

# **22 Website Must-Haves for Driving Traffic, Leads & Sales**

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# INTRODUCTION

Most people know how important a website is to a business's online strategy. Almost every business, whether B2B, B2C, non-profit, local or global needs an online presence to reach buyers in the Internet Age. A company's website is its virtual storefront.

Shockingly, a recent survey by 1&1 Internet reported that up to 40% of small-to-medium sized businesses still don't have a website. Even if you're on social media, operating without a website is just silly. A website is an essential piece of your online marketing strategy.

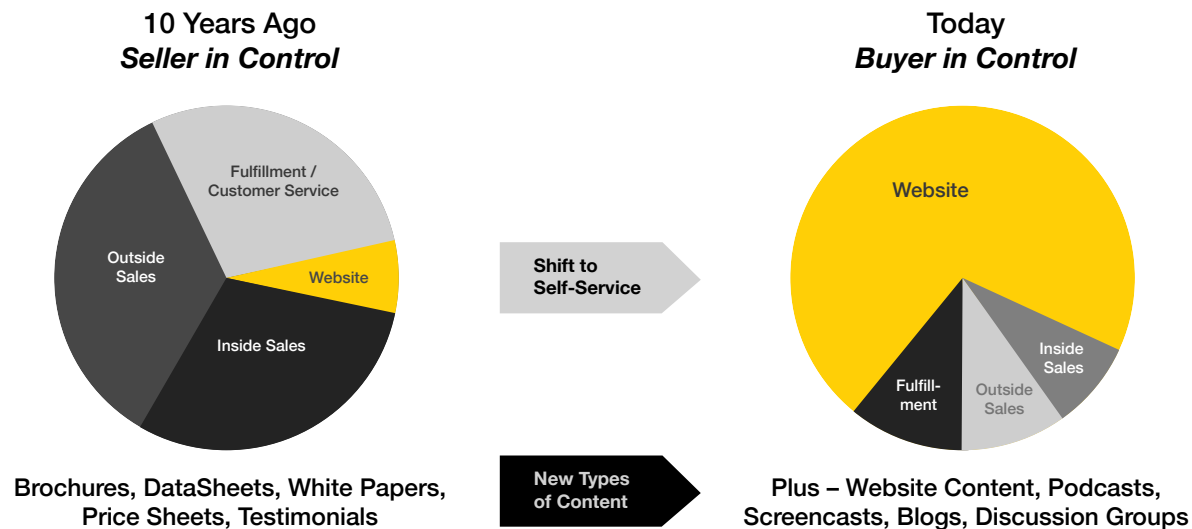
Whether you're looking to build your first website, or if your existing site just isn't getting the traffic or leads you were hoping for, you may wonder what it really takes to have a great website.

Having a website alone isn't the key to great results. Instead, it's the ability to turn your website into an inbound marketing machine. Your website has a hefty goal and it needs to wear many hats. A website needs to perform, not just exist. It needs to attract visitors, educate them and advance the buying process. But I know what you're thinking - easier said than done.

*A recent survey by 1&1 Internet reported that up to 40% of small-to medium-sized businesses **still don't have a website.***

Today, the web is social and interactive. It's not static like most websites tend to be. As such, a website can no longer sustain as its own island. We now need to consider integrating search, social media, content, blogging, and more with our websites. Gone are the days where all it took was a URL, fancy Flash graphics, and an expensive advertising campaign to temporarily boost traffic.

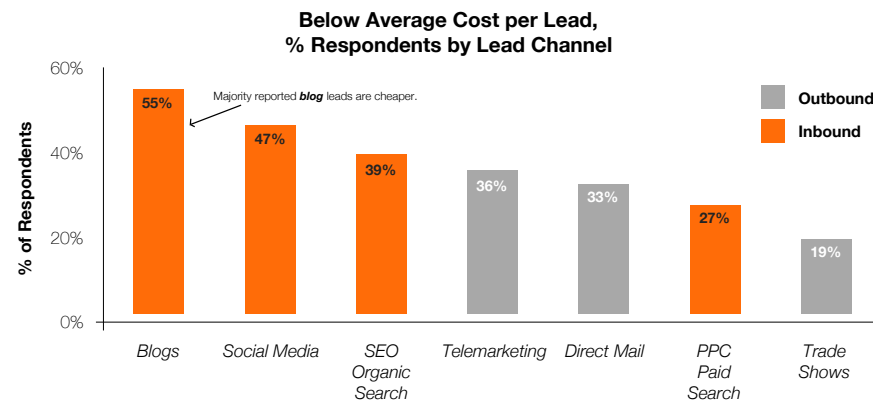
The reason for this shift is largely due to changing buyer behavior. Today's buyer wishes to consume information when they want, how they want, and often-times without the involvement of a sales person. More importantly, they want to be educated and not sold to. As you can see from the following chart, websites and new forms of inbound marketing content (such as podcasts, blogging and social media) have become a considerable factor in the buying cycle.





You'll also find in Hub Spot's 2011 State of Inbound Marketing Report that inbound marketing is more effective in reaching today's buyer. Results show that inbound marketing has a 62% less cost per lead compared to outbound, or traditional, marketing.

What might not be apparently visible here is the role your website plays. It's actually a big one. In most cases, traffic from blogs, social media, organic and paid search end up converting into leads or sales on your main website. Without a website acting as an online basecamp, it would be difficult to attract new business to one source.



This is why an effective website is so crucial for driving more traffic, leads, and sales.

So without further ado, we present to you 22 Website Must-Haves for Driving Traffic, Leads & Sales. Take advantage of these if you're looking to create an effective web presence.

# PART 1: **GET FOUND**

A great website isn't so great if no one sees it. This is why the first chapter is dedicated to getting found online, which covers the very top of the funnel of your inbound marketing strategy. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is an absolute must-have to any website strategy, but it takes hard work and consistency when aiming for the top spot. These tips will help get you on your way to increasing your organic search engine rankings.

# 1. Building Inbound Links

Every website on the internet has the goal of reaching the #1 position in search engines, but because there is only one top spot per keyword phrase, not everyone can make it. So what gets a first place ranking? Off-page search engine optimization (SEO) is the most important factor to increasing your ranking results.

