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# Introduction

So you've decided to bid adieu to your mind-numbing, nine-to-five job and plunge headfirst into the daunting, but equally exhilarating, world of entrepreneurship.

You're not alone. According to 2012 figures (before you ask, yes, these are the most recent numbers available!) from Statistics Canada, there are nearly 1.2 million small businesses in Canada. It's no wonder they've been touted by many as the backbone of the Canadian economy.

Whatever reason you've decided to become an entrepreneur - you simply want to pursue your passion, you like the flexibility self-employment can offer, you want to be your own boss, or you see a potential business opportunity that'll make you some serious mula - one thing is certain: planning, planning and more planning is fundamental to your future success.

How do we know? Well, we've been there ourselves, so we're no strangers to the whole process. We've reveled in the highs, tipped back some cold ones during the lows, and learned what works and what doesn't. Lucky for you,

we've taken all of our experience, and compiled it into one super-handy, practical document that'll help improve your chances of success.

We don't doubt you're already putting in long hours to make a go of your business, so you deserve a bit of a break. Settle in with a coffee - or heck, go all out and grab a latte with extra foam - and get ready to learn, friends. You can thank us later when you're rolling in the dough.



# Get Keyed Up Identifying Your Key Audience



# Chapter One:

# **Get Keyed Up**

*Identifying Your Key Audience* 

So you have a great idea for your own business; that's super! But whether you're an expert builder with dreams of owning your own construction business; a math whiz hoping to start up your own accounting business; awesome at motivating others and have dreams of becoming a life coach; or can spin a tall tale better than the likes of Ernest Hemingway and want to launch your own freelance writing business, it's imperative that you start by identifying your key audience. If you try to target everyone, you're setting yourself up for failure. It's like that old saying goes, "By trying to please everyone, you end up pleasing no one."





### Need some clarity? Here's an example:

Let's say Mary has designed a one-of-a-kind bottle holder that'll revolutionize how little ones are fed. Mary's target audience isn't going to be old Mr. Jenkin's down the road, who enjoys rousing games of Mahjong with his fellow retirees on Thursday afternoons. No, her target audience is going to be all the bleary-eyed new parents wondering how to keep the new little person they brought into the world happy for more than five minutes. Think about it for a sec: you wouldn't talk to an 86-year-old retiree who loves card games the same way you'd chat with a young couple in their late 20s.

In the words of Steve Janssens, our very own brand development specialist, "Every public-facing organization needs to define their target audience. As a business, the more you know about the people buying your product, the more effectively you can tune your message. Targeting your marketing and advertising will make your customers more likely to relate to your ads, making them more likely to respond to your call of action"

So, "That's all fine and well," you say, "but how do I go about doing that?"

Don't worry – we've got your entrepreneurial back. Grab a notebook and your favourite pen, and ask yourself these questions:

- 1. How old are the people most likely to be using your product or service?
- 2. Where do they live? Are they from the city, navigating life in the urban jungle or are they country mice with acres of land? Do they live in their own homes, rent an apartment, or are they still cramping mom and dad's style by living at home?
- 3. What do they do? Are they busy, working professionals? Are they starving students? Retirees? Do they like to travel, or are they homebodies?
- 4. What are their interests?
- 5. What are they looking for?





- 6. Are they mostly men or women? Teens or children?
- 7. How do they get their information? A millennial, for example, is going to get their news much differently (via social media) than someone older than 75 (old-school print newspapers).
- 8. What is their net income?
- 9. Are they married, or single?
- 10. What are their values?

#### It's really that easy!

If you're unsure of any of the questions, a professionally-trained marketing and branding company can help you navigate the overwhelming task.

If you're sitting there thinking, "But wait a sec! I want to appeal to everyone; I don't want to be Pigeonholed!"

We know there are going to be a few of you stubborn folk out there, but we've got to be brutally honest with you: you're just setting yourself up for failure. Owning a business isn't like wearing a poncho: there's just no "one size fits all" solution.

If by some miracle you're able to appeal to every demographic out there, please share your secret!





## Chapter Two:

# Raise Your Voice

Developing a Brand Strategy and Finding Your Brand's Voice

Some people think a brand is simply their logo smacked on a business card. If you're in this camp, take a step back. Your brand is much, much more than this.

