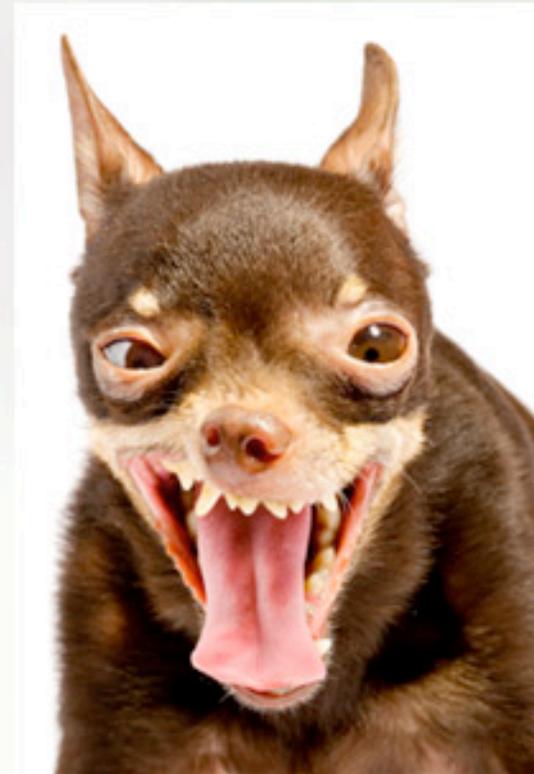


YOUR WEBSITE IS UGLY

*10 Things Your Friends
Won't Tell You But Your
Web Designer Wants
You To Know*

*Kelli Wise
Pint Sized Sites*



Your Website is Ugly

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About the cover photo: @iStockphoto.com/cookelma. This photo is not meant to disparage the dog shown, but let's face it: he's kind of ugly. So ugly, he's cute!

10 Things Your Friends Won't Tell You But Your Web Designer Wants You To Know

No animals were harmed in the making of this eBook.
Although a cornbread muffin, a couple of eggs, and lots of coffee didn't quite make it out alive.

Edition 1.1

PintSizedSites.com – Websites for Small Businesses

Your Website is Ugly

1 I SEE WEB CONTENT.

Lots of web content. That's a big part of my job. I see clients making the same mistakes over and over.

- ✘ Mistakes that cost them customers.
- ✘ Mistakes that cost them money.
- ✘ Mistakes that are easy to fix.

1.1 ARE YOU MAKING ANY OF THESE MISTAKES?

Maybe you are and no one has told you. It's like having spinach between your teeth – will any of your friends tell you before you introduce yourself to that hottie by the fountain? Or will they just sit and watch you crash and burn?

I believe you have something valuable to offer to the world, so I'm hear to tell you: **your website needs work.**

You have something valuable to offer to the world – Your website should reflect that.

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About now, you are looking at your checking account balance and your calendar thinking you don't have the time or money to make any website improvements.

Don't despair. **Most of this can be easily fixed.** It doesn't take a lot of time. It won't even cost any money. Some of the fixes are as simple as picking a piece of spinach out of your teeth.

Let's see if you're making any of these mistakes and what we can do to fix them. We're going to make your website irresistible. Your customers are going to know that you can rock their world.

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1.2 MISTAKE #1 I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN HELP ME

Why? Because you've hidden your most important selling point below the fold.

Open your browser and go straight to your home page. Don't scroll down; just leave it the way it popped up on your screen. Everything that's visible is considered "Above the Fold".

What do you see?

I'll bet it's something unhelpful like "Hi" or "Welcome". Pish-tosh, you'll never make anyone's life better that way.

Hit me above the fold

I want you to think about what keeps me awake at night. What one little thing causes my gut to clench at the mere thought? What little fear or worry occupies my mind late at night? What am I losing sleep over?

That's the first thing I should see when I land on your

The most important stuff on your home page should go here!

The details can go below the fold ...
HERE.

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home page.

The next thing I should see is how you can **HELP ME** sleep easy knowing that you have taken care of everything.

What problem am I trying to solve? What is my boss harping on me about? How can I look like a hero and keep Chip, the new wunderkind, from taking my job?

That's what you want me to see when I first open your home page. Make me glance over my shoulder to see if Chip is sucking up to the boss. Remind me why I am looking for you. Then tell me my problems are solved by your product or service. Tell me that I can be a hero. Tell me that I can send little Chip back to the mailroom sorting TPS reports.

Tell me my problem, and then show me your solution. And do it fast because I've got work to do.