Off-Page SEO is about building inbound links, essentially getting other quality websites to link back to you. Search engines call this authority or “link juice.” The more inbound links you have, the more important your site must be, and the higher you’ll rank.

Link building, when done right, isn’t easy since adding links to other websites is sometimes out of your control. Here are some tips to building inbound links:



- **Create high-quality, educational or entertaining content.** If people like your content, they will naturally want to link to it.
- **Submit your website to online directories.** This is an easy way to start.
- **Write guest posts for other blogs.** This is a win-win for both parties. People will want extra (quality) content from others and in exchange, it's a great way to build inbound links.
- **Research link building opportunities with other websites,** but always check the authority of the websites that you are trying to get links from. There are many tools online that allow you to check domain or page authority.
- **And** don't borrow, beg, barter, bribe or buy links.

## 2. On-page Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

While off-page SEO is hugely important, we can't forget about on-page SEO. This consists of placing your most important keywords within the content elements of your actual pages. These on-page elements include Headlines, Sub-headlines, Body Content, Image Tags, and Links. On-page SEO is often referred to as "Keyword Density".

It's very common that businesses will do too little on-page optimization or too much (keyword stuffing). While it's important to include your keyword as many times as necessary within a page, you don't want to go overboard with it either. For on-page SEO done right:

- **Pick a primary keyword for each page**

page with too many keywords on one page, the page will lose its importance and authority because search engines won't have a clear idea of what the page is about. This is very common on homepages in particular, where too many keywords are used.

- Place your primary keywords in your headline and sub-headline. These areas of content have greater weight to search engines.
- Include the keywords in the body content but don't use them out of context. Make sure they are relevant with the rest of your content.
- Include keywords in the file name of images (e.g. mykeyword.jpg) or use them in the ALT tag.
- Include the keywords in the page URL and keep the URL clean.
- And lastly, write for humans first, search engines second. Always prepare your content for your audience and then look to optimize it for search. Content written in the other order won't read naturally and your visitors will recognize it.

Page URL  
MyWebsite.com/URL-Keyword

Headline

## Free Ebook: The Essential Step-by-Step Guide to Internet Marketing

The Building Blocks for Succeeding With Marketing on the Web

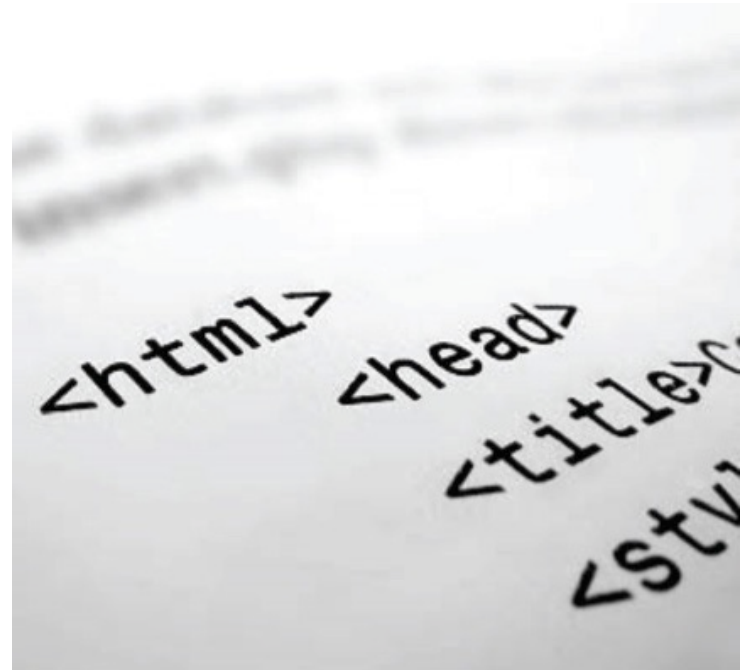
Sub-Headline

Body Content



The final part of on-page SEO is titles and meta tags. This may feel like the most tedious component of SEO, but it's a definite must-have. A Meta Tag is a line of code that is contained in the background of a web page. Search engines look at meta tags to learn more about what the page is about.

Meta tags don't quite have the level of SEO importance as they used to but are still very important. Back in the day, websites abused meta tags to increase their rankings by including far too many keywords. Now search engines are smarter and give more weight to inbound links and page content for ranking instead. However, they still play an important role to an SEO strategy. Make sure to use these on all of your pages.



If you're not a web guru, most website editors and content management systems enable you to easily edit meta tags without coding knowledge. If you don't have an editor, you can simply open a web page file (ending in .htm, .html, .asp or .php) in Notepad or a plain text editor and the meta tags will be found near the top of the document.

Here is example of what meta tags look like in an HTML document:

Title: The title of the page seen at the top of a web browser, also the main headline displayed in search engine results.

```
<title>Designing for your Target Audience | 469-420-0180</title>
```

Description: A concise description of the page.

```
<meta name="Description" content="If you aren't communicating effectively with your target audience, your work could be all for nothing. Here's how to design for your target audience.">
```

How the Title and Description  
Tags are Displayed in Search  
Engine Results

**Designing for your Target Audience | 469-420-0180**

**xxiibrands.com/importance-designing-target-audience/ ▼**

If you aren't communicating effectively with **your target audience**, your work could be all for nothing. Here's how to **design for your target audience**.

