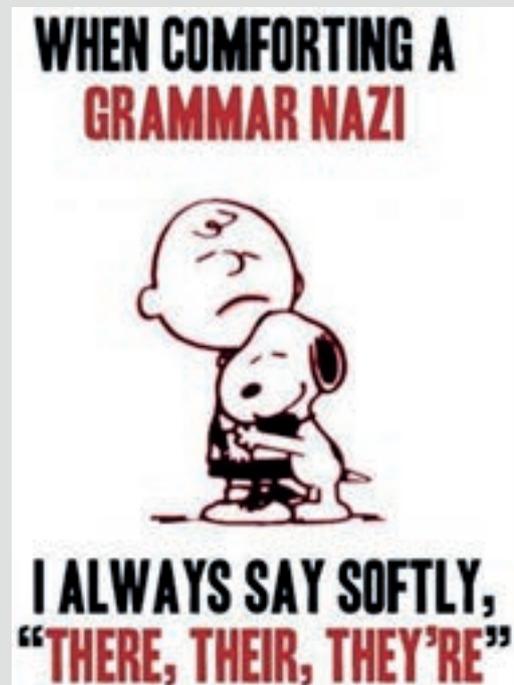


12. LANGUAGE, SPELLING AND ERRORS

Great, error-free copy is a must.

If errors exist, people will assume they exist in your products and services also. Because it's often hard to see your own mistakes - have your copy checked by someone else who is a "grammar nazi".

Not only is correct spelling and grammar important - so is the language and style. Don't be too formal. Be friendly, use phrases that your target audience understand, avoid acronyms and industry jargon. Speak in writing like you would speak to a person face to face. If you can't write well - get a copywriter to do it for you. It's that important.





WEBSITE DESIGN

Design covers the visual appeal of the website. There are several rules to follow when it comes to graphic design, and web design.



13. DESIGN FOR CONVERSION

The ultimate purpose of a website is to display information that the visitor is seeking and to inspire them to take the desired action (phone, fill out a form or buy). When they take this action – it is considered a “conversion” and can be tracked in Google Analytics. If someone doesn’t find what they are looking for within a narrow window of time, they leave. By focusing on what is important to the prospect as they make their way through the website, and make navigation as pain free as possible, you will have a dramatic impact on conversions. Stay focused on the end user and why they are visiting your website.



We track how many people call our client Kraudelt Painting direct from their mobile phones, when they click on this number. This is one of several “conversion” actions on the website which we track and measure.

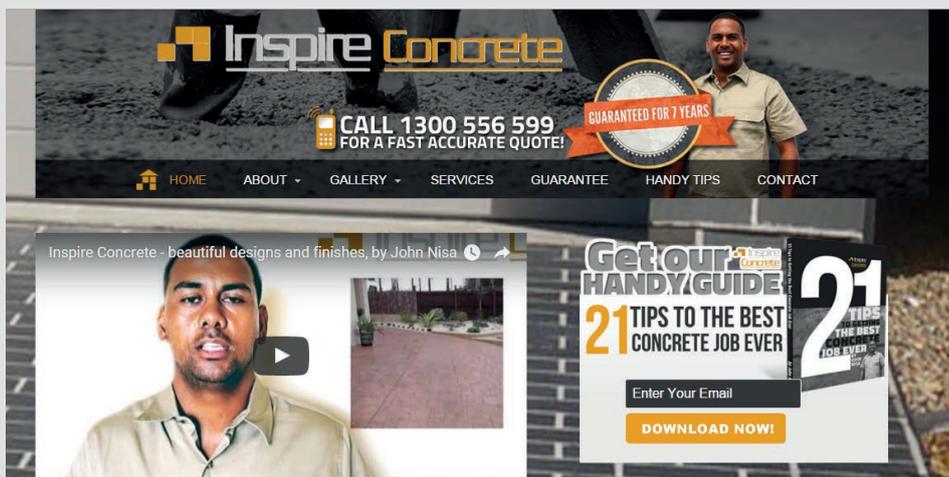


14. CAPTURE VISITOR DETAILS FOR ONGOING MARKETING

Not everyone who visits your site is ready to buy now. It may be days, or months before they're ready.

