

8

WAYS TO KNOW YOU ABSOLUTELY NEED A NEW WEBSITE

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It's hard to believe how many years have transpired since your organization launched its current website. Who can forget how much it cost—or how long it took? Fortunately, the site still functions, albeit a bit slowly. So it should be suitable for another several years. Right?

That's the mindset of those who dread spending money updating their websites. Businesses that would scoff at employing computer equipment, fleet vehicles, or other short-term assets past their expected usefulness believe a website will last forever.

But technology and user expectations change rapidly. Visitors read and interact with websites differently than ever before. They expect easy-to-find and digest information, meaningful and engaging images, and intuitive navigation. Otherwise, they'll quickly move on to another site.

So, if you're putting off investing in a new website, check out this list to determine just how obsolete your current site is.

1

Your site is not responsive.

Not having a mobile-friendly design is a surefire way to convince visitors that your website is past its prime. On a responsive website, the content layout automatically adjusts to fit any size electronic device (i.e., desktop, laptop, tablet, phone). Responsive design has been around for several years. If your website is still not mobile-friendly, then visitors must view a tiny, scaled-down version of your desktop layout on smaller screens.

Why is responsiveness critical to your website? Because Mobile Internet usage is growing at startling speeds. Sixty-three percent of Americans now access the Internet primarily on smartphones and tablets, compared to 37 percent on desktop computers. And caught in a so-called digital divide, 43 percent of low-income adults lack in-home broadband services, which makes them dependent on mobile access to the Internet.

If your website is not responsive, visitors must view a tiny, scaled-down version of your desktop layout on smaller screens.

If your site is not responsive, your entire online presence will appear obsolete.



2

Your site is not accessible.

The reasons for redesigning a website go beyond creating an updated look and feel. One critical objective is to remove any barriers to obtaining information.

Modern website design involves making your site accessible to all visitors—including those living with disabilities, impairments, and limitations. Toward that end, your website should have features that conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act, such as ensuring compatibility with various assistive computer technologies and providing visible captioning for photos and images. In some circumstances, there are costly legal ramifications for failing to comply.

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In addition, visitors should be able to choose the language in which your site's text appears. Today's newer websites include instant translation functions that convert displayed text to other languages.

If your current website lacks accessibility features, a redesign project presents an opportunity to become a more inclusive, digitally responsible organization.



4

Your site's images are not engaging.

Nothing screams “outdated website” as loudly as low-quality photos. Old-school sites often feature overused pictures of smiling business people (usually in groups with their arms crossed), industry stereotypes (i.e., law firms can't help showing courthouse pillars and the scales of justice), and shots of the company's signage. If your site includes those sorts of images, it undoubtedly appears archaic.

When your budget allows, let a website developer produce custom photography. Otherwise, insist that the site builder use thoughtfully chosen stock images that beautifully communicate emotions, transcend cultural barriers, and complement your text.

Hero images make your site unique, while causing visitors to linger longer.

Eye-catching photos offer a sense of your website's theme, look, and feel, causing visitors to linger longer. On the other hand, carelessly selected stock photos put you at risk of showing images that appear on countless other antiquated sites.



5

Your site contains outdated information.

One place to look to determine how often a website is updated is at the bottom of a page. Or, more specifically, at the copyright statement located in the footer. If the most recent copyright year was five years ago, it's clear that the site's information is outdated.

Obsolete information makes your website seem abandoned. When your "current events" page lists last summer's open house as the next big happening, who could take your site seriously? And when the "meet our team" section includes employees who left during a previous U.S. president's administration, visitors will become frustrated when trying to make contact.

Obsolete information makes your website seem abandoned.

Modern techniques can prevent outdated information from appearing on your site. Coding that automatically updates the copyright year and causes upcoming events to drop after their scheduled dates give your site an updated, cared-for appearance.



6

Your site's blog is irrelevant.

Another sign of a forsaken website is the absence of recent blog activity. At the same time, blog content that your audience finds irrelevant signals that you lack meaningful information to share.

Bygone wisdom stressed regular posting as a keystone to search engine optimization—regardless of the topic. Now we know that posting about the information your ideal customers search for online helps drive potential clients to your blog content and, ultimately, to the rest of your site.

Random musings have given way to thoughtfully written blog posts incorporating keywords and phrases that match likely search strings. Valuable content establishes your organization's expertise on the subject matter, which keeps interested prospects engaged and eventually leads to sales conversations.

On the other hand, if your latest post is a year old and offers little insight, readers will suspect you have nothing current—or helpful—to offer.

Meaningful content establishes your organization's expertise on the subject matter, which keeps interested prospects engaged.



BLOG

Your site has broken links.

Remember hurrying to launch your site all those years ago and having time run out before you could finish creating all the pages? Remember listing those pages on your navigation bar and linking to the message, “Coming Soon?” Let’s be honest: your coming soon pages are never coming, and visitors who have clicked on those links are never returning.

Little frustrates website readers more than stumbling onto broken links—regardless of whether those links are internal or external. Visitors come to your site looking for information, and expired links to content that was moved or removed—or never existed—indicate that your website information is outdated. Their next click will likely take visitors back to their search engines.

Little frustrates website readers more than stumbling onto broken links.

Newer websites take advantage of broken link-checking software that periodically validates hyperlinks. If your site lacks that safeguard, your new website had better be “Coming Soon.”



8

Your site is not encouraging visitor action.

Businesses often look to SEO statistics to judge the effectiveness of their websites. But high traffic volume alone does not generate increased revenues, donations, or job applications. That is why you need persuasive content throughout your site.

Your donate-now page must provide more than a link to giving via credit card; by explaining how financial gifts help your clients, listing giving levels, and including testimonials from past recipients, you help convince undecided donors to contribute. In

addition to listing open positions, your career page should describe your organization's work culture, feature current employees, and allow candidates to apply immediately. And every page should include a unique call to action (i.e., contact us for more details, sign up for our newsletter, view our current employment opportunities) encouraging your desired behavior.

You need persuasive content throughout your site.

A good website provides visitors with information. A great website persuades them to act.



We create online experiences that generate awareness for your organization and move visitors to action.

Appealing website design is only beneficial if the results meet your objectives. At The Creative Block, we develop attractive, functional websites that make an immediate impression and turn visitors into clients.

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