Keywords: Words that identify what the page is about. Keep to less than 7 keywords per page. Keywords in meta tags are not visible in the search engine results like Title and Description.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="designing for your target audience">
```



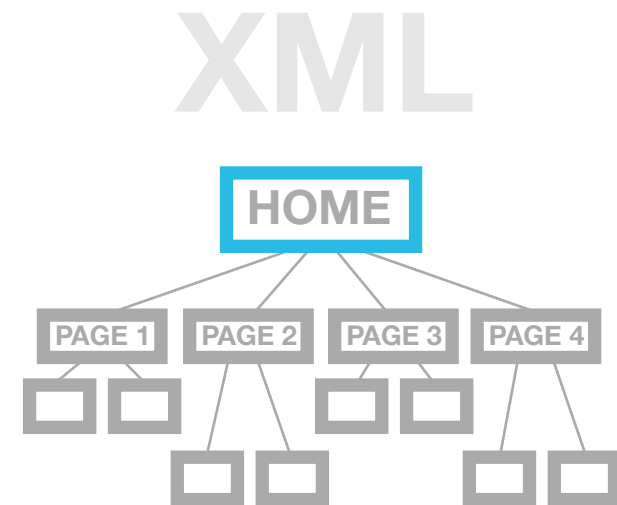
### 3. XML Sitemaps

The general incentive behind an XML sitemap is to help search engine crawlers (or “spiders”) sift through your pages more efficiently. An XML sitemap is simply an .xml file containing a listing of all your pages and when they were updated. It’s a lot like a subway map. It shows the structure of your website and where are your pages reside.

Creating a sitemap is easy. You can find sitemap generators online that will create the .xml file for you. Once you get the .xml file, simply upload it to the root directory of your website (e.g. [www. website.com/sitemap.xml](http://www.website.com/sitemap.xml)).

If your website is updated regularly, make it a good practice to update your xml file at least once a month so search engines have the freshest data.

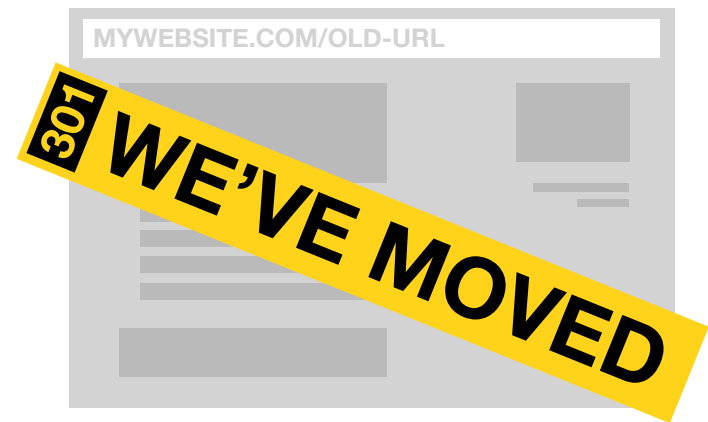
Adding an XML sitemap is a component that is commonly overlooked, while it may not be the deciding factor in improving your Search Engine Optimization, it will certainly help.



## 4. 301 Redirects

We've all experienced a time when we clicked on a website link that ended up being broken. Typically you'll see a "404 message" or "Page Not Found." A lot of times this is caused when a page is moved to a new URL and the old link hasn't been directed to the new page. Think about the lost opportunity when your customers or potential buyers want information that they can't locate. If you choose to move a page on your website, make certain that you use a permanent 301 Redirect, a method used to change an old URL to a new one.

In addition to keeping visitors happy when navigating your website, permanent 301 redirects are also important for SEO. When a user or search engine can't find a new page, you'll lose any SEO status the old page once had. To keep the SEO traction following to new pages, set up a 301 redirect for pages that have been moved so search engines know how to find it.



# PART 2: **COMMUNICATE**

Now that you're generating some good traffic by getting found online, your next focus is getting that traffic to stay on your website. It depends on the industry, but on most websites 30-60% of your visitors will leave without navigating to any other pages. The best way to prevent this from happening is to improve the user experience. With the rise of inbound marketing, content has become front and center in the minds of marketers. It is what search engines and people are looking for. It's what drives visitors to your site, keeps them engaged, and turns prospects into leads. Take a look at these next must-haves for creating killer website content.

# 5. The First Impression

Your website represents who you are and what you offer. When people see it for the first time they're thinking:

- Is this site credible?
- Is it trustworthy?
- Is this a professional company?
- Is this company stable?
- Does this site make me feel welcome?
- Am I in the right place?

You need to ask yourself all of these questions when designing your website. Now, design may not be the most important factor in a website overall. People will often put too much emphasis on how a site looks instead of how it works, but it does play an important role in communicating a positive impression.

For example, an in-depth study from the Stanford University and Consumer Web Watch, "How Do People Evaluate A Website's Credibility? Results from a Large Study", found that a website's design was more important than credibility indicators such having a privacy policy, awards or certifications. P-44 Technologies does a great job at summarizing this study (continue to next page...)

“Visitors first evaluate a site’s overall design, including its use of multimedia. Beau Brendler, director of Consumer Web Watch noted: “While consumers say they judge on substance, these studies demonstrate that consumers judge on aesthetics, and get distracted by bells and whistles.” So, after spending all this time developing great, valuable content that visitors can’t find anywhere else on the Web, does this mean nothing matters but a cool color scheme and fancy flash animation? Fortunately, it doesn’t. The Stanford study noted specifically that while a site’s design is the first indicator of quality, it isn’t the only one: “...the visual design may be the first test of a site’s credibility. If it fails on this criterion, Web users are likely to abandon the site and seek other sources of information and services.”

**Tips for a great website design:**

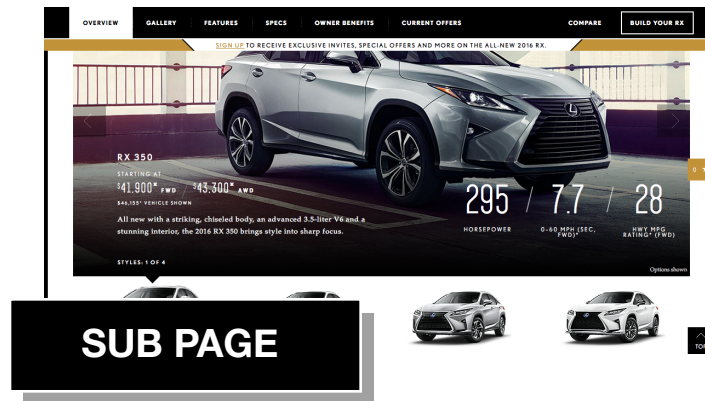
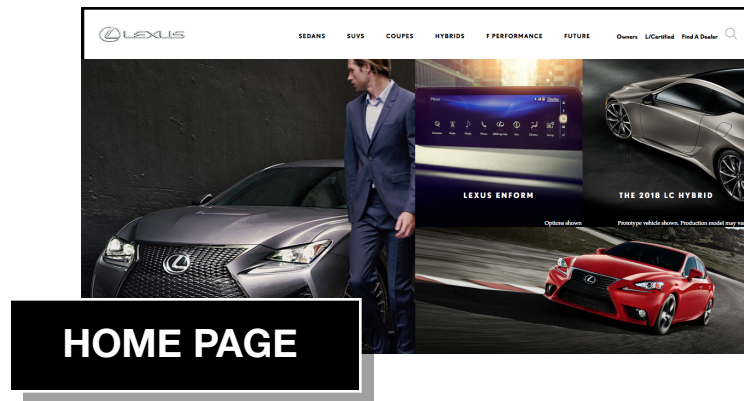
- **Proper use of colors:** Use the right colors for your audience and to draw attention to select elements. Don’t try to make everything jump out. The result will be just the opposite – nothing will stand out. Avoid a chaotic mix of colors on your website and instead pick two to four colors.
- **Animations, gadgets and media:** *Avoid anything unnecessary.* Using animation elements because they look cool is the wrong strategy. In most cases it’s best not to use animated background or background music. Only use media and animations to help support content and information.

- **Layout:** Create a clear navigation structure and organize page elements in a grid fashion as opposed to randomly scattered. Also, don't be afraid of white space, and avoid clutter!
