"THE" Website Content Checklist

(Originally published on [Gillandrews.com](http://gillandrews.com))

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DO THIS BEFORE WRITING A SINGLE LINE ON YOUR WEBSITE

Get clear about your product or services:

☐ What does your product do exactly? / What services do you offer?

☐ What's the benefits?

☐ Who may need it?

Zero in on your target audience:

What kind of people are most likely to love your product or services? The most beautiful website will fail to grow your business if it's aimed to the wrong audience.

Don't try to appeal to everybody. Instead, zero in on those who will benefit the most from your offer. The checkpoints below will help you define your target audience.

☐ *Demographics:*

    ☐ Age

    ☐ Gender

    ☐ Education

    ☐ Family situation

    ☐ Occupation

    ☐ Income

    ☐ Geographical location

☐ *Lifestyle:*

    ☐ Hobbies

    ☐ Favorite TV shows & movies

    ☐ Favorite books

- Pets

  - Where can you meet them offline?

- *Online behavior:*

  - Preferred social media platforms

  - Forums

  - Websites

  - Preferred way to get information online (videos / podcasts / blog posts, etc.)

- *What makes them tick?*

  - Problems

  - Fears

  - Dreams

  - What's important in life? (Values)

  - How do they make the decision to buy?

  - Whom do they trust?

Define the purpose of your website:

- How will your website help your business? For example, get new clients, sell your product, promote your brand, earn money with affiliate marketing etc.

- What pages would you need? Make a list.

- Do you need a blog? If yes, what will be your blog's focus?

- Are you going to grow your email list? If yes, how?

WEBSITE CHECKLIST: EVERY PAGE

Whether it's your homepage or your blog post, if you want your website visitors to keep reading, pay attention and connect with you, make sure you have these points covered on every page.

Make It Relevant

☐ Content generally relevant to your target audience

☐ Content matches the expectations of your visitors based on a link they clicked to get to this page

☐ Page content delivers what the title has promised

Make It Clear

☐ **Clear copy:**

☐ Avoid jargon

☐ Use shorter sentences

☐ Avoid meaningless words ("welcome to our website", "nice to meet you", etc.)

☐ Don't try to be clever if you can't stay clear

☐ Focus on your customers and use "you/your" more often than you use "I/my"

Copy Examples:

Self-centered:

x I teach great marketing

x We oversee one project at a time

x These windows are double-glazed

Customer-focused:

✓ Learn how to turn great ideas into great marketing campaigns

✓ As we oversee one project at a time, you'll have our undivided attention

✓ These double-glazed windows will save you heating costs in winter

☐ Clear design:

☐ What's important is prominent

☐ Logically related elements are also visually related

☐ Clearly defined page areas

☐ Links visually stand out

☐ Text doesn't look like clickable elements

Tip: Don't fall prey to the peer pressure of having all the modern design features. The best design isn't the one that is most beautiful. It's the one that converts the most visitors.

Make It Valuable

☐ Put your readers' needs first, not your business goals

☐ Solve the problems or answer the questions of your target audience

☐ Give actionable tips

Make It Trustworthy

☐ Correct grammar and spelling

☐ No superlatives ("best", "greatest", "awesome", etc.)

- ☐ No words in all capital letters (Exception: Section headings)

- ☐ Don't overuse exclamation marks

- ☐ *Support your claims with evidence:*

  - ☐ Research

  - ☐ Examples

  - ☐ Expert quotes

  - ☐ Other articles on the topic written by experts

Minimize Distractions

- ☐ No autoplay of video / audio

- ☐ *No elements that are moving on their own:*

  - ☐ Blog carousels

  - ☐ Testimonial carousels

  - ☐ Client logo carousels, etc.

  - ☐ Reduce number of ads

- ☐ *Use pop-ups wisely:*

  - ☐ Don't use intrusive pop-ups on mobile

  - ☐ Make sure you are not interrupting your visitors before they reach their goal

  - ☐ If using a pop-up, make sure it can be easily closed

Tip: On average, small and medium business owners need 1319 people to see their opt-in pop-up to get one engaged subscriber. If you are working with your clients one-on-one or if your website doesn't get much traffic yet, your interstitial may cost you more money than it brings in.