If you capture their email address, you can continue to keep in contact and build rapport, add value and provide more info about your authority and credibility.

Keep the number of fields on a form to a minimum and make sure the form is linked to a trustworthy email marketing system. Offer something of value to entice them to hand over their email address.



This simple contact form provides a free valuable guide to help people choose a concreter, and is a great way for our client Inspire Concrete to grow their email marketing list and stay in contact with prospects long after they've left the site.

15. LOGO SHOULD LINK BACK TO THE HOME PAGE

Humans are creatures of habit. The most accepted convention and what users have grown to expect is to have your logo in the top left hand corner. When clicked it links back to the homepage. Don't make your logo too large. It's not the size that counts!



16. CONTACT DETAILS AT THE TOP OF EVERY PAGE

Having your phone number at the top of every page makes it easy for someone to pick up the phone and talk to a human being. On the mobile version of your site it should dial the phone number when clicked and this can be tracked in Google Analytics if the right tracking code is added.

17. TYPOGRAPHY FOR READABILITY

When something is effortless to read you will naturally read more of it. Good layout uses headlines, bullet points, ordered lists, tables and shorter paragraphs. Research has proven that left aligned text is more readable than justified text (aligned both left and right).

Font size is also an important factor. A minimum of 12pt should be used for optimum readability on screen with a line height of around 1.5. Ensure there is contrast between the font and the background colour. Sans serif fonts (Helvetica, Arial, Tahoma) are easier to read online than serif fonts (Times New Roman, Georgia).

Whatever fonts are used – they should be google friendly – ie: display properly on desktop and mobile devices.



The site we designed for client electricalandplumbing.com.au uses headlines, sub headings, bullet points, short paragraphs, good line spacing and left aligned text to make reading effortless.



18. USE WHITE SPACE

Empty space on a page is called 'white space'. Some people think that white space is wasted space and try to fill it. This is not the case. White space increases readability and therefore conversions which is especially important on a content driven website such as a blog. It gives your content space to breathe and makes it more digestible.

19. KEEP THE COLOUR PALETTE SIMPLE

Use no more than three primary colours in your website.

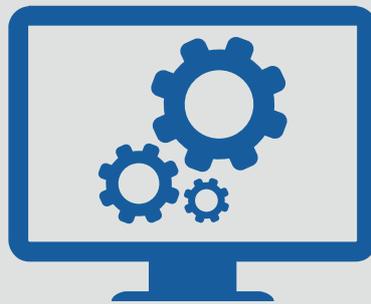
The goal of colour is to complement, contrast, provide vibrancy and direction.

It talks to the user on an emotional level and will evoke different moods and responses. There are entire volumes written around colour theory.

As a general rule of thumb, use complementary colours based on a primary colour (around 60% usage), a complementary colour (around 30% usage) and an accent colour (around 10% usage).



Blue, red, green, purple - does this guy really think he's a website designer?



WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY

Functionality refers to the little things which all go toward making the user experience pain free and easy. They should be able to load your website quickly and easily on any device and find what they are looking for effortlessly.



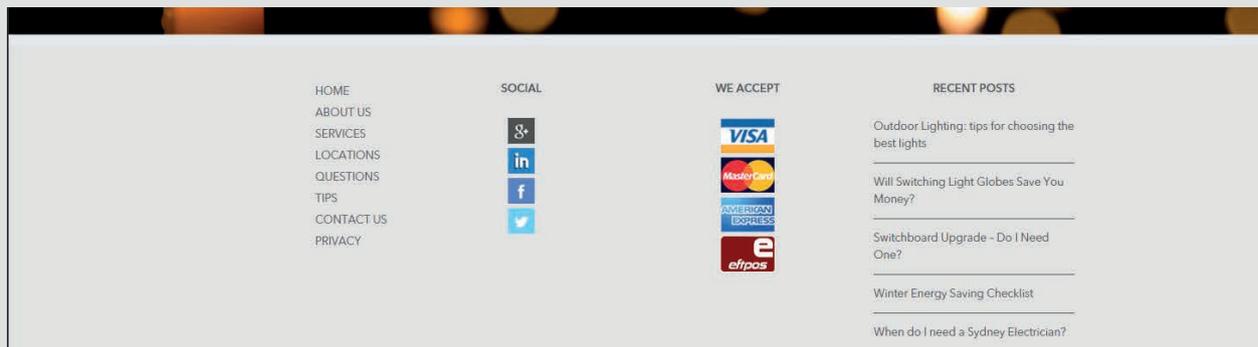
20. NAVIGATION SHOULD BE AT THE TOP AND BOTTOM

Navigation bars should appear at the top and bottom of every page (unless it's an optin landing page) and be structured in a logical way that makes sense to site visitors.