- **Typography:** Make sure your website is legible. Use fonts, font sizes, and font colors that are easy to read. For easier page scanning use bulleted lists, section headers, and short paragraphs. If your site is English language-based, make sure information flows from left to right and top to bottom.

While design is important, don't forget that offering great content is what your visitors are ultimately after. A well-designed website might convince visitors to take a closer look but they won't look twice if the content isn't useful and well organized. After all, you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

## 6. Maintain Consistency

It's best to keep elements on your site fairly consistent from page-to-page. Elements include colors, sizes, layout, and placement of those elements. Your site needs to have a good flow from page to page. This means colors are primarily the same as well as fonts and layout structure. Navigation should remain in the same location of your layout throughout your website.



For layout structure, typically three page layouts exist for most websites: one for the homepage, one for content pages and one for form pages. For example, your homepage will have a different layout than a landing page for a PPC campaign. Keep the elements in these layouts constant. This will help keep your visitors from feeling lost.

## 7. Use Good Photography

Images can be a powerful element to any website but you need to use them wisely. For example, consider stock photography. Stock images are seen everywhere because they're easily accessible and inexpensive. But are they good to use?

Marketing Experiments performed a test comparing the use of stock photography versus real imagery on a website and each of their effects on lead generation. What they found was that photos of real people out-performed the stock photos by 95%. Why? Because stock images tend to be irrelevant. Resist the temptation to use photos of fake smiling business people!

As a result, take care to place meaningful images on your site. Every image is transmitting a subconscious message to your audience and sometimes the result is different from what you might expect.





## 8. Navigation

Perhaps one of the biggest factors to keep visitors on your website is having a good, solid navigation system that supports all search preferences. In fact, more than three-quarters of survey respondents from a recent HubSpot study say that the most important element in website design is ease in finding information.



If people can't find what they're looking for, they will likely give up and leave. Important factors in a site's navigation include:

- Keep the structure of your primary navigation simple and near the top of your page.
- Include navigation in the footer of your site.
- Use breadcrumbs on every page (except for the homepage) so people are aware of their navigation trail.
- Include a Search box near the top of your site so visitors can search by keywords.
- Don't offer too many navigation options on a page.
- Don't dig too deep – in most cases it's best to keep your navigation to no more than three levels deep.
- Include links within your page copy and make it clear where those links go to. This is also great for SEO!
- Avoid use of complicated JavaScript and Flash for your navigation. Many mobile phones can't see Flash, so they wouldn't be able to navigate your website. The same applies to web browsers that don't have an updated version of Flash installed.

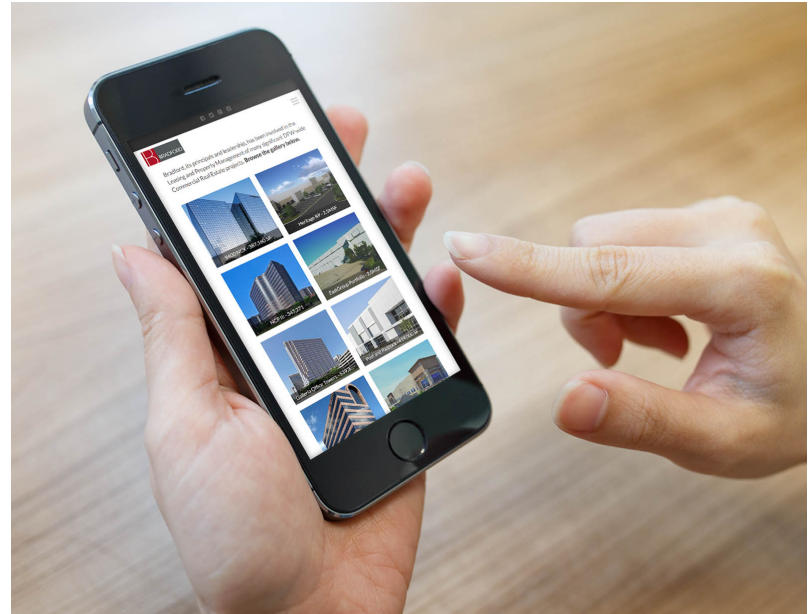
The overall rule with a proper navigation structure is simple: don't require visitors to have to think about where they need to go and how to get there. Make it easy for them.

## 9. Accessibility

Make sure that anyone visiting your website can view it no matter what browser or application they're using.

In order to gain significant traffic, your site needs to be compatible with multiple browsers and devices.

With growth in mobile phones and tablet devices, people are surfing the internet more than ever before. Make sure you get some of those views by allowing everyone to view your site, no matter what kind of system they run or which browser they use.



# 10. Brand Messaging

There are four basic questions you need to ask yourself regarding the content of your website.

1. Will people know what I do within a matter of seconds?
2. Will they understand what page they're on and what it's about?
3. Will they know what to do next?
4. Why should they buy/subscribe/download from this site instead of from someone else?

Ideally, you want your visitors to know the answers to these questions. It should be readily apparent what your site is about, what they can do there, and why they should take action.

On your homepage and most important pages, consider these helpful tips in delivering the right message:


- **Create a few headlines and sub-headline ideas.** To combat question #4 (why should I buy from you?) use a powerful value proposition and steer clear from generic clichés, gibberish terms, and corporate speak.

Home Tour Our Customers Mobile Extras & Add-ons Help/Support Plans & Pricing Sign in 37signals

**WHAT BASECAMP IS**

## Projects Manage Themselves with Basecamp.

Millions of people use Basecamp, the leading online project collaboration tool.



**CLEAR NEXT STEPS**

See Plans and Pricing  
30-day free trial. Sign up in 60 seconds.  
Or, [take a quick tour](#).

**WHO IT IS FOR**

Basecamp is the top choice for entrepreneurs, freelancers, small businesses, and groups inside big organizations.

