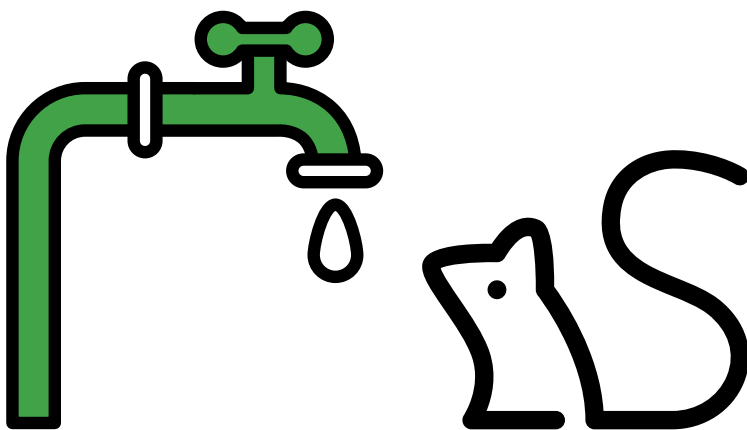


Plumbers

A guide to marketing
your business



sensis

Why do plumbers and gasfitters need a website?

Why do plumbers and gasfitters need a website?

These days if businesses don't have a website it can really work against them.

Did you know that 86% of Australians look for products and services online?

If you're a plumber, it's more important than ever to have a website.

Demand from the new housing market and renovations of existing homes will continue to be strong through 2015.

Typically, home renovators spend hours online looking at bathrooms and kitchens, so it's vital your website creates the right impression early on.

You should aim to look professional when creating a website, but before you get started make sure you're clear about your objectives.

It may seem obvious, but many people begin building their website without really knowing their ultimate aim. Is it to encourage people to call you for work? Is it to show off your previous work? To build your brand expertise reputation?

56% of small businesses have a website.¹
Do you?



¹ Sensis eBusiness Report 2015

Website essentials

A professional website can play a major role in boosting your profile. It gives potential customers more confidence in your business, it lets people find you 24 hours a day and it can help sell your handiwork even after you've gone home for the night.

When choosing a supplier to help create and maintain your website, it should be easy and cost-effective. Now more than ever, website suppliers should be able to give you loads of choice with a variety of website packages and different designs to choose from.

Website must-haves

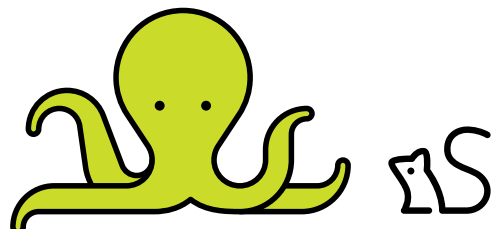
- Simple design – clear information about the type of plumbing or gasfitting work you offer is vital. It shouldn't be too distracting.
- It should build trust – how you speak to your viewers should be clear, engaging and true to your business.
- It should work well on all screens including laptops, tablets and mobiles.

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Simplicity is vital

A simple design helps get all your important messages across quickly and effectively, and the reader is never in doubt about the purpose of your website or how to use it.

While it's tempting to want all the bells and whistles offered by a complicated design, keeping clutter to a minimum is vital so that essential information – such as your contact and product pages – is clearly visible.

Ensure your product descriptions are clear and include photos, videos, reviews and FAQs.

Keep it simple to read with easy-to-navigate links and clear pricing. Never assume that because you understand your site, others will too.

Also make sure the headlines and body copy on each page mention your suburb and city so that people searching on the internet can easily find you.

Case study

Precise Plumbing

This Adelaide-based 'plumbing specialist' uses Facebook intelligently to engage its 970 followers through daily, chatty posts, plus answer everyday maintenance questions. Tweets are also made several times a week to promote special offers.

Precise's website offers three handy online functions – the ability to book online, request a quote and pay bills online. The website also allows visitors to subscribe to the company's

newsletter – another great way for Precise to keep in touch with interested parties.

In an effort to further push its 'Precise' reputation, the website also provides an 'arrival clock', which gives any customer who has made a booking an estimated 'arrival zone'. If the arrival zone isn't kept to, the call out fee is waived. An excellent example of using technology for the customer's (and reputational) benefit!