You need a brand strategy before anything else. Why? Well, it's simple really: your brand strategy will define every single interaction you have with your target market, which we learned about in Chapter One.

A steady brand identity that blows your competition out of the water will help your client base develop trust and loyalty to your company, and provide a solid foundation for your employees.

Here at Aviio Digital, we offer clients a comprehensive brand strategy that differentiates their company from the rest, and will help them build long-lasting relationships with clients. We get into the real nitty-gritty details, leaving no stone unturned.

We take everything into account, from the target audience to the competition, and from there, develop a brand DNA and a consistent visual identity that can be used in all marketing and advertising. We fancy ourselves as eager beavers, you see.

Now, this brings us to finding a voice for your company. If your business had a voice (work with us here and channel your inner eight-year-old for a game of make-believe for just a second,) what would it sound like? Would it be funny? Serious? Quirky? Personable? Weird? Wholesome? Smart? A mixture of a few of these?

It goes without saying: giving your brand a voice will take your company — no matter what it is — from mediocre to miraculous.

Disagree? Let's take a quick look at social media: there are more people than ever before on online...and the number of users is expected to just keep on growing. According to *statista: The Statistics Portal,* "The power of social networking is such that, the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 2.95 billion by 2020." That's nearly three billion users, people!





It stands to reason, then, that choosing a consistent "voice" for your business to use on social media (as well as in your advertising, and on your website, for that matter!) is the key to establishing and maintaining a relationship with your consumers. You'll make your company unique, and people will not only like your company more, they'll relate to it much better

Start by considering how you want your company to be perceived by potential customers, and make a list. Once you've narrowed it down to your top favourites, don't be afraid to do some market research and see what works best. You may be surprised!



# Chapter Three:

# Go Out in Search

### Conducting A Domain Search and Registering the Domain Name

Don't let the name of this chapter scare you away. We're not going to get too technical on you, promise! We'll keep this short and sweet.

According to the Government of Canada, "A domain name — the web address where a website 'lives' online — is a critical component of a business' brand.

Before you choose your domain name, make sure you legally have the right to register the name, and use it. If you register a domain name that infringes (even if you didn't mean to!) on the legal rights of another business or individual, you could be in some seriously hot water.

Make sure you do your research by using an online database to search for your desired name before officially registering it. Better yet? Consult a pro who knows what they're doing! You may just end up saving yourself some serious stress later on down the road.





**One final tip:** before choosing your domain's name, think about it carefully. It should not only be easy to remember and spell, it should also represent your business' brand. Write it down, and examine it carefully. Are there any dirty words hidden in there? Believe it or not, this actually happens!



# Whether by Design or Accident Designing a Logo



### Chapter Four:

# Whether by Design or Accident

Designing a Logo

With your brand and brand voice determined, the fun begins: designing a logo that suits your brand and represents your companyA logo will be the "face" of your business; it'll be what people will come to think of when they think of your company.

There's a lot to consider, from the typography, to the colour and the size, keeping in mind that you want your logo to be memorable, easy to read and timeless. You must also note overly complex logos don't work in your favour (they don't print well), and that too many fonts aren't visually pleasing and will confuse the viewer, if only subconsciously. You don't want that, trust us!

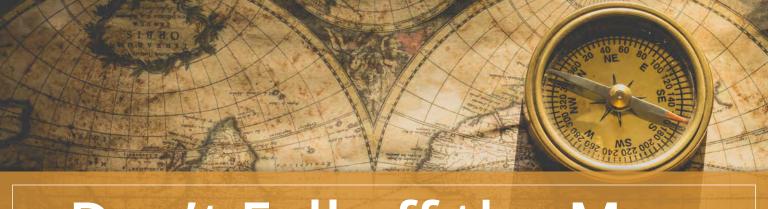
And for the love of Pete, avoid questionable websites that offer you quick jobs for \$5, or logos that use stock art. (Hold on, we just need a minute to shudder dramatically in horror).





Like anything else in life, when it comes to designing a logo, you get what you pay for. You're investing serious money in your business, so make sure you put some room aside in your budget to have a logo professionally designed by someone who knows what they're doing.