Minimize Friction:

All the pages on your website should be:

☐ **Easy to read:**

☐ Unobtrusive background

☐ Readable font types and sizes

☐ High contrast between font and background

☐ *Post text is well-formatted and scannable:*

  ☐ Headings

  ☐ Short paragraphs

  ☐ Text highlights (bold, italic, etc.)

  ☐ Lists / bullet points

Tip: *When using bullet points, make sure you leave* enough white space between individual points*. Otherwise, you'll end up with a long paragraph with dots on the side that is difficult to read.*

☐ **Easy to use:**

Meet your visitors' expectations on where to find certain elements and how to interact with them:

☐ Make clickable elements look like buttons or visually prominent links

☐ Non-clickable elements (body text or headings) shouldn't look like buttons or links

☐ Navigation labels and CTA copy should be clear and not clever

Make It Easy to Take Action

Calls to action aren't only for sales page. Even if it's just a blog post, you should write it with that one action in mind you want your visitors to take: For example, to share this post, to leave a comment, or to check out your Services page.

With this in mind:

- ☐ Create every page with one action in mind you want your visitors to take
- ☐ *Make it easy to take this action:*
    - ☐ Call to action visually prominent
    - ☐ Call to action has a clear copy completing the phrase *"I'd like you to…"* or *"I'd like to…"*

Call-to-Action Examples:

Bad:

x More info

x Become a hero

x Evolve with it

x Shut up and take my money

Good:

✓ Find out more

✓ Book a free course

✓ Steal rivals' ideas

✓ Register for this webinar

SMALL BUSINESS HOMEPAGE CHECKLIST

It's tempting to put too much information on your homepage. Yet, if it fails to clearly communicate what you do and offer an easy way for your visitors to navigate your website they won't stay for long. Use the following checklist to make sure your business homepage is as effective as possible.

Business Homepage "Must-Have"s

☐ **A clear website tagline and a paragraph of text (if necessary) that explain:**

☐ Who are you?

☐ What do you do?

☐ Why should your visitors care? What's the benefit?

Tip: To make sure that your website tagline is clear, ask yourself if you would use the same words to explain it to a stranger. Will they understand it right away or need you to explain further?

When in doubt, use this surefire tagline formula: {What you are}. I {do what} {for whom} {with what benefit}.

Recommended reading: **"How to Make Sure Your Homepage Sends a Clear Message (+ 7 Great Website Tagline Examples)"**

☐ **Navigation:**

☐ Not more than 7 navigation labels

☐ Positioned as your website visitors expect it (one row at the top of the page)

☐ Mouse pointer changes on clickable links

☐ Descriptive

☐ Clear

Navigation Label Examples:

Vague:

x Get to Know Me

x How can I help?

x Fees & Charges

x Read My Columns

x Support yourself

x Get in Touch

Clear:

✓ About

✓ Services

✓ Pricing

✓ Blog

✓ Books / Courses

✓ Contact

Tip: Navigation is the last place you should try to be creative. Your visitors won't read it. They'll scan it for familiar labels. Anything that is unclear or requires them to pause and think will cause irritation or will be overlooked.

Navigation mistakes:

x Linking to unimportant pages (Impressum, Privacy policy, etc.)

x Not linking to important pages (About us, Services, etc.)

x Placing navigation menu items in unexpected places.

x Using too many navigation labels

x Unnecessary drop-down menus

Tip: Drop-down menus irritate your visitors and lose you visits to important pages. Reorganize the information on your website to have only top-level navigation.

☐ **Photo of yourself or your team**

☐ **A paragraph about yourself / your team**

☐ **Call to action**

☐ **Logo**

☐ **Search box**

☐ **Social proof**

  ☐ Credible client testimonials

  ☐ Client logos

  ☐ Certifications

  ☐ Awards

  ☐ Statistics

☐ **Smart footer**

☐ Copyright	☐ Phone and fax numbers
☐ Navigation to main pages	☐ Social icons
☐ Privacy policy	☐ Email signup
☐ Terms of use	☐ Search box
☐ Contact	☐ Latest articles
☐ Postal address / link to a map	☐ Call to action

Tip: You don't have to include all these points in your footer, of course. Just select the most relevant for your business. But whatever you do, don't leave the footer empty. Footer is a safety net of your website "catching" the visitors who haven't found what they were looking for on your page and were about to leave.

