

## How to Fix a Bad Website

*Is your website performing poorly? The great thing about online components is that most can be modified to improve results. This might include minor architectural modifications, design enhancements or content additions. The key is to know WHAT's not working and HOW to fix it.*

### How do you know it's broken?

First you have to define what it *should be doing*. Are visitors completing your online forms? Do you want to increase web traffic from a key geographic area? Are the materials describing your products or services being downloaded (PDF, video, etc.)? Is the traffic moving through your website *quality* traffic? All of these are easily tracked and can provide some basic metrics regarding the effectiveness of your website.

Another way to diagnose your website is to analyze trends that have developed. Maybe your website once had strong numbers but has since declined. You might even be growing web traffic slightly but are dwarfed by the growth of your competitors' websites. If either of these two conditions exist, it may be time to diagnose your website.

### Where's the problem?

Ineffective websites generally result from a weakness in one of these five areas:

#### Strategy

If you utilized a "build it and they will come" approach to website development, then you're probably experiencing some of the shortcomings of what looks like a good site but might not be delivering the desired results. An effective website requires a clearly defined strategy that incorporates input from multiple disciplines including:

- Leadership – business objectives
- Marketing – marketing objectives
- Sales – conversion strategies
- IT – technology requirements
- Design – brand alignment
- Public Relations – news and events
- Finance – budget requirements
- Everyone! – content

With all the input collected, the site architect will assemble all of the inputs into a comprehensive web strategy and produce the appropriate documents to guide the project.

#### Content

Visitors who move through your website are seeking specific content. The challenge for the marketer is to provide content that is relevant to a wide range of visitor groups, each with their own persona; as a result, a quality website must be rich in content – both in depth and breadth.

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## Design

An effective website will have a design that achieves each of these goals:

- Reflects the quality of the brand
- Communicates attributes of the brand
- Facilitates ease-of-navigation
- Moves visitors towards action steps
- Accommodates all content components

## Architecture

Effective websites utilize a comprehensive, master plan as part of their design and development. This includes business objectives, strategy, technical requirements, content needs, brand identity, response mechanisms and intuitive navigation. Neglecting any of these components can adversely affect the performance of the site.

## Usability

The concept of usability is critical to the success of your website. Most simply, “usability” is a measurement of your website’s ease-of-use. For example, how many clicks does it take for a visitor to intuitively locate the information they seek? The answer is a reflection on your navigation, information architecture, design and programming.

Web visitors demonstrate a wide range of habits when it comes to navigating websites but most fall into four or five consistent patterns and each should be accommodated within your site. Abandonment rates, exit rates, time spent on the site are all metrics that can help gauge the usability of your website.

## **How do you fix it?**

All websites have multiple objectives and each should have its own specific form of measurement. How you address a problem is dependent upon what the problem is. The first step might be to conduct [an analysis of your website](#). By evaluating the data produced by your website, you can determine:

- Where your web traffic comes from
- Where you might have broken links
- How engaged your visitors are with your site
- How well your advertising is working
- How efficiently visitors are finding the information they seek
- Demographic information regarding your visitors
- Key web trends.

Once you’ve identified (and quantified!) where the problems are, you begin to implement (the fix). Most often, there are modular solutions which allow you to modify the website in distinct sections.