At the end of the day, your logo is what makes your company recognizable and is going to be on everything, from your business cards, to your storefront, to your letterhead. Don't disregard its importance.



# Don't Fall off the Map Developing a Sitemap for Your Business' Website



# Chapter Five:

# Don't Fall off the Map

Developing a Sitemap for Your Business' website

Don't worry; much like in Chapter Three, we're not going to get overly technical on you in this section. It's pretty straightforward, actually: a sitemap simply lists all the pages on your website, like the homepage, the "about" page, and the contact page, and makes it easy for users and search engines to easily navigate from page to page.

It's important to note here that the pages on websites vary greatly depending on the type of business. If you plan to own a plumbing business, for example, you might have a "services" page, in addition to the other pages previously mentioned. On the other hand, if you're introducing a jewelry business, you might have different pages dedicated to necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, respectively. Launching a photography business? Consider pages for wedding photography, family photography, and corporate photography, in addition to a page that tells clients about who you are, and a contact page so you can easily be reached.

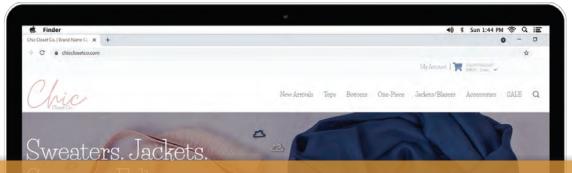




A sitemap is a super-effective planning tool that helps you organize all the content on your website into something that makes sense for visitors. It also helps you avoid repetition, and makes it easy for those visiting your site to quickly and easily find what they're looking for.

If this is all over your head, don't fret. (You're not alone!). A professional web designer will create a wireframe that visually maps out all of the site's content before getting into the nitty-gritty.

A pro will know what potential customers will be looking for, and together, you'll be able to launch a website that'll have clients knocking down your door in no time at all.



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# The Devil is in the Design

Designing Your Website





# Chapter Six:

# The Devil is in the Design

#### Designing Your Website

With your sitemap done and dusted, the time has now come to design your website.

Properly-executed web design can help your business engage with your target audience effectively, while at the same time growing your brand awareness and meeting your business' objectives.

"Websites give your business credibility and allow you to show off your expertise," explains Michael Haaima, creative director at Webworks. "Pros can help you gain valuable exposure not only through the synchronization of your website, but also through search engine listings like Google, and social media networks."

Think you don't need a website? Think again! The digital age is upon us, and it's here to stay.





If your business doesn't have one, you're going to lose money. It's that simple. Why? Without a website, you lack credibility.

A 2015 study performed by Verisign reported that 84 per cent of consumers believe that small businesses with websites are more credible than ones without an online presence. Eighty-four per cent, people! That's huge.

The same study found that nine out of 10 people (again, a substantial amount!) rely on the Internet to locate goods and services. Just think about the last time you wanted to go out to dinner. Chances are, you did some Googling.

To put it simply, without a website, there's no denying you're missing out on connecting with would-be clients, showcasing what you do to the world, and ultimately, prospective sales. In short, a website is not something that's nice to have...it's something you absolutely need to have.

Using your brand strategy, a web designer will take all the info potential customers need, and convey it in a way that's attention-grabbing, easy to navigate, and will result in sales.

They'll also optimize it for different uses. Did we lose you there? Let's make it easy for you: this simply means they'll format your website to be mobile-friendly for tablets and phones.

This is a really important step, especially when you consider how many people use such devices these days. In fact, according to HubSpot, mobile is the leading digital platform.

### Installing analytics comes next.

Analytics not only allow you to learn just who visits your website, they also let you know how they got there, what they did while they were on your site, and where they went when they were done. They allow you to see which pages are the most popular with users (do they love your portfolio page, but dislike your products page?) and how long they were on your site.

In the end, analytics are important for one simple reason: they'll help you understand users' behavior, so you can then optimize your website for better long-term results.

In short, your business (and therefore, you!) will see more financial success.







