

# TEN REASONS WHY WEBSITES FAIL TO LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS

Getting a website online and indexed by some search engines does not guarantee its success. You may have experienced some disappointments with your site or had friends or colleagues complain about theirs. Perhaps you're even struggling right now with an under performing website, and wondering what went wrong.

So, what causes website failure?

It's usually a combination of things, but the following are key factors that contribute to website failure.

## 1. INADEQUATE SCOPING & BRIEFING

A development scope is a document that sets out exactly what a website will do. It lists all of the functions and features and how they interact and connect. Will the website have a database of members? If so, can members update their own information? Will the database capture demographic information? How will you store and export this information? What online reporting will you need? Get all of this documented and agreed to before programming starts.

## 2. LACK OF WEBSITE PLANNING

The larger the website the more planning required. Start with determining the website's primary purpose, your target audience, and how you are going to reach them.

## 3. ATTEMPTING TO DO TOO MUCH TOO SOON

Many website owners rush into a web development after having a great new idea. They are excited about their new business and fired up! In their enthusiasm they are determined to have the best website ever. This can lead to big development bills and even bigger expectations. It's always best to test the water first before jumping right in!

## 4. FEATURE CREEP - NEW FEATURES KEEP BEING ADDED

Feature creep is the web developer's worst nightmare. It happens because at the beginning of a development, a client is not always aware of what is possible, but once they get into things, it quickly dawns on them that if they can do ABC, why not XYZ too.

This is where having a comprehensive development scope is invaluable. Many people assume that programmers are magicians who can wave their magic coding wands. Though I have worked with some programmers who can conjure up some pretty nifty features, I have seen the staggering amount of work that goes into it. So, if you do start talking about new features get ready for your development company to say, "Well, technically it can be done, however, it is not in the original scope, but if you would like us to cost it out we can".

Feature creep can also make you lose focus, so always keep in mind what your website's core purpose is.

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## 5. ASSUMING TOO MUCH

It is tempting to assume that something will work in a particular way because it seems obvious. However, it may not be obvious to your designer and developer. Always ask if you are unsure about an aspect of your website's development. As the client, remember that your web development company might assume a few things too, so be on the look out for any misunderstandings. Always clarify and follow up in writing.

## 6. POOR VISIBILITY ON THE SEARCH ENGINES

If you can't be found on the search engines your success online is going to be limited. Always budget for specialist search engine marketing.

## 7. YOUR SITE IS NOT SEARCH ENGINE FRIENDLY

This trips up a lot of website owners, and happens most often with content management systems and dynamic websites. If the spiders cannot crawl your site because of dynamic URL's, or you can't specify unique titles or Meta data for each page, you are going to have some challenges ahead of you.

## 8. NO INVESTMENT IN WEB MARKETING

By web marketing I mean a total online marketing strategy. Having one prepared for you will give you a blue print to work with for the first 6-12 months. It's not just enough to optimize a website any more, you have to consider paying for website directories, building link popularity, having great web copy and ensuring there are calls to action to make your visitor interact with your site.

## 9. POOR WEB DESIGN

A website that just looks bad is a big turn off. You will be judged by how attractive your site is, and people's expectations get higher each year. If you can, invest more in the actual design of your website. The better looking the site the more credible you are going to be.

## 10. LACK OF USABILITY

If people have trouble using your website it is going to fail, pure and simple. If anyone is frustrated by your website because they can't figure out how something works, they will just leave. Remember, one click and they are gone. It is especially critical that your main navigation system is easy to use.



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