



Why your business needs to

HAVE A WEBSITE

AND 4 EASY STEPS
TO GETTING STARTED

the **UK** DOMAIN
by NOMINET





According to Google

94%

of UK internet users **search online** when trying to find local businesses.

The Consumer Barometer Survey/Google 2016

GET STARTED

Creating a website is an amazing way to grow your business and reach both new and existing customers.

Websites bring a host of great benefits: a window on the digital high street, driving footfall to your physical store, increased opportunities for your business to be discovered, and can be a potential new sales channel via e-commerce when the time is right for you.

You might be thinking the web is not for your business or that getting online is too expensive or complicated. Don't worry. You already have the skills and this short guide will help you to get started.

In this handy guide, we're going to explain the benefits of having an online presence, dispel the common myths, and offer some easy steps to getting started.

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Section ONE

FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE A WEBSITE

REASON 1

Customers can find you easily

The customer buying journey has evolved as the internet has changed the way we shop.

Every minute of every day, shoppers are becoming more reliant on the internet, seeking information on what to buy, where to eat, and which businesses to engage with.

Not all your potential customers are expecting to buy online, but they do want to know about the businesses they might use now or in the future. Potential customers could be searching for what you offer in your location, but will struggle to find you if your business is not online.

REASON 2

Your competitors are online

Most retailers already have a website.

When customers are searching for products and services, they are attracted to the businesses that offer the things they want in the closest location to where they want to shop.

If you are not online, potential customers will find your competitors first.



Being online reduces the chance of being missed.

REASON 3

A website makes your business more trustworthy

Customers expect to find businesses online. Research shows that if you don't have a website you risk being perceived as less trustworthy and credible in the minds of shoppers.

The same applies to email addresses, with some retailers still using free email addresses with providers such as Gmail or Hotmail. Again, research has shown that businesses doing this risk appearing unprofessional and being taken less seriously by customers.

Having a **yourname@yourbusinessname.co.uk** is a simple way to raise your business profile instantly.

89%

of consumers trust businesses that have a website

Research specialists, Insight Engineers, Annual Trust and Awareness Research August 2017

Using a professional website and email address helps to extend the reach of your business and enhance your brand, reputation and high street credibility.

REASON 4

Ensure you're open 24/7

Customers expect to browse & research, any time, anywhere, 24/7. This is the new norm.

Making your business constantly available with an online presence is an easy way to ensure your retail store is never closed. Customers can visit you virtually from wherever they are and they can see the products and services you have on offer, find you, and check out your location and opening hours.



REASON 5

Communicate with your customers

Having a website is a great way to get to know your customers and creates lots of opportunities to communicate with them.

You can tell them about your latest products, events and promotions, and they can tell you what they want and how they think you are doing. There are many online tools that allow you to monitor, communicate, and receive feedback including pop-up surveys, testimonials, and website reviews.

Meeting customer expectations is critical in today's world of retailing. The rules of the game are changing and being online has become a fundamental part of the high street.

You can use a website as a stand alone extension of your physical real world business, but you can also build a social media presence to engage with customers, perhaps by sharing great reviews or publicly answering FAQs. The extent to which you use social media will depend on the age and interests of your customers, but for most businesses it is a great way of extending the reach of an offer.

Not only can a website and social presence help you to interact with your customers and encourage sales, you'll also be able to share and showcase the great things your customers are already saying about your business!

“ The internet offers an excellent opportunity for happy customers to share good experiences of our service and choice. ”

Dale Fletcher, owner of Molemi, small independent shoe retailer, Chipping Camden



Section **TWO**

MYTH BUSTERS

Here are some common myths we will dispel to help assure you that the online world isn't as intimidating as it might seem.

MYTH 1

"I don't need a website, my business is doing fine as it is"

According to research by Lloyds Bank, the most digital small businesses are **TWO & A HALF TIMES** more likely to report an increase in turnover.

