

**FREE
WEBSITE
REPORT**

avaraweb**media**
INTERNET MARKETING CONSULTANTS

Telephone: 0845 307 6177 Email: info@avara.co.uk Website: www.avara.co.uk

How To Avoid A Toxic Website

For some reason, many business owners treat their website like a necessary evil. They spend as little money as possible commissioning one then just leave it sat there in cyberspace with little regard to what it really should be doing.

The Internet is awash with poorly designed, badly constructed websites that have no hope of ever attracting new customers for the business – is yours one of them? It really is commercial suicide to let potential customers find one of these rogue sites. Some business websites are so bad that they'd probably be better not having a website at all, that's just how bad some of them are!

It really all boils down to first impressions with potential customers. Think about this – would you visit a potential new customer wearing jeans and a t-shirt you'd slept in for a week? A stupid question obviously because no sane business owner would expect to gain new customers by presenting such a terrible first impression, no matter how fantastic their goods or services were.

Is it really any different having a terrible website that completely repels your potential customers? Sadly a poor website will probably do more damage to your business than you can by visiting customers looking like a tramp.

So what exactly makes a poor website? You're probably not an expert on such matters and are sitting there thinking "Our website is just fine". But is it? We've listed the ten most common problems that those rogue websites have in common. Open your website and read through the list...are you guilty of one or more crimes against online marketing?

1. Dated Or Poor Design

This one will have the visitor hitting the 'BACK' button in a micro-second because the problem immediately smacks them in the face. Whilst design is always very subjective, there are some basic principles that all designs should adhere to.

Luminous colours that clash, flashing images and dated clip-art are just three of the worst offenders. Not sure if your website fails the grade? Send your website link to 10 of your friends and ask them for an honest opinion of the design. You might be horrified/enlightened by their feedback.

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2. Lack of Content

A website offers a tremendous opportunity to showcase your products or services. Images, videos and useful written content can really enhance the visitors experience and therefore increase the chances of them buying from you. Frustratingly, one common failing is that no thought is given to what the visitor wants.

All too often a web page consists of a few dreary lines of text which have been cut from the companies 20-year old sales brochure...not exactly compelling reading! You must give the visitor good reason to trust in your product or service and that can only be done by providing them with engaging, credible content.

What a terrible waste it is to have potential customers looking at your web page and then leaving because your content failed to entice them into further action.

3. No Contact Enticement

Take a look at your website home page and ask yourself, "Does it entice visitors to contact us?" One significant factor that business owners overlook is that their website should be a lead-machine, generating a regular stream of hot buyers. Does your website encourage visitors to contact you? Does your website give visitors enticements to pick up the phone or email you?

On average, a buyer will visit four websites to research their potential supplier and if your website doesn't offer some 'hook', you can be assured that at least one of the other three will. Just by positively encouraging a visitor to make contact, you can double the amount of leads your website generates. This can easily be achieved by just having a 'quick quote' or 'free quote' enquiry box prominently placed on the web page. These simple prompts are known as a 'call to action' and if used properly, can be a powerful addition to your website.

4. Lost In Cyberspace

No matter how good your website looks, no matter how strong your sales enticement is, no matter how great your products or services are, if potential customers can't find you in the search engines your efforts are pointless.

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When companies commission a new website, they are so focussed on how it looks that they totally overlook it's optimisation for the search engines. Because this vital element of website construction is hidden away in the site code, you may be blissfully unaware of how poorly optimised your website is.

So how bad is it? Try typing your product/service plus your location into Google, i.e. 'Widget Supplier in Mytown'. If your website doesn't appear in the first three results, you have a problem. If it's not on the first page, you have a major problem.

Thankfully this problem can be solved by a process known as search engine optimisation (SEO). A good [SEO Consultant](#) (such as ourselves) can make the changes to your website and push it to the top of the search engine rankings. The higher you rank the more visitors your website will attract and the more leads you'll generate.

5. Cross-Browser Conformity

Sounds like a very complicated issue but in simple terms, it is how your website looks when viewed in different web browsers. In case you're still a bit confused, a web browser is the program you fire up to view the Internet. In most cases this is usually Internet Explorer but Microsoft are losing ground on a daily basis in the Internet browser market with alternatives like Mozilla's Firefox (34% market share) and Google's Chrome (12% market share) both getting in on the action.

The problem with people using different browsers to view the Internet is that they all interpret the code that makes up a website slightly differently. A website that looks perfect in Internet Explorer can look a total mess in a different browser with images and text all misaligned. When was the last time you tested your website in a different browser?

This problem is due to lazy Web Designers not testing the website in multiple browsers before the site is launched. It can be a bit of a headache ensuring the site looks exactly the same in all browsers but it is absolutely fundamental in ensuring that the website can be viewed by any visitor using any browser.

