

DUE NORTH

The Definitive Guide to a High Converting Website



FIELD NOTES

Grow with Due North



Hi, I'm Ben Hiron.

In the 20 years I've been running my own businesses, I've employed (and sacked) around 15 marketing agencies and consultants because they could never deliver on their promise. I knew I could do better. So I decided to form my own marketing business, Due North.

Due North has a unique offering. When you work with us, you deal directly with our marketing superstars. Our team provides broad marketing expertise across a range of disciplines, and are capable of both providing strategic advice and executing the plan. It's a model we're really proud of and produces some amazing results.

“ *Due North have been great for our business. They are the experts when it comes to putting us on the customer journey and helping us develop and refine our message in an extremely competitive market.*

– Geoff Stewart, SuretyIT

We're confident that our model can get you the marketing results that you want. It allows you to start with just a service or two (e.g. Google Ads) but then expand your marketing needs to a whole range of services (or become your entire team) as your business grows and evolves.

Some of the services we provide to our clients include:

- Strategy
- Analytics and Business intelligence
- Execution and marketing resources/people
- Optimisation and growth
- Management



Your website is SO important!

In today's digital age, it's so important for your website to be a super impressive asset that blows the socks off your target audience. It's no longer okay to have a mediocre website, it has to be a great website. Your website is the central asset to your marketing, and arguably one of the most important parts to your business.

“Blow the socks off your target audience.”

Introduction

Face to the World

Your website is the face to the world. Everybody now looks at your website, whether that be a potential customer, whether that be an existing customer, whether that be potential staff, suppliers, you name it. Everybody's looking at your website and they're judging you by the appearance of the website.

So, if it's a poor or mediocre website, people are going to think you're a poor and mediocre as a business. It's super important that your face to the world is a great one. It's your new retail shop front. It's the most important part of your marketing arsenal.

Judge a Book by its Cover

People do judge a book by its cover. Unfortunately, it's the truth. It's how you decided to meet your first girlfriend or boyfriend. It's how you chose who you work for. It's how you choose so many things. The website is the cover of your 'book', so it's important that the initial and first reaction is one that's impressive.

It's the Centre of Your Marketing Universe

Your website is the central plank to all your marketing. It's the pivotal piece that connects everything together. It's the one main part that you own. Obviously, you don't own Google and you don't own your Facebook account or your Instagram page, or your EDM platform (e.g.: Mailchimp), they can be shut down. Whereas your website is yours. It connects everything together.

So, when you put an article up, you share on Facebook and send out on email, it's the central, pivotal part. It's also the core to what Google judges. Your SEO results are based on how good your website is. It's the centre of your marketing universe and you need to treat it as such.

It Supports All Areas of Your Business

This is not just about marketing! A great website will support all areas of your business. Your sales team should be referring to education pieces on your website when conversing with potential customers, your procedures and systems are housed on your website so your current customers can find accurate guides etc. Your FAQs should be housed on your website; your customer engagement information is found on your website. Your website supports all areas of your business, not just marketing.

It Must be Great

No longer is it okay just to have a mediocre or poor website. In today's day and age, it is now vital for businesses to thrive and grow, they must have a great website and that will just become more and more important.

70% of people have chosen whether they'll use you before they even speak to you. That startling fact is getting bigger, and it why it's so important to have a great website. People will choose whether they're going to use you or not based on their research. They're going to spend a heap of time on your website, so they need to see that you are as good as you think you are.

Don't Skimp

Coming back to how important this website is. Don't skimp on it. Don't try and build a \$2000 website by outsourcing it to somebody in India. Don't think near enough is good enough. This is the core to your marketing and your business success. So, don't skimp on it, invest in it, like it is the most important thing in your business. In our book, it is!

Be Proud of It

You need to be proud of your website, and if you're not proud of it, it's time to keep working on it, building it, improving it and growing it until you are proud of it. This is your brand to the world. It's your face. As a business owner or a marketing manager, you need to be really proud of your website.

It's an Amazing Asset

Having a great website produces amazing returns to your business. Amazing returns in terms of more leads or sales through the door and in terms of impressing your customers and your target audience. It also means Google will give you more and more business as a result of it. Your suppliers will choose how creditworthy you are based on it. Your potential employees will choose whether they want to work with you or not, all based on your website. It really is an amazing asset that produces great returns for your business, and you need to treat it as such.