The Lloyds Business Digital Index Report, 2017

Having a website isn't just about selling online (which is completely optional), it's about helping more customers find you over your competitors. Being online can open lots of exciting marketing opportunities and allow you to maximise customer relationships and strengthen brand awareness.



MYTH 2

"It will take too much time"

We appreciate that business owners are wary of the time required to set up a website and get online. However, creating a website can be a simple process and doesn't have to be time consuming, especially when combined with the right tools, resources and guidance.

While your new website will need occasional updating (once live), it needn't consume all your time.

Once you start to understand the mechanics of getting online, there are many platforms designed to make maintenance as easy as possible and help you develop your business online. Setting aside a little time each week is an excellent way to start, and your website can evolve as your business grows online.

MYTH 3

"It's too technical"

It's completely understandable to find the idea of getting online intimidating, but the process can be a lot easier than you might think. The internet has many simple step-by-step resources to help get your website up and running.

Some website providers will take on the technical work for you, and many website builders are designed to help newcomers create a great looking website.

There's lots of options to help you develop your digital skills, including free website templates that allow you to simply drop your content and images into.

MYTH 4

"It's too expensive"

If setting up and maintaining a website was really expensive, no one would be doing it.

Take advantage of low-cost deals & special offers to help you get online!

If you start looking into professional web-building platforms or expensive consultants, you might find the process can become costly. However, there are lots of low-cost solutions available as you start to explore the online world.

Domain registrars (companies who sell the domain names), website platforms and web hosting services often have low-priced package deals, great bundles and special offers that you can take advantage of when you start online. Hosting a website can cost a few pounds a month depending on the size of website and what you want to achieve.

MYTH 5

"I don't want to sell online so I don't need a website"

It's a common misconception that you must be selling online to benefit from having an online presence.

There are many different ways to use the web to enhance and benefit your business. Customers often use the internet to find and research businesses, not just buy from them. Even showing customers where your shop is based, what times you're open, where people can park could increase footfall to your store.

There are lots of different ways you can use a website to develop your business, such as:

- A brochure website to ensure your vital business information can be found online
- A marketing and communication website where you can engage customers in a dialogue, through a blog or social media platforms
- An e-commerce website from which you can sell products

MYTH 6

"I have a Facebook page, I am online"

Although having a social media presence is great for brand awareness and engaging for those who already follow you, customers prefer dealing with companies who have a website to accompany their social media accounts.

Having a website gives you greater control over your brand presence, helps your business appear more professional than a social media account alone, and gives you a home online.

**Businesses with
a website are
trusted almost**

**3 TIMES
AS MUCH** 

**as those who rely on
social media alone**

Insight Engineers: Annual Trust and Awareness Research 2017

MYTH 7

"I have nothing to say online"

Websites don't have to contain lots of pages of content to be effective, but you'd be surprised at how much you have to say about your business once you get started.

Alongside the business essentials (opening hours, location, contact details), you could write about your business' story to create a personal approach and showcase customer reviews.

Visual content is becoming increasingly popular online so a gallery page showing your products, events and some happy customers can attract more business. There are lots of different website templates out there (including free basic ones) so you can choose one that matches what you want to say and how you want to say it. For example, there's options for businesses with little imagery or those who are keen to write a regular blog.



MYTH 8

"I don't know where to start"

It's not uncommon for the process of getting online to be slightly daunting but there are plenty of great resources out there to help.

Plus, most of the processes are designed to help newcomers to get started.

If you would like any further support or information, visit theukdomain.uk, or please get in touch via email at website@nominet.uk or telephone +44 01865 332208



Section THREE

FOUR EASY STEPS TO GETTING STARTED NOW ...

STEP 1

Choose a domain name

What is a domain name?

Domain names are the string of characters that are used to identify websites on the internet. For example, 'theukdomain.uk' or 'google.co.uk'. Think of them as the house name of your online address.

Choosing the right domain name is one of the most important steps to getting online and there are some things you should consider before making your final decision:

Is it simple?

