



# How to create your website

## Step-by-step guide

Build your website the easy way



## Introduction

### Do you need a website?

Marketing and promotion. Sales and support. A 24/7 window into your business. There are plenty of reasons to start a website for your company:

- Offer news and information
- Show your product range
- Sell to customers online
- Support your existing customers

The internet is a major influence on purchasing decisions, so having a website will give your company extra exposure and credibility – as well as helping you attract new customers.

### It's easy to build a website

You don't need to be a technical whizz to put together a high-quality website and it needn't cost more than a few pounds each month.

So what are you waiting for? Read on and see how easy it is to build a website for your company.

### Suggestions

#### Our services

We offer services to help you build a website. We mention them where appropriate in this guide, but it's up to you whether you want to use them.

Either way, this guide contains lots of handy, practical advice.

#### Extra help

For more web design help and advice, check out our blog too.

<http://inside.123-reg.co.uk>



# Naming your site

## Give your site a name

A domain name is the address where people can find your website. Our domain name is [www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk). You need a memorable domain name so it's easy for potential customers to visit your website.

### Get the right domain

- Most businesses register domain names ending in **.com** or **.co.uk**. These are the addresses people recognise and trust most.
- You can also consider other business-related domain extensions like **.biz** or **.net** – especially if you can't find a good .com domain.
- If you trade abroad, register domains for your target markets. For instance, an address ending in **.mx** would be good for trading in Mexico.

### Domain name tips

- Lots of good domain names are already taken, so you might have to explore different ideas to find the right one for your company.
- You buy domain names for a fixed period – typically two years. Always renew domains promptly, to stop others snatching them!
- To stop “domain squatters” profiting from your brand, consider registering additional domain name extensions.

### Suggestions

#### Register your domain name

You can register domain names through our website. We manage more than 2.4 million domains for our customers and our prices offer great value. [www.123-reg.co.uk/domain-names](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/domain-names)

#### Domain name advice

We've put lots of useful domain name advice on our blog – including information about avoiding domain squatters and scammers. <http://inside.123-reg.co.uk>

#### Do you need email too?

When you buy your domain name, it's really easy to get email addresses for everyone in your company. [www.123-reg.co.uk/email](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/email)



# Website purpose

## What's your website for?

Once you've decided to build a website for your company, you need to decide what you want to achieve with it. Define some broad objectives for your site. For instance, you might want to:

- Sell directly online
- Attract new customers
- Offer after-sales support
- Provide information about your company

It's important to decide your aims at the start, because they will influence how your website looks, the structure of the pages and what information you include.

Write the aims of your website down in priority order, so you can refer to them as you design and build your site.

### Suggestions

#### [Get some inspiration](#)

Look at other websites to help decide what to do with yours.

Check websites run by your competitors – and pay attention to other websites you use regularly. How are they structured? What can you do with them?

#### [Ask your customers](#)

Your customers can be a valuable source of feedback - ask them what they'd like to be able to do with your website.



## Site map

### How will you structure your site?

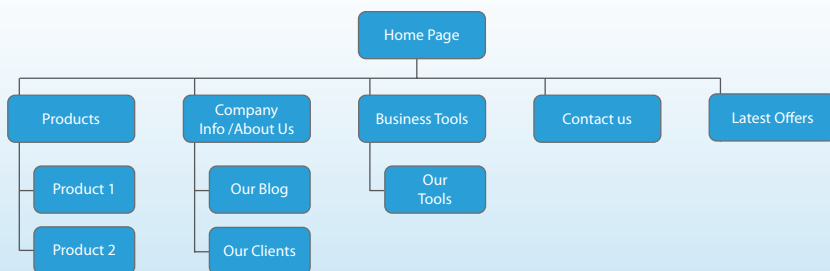
Before you start building anything, it's important to decide what pages you want on your website and how they will fit together.

The structure of your site will depend on what you're aiming to do with it.

