

Do I Really Need a **New Website?**

Investing in a new website is a daunting decision for any business owner. It takes precious time and can be a sizable investment. But there's also no doubt how important it is for your business to have a high-performing website.

If your customers use the internet (hint: they definitely do), having a website is essential. But that doesn't mean you should rush out and invest in the quickest, cheapest option available. A weak website can actually do more harm than not having one at all, so you need to treat this asset with the appropriate care.

What makes a website 'good' or 'bad'?

There's no line in the sand that separates 'good' websites from 'bad' ones. But typically, these are the key 8 factors that will separate a strong website from one that performs poorly:

THE IDEAL WEBSITE	AN INNEFFECTIVE WEBSITE
Appeals to both search engines and users	Appeals to either users or search engines (or neither)
Fulfils the user's intent	Doesn't fulfil user intent
Is up to date	Sits stagnant, without regular updates
Responds quickly	Has long delays in loading pages
Gives users clear and helpful paths	Doesn't make navigation simple at all
Has a clean and on-brand design	Isn't designed with much planning or clarity
Offers users a great UX (user experience)	Has no focus on effort put into UX
Drives terrific results for the business	Fails to deliver a return for the business

The specific goals and measures of ROI for a website will vary from business to business. The fact remains, however, that if a website exists at all, it must deliver a return of some sort.

An ideal website will deliver:

- A direct return via e-commerce
- An indirect return via lead generation, service bookings or pushing users to a physical store
- Brand-related objectives such as visibility, brand equity, authority and trust
- Or some combination of the above.

This means a strong website can provide value even if you're strictly a bricks-and-mortar company.

Unfortunately, the opposite is also true for a weak website. Even if you don't have any online conversions to worry about, a bad site can still cause harm to your business. Let's look at how.

What can a bad website cost you?

RANKINGS AND SEO EXPENDITURE

Any effort your business has put into optimising your search engine rankings can be completely undermined by a poorly made website. Even assuming you have the greatest content, with the best incorporation of keywords possible, a bad UX will cost you rankings.

Firstly, Google (and other search engines) map the ease of navigating your website. If your website doesn't respond well, it can become almost impossible to rank for anything other than the longest-tailed keywords.

And even if Google initially serves your website with terrific rankings, and your click-through rate is strong enough, users will make up their own mind once they land. If your website doesn't meet their requirements, they pogo-stick (go back to Google, and click the next listing). Over time, each pogo-stick tells Google that your website doesn't fulfil users' search intents, and this will cost you rankings.



Psst. Your bad website is driving your SEO agency crazy too.

A bad CMS and site can make it very difficult to implement SEO tactics. A CMS like WordPress can usually be crawled by Google with ease, and deliver an enjoyable UX on the front end.

ADWORDS SPEND

If rankings are becoming too difficult to gain organically, bidding on the right keywords can seem like the most obvious backup. And even assuming your SERP listing is strong enough to encourage click-throughs, you're still likely to find you're paying for an incredibly low (if any) conversion rate.

It's the equivalent of running the most targeted, high-quality TV ads for a theme park... where all the rides are still under construction.



BRAND REPUTATION

The common ground between the 2 points above comes down to your audience being exposed to your brand, but with little impact made on their intent. But a poor enough website will convince your audience that your brand isn't worth purchasing from anyway. If this is the case, it's almost better to take the website down, and leave you brand a 'mystery' rather than a 'known negative'.

CONVERSION RATES

Consider the average journey for users, from search to conversion.

- They search for the product or service they need.
- They open the first 5 listings.
 - Immediately, 1 of them doesn't meet their search intent, so it's closed
 - Another 2 have rather ordinary designs and don't inspire the reader to look for more information. They get closed too.
 - The last 2 seem good, so the user goes ahead and asks for a quote from each.



Simply put, the quality of your website is going to weigh directly on your overall conversion rate and your volume of enquiries/purchases.

Case Study

Let's put this into practice, by considering a hypothetical e-commerce business that's been operating for around 18 months. While young, the business has developed around 1,000 visitors per month, and a conversion rate of around 2%. Each conversion averages to around \$50 of revenue.

Their goal is to invest in SEO over the next 12 months in order to increase their website traffic. Unfortunately, their website build is hardly ideal, and is going to heavily limit their potential reach and conversion rate growth.

A BAD WEBSITE'S SEO TIMELINE

	CUMULATIVE INVESTMENT IN SEO	WEBSITE TRAFFIC	CONVERSION RATE	CUMULATIVE SEO REVENUE*
START	\$0	1,000	2%	\$0
2 MONTHS IN	\$2,000	1,100	2%	-\$900
4 MONTHS IN	\$4,000	1,400	2%	-\$1,500
6 MONTHS IN	\$6,000	1,600	2%	-\$1,900
8 MONTHS IN	\$8,000	1,800	2%	-\$2,100
10 MONTHS IN	\$10,000	2,050	2.1%	-\$1,948
12 MONTHS IN	\$12,000	2,200	2.1%	-\$1,638

*Based on a \$50 conversion value

Over 12 months, their spend on SEO services would have cost \$1,600 more than extra revenue those services would have brought in.

Now, let's factor in how the performance of the very same SEO services could differ, if the business elected to build a new website prior to commencement.

A GOOD WEBSITE'S SEO TIMELINE

	CUMULATIVE INVESTMENT IN SEO	WEBSITE TRAFFIC	CONVERSION RATE	CUMULATIVE SEO REVENUE*
START	\$0	1,100	2%	\$0
2 MONTHS IN	\$2,000	1,500	2%	\$-500
4 MONTHS IN	\$4,000	2,200	2.4%	\$100
6 MONTHS IN	\$6,000	3,000	2.5%	\$1,850
8 MONTHS IN	\$8,000	4,700	2.8%	\$6,430
10 MONTHS IN	\$10,000	6,300	2.9%	\$13,565
12 MONTHS IN	\$12,000	10,000	3%	\$26,565

*Based on a \$50 conversion value

Rebuilding a site tends to cost around \$5,000-\$7,000. So even if you take that away from the total increase in revenue from the same SEO services, it still would have brought in close to \$20,000 in extra revenue. This is typically why we prefer not to perform any SEO services on an older or poorly operating website. We'd rather be honest upfront and look after the business owner.