- **Make sure to include clear call-to-actions and next steps.** The website shown above for Basecamp is a great example. They include links in their body copy, next step links at the end of the copy, and calls-to-action when appropriate. When you include a little direction, it makes it easy for visitors to know what they should do next.

# 11. Educate and Offer Value

Even though the purpose of a corporate website is to provide information about your products and services, not everyone is ready to buy when they first hit your site. Second, remember it's not all about you. What's in it for them?

- Offer more than just product content. Provide eBooks, whitepapers, videos, and other forms of content that is educational. This will nurture prospects through your marketing and sales funnel until they're ready to buy, plus they will feel as if they're receiving valuable information along the way and not just a sales pitch.
- In product-specific content, write as if you are speaking directly to your audience. Use words like "you" and "we." Be transparent. Make yourself sound human. Speak their language.
- Write your product content as if you're helping them solve their problems. Avoid "we are the best" speak and instead use "this is how we help you..."



## 12. Importance of Quality

Everyone knows having a lot of content is a good thing, but in the days where search engines are getting smarter and buyers are becoming more selective, quality content is truly king.

Quality content is a definite must-have for any website. This includes:

- **Offer unique content.** People love this and so do search engines.
- **Write for humans**, not search engines. People don't read like robots.
- **Provide value** and educational content that helps others.
- **Do your research when paying for content** that is written by third-party services. Some work well, others do not.
- **Keep content fresh.** Having news that's two years old still sitting on your homepage will probably give your visitors a bad feeling.

- **Know your audience.** Providing content that is specific to your buyers makes it more relevant for them, and in turn, higher quality.
- **Include evidence when needed.** If stating facts, numbers, awards, testimonials, etc., try to back it up with a source and give credit where credit is due.
- **Know your subject well.** You probably don't want an auto mechanic writing about brain surgery. Accurate content equals quality.



# 13. Be Clear, Not Clever

A professional image is necessary but you still want to avoid the dreaded corporate jargon. These are terms and phrases that have been overused and abused, rendering them meaningless. You'll find these mostly in the high-tech and B2B industry. These words are meant to add more emphasis of a particular subject but instead they make your eyes roll.

**Avoid these words** on your website and in other materials whenever possible:

- 
- **Next Generation**
  - **Flexible**
  - **Robust**
  - **Scalable**
  - **Easy to use**
  - **Cutting edge**
  - **Ground breaking**
  - **Best of breed**
  - **Mission critical**
  - **And so on...you get the point**

For years, advertising has tricked us into thinking that catchy and creative headlines and phrases work well at capturing our attention. They might have for a while, but not so much anymore. As consumers we are tired of advertising trickery, marketing clichés, and surreptitious methods of persuasion. We don't want to be lied to, gimmicked, or fooled. We just want the truth!

Wouldn't it be easier to get the point in our content instead of trying to persuade others?

If you focus your content on **being clear, not clever**, you will find that more people will place their trust in you. Be careful not to make things more complicated than they need to be. Use simple words that are easy to understand. Your goal is to be understood. Just be clear with what you want people to do on your site, and you'll gain more fans and followers in the long-run.

# 14. Blogging

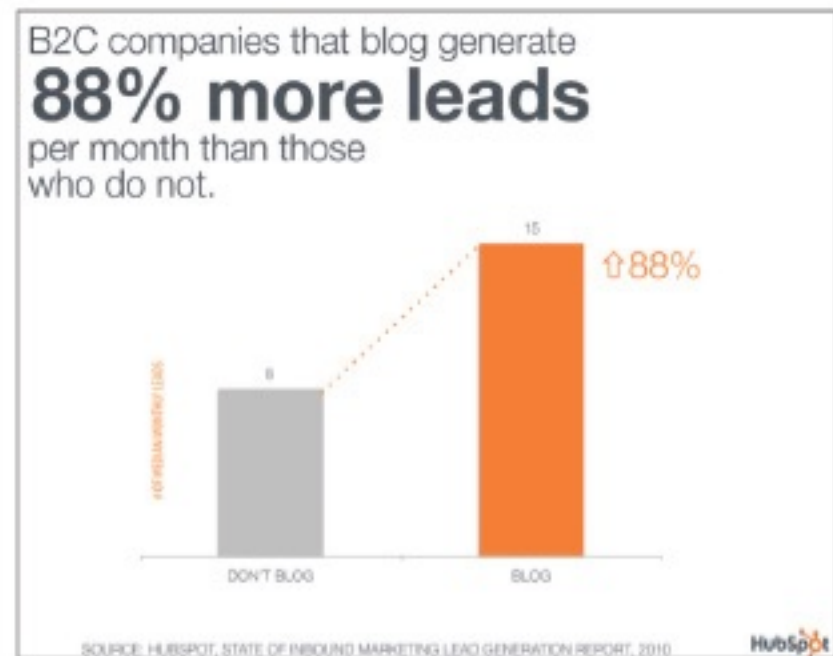
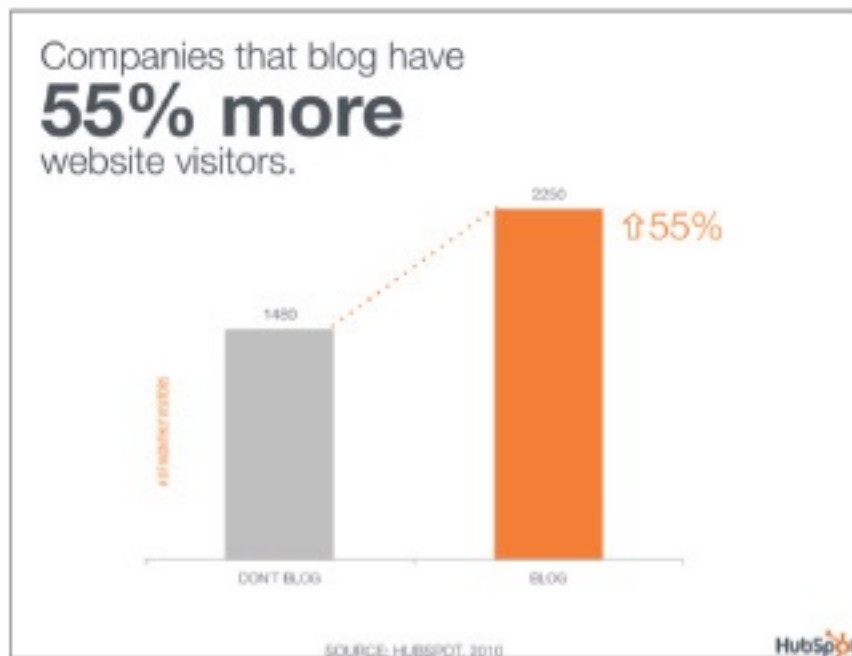
Blogging is without a doubt one of the most important assets to any inbound marketing strategy, and it's a perfect complement to your website.

**Here are some reasons why you really need a blog:**

- It creates fresh content and more pages of content, which is great for SEO.
- It helps establish you as an industry authority and thought leader.
- It helps drive more traffic and leads back to your website.
- It's a great channel to converse and engage with your audience and customers.
- It's a great way to get valuable inbound links!

Blogging isn't as difficult as you think. There are plenty of blogging tools you can use to get started.

If you still need proof blogging works, HubSpot has lots of research on the subject, specifically:



*How do you like them apples?* Yes, blogging gets results!

I recommend checking out 100 Marketing, Charts and Graphs for more awesome blogging stats.

# 15. Make Content Shareable and Social

Social media websites have seen an exponential growth in the past decade and continue to grow larger every day. Oftentimes people will “Like” a post, product, or blog entry, causing all of their friends to see what they like and even provide them with a link to find it themselves.

Consider this type of network effect for your own website. Make it just as easy for people to share and socialize about your content and resources. It’s almost blindingly obvious why you should take advantage of this opportunity. Providing people with excellent content that can be shared with their peers will surely increase your flow of traffic.