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CHAPTER 1:

STRATEGY

Whilst we really hate the word strategy...

It is so important that you get your website strategy right from the start. One of the biggest mistakes we continually see with websites is that they don't get the strategy right. They just think it has to look good. Whilst that's a component of it, there's a lot more to it than just the looks.

“ *They just think it has to look good, but there's a lot more to it than just looks!* ”

1. It All Starts with the Right Strategy

Getting the right strategy in place will then mean you're able to build the right website, which means it produces the right things for your business, which means it gives you the right outcomes long term, which is what we're after. It's so important to have the right strategy in place.

2. Customer Strategy

Define your target audience

The first step in building a great customer strategy involves getting crystal clear on who you are selling what to. To tap into your target market, you need to get to know them...intimately.

It's all about defining your 'who', that is your target audience (and it's not female 18-65 by the way). It needs to be way more specific than that and should consist of at least 3-4 different segments of ideal customers that have all of your different needs and wants. These segments obviously won't account for all of your customers, but you want to define them as best you can.

Define your customer personas

Collating the data on your customers is really important as it will help you define your customer persona. Your customer personas are fictitious profiles of your ideal customer, segmented into target audiences that we want the marketing strategy to focus on.

It brings together all of the information you've captured about who they are, where they are, what they like and dislike, and how they are likely to find out about your product or service.

Customer personas help you and other people in your organisation understand them better and are a great reference tool to ensure that any marketing you're undertaking is targeted specifically to each of your appropriate audiences.

Define your value proposition

One of the hardest parts of a marketing strategy is defining your value proposition; what value you as an organisation are providing your target audiences. Another way to think of this is what are you being hired to do for them?

A value proposition is a promise of value to be delivered.

3. Business Strategy

You can't get the right customer strategy without having the right business strategy in place, they're all vitally aligned with each other. This means you need to get the business strategy right, which then drives the customer strategy, which will then drive your marketing strategy, which will then drive your website strategy. Obviously, these are core things to get right.

4. Objectives

So, what are the objectives for the website?

- **Drive Revenue Growth** – There's the obvious, you want leads and revenue to come from it. If it's an eCommerce site, it's revenue. If you're a lead generation type business, you want some leads coming through, but what are the other objectives for it?
- **Cut Costs** – For many business, the website offers an ability to cut costs in a business. It allows for things like online ordering, automated customer service, answer questions online so you can reduce customer service staff. Today's technology now means you can cut a lot of costs out of the business by having the right digital strategy in place.
- **Automate** – What's the automation process that you can incorporate to really drive efficiencies in the business?
- **Improve Customer Experiences** – What are the improved customer experiences that you want to include?
- **Other Stakeholders** – What are the other stakeholders you need to take into account. Recruitment might be one, investors might be another and suppliers another. What are all those objectives.



5. Functionality

Based on our objectives above, we need to scope out the detail functionality that we need to build into the website to ensure these objectives are met. So, what is the search function or the eCommerce function or the SEO functions, or the ordering functions, or the resource functions, or the blog functions?

Make sure you're crystal clear on what those functional aspects of the website are. How important is it for you to be able to update it internally, versus using a web developer? And obviously the more you can do internally the cheaper it's going to be cost wise over time.

6. Your Target Audience vs SEO

One of the big challenges we see with web builds these days is people try and build it for Google, not for their target audience. Everything you do, you do for your target audience when building a website. You have to make sure you're providing a great user journey starting from the homepage. You need to have areas dedicated to each target audience throughout the site. You need references made to them and who they are. We want social proof that speaks direct to each target audience. All those things are really important. You don't ever build it for Google and SEO. You want to overlay a few technical things as you go, but certainly the website build is all about your target audience and how you're going to impress their socks off.

CHAPTER 2:

THE CORE ELEMENTS

Once you've got the right website strategy...

Then it's time to start breaking each down into what are the core elements of the website that you need to really nail to make sure you end up with a great asset for your business.

1. User Journey

What steps are you are going to take your visitors through, throughout the website, to impress them and allow a user to get the information they need really quickly?

