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The Small Business Website Checklist

What an informational website should have to build trust, get found and turn more visitors into enquiries — explained without the technical jargon.

A good small business website has three jobs:

1) Make people trust you. 2) Help the right people find you. 3) Make it obvious and easy to get in touch.

A practical guide for local and service-based businesses

Free guide by Built by SemDev

1. Start with the purpose of the website

A small business website does not need dozens of pages, flashy animations or complicated features. It needs to answer the questions a potential customer has before they feel comfortable contacting you.

In simple terms, visitors normally want to know:

- What do you do?
- Do you work with people like me?
- Do you serve my area?
- Can I trust you?
- How much does it cost, or how do I get a quote?
- What should I do next?

The five-second test

Someone landing on your homepage should be able to understand what you do, who you help and what they should do next within a few seconds.

2. The three jobs every small business website should do

Build trust

People are cautious when they are choosing a business. Your website should remove doubt by showing that you are real, professional, experienced and easy to deal with.

Get found

Your website should clearly explain your services and locations so search engines can understand what your business offers and which searches your pages are relevant to.

Generate enquiries

Do not make visitors hunt for the next step. Every important page should make it easy to call, message, request a quote or book.

3. What your homepage should include

Your homepage is usually the first impression of the business. It should quickly give someone enough information to understand the offer and decide whether to keep reading.

A simple homepage order to follow

If you are building the site yourself, this is a strong general structure. You do not need every section for every business, but the order helps move a visitor from understanding the offer to trusting you and then taking action. It is important to add contact buttons throughout the page after sections, not just at the end.

1. Hero section: Say clearly what you do. Add a short line explaining who you help, where you work or the main benefit. Finish with one obvious button such as “Get a quote”, “Book a consultation” or “Call us”.

2. Quick trust proof: Show something that immediately reduces doubt: review rating, years of experience, accreditations, recognised clients, number of projects completed or another genuine proof point.

3. Main services: Show your core services with a short explanation and link each one to its own useful service page.

4. Why choose you: Give three to five specific reasons someone should choose your business. Avoid generic claims such as “quality service” unless you explain what makes them true.

5. How it works: Explain the process in a few simple steps so the customer knows what happens after they enquire.

6. Reviews, case study or recent work: Use real proof before asking visitors to believe marketing claims.

7. About the business: Introduce the person or team behind the company. For local businesses, a real photo and short introduction can make a big difference to trust.

8. Service area: If location matters, make it clear where you work and link to useful location pages where appropriate.

9. FAQs: Answer common questions that could delay an enquiry, such as price, timings, availability, guarantees or what is included.

10. Final call to action: Repeat the main next step. Do not assume somebody will scroll back to the top.

11. Footer: Include contact details, main page links, relevant policies and active social profiles.

Think of the homepage as a guided conversation

It should move someone from “What is this?” to “This is relevant”, then “I trust them”, and finally “I know exactly how to contact them.”

Item	Why it matters	Done?
A clear headline	Say what you do in plain English. Avoid vague slogans that could describe almost any business.	☐
Who you help or where you work	Make it obvious whether the visitor is in the right place.	☐
A strong main call to action	Use something clear such as “Get a quote”, “Book a consultation”, “Call us” or “Send a message”.	☐
A short summary of your main services	Help people quickly see whether you provide what they need.	☐
Why customers choose you	Give specific reasons, not empty phrases such as “quality service”.	☐
Proof	Reviews, ratings, case studies, client logos, accreditations, years of experience or real project examples.	☐
An introduction to the business	People often want to know who they are dealing with, especially for local service businesses.	☐
Service area	State the towns, cities or areas you genuinely serve.	☐
Another clear contact opportunity	Do not rely on one button at the very top of the page.	☐

4. Trust signals: give people reasons to believe you

Visitors cannot see your premises, shake your hand or speak to you when they first land on the site. The website has to do some of that trust-building for you.