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1.2.1 Not sure how this works? Let's look at some examples

You're a bookkeeper. Don't lead off with "Hi, I'm a bookkeeper". I'm not stupid. I already figured that out. How could I not? Your company name is "Bob's House of Bookkeeping".

Instead, tell me you know what's keeping me up at night.

"Do you know where all your money is?"

"Is that business deduction really legal?"

"Do you spend more time doing payroll than with your family?"

If my answers are: *No, I'm not sure, and Yes* – then I know I've found someone who understands me. Bonus – I figured that out within seconds. You know my problems and you aren't wasting my time.

This is a quick punch to the gut & it works.

Your customers want to know what you can do for them. Frame what you have to offer in terms of their need rather than what you do.

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Now that I'm as scared as a redshirted extra in a Star Trek episode, show me your solution and then tell me that I don't need to look any farther.

"Cash flow reports you can understand."

"The latest information on allowable tax deductions"

"20 years of payroll experience"

Whew, that's great news! I thought I might be going to prison over mileage deductions, but you'll keep me safe from the IRS. Now that I know you understand my problem and have a solution, I'm ready to hear more. Now you can go into detail, below the fold.

1.3 EXERCISE #1

What is your customer's biggest fear or problem? Write that down. Be graphic. Scare your customer a little.

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How does your product or service make that fear or problem go away? Write that down. Make your customer feel safe.

Congratulations! You've now got better sales content than most of your competitors.

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1.4 MISTAKE #2 YOUR WEBSITE HURTS MY EYES

Are all babies cute? Even if they're not?

I hate to tell you this, but your website is not your baby and it's ugly as sin. In fact, it's so ugly people are emailing links to it with cute little captions like:

"Dude, the 1990's called and they want their blinking, scrolling text back"

"Is this the BEFORE picture?"

"Which is uglier, this website or this dog?"

Maybe you've gotten a quote of several thousand dollars for a custom website and you don't have that kind of cash. So you decided to design your own website using one of those 'easy to use' website builders that your webhost offers for free.

The site builder with the templates from 1998?



Your Website is Ugly

The site builder with clip art so old and ugly even Microsoft won't include it with their software?

The site builder that uses wallpaper better suited as a test for color blindness than sales pages?

Yeah, that site builder. The one that lets you, the person with no fashion sense or matching socks, pick colors & graphics for your website. I'm sorry I have to tell you: Your website is uglier than this dog.

1.5A BEAUTIFUL WEBSITE DOESN'T NEED TO COST THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS.

If you're handy with a computer, you can have a gorgeous website for under \$50 and the price of webhosting using Wordpress and a premium theme.



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Or you can hire the likes of me to give you something a little more customized with your logo and color scheme for under \$1000.

- ✘ Ugly websites make your information look out of date.
- ✘ Ugly websites make you look amateurish.
- ✘ Ugly websites cost you money and sales.

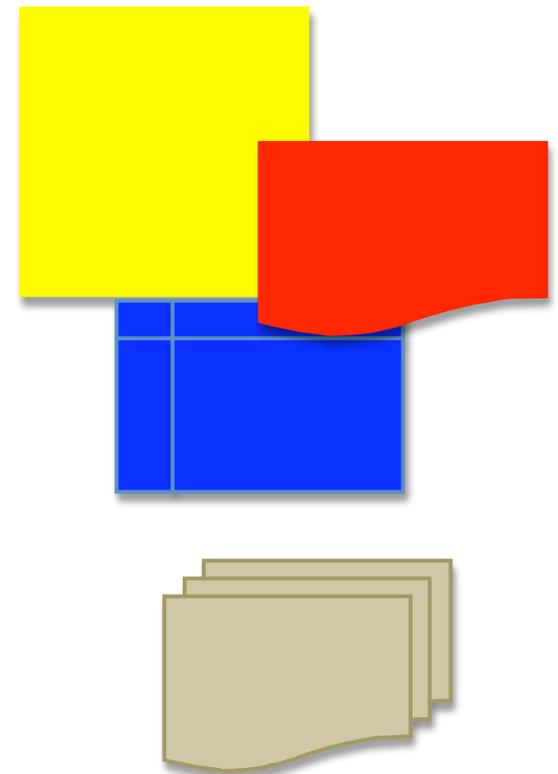
Spend a little money and get a gorgeous website.

1.6 WHAT MAKES A WEBSITE UGLY?

1.6.1 Clutter

Does your website have a lot of ads? Do they clash visually? Do any of them have blinking or scrolling text? Do any of them have that weird bobble head effect? Do any of them feature more than one exclamation point in a row?

You have ad clutter. Unless your primary income is advertising, thin the herd. Ask yourself if you're in business to make money for you or your advertisers.