These are some of the things you might need to include:

- Home page
- Product catalogue
- Company information
- Online order form
- Contact page
- Help and support
- Business news

It's a good idea to draw up a map of your site – either using paper or your computer.



Most site maps are represented by a tree diagram, with the website's home page positioned at the top of the tree.

### Suggestions

#### Keep it flexible

You don't have to get your site map spot on first time. You can always change it later, so just make sure you have a good idea of what pages your site will need.

#### Navigation matters

When you create your site map, structure the pages so visitors can easily move from between them.

Think about the paths visitors are likely to take through your site, and make these easy to follow.



# Constructing your site

## Decide how to build your site

There are 3 main ways to actually build your website:

### Do it from scratch

- If you're familiar with the HTML code websites are built with, you can create your site from scratch. This gives you a high level of control, but can be time-consuming and tricky.

*Good if you're not afraid of code and have enough time available.*

### Use a site creator

- This is the fastest, easiest way to build a website. Just pick the design you like from a range of templates, then add your images, text and other content. No technical knowledge is required.

*Good if you're on a limited budget and don't want any technical hassle.*

### Work with professionals

- For a unique, highly-professional website, you can work with a web design agency. You'll benefit from all their expertise and should get a site that fits your needs exactly.

*Good if you have complex requirements and money to spend.*

Your budget and the level of technical knowledge in your business will largely determine which is the right option for you. Make sure your chosen method will meet all your website needs too.

### Suggestions

#### Instantsite

Ideal for complete beginners who want to build a website themselves but don't have the know-how.

Anyone can build a website in an instant with InstantSite.

[www.123-reg.co.uk/instantsite](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/instantsite)

#### Website Builder

Ideal for anyone who wants to build a professional business website using a fast and flexible website builder.

[www.123-reg.co.uk/website-builder](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/website-builder)

#### Web design service

Our web design service gives you a tailor made website in just 48 hours. Get in touch and we'll do the rest. [www.123-reg.co.uk/webworx24-web-design](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/webworx24-web-design)

#### Learning HTML

If you have the time, learning HTML can be very rewarding. There are lots of online resources to get you started. One of the best is w3schools.com.

[www.w3schools.com](http://www.w3schools.com)



## Site content

### What to put on your site

Sometimes it's hard to know what to put on your website. Unlike printing a catalogue or newsletter, you can include as much information as you like – at little or no extra cost! However, too much detail is just as bad as too little – so think carefully when selecting content for your site.

#### Tips for great content

- **Put your visitors first.** Think about what people are most likely to be looking for on each page, and make that the first thing you include.
- **Avoid dead ends.** Every page should give your visitors somewhere to go – for instance, to buy a product, or contact you.
- **Keep it snappy.** Keep pages to a maximum of 400 words, using bullet points and titles, so people can skim read.
- **Be personal.** A casual, conversational tone works well on the internet – so try not to sound stuffy and formal.
- **Use pictures and video.** Carefully chosen, well-placed photos and videos can really bring your site – and business – to life.
- **Remember your objectives.** Every item on your website should go some way towards meeting the objectives you defined at the start.

#### Get some help

If you're struggling to generate content for your website, there are lots of places to go for help. Ask your staff, see if customers will contribute – or search online for a web agency or professional writer.

#### Suggestions

##### Answer key questions

Planning your website content?  
Think about the questions customers ask most often. Would it help to put the answers on your site?

##### Finding Photos

It's easy to find cheap (or even free) photos to use on your website. Try these sites – but always carefully check the copyright rules for using each photo.

[www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

[www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

[www.fotolia.com](http://www.fotolia.com)

[www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu)



## Selling online

### Should you sell online?

Setting up an online shop is a great way to find new customers and grow your business - ultimately giving you extra stability.

#### How to sell online

There are two main ways to create an online shop:

- **Use an ecommerce package.** The easiest way to get started, an ecommerce package will let you choose a design for your shop, then add your company and product details. It will take care of payment and order processing too, so you don't need any technical knowledge.
- **Develop a shop yourself.** If you need customised functions, you can build an online shop from scratch. This gives you loads of flexibility, but takes lots of time and know-how. Most companies would need to work with a professional web developer to do this.

