

# What's in a website?

The real cost of getting it right



## What's in a website?

A website is the most important marketing tool a business has. It's the go-to place for prospects wanting to find out more before making a purchase, and the hub of any inbound marketing strategy.

With more and more businesses choosing to follow the inbound methodology, company websites are improving all the time: working faster, looking better, being more useful and, of course, able to function across all types of device including mobiles and tablets.

This is great news for customers but it does make our job as marketers that little bit harder, as we need to step up our game to stay ahead of the competition.



# How much will a good website cost me?

This is a question we get asked often and the truthful answer is: 'How much does a car cost?'. The cost of building a great website - whether from scratch or redesigning an existing site - can vary enormously, from as low as a few hundred pounds if you do it all yourself to hundreds of thousands of pounds for the most advanced custom-built websites.

**What we would say is, you should invest in the very best design you can afford.**



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## Can I do it myself?

The simple answer is: yes, of course you can. Building a website yourself will always be the cheapest option. You can use site builder tools that a company like WIX provides.

However, it's generally the case that the less money you spend, the more time and trouble you can expect to go through to get the site to how you want it to be. It's also worth bearing in mind that the site is unlikely to look or function exactly how you want it to, because custom work requires coding so you will have to keep it generic unless you have that ability.

Do-it-yourself websites are great for very small businesses with limited budgets, but businesses driven by results would be advised to seek additional expertise.



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## Ok... I'll hire a freelancer

This is the next level up from designing and building your website yourself. A good freelance designer will provide you with a site that looks great and functions well. There shouldn't be any major flaws, and they'll work with you, taking on board your ideas and producing a few mock-ups for you to consider before you settle on a final design.

The cost of using freelancers varies greatly depending on the individual designer's experience and what you want from your finished website. As a ballpark, a good designer will likely charge anywhere from £1,000 to £3,000 for a simple website, with the price rising for bigger sites with advanced custom design features.

Employing a freelancer can seem like an attractive option, but there can be downsides. Firstly, with so many freelancers out there and without being able to 'try before you buy', it can be hard to know what level of quality you will get from your finished project. It's also worth bearing in mind that there will only be one person working on the project, so it may take longer to get the finished site up and running.

The majority of designers will focus primarily on how the website looks while suggesting some ways in which you can improve user experience, but most may not offer much more insight than that. If you're looking to transform your business's digital performance, it may be worth investing in a more holistic approach to website design.



# I could hire an agency, but won't that be very expensive?

If you're serious about improving your business's digital credentials and performance, then hiring an agency to design your website is the ideal way to go. You'll benefit from a variety of expertise at your disposal and get so much more for your money in terms of the way your site looks and functions. However, it is true that you will pay more for the privilege.

A new website will likely cost between £6,000 and £10,000, while for a bigger and more complicated site you can expect to pay £12,000 upwards. But, as a result, you'll get a website that will be able to compete with some of the biggest brands in the world.

The main benefit of working with an agency is the expertise and resources it has at its disposal. Its team will likely be made up of experts in all areas of design, content creation and marketing, as well as the technology needed to ensure the finished site is the powerful, effective lead-generator for your business that you want and need it to be.

An agency team will take a strategic and holistic approach to your website, spending equal time looking at every element that makes up the site, ensuring it is the very best it can be. This includes the sitemap, content, user experience, SEO, mobile and conversion rate optimisation.

By working with an agency, you'll be able to completely customise the look of your website, and the checks and balances you get will mean it should be visually and functionally flawless.







## I'm on the road to the website of my dreams - what next?



Content. Content. Content. We cannot say this enough: good content is absolutely key to a great performing website. Getting the content right can be time-consuming, but it is without doubt the most important part of any website design. Great websites are built around their content, with the design adapted as needed to fit. Too many organisations fall into the trap of designing their website and filling in the content afterwards but - when you think about it - this is madness.



Great design will help you get your message across more effectively and will improve the user experience, meaning your customers will find it easier and more enjoyable to consume the content on your website. But, unless you sell design as a service itself, no one is going to be persuaded to buy what you're selling based on this alone: your content delivers your value proposition, not the way your website looks and works. Many prospects will visit your site to research your company, read your blog, view your case studies, watch a video... in which case your content is doing almost all the work.

A content-first approach to design is another key advantage of hiring an agency to design your website, as any agency team will contain content marketers experienced in helping clients in this area. Content and population costs are not normally included within a website build, so budget £2,000 - £10,000 for the best content you can afford. Don't follow in the footsteps of everyone else. Develop content that is unique and different from what your competitors are writing about.



# Great content - got it! Anything else?

If you're investing all this money in a good-looking, well-functioning, easy-to-use website with fantastic content that is going to act as a hub to draw customers and prospects to your business, you need to make sure you're getting optimum return on investment. As the digital landscape continues to evolve at a rapid pace, it's vital to future-proof your site to ensure it continues to be the valuable marketing tool you've paid for it to be.

On the one hand, as web designers have improved their techniques and the tools at their disposal have advanced, producing a decent-looking website is now easier than ever. But, with so many more advanced features to consider during the development process, it's vital to think about what might happen next. This is where a good website agency will prove invaluable, as they are accustomed to thinking about the future.

As an example - in 2015 Google announced its search algorithms would favour mobile-friendly websites, making this adaptability an essential for any business wanting to succeed in inbound marketing. But good web designers had been advocating mobile-friendly design as early as six years before, due to the popularity of the smart phone and the growth of mobile traffic. At the time it was more expensive and difficult to achieve, but designers knew it was inevitably going to be needed and businesses that listened will have reaped the rewards.

As technology continues to advance, and company websites play an ever-increasing role in the success of a business, it is more important than ever to invest in the very best development you can afford, even if some elements of it might not be for "right now".







## Putting price into perspective

Let's think about what a great website does for your business for a second... It works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, promoting your brand. It's consistent, needs minimal supervision or intervention, and is capable of continuous improvement. You don't have to pay it a salary or provide any benefits; all that's needed is one upfront payment and it will work for you as long as you need it to.

Could you ever find a sales person that would do that for you, and offer you that return on investment?

With that in mind, and remembering that a great website is the absolute heart and foundation of inbound marketing (which is proven to be the most effective form of marketing around today), you can see why it doesn't pay to cut corners in this area. A (relatively small) investment now, combined with a strong content marketing strategy and a little determination, drive and ambition, will help you get to where you want to be.

**Just having an “online brochure” is no longer enough.**



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# The right budget...

You need a website that's a valuable asset to your business. You need to think of your website as a "well-oiled machine". Remember, an agency would look after most of the components mentioned below.

## What should you budget for website design?

Do-it-yourself using site builders	£200 - 500+	Ongoing support £25 pm
Using a freelance web designer	£1,000 - £3,000	Ongoing support £50 - £100 pm
Using a website agency	£6,000+	Ongoing support £150+ pm
Using a top 100 digital agency	£30,000+	Ongoing support £1,500+ pm
A specialist eCommerce agency	£50,000+	Ongoing support £3,000+ pm

## How much should I spend on content creation for a new website?

A photography company	£1,000 - £3,000+
A video company	£1,000 - £15,000+
A content/ design agency	£1,000 - £3,000+

## What other costs should I consider to make my website a success?

Hosting (shared, VPS or dedicated)	£10 - £2,500 pm
Inbound marketing	£3,000 - £8,000 pm
PPC / Adwords spend	£500+ pm
CRM integration	£200+ pm
Marketing platform	£150+ pm



**Your website is your best salesman,  
so what is that worth to your business?**



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