Jimdo Guide for Small Business Websites

Does your small business need a website? The answer is a very loud, enthusiastic "yes!" A website is by far the best way to attract new business, help customers find you, and serve as your official presence on the internet.

While we take for granted that everyone is online, the truth is that many small businesses still don't have websites. In one recent survey, 60% of very small businesses (made up of 1-5 people) said they don't have one. What gives?

Some people cite the cost, others say they don't have time or the technical expertise. But many also said that they thought their businesses were too small to need a website.

The fact is, no business is "too small" to deserve a clean, beautiful, and easy-to-maintain website. Building a website for your small business is easy and affordable — with no coding skills required.

A small business website:

- Makes your business look more serious and trustworthy
- Helps customers find you, no matter where they are
- Serves as a landing page for all your social media profiles
- Grows with you as your business grows

This guide will walk you through the steps of making a website for your small business. You may be starting out small, but with the right website you won't be small for long.

Plan your business website

1. Outline what you want your website to have on it.

The first step, before you start building, is to think about the different pieces of information you'll need on your website and where you want them to go. This is your **Site Plan.** No need to get fancy here; writing this down on a piece of paper is perfect.

You know you'll need a homepage, that's a given. But what about other pages? You may want an About page, a Contact page, and maybe a page that lists your services. You don't have to have too many pages —some of the most successful small business websites are surprisingly simple.

One way to think about your website is to brainstorm three things you want your visitors to be able to do. Focus on just three things and you'll be sure that your website won't be overly complicated, and that your visitors will be able to find just what they need quickly.

Some examples of answers to this question might be:
- sign up for updates
- learn who you are
- understand what your product does
- find your location/contact information
- see examples of your work
- read your latest announcements
- download your latest song

Anything that doesn't make it into the top three can still be included on your site, but it shouldn't be your focus. If you can only narrow your list down to 10 action items, then you're probably expecting people to accomplish far too much on your website—meaning you'll present too many options, visitors won't be able to find what they need, and they may quickly leave your site for somewhere else.

Gather the pieces you need for your small business website

Once you have a brief Site Plan and an idea of what visitors should do on your website, gather the assets you'll need to put your ideas into action.

Custom domain name

Your website should send the message that you are reputable and committed to your business. One of the best ways to do this is to have a custom domain name (website address). When you start your Jimdo website, its address will be a Jimdo subdomain (e.g. mywebsite.jimdo.com). To make it fully yours and get rid of the .jimdo in your URL, be sure to set up the custom domain that comes with a JimdoPro or JimdoBusiness subscription. You'll also get a custom email address to go with it.

Images

Images really make a website. They break up text, keep readers interested, and help establish your website's overall style.

Ask yourself if you have all the photos you need, and at the quality you need for them to look their best. Examples of photos you might need are:

- photos for your website background
- products photos (here's an easy tutorial on how to take good ones)
- a headshot or other flattering photo of you
- It can also be nice to include some behind-the-scenes photos of your office or workspace so that people can get to to know you.

You don't need to take all of these photos yourself—there's a growing list of websites that provide high quality stock photos free of charge. Just make sure that your images are large enough to show up well for all screen sizes.

Quality text

Depending on what pages you have in your Site Plan, you'll want to start writing some of the text to go with them. Part of the beauty of having your own website is that you can tweak the writing whenever you want, so don't worry about getting it perfect right now. Just start with the basics—you can always add more later.

Remember that you may not need as much text as you think, since visitors likely won't spend too much time reading it. Short paragraphs and sentences will work best. Text that looks normal in a Word document or on a printed brochure can seem way too long once it's on a screen.

When you write, keep search engines in mind too. Try to use words that people might type into Google to find your business. This is especially important in your Heading Elements. By doing this kind of search engine optimization, you'll make it easier for customers to find you (see our section on SEO below for more information).

Check out these posts for more tips on [writing good copy for websites](#) and [proofreading your text like a pro](#).

Extras for your website

Once you know what images and text you'll need to get started, you can also think about other elements that would be nice to have:

- [Logo](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Widgets](#)
- [Newsletter signups](#)
- [Social media accounts](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Customer Testimonials](#)

Check out [this infographic on the Anatomy of a Business Website](#) for more information on the different parts of a website.

The best templates for small business websites

Jimdo has over thirty responsive templates to choose from, and you can use any of them for your small business website. How do you decide? Here are some of our recommendations.

