

Website Promotion: The Small Business Guide

 Simply Business™

The internet can seem daunting if you are a small business owner who has just started a website or who wants to start one.

If you feel like this is you then keep reading because this guide gives you some of the top tips for how to promote your website cheaply, easily and in your own time.

Many of the tips are simple to implement on your website, all of them are cost effective, and if you take the time to put them into practice your site should see an increase in the number of visitors you have.

How to Start a Website

If you have no idea about how to start a website then this section is for you. If you already have a website then it is probably best to now go to the section called “Promoting your Website with Search Engines” which can be found later in the Guide.

Buy a Domain Name

The first step is to buy a domain name. The domain name will be the address of your website. For example, www.simplybusiness.co.uk or www.bbc.co.uk . This is how people will be able to find your website and distinguishes it from the other websites on the internet.

You register a domain name when you buy it and you normally pay yearly to keep that domain registered in your name. You can buy domain names for longer periods, it depends on how much money you want to spend at the beginning and how confident you are that you will still be running your website in a few years time.

There are numerous companies you can register domain names with such as www.123-reg.co.uk , www.godaddy.com , www.netnames.co.uk and many others. A list of domain registrars in the UK can be found [here](#).

The cost for a domain name can vary slightly, but the typical cost to register a domain for one year would be from £5.00 upwards.

Choosing a Domain Name

If your business is already established and has a brand that is synonymous with the business it could be quite important to have a domain name that matches your business name.

Potential customers might directly type in your business name when looking for your business online, especially if you are more well known off line. For example www.yourbusinessname.co.uk is ideal.

Sometimes the domain name you want is already taken, in which case you will need to go for another name. You could opt to add hyphens to the name, for example www.your-business-name.co.uk . This isn't really ideal in terms of branding your website and having users easily find you but it is possible to do.

It is a good idea not to make your domain name too long, the shorter it is the easier it is to remember, you might also want to put the name on promotional offline material like your business cards so you want the name to be short enough to fit on.

If you are just starting your business, thinking about the domain name early on will help you. You may want to see if the name you are choosing for your business is available as a domain before you officially decide to call your business that name.

Choose a Web Host

Once you have a domain name you now need a host for your website. A host is the place your website will be located. Internet users will be able to access your website through a host.

It is important to have a reliable host that keeps your website up and running as much as possible, so choose carefully as some are better than others. A couple of lower cost recommendations are listed here but you can also do your own research.

[Positive Internet Company](#)

[Dataflame](#)

[Web Hosting Talk](#) – a forum where people give opinions and recommendations about web hosts and a great place to do some research.

The cost of hosting varies depending upon which company you use, prices can start from £10.00 per month upwards.

Creating your Website

Many small businesses underestimate the value of professional looking website design. Good looking, quality website design can sometimes be the deciding factor as to whether your website is successful and taken seriously.

The following ideas should help you create a good website:

Hire a Website Designer

For the best looking design you should hire a website designer. There are some who specialise in designing websites for small businesses and can produce a simple professional looking website for you for a small investment. Always check out their portfolio before committing to anyone, as some designers are better than others.

Website Templates

There are free, professionally designed website templates which can be found on the internet and can be put on your website quite simply. You will need to edit them so they display your own content. Here are a couple of [websites](#) that offer [free templates](#).

To add templates you will need to have some knowledge of how to upload files to your website. A great resource for beginners is [TheSiteWizard.com](#) which helps explain everything you need to know.

Some sites enable you to use existing website templates and change them using a content management system. Moonfruit.com, for example, will also host your website for you and can supply an email account in return for a monthly fee.

Website Design

Small businesses can often overlook website design as they believe it to be an expense they can't afford or don't see it as important enough.

A website that looks professional sends a message to a potential customer that the company is professional, and the chances are they will be more likely to buy your product or service. Other websites are also more likely to link to your site if you look like a more credible source.

If you haven't already, it is often worth investing in getting a logo designed for your business that you can put on your website. This adds to the professional look of your site.

