

# Setting up a website: key considerations.

Supporting you on your business journey.

If your business is going to trade online, then you'll already be thinking about your website. But even if you're not setting up an internet business, you should still consider if an online presence could add value. Even a simple website could give you the edge over your competitors.

This guide will help you think through these key considerations:

- Why set up a website?
- Is a website right for your business?
- What are the practicalities of setting up a website?
- Why building a website is only the beginning.



Lloyds TSB | Commercial

# Why set up a website?

A website allows you to reach a global audience 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. It could allow your business to operate without a shop front. If you trade through your website, it can also help lower the cost of sales and customer acquisition.

A website has several potential benefits:

- It can enhance your company PR and help build your brand.
- You can explain the benefits of your products/services to a wider audience.
- You can help build your company's reputation.
- You can gain more immediate feedback from your customers and improve your product or service.

A website can increase the amount of business that you do, by enabling you to:

- Sell products to customers online (e-commerce).
- Showcase your services and products to a wider customer base.
- Reach international markets.

A website can save your time and money:

- Answers to common queries can be put on your site, cutting down on phone time.
- Product photos and descriptions can replace expensive print brochures – updating online is much cheaper too.
- Putting standardised forms on your site and communicating via email can reduce your administration costs.
- You can advertise for new recruits online.

## Is a website right for your business?

It's important to be clear about how a website can add to your business. How will a website help your business get where you want it to be? Do you have sufficient resources to maintain your internet presence – keeping the site updated, for example?

The first task in evaluating what a site can realistically achieve for you is to determine your objectives and set yourself some goals. Ask yourself:

- What are the short, medium and long-term benefits of a website for my business? For example, if you intend to trade online, are you seeking to gain more customers, lower operating costs or establish a competitive edge?

- How do you intend to define the success of your site? For example, how many new customers can you attract in the first year?
- How much time and money will you save by dealing with your customer queries online?

Don't forget to calculate the value of automating your existing business processes – it could make the crucial difference to your decision.

## The practicalities.

### Building your website.

If you decide that a website is right for your business, next you need to look at the practicalities of setting your site up.

A basic shop window with email facilities can be done on a DIY basis or templated from an online provider, but if you need or want a more sophisticated approach, particularly with different e-commerce functions, then you may well have to bring in the experts.

### Doing the job yourself: pros and cons.

#### Pros.

- Cheaper (if you, or a colleague, have the expertise).
- Familiarity with the business.
- The website builder can focus on this single task.

#### Cons.

- You may lack the right skills.
- Whoever is building the site may have to be diverted from other work.
- The end result may not be as good as a professional developer's.
- You or someone in your business may need to keep trained-up and available for any on-going maintenance and content updating work.

### Using a web developer: pros and cons.

#### Pros.

- You can commission work to a pre-agreed budget and timetable.
- You'll be using skilled people with a wide range of experience.
- They'll have up-to-date expertise and ideas about what works best online.

## Cons.

- They will also be working for other clients.
- There may be a learning curve to understand your business goals and market.
- Changes outside of the agreed brief may cost extra.

A tip: when thinking about the points above, remember that recognising customer need is always more important than understanding technology.

## Your website name.

Another practical consideration will be buying your web addresses (or 'domain name'). Check what's available. Your first choice of domain name might not be available, so consider some alternatives:

- Would a ".co.uk" and/or ".net" address work if you can't get the ".com"?
- Could you hyphenate your company's name, using "my-company.com" instead of "mycompany.com"?

Registering several domain names will help avoid confusion with other organisations that have set up websites with similar names, and help maximise traffic to your site from interested users.

## Web host providers.

Every website needs its own space on the internet. To get your own space, you will need a web hosting provider. They will host your site on their space and ensure that when a visitor types in your web address they see your site.

Decide what kind of website hosting service you'll need – do you want technical help and back-up, for instance – and shop around. Your internet service provider will probably offer web hosting.

If you are going to allow customers to order goods or make requests online, customer service will be crucial to your web success. You must be able to respond quickly and to offer guaranteed security and delivery deadlines.

# Building a site is just the beginning.

When thinking about your website, you'll naturally pay close attention to the content, layout and navigation between pages. But a key consideration is how to get people to visit your site in the first place. There are a number of things you can do.

## Finding key words.

The majority of traffic to websites arrives via search engines, such as Google and Bing. One way that search engines find sites is by matching words used in a search to the engine's ever-growing index of key words. The greater the match, and the more frequently a site appears in the search list, the higher a site is likely to be ranked on the results page – and that means the more visitors it will receive.

There are ways of improving a website's ranking in search engine results – generally referred to as search engine optimisation (SEO). SEO looks at how search engines work, the key words used in searches and which search engines are preferred by a site's target audience.

So, one approach to optimising search engine results for your site is to identify the key words likely to be used by someone searching for a business like yours, then making sure those words appear regularly within your site.

To come up with key words for your site:

- think about the words you would use to find it.
- try searching for competitors and see what words bring up their sites in the search results.
- use free tools available on the internet to find key words and search terms to use on your website.

Although using key words on your site is likely to increase your position in search engines' results, don't overdo it – the page still needs to read well when the visitor gets there. Keep your key word percentage to between 0.5 and 2 per cent of the total text on a page.

## Key word placement.

Key word placement refers to where you position key words within your site to help with search engine optimisation.

Place your key words near the top and bottom of your page – within the first 25 and last 25 words. Use them in headings and sub-headings too. Search engines pay close attention to these areas.

It also helps to surround key words by other key words – it will help bring more targeted searches to your site. This works because people tend to search for products or services and then add more information containing another key word to their search.

## Building links.

When ranking results, search engines take into account how many other sites link to a page. So it's a good idea to research other sites that might be prepared to link to yours. Look at the sites people regularly go to for information about what's available in your marketplace and find out about linking from them. Again, look at your competitors' sites to see who they link to and from.

Consider visiting forums and blogs that are related to the content of your site. You can often add your website link to your profile on the forum or blog. Then every time you post a comment and leave your profile signature, your website is available for other visitors to see, including search engines.

## Advertising your site online.

The internet offers extremely efficient, intelligent and wide-ranging advertising opportunities, from banner ads which are embedded onto a webpage, to social network advertising and email campaigns. So online advertising is well worth considering, but it's a fast moving and competitive area and to advertise successfully you need to understand some important principles, or call on the services of an expert who does.

While all reasonable care has been taken to ensure that the information in this business guide is accurate, no liability is accepted by Lloyds TSB for any loss or damage caused to any person relying on any statement or omission in this business guide. This business guide is provided for information only and should not be relied on as offering advice for any set of circumstances and specific advice should always be sought in each instance.

[www.lloydstsb.com/business](http://www.lloydstsb.com/business)

Lloyds TSB Bank plc Registered Office: 25 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HN. Registered in England and Wales no. 2065.  
Telephone: 020 7626 1500.

Lloyds TSB Scotland plc Registered Office: Henry Duncan House, 120 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4LH.

Registered in Scotland no. SC95237. Telephone: 0131 225 4555.

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority under numbers 119278 and 191240 respectively.

Lloyds TSB Bank plc and Lloyds TSB Scotland plc are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and the Financial Ombudsman Service (please note that due to the schemes' eligibility criteria not all Lloyds TSB Commercial customers will be covered by these schemes).