Other things you may want to put on your homepage:

☐ Selected services

- ☐ Freebies
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Courses
- ☐ Featured posts
- ☐ Featured videos

Tip: Don't get carried away by cluttering your homepage with all possible information. First, cover the "must-haves", and only then consider adding more things

ABOUT PAGE CHECKLIST

Tip: Your About page isn't a place for your ramblings about your career path, your hobbies or your philosophy. The main question it should answer: What problems do you solve and how you can help your customers?

A compelling About page includes:

- ☐ ***Your photo or a photo of your team:***
    - ☐ All faces clearly visible and recognizable
    - ☐ People looking straight or towards the text of the page (not away from it)
- ☐ ***A short personal introduction that shows you as:***
    - ☐ Likable
    - ☐ Relatable
    - ☐ Approachable

- ☐ *Your mission:*
  - ☐ What problems do you solve?
  - ☐ For whom?
- ☐ *Credibility enhancers:*
  - ☐ Qualifications
  - ☐ Awards
  - ☐ Features in famous publications
  - ☐ Endorsements from recognized experts
  - ☐ Client Testimonials
  - ☐ Statistics (for ex., books review score, copies sold)
- ☐ Work samples
- ☐ *Call to action:*
  - ☐ to check out your Services page
  - ☐ to view your work samples
  - ☐ to check out your books
  - ☐ to sign up for your newsletter
  - ☐ to contact you, etc.

Tip: What would you like your website visitors to do after they've read your About page? Don't hope for them figure out what to do next by themselves. Include a clear call to action: A sign-up form for your newsletter, a link to your Services page or your email address they can reach you at.

SERVICES PAGE CHECKLIST

Before creating your service pages, think about how you want your visitors to find them. Do you offer many services and want to link to them from the top navigation menu? Avoid using a drop-down menu.

Reasons not to use a drop-down menu in the navigation:

☐ Users tend to skip top-level navigation labels if there is a drop-down menu.

☐ Users find drop down menus irritating.

☐ Drop-down menus don't work on certain devices.

Creating navigation to service pages without a drop-down menu:

☐ Create a main Services page

☐ Feature your separate services on it and link to the corresponding pages

☐ Link only to your main Services page from the top navigation without a drop-down menu

  or

☐ If you offer only a few services, you can omit the main Services page and link directly to the single services from your top navigation.

Services Page Checklist

- ☐ Short description of what you offer and for whom
- ☐ *Featured services (one section for every service):*
  - ☐ Service title
  - ☐ Brief service description
  - ☐ Link to the corresponding page in a form of a call to action
- ☐ *Credibility enhancers:*
  - ☐ Client logos
  - ☐ Credible client testimonials
- ☐ Link to your contact page

A Service Page Checklist

Tip: Create a dedicated page for each major service you provide. This will help you rank better for the relevant keywords. Plus, by sharing a page that focuses only on one service on social will bring you more targeted traffic.

☐ Unique value proposition:

- ☐ *What is it?*
  - ☐ Service title
  - ☐ Short summary of a service
- ☐ Whom is it for?
- ☐ *What's the benefit?*
  - ☐ Expose reader's need
  - ☐ Demonstrate importance
  - ☐ Tell what's in for them
  - ☐ Focus on benefits, not features
  - ☐ Tell them what makes your offer unique

☐ Earning trust:

- ☐ Add a short description of your process
- ☐ Answer frequently asked questions
- ☐ Address and eliminate possible objections
- ☐ *Credibility enhancers:*
    - ☐ Links to relevant case studies
    - ☐ Expert endorsements
    - ☐ Believable client testimonials

☐ Call to action:

- ☐ One per page
- ☐ Visually prominent
- ☐ Clear
- ☐ Compelling
- ☐ *In a form of:*
    - ☐ Link to your Contact page, *or*
    - ☐ An embedded contact form and/or your email address

Tip: *The main goal of your service pages is to show your prospects that you are the right person to solve their problems. Make your prospects feel comfortable to contact you by keeping the conversational tone and anticipating their questions.*

BLOG PAGE CHECKLIST

Your Blog page is one of the most visited on your website. Go beyond a standard blogroll and offer your website visitors a better way to discover relevant content.

