Our Website Principles: Building Sites That Actually Work

Why Most Websites Fail (And How to Avoid It)

Your website has about **3 seconds to convince someone** they're in the right place. Most sites waste those precious seconds on generic stock photos, vague headlines, and making visitors play detective to figure out what you actually do.

Here's our approach: treat your website like you're having a conversation with someone genuinely interested but slightly impatient. Be clear, be helpful, and get to the point.

Principle 1: Your Homepage Above the Fold is Your Shop Window

Everything visible before someone scrolls should answer the question **"What do you do and why should I care?"**

In practice:

- Clear headline that explains what you do (not "Welcome to our website")
- Subheading that explains who it's for or what problem you solve
- One obvious next step (not seven different buttons competing for attention)
- Visual that actually relates to your business, not random stock photography

The reality check:
If your mum visited your website and couldn't explain what you do after 5 seconds, you've got work to do.

Principle 2: Functionality Over Flash

Your website should load fast, work on mobile, and **not make people wait** for fancy animations to finish before they can click anything.

In practice:

- Fast loading times (because nobody waits for slow websites anymore)
- Mobile-first design (most people browse on their phone)
- Working contact forms (test them monthly)
- Links that actually work
- Images that load properly

The reality check:
A beautiful website that doesn't work is just expensive decoration.

Principle 3: Design Your User Journey, Don't Copy Everyone Else's

Think about what **YOUR** customers need, not what your competitor's website looks like.

Map your *actual* customer journey:

1. Awareness stage: "I have a problem but don't know the solution"
2. Consideration stage: "I know the solution, now I'm comparing options"
3. Decision stage: "I'm ready to buy, just need to choose who"

Different stages need different content:

1. Awareness: Educational content, problem identification, "how-to" guides
2. Consideration: Service comparisons, case studies, "why us" content
3. Decision: Pricing, testimonials, clear next steps, contact information

The reality check:
If every page on your website says the same thing, you're not helping anyone make a decision.

Principle 4: Accessibility Isn't Optional (And It's Not That Hard)

Your website should work for **everyone**, including people who use screen readers, have vision impairments, or can't use a mouse.

Simple accessibility wins:

- Alt text for images (describe what's in the picture)
- Good colour contrast (dark text on light backgrounds)
- Headings that make sense (H1 for main title, H2 for sections, etc.)
- Links that make sense out of context ("Read more about our services" not just "Click here")
- Forms with clear labels

The reality check:
Accessibility improvements make your site better for everyone, not just people with disabilities.

Principle 5: Brand Cohesion Throughout

Your website should feel like the same business that wrote your social media posts and answered your phone.

Brand consistency includes:
- Visual elements (colours, fonts, imagery style)
- Tone of voice (formal vs. casual, technical vs. simple)
- Messaging (what you stand for, what makes you different)
- Photography style (polished vs. candid, studio vs. lifestyle)

The reality check:
If someone could remove your logo and it could be any business in your industry, **your brand isn‘t strong enough**.

Principle 6: Calls to Action That Actually Make Sense

Tell people what to do next, but make it **relevant to where they are** in their journey.

Strategic CTA placement:
- Homepage: Primary action (book a call, get a quote) + secondary action (learn more)
- About page: „Work with us“ or „Get in touch“
- Service pages: „Book this service“ or „Get a quote“
- Blog posts: „Download our guide“ or „Book a consultation“
- Contact page: Make it ridiculously easy to contact you

CTA copy that works:
- Be specific: „Book a free 30-minute consultation“ vs. „Get started“
- Create urgency without being pushy: „Get your quote this week“
- Remove friction: „No obligation“ or „Free, no strings attached“

The reality check:
Every page should have one obvious next step. If visitors finish reading and don‘t know what to do, they‘ll leave.

Principle 7: Tone of Voice That Sounds Human

Write like you're talking to a **real person**, not dictating a press release.

Voice principles:
- Use „you" and „we" instead of „the customer" and „the company"
- Explain things simply (if you need jargon, explain it)
- Show personality (it's okay to have opinions)
- Be consistent across all pages

The reality check:
Read your website copy out loud. If it sounds like a robot wrote it, start over.

Principle 8: Understanding the Buyer Journey

Different visitors **need different things** depending on how ready they are to buy.