Real reviews

Use genuine customer feedback. Where possible, show a name, company, location, review source or other detail that makes the testimonial believable.

Real photographs

Photos of the owner, team, premises, vans, finished jobs or products usually build more trust than generic stock photography.

Case studies and examples

Show what you actually did, who it helped and the outcome. Before-and-after examples are especially strong where relevant.

Clear contact details

Display a real phone number, business email and appropriate address or service area. A domain email such as hello@yourbusiness.co.uk generally looks more professional than a personal free email address.

About page

Explain who is behind the company, how long you have been operating, what you specialise in and how you work.

Accreditations and memberships

If you hold genuine qualifications, licences, trade memberships or certifications, show them and explain what they mean for the customer.

Policies and company information

Privacy information, relevant terms and accurate company details make the business easier to verify and show that the website is being run properly.

Avoid fake trust signals

Do not invent reviews, client logos, “awards”, scarcity or impressive-looking numbers. Real proof is much more valuable than manufactured credibility.

5. Service pages: give each important service a useful page

If you offer several important services, do not squeeze everything onto one generic “Services” page. A separate page for each main service gives customers more useful information and gives search engines a clearer page to show for relevant searches.

A good service page should answer:

- What is the service?
- Who is it for?
- What problem does it solve?
- What is included?
- Why should someone choose you for it?
- What does the process look like?
- What questions do customers normally ask?
- What should the visitor do next?

A service page structure to follow

1. Clear page heading: Name the service in plain English. If location is important, mention your main area naturally where appropriate.

- 2. Short introduction:** Explain who the service is for, the problem it solves and the main benefit.
- 3. What is included:** Break down the actual work, deliverables or options.
- 4. Benefits and outcomes:** Explain what changes for the customer, not just what tasks you perform.
- 5. Why choose your business:** Use specific proof such as specialist experience, guarantees, qualifications, turnaround times or relevant reviews.
- 6. How the process works:** Explain the steps from enquiry through to completion.
- 7. Real proof:** Add reviews, photos, project examples or case studies relevant to the service.
- 8. Areas covered:** Where location matters, say where the service is available and link to relevant location pages.
- 9. FAQs:** Answer questions about pricing, timings, suitability, preparation, guarantees and anything customers commonly ask.
- 10. Call to action:** Finish with the action you want the visitor to take.

Why service pages help SEO

A page focused on one important service gives search engines far more context than a homepage containing one sentence about it. It also gives you a relevant page to link to internally and a better landing page when somebody searches specifically for that service.

Example

A plumbing company is better served by useful pages for boiler repair, boiler installation, bathroom plumbing and emergency plumbing than one short page that simply lists all four services.

6. Location pages: help customers in the areas you genuinely serve find you

For a local business, your website should make your real service area obvious. This helps customers understand whether you cover their location and gives search engines clearer context.

- Mention your genuine main location naturally on the homepage and contact page.
- Show the areas you actually serve.
- Create useful location pages only where you genuinely serve that area and can provide meaningful, location-specific information.
- Keep your business name, address or service area, phone number and website details consistent across your website and major business profiles.
- Link to or reference your Google Business Profile where useful and keep that profile accurate.
- Use customer reviews that naturally mention the service or location when customers choose to include those details.

Do not create dozens of near-identical pages where only the town name changes. Each location page should be useful to someone in that area and should explain how you serve them.

A location page structure to follow

- 1. Location-focused heading:** Clearly state the service or type of business and the area, for example “Web Design in Exeter” or “Roofing Services in Torquay”.
- 2. Useful local introduction:** Explain that you serve the area and the types of customers or projects you help there.
- 3. Main services available:** Summarise the relevant services and link to the full service pages.

- 4. Why choose you:** Explain the benefits of working with your business rather than filling the page with generic facts about the town.
- 5. Local proof:** Where possible, include a nearby project, customer review, case study, photo or real example connected with the area.
- 6. Nearby areas:** Mention surrounding places you genuinely cover where that is useful to the visitor.
- 7. FAQs:** Answer location-specific questions such as travel, availability, call-out area or how the service works remotely.
- 8. Clear enquiry section:** Make it obvious how somebody in that location can contact you.