- **Home Page** – On the homepage, how do you take each target audience to the right section that they're looking for? How do you get them straight to the category pages? How do they navigate to the sub-category pages? How do they navigate to the product pages or the service pages? Whatever it may be. Really, a homepage is the most important page on your website, so you need to spend a heap of time getting that user journey right.
- **Category Pages** – People have come to the category pages generally from the homepage or from a search, they've come through to the subject matter of the main part to your website, so then how do you take them to the next level? What's the subcategory or product pages that you need to take them through to? What's the part of that page that's going to really capture their attention and say how good you are in this?
- **Subcategory Pages** – If your business is big enough, you'll then have sub-category pages, which summarizes the products and services or groups them together.
- **Product/Services Pages** – This is where the nitty gritty starts to come in, so getting a really good overview of the product or service itself (who it's applicable for, what's it made of, the metrics, the technicalities) and then you know what?

You drill down. The more information you can provide the better. Some people just want high level, some people want a lot of detail, so you really need to build your website for that. How can you provide more and more detail is the main aim of the game.

- **Blog** – People want to be educated, they want to know who you are, which comes out in the content you produce. This means your blog section becomes really important. Overall, that user journey and how you provide a very simple, crisp, impressive user journey is vitally important.

2. Design

Design is super important.

You don't want a crappy looking website, you want something that's really impressive throughout. Design's a very personal thing. It needs to reflect your brand, your business, your ethos, your target audience. Ultimately, you want a really good one that marries up and ticks all those boxes, and that every single page has a great design. It's a bit different throughout, so you don't want the same design for every single page. Your homepage will have its own design. Your category pages will have its own design, your product pages will have its own design and so on.

It's about providing a great experience because it's visually pleasing to the eye and communicates all the right information. A point to note on is that content comes first. So, you generally want to design things around great content. You've got to write your content first and then you design pages accordingly to the content. The old days of design first and then content is well and truly over. You really want to write the content first, and then you design around content.

3. Structure

The structure of your website is super important as well, to make sure you capture and communicate all the right bits of information. Ultimately that rolls around three core areas.

- **The Business** – What's the information you need to communicate about the business, about who you guys are, the management team, your backgrounds, case studies and testimonials? All that sort of information you need to get right.
- **The Target Audience** – You need to make sure your website has the right structure for each of your target audiences, that they have their own dedicated areas, that all the information is going to communicate exactly their pain points and their opportunities and dreams.
- **Google** – Over time you must take into account the requirements that Google has given us, but keep in mind that googles requirements are the same as your target audience. Google tells us what your target audience are typing into the search box, and you need to create the right structure around content that's going to answer those questions and topics that people are typing into Google.

4. Social Proof

Social proof is the real-world proof that clearly communicates to your target audience how good you are. This is all about the justifications like case studies, testimonials and the awards you have won that demonstrate you're really good at what you do, and preferably demonstrate you're the best at what you do. Let's break these down.



- **Case Studies** – People want to know what you’ve done for other businesses. They want to know the results, they want to know the process you took them through, they want to know the trials and tribulations. So once again, the more information you can provide in a case study the better. Videos and photos are all really important too.
- **Testimonials** – It’s still really important to have people saying how good you are. Obviously, your customers are the most important, and you want real names and real addresses if you can. You don’t trust a quote from Sarah, but you’ll trust a quote from Sarah Jones from Smith & Co, Warana. Full names, full addresses, full business names are what you really need to classify testimonials.

Just a little word of warning with that is you don’t want too many. My real estate agent has over 400 five-star reviews on Google. You know that’s absolute horseshit, there’s no way a real estate agent has that many five-star reviews, right? You just want a nice, real number of good testimonials.

- **Awards** – Win some awards. Once again, that’s your peers in the industry saying how good you are, and they’re worth their weight in gold. People love awards, so make sure you’re screaming from the rooftops that those are awards you’ve received.
- **Industry** – How are you involved in the industry, in helping to grow and improve it? What’s the industry association that you’re part of? What engagement do you have in the industry? How are you pushing the industry forward? Once again, they’re all amazing bits of social proof that people will be more and more impressed with.
- **Thought Leadership** – How do we help educate people more with great information that you’re producing? How do you drive the industry forward with ideas and concepts? This means sharing great wins that are coming out of the US. That’s all about social proof, which is really important that we incorporate. Because otherwise people don’t trust people anymore. If you just say, “I’m good” without backing it up, people don’t trust that.