Making your domain name as simple as possible means it will be easy for customers to type, spell, remember and find online.

Try saying your domain name out loud – is it easy to say? Complicated or confusing names may have a negative impact on both your online and offline marketing attempts. For example, people are much more likely to remember barnethomeinteriors.uk than bobs-home-interiors-barnet.uk



“ For us, it’s a virtual shop window and we use it to create intrigue to draw people in. **”**

Kim Henry, owner of Halsey's Deli and Eatery, Hitchin

Does it reflect what you do?

Your website and email address are all about making a great first impression and your domain name should represent your business well. Make sure your domain name closely matches your business name, as many customers will often guess your website address based on the name of your business. Plus, having different domain and business names could become very confusing; unclear domain names don't typically do very well online.

Some retailers may choose to incorporate their location into their domain name, as it could help the business become more discoverable to local customers, but this is not essential.

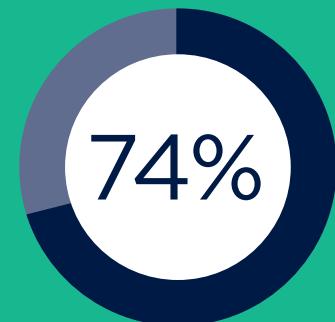
Is it futureproof?

Although you can always move your website onto a new domain in the future, it's better to pick a domain name that will stand the test of time right from the beginning. This requires you to think about where your business could go in the future and ensure your domain name won't limit your offering if you decide to expand your range.

Use an appropriate domain name extension

You need to think about which extension you want to use for your domain name. A top-level domain (TLD) is the bit that you see at the end of website addresses. For example, .co.uk, .com, .net and .org.

If you're a UK-based business with UK customers, it's best to choose a domain ending in .UK as it's considered trustworthy and identifies your business' location. You can find more advice on what the options are and choosing the perfect domain name by visiting theukdomain.uk/buy-a-domain



Market research shows that 74% of UK consumers, when searching online for a product or service, **prefer to click first on a website ending in .uk**

*Annual Trust and Awareness Research -
Insight Engineers, September 2017*



Checking if your domain name is available

Once you've decided on your domain name, or narrowed it down to the few final choices, you'll need to see whether it's available or if someone already owns it.

Visit our 'Find a Domain' tool at theukdomain.uk/buy-a-domain, which checks through every registered .UK domain name for free to let you know whether yours is still available. If it isn't, tweak it slightly and try again.

Choosing a registrar

Registrars are the online retailers from whom you can buy your domain and there are many to choose from. Each offer a wide range of services for different prices so make sure you spend some time researching what each registrar offers. For example, do you just want a basic website of a few pages and an email address? If so, find a package or special offer that suits what you need. Domain names are priced annually and range depending on the registrar but are usually only a few pounds. Website and hosting packages are usually charged monthly but again this will depend on the supplier.

As your needs grow and your site requires more storage space (often called hosting), the fees may rise slightly. As you check out different registrar offers you'll get a feel for a package offer that works for you, at the right price to reflect your budget.

Think about how you want to build your website and what features are important to you. Many packages are clearly outlined on the registrar website and will often include email addresses. It's good to read some reviews from other customers too. This will give you an idea of how easy the process is and whether the customer service is good. For more help and advice, go to theukdomain.uk/retail



Keep in mind who your ideal customer is throughout the process of setting up your website.



STEP 2

Create your first website

Planning your website – before you get started creating your website, set aside some time to plan what you want to use your website for and how you want it to work.

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR WEBSITE TO DO?

Deciding on the purpose of your website is very important. By having your goals in mind before you start and while you're creating your website, your efforts will remain focused. Which of the following goals do you identify with the most?

- Better customer communication
- Drive footfall to your store
- Spread brand awareness
- Network and contact-building
- Provide information to prospective customers on your products and services
- Generate sales leads / future sales orders
- Online sales and service

Keep in mind who your ideal customer is throughout the process of setting up your website. What is their age range, interest, location and occupation? What would they like to see on your website?