Your Website is Ugly

If the ads hurt your eyes or cost you customers, get rid of them and tell your advertisers why: your ads suck; make them prettier or find somewhere else to post them.

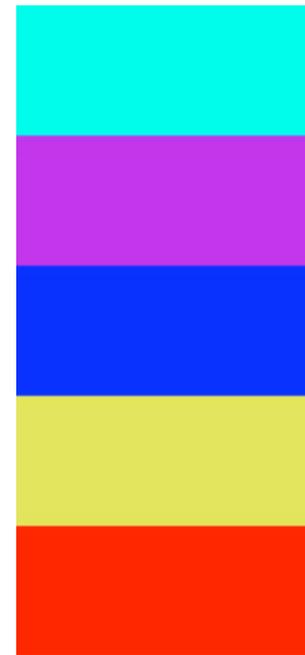
1.6.2 Too many knick-knacks in the sidebar(s)

If you design your website properly, I will wander through it the way I wander through a store. Draw me in. Make me wonder what other lovely things you have to offer. Don't throw it all in my face at the front door.

1.6.3 Ugly, clashing colors

Pardon the pun, but color selection is an art. The colors on your website should have a cohesive color SCHEME. Don't just throw some random colors up and hope it all works because you like **Orange**, **Purple**, and **Desert Camouflage**.

Also, be really mindful of background colors. **Pink Text on Blue Background** has been implicated in at least 15 violent assaults. Ok, maybe not, but it's nearly impossible to read. Some color combinations are actually invisible to readers



*Does this look
like your color
palette?*

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who are colorblind. This might be a fun way to prank your friends, but will make your customers feel stupid.

1.7 EXERCISE #2

Does your home page remind you of your grandmother's mantle? Pictures of every child, grandchild, mother, father, cousin, distant relative, and long lost friend competing for attention?

Count the number of ads and widgets featured on your home page. Don't count the stuff in the footer. How many are there on your page? Write that number here

How many are above the fold? Write that number here.

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A good rule of thumb: If the first number is more than 3 times the second number and the second number is more than 4, you have too many. For those not good at math, that's 12 total and 4 above the fold.

Count the number of colors used. Write that number here. Black & white don't count.

Did you count more than 3? That is too many colors. A good rule of thumb, for amateur color designers:

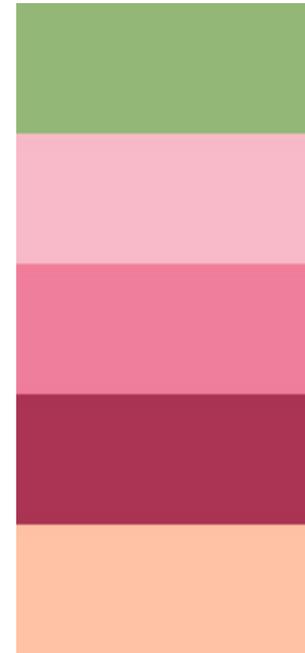
1 Primary color

plus 2 additional shades of the primary color, usually one lighter and one darker

You can add either:

1 color from the opposite side of the color wheel (it's called a complementary color)

Isn't this better?



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1 color adjacent on the color wheel (it's called an analogous color)

- OR -

2 colors adjacent on the color wheel (they are called analogous color)

That's a total of 3 colors with some lighter or darker shades for emphasis.

NOTE: if you are a graphic designer, painter, interior decorator, or expert quilter YOU get to break this rule of thumb because you actually understand color theory. This rule of thumb applies to the rest of us who depend on people like you to make sure our shirts match our slacks.

A great resource to help you design a color scheme is Color Scheme

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1.8 MISTAKE #3 I CAN'T READ YOUR TEXT

Please make your text big enough to read.

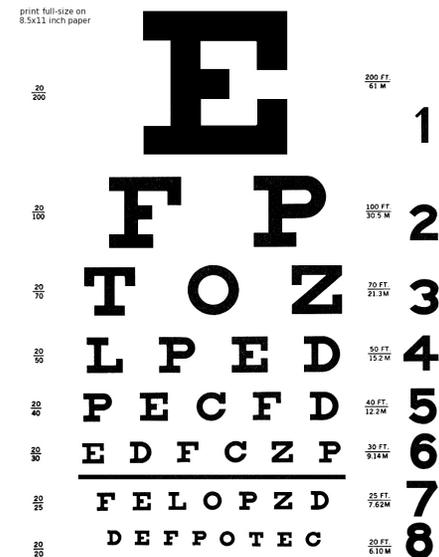
Please make your text dark enough to read.

