

*Because we care
about your business,
this guide to creating
your very own
website was put
together to help
promote and grow
your company right
now through simple
strategies at little or
no cost to you.*

CREATE A WEBSITE FOR YOUR EYE CARE BUSINESS

INCREASE EXPOSURE

Today just about every type of business needs to have a website, and an eye care business is no exception. It's just expected, much like a phone number or physical address. More and more, a small business website is a connecting point between you and your customers. Being on the web isn't just for large companies. Small businesses need to represent themselves and be accessible on the Internet as well.

Introducing Yourself to New Customers

Of course you wouldn't hide your business from customers. You want to make sure that people can find you. A website provides any business with much needed exposure to new customers.

Establishing Trust

When you create a business website, you are telling people that you are serious about your business. You are welcoming them to use your services, buy your products and you are establishing trust. Customers want more information about your company. Think about your website as a welcome mat or an "open" sign for new customers.

Getting Listed on Search Engines

Search engines are used by everyone these days. It's difficult to imagine a world without it. Studies show that most people's first exposure to a new business will initiate from an online search. It's a prime position to be found by customers that can benefit from your business's products and services.

Giving a Great First Impression

This may seem obvious, but having a good looking website provides a good first impression to customers visiting your site. People will associate your business with your website.

- Use Your Website to Tell Your Story
- Announce Upcoming Events and Alert People
- Share Pictures and Videos
- Share the Latest News

A Business Website Helps You Leverage Social Networking Sites

A good business website will be able to take advantage of popular social network sites like Facebook, Google+ and Twitter. When your website integrates with social networking sites you're able to reach a larger audience to your business. For example, if someone clicks a Facebook "Like" button on your site this will alert their network of friends about an item on your site. Promoting your business through social networking sites is a great way to create free attention to your products and services. Services offered by Eyevertise can design and execute the latest internet marketing strategies for eye care professionals for a monthly fee. However, the following websites can facilitate the process of creating your business' website if you decide to do it on your own.

HOW TO START

While there are tools such as GoDaddy.com or Wordpress.com that have made it easier than ever to build a website, keep in mind that the process can still be very detail-oriented.

- 1. Selecting a Domain Name** - The domain name is what people type in their address bar in order to get to your site, so there are some tips you should keep in mind during your brainstorming session. Keep in mind that your first choice should be that of your practice name. For example, *ABC Optical's* domain name should be *abcoptical.com* if it is available. Your second choice could be something that is closely related to your business name. If you're not ready to start building a site, at the very minimum, consider buying your domain name for later use.
 - **Keep it short.**
 - **Don't use numbers.**
 - **Make it memorable.**
 - **Stray away from acronyms and abbreviations.**
 - **Try to stick with the "dot com."**

- 2. Finding a Home for Your Website** - A good web host is essential for building your site. It's the place where your website lives, and how it maintains a connection to the Internet. Most small businesses, unless backed by a fully-staffed IT department, won't be able to afford to host their own sites, so the best option is probably to find an external web host such as JustHost.com, iPage.com, or Web.com.
 - **Make sure there's 24/7 technical support.**
 - **Read customer reviews.**
 - **Can I add to my service as my company grows?**
When you're ready to decide on a host, make sure you have the option of adding more space or features as your site expands and attracts more visitors.

- 3. Basic Site Essentials** - People expect a website to have things in a certain place. While it's great to be creative in your design, you should keep the layout familiar, so that your visitor isn't confused. When someone gets to your home page, they should be able to see a quick description of who you are and what your company does. Using a preset template you can have at minimum: your logo, images of your office, contact information, store hours and a list of your services. You can also associate a "call to action" with your information, such as offering the user to request a free consultation.

4. **Managing Site Content** - Above all, you must keep in mind that the content of your site is, essentially, what will keep visitors interested and coming back for more. Site content can include text, images, and even multimedia such as videos and podcasts. Whatever you decide to include, make sure it relates to your company or industry, and answers any questions a potential customer might have. If you decide to include regular blog posts, for example, you can post thoughts on a current event that might affect or showcase the need of your service. Or, you could implement videos to demonstrate new ways to use your product.

Here are some important tips to remember as you create content for your site:

- **Update often.** One of the quickest ways to lose followers is to let your site become stale. Make sure you have a plan for how often you will post new information. Pushing out relevant content, making sure it's original and is something people are interested in – that increases your chances of having a following.
- **Consider hiring a copywriter.** If you feel you won't have time to write clear, concise, error-free text for your site, you may want to bring on a copywriter to help.
- **Steer clear of over-used images.** Try to avoid using pictures that you may have seen on other sites. A good place to find fresh images (for free) is iStockphoto.

5. **Marketing Your Site** - Now that you've got your site up and running, you want to make sure current and potential customers will be able to find you on the Web. Here are some key strategies that should be included in the marketing of your website:

- **Take advantage of social media outlets.** As a business owner, you can't afford to not have an account on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. If you don't, your website certainly provides reason to start one now. Posting content from your website to your profiles and statuses on these sites is one of the most effective ways to gain traction.
- **Use the power of e-mail.** Send out a monthly newsletter to your business contacts to inform them of new information or features on your website. You can also time these e-mails according to a specific time when your product or service might be important.
- **Submit your site to search engines.** Search engines, like Google, are basically directories to the Internet, so it's paramount that your site can be found when users are looking for you. If you visit <http://www.google.com/addurl/>, submitting your site is simply a matter of typing in the homepage of your URL, along with a few keywords describing your site, and you're done.

Tactics like these are just a few of the ways you can boost your website's search engine optimization (SEO), which is essential to increasing traffic, driving sales, and raising awareness of your brand. An example of doing this within your site content is identifying and repeating keywords and phrases associated with your industry or product that are commonly searched for, which Google's keyword tool can help with.

Remember that marketing your website is an ongoing effort, and should go hand in hand with regular upkeep and maintenance of the site. While electronic communication reigns when it comes to promotion, traditional methods like word-of-mouth and print aren't completely dead. Nothing should go out of the door of your business without having your domain name on it.

For more information, contact our Marketing Department at marketing@bestimageoptical.com.