# Building a Lead-Generating, Powerhouse Website




imbue creative®

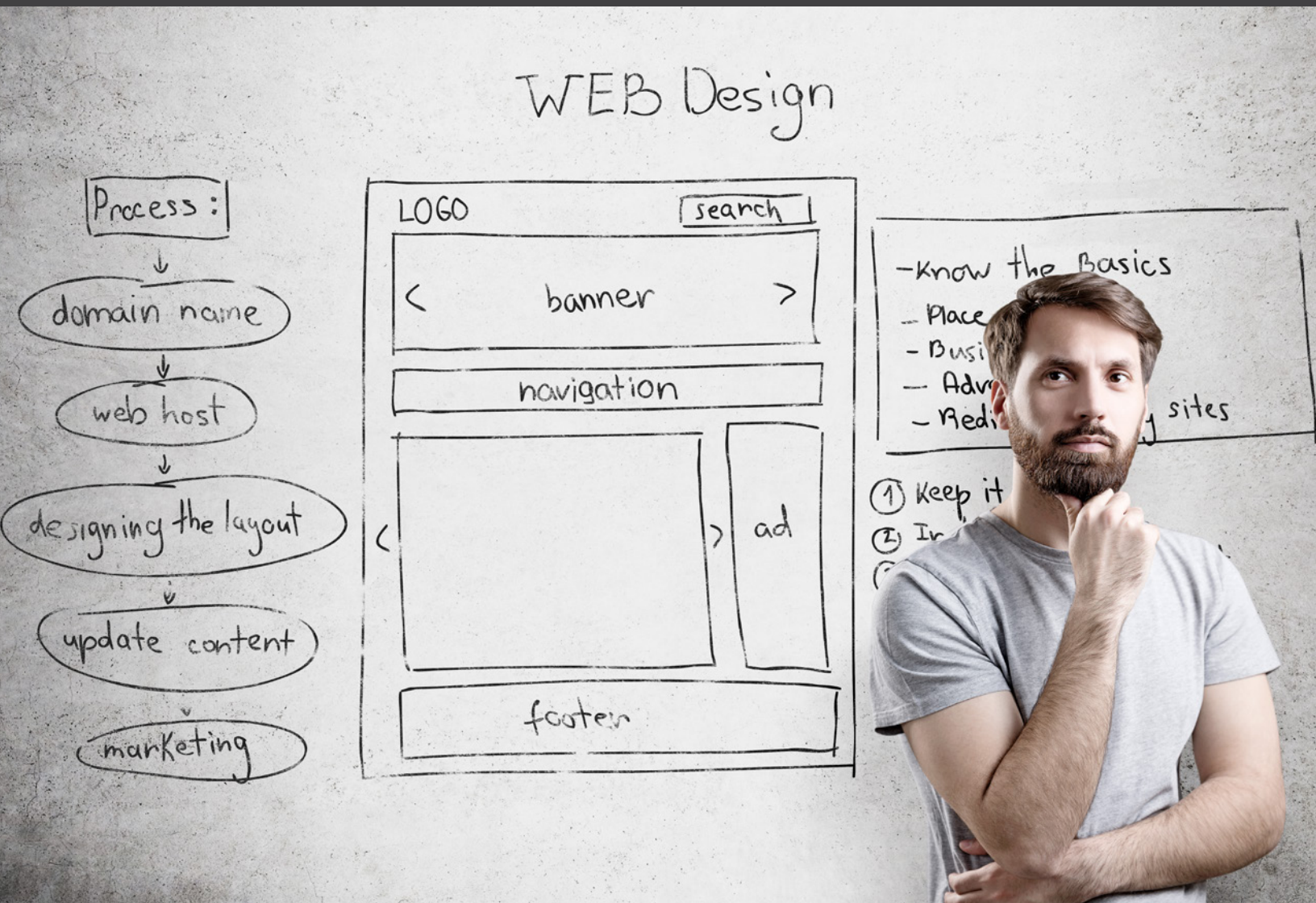
imbuecreative.com

# Building a Lead-Generating, Powerhouse Website

While every organization has a website, it's easy to understand why most of them are not lead-generating powerhouses. Understandably, many organizations face challenges in devoting the time required to keeping their website's content fresh and up-to-date, and increasing visibility online.