Website Design Checklist

Here is a quick checklist of some important things to think about when you are designing your site:

- **Content-** Make sure your content is clear and has lots of paragraphs and headings so it's easy for your customers to read.
- **Navigation-** Make the site navigation simple and clear directly your website visitors to the pages they are most likely to find interesting. Put yourself in the shoes of your potential customers.
- **Links-** Check if you have any broken links on your site (broken links are links that don't go to a page, you get an error when you click on them), broken links can make a website look less professional.
- **Images-** Make sure any images you use aren't too large because they might cause your pages to load slowly.
- **Test your website-** If you have a site that requires customers to contact you or even buy online, test the forms to make sure they are working. It's surprisingly easy to make a great website and the most important part (getting the enquiries from customers) doesn't work.

Testing

Before you launch your website it is important to make sure that it is immediately obvious what you are offering, where users should click to get the information they need, and what they think of the design and content.

The only way to do this effectively is to test it. Larger companies do what is called 'usability' testing where they hire a user from their target market to go through the website and point out things they like and don't like and why they are doing certain things.

This method can be quite expensive but a smaller business owner can achieve similar results by asking friends and family to test their site. Ask people who don't know much about your business and ask those from different demographics. For example, one colleague always gets her uncle to test her website because he is the worst person she knows at using the internet.

There is a useful book you can buy which will help you with the testing process. It is called 'Don't Make Me Think' by Steve Krug.

Website analysis

Once you have your website up and running and have visitors to your site it is really useful to know how many people are visiting your site and what they do when they get there.

Google offers a free tool for website analysis called [Google Analytics](#). Google Analytics is great for beginner website owners who just want a small amount of analysis as well as large companies looking to go in depth with their data.

What useful information can website analytics give you?

Analytics can give you information on different aspects of user behaviour the most useful for small business websites are:

Site Visits- The number of visitors to your site

Page views- The number of pages viewed by someone when they visit your site

Average Page Views- the average number of pages viewed on your site, this is a good indication of how users interact with your site

Bounce Rate- the percentage of single page visits which is where a visitor leaves from the same page they entered the site

Time on site- the time a user spends on your site

The percentage of new visitors- you can compare the number of new visitors with the number of returning visitors to see how successful your site is at attracting new people or retaining existing viewers

Map Overlay – with this feature you can look at where the largest amounts of your site visitors came from which could be useful

These are some of the most useful tools for small websites. Analytics packages often allow you to delve further into your websites data and do more analysis but for most small website owners this is not necessary.

Promoting your Website with Search Engines

One of the most effective ways for your website to reach potential customers is to be ranked on a search engine such as [Google](#), yahoo, AOL or msn.

This is a great way to reach people who are searching specifically for your product or service and can be very cost effective compared with other forms of advertising.

Google is the most widely used search engine on the web and so it makes sense to design your website with the Google search engine in mind.

Tips for How to Rank well in Google

Keyword Research

In order to target the search engines you need to identify which keywords you want to target. You will need to do some keyword research around your industry to find out which words people type into search engines when they are searching for the product or service you supply.

How to do Keyword Research

Think about what terms your customers will use to find your products in a search engine. If you have time, write your ideas down and try to brainstorm around them. The goal you have here is to come up with as many key terms as you can that you can use in your content.

A quick, easy and free way to research what people are searching for in Google is to use the [Google Adwords Keyword Tool](#). This is free and will give you a good estimate of the number of people that search for a particular phrase on Google.

Currently in the UK Google is by far the most dominant search engine, with the vast majority of users using it. Using the search data from Google is a good indication of what people are searching for.

The Long Tail

Many industries are competitive on the internet and quite often for a small business to compete for competitive keyword terms against other well established websites will take time and a lot of marketing.

One way for a small business new to the internet to attract new visitors and potential customers is to target the 'long tail'. This is a term for phrases that are often longer and less searched for than more popular terms.