# Chapter Seven:

# Titles Won't Scare You

Developing A Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Strategy

We get it: the term, "Search Engine Optimization" sounds intimidating, but we assure you, it's not all that bad! In fact, Search Engine Optimization (more commonly known as SEO) is a great thing. (Not as great as ice cream, but it's pretty darn close.)

Essentially, SEO is the process of getting traffic from organic search results on search engines. The higher your business ranks in search engine results, the more traffic your site will receive.

A professional web designer will know exactly how to generate all that traffic you want to your website by considering elements like keywords; easy-to-read and interesting content; fast page loading speed; top-of-the-line design; and the use of alt tags (alternative text descriptions).

"Search Engine Optimization is the reason a website can be found online," explains Haaima. "Without proper SEO, the site sits dormant and really won't help increase revenue, etc. Having a professional team manage your SEO will ensure that your site makes it to the top of Google."

And there you have it, folks. See, it wasn't that bad, was it?







# Chapter Eight:

# What's the Game Plan

#### Developing a Marketing Plan

By now, you're well on your way to becoming a successful entrepreneur. But there's still a long (albeit, exhilarating!) road ahead.

Next up, you'll need to tackle a marketing plan. Wondering what the heck that is?"Unless your business has unlimited time and an unlimited budget, it pays to have a marketing plan," says Janssens. "It's the backbone of your efforts and lets everyone in the organization know where, why and how you are executing your next marketing campaign."

If you enjoy doing research, you're in luck; a well-developed marketing plan involves lots of it. It also involves determining just where your brand sits in the industry. You'll be able to grow your business quickly, and fly past your competition.

Begin by establishing a list of marketing objectives. Do you want to increase your bi-monthly sales? Increase your yearly earnings? Do you simply want to boost customer awareness?

Keeping your budget in mind, develop an action plan. Perhaps it's placing an ad in a magazine, or organizing a contest. Maybe you'd like to run an advertorial in a trade magazine, or offer clients a can't-miss-it deal. The possibilities are endless!

Are you feeling overwhelmed? Need help? We don't blame you. There's a lot to think about! A pro will allow you to focus on maintaining and growing your business, while at the same time guaranteeing a specialized, experienced and innovative team — like us! — is working to uncover the most profitable opportunities for your company.





# Content is King

Content Creation





# Chapter Nine:

# Content is King

Content Creation

In the words of MarketingProfs author Ann Handley, "Good content is not storytelling. It's telling your story well."

We couldn't agree more! Content is, in fact, king.

Besides their insatiable love of grammar (they're usually huge nerds), content writers are known for telling stories in a way that actually engages readers. They understand their audience, and will gear the style of their writing to suit those viewers. For example, a great content writer knows they have to address those checking out a power tools website much differently than they'd speak to folks heading to a website that sells stylish stilettos.

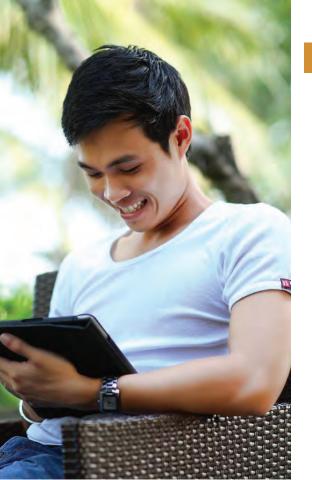
And here's one thing we know to be true: running a business in the digital age means one thing: a huge amount of writing. Just think about it for a moment: there's social media posts, blogs, e-newsletters, website content...we could go on and on.

If you want your website and social media channels to reflect well on your business, you'd do well hiring a professional writer. Just like you're an expert in whatever it is that you do – whether you're a florist or home builder – a professional writer is an expert, too. It's what they do for a living, after all, so chances are pretty decent that they're good at it!

Know what else? A professional writer will save you tons of time – and if you're a business owner — even if you're just starting out — you know time is a precious commodity. Leave the researching, writing and editing to a pro, and watch in amazement as you handle your million other tasks with more ease and efficiency.







#### Chapter Ten:

#### Time to Get Social

Establishing a Social Media Presence

Just in case you didn't get the memo (and we suspect you did; we're just being cheeky) social media has arrived and it's not going anywhere. Unlike 2017's neon eyeliner trend (thank goodness that's over) it's not a passing fad. Whether it's Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, or Snapchat, social media is everywhere you look.

