

Writing Web Page Content

1. Overview

Writing content for your website might sound a little challenging, but it is quite straight forward if you use a structured approach to decide what pages you need, what to put on those pages and in what order. This document aims to provide you with this structured approach.

The first thing to remember is that most people do not read websites with as much concentration as they read words on paper. It is harder to focus on a screen for as long and it is very easy to go to another site. As a result 'click away' times are reported to be between 3 - 5 seconds if a site visitor does not get what they want quickly.

Web page text, therefore needs to be written in such a way as to provide the right information, in the right order at the right level of detail, to keep visitors on your site. Structuring your site correctly and writing as succinctly as possible will ensure you keep their interest.

Also remember visitors have entered your site for a reason and as such are always thinking, 'what's here for me?' when reading a page. You must ensure they are getting the information they want, not so much what you might think they should have.

To do this please:

- Design your page structure to cover the key areas of your business in the right sequence. The Suggested Pages section below will do this for most businesses.
- Write short paragraphs of 2 - 3 lines maximum if possible. If you change subject remember to start a new paragraph.
- Avoid using too many adjectives; let web visitors decide, as they can be quite sceptical.
- Use headings and sub headings where possible.
- Use bulleted or numbered lists where possible as they are easier to absorb - like here.

2. Suggested Pages

Your first task is to decide what pages your site requires. We divide pages into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary types.

Primary pages are those which sit along the top navigation and divide the site into its main areas of interest to visitors. You should have between five and seven to ensure ease of navigation.

Content on Primary pages tends to be high level overview information with visitors then having the choice to drop down to more detailed secondary pages if desired.

An example of this is an Accountants Services page which will list his key offerings, e.g. Accounts, Book keeping, VAT etc. As most people know what these are a short description on this page will usually suffice.

Secondary pages can then provide that visitor with the next level of detail if required. If a visitor wants to know exactly what he's getting as part of the VAT service he can drop down onto the secondary VAT page and get the detail he wants. He will read it because he wants to be there.

A Tertiary page sits under a Secondary page and is used for further levels of even more detailed information, such as product specifications or contract details.

Now you need to write a list of your pages as understood at the present time. This list could look like this:

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary

Home

About

Services

Service One

Service Two

Service Three

Specification

Case Studies

Case Study One

Case Study Two

Contact

Note the indents to denote the secondary and tertiary pages' position in the navigation hierarchy.

Remember these are pages suggested by us for an 'average' business. Your business is unique and will have different pages.

2.1. Home Page

This page is the most important page on the site. Its main objective is to persuade visitors to visit the rest of your site or to call you straight away from that page. You may have around 3 - 5 seconds to do this, as mentioned above.

Visitors leaving your home page without visiting other site pages is known as the 'Bounce Rate' which you may have heard of. You need this to be as low as possible.

What Content do you put on the Home Page?

To do this try to put yourself in the shoes of your new site visitors. Please try and remember this little mantra at all times:

'Your site is not for you; it is for the customers you are yet to have'

Remember new visitors are coming to your site for a reason. Unless they are looking for you in particular, they typed a search into Google to e.g. answer a question or solve a problem.

They then found your site and are hoping you will answer their question or solve their problem. If you don't seem to address this quickly they may likely click away.

With this in mind here is our list of what content items we think could be covered on a typical home page. Remember not all of these will be needed, it depends on your business:

- What is your business's name
- What do you do
- Why choose you
- What is the answer to the questions your visitors might be asking
- A possible tagline
- What the benefits of your products/services are
- What are the unique selling points (USPs) of your business
- What may be of current interest to your visitors in your market to arouse their curiosity
- Call to Action/Telephone number
- Testimonials

Your home page could then contain the following sections and items:

Home Page Banner

Your business's name and a catchy tagline. A tagline is a short sentence designed to capture a visitor's interest, often by answering the question they consciously or subconsciously have. They can be very powerful and can summarise benefits and USPs nicely.

Welcome Message

Just below the banner you could write a paragraph outlining what you do using one of the frameworks below:

1. Problem - Agitate - Solve: Identify the problem/question a visitor has, illustrate it and present a solution - yours.

Eg: Is your printer slow and costly to run? Our new printer using the latest tech is fast and cheap to run.

2. Before - After Bridge: This where you paint a picture of the visitor's situation before and after using your services/product.

Eg: Before using our new modern printers your customer letters and documents were bland and average.

With a new printer your documents will be bright and sharp presenting a whole new image.

3. Features - Advantages/USP's - Benefits: You highlight your products or services main features, how they exceed your competition and what the benefits are

Eg: Our new printers have larger paper trays than others, a faster print shuttle and sophisticated jamming sensors giving you faster easier and quicker printing

Remember Benefits are what the customer gains, i.e. saving time, saving money, making more money, gaining satisfaction or an experience.

USPs are what makes your business different or better than the competition such as qualifications, experience, reliability, friendliness, effectiveness, range of products/services etc.