The key to creating a compelling user experience and content that attracts visitors, engages them, encourages return visits, and turns them into leads is planning. Your website needs to not only attract the right kinds of leads, but then must work hard to engage them so they will stick around and learn more about your brand. Everything from your website's design and user experience to its content plays a role in telling a prospective customer your brand's story and in helping them view your organization as a credible source. A poor user experience or the presentation of irrelevant or outdated content will quickly make leads go elsewhere to find the solution or partner they feel they can trust.

How do you plan or redesign a website that generates and captures leads, and helps nurture them into clients, customers, and brand advocates? Read on for some key considerations....



# Plan Well

## (and make content management manageable)

What is the main goal of your website? To drive inbound leads so your sales and marketing team can nurture them into clients or customers? To serve as an educational resource for a specific community or population? To help establish your organization as a resource for thought leadership in your area of practice or expertise? Since this article is primarily about building a lead-generating website, we're going to focus mainly on driving leads to your sales and marketing team; however, many of the planning principles discussed can still be helpful for other types of powerhouse websites.

If you want your website to drive inbound search traffic, then your organization's commitment to developing and posting content on a regular basis is critical. One of the primary items you need to decide up front is **how much content the site will have at launch, and how much content you can realistically generate going forward.** You also need to consider the different types of content you will include on your site, and what types of content you will develop on an ongoing basis. Then, you can make a plan for housing that content in a logical, and user-friendly, manner. For example, you should consider:

### Content for Main Company Pages

Your core pages should include your brand's story and the services or products you provide. Make this content easy to digest and ensure that it quickly tells your brand story in terms that your core audiences will connect with.

### Blog Approach

Will you be able to blog frequently? If so, who will be blogging for your organization? Whose voice will the blog use, that of the organization or individual team members and guest bloggers? If you can't commit to blogging, don't start a blog. Nothing makes a website look more stale than a blog with no recent posts.

### Content Offers

One of the staples of inbound marketing is building content offers and driving traffic to those offers. The goal is to encourage leads to submit contact information in exchange for downloading the offer. Content offers can be simple checklists and tip sheets or robust ebooks and online videos. No matter their size, they should offer something of value in exchange for the lead's contact details.

### Landing Pages

If you want a visitor to perform a specific action on your website (like downloading a content offer or completing a form to request a consultation or product demo), make sure you have special landing pages that encourage only that one desired action. In other words, make your landing pages simple and don't include links that can encourage your visitor to click away from the page.




### Future Content

What other types of content will you produce (or ask your agency to produce) now and in the future? Video? Image galleries? Thought-leadership articles? Industry commentary? Think through your overall content strategy up front so you can plan your website to house additional types of content down the road. You'll never think of everything, but some careful consideration and planning now for things you plan to produce and post later will save you on future development costs.

# Choose the Right Designer and Developer

You can have great content and a solid content strategy, but the user experience will make or break your website's effectiveness in connecting with visitors and converting them into leads. Plus, if you present a professional and consistent design, visitors will be more likely to expect that you apply the same care in providing products and services to your clients or customers. When it's easy for a user to find the information they seek or to accomplish a task using your website, that positive experience will also be associated with how people feel about your brand in general.

At first glance, it can seem easy to evaluate potential web designers and developers simply by looking at their portfolios. Remember that a website can look beautiful, but be poorly coded. Ensure that the design and development team has significant experience building the type of site you need, earning bonus points if they have experience that is specific to your industry. Note that developers are often great at code, but not at design—and vice versa, so ensure your team excels at both.

It's also important to note that the best website in the world won't be great for long without ongoing support. Make sure the development team you choose can continue to assist you in keeping your website secure and compatible with future changes in hosting environments and web browsers.