Blog Page "Must-Have"s

- ☐ Links to your blog posts
- ☐ Enticing titles relevant to your target audience
- ☐ Only a short snippet of the posts' text
- ☐ Search bar (if you don't have a search option in the navigation)

Tip: Make sure that your blog posts have relevant and enticing titles. The titles of your blog posts contribute to your business message *and help your visitors understand your expertise better.*
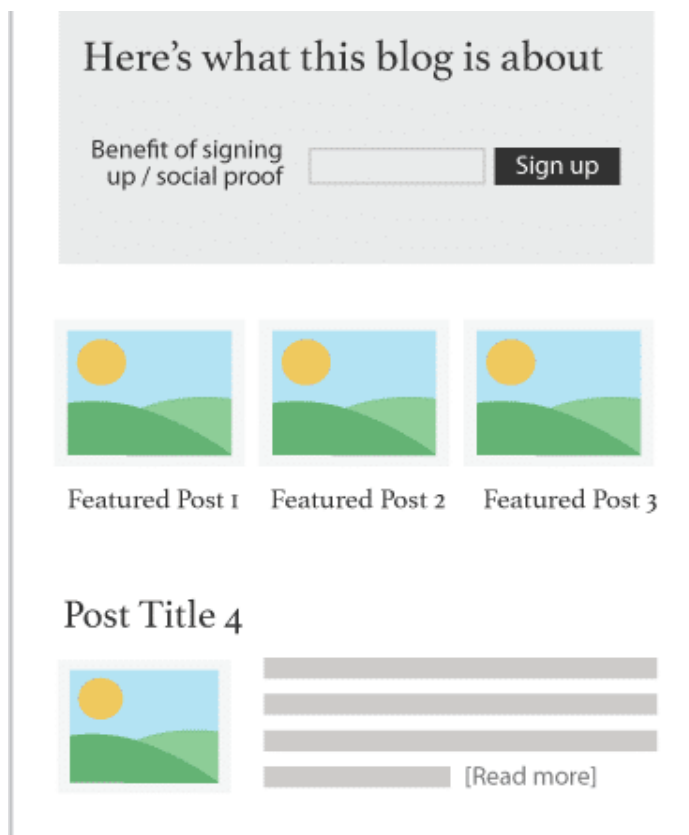
Making Your Blog Page More Effective:

- ☐ Add a paragraph of what to expect on your blog
- ☐ Feature several categories above the fold to increase the chances of your readers to find a topic they are interested in

3 BETTER BLOG PAGE EXAMPLES

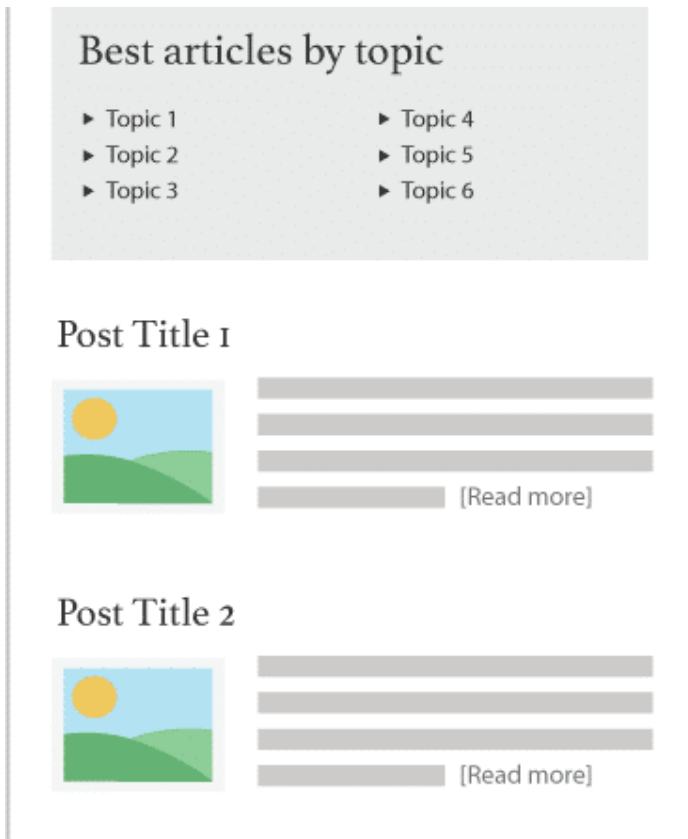### Example #1: Blog focus + featured posts

Why does this work?