WHAT TYPE OF WEBSITE IS BEST SUITED FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

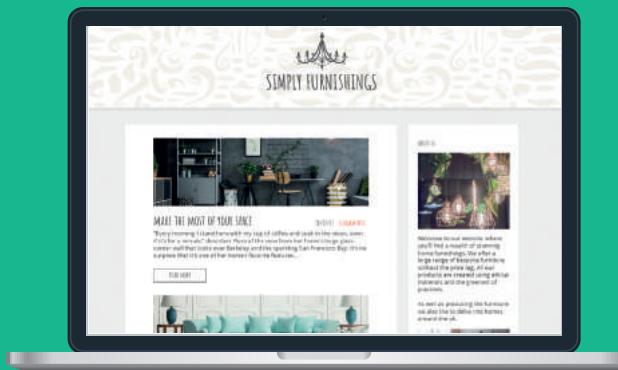
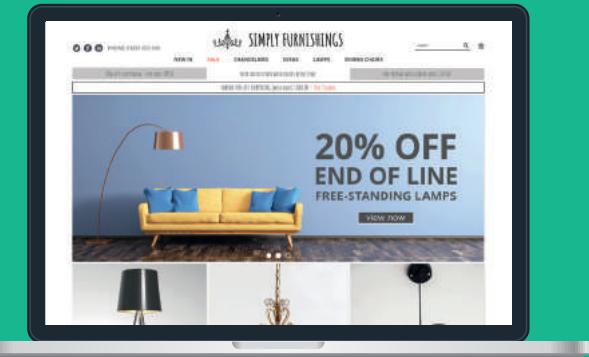
A website doesn't have to have e-commerce functionality to be an effective online home for your business. There are many options available, with many websites offering a mix, such as:

Brochure website

This tells potential customers what your company does, what it offers and how to get in touch. This could be quite a simple website consisting of a couple of pages, perhaps including an online catalogue of all products and general information (e.g. opening times and location). You could also include customer case studies as testimonials.

Online shop (e-commerce)

An e-commerce website will allow you to sell products directly from your site and take secure payments over the internet.



Blog

Although a blog will sometimes be the sole function of some websites, most businesses use a blog to complement a brochure or e-commerce website.

Make sure the website you choose suits your budget, your type of business and your online goals.

If you would like any further support or information, visit

theukdomain.uk, or please get in touch via email to **website@nominet.uk** or telephone **+44 01865 332208**

STEP 3

Building your website

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BUILD YOUR WEBSITE?

There are lots of options available for building a website depending on your level of expertise, how much time you have and your budget. Many of the website building packages are very user friendly and offer simple 'drag and drop' functionality. You could consider:

A registrar

Most registrars offer web building services along with domain packages to allow you to keep everything to do with your website in one place. These are often relatively easy to use with lots of intuitive tools, and the registrar's customer service will help you with any bumps in the road.

DIY Website Builders (e.g. Weebly and Wix)

You don't have to be tech-savvy to install and apply a template to build your website. Weebly, WordPress or Wix are great examples of services who offer a large choice of free ready-made templates. Many registrars also offer easy to use website builder software with drag and drop menus and a wide range of ready to go templates.

Using a web design agency

If you're short on time, have the budget available or would feel more confident involving an expert, a website design agency or freelancer can handle all the work for you.

Building a website is easier than you think ...

There's lots of options available to build your own website!



WHAT SHOULD YOU INCLUDE ON YOUR WEBSITE?

Regardless of the type of website you're building, there are some fundamentals to include:

- Business name and logo
- Unique selling point and the benefits of your product or service
- A clear headline on what your business is all about and what you offer to customers
- Some great imagery showcasing your products or services and any current offers
- Contact details and location
- Any awards your business has won, product guarantees and security offered (more for e-commerce websites)
- Links to your business' social media accounts so customers can start following you

It's important to keep updating your website and ensure it remains relevant to your target audience, a few minutes a week might be sufficient. If you have a big update then allow an hour.