- Add a sharing widget or plugin to every page on your site. This will enable visitors to share your pages via all the major social networks. Tools like AddThis or ShareThis are easy to install and provide you with analytic tracking as well.
- If you’re on a blogging platform like WordPress, there are plug-ins available that enable people to share your articles, as well as auto-publish content to your social networks like Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

# 16. Use Multiple Forms of Content

Content is more than just the written word. Media and utilities are excellent forms of content that can turn a text-heavy site into something that pleases the viewing preferences of multiple audiences.

- Content takes place in the form of:
- Imagery, including infographics like this one →
- Video
- Audio
- Online utility tools (e.g. Website Grader)
- Games
- You name it!

Try using many different forms of content. It will help create a content-rich experience.



# 17. Customer Proof

No matter what you're selling, potential buyers like to see confirmation that you've made other customers happy. Testimonials, customer reviews and case studies are powerful sources of content for moving prospects even closer to the final buying stages.

- **Provide authentic customer stories** and **don't** hide these behind a form!
- **Place real, short and powerful testimonials on your site.** Tips to maximize testimonials:
  - Try to include real names and titles, using pictures of the person along with their testimonial if possible (if they already have a picture on LinkedIn, ask to use that!). This adds authenticity. Not including a name makes a testimonial seem phony even if it's real.
  - Instead of randomly placing testimonials on any page, consider placing testimonials on certain topics on the pages relevant to them. For example, if you have a quote about your awesome customer service, place that on a service or support page. If you have one for your convenient return policy, place that somewhere in a shopping cart or pricing page.

- **The more proof you have the better.** Make it part of your strategy to collect case studies and testimonials when possible.
- **Leverage other online sites that provide reviews,** such as Yelp (for local businesses), or industry specific directories like Capterra (for software providers).





# PART 3: **GROW**

Now that you know what it takes to drive traffic and engage visitors with great content, the next step is to get your visitors to convert from a prospect into a lead.

You don't want them leaving without providing some information or else you'll lose the opportunity to nurture them until they're ready to buy. Here are some must-haves for increasing your website conversions.

# 18. Effective Calls-to-Action

The effect of a successful Call to Action (CTA) is to drive a visitor to take a desired action. CTAs are typically kept above the fold or in clear sight on a page so visitors know where to take the next step. CTAs are the key to lead generation but they need to be done right to convert traffic into leads.

- **Make them bigger and bolder** than most other elements on the page, but don't overdo it.
- **Consider colors of the CTA**, whether it's a link, button or image. Make them look so good people will want to click on them.
- **Offer CTAs that provide value**, like guides, whitepapers, estimates, etc. "Contact Us" is the worst form of a CTA. Don't rely on that as your only option for conversion.
- **Make the CTA look clickable**. You can do this by making a button or adding a hover effect to an element.
- **Less is more**. Keep it simple and clear what is being offered.
- **Test when possible**. Try testing different colors (e.g. red versus green buttons), language, and placement to see which CTAs get more clicks and drive more leads.

Here are some good examples of calls-to-action:

The screenshot shows the FreshBooks website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Home, Tour, Signup, About, Add-ons, API, Blog, Support, and a Login button. The main headline reads "Focus on your work, not your paperwork" with a sub-headline "The fastest way to track time, organize expenses & invoice your clients". A large green button labeled "Try it for Free" is prominent, with a callout box pointing to it that says "CLEAR CTAs". To the right of the button is a link "or Take a Quick Tour". The background features a smartphone displaying the FreshBooks app and a printed invoice. The invoice includes a table with columns "Unit Cost", "Quantity", and "Line Total".

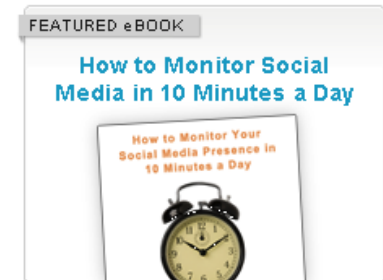
Unit Cost	Quantity	Line Total
150.00	5	750.00
125.00	3	375.00
		<b>1,125.00</b>
		<b>Subtotal</b>
		<b>GST 5%</b>
		<b>1,181.25</b>
		<b>Total</b>
		<b>Amount Paid</b>

Example 1: Freshbooks



- [Marketing Webinars](#)
- [Marketing Hubs](#)
- [Inbound Marketing Communities](#)
- [Inbound Marketing University](#)
- [Marketing Whitepapers & eBooks](#)
- [Marketing Kits](#)
- [Inbound Marketing Blog](#)
- [Marketing Videos](#)
- [Marketing Video Podcast](#)
- [Marketing Tools](#)
- [Marketing Studies & Reports](#)
- [Marketing Examples](#)
- [HubSpot Content Usage Guideline](#)

## Marketing Resources



Collection of upcoming and archived internet marketing webinars on a variety of topics, from blogging, to search engine marketing, to press releases.



Example 2: HubSpot

# 19. CTA Positioning

So you have Calls To Action, but how will people find them?

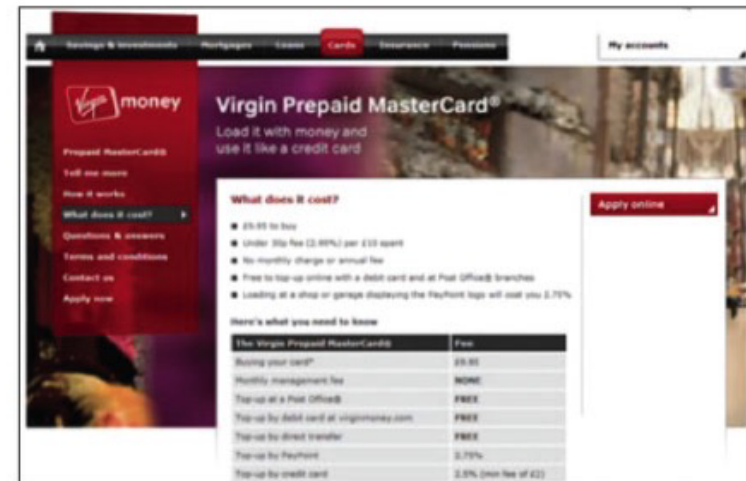
You want to think about where you will be placing your CTAs. You don't want to dump CTAs everywhere. That will give people too many options, or not the right options at the right time.