For example if you are looking to buy a hat you might type in “hats” which is obviously a shorter phrase than something like “wedding hat”. You may be able to find quite a few of these phrases in your industry that bring with them a good amount of traffic to your website. Sometimes it is best to look beyond the more obvious phrases at the beginning and target them for the longer term. Longer tail phrases will often give your site better results in a shorter period of time.

Longer, more descriptive phrases often bring a higher conversion from searchers because these people know exactly what they want and are more likely to be specifically looking for the product or service you offer.

Links

One of the main criteria Google uses to rank websites is the quantity and quality of links to your website from other websites. In very general terms it is more likely that the more links you have to your website the higher you will rank in Google for your chosen keywords.

Links that are from popular, reputable and trustworthy websites such as news sites like bbc.co.uk, and cnn.com or educational institutions such as Harvard.edu and Cambridge.ac.uk are more powerful and will help you rank higher. It is however rare to get a link from the above examples, so don't be disappointed if your website doesn't get one!

A link from a website where the subject is directly related to your site may also help you to gain a higher ranking in the search engines.

For example, if you are a carpenter, a link from a website about carpentry or from the website of another carpenter may help you to rank higher.

Anchor Text

Another way for a search engine to know what subject a linked-to website is about is to look at the anchor text of a link. The anchor text is the text that forms the link, for example [search engine](#) where the anchor text is “search engine” and the link from it is www.google.co.uk.

The search engines will then be helped to understand what the linked to page is about. If lots of websites link to a page using the same or similar anchor text that page will rank higher in the search engines for the text that other websites are linking to it with.

Tips on How to get Links to your Website

Directories

A simple method to gain links is to submit your website to online directories. There are many to choose from so you need to be selective, industry specific

directories can often provide a fairly good quality link back to your website because it is in a related field.

A good quality trusted directory is the [Yahoo Directory](#) which you have to pay for but it can be worth it as it is one of the oldest and most well respected directories.

When submitting your website to directories try to use anchor text that matches the keywords and phrases that you have decided to target. Some directories don't allow it but if they do, make use of it.

The Content of your Website

If your website provides information that other people find useful it may attract links back to it. Other websites may link to your website because it is a good resource or might be useful to their website visitors. Content that is original, provides a unique take on a subject and is useful, often attracts links.

It is a good idea to try to think that every time you make a piece of content for your site you make it as high quality and as original and unique as you can. Websites that are good at attracting links are those that very often provide something of value to their site visitors.

A good example of content that generates links is a blog.

What is a Blog?

Blog is short for weblog which is an online commentary or diary that is updated regularly. It can be a social commentary, description of events, personal thoughts, or anything the writer wants it to be.

A blog is often a good way to easily create content on your website. You can update a blog as often as you like and the more interesting and original the content you write, the more likely your website is to get noticed and linked to.

Businesses are increasingly using blogs as a method of promotion on the internet. Blog entries can highlight product releases, new company developments, staff events or whatever is topical at a particular time.

Business blogs are generally written in a more conversational way to other business content, a blog engages readers more and gives a more human feel to a business.

Keep up to Date with Industry News

The advantages of writing a blog are that because of the ease of updating it you can write about new trends in your industry and keep your website visitors up to date with industry news.

If you are in an industry where other people write about topical industry issues online, using your blog you could participate in these conversations. You can do this by commenting on other blogs and then joining a conversation by writing about the subject on your blog.

Stand out from the Crowd

There are various tactics you could use to make your content stand out from the crowd and give it a different angle. Create some interesting content, use videos or pictures, this can be effective if you are in a market where websites are particularly boring. Being different often gets links.

If you write something controversial this can also make your website stand out. Just be careful not to be too controversial, it isn't worth being sued! Although this might create publicity and links it is not recommended.

A simple blog can be added to your website using www.wordpress.org, you can even make your whole website a blog which you can update as often as you like. Other platforms for blogging are www.moveabletype.com , www.typepad.com and www.blogger.com .

In general, blogs are an excellent way of promoting your business online and giving your product or service more visibility on the internet.

