



# 10 WEBSITE SECRETS YOUR COMPETITORS DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW



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I spend a lot of time looking for bad websites – in fact, I love them, because when I find one, I know that it's an opportunity to help the owner get a new website that will benefit their business.

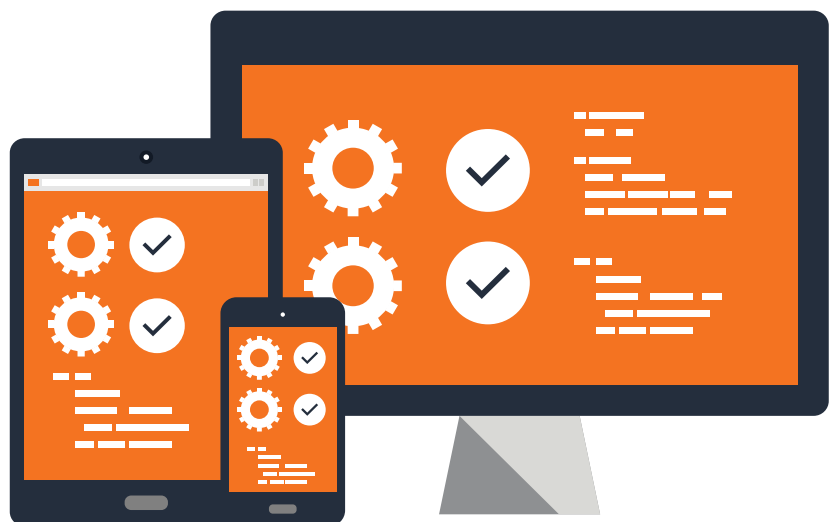
I'm not the only one who likes bad websites - your competitors do too. They know that if you have a website that isn't easy for visitors to use and that doesn't engage them, people won't stay on there for long. Potential customers will get fed up, and instead of contacting you or buying your products, they will leave your site and go elsewhere - straight to your competitors!

It's time that your website helped your business more than it helps your competitors – here are my top 10 tips that will enable it to do just that:

## 1. Your website must be fully responsive

A fully responsive website is one that automatically adapts to the size of screen it is being viewed on, meaning the content is as easy to read on a mobile or tablet as it is on a desktop or laptop.

With over 60% of web browsing now carried out on smartphones and tablets, it is essential that your website is fully responsive. Mobile use is only going to increase, and people simply won't stay on your site if it is not optimised for mobile devices. They will quickly get frustrated with how difficult the text is to read, whilst visual content will have very little impact, and if



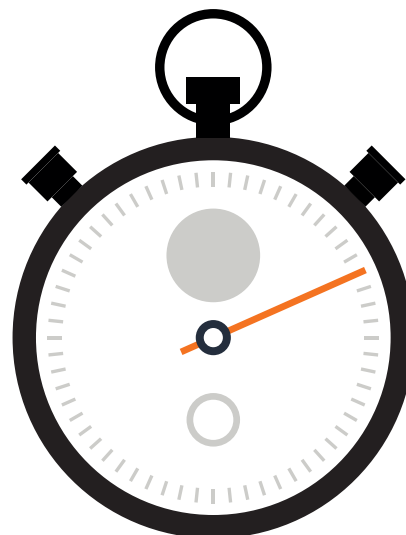
you have a contact form that you expect people to complete, forget it! Instead, your site will drive people away and onto a competitor's fully responsive website - you just lost that prospective new customer!

A non-responsive website could also affect how many people find your site in the first place. Google has started to roll out mobile-first indexing, meaning that it will now prioritise mobile content over desktop content. This also means that it's no longer enough to have a separate mobile website, as these typically have reduced content, making it harder for Google to find relevant material to answer search queries, resulting in a lower search ranking.

## 2. Your website needs to load quickly

We are an increasingly impatient population. Estimates vary on how long the average person will wait for a web page to load before abandoning it, but one thing is certain; every second counts. If your website is taking more than 3 seconds to load, visitors to your site will give up and move on to your competitor's site.

Slow loading times not only cause people to leave your site, but they can also prevent them from finding it to begin with. Like non-responsive websites, a slow loading website can affect your search engine ranking, as both Google and Bing use page loading speed as a ranking factor.