Consider this:

- **Segment your top-of-the-funnel and middle-of-the-funnel offers.** Place top-of-funnel type offers (whitepapers, downloads) on top-level pages. Add middle-of-funnel offers (request a quote, trial, pricing) as the prospect is digging deeper and learning more about your offering.
- **Place CTAs both above and below the fold.** Placing CTAs above the fold is important because that area of a page gets the most views. However, there are still other areas of a page to promote your CTAs. Add some at the bottom of pages and within body content as well.
- **Some studies suggest placing CTAs to the right of the page work better** but testing this will ultimately determine what's best for your website.



vs.



The placement of your CTAs can impact conversion. The only way to know which options work best is to measure and adjust!

- **Use thank you pages for additional CTAs.** A thank you page or message is what is seen right after someone completes a web form. Many times there is plenty of real estate to offer more downloads and CTAs. Once a prospect completes a form, don't stop there. Offer them additional downloads, however if possible, do so without requiring them to complete another form.
- **Test, test, test!** As indicated in the example above, it's unclear which version will drive the most conversions. Try different placements and use analytics so you know which one works best for your website.

## 20. Landing Pages

Now that you have some awesome CTAs you need to drive those links to landing pages.

Landing pages, sometimes called a “Lead Capture Page”, are used to convert visitors into leads by completing a transaction or by collecting contact information from them. Landing pages consist of:

- A headline and (optional) sub-headline
- A brief description of the offer/CTA
- At least one supporting image
- Supporting elements such as testimonials or security badges (optional)
- And most importantly, a form to capture information

Landing pages are necessary to implement. Landing pages direct your visitors to one particular offer without the distractions of everything else on your website. Visitors are on a landing page for one specific purpose: to complete the lead capture form!

## What makes an effective landing page?

- **Include the elements on the previous page** and only what is needed. Keep your pages simple and minimize distractions.
- **Never ever use your homepage** as a landing page.
- **Remove main site navigation** from the landing page so visitors can focus on completing the form and not continuing to search your site.
- **Make it very clear** what the offer is and make it irresistible.
- **Content on your landing page should absolutely match your call-to-action.** If there is a disconnect in your messaging visitors will hit the Back button.
- **Reduce friction.** Don't make visitors think too much or do too much work (i.e. reading).
- **Use the correct form** and only collect the information you absolutely need (see must-have Forms for more details).

Effective landing pages are what will turn your website into a lead generating machine.



## Example of a bad landing page:

Announcing  
**midnight trader**  
Night vision for the investment community  
**Extended Hours**

**FREE 2-Week Trial**  
(Credit Card Required)

**Sign Up Today!**




Get streaming, real-time AFTER-HOUR and PRE-MARKET Level II quotes, trading analysis and news from the premier provider of live extended-hours market intelligence.

MidnightTrader analyzes and publishes over 125 extended-hours market and stock specific reports daily. This real-time and historical analysis of corporate announcements and subsequent market reaction information provides insight into what is likely to have a substantial effect on the current and future trading price of a company's stock.

### Features

- **Real-time Extended-Hours Level II ECN quotes** — Follow the market with real-time, streaming quotes from the INET and ARCA ECNs before and after regular market hours!
- **Live Trading Analysis** — See what's trading after the close and before the open with live news and trading updates.
- **Most Actives** — Find out what stocks are moving and are the most actively traded before the regular session.
- **News** — Get MidnightTrader's live extended-hours news and unique market commentary before the rest of Wall Street.
- **Volume Spike & Order Interest Analysis** — MidnightTrader analysts provide real-time coverage of any unusual volume spikes and pre-execution buy or sell order interest building in the pre-market or after-hours.
- **Forecast Reports** — *Nightly* analysis of after-hours trading activity covering issues that are likely to post wilder moves in the upcoming pre-market and regular session based on their historical reaction to similar news in the past.

### View screen shots of features:



**Existing MidnightTrader Subscribers:**  
If you have already signed up for MidnightTrader's extended-hours market services, [login here](#).

FREE 14-day trial offer. After 14 days of Free service, you will be billed at the listed monthly rate (\$29.95/month or \$289/year) if you have not cancelled.

\* Quick Takes Pro — FREE trial of this daily technical analysis report issued ahead of the open by Barron's Michael Kahn is also available. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Night Vision**

1. Not sure what this page is offering.
2. Not clear what you'd be signing up for? "Free 2 Week Trial" is hidden.
3. Way too much text. No one will ever read all that!