There are 2 trends in web design you need to be aware of. One is a shining example. The other is a horrible warning.

Trend #1: 16 px font is the new standard

16 pixel (px) font is big enough to be comfortably read on most computer screens, but not clownishly big. Some fonts may even have to bump up to 18 px. Don't be afraid to go big.

Note to those under the age of 30: Someday you will be 50 and that cool 8 pixel font will be unreadable. Making me put on my reading glasses in front of my friends makes me feel stupid. Making me feel stupid makes me not want to give you my business. 'Nuff said.



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Another good rule of thumb: Make your headings big enough to contrast with one another and stand out as “This is important stuff”. Examples:

Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3

Heading 4

Paragraph Text

That wasn't so hard, was it? It's not like people are using up paper and ink printing this stuff out, so be generous. Make the text big enough to read and leave some space around it to make it stand out.

Trend #2 Light gray text on a white background

I'm seeing this more often in off the shelf, premium themes and all of my clients ask the same question:

“Can you make the text darker so I can actually read it?”

“If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to serve as a horrible warning.”

- Catherine Aird

Your Website is Ugly

Really? This is readable to you? Or maybe you're really shy and don't want to have your text intrude upon my life? Is this such an important secret that only those with the 'reading pale text' super powers are allowed to know what it says?

Did that make the point? Let this serve as a horrible warning: make the text readable. And if you design premium themes – how about making the text a little darker so everyone can read along?

That brings me to another text formatting mistake: white text on a black background.

Unless your website is promoting a horror flick or a rock band (or a horror flick by a rock band, do you hear me Rob Zombie?), don't use white text on a dark background. It's hard and tiring to read.

If you are a photographer with a portfolio site and you want your photos to “pop”, by all means, use a black

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background. But you can format your text areas to have dark font on a light background using transparency or analogous colors.

You have epic stuff that will make my life awesome. Make sure I know that by making your site readable.

1.9 EXERCISE #3

How big is the font on your website? Write the font size here.

If it is less than 16 px, find someone over the age of 40 who needs reading glasses and have them read your site without using their glasses. If they squint or complain that it's hard to read, make the font bigger.

Is your text lighter than your background? Circle your answer:

Your Website is Ugly

Yes - my text is light on a dark background

No – my text is dark on a light background

I don't know – the text is too light to read

If you circled **Yes** and you are not Rob Zombie, you've got some changes to make. If you circled **I don't know**? That's right, you have to make the text darker, too.

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1.10 MISTAKE #4 YOU DO KNOW WHAT "SPELL CHECK" IS, DON'T YOU?

True story: A friend of mine, we'll call him Arnold, just received his new business cards with his tag line "Don't sweat the samll stuff". He was so proud and excited. His business was brand new; he had a new logo and glossy, premium paper stock business cards. Like a proud papa, he was.

Until I pointed out the typo.

Did you notice it? I'll give you a second to go back and look. He misspelled the word 'small' and now had 1,000 useless bits of paper that he paid top dollar for.

All because he didn't use a spell check on his text.

If your website editor does not have a spell check, your word processor does. Nothing says amateur quite like a web page full of spelling and grammar errors.

"Sllep Check is your Frined."

Easy to use & all those silly typos disappear.

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1.11 EXERCISE #4

Copy all of the text from your web page and paste it into a word processor to check for spelling errors.

Fix the spelling errors.

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1.12 MISTAKE #5 YOUR NAVIGATION IS LOSING PEOPLE

It seems like such a simple thing, designing a navigation menu, but it is usually done as an afterthought most of the time. The result is a poorly thought out menu that suffers from two distinct problems: obfuscation* & encumbrance*.

You had to look those 2 words up, didn't you? My point, exactly.

Obfuscation:

Have you ever been to one of those cute, touristy seafood restaurants? You know, the ones who label their restrooms "Crabs" and "Lobsters". I have. In fact my dear old dad couldn't figure out which was which, so he guessed and walked into through the door labeled "Lobsters". The woman in the ladies' room nearly had a heart attack at the sight of a man walking in, but how was he to know?

*Eschew
Obfuscation!*

Your Website is Ugly

Your menu is just like that. You've got cute, clever names for everything, but no one can figure out what they mean or where they go.

Let's say you sell books. Your menu has listings for "Eyes" and "Ears". I'm looking for the latest William Gibson novel.

I guess I'll have to go to Amazon because you only sell books for people interested in vision and hearing.

What you should have is: "Books" and "Audio books". Quit making me think so hard in order to give you my money.

*obfuscate: to make evasive, unclear, or confusing

*encumber: to overload, to fill with useless matter

Encumbrance:

Your menu is cluttered up with too many choices.