What do your customers want?

In the always-changing world of digital marketing, new ways of promoting your business continue to pop up, and expectations from consumers rise further year on year.

Nowadays leading plumbing companies in Australia and around the world are offering innovative online content and customer experiences for their customers. An example is UK plumber and maintenance company, My Plumber, which does a pretty impressive job of using its website to

absolute full potential with the description "London's leading independent plumbing and maintenance company".

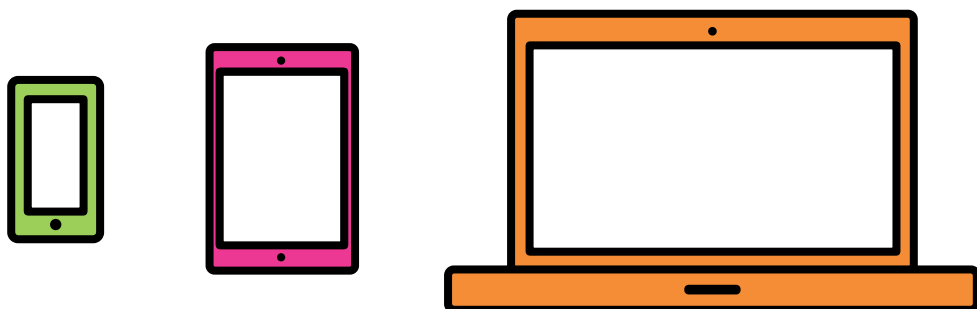
Video testimonials add to the authenticity of positive reviews, while the 'Meet Your Plumber' section helps to add a personal, human touch.

The website also includes online booking capabilities (a virtual essential these days), plus a live feed from TrustPilot – a consumer review website. My Plumber has received 57

reviews via the site and an 'excellent' rating.

The company's Twitter account, which is entertainingly posted to almost daily by founder and managing director Angie Lyons-Redman, has an impressive 2000-plus followers.

My Plumber's blog, which can be accessed from the homepage, has been running since October 2011, making it an early adopter and almost a pioneer in the blogging field.



Good design wins customers

The first mistake many businesses make is to consider what they want to include on their website, as opposed to what their customers want to know about the business.

The experience a potential customer has on your site will be the difference between them leaving in a hurry or calling you for a plumbing quote. Once visitors land on your site, make sure they can find what they're looking for quickly and efficiently.

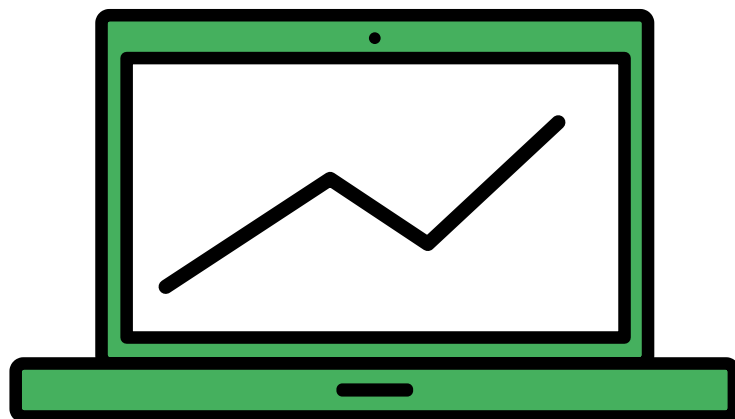
People are used to certain useability features of the internet. These include business logos usually appearing in the top-left corner, an 'About Us' section – which helps them decide whether to engage with a business – and navigations being in the same place on each page.

Websites are read from left to right (in an F-shape), in much the same way as print materials, so put your logo in the top-left corner of the site.

In addition, ensure your site pages are pleasing to the eye and that all the links work. All the pages of your site need to load quickly. And if you offer e-commerce on your site, make sure you shop on it yourself every few weeks to be sure the experience is quick and trouble-free.

Top tips

- Make sure navigation bars have clear, large links to help people quickly get to the most useful information.
- The 'About Us' section is the second or third most visited page of a website. Make sure it's easy to understand and written in concise language.