TEST YOUR WEBSITE

Make sure you run your website on all the major search browsers to check everything appears as it should and looks good (e.g. Firefox, Internet Explorer, Chrome and Safari). Don't forget to test out your website on mobiles and tablets too, as lots of customers will access your site via portable devices.

STEP 4 Attract customers to your website

Once you've got your website up and running, you need to start attracting people so your online 'showroom' isn't empty and to start growing and marketing your business online. Remember your customers research online, but the vast majority still prefer to buy 'offline' in a physical shop.

Social Media

Social media is a great tool to raise brand awareness, particularly in your local area, and connect with your customers. With 84% of UK adults currently on social media platforms... that's a big audience!

Once you've built up your following, sharing your site content via social platforms can be a great way to get more traffic to your website.

Plus, you'll be able to:

- Gain valuable customer insights
- Increase brand awareness
- Create targeted advert campaigns (these are surprisingly inexpensive)
- Easily share content and information
- Build relationships with your customers
- Improve brand loyalty
- Gain customer feedback

84%
of UK adults currently
use social media platforms!

Think Digital First [http://www.thinkdigitalfirst.com/2016/01/04/
the-demographics-of-social-media-users-in-2016/](http://www.thinkdigitalfirst.com/2016/01/04/the-demographics-of-social-media-users-in-2016/)



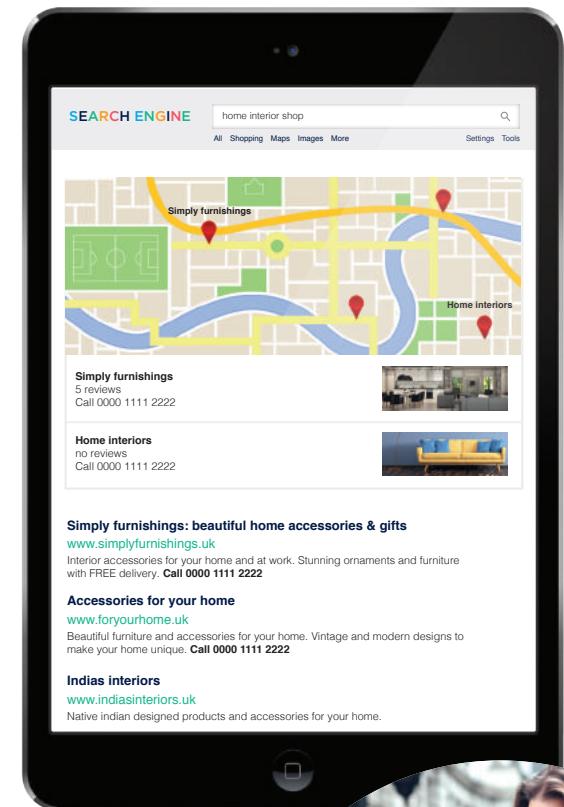
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO is all about discoverability on the internet and optimising websites to climb the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPS) so your business appears higher on the list of rankings on sites like Google and Bing.

Although it may sound complicated, there are some simple steps you can take to improve SEO, which you can find out about in our guide for new site owners on theukdomain.uk/seotips

Local SEO is great for retailers as it's all about targeting potential customers in your local area. For example, if you were to search for 'home interior shop' on Google, you should see a results page that not only responds to the keyword you typed in, but also tailors itself to your location.

This can be excellent for businesses looking to target potential customers in their location.



You can find some great tips
on how to get started on
theukdomain.uk/seotips



Email Marketing

Email marketing involves using email as a tool to communicate with your customers, directly emailing your target audience to promote your business and products. We would recommend you look for ways to encourage customers to sign up for emails, such as offering them a monthly newsletter of new products instore. Money saving offers or vouchers are often a successful way to get subscribers to an email database.

