

Website Golden Rules Checklist

When creating a business website there are Golden Rules to follow. Tick those you feel you've already got a handle on and take another look at those you haven't.

Rule 1

The website should be about the user first, not the business. Stop stating "here's what we want you to know about our products and services" and start asking "how can we help you?"

Does the website:

- Talk about the Client's challenges?
- Help decision-making regarding whether the product/service is right for them?
- State who you can and cannot help ie explain your target market?
- Have content in various formats ie video, audio, copy?

Rule 2

Every additional click you force a user to make is an opportunity for them to click off the site – and on to someone else's. Make it easy for them to stay on yours.

Does your website:

- Use a modern design?
- Load-fast?
- Have easily understood Calls to Action (CTAs)?
- Have clear intuitive menus?
- Have an adaptive (mobile ready) template?
- Look good on each browser type?
- Use minimal pop-ups and advertisements?
- Include clear contact information for your customers to get in touch?
- Specify a clear ordering process and/or payment facilities (if e-commerce site)?

Rule 3

Present your business as a human – not corporate – entity.

Does your website:

- Include lots of pictures of real people doing real things?
- Tell stories?
- Include elements of social proof?
- Use non-corporate language and jargon?
- Convey emotion in the copy, pictures and colours?

Rule 4

Know who your users are – use analytics, get feedback – and then adjust as necessary to attract your target audience.

Does your website have analytics?

If so, do you understand them?

Do you use analytics to improve your site and gain knowledge about your visitors?

Do you ever ask your clients for feedback about your website?

Rule 5

A website is only useful if it can be found, so make sure Google likes it by prioritizing SEO requirements.

Does your website:

Use appropriate keywords or phrases naturally in your content and headers?

Have regular updates/additions to content demonstrating it is active and current?

Have a number of authoritative backlinks?

Provide high quality information about your industry/subject area?

Include original content found nowhere else?

Have a site map?

Have a security certificate?

Rule 6

Make sure your website is secure. No one will thank you for giving them a virus and your site will be shut down quickly – not to mention the inconvenience of fixing a hacked site.

Is your website up to date with the latest template and plugins if you use them?

Do you have hack alert and other virus checking software?

Is your website hosted in a secure environment?

Do you use a security mechanism on your Contact Page and Comments (if enabled)?

Rule 7

To be professional, you must be in control of your site (even if you use a third party to help you with the initial design or ongoing maintenance).

Did you pay for a unique website address that does not include the name of your host/platform?

Do you pay for hosting rather than use a freebie site builder/platform?

Does your site use a modern template that you can potentially change for a new look?

Do you have the ability to update or add to your content without needing a third party to do it for you?

Can you add pages, pictures, a blog, video etc?