Does your website look good on mobile screens?

There's no denying the power of mobile. The mobile phone market is near saturation point, with more mobiles in Australia than Australians.

Mobile sites are often an afterthought for small businesses putting together a website. Although with 78% of Australian mobile users researching products on their phone, it's essential that your website displays perfectly in the mobile environment.³

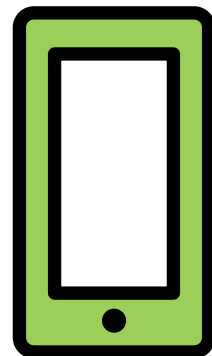
Of course, this also applies to tablets and laptops because often websites built for just a desktop experience will suffer on a smaller, portrait orientated mobile screen.

Typical mobile device users have even less patience than PC users, so just that half-a-second too long and they will move on to another website.

Therefore, you want a website that works on all devices so that your business information can be found quickly and easily by a customer.

It needs to be responsive so that the right information is displayed at the right size for mobile viewing, but most importantly, the site absolutely must load quickly.

35% of small businesses have a website that works well on mobiles.² Does yours?



² Sensis eBusiness Report 2015

Is your website linked in to social media?

No matter what kind of business you're running, social media is a key part of a successful website.

It is the new word of mouth – blogs, review sites and social media platforms are now places for customers to turn to for open and honest business recommendations. You should give your website a competitive edge by showing your customers you're active in their favourite social media channels.

You don't need to use every medium – pick one or two and use them well. A great example is US-based Abacus Plumbing & Airconditioning.

Houston-based Abacus posts to its 1000-plus Facebook followers at least daily, and not just to sell its services. Posts regularly include helpful tips, interesting facts, customer testimonials and product reviews.

The company's website cleverly includes in the top-left of its homepage the fact that its services are rated "4.7 out of 5 based on 725 reviews", as well as a link through to the actual reviews.

To add to its online reputation building efforts, the homepage also prominently features accreditations and awards, plus links to various charities that the company actively supports.

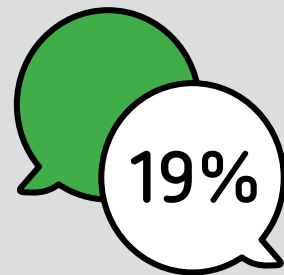
If or when potential customers decide to engage Abacus' services, included in the top-right of the homepage is the ability to 'schedule a job' online, as well as a contact phone number and opening hours (24/7 including holidays).

28%



of Australians research products and services on social media

but only



of plumbers have a social media presence³

³ Yellow Social Media Report 2015

Can your customers find your website?

Search Engine Optimisation (or SEO) is one of those technology buzzwords you may have heard about but not fully understand.

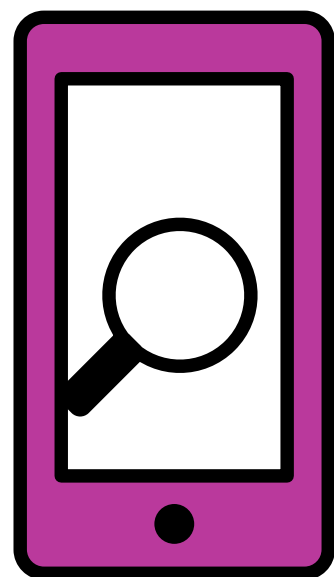
SEO aims to boost your website ranking on the internet by influencing search engines, such as Google, so they find your site and rank it high in their search engine results pages.

The better your SEO strategy is the more traffic you're likely to get to your site and the more sales you make. This is why it's important to have a well-written and well-structured website – so that the search engines can easily access information about your business.

Another way to get more traffic to your page is through Search Engine Marketing (SEM), which involves advertising your website on search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing.

While basic SEO and SEM can be performed by business owners, many choose to hire professionals in the field to develop a long-term strategy.

Keywords are the terms people enter to perform a search, and they are also the main marker of relevance for search engines. Here's an example: Many banks will advertising for 'mortgages', but most consumers will search for 'home loans', so make sure you have the right keywords.



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