The best business websites [make their most critical information available to visitors right away](#). Whether you're a restaurant posting your menu and opening hours, a salon posting your contact information and booking widget, or a store posting your locations and latest products, you want to make sure the content you do have is easy to find without a lot of clicks.

Choosing a [template with a sidebar on the left or right](#) is a good place to start, and you can put your basic stats in there so that people can easily find it.

Try: Amsterdam, Havana, Lima, Reykjavik, Madrid

A sidebar on the bottom can work too, but it will take customers a few more seconds to scroll down to see it. You should also stick with [a short navigation menu](#), either horizontal or vertical.

Try: Miami, Barcelona, Malaga, or Zurich.

See all of Jimdo's templates at http://jimdo.design

The different parts of your small business website

Header Area

Your [website header](#) is the first thing that visitors see, and will also appear on every single page of your site. Choose an eye-catching image (here are a few resources for [finding good ones](#)) and pair it with a logo, if you have one, and your site title (most likely your brand/company name) in the font and color of your choice.

Navigation

Your navigation, or menu bar, shows the main pages of your website. It's also the primary way that visitors will navigate your site and find what they are looking for. Navigation menus work best when they are clear, straightforward, and only take up one line. Rather than cramming as many pages into your navigation as will fit, [take the time to really think about the most necessary parts of your website](#). Only include the essentials in your top navigation.

Sidebar

Your website's sidebar will appear on every page of your website. Depending on the template you choose, the sidebar might be on the left side, right side, or even on the bottom. Many people use the sidebar for some of their most important information that's relevant no matter which page a visitor is on. For example this is a good place for your contact information, hours of operation, location, and social media buttons.

Products & Services

Every website is different, but you should describe your main products and services on your homepage. Just like with an elevator pitch, you only have a few seconds to describe your value proposition. If you have one chance to impress or interest visitors, what would you choose to feature? Use your homepage to highlight your main strengths and make your customers want to learn more. Then, you can direct them to another page for more details.

Call to Action

Most people [leave a website within 10-20 seconds](#). Your goal is to get them to stay longer and explore. That's where a good "call to action" can help. Once you've piqued someone's interest with your header, products, and services, you want them to click in to your website and keep learning more about you. A link or [button](#) here with an engaging, active direction ("learn more" or "I want one") will make it clear to people exactly where they should go to reach the next step.

Social Media Buttons

It was once common for social media information to be hidden on an About or Contact page, but no more. Now it's standard to give social media buttons a prominent place on your homepage or in your sidebar. Whatever you choose, just make sure they are visible so that people can easily connect with you. We recommend downloading some standard social media icons (for free) and then adding them to your site as Photo Elements. If you want even more functionality, you can use a free service like AddThis. [More information on these options is available in our Support Center](#).

About Page

Your About Page will likely be one of the most-visited pages of your website, as potential customers try to learn more about you. While ideally you'll have already told people who you are and what you do on your homepage, your About Page provides a place to go into more depth. You can talk about your professional background, facts about your company and its history, and what makes you unique. Include a picture of you and your colleagues, and don't be afraid to let your personality shine through. [Here are more ideas for building a great About Page.](#)

Contact Information

While you want customers to be able to learn more about you from your website, probably the most important step is for them to be able to get in touch! Be sure to make your contact information easy to find. You can put it in your website sidebar or footer, or have a separate Contact Page. Whatever you choose, your contact information should always be easy to find without the visitor having to go through too many steps. You can also add a [Contact form](#) or a [Map Element](#) to show where you're located.

Make your business website look more trustworthy

The primary goal of your small business website is to show that you're a pro at what you do. Trust is a deciding factor in many customers' and clients' decisions, so make sure your website sends the right message about your business:

1. **Keep your information up-to-date:** [Outdated information is the number one pet peeve](#) consumers cite when asked about small business websites. With your own Jimdo website, it takes just a few minutes to update your content at any time. Always keep your information up-to-date as seasonal hours shift or products and services change.

2. **Use a custom domain name (web address):** JimdoPro and JimdoBusiness customers get a personalized domain, which adds an extra level of professionalism to your website.

3. **Describe yourself honestly:** Take some time to fill out your About page with your professional background, what makes you unique, and also a flattering headshot.

4. **Make sure your website looks polished and professional:** Customers want to see that you put care and consideration into everything you do, including your website. Proofread your text carefully (here are some tips) and keep your design clean and simple. Make sure to use high-quality photographs that aren't fuzzy.

