**What makes a good business website?**

Most people can set up a website for their business, but how do you ensure it generates sales? **Abidemi Sanusi** gives her top tips

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A good website has great content, is regularly updated, intuitive, easy to use, and, ideally, has a good visitor-customer conversion rate. However, many businesses struggle to build and maintain a successful website, because they lack the knowledge required.

The following tips can help you make your website work harder to win new customers, while maintaining your current client base.

**Your website should sell to your ideal customer**

I've heard that the most profitable swimming pool maintenance company in America is not run by a ruthless, corporate company, but by an unassuming guy who answered every conceivable question that his target customers had about swimming pool maintenance on his website's FAQ page.

It's a great strategy and one that every business should deploy for their website. Web visitors are primarily hunters. They hunt for information, and if you don't give them what they need, they'll go elsewhere.

By putting yourself in your potential customers' shoes and answering every question they could possibly have about your product or service, you put them at ease, build up trust in your brand and set up yourself as the expert in your field. That will help you win customers, and, I believe, is more effective than the blatant BUY! BUY! BUY! tactics deployed on some business websites. Nobody likes the hard sell, so why scare away your potential customers by using such tactics?

**Good copywriting equals good sales**

On the web, content is king, and quality content is the reason why websites get repeat visitors, and ultimately customers.

Last year, the BBC reported that [spelling mistakes were costing businesses millions in lost sales](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14130854) . You wouldn't trust a website with lots of typos and stale content, so why would your target customers?

But copywriting isn't just about checking spelling mistakes. A good copywriter will have a firm understanding of your business goals and will craft the content needed to meet those needs and reel in your target customers. So invest in one – they're worth it.

**Optimise your website for search engines**

The greatest website in the world is no good to anyone if it can't be found.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is the process of optimising your website so that it comes up in search engine results for certain keywords. The better optimised your website is, the higher up your search engine ranking will be.

Here are some easy – and free – steps you can take to optimise your website so that it shows up in search engine rankings for your target customers.

1. Research the keywords you want to rank highly in search engines for. [Google Adwords' Keyword Tool](https://adwords.google.com/o/Targeting/Explorer?__c=1000000000&__u=1000000000&ideaRequestType=KEYWORD_IDEAS) is a great way of doing this.

2. Use those keywords in your content, but exercise restraint. You don't want to stuff your content with the same keyword 200 times in a 350-word web page, because it makes for a bad reading experience for your target customers. It could also get you penalised by Google – and you don't want that.

3. Links are considered currency on the web. So try getting links to your website in good content on high-ranking websites. Links to your site are known as backlinks, and are at their most valuable when you include the keywords in a natural way. This is because it tells search engines that your website is trusted, which makes them more likely to push you up the search rankings, meaning your site will appear higher in a keyword search.

**Keep it fresh**

Search engines love fresh content, and so do website visitors. The easiest way to keep your content fresh is by having a blog on your website. It's a great way of communicating with your customers, building up an audience, increasing traffic to your website and generally making a name for yourself in your industry. It's also great for your SEO.

If you haven't got the time nor inclination to do this, then outsource it.

**Navigation and usability matter – keep it simple**

Bad navigation and information architecture (the way you structure your content) can cost you in lost sales. So keep it simple and intuitive – it works.

**Online is great, but website visitors like humans too**

Ultimately, your customers are human, not virtual, so make sure your contact details are clearly visible on every page of your website.

*Abidemi Sanusi is the founder of* [*Ready Writer Copywriting*](http://www.thereadywriter.co.uk/)*. They can also be found on* [*Facebook*](http://www.facebook.com/readywriteruk)

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