 One thing this example doesn't consider is that your conversion value can increase when your website design is good. Consumers feel more confident spending money on a well-functioning site, and seamless navigation will make it easier for your customers to discover other items they're interested in adding to their cart.

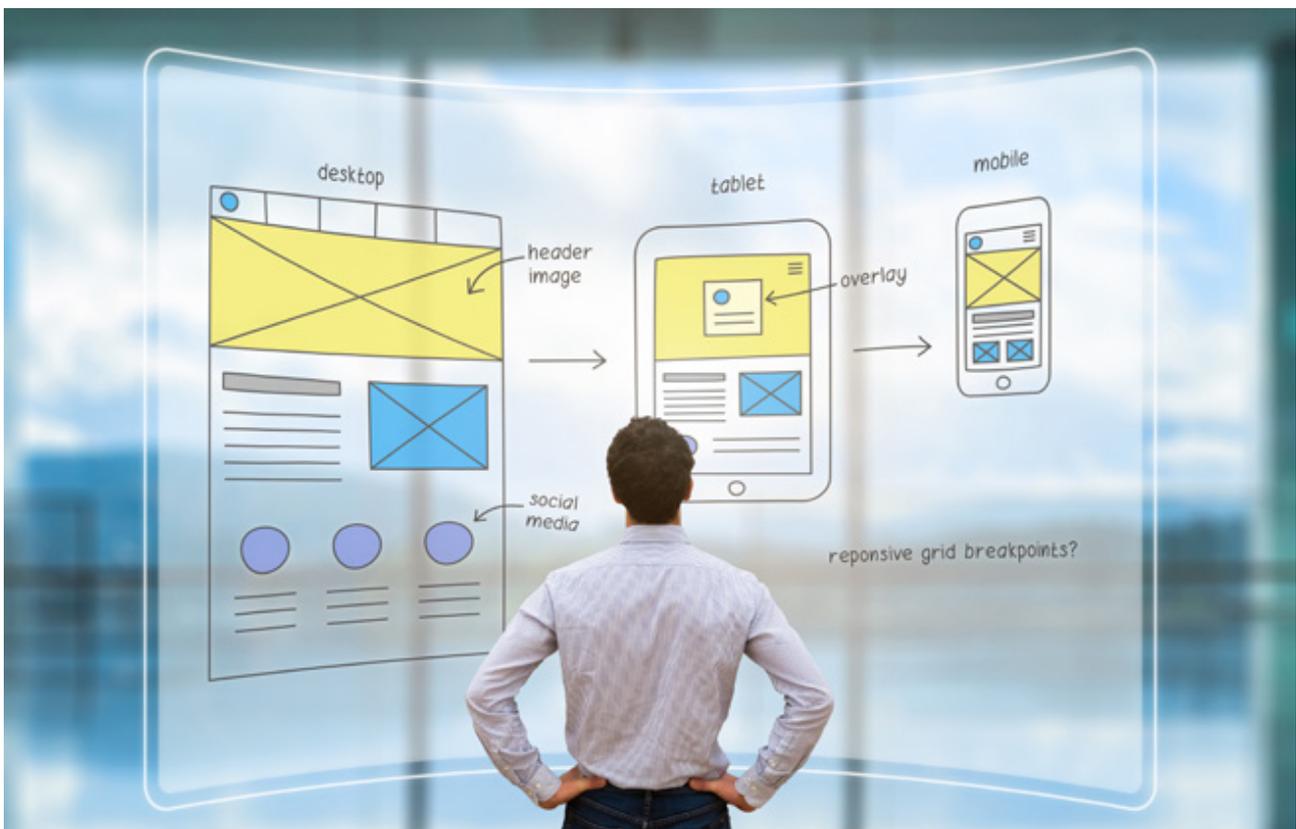
Please note this case study is hypothetical and should be viewed as an illustrative example only.

The science of a good website

There have been countless studies, including one by [UXMag](#), into how website design influences a consumer's trust of a brand. But there are 4 key factors that can influence the trust customers have in your brand and website:

- A high-quality and consistent UX
- A credible brand
- Case studies & testimonials (around [72% of customers](#) trust online case studies and testimonials)
- Positive online reviews (around [88% of customers](#) trust positive online reviews as much as they would a personal recommendation).

Applying these across your website can dramatically improve the trust between brand and audience, as well as optimising your website's ROI.



A high-quality UX should apply across devices and platforms seamlessly.

AND SADLY, STRONG CONTENT WON'T SAVE YOU

Strong copy is important, but a poorly built site will put your words to waste. Despite how well your copy can connect with your consumer, a poor website will still have a bounce rate of 70% or greater. The same copy delivered on a stronger website could reduce that bounce rate to as low as 40% – doubling your engaged users from the exact same reach.

SO DO I NEED A NEW WEBSITE? OR SHOULD I JUST FIX THE ONE I HAVE?

This will really vary for everyone. But to simplify the question, we've included a checklist – to see how whether you should leave, repair, or rebuild your website. Simply download the pdf and find out what's best for your website.

We don't do paid ads for low-quality websites, because you won't get an ROI. We'd rather work with you to develop a new site that will deliver results from our work in the long term.

For more advice on website performance and all things digital, [chat to the experts](#) at Search Factory today.



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