How location pages can help SEO

People often search using a service plus a place name, such as “accountant Plymouth” or “wedding photographer Exeter”. A strong location page gives your website a specific page that is relevant to that type of search and immediately confirms to the visitor that you work in their area.

Quality over quantity

Five genuinely useful location pages are better than fifty thin pages where only the town name changes. Create them because they help a real potential customer, not simply because a keyword tool shows search volume.

7. Connect your website to the rest of your online presence

Use internal links between your pages

Internal links are links from one page of your website to another. They help visitors move naturally through the site and help search engines understand how your pages relate to each other.

- Link from the homepage to your most important service pages.
- Link service pages to related services where it genuinely helps.
- Link location pages to the services available in that area.
- Link service pages to relevant location pages where useful.
- Link case studies to the service they demonstrate.
- Use descriptive wording such as “boiler repair service” rather than making every link say “click here”.

Why internal links matter

They guide people towards useful next pages, make important pages easier to discover and help search engines understand which pages are related and important. They are very important.

Link to genuine social profiles

Add links to active business social profiles in sensible places such as the footer, contact page or About page. This gives visitors another way to verify the business, see recent work and they help prove to search engines that you’re a real business, which is important for rankings. Do not add icons for abandoned accounts simply because the website template includes them.

Optimise your Google Business Profile

For a local business, a properly completed Google Business Profile is an important part of being found in Google Search and Maps. Keep the information accurate, choose the correct categories and services, add real photos and collect genuine reviews regularly.

Register on reputable business directories

Legitimate business directories and map platforms can create useful citations and backlinks to your website. Keep your business name, address or service area, phone number and website details consistent. Focus on recognised platforms and relevant industry directories rather than hundreds of low-quality websites. Backlinks help build domain authority, which is an important ranking factor.

Want the step-by-step guides?

Built by SemDev also has free guides covering Google Business Profile optimisation and reputable business directory/backlink listings. Get in contact and I will send you the links.

8. Write website copy that persuades people and supports SEO

Good website copy has two audiences: the person reading it and the search engine trying to understand the page. The person comes first. Write clearly and specifically, then make sure the page naturally uses the words people search for.

- Use clear headings that explain the point of each section.
- Keep paragraphs reasonably short.
- Use the words customers actually use when describing the service.
- Explain benefits as well as features.
- Be specific. “Same-day call-outs across Plymouth” is stronger than “excellent customer service”.
- Answer common objections and questions before the visitor has to ask.
- Avoid forcing keywords into every sentence.

A simple persuasive copy formula

A useful structure is: problem or need → what you offer → why it helps → proof → next step.

Example: “Struggling with a boiler that keeps losing pressure? We diagnose and repair common boiler faults across Plymouth. You will get a clear explanation of the problem before any work goes ahead. See our recent customer reviews, then get in touch for availability.”

Use SEO wording naturally

Think about what somebody would type into Google to find the page. Usually that means the service, and sometimes the location. Use that wording naturally in the page title, main heading, introduction and other relevant headings. You do not need to repeat the exact phrase in every paragraph.

Avoid this	Do this instead
“Welcome to ABC Ltd. We pride ourselves on quality, professionalism and customer satisfaction.”	“Boiler repairs in Plymouth for homeowners and landlords. We diagnose faults, explain the options clearly and get your heating working again as quickly as possible.”
“We offer a comprehensive range of bespoke solutions tailored to your individual requirements.”	“Need a new bathroom? We handle the plumbing, fitting and finishing so you have one team managing the whole job.”
“Plymouth plumber, plumber Plymouth, best plumber Plymouth, plumbing Plymouth...”	“Local plumbing services across Plymouth, including boiler repairs, bathroom plumbing and urgent call-outs.”
“We have been established since 2012 and are passionate about customer service.”	“You get one point of contact, clear updates and an agreed plan from the first quote through to completion.”

