

# Is Your Website Helping You or Hurting You?

A 16-point checklist for looking at your website the way a stranger would.

**Before you start:** Open your site in a private or incognito window, or on a phone that's never visited it. Your own browser remembers your site, so it may load faster for you than for a stranger. And Google tailors search results to you, so your site may rank higher for you than it does for anyone else.

## Part 1: What you can see

Check these right now, just by looking at your own site.

### The First Impression

- ☐ **A stranger could tell what I do and how to reach me, just from the very top of my homepage, before scrolling.**

Nobody cares who you are until they know what you do. If the top of your page opens with "Welcome" or your company history, you're making people work before they know they're in the right place.

- ☐ **My site says why someone should pick me over someone else.**

Explaining what you do isn't enough anymore. Visitors are comparing you to other options, so your site needs a reason to choose you specifically, not just a list of services.

### Navigation & Next Steps

- ☐ **My menu items make sense to a stranger. Nothing cute or clever, just plain words for what's there.**

A menu that only makes sense to you sends visitors looking for the plain-English version, usually on a competitor's site.

- ☐ **Every page asks the visitor to do something, like call, book, or buy. (That's called a call to action.) If I include a phone number, it's tap-to-call, not just text.**

A visitor who's ready to act should never have to hunt for how. And if someone on a phone taps your number and it doesn't dial, you've added a step most people won't bother with.

- ☐ **On my phone, my site is easy to read and get around. The menu opens, I can read the text without zooming, and buttons are easy to tap.**

Most visitors will see your site on a phone first. If they have to pinch and zoom, or can't find the menu, they'll leave before they ever find your phone number.

### Trust & Credibility

- ☐ **My site looks professional and makes people trust me.**

A site that looks dated or sloppy makes people wonder if the work will look the same way. Professional design does quiet trust-building before anyone reads a word.

- ☐ **I show proof I'm good at what I do, like reviews or real examples.**

Claims are cheap. Proof, like reviews, examples, or real results, is what actually convinces a stranger to trust you.

- ☐ **My About page has real photos and real background, so people know who they're trusting.**

People want to know there's a real person behind the business before they hand over their money. Save the story for the About page. Keep the homepage about what you do.

### Ease of Use

- ☐ **My homepage loads quickly, even on a slower phone connection, not just on my own computer.**

Visitors won't wait around for a slow page, no matter how good the content is once it loads. You don't need a perfect score, just make sure people aren't left staring at a blank screen.

- ☐ **There's nothing on my site that's obviously out of date, like an old copyright year, an expired promotion, or a broken link.**

Small signs of neglect make people wonder if the business is still paying attention. An outdated date or a dead link is a quiet reason for someone to leave.

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## Part 2: Under the hood

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These take a little more time than Part 1. Set aside some time this week.

- ☐ **I own my domain name. It's registered to me or my business, and I know where it's registered and how to log in.**

Whoever controls your domain name controls your website and your business email. If your web designer registered it in their name, they can hold it hostage, let it expire, or take it with them. This is the most important item on the whole list.

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- ☐ **I know who can log in to my website, and I have my own logins written down somewhere safe.**

If the only person who can get into your website is the person who built it, you can't fix anything, check anything, or switch to someone else without them. You should have your own access, not just someone else's.

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- ☐ **When I search my business name in a private window, my website shows up near the top, and what Google shows about my business is correct.**

Your own browser and Google account change what you see. A private window gets you closer to what a stranger sees. If you don't show up for your own business name, something is wrong, and it's worth finding out why.

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- ☐ **Someone outside my business searched for my company on their own phone. They found my site easily, it loaded quickly, and they could find what they needed.**

A different person, on a different phone, in a different place, is the most honest test there is. Ask them what they saw and what was hard to find. Their answer will tell you more than checking it yourself.

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- ☐ **I've claimed my Google Business Profile, and my hours, phone number, and website link are all correct.**

For a lot of local customers, your Google listing is the first thing they see, before your website. If your hours are wrong or the link is broken, your website never gets a chance. Google's guide to adding or claiming your business: [support.google.com/business/answer/2911778](https://support.google.com/business/answer/2911778)

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- ☐ **I know what I want my website to accomplish, and I have a way to check whether it's actually doing that, like Google Analytics.**

Most business owners have never looked at their own website's numbers. Without some way to check, there's no way to know if the site is working or just sitting there.

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**Not sure what to do about what you found?** Let's have a quick conversation and see if I can help.

Diana Ratliff, Your Friend on the Web · [yourfriendontheweb.com](https://yourfriendontheweb.com)

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