- Blog focus clear upfront

- More posts visible above the fold because of the horizontal layout for featured posts
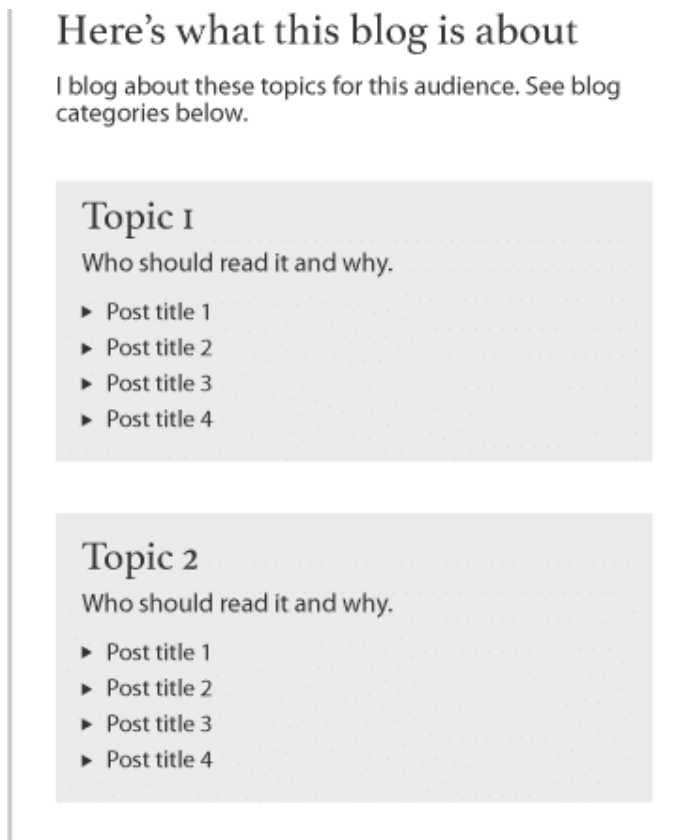
Example #2: Featured topics

Why does this work?

- Blog focus clear based on the featured topics

- Your visitors have a better chance to find relevant content, as they can explore it based on their interests and not the publishing date of your latest blog posts

Example #3: Categorize everything

Here's what this blog is about

I blog about these topics for this audience. See blog categories below.

Topic 1

Who should read it and why.

▶ Post title 1
▶ Post title 2
▶ Post title 3
▶ Post title 4

Topic 2

Who should read it and why.

▶ Post title 1
▶ Post title 2
▶ Post title 3
▶ Post title 4

Why does this work?

- Blog focus clear upfront

- Your readers have a full picture of your expertise and an easy way to discover more relevant content

- You have full control over what posts to draw your readers' attention to

Important: On your Blog page, your visitors expect to see the links to your blog posts. So, make sure the first links to the posts are visible above the fold and add additional information only if it helps your visitors achieve this goal.

x Huge "about me" section or other self-serving information that occupies a lot of space

✓ A short paragraph about your blog's focus, featured categories, featured blog posts, etc.

BLOG POST CHECKLIST

If you want to use your blog posts to attract new customers, you should think of your blog posts as your "salespeople". They "sell" you to your potential clients by showcasing your expertise and personality. Here's what you need to create posts that will win your more business.

Enticing Headline:

☐ Make a promise relevant to your target audience

☐ Use a hook (trigger curiosity, ask a question, address a fear, etc.)

☐ *Use powerful words:*

Words that get more clicks: Examples*

How to	Blog post	Squeaky
[Numbers]	Why	Bland
Free	Best	Gobsmacked
You	Tricks	
Tips	Great	

* – *Source: "131 Words That Increase Web Traffic".*

Words that create an emotional response: Examples**

Gigantic	Shocking	Eye-popping
Teeny-tiny	Crisp	Turbulent
Bulky	Juicy	Deafening

** – *Source: ["How to Arouse the Magic of Sensory Words (Even in Business Writing!)"](#).*

Tip: Even if your post is excellent, a bland headline will rob it of the attention it deserves. To get more people to read your blog post:

- *Spend some time creating an engaging headline. If you get stuck, use this [ultra-practical way to create a headline](#) in 3 steps.*

- *Don't trust headline analyzers as they won't accurately reflect the reaction of *your* audience to the headline.*

Engaging Content:

- ☐ Keep the promise of the tagline
- ☐ Grab readers' attention from the first sentence
- ☐ Use cliffhangers to keep them reading
- ☐ Get to the point quickly
- ☐ Use short sentences
- ☐ Use words anyone will understand

Proper Formatting:

- ☐ Break content in sections with headings and subheadings
- ☐ Use font big enough to make it easy to read (also on mobile)
- ☐ Use short paragraphs
- ☐ Use enough white space
- ☐ Use bold and italic highlights wisely
- ☐ Use visuals

SEO:

☐ **Target long-tail keywords**

☐ **Use words that are semantically related to the main keyword**

☐ **Use keyword in:**

    ☐ URL

    ☐ Meta title

    ☐ *Meta description:*

        ☐ Between 50 and 300 characters

        ☐ Unique for every piece of content

        ☐ Addresses customers' problem

        ☐ Presents your solution

        ☐ Highlights outcome

    ☐ Beginning of the post

    ☐ Throughout the text where it sounds naturally

    ☐ Subheadings

    ☐ *Images:*

        ☐ Image file names

        ☐ Image titles

        ☐ ALT tags of images

☐ **Add internal links**

Tip: Internal links can improve your SEO, as they pass authority from one page to another. To give a ranking boost to a post that almost ranks on page #1, add an internal link to it from a page with a high authority.

Call to Action:

Calls to action aren't only for sales pages. After they've read your blog post, point your impressed readers towards the next step you'd like them to take.

☐ Write your blog post with one main call to action in mind

Examples of a main call to action for a blog post:

- Download a lead magnet
- Check out your new course / book
- Check out your services page
- Contact you
- Share the post
- Leave a comment, etc.

☐ Encourage minor actions like sharing, commenting or reading more:

☐ Add easy-to-find social sharing buttons

☐ Add internal links, "recommended reading" or "related posts" sections

☐ Allow comments

Common Blog Post Mistakes:

- x Too wordy
- x Poorly formatted
- x Content that doesn't provide value
- x No personality
- x No call-to-action
- x Over-promotional

Author's bio:

Having an Author's bio after every post on your website will make your impressed visitors remember your name and recognize it next time they see it, for example, in their inbox or social feed.

Adding the links to your social profiles and to your lead magnet will encourage your visitors to connect with you on other platforms or subscribe to your updates.

☐ State clearly:

☐ Who you are

☐ What you do

☐ How people benefit from your product or services

☐ Use short unambiguous sentences

☐ If you are linking to your freebie:

☐ Give your readers a good reason to check it out and put the emphasis on how that guide or checklist will solve their problems.

Author's Bio Mistakes:

x Sharing things your audience doesn't care about

x Making it too long

x Being vague or too clever

x Striking a wrong tone (being too formal or too playful)

Tip: When writing your author's bio, only include the information that will either increase your authority in the readers' eyes or increase their motivation to click on your link.

CONTACT PAGE CHECKLIST

If you want more people to contact you, you need to do better than having just a generic contact form on your Contact page. Here's what you should include on your Contact page to make your prospects feel welcomed.

☐ **Contact Page "Must-Have"s:**

☐ Your photo

☐ A friendly paragraph as if you're talking to your prospects in person

☐ Mention how long it usually takes you to respond to inquiries

☐ Use contact form instead or along with an email address

Advantages of using a contact form:

- You can ask for particular information in advance
- You can track submissions
- You can reduce the number of spam emails
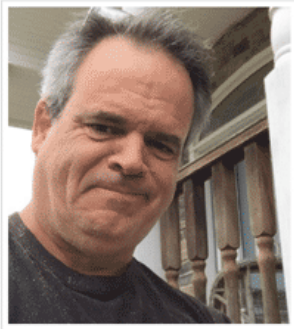- You can add a "thank you" page

☐ **Other info to include (if applies):**

☐ Your phone number

☐ Office hours

☐ A map

☐ Driving directions

☐ **Link to your Contact page from:**

- ☐ Main navigation
- ☐ Service pages
- ☐ Footer

Contact page: Real-life example

Hi. I'm Chris, the owner of C.D. Construction. I just wanted to let you know that when you call us, you won't be put on hold or passed down the line. I'll personally pick up the phone and answer all your questions.

If you'd like to get a free estimate, we'll schedule a visit to your house right away so that I can see and measure the space in person. You'll get your free estimate in a couple of days after that.