Common copy mistakes

- Writing mainly about how great the company is rather than what the customer needs.
- Using vague phrases such as “high quality” and “professional service” without explaining what makes them true.
- Long walls of text with no useful headings.
- Repeating the same keyword unnaturally.
- Copying a competitor and changing only the company name.
- Publishing AI-generated copy without checking that it is accurate, specific and sounds like your business.

9. Make it easy to enquire

A website can look good and still fail if visitors do not know what to do next. The contact journey should be simple, obvious and low-friction.

Item	Why it matters	Done?
Visible phone number	Especially important for businesses where customers often want to speak immediately.	☐
Clear enquiry button	Use the same main action consistently throughout the site.	☐
Short contact form	Only ask for information you genuinely need at the first step.	☐
WhatsApp or messaging	Useful where customers already prefer that channel.	☐
Contact page	Include all relevant ways to get in touch, opening hours and location/service-area information.	☐
Calls to action on service pages	Do not make someone return to the homepage to contact you.	☐
Confirmation after form submission	Tell people that their enquiry was received and what happens next.	☐

Reduce friction

If someone only needs to ask whether you can help, a form demanding ten fields, a budget, a deadline and a long project brief may stop them from contacting you at all.

10. Make the website easy to use on a phone

A large share of small-business website visits happen on mobile. Your website should not merely “fit” on a phone; it should be easy to use with one hand.

- Text should be readable without zooming.
- Buttons should be large enough to tap comfortably.
- Phone numbers should be clickable.
- Menus should be simple and obvious.
- Important information should not be hidden behind complicated effects.

- Forms should be easy to complete on a small screen.
- Images should resize correctly and not force horizontal scrolling.
- The most important call to action should remain easy to find.

11. Keep it fast

Slow websites frustrate visitors. You do not need to understand the technical details to recognise the common causes: oversized images, too many apps or plugins, unnecessary animations, heavy video backgrounds and poorly built themes.

As a business owner, the practical checks are simple:

- Open the site on mobile data as well as Wi-Fi.
- Check whether the first useful content appears quickly.
- Compress large images before uploading them.
- Avoid autoplay video unless it genuinely improves the page.
- Remove apps, widgets and tracking tools you no longer use.
- Ask your web developer to keep performance in mind when adding new features.

12. The technical basics you should have — without needing to manage them yourself

Item	Why it matters	Done?
HTTPS / security certificate	Visitors should see a secure connection rather than a browser warning.	☐
Reliable hosting	Your website should stay available and load consistently.	☐
Backups	There should be a way to recover the site if something goes wrong.	☐
Spam protection	Forms should be protected without making genuine enquiries difficult.	☐
Search-friendly page titles and descriptions	These help search engines and searchers understand each page.	☐
Readable page addresses	A service page should have a clean address such as /boiler-repair/ rather than a long string of random characters.	☐
Image descriptions where useful	Helpful alternative text improves accessibility and gives context when images cannot be seen.	☐
Sitemap and search indexing setup	Search engines should be able to discover the pages you want people to find.	☐
Analytics / enquiry tracking	You should be able to understand whether the site is bringing visits and enquiries.	☐

13. Do not ignore accessibility and legal basics

A professional website should be usable by as many people as reasonably possible and should clearly explain how customer information is handled.

- Use readable text sizes and good contrast between text and backgrounds.
- Do not communicate important information using colour alone.
- Give meaningful images useful alternative text where appropriate.
- Make links and buttons descriptive rather than using “click here” everywhere.
- Provide a privacy policy that reflects how the business actually handles personal information.
- Use an appropriate cookie consent solution if the site uses non-essential cookies or tracking that requires consent.
- Display company and contact information required for your type of UK business where applicable.

Legal requirements vary by business and by what the website does. If you sell online, collect sensitive information or operate in a regulated sector, get advice that is specific to your business.