4. Screen shots of the product are very confusing.
5. No forms directly on this page to capture prospect information.
6. Length of the page might be too long.
7. Selling too much on features and not **value**.
8. No customer proof with testimonials or case studies.

## Example of a good landing page:



### Free eBook: How To Brainstorm Content That Rocks And Converts

Effective marketing starts with great content. But how effective can you be if you don't know where to start?

Don't worry – you're not alone.

That's why HubSpot and AWeber wrote this guide for you and all those other marketers that struggle with writing great content.

In the new eBook *"How To Brainstorm Content That Rocks And Converts"* you'll find out how to:

- Write customer-generated content
- Take full advantage of repurposed content
- Get unblocked and generate fresh ideas
- Use search tools to mine for topics

Content that's thought out, clearly focused and well written has more value to everyone who encounters your brand. Download your free copy of *"How To Brainstorm Content That Rocks And Converts."*



### Download Your Free Copy!

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email ([privacy policy](#)) \*

Phone \*

Company \*

Company Website \*

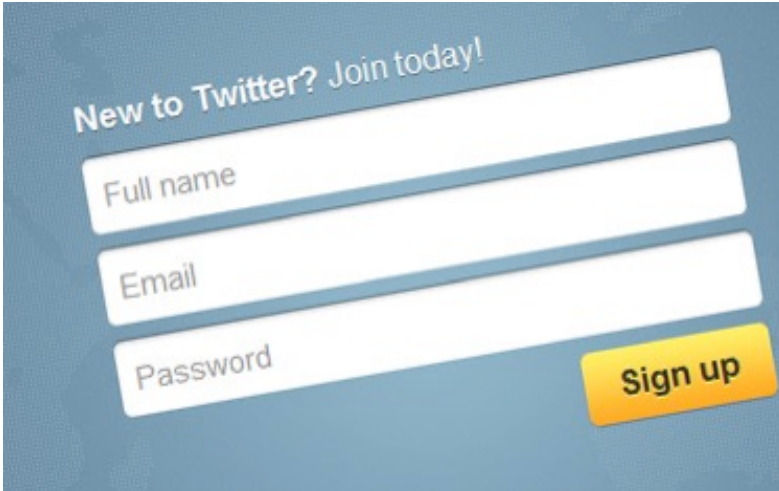
1. Main navigation has been removed
2. HubSpot logo remains in the top left corner.
3. Clear headline describing the offer.
4. Clear image of the offer.
5. Brief description of the offer including bullet points for scanning.
6. Lead form directly on the page with sub-headline re-emphasizing the offer.
7. Content focuses on value.
8. Not too long.

# 21. Forms

Forms are the key to a landing page. Without them, there is nothing for the visitor to do on that page. Forms come in handy when it's time for people to sign-up, subscribe to your site or download an offer.

You might be wondering how much or how little information you should require with a form. There is no magic answer when it comes to how many fields your form should contain but the best balance would be to collect only the information you really need.

The fewer fields you have in a form, the more likely it is that you'll receive more conversions. This is because with each new field you add to a form, it creates more work for the visitor and fewer conversions. A longer form looks like more work and sometimes it will be avoided altogether. But on the other hand, the more fields you require, the better quality those leads might be. The best way to determine what works best is to test it.

A registration form for Twitter. The form is set against a blue background. At the top, it says "New to Twitter? Join today!". Below this are three white input fields with labels: "Full name", "Email", and "Password". To the right of the "Password" field is a yellow button with the text "Sign up".

### Recommendations for landing page forms:

- **Only ask for the information you need** for you or your sales team. Also, avoid asking for sensitive information that companies or consumers may not want to disclose.
- **Consider the value of the offer.** The more valuable an offer may be perceived, the more information you may be able to ask for in return. If it's a newsletter subscription, only ask for email address and maybe their first name at most.
- **Reduce anxiety.** People are more resistant to give up their information these days, especially because of the increase in spam. Add a privacy message (or link to your privacy policy) that indicates their email will not be shared or sold.
- **Don't use the word "SUBMIT" on your form buttons!** No one wants to submit anything. Instead, try "download whitepaper", "Get your free eBook", or "Join our newsletter".
- **If you're advertising a downloadable offer as your CTA, fulfill the request instantly.** For example, if your form is for a whitepaper download, include a link to download that whitepaper on the very next page (typically called a "thank you" page). Another option is to send an auto-responder email containing a link to the offer but it's recommended it's given right away upon form submission so people don't have to dig in their email for your content.

## 22. Newsletters

Speaking of newsletters, you should definitely offer a newsletter subscription on your website. Not all CTAs need to be big offers. Newsletters or mailing lists are the perfect way to collect email addresses so you can nurture prospects over time to become leads. Just make sure it's easy for people to find your subscription form.



### Social Design Newsletter

Sign up for the Social Design Newsletter, chock-full of social design issues like reputation, influence, behavior, community, and their relationship with design.

Email:

Name:

Subscribe

# Let's Wrap Up

The internet has changed everything. Internet usage is growing rapidly and you need to be there when potential buyers come looking. A business website may be the most important factor in your inbound marketing strategy, but it's more than just having a website; it's the integration of SEO, social media, blogging, content, CTAs and landing pages that will drive traffic, leads and sales.

After all, it's these components that **generate sales and revenue** for your business. Inbound marketing is the key to filling your sales funnel with qualified leads, and your website is where education, engagement and conversion take place.

Follow these guidelines and you'll soon have a great website that generates traffic, leads and sales.

# Can we help with your Inbound Marketing?

Email us at [hello@xxiibrands.com](mailto:hello@xxiibrands.com) for a  
free assessment.