9-Step Profitable Web Design Process

UpwardCreative

Helping your thrive with independent **UX**, **website** & **brand design**

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About Upward Creative

UpwardCreative.com is the website of self employed Website and Graphic Designer, Stuart Gamblen, where small businesses, start ups and entrepreneurs come to get ideas and help with:

UX design
Web design and...
Branding

NOTE: If you're new to Upward Creative, you can click one of the links above for free, instant access to my most popular articles and case studies on the topic that interests you most: UX, WordPress website or brand design.

If you like what you see, you can subscribe to my UX, web and brand design newsletter and get new case studies and articles in your inbox every month...

Want to create a profitable website?

It’s not easy on your own. You must follow and put in place a number of key steps...

But how do you know what steps to follow to build a profitable website that helps your organisation to thrive in todays increasingly digital world?

You can use my guide to help you identify and **avoid problems from the start**, or to **fix them today** (if you already have a website)...

In this fact filled guide, you’ll discover:

- The fail-proof site planning process that saves countless time, energy & money
- Why your current website isn’t getting the results you want...
- How to avoid being short-changed by inexperienced designers or made a fool of by overpriced agencies...

...and the **9-Step Profitable Web Design Process**...

1. Strategy

Before you build a website, you must have a clear strategy...

It will serve as the roadmap that takes you from idea to continual lead generation and turns knowledge into a reason for your ideal consumer to buy.

> *“ While knowledge is on thing... it us quite another to translate this into actionable steps that create a prominent web presence. ”* - B2B Marketing

A strong strategy will incorporate the core values that your business upholds. These values will influence your message and its presentation.

It is critical to identify who you website is for and understand:

- Who is your perfect customer?
- What matters most to your ideal customer?
- What problem(s) you can solve for them?

- How can you and your product or service can be of value to them?
- What is your unique selling proposition (USP)?
- What is the core goal of your website?

Only then will you be able to formulate a clear and concise strategy.

Remember: Successful strategies are specific and precise.

Any vagueness will transition to your website's message and ultimately erode its user-experience and effectiveness.

2. Customer Journey

The customer journey is all about getting people to move from point A to point B...

...or from B to C, or C to D and so on.

It's is a critical element to plan before building your website. Not only will it influence everything from design to content, but it will also directly impact the survival and growth of your business.

The best business websites are built around a firm understanding of how customers will interact with the website. This interaction is unique to each business and will require engineering prior to implementation.

Mapping your customer journey before building a website offers three major benefits:

1. The ability to attract targeted or ideal customers.
2. The capacity to transform information seekers into buyers.
3. The opportunity to turn buyers into repeat customers.

To help you map a customer journey unique to your website and business, ask yourself:

- What is your customer persona?
- What motivates your customer?
- What are their needs, hesitations and concerns?
- What behavioural stages does your ideal prospect need to go through to become a customer?
- What touch-points does your ideal prospect need to engage with for you to help them achieve their goals?
- What steps do you need in place to turn a customer into a repeat buyer?
- What experience do you need to provide to turn a customer into a brand evangelist?
- What does your website need to do in order to help you automate this process?

3. Sitemap

Your sitemap is a bird's eye view of your entire website...

It's a blueprint, its purpose to plan the pages and paths your site will house.

It includes everything from the top level menu down to sub-menus and each individual page of your site.

To achieve the optimum sitemap structure for your website...

- Take into consideration the customer's journey...
- Note the objective of each page...
- Consider page and navigational hierarchy...
- Weed out unnecessary duplications and redundancies...

Creating a sitemap puts your website hierarchy, structure and pages into context.

It highlights strengths and weaknesses before your website is built, allowing you to improve your websites usability, customer journey and success.

4. Content

> *“ Stage one of any great content strategy is the plan. Without you will fail ”* - Moz

Every page within your sitemap will require content, and it must accomplish or contribute to the objective of each page.

The best way to achieve this is to plan your website content BEFORE designing your new website.

Content is strongest when created for people and search engines.

You will need to plan content that appeals to people and search engines through four key elements:

1. **Originality** - Fresh, evergreen content is favoured by search engines and captures the attention of your audience.
2. **Value** - Content must inform, educate and have worth to keep your audience

on the page and engaged with your business.

3. **Quantity & Quality** - The more pages of high-quality content you publish, the higher you will rank with search engines and the more likely people will be to visit and share your content, thus expanding your reach and authority.
4. **Multimedia** - Visual elements like images, infographics, and videos capture and hold attention while also increasing your visibility to consumers in the search engines.

Links to further info:

- 5 Reasons You Must Write Website Content FIRST to Get the Best Website Design

5. Page Structure

The secret to a strong website is simplicity and ease-of-use...

Your website as a whole conveys a message. But each page must be structured and built with a SINGLE goal in mind.

Multiple choices lead to confusion and a confused person does not take action.

By structuring page layouts with simplicity, consistency and a single goal, you will:

- Eliminate confusion...
- Encourage the visitor to stay on the page...
- Methodically and effortlessly guide the visitor through your information and towards your call-to-action...
- Convince more visitors to take your desired action (known as a “conversion”)...
- Drive the customer through to the next step of your mapped customer journey...

72% of people will use only mobile for internet by 2025. - Source

Therefore, structuring your pages for an interactive and mobile-friendly experience is also essential.

Mobile usage is only increasing. Your website MUST deliver a vibrant, crisp and user-friendly experience for all users, across all devices.

The best way to do this is with a mobile-friendly or “responsive” website design, that will adapt it’s layout dynamically to the device it’s being viewed from.

A mobile-friendly website that remains legible on all devices will help you reduce site abandonment, increase your search engine position and create a more profitable website.