Topic Boxes

These are where, for example, three items of information are put in boxes in a row under the Welcome message which will itemise areas of interest to your visitor. These could include:

- Recent company news
- A new product/service
- Your approach to recent industry specific legislation
- A new senior staff member
- A company event
- A special offer

This will vary from business to business and will need to be decided by you, depending on what your business does and what you need to emphasise.

Writing Your Content

Now you know what possible sections and items need to go on your home page writing your content should be a lot more straightforward than it was at the start.

Remember, you are aiming to catch your site visitors' interest quickly, by answering a question or solving a problem they have in their minds - which is why they are looking at your site after all.

Answer their questions, let them know why your business is the one to use and you should get their attention.

2.2. About Page

This page tells new site visitors who don't know you all about your business and indeed you. The objective is to build interest, liking and enough confidence to make contact.

What Content Items are required

Most About Pages should cover the following, generally in the order given:

- History of the founder/s
 - Qualifications
 - Starting work history
 - CVs together with good quality businesslike photos
- Why he/she/they set up the business initially
- What was the initial differentiator or USP
- Current offerings in brief
- Current USPs
- How the business is doing
- Key alliances or trade body memberships
- The future direction of the business if relevant

Think of this as a timeline and it will make sense to you as well as your visitors and be easy to follow and hopefully remember.

You may wish to include CVs of key senior staff and perhaps photos. All photos should be of a professional nature, e.g. suit and tie, white background etc.

The objective is to build a positive, competent view of your business that will make a new visitor feel confident in contacting you.

2.3. Services or Products Page

Here give an overview of what your business offers in terms of scope to give visitors an idea of your overall capabilities. As a result, list all the main services you offer or all the main products or product groups as required.

The objective is to reassure larger prospects that you can provide everything they might need in your field resulting in them meeting all their needs from one supplier, which is preferable in any industry.

You can then use secondary pages for more detailed information on individual products or services if required. More detail is fine here as visitors have made the effort to go to these pages.

When describing your services or products on the primary page, try and use three sentences which should cover what the requirement or problem is, how your solution meets it and what the final benefits are.

When describing your services or products on the secondary pages, try and use three sections which should cover what the requirement or problem is, how your solution meets it and what the final benefits are.

You could also use these secondary pages to showcase your skills and expertise in your field in order to build more confidence. If you have some relevant case studies or testimonials specific to each service or product they can usefully be put on that service or products secondary page.

2.4. Contact Page

Please provide Contact information in the order you would prefer to receive it.

Visitors always like to see a physical address on any website to infer organisational authenticity, together with a map in case they want to visit you.

We would only recommend a contact form if you prefer one as these are can be unreliable as are often treated as spam.

2.5. Other Pages

The following pages may be needed for your business and can be added if required.

Case Studies Page

A Case Studies Page is generally used for businesses that supply services and/or products to large projects, such as long engineering projects or complex legal cases.

The objective of this page is to build confidence and trust in your business as a reliable supplier who has 'done it before'.

If visitors see a case study which replicates their requirement and that you have provided it, they will be more inclined to contact you.

To do this we suggest you feature three case studies each containing three paragraphs; the problem, your solution and the outcome - success hopefully. If you have any relevant images these can be usefully used here.

You can have all case studies on one page or a summary page with each case study examined in more detail on a secondary page as required.

If your case studies can each have a testimonial so much the better.

FAQ Page

A Frequently Asked Questions Page can be useful for some sites.

If you think you need one, list your questions in the order in which they are most frequently asked or in an order logical to your business e.g. directions, parking, registration, whichever works best.

We would suggest no more than ten FAQ questions if possible, for ease of use.

Resources Page

A Resources Page can also be useful on some sites.

Make sure the resources listed are pertinent to your business and assist your visitors. Bear in mind resource links will lead people away from your site so please use with caution.

Business Specific Pages

There will of course be other pages specific to you. Remember to make them relevant to the customer and to put their needs first.

2.6. The Footer

Your site will have a footer on every page. It can be small with just a Copyright notice or it can be used for providing useful secondary information quickly.

Footers can include:

- Contact Details
- Social Media Icons
- Accreditation Logos
- Twitter feeds
- Instagram feeds
- VAT & Company Numbers
- Legal Policies

Please let us know what you feel would be useful to your visitors.

3. Submitting Content

Please submit your webpage copy in a Microsoft Word or Apple Pages file.

Create a 'site page tree diagram', primary pages first and then secondary/tertiary pages indented underneath them.

Each website page title should be clearly listed with its text underneath. Sub pages should be created under each primary page with their text under that.

Please do not worry about the layout or presentation of your text as this is our responsibility.

If you would like specific images on any page, please list them in or under the text where you want them by image file name e.g. building1.jpg. Please do

not use 'put a picture of the large building we sent you here please' as this can lead to quite a lot of confusion...

If you are submitting sets of images e.g. for a case study building project, please label them with a suitable name and number sequence if you can, e.g. case_study_1.jpg, case_study_2.jpg, case_study_3.jpg etc.

With your images please do not submit these by email as large files may not arrive.

Please use the excellent and very easy to use www.wetransfer.com service.

There is a free option which allows up to 2GB to be sent free each time.

If you have questions on the above, please contact us straight away and we will be happy to help.

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