**The number one complaint many organizations have with web developers is the lack of responsiveness to support requests**. To maintain a good user experience for your website, you'll want to be sure that the team you've selected to develop your website will be there when you need them.



# Choose the Right Technology

There are a lot of choices when it comes to the technology your site will use, from open source content management systems like WordPress and Drupal, to proprietary platforms and complete custom builds. Developers will have their favorites, and it's sometimes difficult to know if those choices are right for you in the long run. The sign of a good development team is one that asks specific questions about your current website needs, and who also asks about your plans for the future so they can determine if their level of expertise is right for the job. **Be sure to share your plans for any future website growth so your development team knows what your long-term goals include.** This will help them choose the technology most likely to suit your needs over time. It's impossible to predict every potential future need, but consideration of the possibilities and communicating those potential needs to your development team will help them develop the best possible plan for your site.



# Leverage Marketing Automation and CRM Tools

So, you've got a beautiful, well designed and developed website with stellar content and you're working hard to get people to find the site. You may be leveraging many types of initiatives, including pay-per-click search advertising, organic search engine optimization, email marketing, social media, direct mail, and out-of-home advertising. Every organization's strategy for increasing visits will be different, but the goals for what happens once visitors land on a site are pretty much the same: **you want them to be engaged and to take action**. Once they take action, you want to nurture them until they convert.

This is where choosing the right marketing automation and customer relationship management (CRM) platforms are critical. Your choice depends on how your organization works and how your customers and clients buy. If your products or services have a considered buying process where prospects spend several weeks or more researching their alternatives before deciding to buy, then implementing a marketing automation platform like HubSpot, Marketo, Act-On, or Pardot may make sense for you. These platforms allow you to capture lead data so you can then conduct highly personalized and automated lead nurturing campaigns that continue to engage prospects and help your organization build credibility and stay top-of-mind. Many have their own CRM built in or integrate well with the CRM you're already using, like Salesforce.

The power of a integrating your website with a marketing automation system is significant; so is the investment of time to get it set up and running. Do your research and select the system that makes the most sense for your organization, and then plan to take several months to complete the necessary training and gain experience with the platform. If you don't have the staff to manage this, you can hire a firm that specializes in inbound marketing to help.




If your products or services do not have a considered buying process and are geared more towards a quick purchase, then a marketing automation system may be overkill for initial lead nurturing. However, it can still be leveraged for ongoing relationship building, brand building, and cross sell/upsell opportunities.

Depending on the specific buying processes of your organization's clients and customers, a good CRM system like Salesforce or SugarCRM may be all you need. It can prove invaluable in keeping your sales and marketing teams in sync and in managing your customer database in order to maximize your sales and marketing efforts—and in turning existing customers and clients into repeat buyers and brand advocates.

# The Bottom Line

Building a lead-generating powerhouse website requires the alignment of goals and objectives between the organization and its design and development partner. Unless a website is planned well from the start, including its content, design, and user experience, it is destined to become a stale online brochure that is severely underutilized. Choose your design and development teams carefully, and realize that one team might not be able to satisfy all of your requirements. Your choice of marketing automation and CRM platforms will also take careful consideration to ensure you're making the right decision for now and for the future. The goals and objectives of every website may be unique, but consideration of the points discussed in this article should help put you well on your way to planning a website that works hard for your organization for years to come.



# ABOUT US

*Imbue Creative is an award-winning branding and creative services agency. The company's team of designers, writers, social media experts, and content specialists helps organizations connect with new audiences and build loyalty in existing relationships through brand-building programs built on strong, targeted messaging and breakthrough design concepts. The company was founded in 2004 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and now calls a landmark building in historic Lambertville, New Jersey home.*

*Learn more at imbuecreative.com.*

## Contact Us:

Imbue Creative
71 North Main St., 1st Floor
Lambertville, NJ 08530

www.imbuecreative.com
609-963-4004
info@imbuecreative.com