5. Assets

What are the marketing assets that you need a website to house, that are going to add real value to your target audience and your customers?

- **eBooks** – Most businesses should be producing eBooks in different formats that clearly demonstrate who they are, how they operate, what the processes are, what the products are, what the benefits are, and what thoughts you need to consider. All these sorts of things become really important to put into eBooks.
- **Videos** – Videos are a great way to communicate your ideas, the benefits and other information really quickly. It's also gives people a short glimpse into the people they're going to be dealing with. Your blog articles are all assets too, so the more information we can get out there, the better. There's just a heap of assets that you want to start producing and then make sure they're a core element of your business moving forward.

6. Foundations

How do we get the foundations of your business communicated well throughout the website? This foundational information includes your 'about us' section, your team, the history of your business, and your credentials. This also includes describing all your products well, having a good 'contact us' page, having all the privacy policies. This is all really important to get right and pictured well throughout your website because it communicates authenticity, for want of a better word.

7. Backend

You want a well-built backend of the website, so it's very simple to use, it doesn't break, it's technically sound, it's easy to update. But most importantly, it's easy for the business to use on an ongoing basis. All too often you'll end up with a dog's breakfast of a backend because you've gone cheap or lazy, but over time it will cost you a lot more than investing upfront.

8. Everybody is Different

You need to keep this in mind when you're building a website.

Everybody is different and everybody wants to see different things and are impressed by different things. You want to start with good summaries, so those that just want summary information will get it quickly, they'll be happy and move on. And then there's those that love a lot of detail, so you want to give them the summary version, then you want to give them the middle road amount of detail, and then you want to take them through the entire detail. Everybody takes in content differently, so you want it as a written article, you want it as a video, you want it as an infographic, whatever else it may be. Everybody takes in different amounts of information, so you need to accommodate every single one of those touchpoints.

9. Your Story

Probably one of the weaker points of most websites is telling your story. What's your background? What's your history? Where have you come from? What mistakes have you made? What are your wins? What are your credentials? Why should I choose you? People love a great story and we need to tell one with your website.

10. No Risk!

Once again, your website cannot be or produce a risk to your business. It's an asset that you need to protect and cherish and invest in. Some examples include if you're not backing up a website or you're not updating the website software. These become real risks of losing the website. Using a custom CMS, which is somebody else's bit of software that you're just building your website on, is risky because they own and control it. If their business goes belly up, then you're up shit creek. You want to use good, open source platforms and code, but really minimise any risk to your business..

CHAPTER 3:

CONTENT IS KING

This is so true in today's day and age, and it's just going to get more and more important.

The content you produce is vital to the future success of your marketing. We've got a whole eBook related to content which you can [view on our website](#) but this chapter will give you a quick synopsis of it.

1. Products & Services

You need to communicate your products and services really well and then you need to take that to the next level. You need to break each product down, to explain the pros and the cons, and the more detail you can provide the better. Once again, your products and services need to be communicated really well.