The more choices I have to make, the more difficult it becomes to choose. This is called Choice Fatigue.

If you're feeling curious, or you're really bored, you can read the details at this 2009 paper at Stanford University.

http://www.stanford.edu/~ned789/Choice_Fatigue.pdf

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Humans are a bit odd when it comes to choosing: ***the more choices you offer a person, the less able they are to choose.***

How many times have you stood in front of a display of pickles and tried to decide between: dill or sweet, whole or spears or slices, crinkle cut or smooth, name brand or store brand? In my grocer's, there are over 20 different types of pickles to choose from. Who really has time to spend 10 minutes trying to find the right pickle for a hamburger?

You need to cut the number of decisions the customer has to make at any one time. They may end up choosing between 20 different pickles, but lead them to their choice one small decision at a time. That's what subnavigation is for.

Like this:

(Start)

Your Website is Ugly

- *Pickles*: Dill or Sweet?
- ↳ *Dill*: whole, spear, or slices?
 - ↳ *Slices*: crinkle cut or smooth?
 - ↳ *Smooth*: name brand or store brand?
 - ↳ *Name Brand*

See? One step at a time and I've decided on name brand, sliced, dill pickles for my hamburger (or veggie burger for your vegetarians). Yum!

1.13 EXERCISE #5

What text are you using for your "About Me" page? Write that here:

Is this text either: About, About Me, or About Us?

Home

About

Products

Contact

- vs -

Home Page

About Your Bookkeeper

Dill Pickles

Sweet Pickles

How To Contact Me

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Yes – Congratulations, I know where to find out who you are

No – it's labeled something else. Then it is either too long or too obscure. Change it.

If you answered **Yes**, then it's likely that your menu labels are short, sweet and to the point. You can check them again, but you're on the right track.

If you answered **No**, then it's likely that all of your menu labels are just as big or confusing. Keep them short, sweet, and to the point.

Can your menu items be sorted into similar categories? Do it. Now.

Your Website is Ugly

1.14 MISTAKE #6 I CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO CONTACT YOU

Put your contact information on every page

This point is so important it bears repeating:

Put your contact information on every page!

Don't think that you can only put your contact information on your Contact page. Put it in the footer. Put it the header image. Put it in the sidebar. For all that's holy - Put your contact information on every page!

This brings me to a related mistake: **don't give me contact information you don't monitor.**

I have a couple of clients who do not use email when dealing with their clients. So imagine their surprise when I asked why they wanted their email address on the website?

I'll keep it easy for you to remember:

A search optimization tip:

Make sure your address and phone number are identical in every way (abbreviations and all) everywhere they are listed on the internet.

Machines don't know that SE and Southeast are the same.

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How do you want to communicate with me? Give me that information.

If you're a physician, you aren't going to give me your cell phone number or your email address. So only publish your office number that provides clear instructions to me in case I'm having an emergency or want to schedule an appointment.

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1.15 EXERCISE #6

How do you want me to contact you? Place an X in the appropriate spot.

Yes No

___ ___ Email

___ ___ Phone

Make sure the YES items are on every page. Do it. Now.

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1.16 MISTAKE #7 ASKING FOR INFORMATION YOU DON'T NEED

A contact form can be one of the most useful things you have on your website. It's easy to use and hides your email address from spammers. Don't tell the corporate overlords, but many of their employees are using the internet while they are at work.

When they click on an email hyperlink, it opens their email program. Unfortunately, they don't want their corporate masters to know they are looking for rental property in another state, nor do they want you to know they work for Acme Widgets, Inc.

A contact form solves that problem. The visitor gets to choose which email account to use (their personal account) and the inquiry doesn't go through Acme's mail servers.

That sounds like a win win win situation, doesn't it? Unless you are making mistake #7.

If your contact form looks like this:

IRS Section 125 Qualifying Event Checklist
-Flexed Premiums & Un-reimbursed Medical-

CWID# _____ Employee Name: _____ Date: _____

ALL CHANGES ARE EFFECTIVE THE FIRST OF THE FOLLOWING MONTH AND CHANGES REQUESTED MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 31 DAYS OF THE QUALIFYING EVENT

THE FOLLOWING MUST BE COMPLETED:
Please explain the qualifying event(s) and describe how the requested change is consistent with the event(s).
(Example: spouse changed jobs, lost health benefits with previous employer, coverage ended 7/31/08, add spouse to health 8/1/08.)

Please Note: This Qualifying Event must be consistent with the request to add, drop, or make a change that affects your tax-sheltered health, dental, or vision premiums and Flexible Spending Account for your unreimbursed medical account.