Sometimes the way you organise your company and products internally, is completely different to how a website visitor may search for information on your site. You must think like a customer!

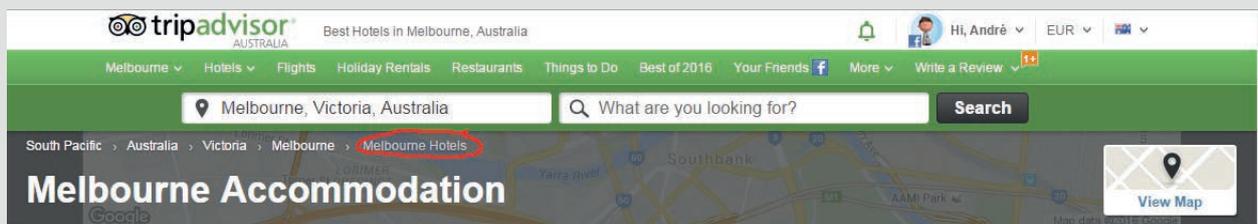
Make use of the footer. Any viewer that makes it to the bottom of your page is going to see it (users do scroll). It makes sense to have a repeat of your primary navigation as the viewer has finished with that page and will be looking for the next one. If there is space, include contact details and a phone number. The footer is also the ideal place to include links to non-primary but essential pages such as privacy, terms, sitemap, social media links, payment types etc.

It's also a good place to repeat titles and links to your blogposts.



21. INCLUDE BREADCRUMBS

This was taken from the tale of Hansel and Gretel who laid down a trail of breadcrumbs to find their way back home. This navigational tool is more relevant on internal pages and gives the user a visual representation of which page they are on and where they have come from.





22. INCLUDE A SITE SEARCH

If someone can't find what they need on your site, then a search bar will help them find it quickly. This search bar should be clearly visible located at the top right of the page. The button next to the search field should say 'search'. Studies have indicated that the ideal search bar width is 27 characters wide. Including a search bar is a wonderful strategy to find out exactly what visitors are looking for, because their searches can be tracked in Google Analytics.



23. STICK TO THE COMMON LINK COLOUR

Research indicates that the colour **blue** is still the best indicator of a link within your website. There are no problems deviating from this but ensure there is ample contrast from other text colours within your site. Also include a colour change for the mouse hover state.



24. RESPONSIVE DESIGN IS A MUST

Responsive design refers to a web design which automatically detects the visitor's device and resizes and changes the layout to suit the device. This is different to a site that just resizes to display the same on a smaller screen and still requires the visitor to pinch and zoom to read the content and navigate. And then there's adaptive - which involves maintaining a completely separate website just for use with mobile devices. We design responsive sites for our clients.

In April 2015 Google changed their criteria (algorithm) to place a bigger emphasis on mobile friendly websites. If your site's not responsive, you will be penalised in search results.

- Mobile. If your site isn't phone-friendly and tablet-accessible, your customers will bounce right off your site and give their business to your competition. And did I mention that by 2017 80% of Australian people will own a smartphone?
- User experience. Nobody likes wasting time trying to zoom and tap tiny links, and squinting at postage-stamp sized images.
- Click to call. If you don't have click to call on your site - your website visitors (who are mainly using phones) can't call you easily. So they'll visit your competitor's site where they can.

Happy customers = happy business!



When we designed the new website for kraudelpainting.com.au - we chose a responsive theme, so that the site automatically resizes to fit the browser or device in which it is being viewed. The responsive website has content that cascades down the screen beautifully vs just a miniature view of the full desktop display.