14. The pages most informational small business websites need

Item	Why it matters	Done?
Home	Explains what you do, who you help, why to trust you and what to do next.	☐
About	Introduces the people and story behind the business.	☐
Individual service pages	Give each important service enough detail to be useful and discoverable.	☐
Contact	Makes every relevant contact option easy to find.	☐
Case studies / portfolio	Shows real work and outcomes where applicable.	☐
FAQs	Answers recurring questions and removes objections.	☐
Privacy policy	Explains how personal information is handled.	☐
Relevant terms / policies	Useful or required depending on the business and what the website offers.	☐

15. Common mistakes that cost small businesses enquiries

A vague homepage headline

“Welcome to our website” tells the visitor nothing. Say what you actually do.

No clear next step

If visitors have to search for a phone number or contact page, some will leave.

One thin page for every service

Important services deserve enough information for someone to make a decision.

Too much focus on the business, not the customer

Visitors care about whether you can solve their problem. Company history is useful, but it should not dominate every page.

Generic stock imagery everywhere

Real photographs usually make a local business easier to trust.

Tiny text and crowded mobile layouts

If the site is annoying to use on a phone, design quality on desktop will not save it.

Out-of-date information

Old opening hours, dead social links and services you no longer offer make the business look neglected.

Buying unnecessary features

Chatbots, pop-ups, animations and apps are not automatically improvements. Every feature should serve a purpose.

16. Keep the website current

A website is not something that should be ignored for five years after launch. A simple maintenance routine is enough for most small businesses.

- Update prices, services, opening hours and contact details when they change.
- Add strong new reviews and project examples.
- Replace outdated photographs.
- Check contact forms occasionally to make sure they still work.
- Review the site on your phone after major changes.
- Keep software, plugins and the platform maintained if your website relies on them.
- Look at which pages bring traffic and which pages generate enquiries.
- Add genuinely useful content when customers repeatedly ask the same questions.

17. The quick website check

- ☐ A new visitor can tell what the business does within a few seconds.
- ☐ The main location or service area is clear.
- ☐ There is an obvious main call to action.
- ☐ The phone number and contact options are easy to find.
- ☐ The business has a proper About section or page.
- ☐ Important services have useful individual pages.
- ☐ Real reviews or testimonials are visible.
- ☐ Real work, case studies or examples are shown where possible.
- ☐ Contact details are accurate and consistent.
- ☐ The website looks good and works properly on mobile.
- ☐ Pages load quickly enough to feel responsive.

- ☐ Forms are short and easy to complete.
- ☐ There are no obvious spelling errors or outdated details.
- ☐ The site uses a secure HTTPS connection.
- ☐ Page titles and descriptions have been set up properly.
- ☐ The website clearly explains the areas the business serves.
- ☐ The site has a suitable privacy policy and cookie setup.
- ☐ Social links point to active, genuine profiles.
- ☐ There is a way to measure visits and enquiries.
- ☐ Every important page gives the visitor a clear next step.
- ☐ Important pages link to related pages naturally.
- ☐ Service pages contain enough useful information to answer a customer's main questions.
- ☐ Location pages are genuinely useful and not copy-and-paste versions of each other.
- ☐ The website copy uses important search wording naturally without keyword stuffing.
- ☐ The Google Business Profile is fully completed and kept accurate.
- ☐ The business is listed on reputable directories and relevant industry platforms.

If your website does these things well, it is doing its job.

You do not need the fanciest website in your industry. You need one that makes the business easy to understand, easy to trust, easy to find and easy to contact.

Need help instead?

Don't want to manage your own site?

Get in contact and let's see if we are a good fit to work together.

Contact Built by SemDev

Add your contact details below before sharing this resource:

- Website: builtbysemdev.com
- Email: hello@builtbysemdev.com
- WhatsApp: <https://wa.me/447946034690>
- Book a call: <https://calendly.com/hello-builtbysemdev/30min>
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