You can use email marketing to:

- Enhance customer relationships
- Build customer loyalty
- Acquire customers
- Increase brand awareness
- Generate sales

If you decide to use this technique, the key is relevance and engaging your audience. Don't start over-mailing or spamming customers.



Market research found that 66% of online customers make a purchase as a **result of an email marketing message**

Data & Marketing Association Research <https://thedma.org/data-driven-marketing/saturday-stat-series/>

Email marketing has an average return on investment, that's **4 TIMES HIGHER** than any other marketing strategy including social media & paid search.

eMarketer, 2016 <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Email-Outperforms-Social-Media-Paid-Search-ROI/1014905> and <https://thedma.org/>



Learning from your online presence

Once you're up and running online, there are some great tools that can tell you everything from where your target audience lives online to how many people are visiting your website.

Google Analytics is a popular (and free) website that provides a wealth of useful and interesting data on how your website is performing and who is visiting it. Most of the basic useful information can be found easily on the ready-made dashboards and there are plenty of guides out there if you wanted to delve deeper in the future.

These are just a couple of examples of what you could find out from Google Analytics. Remember, the longer your website is live, the more data you'll have available to compare.

- How many people are visiting your website (per day, week, month, year)
- How long people are spending on your website
- Which of your webpages are being visited the most
- The age and gender of visitors to your website
- Which devices people are using to visit your website

If your business is also active on social media, you can get further insights into your customers. For example, Facebook Insights can tell you the age, gender, lifestyle, education and job role of your fans as well as past purchase behaviour and how frequently your target audience is using the platform.

WEBSITE ACTION PLAN

Are you ready to get started? Here's a useful checklist of the seven steps you need to take to get online:

1 CHOOSE A DOMAIN NAME

Try to make it simple, reflective of your current business and with scope for development. Once you've picked the perfect domain name, check if it's available using our 'Find a Domain' search box at theukdomain.uk/buy-a-domain/.

2 CHOOSE A REGISTRAR

Alongside the search results you will see a range of registrars that offer your domain. Research registrars for their special offers and look at their T&Cs. Think about how you want to build your website and what features are important to you to help with your decision.

3 DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT YOUR WEBSITE TO DO AND WHICH DESIGN BEST SUITS THE PURPOSE

Set out the purpose of your website and some initial goals. This will help direct you to a suitable design and website type.

4 CHOOSE A WEBSITE PLATFORM

There are several different options available when it comes to building your website. Think about your expertise, digital confidence, time capacity and budget when making your decision. Remember that whatever you start with, it can always be updated and improved at a later date.

5 BUILD YOUR WEBSITE

Don't be afraid to look at different themes and take your time when building your website. Remember to include those essentials too, such as your contact details, business name and great imagery that clearly shows what your business offers.

6 TEST YOUR WEBSITE

It's important to test your website across all major search browsers and mobile devices.

7 ATTRACT CUSTOMERS TO YOUR WEBSITE AND LEARN FROM THEM

Once your website is up and running, it's time to get the word out. You could set up some social media accounts, create blog posts and collect email subscribers. When you're ready, you can also look at the analytics of your online presence and use these to grow further. Do your Facebook fans react well to a certain post type? And which webpage is most popular with your online customers?

Being online will open a whole host of new opportunities for your business so, what are you waiting for? If you would like any further support or information about anything featured in this guide please get in touch via email to website@nominet.uk or telephone +44 01865 332208.

You can find lots of helpful articles, blogs and free guides on our website too - theukdomain.uk



ABOUT US

The UK Domain provides advice and guides for businesses and individuals, to help them achieve more online with a professional website and email address.

Today over 3 million UK businesses and millions more consumers use a domain name ending in .uk and rely on our registry services. The UK Domain family, including .co.uk, .uk, .org.uk and .me.uk is managed and operated by Nominet.

theukdomain.uk