Blog Post Titles

Something which goes hand in hand with making the content on your blog stand out is to make sure you write catchy snappy titles. A good title can make more people read what you have written and even make more people link to your article.

The internet is becoming increasingly competitive and a strong title can be the difference between an article being popular or not.

This is a great explanation of why titles are so important and [how to write great headlines](#) .

Using Contacts to get Links

An excellent way to get links back to your website is to focus on your website's online "community". This means other websites that are focused on your industry and link between one another because they are talking about similar topics.

If you can develop relationships and get these sites to link to you, you may be one step ahead of some of your other competitors.

Have a look at other websites that are in your industry and see if you could create some content that they might want to link to. You may find that a

particular website might really want to link to a guide that you have written or some news about the industry that you have uncovered.

If you have developed business relationships with other companies or individuals who work in your industry you could ask them to link to your website if they have their own site.

Optimising the performance of your website

There are a few simple ways that you can optimise the performance of your website in the search engines.

Site Structure

The structure of your website is important for your website visitors and for search engines. Visitors need to be able to easily navigate around your website and search engines need to be able to know which pages target which topics.

Individual Pages

Make sure that each page targets different keywords, that way the search engines will know which pages to show for a particular search query. Other websites will know what pages to link to and the search engines will know which pages to rank for particular queries.

Page Titles

Once you have done the keyword research as explained earlier you can then begin to target those keywords you decided to target. A good way to do this is with your page titles.

If you have access to your websites code, the title tag is near the top of the page in the <title> section. If you don't have access to your websites code because you are using an online website creator or something similar, often these give you the option to edit your page titles.

Within the <title> </title> tags you should try to use the main keywords each page of your website is targeting, with an attractive phrase that will be appealing to potential customers.

Search Engines such as Google will use the keywords in the title tag to help determine what each page of your website is about and therefore when potential customers type those keywords into Google you will be more likely to rank for those terms.

Resist the temptation to stuff the title with lots of keywords and phrases, this will look like spam to the search engines and they could penalise your website.

Attractive title tags will help more people click on your website in Google

When you look at the search engine results pages in Google you can see that for each result for each page, the top line of that result is taken from the title of the web page.

The more attractive this title is to someone who searches for something, the more likely they are to click on that website.

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This is where the title tag for your web page appears in the Google search engine results pages.

Meta Descriptions

These can be found in your website's code in the tag `<meta name="description" content=`. This will be picked up by the search engines and placed in your listing on the search engine results pages.

It is important to have an attractive description of each page here because it could make a search engine user more likely to click on your website in the search engine results pages.

On any particular search engine results page there are nine other websites, probably all competing with you. In the meta description you need to give the search engine user a reason to click on your website.

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This is where the meta description for your web page appears in the Google search engine results pages.

Header Tags

For each page of your website in the code you should see some `<h>` tags, for example `<h1>` `<h2>`. It is recommended that you put the main keywords you want to target for that page into these tags.

By doing this, the search engines will have a clearer idea about what each page of your website is about and will help your site rank higher for the keywords you want.

Website Content

It is a good idea to include some keywords in the content of each web page. Remember that you can target a number of phrases per page. It is also important not to “stuff” your content with keywords and to write for humans to read rather than search engines.

There is no set figure for how many keywords you should include and it is best to write copy for your customers but making sure to include the necessary keywords you are targeting within the copy.

This is a great place to target long tail key phrases as explained above. More content leads to a greater chance of having more longer tail key phrases.

Website design doesn't have to be expensive, there are many free templates which can be downloaded online that are professional looking and easy to set up as explained earlier in this guide.

Other websites will be less inclined to link to your site if the design is poor quality. A website that is designed in a professional way is quite easy for other websites to link to.

Pay Per Click Advertising

Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising offers you the ability to bypass the natural search rankings on the search engines. Your results will be displayed at the top of the search engine rankings pages and on the right hand side.