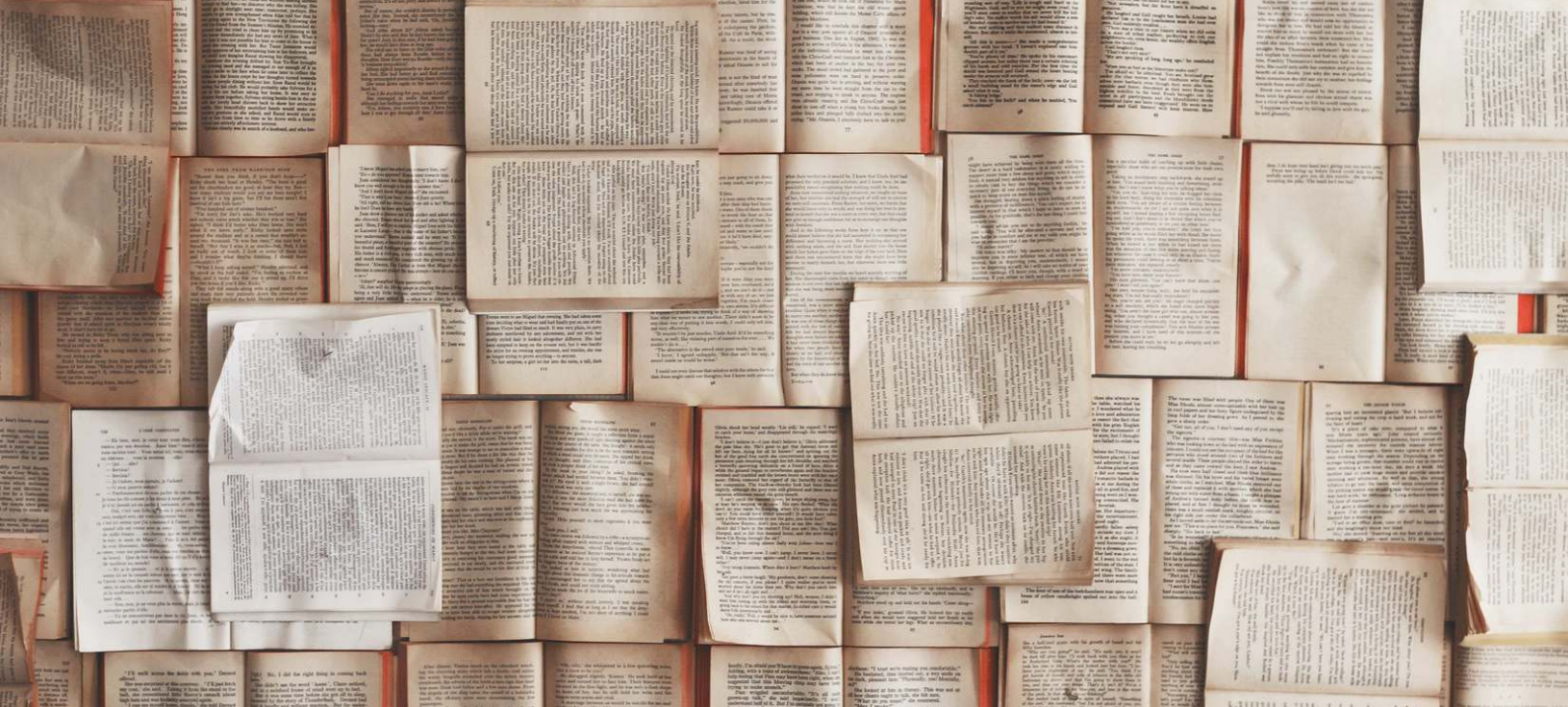
2. Foundational Content

We've referred to this already above. This is really all about making sure your whole website communicates exactly who you are, what you do, how you do it, what you offer, your products and services, and the benefits on why they should work with you.

“*So, what is the content that your target audience is searching for?*”

3. SEO Content

There will be some topics that aren't in your foundation content that people would like to know about, that they're typing into Google. So, we need to find out what they're typing into Google, and then we need to start producing the content so that Google can see that you're relevant. This shows Google that you're an expert authority, so they're actually going to show your business in the search results. That's really all about how we generate the right SEO content.



4. Thought Leadership

This is really where we need to bring you to the fore.

We've ticked all the other boxes, and then it's time to show how you are actually adding to the body of knowledge in your industry. What are the insights that you share from them? What's the trends and topics that are coming out through the media that you can answer? What's the latest and greatest coming out of America or the UK or Europe? It's really about how we turn you into a thought leader in the industry.

5. Whole Encyclopedia

Ultimately, we want to turn your website into your industry encyclopedia.

The more information the better. The more we open up and share, the better results will be for you, for your customers, for your leads, and for Google who will reward you accordingly. All your product information, your processes and your systems should be on your website. And just producing an amazing encyclopedia of an asset for you.

CHAPTER 4:

TAKE A WHOLE TEAM

This is not just marketing...

It takes the whole team to be involved in building a great asset. The reason is because we want the whole website to be reflective of the whole business.

1. Whole Business Involved

This is not just marketing; it takes the whole team to be involved in building a great asset. The reason is because we want the whole website to be reflective of the whole business. From the individuals to the processes to the tools to the systems to sales & operations to customer support. Whatever it may be, they all should have a hand in producing content and building the website as a whole. There's a little bit required from the whole team in the build part, but more importantly in the ongoing website growth and improvement process where the whole team will combine to produce a truly great website.

2. Resources

Getting a website up and running takes people's time, energy, effort, commitment, and then everyone has to continually grow and evolve that website. The business, as a whole, needs to assign the appropriate resources to do it, because it is a big investment both in terms of the cost of getting it done, but also the time. The amount of time it takes to get all the content together for your business is quite staggering.