Change	Description	Date of Event	Name of Spouse / Dependent
✓ Change	Change in Legal Marital Status Marriage (excludes common-law) Divorce/Legal Separation/Annulment (circle as appropriate)		
✓ Change	Change in Number of Dependents Death Adoption/Placement for Adoption Birth	Date of Event	Name of Dependent
✓ Change	Change in Employment Status (circle affected): Employee / Spouse / Dependent Termination of Employment with Loss of Employer Group Coverage: Employer Name: _____ Ins. Co. _____ Policy# _____ Commencement of Employment with Gain of Employer Group Coverage: Employer Name: _____ Ins. Co. _____ Policy# _____ Leave of Absence (going on or returning from) Commencement of unpaid leave (F.D.L., LWOP, Military, Layoff & FMLA) Upon return to work, circle all that apply: Health Dental Vision Termination within 90 days (no inside original document)	Date of Change	Name of Spouse / Dependent
✓ Change	*Gain/Loss of Coverage (circle affected): Employee / Spouse / Dependent *Gain of Coverage: Health Dental Vision Group/Employer Name: _____ Ins. Co. _____ Policy# _____ Voluntary Loss of Coverage: Health Dental Vision Employer/State Sponsored Plan Name: _____ Ins. Co. _____ Policy# _____	Gain/Loss Date	Name of Individual(s) affected
✓ Change	Change in Status Affecting Dependent Eligibility: Ineligible (circle one) Married age 21 Financially independent (not claimed on tax return) Marriage before age 21	Date of Event	Name of Dependent
✓ Change	Change in Residence affecting HMO: (must live or work within zip code area) Current Vendor	Date of Move	Name of Individual(s) affected
✓ Change	Change of Custody, Judgment, Court Order or Divorce requiring Health coverage, including Qualified Medical Child Support Orders (QMSO). If employee has court order to cover a dependent Child(ren), changes must be consistent with order	Date of Order	Name of Dependents

*Mid-year changes are allowed when gaining or losing coverage through a spouse's employer, your former employer, or one of the federal or state sponsored insurance plans (i.e. COBRA, military, Indian Health, Medicare, Medicaid, SSA, Veteran's Administration). Mid-year changes are not allowed for a voluntary drop of coverage.
**Changes due to the birth of a child are retroactive to the date of birth, unless noted.

Employee Signature:
Your signature confirms that all statements herein are true. Documentation that authenticates these statements could be required during an audit. Refer to Title 74 Oklahoma Statutes § 1323, Fraud – Penalties

You might need to make a few edits.

Your Website is Ugly

Do you really need to know my full name? Phone number?
Home address? What are you doing with this information?
Stealing my identity? Selling my information to a junk mail
service?

This is where most small businesses fail at contact forms.
Someone comes to your website and they see that you sell
crocheted car covers. They see that you have one available
for a 1967 Ford Mustang. And they know it's available in
Merino Wool or 100% cotton. Now they want to know if
it's organic cotton.

But you won't let them ask that one simple question
without getting a full history, including vaccination records
and whether they took high school Spanish.

So they go to the next company selling crocheted car
covers and purchase from them.

A good rule of thumb: ask for a name (not first and last,
just a name), REQUIRE an email and REQUIRE the

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message. You don't even need to ask for a subject, it should be in the message text.

1.17 EXERCISE #7

Do you have a contact form?

No – Add one, you'll thank me later

Yes – Proceed to the question below

How many pieces of information does your contact form ask for? Write this number here:

If you answered:

3 or less – good job. You are making it easy to use the form

4 to 6 – How many of these are Required for submission?

Are they all necessary?

Your Website is Ugly

7 or more – you probably don't get a lot of inquiries from your contact form, do you? Ask yourself: what do I *need* with all this information? **The contact form is an inquiry, not an order form.** Make it easy to ask questions about your service or product.

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1.18 MISTAKE #8 YOU PUT EVERYTHING ON ONE PAGE TO SAVE MONEY

The problem with a lot of free website packages is they limit you to 5 pages. You have a lot of products to sell or a lot to say about the services you provide. So, to make everything fit on the cheap/free site, you put everything on the same page.