PPC saves you a lot of time and effort in terms of promoting your website. Instead of using many of the methods described above you can pay for your placement in the search engines.

One reason why PPC has become popular is the speed with which you are able to have a high placement in Google and start to see results immediately. You are also able to target people who are specifically searching for your product or service quickly.

In simple terms PPC advertising works through a system where you pay each time someone clicks on your advert on the search engine. The price you pay is determined largely by the amount of competition for the keywords that you are targeting.

Advertisers bid on keyword phrases and the more competitors there are competing for a keyword or phrase the higher the bids and the more advertisers have to pay.

The screenshot shows search engine results for 'Business Insurance'. The main results include:

- Simply Business Quotes** (Sponsored Links): www.SimplyBusiness.co.uk Public liability insurance, loans and much more for your business.
- Hiscox Business Insurance**: hiscox.co.uk/business Business insurance for professionals. Quote & buy online.
- Business Insurance**: www.directlineforbusiness.co.uk We guarantee to beat your renewal quote and save you money.

Below these are organic search results for 'Business Insurance and Commercial Finance from Simply Business'. A red text box with arrows pointing to the sponsored links area contains the text: "This is where the PPC adverts are placed. If you use Google Adwords these are the areas you would see your adverts."

On the right side of the screenshot, there are additional sponsored links:

- Business insurance**: We guarantee to beat your renewal premium. Get an online quote today! www.premierlinedirect.co.uk
- Simple Landlord Insurance**: Get a Price Beating Quote! Spread the Cost with monthly Direct Debit www.SimpleLandlordInsurance.com
- Business Insurance**: 1 call up to 25 insurers Get a variety of quotes in minutes. www.swintoncommercialoffers.co.uk
- Business Insurance**: Save money on business insurance Compare quotes from top UK insurers

PPC Advertising Providers

PPC advertising is mainly provided by the main three search engines [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) and [MSN](#). Google currently is the most widely used as it has a far larger proportion of people using it's search engine.

PPC advertising is more effective if you do in depth keyword research in your industry. Longer tail keywords will normally be less competitive and cheaper

than more popular terms and often bring customers who are specifically looking for a service you provide.

PPC advertising systems such as Google Adwords will collect the data regarding your key phrases and how many people clicked on particular search terms so you can do a trial and then analyse which key phrases work for you and which don't.

Google Adwords Voucher

If you buy your business insurance with [Simply Business](#) you will be given a voucher for £75 off Google Adwords Pay Per Click advertising. This is a great way to experiment with PPC because you won't be spending any of your own money and you can create a trial to see which keywords bring visitors to your website.

Other Online Advertising

While search engines and Pay-per-click are the two most cost-effective ways of promoting your business and website online, there are also some other forms of advertising to consider.

Banners on other websites

Many websites sell advertising space to other websites in the form of banners or buttons. The return on investment is not great for this type of advertising, however, so it is best left to the big brands who are prepared to pay for the visibility.

Online directories

The internet has a vast array of directory sites. The ones worth being listed on are those that are either highly targeted to a specific audience or industry, or those whose brand carries a lot of weight.

For example, www.babydirectory.com charges reasonable rates for a listing and is highly targeted to pregnant women and new mothers. Therefore the adverts and listings are only hitting potential buyers.

The most well-known example is yell.com – the online version of the Yellow Pages. Lots of people who use the printed directory also now search the online directory for products and services.

Review sites

Many websites that used to be simple directories now offer user generated content and carry reviews of businesses. Some of these sites have paid-for listings and others have free listings.

There are review sites for almost all types of business these days, some more targeted than others. For example, www.beerintheevening.com is a directory of pubs and eateries, which offers users the chance to review their favourite or least favourite venues. At the less targeted end of the scale is www.reviewcentre.com which reviews everything from DVD players to stocks and shares websites.

These types of site also tend to rank highly in the search engines so are worth the effort of getting a listing.

