

Creating A Website

There may have been a time when having a business website was seen to be an optional extra – these days it's as essential as a telephone number!

Functions of a website

Internet access is literally worldwide, so having a presence online enables you to promote your business to as many potential customers as possible at minimal cost. A website is a great opportunity to introduce your new business to the public. The key elements of a website include a description of your products and services, your location, contact details, operating hours, prices and payment methods. Some websites also offer facilities to receive and respond to queries and perform transactions online.

Benefits of having a website

- Expands your business beyond your local vicinity into regional and international markets
- Gives your business a professional image and validates your business credibility
- Opens the way for potential customers to learn about you and your business, research your products and services, compare prices, make queries and buy online
- Enables existing customers to read about your new and improved products and services and provide you with feedback
- Gives you access to marketing tools such as email newsletters and mailing lists which can complement printed promotional material, but will save postage and printing costs



- Allows you to modify and update the content of your site quickly and easily at no additional cost
- Lets you track statistics – how many visitors to your website, what pages they are viewing, how long they are spending on your site – this information can help you improve your website and develop your business
- Offers customers the convenience of being accessible 24/7, anywhere in the world!

Here's a good example...

Luke is working from home late one night when he suddenly remembers his wife's birthday is tomorrow – he hasn't bought her a present and the shops are closed! His first thought is 'flowers' – but it's too late to order them over the phone. Immediately, he searches the Internet for 'florists'. Within minutes, Luke has been able to locate the website of a local florist. He's able to choose an arrangement, make payment by credit card and add a request that the flowers be delivered to his wife's workplace in the morning.

Feeling very pleased with himself, Luke then decides to go one step further and searches for 'Italian restaurants' – his wife's favourite! Easily he finds a few listings and decides to check out the website for a newly opened restaurant in the city. The website contains tempting photos, a menu, wine list and even has a facility for making reservations online – so he makes a booking!

Luke is relieved. Not only has he been able to organise flowers and a romantic dinner all from the comfort of his chair, but his wife will be pleasantly surprised that he hasn't forgotten!

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Website design

A relatively simple and cost-effective method is to create your own website and there are hundreds of DIY websites to help you through the steps. Take care that the layout of your site is not too 'busy' and that the colours are easy on the eye.

Alternatively, you can employ a website designer and again there are hundreds of designers to choose from. If you choose this option, make sure the designer can show you how to update and maintain the website yourself.

Whichever method you choose, ensure your site:

- Has a professional look and feel
- Reflects the image of your business
- Contains accurate, relevant and useful content
- Answers customers' most commonly asked questions about your products and services
- Is easy to find, quick to load and simple to navigate
- Is reviewed regularly and updated when necessary.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

- Consider your objective – what do you want your website to achieve?
- Think about your audience – who is likely to visit your site? What will appeal to them? What features will they be looking for?
- Visit other websites to see what works and what doesn't, what you like and dislike and what functions you should incorporate in your own website.
- Consider your budget and obtain quotes both for creating your own website for hiring the services of a website designer.

**Contact BRJ Accountants team today on 07 3862 9955
for assistance with this Action Plan!**



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