5. **Get a professional logo:** If you're serious about your business, a professional logo is worth the investment. Your logo will give a cohesive look to all of your branding, social media accounts, and website.

6. **Add testimonials and certifications:** Customer testimonials lend legitimacy to your website, and can also help by letting other people talk about your strengths so that you don't have to. If you're a member of any professional associations or have any other credentials or awards, you can add a logo or icon for them on your site.

Helpful widgets for your small business website

Once you've put together the basic parts of your website, you can add functionality with some external widgets. A widget is an application that can be embedded into the body of your website, such as a booking form or audio player. Calendars, live chat—the sky is really the limit when it comes to widgets.

You can easily add a widget to your website by copying the code provided by the widget-maker, and pasting the code into a Widget/HTML Element on your website. Best of all, most widgets work on a "freemium" model so you can use the basic features absolutely free.

Here are some of our favorites for small business websites:

- Add an email signup box right to your website and manage your business's email marketing with MailChimp or INinbox.
- Get fancy with stylist social media follow and share buttons from AddThis.
- Share a simple calendar with Google Calendar.
- Take bookings or show your availability with BookingBug, AvailabilityCalendar.com, or ScheduleOnce
- Sell tickets to events with Ticketleap or Eventbrite.
- Use Wufoo to make it easy for your clients to download forms and files.
- Sell music, ebooks, or other digital content with Gumroad.
- Answer customers' questions right away with live chat widgets from SnapEngage, Userlike, and Olark.

Getting started with SEO for your small business

Now that you've got the basics down on your website, it's time to start doing some search engine optimization so that your business appears in people's Google searches.

Sometimes search engines can seem mysterious, and there are countless SEO guides and experts out there. But you don't need to be an SEO wizard to take some basic steps that have worked for countless other websites to date. Spending just a little bit of time under the hood of your website will improve your SEO by leaps and bounds.

Basic SEO practices for your small business website

Focus on your business's keywords. Think about the terms that people would use to look for your business on Google. For example they might type in "dog walking san francisco" or "best dog grooming in Hamburg." Try to think of these terms from the point of view of your potential customers — these are the words and phrases that you'll want to use in your SEO settings and in the text of your website so that search engines know exactly what your site is about. Once you have an idea of some keywords, you can even do some keyword research to see suggestions for other terms that might be even better to use.

Fill out the SEO settings on your Jimdo website. Jimdo comes with built-in features that will give your website's SEO a boost. First, do a quick check to make sure Google has indexed your website. Then, click on SEO in your website's Site Admin to open up your SEO Tools. Here you can edit your Site Title, Page Titles, and Page Descriptions to accurately describe your business, using some of the keywords you've come up with. For more guidance on how to fill out these settings, check out the SEO section of our Support Center.

Go further with more "on-page" SEO tricks. Once you've filled out your SEO settings, think about the content that's on each page of your website. Add Heading Elements to your website and fill in the Alternative Text fields on your images. Also know that *the* most important factor in search engine ranking is having high-quality, relevant text on your website. Keep your content fresh and high-quality, and be sure to make regular updates to your website so that search engines will keep coming back.

Read more about how to get Google to notice your website.

Claim your local business profiles

When people search for your business, they'll ideally find your website. But they'll also see results from your Google Business Listing, Yelp profile, and other online business listings.

Now's a good time to make sure that your information is consistent across all these platforms. Doing so will also help your local SEO marketing strategy.

Google Business Listing
Many small business owners don't realize that they need to claim and update their Google Business Listing. If you keep you Google account in order, you can take advantage of a streamlined listing across all of Google's platforms, an easy dashboard, and some added SEO juice from having all of your information complete and up-to-date. Plus, it's all free! [Here's more information about how to claim and update your listing.](#)

Yelp
Your business may already have a Yelp page, but as an owner you need to ["claim" it](#). This will let you to update the profile page, access Yelp's tools for business owners, and keep your hours and other information up-to-date . If the page doesn't already exist, you can create one. In one survey, only 11% of small businesses had claimed their profiles, so make sure you do this! Here are more tips for [making the most out of your Yelp profile](#).

While Google Places and Yelp are the most popular platforms for business searches, you should also consider claiming and updating your profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, LinkedIn, and Yahoo! Local.

More resources for small businesses

By following these steps, you'll soon be on your way to building a small business website that sends just the right message to your customers. But don't stop here. There are many more design tips and strategies for small business owners on [Jimdo's blog](#)!