Call us today at (845) 610-3630

Office hours: Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday: 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Chris Doyle, the owner of C.D. Construction

Couldn't reach us by phone?

Use this contact form to get in touch. We usually reply within 24 hours.

Name (required)

[   ]

Email (required)

[   ]

Phone

[   ]

What Would You Like Done?

[   ]

Do You Have Any Of The Following Already?

☐ Blueprints

☐ Permits

How Did You Hear About Us?

[   ]

[Submit]

(Source: C.D. Construction)

Why does this work?

- A friendly face and a conversational tone puts the reader at ease.

- Additional information reassures the reader that this is the right way to ask for a free estimate.

- A visually prominent phone number is easy to spot.

- Office hours clarify the question whether it's appropriate to call at a particular time.

- The sentence before the contact form reassures the reader that they will get a quick response.

TESTIMONIALS CHECKLIST

Do you really need a Testimonials page?

Testimonials are most powerful in context: On your homepage, About or Services page next to the claims you make about your offer. So, believable client testimonials are a must every time you make a claim about your service or product.

Whether you also need a Testimonials page depends on your industry and your visitors' expectations. If you already have a Testimonials page, look at your Google Analytics to see how many people are actually visiting it.

Credible client testimonial: Checklist

"Loved it!" is one of the worst testimonials you can use on your website. It's vague and unspecific, which make it less believable and useless for your potential customers. Here's what makes a client testimonial great.

A great client testimonial:

- ☐ Is short and direct

- ☐ *Is believable:*

  - ☐ Uses full names and, if possible, headshots of the clients

  - ☐ Is specific enough to sound authentic

- ☐ *Backs up your claims:*

  - ☐ Reinforces your unique value proposition, and/or

  - ☐ Uses data behind the value service / product delivers, and/or

  - ☐ Addresses initial fears of your customers and explains how they were eliminated

- ☐ If possible, **includes the keyword** you've optimized the page that contains this testimonial for.

Testimonial Example:

> ## "5% increase in blog subscriptions"
>
> Julia understands usability. After she reviewed my homepage, the conversion rate for my newsletter opt-in went up 5%.
>
> Creg Sallivan, cs-marketing.com

Why is this a good testimonial?

- Even if your website visitors are skimming your page, they'll get the main message of the testimonial from its heading.

- It's a short testimonial that can be easily processed.

- A headshot, the full name and the website URL shows that it comes from a real person.

- The text of the testimonial uses data to show that the service provided (page review) led to desired effect (increase in conversions).

Q. My clients don't want to put their full names and photos next to their testimonials. What should I do?

A. If you are a therapist or a nutrition expert, it's possible that your clients will be reluctant to have their full names and photos displayed next to their testimonials.

But your potential clients will understand why it's the case. So, even with no picture and the first names only, your testimonials will be believable if they are specific enough

FAQS PAGE CHECKLIST

Do you really need an FAQs page?

This depends on how much time you would spend answering the questions otherwise and whether your audience expects you to have an FAQs page. In most of the cases, it's better to answer the questions your website visitors may have on the spot – on a specific page they may need this information.

FAQs page: Pros and Cons

Pros:

- ✓ Saves you time
- ✓ Weeds out the clients who won't be a good fit
- ✓ Reassures your ideal clients that you are what they need
- ✓ Can boost your SEO

Cons:

x Not many people will visit it

x When someone has a question on another page, they may not think of checking your FAQ page and may leave your website

FAQs page checklist:

☐ Structure it for easy navigation.

☐ Make it scannable.

☐ List most often asked questions first.

☐ Don't duplicate existing content.

☐ Make the answers succinct and to the point linking to the in-depth posts on the topic, if necessary.

☐ Add a link to your Contact page at the end encouraging your visitors to contact you if they haven't found the answer to their question.

Tip: Even if you have a dedicated FAQs page, anticipate the questions your prospects may have while visiting particular pages and provide the answers to them on the spot.

Answer FAQs in context:

☐ On your homepage

☐ On your service / product pages

☐ On the checkout page

☐ Anywhere where you ask a prospect to take an action but anticipate particular reservations

About the Author:

Gill Andrews is a versatile content creator and a web consultant who turns underperforming websites into slick lead generating machines.

Want detailed feedback on your website? I offer professional website reviews!

[Learn more >>](#)