Social and business networking

Social networking is a prolific internet phenomenon and one that is constantly evolving. The jury is out, however, on how well it works for promoting a

business despite offering behaviourally targeted ads and groups where users can form an allegiance to a brand.

However some businesses have found that the best way to utilise a social network is to set up a profile. For example, the Royal Airforce was having trouble recruiting so they got some of their pilots to set up facebook profiles where they gave a little taste of what life as an RAF pilot is like. It was their most successful recruitment campaign.

Business networking is also becoming popular with the continued growth of sites such as linkedin.com. More useful for the small business are those such as Bview.com which promote business to business networking and reviews as well as business to consumer and consumer to consumer.

Local websites

If your business relies on local trade, then it may be worth getting a listing on a local website. Most towns and regions have their own websites which exist solely to promote visits to the area and boost the local economy.

Advertising on these sites can be well-targeted and relatively cheap.

Affiliate Marketing

A cheap way of marketing online is to get other people to do the hard work! Affiliate marketing is where other websites sell your product or service on your behalf and get commission from either the lead or the sale.

Setting up an affiliate can be as simple as asking another site that targets similar users to yours if they would like to host your advertising banner in return for a percentage of any profits that are generated from clicks through it.

To make it work you will need to have some kind of reporting tool in order to track where your customers arrive at the site from. Allocate each affiliate with a unique reference code so you can track visitors to your site effectively.

To get benefit from affiliate marketing the profit margin on your product or service must be large enough to accommodate commission payments. On the other hand, if your customers make regular repeat-transactions, it may be worth sacrificing the profit on one sale to make more sales in the future.

Using your website to generate marketing data

Some forms of marketing are difficult to do if you don't have any data to work with. If you get junk-mail which is addressed to you through your door, it means you are on somebody's mailing list and that they got your data from somewhere – probably on a list they bought from another company you transacted with.

Since small businesses cannot afford to buy lists of prospects from other companies, they must create their own databases. One way to grow your database is to use your website to capture prospect information.

Here are some ways you can do this:

Run a competition

If you run a competition or prize draw through your website it gives you the opportunity to collect data. Remember that you can't use the data for marketing purposes unless the user 'opts in'. This means that they must agree to be contacted by you in the future about offers or with information.

Simply add a checkbox to your entry form that gives the entrant the option of receiving more information by email or post from you.

Send a newsletter

Many businesses send out a newsletter either in the post or by email which keeps customers abreast of any new offers and products or gives them useful information related to your industry.

You can use your website to sign-up users to your newsletter and at the same time as them if they would like to receive other types of communication from you.

Registration or membership

On some websites you must be a member in order to buy a product or view information. This is true whether you are buying books and CDs from amazon.com or reading marketing news on mad.com.

Creating a membership or registration process in this way allows you to capture the data of all your customers. Even if they don't opt-in to receive communications from you, you will still be able to learn a lot about your customer base from the information they give. This will help you to improve your service and target it more effectively to your customer base.

Email marketing

Email marketing is cheap and a convenient way of communicating with your customers.

At the least it should be used as a support function on your website. Whenever a customer completes a positive action on your site – purchasing something or registering for something – they expect to receive confirmation. Email is the ideal tool for this as it is instant and these days internet shoppers expect it.

Once you start to build up a database and have customers opting in to receive information from you, you can send out emails for marketing purposes.

Marketing emails can be anything from newsletters to product offers to Christmas cards. The most important thing is getting the message right for the individual customer. Email is the most cost effective way to achieve such high targeting, as long as the data you have is good quality.

Creating emails

Text emails can be effective if they are short and straight to the point. However if you are selling products, images have more of an impact.

If you can code html web-pages you will be able to code an email in a similar way. However you need to ensure that your email provider can handle the format.

If you use Microsoft Outlook, you can download ready-made email templates for a fee. You can also get free email templates from other sources on the internet, which can be adapted to your needs. Just type 'free email template' into Google.