Links to further info:

- Google Demands Mobile-Friendly Website Design or Suffer
- 14 Compelling Stats That Make the Case For Mobile-Friendly Website Design

Grab Your Complementary Website Strategy Call

Get a complementary website design strategy call and custom action plan (from Web Designer, Stuart) based on your business, challenges and goals.

Grab My Complementary Website Strategy Call Now

(Limited places available based on my calendar. Please apply now.)

6. Design

> *“ 65% of people are visual learners. ”* - Neil Fleming

How many times have you clicked off a website just because it looked bad?

Whether it’s right or wrong, first impressions are lasting impressions, and people will instantly judge your worth based on the visual design of your website.

Who would you employ the guy dressed like a homeless person or the man in a suit?

Don’t let your business be the homeless person.

Influence over your audience starts with visual appeal. A logo, great design and consistent branding throughout your website will increase your perceived value.

You already offer REAL value, but before customers will experience it, your

PERCEIVED value will win or lose their business.

A professional and consistent design that reflects the real value of your business establishes four major qualities sought after by consumers:

1. Perceived value
2. Trust
3. Credibility
4. Authority

It these quality's that will lead to attention, interest, desire and action (AIDA) in relation to your products or services:

- **A** – attention (awareness): attract the attention of the customer.
- **I** – interest of the customer.
- **D** – desire: convince customers that they want and desire the product or service and that it will satisfy their needs.
- **A** – action: lead customers towards taking action and/or purchasing.

To help determine the best design direction for your website make sure you consider, research and note down the following:

- What personality do you want your website and business to have?
- What UNIQUE business qualities do you want your website to project? Qualities like ”professional” are to generic, everyone wants a professional website. Be specific.
- Who are your top competitors and how can you differentiate yourself through design?
- What are your 5 favourite website designs?
- What is it about your favourite websites that you like?

Links to further info:

- 12 Reasons Good Design is Good for Small Business
- 5 Secrets to a Killer Business Logo Design
- Top 9 Small Business Web Design Mistakes to Avoid
- 5 Small Business Web Design Mistakes That Kill Online Lead Generation

7. Systems

Your website should be more than an online brochure...

It should help automate the customer journey and process of you and your customer achieving a specific goal.

Systems are important to the functionality of your site because they provide, amongst other things, the means through which your audience takes action.

There are certain **website systems** that **every website must have**, including...

- Hosting
- Email
- Backup system

...and certain **website systems** that **benefit nearly EVERY business**, such as:

- Lead magnets
- Lead capture
- Email marketing / autoresponder

But the best systems for your site are determined by the specific goals of your business.

For example:

- A business may need a membership system because it fuels revenue. The primary goal of their website may be to provide a membership portal to their current and prospective customers.
- Another business may require an e-commerce system to successfully sell their product and invoice customers.
- Another may require a Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver an online video course.
- Yet another business will have no use for any of these systems and find a mailing list opt-in, and CMS are enough to accomplish the primary goal of their website.

The greatest benefit of a functional website is being able to automate and scale interaction and action from your ideal user or customer.

The systems you select will directly impact the functionality and success of your website.

Before building your website, carefully consider the systems needed, from those that run behind the scenes—like a website backup system, hosting, and email—to those seen and used by your customers.

Links to further info:

- What is WordPress and How Can it Benefit Me or My Business?
- What is the Genesis Framework for WordPress?
- 5 Essential WordPress Plugins for Small Business Websites

8. Testing

> *“ Never stop testing, and your advertising will never stop improving ”* - David Olgivy

Testing is one of the most critical stages of website development...

It provides the opportunity to find and fix problematic areas of your website before they negatively influence your ideal customer and...

...ongoing testing can also help you increase leads and sales by implementing incremental website improvements that are backed by REAL data (more on this in a moment).

Testing involves paying close attention to:

- **Functionality** - because how your website operates as a whole and on individual pages impacts customer acquisition and ascension.
- **Flow** - because following the natural course of your website as your ideal

consumer would determines whether it makes sense, is easy to navigate and supports the customer journey.

- **Relevance** - because the content of your website must be relevant, valuable, and impactful to attract prospects and convert them into buyers.
- **Clarity** - because a website that is easy to understand and immediately conveys a clear message encourages action taking.
- **Conversion** - because landing pages must provide clear, compelling content and commands for customers to take a desired action.

Once your website has passed it's pre-launch checks, it will be ready to go live. But your work does't end there. You should always be testing, growing and improving your website.

Which leads us finally to...

9. Analytics

> *“ Web analytics is the measurement, collection and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing Web usage ”* - The Web Analytics Association

You cannot improve upon the performance of your website if you do not measure its current effectiveness.

Your ability to maintain, grow, and convert your audience into loyal customers will depend on continually improving the effectiveness of your website.

> *“ If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it ”* - Peter Drucker

Monitoring the metrics that apply to the growth of your client base will give you the intelligence necessary to repair problems and improve conversion rates.

Best of all, apart from some very advanced features, all of this can be done for free using Google Analytics...

Something as simple as setting up goals in Google Analytics, tracking performance and then implementing small website improvements accordingly, can massively increase your websites success and organisations profits.

Make sure you're website is using analytics so you can make intelligent, informed decisions that will improve it's performance and grow your business.

I wrote this guide to help you to better understand how to build a profitable and successful website...

Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

If you have any questions about the 9-steps included in this website guide, or about websites in general, you're invited to contact me:

Call: +44 1452 473072
E-mail: stuart@upwardcreative.com
Book: Reserve my complementary website consultation now

I've dedicated my business to educating consumers. I'll be happy to help you in any way.

Cordially,
Stuart Gamblen
Independent UX, Web & Brand Designer, Upward Creative

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