Maybe you don't have the free site, but you still have everything on the same page. The why doesn't matter. You still end up with a page that goes on and on and on and

Pages that never seem to end will sap the will from even the hardest internet explorer. **Faced with a seemingly infinite amount of text, I will eventually lose interest** and wander off to look at videos of cats napping. So much for buying whatever it was you were selling, but I've been here so long I forgot what you were selling and why I was looking here in the first place and is my blood sugar

Ut enim (quam dolor sit amet), consectetur
adipiscing elit. Proin blandit volutpat diam
egit accipit. Aenean ut nisi id eros vehicula
semper. Duis id suscipit quam. In Aac
Aahtase plenas dicitur. Vestibulum
consequat purus nec nisi tristique aliquam.
Suspendisse non mauris ac libero curabitur
facilisis. Pellentesque dapibus tempor
ut quam lectus. Aenean molestique lectus
sed felis tempus eu nullam erat fermentum.
Quisque nuncupat curus enim, et tempus
magna fermentum nec. Etiam id nibh orci.
Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus
orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae;
Vestibulum eget lacus sem.
Nulla accumsan, odio a ultrices gravida,
mi eros dignissim arcu, a sodales nunc
ipsum quis diam. Vivamus non nisi eu
rius congue dicitur a vitae neque. In
vehicula dolor ac nibh tempus id tristique
ut vehicula. Fusce nisi arcu, sodales a
lobortis ac, posuere vitae arcu. Suspendisse
ac nulla nec orci lacinia mollis. Vestibulum
adipiscing aliquam feugiat. Sed tristique
congue nulla non dignissim. Nullam quis
ante eget mauris volutpat tristique.
Donec ut sapien et nunc mattis dapibus
et in magna. In suscipit rhoncus arcu.
Duis et acelerique sem. Vestibulum non
lectus orci, ac molestie est. Cras nec urna
mi. Pellentesque gravida, ante et imperdiet
porttitor; mauris lectus tristique mi, a
fringilla felis mauris a enim. Duis accumsan
molestiae arcu et tristique. Nulla sceleris
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Your Website is Ugly

dropping? When was my last meal, oh my god, how long have I been reading this page?

You get the idea. Break up very long pages into sections. Novelists do it all the time. They call them Chapters. You can do it, too. Do you have 20,000 words on improving my home's energy efficiency? Break it up into separate pages on windows, insulation, lighting, heating, draft prevention, and passive solar.

You not only make it more digestible for me to read, this will also force to you focus on one topic at a time. An even bigger **bonus: it will give you better search results as each page is concentrated on one search term and your keyword density will be higher.**

“But what about those super long sales pages?” you ask. Those sales pages are a bit of an illusion. If you'll notice, every so often you get presented with a “Buy Now” button. This actually breaks the page up by offering you a

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shortcut – the sooner you decide to buy, the less you have to read.

1.19 EXERCISE #8

Open each page of your website and check the size of the scroll bar on the right side of your browser window. If the scroll bar placeholder is really tiny compared to the scroll bar, your page is too long.

A good rule of thumb: Your web page should be 4 to 5 screen heights long, maximum. Better is 2 to 3. Anything longer is a good candidate for breaking up into smaller pages.

Your Website is Ugly

1.20 MISTAKE #9 I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO?

Think back to Mistake #1. It seems like so long ago, doesn't it?

You told me you knew what my problem was.

You told me you knew how to fix it.

<insert crickets chirping here>

Now what?

You have given me tons of great information, but you never asked for my business. You have no **Call To Action**.

You never told me what to do next! *Can't you see I'm almost paralyzed with fear?* Can't you see how excited I am that someone not only understands that fear, but can take it all away? But am I supposed to call you? Are there any forms I should fill out? Do I need to come to your office?

Remember the issue with Choice Fatigue?

Giving me a clear call to action will help me deal with that and move on to doing business with you.

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Give me the next step:

- “Call for an appointment”
- “Click here for more information”
 - “Buy now”

These are all examples of a call to action. They lead me to the next destination on my journey for a solution. I have a problem, you have a solution, I will do X, You will do Y. The Fear will be gone. Life will be good.

I'm guilty of this, too: I forget to ask you to buy. I'm worried that you will think I'm a craven opportunist if I ask for your business. I don't think I'm worthy. I have used all the excuses and I have heard all the excuses.

But here's the truth: I own a car and want to keep it running. If you're a good auto mechanic, I NEED YOU!

If we meet and you find out I need a good mechanic, give me your phone number and tell me to call you Monday morning at 8:45 am. You'll have processed all of the

Afraid to ask for the sale?

Think back to the last time you needed the name of a plumber or auto mechanic or air conditioning salesman.

Someone out there NEEDS what you have or can do. Asking for the sale will let them know you are OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

Your Website is Ugly

morning drop offs, given your employees their work assignments and can give me full attention to listen to what I need, give me a quote, and schedule an appointment. I don't think you're being a jerk; I think you're being really helpful.