3. Commitment

The 'powers that be' need to commit to this process. Both in terms of dollars and people. Without it, this doesn't work as it's slow and you don't get the results you want. It needs to be seen as a priority for the business and actioned accordingly.

4. Priorities

It is a big priority, it's an ongoing priority that's going to be forever in your business, but once again, it's worth its weight in gold when you get it right.

5. The Right People

You need to have the right people that are working on this. It's no good delegating this to a junior person when it needs to have the 'big guns' shape and develop the website and its content. You need the right people on the right seats on the right bus, which comes under resources, commitment and priorities.

CHAPTER 5:

BUILT WELL & GOOGLE

The central plank of having a great website is that Google loves it, and rewards you accordingly with bringing more business to you.

That means you need a really well-built website, both from an end user perspective, which is really all the topics we've covered above, and from a technical perspective. This will ensure that it has everything that Google needs to tick all the boxes.

1. Technically Sound

It's important to make sure Google can crawl all the information on your website. This means he can find it all, it loads quickly and there's no broken links. Every page has to have titles on it and headings on it, correctly done. That just tells Google that it's a well-built site. It shows you've taken the care to invest in it, so therefore he's going to say, "These guys are saying this is important." That also reflects your target audience, right? They want the right headings on your website. They want to be able to navigate it well, they want it to load quickly. So, there's a direct correlation between Google and your target audience.