## 3. Tell people where you are

Have you ever visited a company's website, browsed their products or services, and then looked at their contact page to see where they are based? If there is no address and no local code included in the phone number, do you feel that you can trust that company, or that they have something to hide?

People like to deal with local businesses. They immediately feel an infinity with them if they know they are in the same town or county, and that helps to build trust.

Having your contact information present on every page helps your customers to reach you faster - if they have to hunt down your information to get in touch with you, they're more likely to give up and go to a competitor.

Displaying your address can also help to boost your organic search ranking. When someone is searching for a local business or organisation, search engines will be able to easily recognise that your website is a good fit if your address is included throughout your site.





#### 4. Keep your website up to date

Once you have contact information on your website, it is important that you keep it up to date.

There have been many occasions where I have visited a website with the intention of making a purchase, only to find that the contact details displayed on Google were different from those on their website. Which number or address did I use? I didn't! I found a competitor that was easier to contact.

Having information on your website that is no longer correct will confuse potential customers, and it will also damage your credibility. Furthermore, your Google rankings are likely to be negatively affected if your contact details are not consistent.

#### 5. Avoid spelling and grammar mistakes

It's not great when you are reading something and the spelling is wrong and the grammar is not right. It makes it hard to read and understand the points that are being made and is not likely to engage your website visitors which means they probably won't stay on your website and your credibility will also be damaged.



OK, this is an extreme example, but I'm sure it gets the point across. (That's if you stayed around long enough to read it!)

#### 6. Get the right words in the right place

To keep people on your website, you need to get them on there in the first place.



Your page title is the clickable heading that appears at the top of the search engine result for a particular website page. It is important that every page on your website has an accurate title that tells both search engines and visitors what it is about. For instance, 'Contact ABC Accountants' would be more effective than 'Contact Us' as a page title. (This is different to what appears on the navigation bar on your website. 'Contact Us' is perfectly acceptable there).

You should also have an effective description for each page of your website. The description is the section that appears underneath the page title in search results. Ideally it should be between 80 and 160 characters long, and give enough relevant information to make people want to view the page. To help your SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), it also needs to contain any relevant keywords or phrases.

## 7. Tell visitors what problem you can solve for them

When someone visits your website, it's because they have a problem that needs solving. A common mistake is to only focus on the products or services on offer, and not to tell visitors which problems they can solve.

Have a clear idea of what problem it is that your company solves, and who you solve it for.



## 8. Make your website easy to navigate

Once you are clear about which problems your company solves, you need to make it easy for people to find your solution.

It is surprising how many websites are cluttered and confusing, making it impossible to find the information you are looking for. If your site is like this, it won't take long for your visitors to leave and go looking for your competitors.



A clean website with a clear layout that is easy to navigate will help keep visitors on your site and make it easy for them to find out how you can solve their problems.

## 9. Tell people what to do

Once your visitors have found the solution to their problem, they need to be told what to do next.

This is where a Call To Action (CTA) is needed. You can't rely on visitors to go looking around your website for your email address or phone number, and then make contact with you. You need to issue an instruction, and tell them what they need to do next. People are far more likely to buy your product if, having read how it will solve their problem, there is a 'Buy Now' button which, when clicked, goes straight through to their PayPal account.



Another good CTA is 'Contact Us Today' which, when clicked opens up an email browser or takes you to a contact form. A CTA needs to tell your website visitors exactly what you want them to do, and needs to have a minimal number of clicks in order for the action to be completed.

## 10. Regularly add fresh content

Regularly adding fresh, authoritative content is a great way of boosting SEO for your website. People are also more likely to return to your site if they know that you regularly change and add to what is on there.

A blog is the perfect way to regularly add new and interesting content to your website. As well as improving SEO, a blog establishes your expertise and knowledge of your topic, and provides visitors to your site with more to read, which will in turn encourage them to spend more time on your site and help them decide to make a purchase or get in contact.

A good website can be your best and most cost-effective sales person. A bad website can be a great sales aid for your competitors.



John Wright is an it'seeze Website Consultant. His company, **it'seeze Horsham**, create professionally designed, fully responsive, bespoke websites at affordable prices, for businesses in Surrey and West Sussex.

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