



10 Web Design Mistakes Business Owners Make

And How to Avoid Making Them

I have worked as a graphic designer and marketing consultant for 15 years. In that time, I have had the privilege of helping many business owners work out of some their marketing mistakes and into more productive practices.

It isn't their fault, really. Most of them are quite capable managers, leaders, and strategists. They've obviously reached some measure of success, because they can afford to hire me to help them grow. I have the utmost respect for entrepreneurs. It's their courage, vision, and hard work that makes our country and its economy what it is.

I created this report in an effort to help business owners. No one can know everything, and most entrepreneurs I know have no interest in designing and managing websites. However, all of the entrepreneurs I know need websites. So, I've identified 10 common mistakes my friends tend to make and offered solutions to help them out. Here we go.

Business owners need a website, but they don't know exactly what they want it to do for them.

People tend to see things that they don't understand as sort of magical and websites can often be like this. Owners know that they need one, because their competitors have them, but, since they don't know about all the things that websites can do, they aren't sure what to tell a designer to build. This leads to some common problems.

If you downloaded this report after watching our [YouTube video](#), you've already seen a brief explanation of the two types of web design companies. There are production-focused designers and people-focused designers. Production-focused designers make their money by building hundreds of basic websites for as many clients as possible. People-focused designers make their money by building relationships with fewer customers and serving their needs over a long-term. Two Creative Design Group is people-focused.



When an owner doesn't know what to tell the designer to build, he gets one of two products - a K-Car or a Bondmobile. A K-Car (a Renault Reliant K) is the quintessential, nondescript, basic car of the 1980's. No one stops in a parking lot to check out a K-Car. It doesn't go fast, look cool, or provide any measure of luxury. It simply delivers its contents from point A to point B without fanfare of any kind. This is what you get from a production-focused designer when you don't tell him what you want. It doesn't cost a fortune, but it's also not very effective. A K-Car website leaves its owner feeling frustrated and convinced that websites are a necessary evil, but not effective marketing tools.

A Bondmobile (as in James Bond mobile) is a marvel of modern engineering. It is gorgeous to look at, thrilling to drive, and it offers every luxury known to man. A Bondmobile allows its owner to travel in style, impress the beautiful ladies, and foil the plots of evil super-geniuses. However, its owner needs to be instructed on how to use it. And if he or she is not an international secret agent super spy of mystery, operating it can prove perilous. This is what you get from a people-focused designer when you don't tell him what you want. Because of the designer-client relationship, there is a strong fear of disappointing you. Therefore you get a website that is part marketing vehicle and part weapon of mass destruction. A Bondmobile is expensive and complicated and often leaves its owner feeling just as frustrated.

I encourage business owners to think of their websites like their phone or their email. It's simply a tool for communication. The amount of functionality, style, and luxury that you need depends on your audience and your message. Ask yourself these questions:

- *Who will communicate with whom through my website?*
- *Which is a bigger factor price or functionality?*
- *Rate these in order of importance*
 - _____ I want it to draw attention and create traffic
 - _____ I want it to communicate information to my existing customers
 - _____ I want it to communicate information to my employees
 - _____ I want it to communicate information from my customers to me
 - _____ I want to sell products/services with through it
 - _____ I want to use it as an organizational tool within my company



When you think through these factors, you begin to see how important it is for your designer to know what you want. You also see how important it is to hire a designer that you trust to guide you properly. Two Creative Design Group is a people-focused design company. We do our best to deliver the finest customized solutions to our customers.

Business owners don't have a plan for web management.

It's easy for owners to think of websites as electronic billboards. You have them designed, built, and then forget about them. After all, you have a thousand other details to worry about every day as it is. This is what leads so many owners to the conclusion that websites are ineffective.

A website is like any other tool. It's effective if you work with it. The most beautiful hammer in the world is entirely useless if it never gets used to pound anything. When you invest in a website, take time to consider how it will be used to accomplish the answers to the questions above. Then ask yourself these questions:

Who will communicate through my website?

What will they communicate?

How often will they communicate?

Will we collect data from these communications?

Who will collect the data?

How will the data be processed?

Who will use the data?

How will they use it?