If your website isn't rendering properly in Firefox for example, that means that a third of your sites visitors are looking at a mess, not the website you intended them to view.

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6. Targeting The Wrong Market

One major advantage of marketing with a website is you can get very detailed data on your visitors including the search term they used to find your website in the first place.

Assuming you have an analytical program installed on your website (if you don't, fire your Web Designer), you should frequently check the search terms that visitors are using to find you.

Why is this data important? When you first commission your website you probably assumed that you knew your target market. It's quite possible that you know your offline market inside out but be warned, your online market could differ significantly. Let's look at an example.

A company sells 'Widgets' and they've traded primarily in 'Luxury Blue Widgets' very successfully for many years. Last year they commissioned a website to help them sell more 'Widgets' and the website was set-up to focus on the 'Luxury Blue Widget' market as that was their best seller offline.

A year passes and the visitor data is analysed. To everyone's surprise, the two most common terms that visitors use to find the site are 'Cheap Widgets' and 'Red Widgets'.

All of the visitors end up at a website focussed on selling 'Luxury Blue Widgets' but they really wanted either 'Cheap Widgets' or 'Red Widgets' so they go and buy their Widgets elsewhere.

This is what the focus of the website should be on and the Widget Company have missed out on a massive opportunity to sell more Widgets by targeting the wrong market.

7. Poor Navigation

Your website really should be designed so the visitor can navigate around the site easily and with the minimum of thought involved in the process.

Even as the most basic level, your website should have an easily identifiable navigation bar which contains details of where the visitor needs to click for the information they require. So many websites fall down even with this basic requirement. The navigation section of your website should be highly

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prominent and the buttons or links should clearly tell the visitor what information will be obtained when clicked.

A example of poor navigation could be when pages are labelled 'products' and 'information'. Say a visitor wants to know information *about* a product, which link do they click?

You need to consider what the visitor wants and give it to them as clearly and concisely as possible. Using navigation bars with very specific labels will greatly enhance the visitor experience and they are far more likely to stay on the site and get in touch with you.

8. Mind Your Language

This may seem obvious but when was the last time you checked your website for spelling or grammatical errors? It may seem very trivial but even a single spelling mistake will stick out like a sore thumb and lead visitors to question just how credible your business is if it can't even spot a spelling mistake on your company website.

One major contribution to the blight of poor grammar on websites is the outsourcing of content to overseas Web Designers and Copywriters whose first language isn't English. A particular problem, even when the site is spell-checked is the subtle language difference between UK English and US English.

If your website targets UK visitors, you might want to double-check that all of the spellings are based on a UK English dictionary to avoid common mistakes such as colour and color, specialise or specialize.

9. Generic Email Addresses

Another factor that really gives a poor impression of a business is where the company uses a generic email address on their website (and other marketing material) such as @yahoo.com or @hotmail.co.uk.

There is absolutely no reason why any business should be using generic email addresses if they have a website. If you are, you should stop reading and get on to whoever designed your website and ask them why you haven't got an email address like you@yourdomain.com.

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Again this may seem trivial but it really smacks of amateurism. Not only that but it completely undermines your brand or trading name. If you are Chris from ABC Widgets Ltd, you should be offering potential customers an email address of chris@abcwidgets.com, not chris_smith1972@hotmail.co.uk.

10. Single Page Websites

There's only one word that described a single page website...pointless.

Imagine you buy a full page advert in your local paper. Would you only use a quarter of the page to sell your product or service? Of course you wouldn't, what a waste of money that would be. Equally, if you've at least gone to the trouble of getting a domain name and putting up a page, it's not too much additional cost or effort to add a few more pages of content is it?

If a visitor lands on your solitary web page, what information are you able to convey on a single page? The answer is not very much and therefore the visitor will think that if you can't be bothered to provide them with more information, they can't be bothered to give you their custom.

What a waste of an opportunity for the sake of offering a few more pages of good content.

The Conclusion & Remedy

If you've reached this part of our report and are sitting a little uncomfortably because your website is guilty of more than one of the above mistakes, don't fret.

The fact that you are still in business is a good thing. Now imagine how much extra business you could create if your website was transformed from a lame duck into powerful lead machine? Rather than just imagining, why not get in touch with us to see how we can transform your [online marketing](#) and more importantly, your turnover?

We offer a completely free initial consultation and there is no obligation to use any of our effective online marketing services.

Of course we hope you'll appreciate the potential of what we offer and how we can genuinely help your business. You can call us on 01252 416 222, [email us](#) or [visit our website](#),

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Thanks for reading and we hope you found this report useful.

Keith A Pearson

Avara Web Media

[Internet Marketing & SEO Consultants](#)