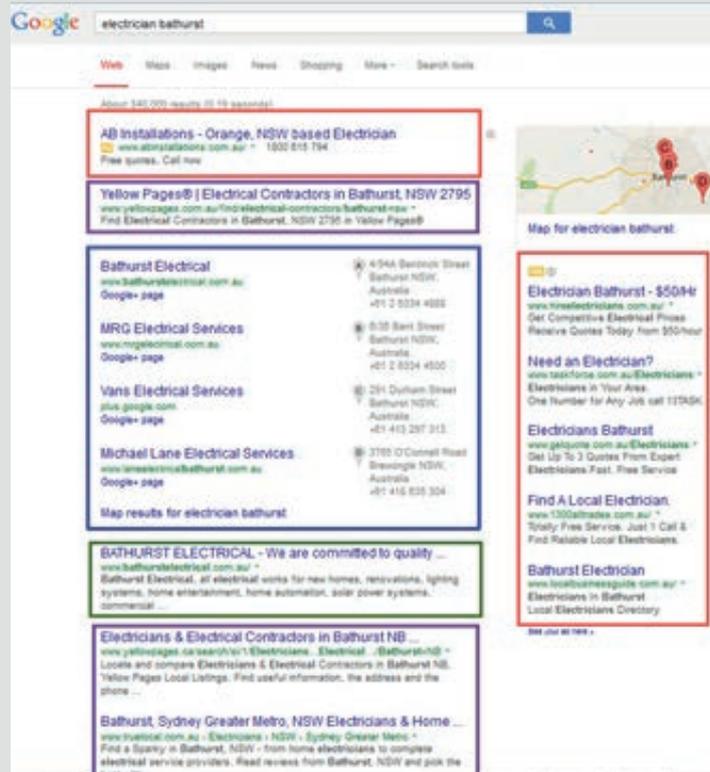


25. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

A great website with no visitors is just a waste and a shame.

Optimising all the pages and content on your site for search engines, and regularly adding content that matches the keyword phrases that people in your target locations are searching for, will help drive traffic to your site.

The Wordpress plugin SEO by Yoast is a fantastic tool for adding the right SEO tags to your pages and posts. And don't forget to add alt text to your images – so they are searchable too.



26. TRACK AND MEASURE WITH ANALYTICS

Incorporating tracking and site analytics programs will provide insight into what's actually happening on your website, from traffic metrics to keyword searches. Analytics tools – including Google Analytics and Google Search Console tools are vital for measuring traffic sources, visitor types, onsite behaviour and conversions. The site and your marketing can then be tested and tweaked to improve performance.





27. FAST LOAD TIME

Users are impatient and a slow loading website will have the user hitting the back button very quickly. You have approximately four seconds before their flow is interrupted and they lose interest. Every element of your site – code, images and hosting must be optimised to deliver fast display of every page.

Here's a free tool where you can measure your site's load time:

<http://tools.pingdom.com/fpt/>

The target is for it to load in under 6 seconds, less is better!

28. BACKUP AND SECURITY

Hacking has become prolific – and no site is immune to it.

We take several precautions to make it difficult for hackers to gain access to your site and email systems.

With our [hosting packages](#), we take monthly backups of the entire site and store on a separate secure server (to make it easy to restore should that be necessary) we update all plugins every month and we remove all email addresses from your site to avoid harvesting by spam bots. We also [block spam referrers](#) – a recent epidemic that is skewing Google Analytics reports.

29. EASE OF UPDATES AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT

It's important that your new website is easy for you to update and add fresh content. All of our sites are created using the WordPress Content Management System (CMS) and we provide video training to show you step by step how to add new content and style it – including images and videos. We also show you how to add SEO to new posts and distribute to your social media platforms.



TAKE ACTION

Developing a lead generating website is Step 1. You must constantly promote it. And that is your ongoing Step 2.



30. PROMOTE IT!

Build it and they will come. One of the world's biggest lies. Once your site meets all the above criteria - you need traffic. And you need the right traffic - not thousands of hits from Russia or the Philippines (unless you're selling to these markets of course!).