Optimising your email creatives

- Put your most relevant information in the top third of your email, as this is what appears in the preview pane
- A customer should be able to tell who you are and what your email is offering by looking at the top left corner of your email
- Be careful of the words you use in your emails – some will flag it as spam and stop it getting through
- Don't use too many images unless you are promoting a lot of products
- Keep your image size small so that they download quickly
- Use ALT text on all your images so that if they don't appear, the reader can see what their purpose was.
- Include as many links as you can, including linking from your logo and images
- Make sure your links are obvious – underline text or use big, bright buttons
- Keep your text short and to the point
- Make sure your email design is consistent with your website design and your company branding
- Get your subject lines right
- Test all aspects of your email, including variations on your design and subject line
- Tailor the content to the individual customer wherever possible.
- Personalise the email to the recipient wherever possible

Sending your emails

Microsoft Outlook supports html emails and can send out bulk emails, so this may be a good solution to get started. It is not very sophisticated, however and cannot track the emails for you.

Dedicated email software that includes a reporting function is the next step. Some of these services are free, such as livewirecampaign.co.uk and some are paid-for such as cheetahmail.com. They generally offer the ability to upload your email creatives, edit them and add links, upload your data and then see who has opened and clicked on them.

The amount you pay per email send generally depends on the volume you send. The higher the volume the less you pay.

Staying out of trouble

If you are a b2c (business to consumer) company, you should never send unsolicited emails. This means that every person you send an email to must have opted in to receive it. If you buy a list from a company it is important to make sure that the prospects on it have opted in to receive communications from companies other than the one they gave their data to originally.

If you do send unsolicited email or 'spam' then the recipient can report you. This could result in prosecution as it is illegal to send spam emails.

If you are a b2b (business to business) company, you are allowed to send emails relating to your business to your existing customers and to prospects who have requested information, quotes or bought products from you in the past.

The emails to non-customers must mention the interaction that the person had with your business previously and must also give the recipient the option of unsubscribing from your email list.

Marketing emails such as newsletters and sales promotions must be opted-in for if you are sending to new businesses.

Technically you are allowed to send business emails to business email addresses (ie. john@johnsplumbing.com *not* john@hotmail.com), although we would always recommend sticking to opt-in prospects as these are the ones most likely to respond.

These rules are updated frequently due to the speed that the internet evolves, so you need to keep checking to make sure you are within the law.

Useful Resources

Small business website promotion can be cheap and you can do it on your own if you have a limited budget. All the above tips will take time to do but the rewards in terms of increased website visitors and then eventual sales should make the time spent worthwhile.

Listed below are some resources that provide more detailed information about promoting your website.

Marketing your Website

- <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/topic.py?topic=8522> – official guidelines from Google about how to make your website “Google friendly”
- <http://www.google.com/webmasters/> - Google has a section for owners of websites that helps you to keep track of how Google views your website and how you can optimise it for the best performance in Google. There is also a Google blog which keeps you up to date with the latest information from the search engine
- www.seomoz.org – a useful site with lots of information and discussion around optimising your website for the search engines
- www.google.com/intl/en_uk/adwords/learningcenter/ - this is probably the most comprehensive resource about Google’s PPC programme Google Adwords. As it is written by Google it covers everything you need to know
- www.searchenginewatch.com – a great resource to learn about improving your search engine rankings using natural search and PPC
- <http://www.seobook.com> -an online Search Engine Optimisation training course with a blog that offers free advice and tips

Website Design

- www.w3.org/ - this organisation promotes web standards and guidelines. They have some tutorials for creating websites from beginner to advanced
- www.moonfruit.com – this site lets you create websites using a simple website creator. It is great if you don’t have any idea about how to set up a website and is a cheap option as you can design a good looking website quite easily
- www.homestead.com – another website creator for beginner website designers
- www.freetemplatesonline.com – this site lets you download free website templates, all you have to do is add your content and change them around a bit to fit your requirements
- www.templateworld.com – paid templates with some free ones too, some nice designs amongst the free and paid

- www.templatemonster.com – paid templates with some good designs, updated with new templates quite often