Early stage visitors (just browsing):
- Need education and problem identification
- Want to understand their options
- Aren't ready for hard sales pitches
- Content they need: Blog posts, guides, FAQs, „how it works" pages

Middle stage visitors (comparing options):
- Comparing you to competitors
- Want to understand your process and results
- Content they need: Case studies, service details, „why us" pages, testimonials

Late stage visitors (ready to buy):
- Know they want to work with you
- Need practical next steps
- Content they need: Clear pricing, booking forms, contact details, guarantee information

The reality check:
If your website only caters to people ready to buy immediately, you're missing 90% of potential customers.

Principle 9: Test, Don‘t Guess

Your opinions about your website don‘t matter. Your visitors‘ behaviour does.

Simple testing approaches:
- Ask 5 people to find specific information on your site
- Use tools like Hotjar to see where people click and scroll
- Check your analytics - where do people leave your site?
- Test your contact forms regularly
- Get feedback from actual customers

The reality check:
You know your business too well to judge your own website objectively.

Principle 10: Maintenance Isn‘t Glamorous, But It‘s Essential

A website isn‘t a „set and forget“ investment. It needs **regular care** to keep working properly.

Monthly maintenance tasks:
- Update plugins and security
- Check for broken links
- Test contact forms
- Review loading speeds
- Update outdated information

Quarterly reviews:
- Analyse which pages are performing well
- Update testimonials and case studies
- Refresh any outdated content
- Review and update service descriptions

The reality check:
A website that hasn‘t been updated in two years looks abandoned, even if your business is thriving.

Website Principles Checklist: Does Your Site Measure Up?

Use this checklist to audit your current website against our principles. Be honest!

Above the Fold Content

- [ ] Homepage headline explains what you do
- [ ] Subheading explains who it's for or what problem you solve
- [ ] One obvious primary call-to-action button
- [ ] Visual relates to your actual business
- [ ] Everything loads and displays properly on mobile

Functionality Basics

- [ ] Website loads in under 3 seconds
- [ ] All pages display correctly on mobile devices
- [ ] Contact forms actually work (test them!)
- [ ] All links go where they're supposed to
- [ ] Images load properly and aren't pixelated

User Journey Design

- [ ] Different pages serve different stages of the buyer journey
- [ ] Educational content for early-stage visitors
- [ ] Comparison/testimonial content for middle-stage visitors
- [ ] Clear next steps for ready-to-buy visitors
- [ ] Navigation makes sense to someone who doesn't know your business

Accessibility Standards

- [ ] Alt text added to all images
- [ ] Good colour contrast throughout
- [ ] Headings follow logical structure (H1, H2, H3)
- [ ] Links make sense out of context
- [ ] Forms have clear, descriptive labels

Brand Cohesion

- [ ] Visual style consistent across all pages
- [ ] Tone of voice feels the same throughout
- [ ] Photography style matches your brand personality
- [ ] Messaging reflects what makes you different
- [ ] Website feels connected to your other marketing

Human Tone of Voice

- [ ] Copy uses "you" and "we" instead of third person
- [ ] Technical terms are explained simply
- [ ] Personality comes through in the writing
- [ ] Sounds natural when read aloud
- [ ] Consistent voice across all pages

Strategic Calls to Action

- [ ] Every page has at least one clear next step
- [ ] CTA buttons are specific, not generic
- [ ] Multiple contact options available
- [ ] CTAs match the page content and visitor intent
- [ ] Primary actions stand out visually

Buyer Journey Support

- [ ] Content for people just discovering they have a problem
- [ ] Information for people comparing their options
- [ ] Clear process for people ready to buy
- [ ] Easy ways to get in touch at every stage
- [ ] Different entry points for different visitor types

Testing and Optimisation

- [ ] Analytics installed and regularly checked
- [ ] Feedback collected from actual users
- [ ] High-exit pages identified and improved
- [ ] Mobile experience tested on real devices
- [ ] Loading speed monitored and optimised

Regular Maintenance

- [ ] Content updated within the last 6 months
- [ ] Plugins and security up to date
- [ ] Broken links checked monthly
- [ ] Contact information current and accurate
- [ ] Testimonials and case studies recent

Your Score: /50

40-50: Great work!
30-39: Some improvements needed
20-29: Your website needs attention
Under 20: Time for a website overhaul