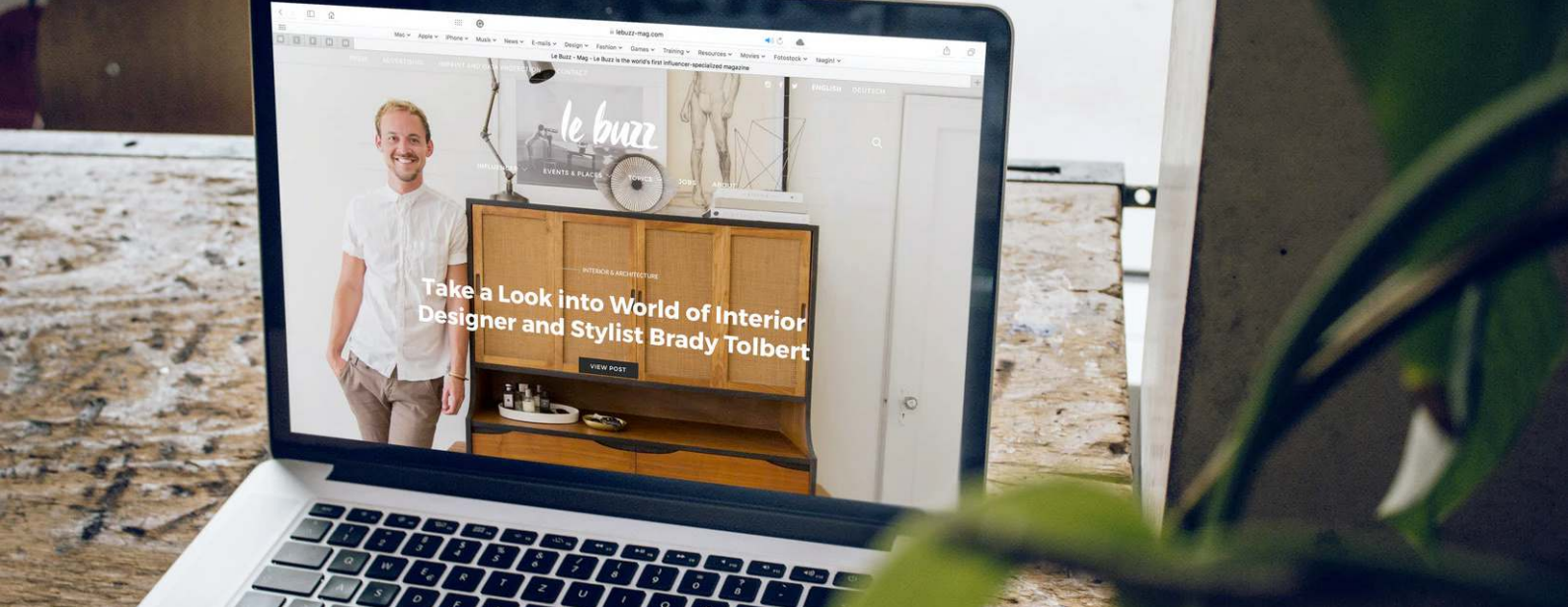
2. Great Backend

You want a great backend that's easy to use, easy to update, easy to add new pages, to add new content, so anybody in the business can add and subtract to it. All too often you end up with a dog's breakfast of a backend that's really hard and lumpy to use, and you're left paying exorbitant fees for other people to update it. That's a really big oversight that most people have when they're getting quotes and looking into website rebuilds.

“Google is shouting this from the top of their lungs...”

3. Mobile First

Google's shouting this from the top of their lungs, all the web developers and digital marketers are as well, and you need to take note that your website now needs to be designed for mobile as your first priority. And then desktop, and then tablet. Ultimately you are designing and building for three different versions of your website, but mobile now needs to come first because it accounts for so much of the traffic on the Internet. So much of the traffic that will be coming through your website for all businesses, are majority people on their mobile devices. That's why you need to design it mobile first.



4. SEO

There are some technical things you're going to need to do from an SEO perspective. We always suggest these come secondary to everything else that we've covered, but there are some boxes that you do want to tick in terms of SEO audits and technical onsites. But that certainly comes close to when you're ready to launch or just after launch, depending on your site transitioning etc.

5. Growth

Once you've built your site, it's now time to grow it. This is not a set and forget proposition. It's every day and every week and every month, and every quarter and every year. How are we adding, growing and improving that website for your target audience? And Google rewards you accordingly.

6. Growth Analytics

Using Google Analytics, tracking and reporting is vital.

This enables you to determine what's working well on the site, what's not working well, where are people exiting the site? What pages have a high bounce rate or people aren't engaging with? All that information becomes really important in terms of how well the results come through for your website.

CHAPTER 6:

LONG TERM

It's a long-term proposition that you're continually adding and evolving.

Once you've built your website, you're going to need to continually grow and improve this asset.

1. A Living, Breathing Thing

If you don't nurture your website; feed it, water it and take care of it, it will break and die. You need to treat it as a living, breathing part of your business.

2. Optimise

You need to continually improve and optimise your website from:

- A user journey perspective
- A content perspective
- An SEO perspective
- An analytics perspective

Once again, it's no different from every other part of your business. How are you continually getting better and better and better and better?

3. Encyclopedia

How are you adding another bit of knowledge to your industry's encyclopedia every day and every week? This becomes really important for long term growth and it produces an amazing asset. It's worth a lot when you come to sell your business down the track.

4. Thought Leader

This is where you will really come to the fore long term, with how you grow your marketing to position yourself as a thought leader in the industry, both as a business, and also as individuals. Once you do this, that's when the big bucks start rolling in from a marketing perspective.



5. Bigger Picture

Yes, your website is important, but it is part of a bigger picture, so it has to be part of your complete business and your complete marketing. It's communicating the right value proposition and messages. It's not a standalone, it's part of a bigger picture.

6. Amazing Asset

It is an amazing asset. It will drive long term growth for your business, and you need to invest in it accordingly.

Conclusion

Amazing Outcomes for Your Business

Ultimately, the whole purpose of having an amazing website asset, is it produces amazing outcomes to your business over time. That includes more revenue, more repeat revenue, bigger assets when you come to sell your business, better staff recruitment processes, better engagement with clients, and that all adds up to amazing outcomes long term to your business. Once again, this is why it's so important to have a great website.



A little about us:

***“We know strategies for business growth...
because we’ve grown our own businesses”***

Because we’ve been there and done that! We’ve built and grown our own businesses – more times than not, learning the hard way. Chances are we’ve been in a similar situation that you’re in now, and made nearly every mistake possible in sales and marketing. It’s through this experience that we know how to grow businesses.

- Built our own B2B sales channel that generated 22,000 new small business clients
 - Employed over 300 people
 - Built a successful digital marketing company
 - Have been running our own businesses for over 20 years
-

**Ready to build an amazing website for
your business? Let's talk!**

DUE NORTH

where business come to grow

With over 20 years of experience, Due North has everything you need in one place to grow your business. We truly believe that your success is our success.

Reach us here:

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