Answering these questions will lead you down the path to an effective plan for website management. You'll begin to understand the importance of managing your site and whether you can handle it in-house or you prefer to outsource it. Two Creative Design Group will tailor a management plan to your needs and even manage your site for you.



Business owners design for themselves not their customers.

As a business owner, it's easy to fall prey to designing to please yourself. After all, you're writing the check, so why shouldn't you build the website you've always wanted? Well, you should if it's also the website your customers have always wanted. This is where you can get into real trouble with a production-focused designer. He'll warn you that your ideas are impractical, but he'll rarely press the issue for your own good. He wants to get your site built and billed as quickly as possible, because his profit is in the volume of sites he creates.

Make sure that you look at your website design through your customer's eyes, before you start building it. Survey your existing customer base and ask what they would like to see in your site. Thoroughly investigate your competitors sites to find commonalities and ways to distinguish your site from theirs. Above all, hire a designer that will work in the best interest of your business. This is a sizable investment in a tool you will use for years and it's no time to surround yourself with "yes" men.

As a people-focused design company, Two Creative Design Group works with the success of your business in mind. We plan to maintain a long-term relationship with you and become your "go to" people. Your success is our success, so at the end of the day - it has to work.

Business owners neglect search engine optimization.

Search engine optimization or SEO is essential if you want people to find your website. The "build it and they will come" days are over, so understand this from the beginning. ***You have to optimize. You absolutely have to or you're throwing your money away.***

Now that we're clear on the necessity of SEO, let's navigate the waters a bit. Some designers like to pretend that it's this voodoo that only they can do. I actually had a client tell me that his former designer claimed to be the only person in greater Cincinnati who was certified to perform search engine optimization. Not only is that completely absurd, it's dishonest and wrong.



Regardless of what anyone tells you, there is no certification necessary for SEO. It's not brain surgery. It's a combination of knowledge and skill that any web designer worth his salt should possess. And it is completely measurable, so you can know if it's working or not. That said, it's also not the simplest process in the world either and, unless you have a significant amount of time and desire to learn it, you should leave it to the pros.

SEO is an area where you are going to have to trust your designer to look out for you. So, even though you can verify the effectiveness of his approach with data, you need to hire a designer you can trust. Nothing is worse than spending a ton of time, talent, and money on a website only to learn that no one can find it because your SEO strategy is ineffective. At Two Creative Design Group, we're people-focused so we develop an effective SEO strategy from the beginning of the process and implement it as we build your site. We clearly explain the strategy to you and then provide analytical data to verify its effectiveness.

Business owners don't request analytics and don't plan to use them.

Your web designer may not want you to know this, but SEO effectiveness can be verified. Google, Bing, and Yahoo all provide analytical data about your website traffic for free. So does YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and just about any other service on the web. You may need some help interpreting the data, but, make no mistake, it's available and it's free. You can either get the login information for your various analytics accounts from your designer so you can collect and interpret the data yourself, or you can have him provide a regular report of the most pertinent stats.

Once you begin collecting this data, what are you going to do with it? SEO data is just like our beautiful hammer - useless unless we use it. Go back to your original website goals and consider them along with your management plan. Now ask yourself these questions:

What stats should I be collecting?

Who needs that data?

How will the data be interpreted?

What will we learn from the data?

What will we do with the knowledge we gain?



The interpretation and implementation of analytical website data is an excellent opportunity for partnering with your designer. By working through the information together you receive the benefit of your insight as the owner and your designer's insight as a creative technician. One of the most valuable ways that Two Creative Design Group serves our clients is in processing website data. We'll help you collect and interpret the specific data that matters most to the success of your business.

Business owners neglect to build their mailing list.

There's a popular saying in the marketing business. It's "The money is in the list." One of the most important things that your website can ever do for your business is build a mailing list. Your list can be just for emailing or it can include the necessary information for direct mailing as well. The critical thing is to build one.

Building a list is every bit as vital as keeping a database of your existing customers and their transactions. It's insurance against the fickle nature of constant upgrades and volatile economies. By building a mailing list, you create your own personal market specifically for your products. Think about it. There are no competitors within your mailing list. There are only people who have, at one point or another, agreed to hear from you by opting into your list. And, pre-qualified customers like those on your list are way more likely to buy from you than the world at large.