- It's important to plan and execute online marketing campaigns to drive traffic to your site. This can be done in a variety of ways - SEO, PPC advertising, remarketing, Social Media posting and advertising, social bookmarking, authoritative backlinks, reviews, youtube marketing, email marketing and offline marketing.
- If you're a local business - make sure you have claimed your Google My Business listing, optimised it and linked it to your website.
- Regularly measure and review performance using Analytics tools and conduct split testing to try and improve results.





And you need to be visible online in a number of places, where your customers are hanging out. The 21st century heralds the Age of the Customer. This means that customers now have more control and more say than ever before. They demand outstanding service, they can find out nearly anything they want about you, they can share good news and bad news fast to all their friends – and to the world.

With 98% of Australians connected to the internet by computer or mobile device, and 80% of all site visits coming from a mobile phone – you cannot survive and grow without a well-planned and active digital footprint. Online marketing is quite involved, as you can see. But when done properly – the results can be outstanding.

At Commonsense Marketing we don't look at website development the same way that technical website developers or graphic designers do. We create websites for our clients that generate results. It's that simple.

ACTION STEP 1' - ANALYSE YOUR CURRENT WEBSITE

Not sure if your current website meets all these criteria or how to improve it?

Get an indepth Website Critique. [Here's what's covered.](#)

**Order Detailed
Website Critique**



ACTION STEP 2 - GET A NEW WEBSITE

Ready to do something about your website? Give us a call on 1300 554 495 to discuss your website and marketing or shoot me an email and we'll call you. We'd love to design a great website for you – one that generates the results you want.

Check out some of the websites we've created here:

<http://commonsensemktng.com.au/case-studies/>

Shoot me an email info@commonsensemktng.com.au



INDEPTH CRITIQUE OF YOUR SITE

If you'd like the unvarnished truth about how your website stacks up against all these important criteria (and a few more) – order our website critique.

**Order Detailed
Website Critique**

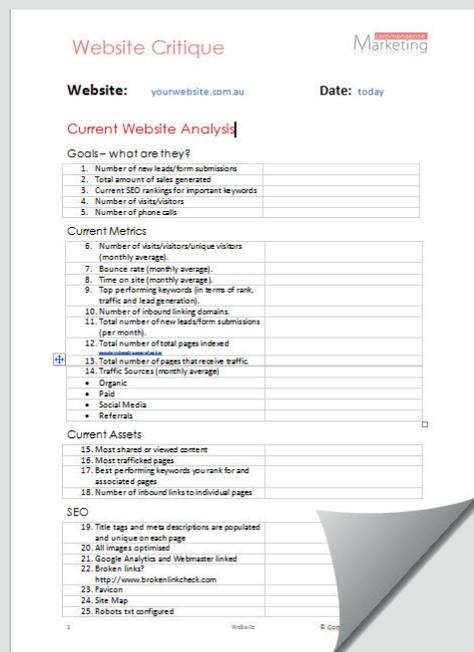


You'll receive a comprehensive report which covers:

Current Website Analysis

- **Analysis of 52 criteria, including:**
- **Goals**
- **Current Metrics**
- **Current Assets**
- **SEO**
- **Site Management and Tracking**
- **Functionality**
- **Content**
- **Value Proposition**

- 1) Marketing Component Website Grader Report
- 2) Your website planning checklist



**Order Detailed
Website Critique**





YOUR CHECKLIST

Print out this checklist and use it to make notes on how well your website meets all the criteria.

1. Address the visitor's need in the headline
2. Use benefit-laden copy
3. Use lots of sub-headings
4. Use relevant images
5. Make your content interesting
6. Have an informative About Us page
7. Use video
8. Add a blog
9. Use testimonials
10. Use guarantees/security seals to remove risk
11. Include a Privacy page
12. Language, spelling and errors
13. Design for conversion
14. Capture visitor details for ongoing marketing
15. Logo should link back to the home page
16. Contact details at the top of every page
17. Typography for readability
18. Use white space
19. Keep the colour palette simple
20. Navigation should be at the top and bottom
21. Include breadcrumbs
22. Include a site search
23. Stick to the common link colour
24. Responsive design is a must
25. Search Engine Optimisation
26. Track and measure with Analytics
27. Fast load time
28. Backup and security
29. Ease of updates and content management
30. Promote it!