When you plan your online shop, consider the impact on the rest of your business. You have to take care of postage, returns, enquiries – and monitor stock levels so you don't keep your customers waiting.

### Keeping it all secure

Security is super important when you're handling sensitive details like credit card information.

You can protect this information and prove your site's identity with an SSL certificate from GlobalSign. This activates the browser padlock which visitors expect to see when they buy online - giving them confidence in your site.

#### Suggestions

##### Our online shop service

Our Ecommerce package includes everything you need to build and run an online shop.

[www.123-reg.co.uk/ecommerce](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/ecommerce)

##### SSL certificates

Our range of SSL certificates protect the information on your website – no matter whether you run an online shop or not.

[www.123-reg.co.uk/ssl-certificates](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/ssl-certificates)





# Hosting your site

## Publishing your website

Once you've built your website, you can publish it on the internet using a web hosting package. This gives you web space, so anyone online can visit your website.

(If you use a website creator or ecommerce package to create your website, web hosting should be included).

### Get the right hosting

Web hosting packages include two essential features:

- **Storage space**, for your website files. This is measured in megabytes (MB) – you need at least 10MB for a simple site, and much more for a complex one.
- **Bandwidth**, which allows visitors to view your site. It's also measured in megabytes - the more visitors you have, the more bandwidth you'll need.

It's hard to know exactly how much storage space and bandwidth you should get, but entry-level hosting packages are usually suitable for simple websites. If you're not sure what you need, look for a low-end package which you can upgrade easily

Here are some other things to look for in your web hosting package:

- **Good support.** Comprehensive online help and a knowledgeable support team can be a lifeline.
- **Reliability and security.** Look for an established provider with a good track record in the hosting industry.

### Suggestions

#### Hosting from 123-reg

Our hosting packages are super reliable and have all the advanced features you'll ever need.

[www.123-reg.co.uk/web-hosting](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/web-hosting)



# Keeping it updated

## Managing your website

Published your website? That's just the start. To keep visitors interested and willing to return, you need to regularly update your site with new information and remove any outdated content.

### What to update

There are lots of things to keep up-to-date on your website:

- **Products and prices.** If your product catalogue is online, remember to update it whenever prices or product details change.
- **News.** If there's a company news section on your website, update it frequently – otherwise it will look out-of-date.
- **Company information.** Things change. Maybe you've taken on new staff, or moved offices. Your website needs to reflect this.

To make sure nothing gets missed, it's a good idea to review content on your website in sequence. Keep a list of pages and aim to review them all at least once every 6 months..

### Suggestions

#### Online marketing tools

Attract more visitors and keep them on your site for longer.

[www.123-reg.co.uk/internet-marketing/](http://www.123-reg.co.uk/internet-marketing/)

#### Here's our advice

Need ideas? Read our blog for a regular dose of inspiration.

<http://inside.123-reg.co.uk>



## Improving your website

### Keep it fresh

The best business websites are treated as ongoing projects, with new pages, sections or functions being added regularly. For example, you could:

- Add a discussion forum so customers can share information.
- Start selling online (if you don't already).
- Launch a blog offering advice about your products or services.
- Shoot some promotional videos and put them online.

Gradual improvements add up. So even if it's just a new page here or a video there, visitors will notice the overall impact on your website.

### About 123-reg

With over 2.4 million registered domain names, we're one of the UK's biggest web hosting companies. So when you choose 123-reg for your online business, you can be sure we're in it for the long run.

To see our full range of services, just visit our website at [www.123-reg.co.uk](http://www.123-reg.co.uk).

### Suggestions

#### Plan ahead

You can use a web statistics tool to see how people are using your website. For instance, see how customers find your site and see which pages are most popular. Then use this information to plan improvements.

Try Google Analytics or Clicky to get started.

[www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics)  
[www.clicky.com](http://www.clicky.com)