Make sure that your designer has a solution for building a list with your site. It will usually cost you a fee, but, net to SEO, it is the most important money you'll spend. Two Creative Design Group offers a mailing list solution with every website we build and we'll help you use it to accomplish things you never knew were possible.

Business owners don't have a plan for content creation.

One of the main sources of SEO juice is the sheer size of your website. The more pages of indexed content (pages that have been reviewed by search engines) you have, the more powerful your site is and the easier it is to find. In addition to building and managing plans, you need a plan for continual content creation.



Content creation can be as simple as writing regular blog posts or informational articles about your business and your industry. You can post regular photos pertaining to your business and talk about current promotions. You can even post how-to articles for your customers. At Two Creative Design Group, we have a rule about content. Content can be informative, entertaining, or instructional. Acceptable content must meet at least one of these criteria. Good content will meet at least two and great content will meet all three.

When forming your plan for content creation, ask yourself these questions:

What content will we create this year?

How will this content benefit our customers?

Will it be informative, entertaining, or instructional?

Who will create this content?

When will it be created?

Where will it be posted on the website?

Other than the website, how will we deliver the content to customers?

Two Creative Design Group can help you with your content creation, posting, and delivery. We create content all the time so we have a really good idea of what works and how to use it. You need to continually create content, but you don't have to do it yourself.

Business owners underestimate the power of social media.

Social media is a term that refers to sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, and LinkedIn. There are actually hundreds of social media sites on the web and this is where the real action happens. The most successful website owners actually focus the majority of their efforts on social media in order to drive traffic to their sites.

As I said there are literally hundreds of social media sites to choose from. Some involve writing articles, some are about sharing photos, some are for posting video, and some are just for telling the world where you are and what your doing. You need to choose two or three that lend themselves to sharing content about your business and use them to promote your website.



The largest and most well-known social media site is Facebook followed by Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. LinkedIn is a social media site for professional networking and can provide your business with some valuable SEO juice. The choices are vast making this another situation where you need to rely on your designer for guidance. A good people-focused designer like Two Creative Design Group will thoroughly get to know your business in order to make a suitable recommendation.

Once you have chosen the social media sites that are the best fit for you, have your designer help you get trained on how to use them effectively. We make training available to all our design clients.

Business owners choose poor domain names.

Your domain name is what comes between the www and the .com or .net or .org. It's the address of your website and how people will find you on the web. It's also one of the most important parts of your SEO strategy.

There are two ways to think about choosing a domain name. You can name your site after your company in an effort to create a strong brand or you can choose a domain name that contains your top SEO keywords in an effort to attract traffic quickly. The downsides to these approaches are that a domain strongly branded with your company name will take longer to attract any significant traffic and a domain rich in keywords will not brand your company as well.

The strategy you choose depends on your website goals and your business needs. Ask your designer to do the research and provide you with options using both naming methods. Then choose the one that fits the best. Two Creative Design Group offers all our clients help with choosing domains so that their websites bring the results they need.

Business owners neglect the importance of local listings.

Local listings are some of the most valuable and affordable tools that business owners have, because they



are powerful and they are free. While local listings have a little more to offer brick and mortar companies, internet companies can benefit from them as well.

There are several things I love about local listings, but first let me explain what they are. Local listings are websites that publicize your business and its location through a profile that you set up. Some examples are Google+, Manta, Yelp, Merchant Circle, LinkedIn, Foursquare, CitySearch, and local.com. Most of these sites have both free and paid listings available for you to claim and complete.

Local listings are powerful because of all of the information you can pack onto them. Most will allow you to place photos, videos, maps, and descriptions along with contact information and the details of your latest promotion. Also, because of their size, they are powerful in search engines. In fact, it is common in the beginning to have your local listings outperform your website in search results.

Try some local listings to increase awareness of your business and improve your ranking in Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Look up your competitors in search engines and see what local listings they may be using. Your designer should know which local listings are performing best in your area. Be sure to ask him for recommendations.

We hope this has been helpful.

Well, there they are - 10 Web Design Mistakes Business Owners Make and How to Avoid Making Them. If you found this report helpful, send us a message through our website at www.twocreativedesign.com or leave a comment on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/twocreativedesign.



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