So quit being shy about asking for my business and start being helpful. Tell me what the next step in the process is (“call me at this number at 8:45 am on Monday morning”). I will be grateful, not hateful.

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1.21 EXERCISE #9

For each page of your website, write the call to action here:

Page	Call to Action
Home	"Click product page for more information"
1.22	1.23
1.24	1.25
1.26	1.27
1.28	1.29
1.30	1.31
1.32	1.33

Your Website is Ugly

1.34 MISTAKE #10 YOU DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE

You would be surprised at the number of people reading this who haven't actually published their websites because they're still perfecting them. Maybe that describes you. Or maybe you have a big redesign planned but haven't made it public because it's "not done".

You haven't finished that website because:

You are working on color choice

You need the right font

You're design the right logo

You don't have all of the text written for all of the pages

You don't have enough blog articles "in the can" to launch

Let me share a little secret with you: that's all bull. There is no perfect. A website is never done.

The ugliest website is the one never published because it's "not good enough".

This dog might be ugly, but someone loves him enough to sell his picture on iStockPhoto.com



I love this little guy enough to buy his picture

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That doesn't mean you should never publish what you have. In fact, the opposite is true. **Mistakes #1 - #9? They mean nothing if you never publish.**

I recently had a client ask me how many pages she needed to have written so she would have a good website. She had read somewhere that she needed 100 pages to rank really well on Google. She was worried that it was going to take her *weeks* to write that much stuff.

Silly her. The author she quoted has been writing web content for years! Of course she ranks well – she's had the same domain for years, has consistently added to the content, and has built up an impressive library of articles that people use.

You have to start somewhere. But if you are going to make my life awesome with your epic shit **you need to start.**

Now.

Hit Publish.

Don't let any of the stuff I've written stop you from getting your website launched.

Tell me to take a hike

Get off your scared little ass

Hit the "PUBLISH" button

Your Website is Ugly

Fix it later.

I guarantee you that someone just did so, mistakes and all.

The world hasn't stopped orbiting the sun, has it? Your website mistakes won't create a rip in the space/time continuum, so get off your scared little ass and hit publish.

Now.

At the bare minimum, a website should have a Home page, a Contact page, and an About page. Tell me about my problems and your solutions, tell me who I'm doing business with, and tell me how to get in touch with you.

Fill up the site as you go along.

Here's another little secret: Right after I get done typing all of this, I'm going to go review my website and I *Guarantee* that I will find that I have made at least one of these mistakes, if not several, on my website.

But websites aren't carved in stone and mistakes can be fixed with the click of a mouse.

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How would you have found this **Epic Guide** if I was sitting around making sure that everything was perfect before I made it public?

“There comes a time in every product’s development when it’s time to fire the engineer and put it into production.”
My boss Steve @ Tandy. He was right.

1.35 **EXERCISE #10**

Log into your website editor. Delete that “coming soon” page. Upload your website or hit Publish.

“The perfect is the enemy of the good.”
- Voltaire

Your Website is Ugly

1.36 **MISTAKE #11 * QUIT OBSESSING ABOUT SEO
AND WRITE SOMETHING I WANT TO READ**

If I had a nickel for every time a client worried more about search engine optimization than their call to action, I could retire to a private island.

If you write something I want to read, and you have a product I need, I'll tell my friends about you. I'll tweet about you. I'll link to you on Facebook and Google +. That's the best search engine love you can get.

Forget keyword density, meta tags and all that stuff and concentrate on good, old-fashioned valuable information.

Take care of your customers. They'll spread the word.

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*You thought there would only be 10, didn't you? Ah, but I threw in a bonus item to see if you were really paying attention. That and I'm all about maximizing value.

Your Website is Ugly

1.37 SUMMARY

I guess I'm hoping that you realize that the title of this was written tongue in cheek. If not - oops.

The message remains: Your website isn't perfect. It isn't finished. It never will be. But it can, and should, be improved upon.

Most of the improvements I've suggested are free. Get your site published. Polish it. Tweak it. Add to it.

A website is not a static thing. It can, and should change and grow with you and your business.

1.38 CALL TO ACTION:

- If you've been nodding along with this guide and can think of some changes you'd like to make – or
 - If you don't want to do it all yourself – or
 - If your old web designer has quit returning your calls – or
 - If you'd like some help with making your website amazing

*Visit
PintSizedSites.com
for more
information on
how to make your
website better.*

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Contact me. I'd love to help you out. I'd love to help you make the world a better place. Not sure how to get in touch? Go to my website. I have a contact form. I have a phone number. Use one of them to get in touch.

2 BE EPIC. BE AWESOME. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.