"Social media is the one medium that allows for a two-way conversation, and you don't have to have a large budget to use it," says Chelsea Davidson, marketing coordinator with Webworks. "You can update your followers on promotions, sales, new products, or even just industry-related information.

"Posting photos also helps customers see what you offer. Current customers can post about your products or services, bringing your brand on the radar of their network and attracting new people to your business."

Need some numbers? According to statista, The Statistics Portal, in 2017, there were roughly 22.7 million social network users in Canada, and this figure is expected to increase to more than 24 million in 2022.

# Here's another one for you: Ninety-five percent of online adults aged 18-34 are most likely to follow a brand via social networking.

So, you see, there's no doubt about it: you need to take your business online. It's not even an option, really, if you want to be successful.

Our advice? Be thankful for this incredible opportunity to engage with an audience in ways businesses in the past never could.

So how can you use social media to your advantage? Well, for starters, keep an eye on your competition to see what they're up to. Then, develop a plan to promote your products/services to your potential clients. A social media expert can help guide your decisions; they know exactly what customers are looking for and the best ways to reach those customers — whether through image sharing, videos, giveaways, or contests. The possibilities are endless.

If you want to take your online presence to the next level, consider paid ads on mediums like Facebook and InstagramFor little investment, you can have a potentially high return.

# Social Networking Sites













Fact: Canadians spend most of their time on social networking sites: more than 44 hours each month, which is more than any other European or North American country.



# Be High Maintenance

Maintaining Your Website and Online Presence





#### Chapter Eleven:

### Be High Maintenance

Maintaining Your Webste and Online Presence

So, you've created a website and established a social media presence. Now you can kick your sandy feet up on a sun-dappled Caribbean island while you're served a slushy Bahama Mama (more rum, less grenadine) under a softly swaying palm tree while steel drums play softly in the background.

Wrong.
The work has only begun!

It's not simply a case of, "Build it and they will come." Even if you've done everything you're supposed to – created an eye-catching, easy to use website, completed some SEO work, and established a solid presence on social media – it doesn't mean you can just forget about it.

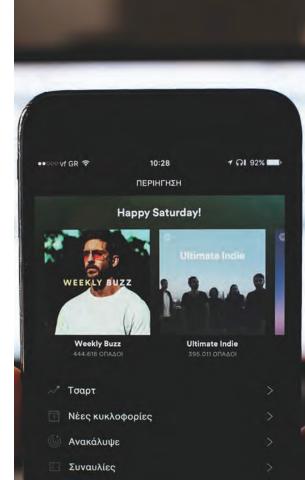
We get it: you're busy. But don't – we repeat – don't let your website languish while you move on to other "more important" things. (Or sip cocktails on the beach!).

For your benefit, we've put together a list of the top five reasons you need to give your website the attention it deserves – like a golden retriever puppy, you need to give it lots of love!

1. **Information gets old – fast**Say you launch your website in October, and decide to offer a deal to clients for a month or two on winter tires. "Buy three winter tires and get 15 per cent off the fourth". Well, if it's August, and your website hasn't been updated, that special is long over. Think for a sec about how that reflects on your business.

#### The answer? Not good.

- 2. Your customers need reasons to come back first time a customer visited your site, it was likely to see what your business was all about, and what they could get. That's great. But now that you've established a relationship with them, you need to keep them coming back with things like blogs, company information, and featuring new products clients will love.
- 3. You need to make sure the user experience is greatery now and again (more often than not) take some time to browse through your own website, pretending to be a customer. What's the user experience like? Can you easily navigate from page to page? If not, you have a problem. It also doesn't hurt to have someone else take a look at your website for you, and critique it so you can improve upon the user experience in a multitude of ways.





- 4. **Search engines love, love fresh content.** You want to be on top? (Not in that way, you dirty scoundrel. We mean in search engines!). It all boils down to this: the more often you update your website with hot-off-the-press content (whether through copy, images, or video) the higher your search engine rankings will be.
- 5. **You need to keep your security up-to-date.** How often do we hear horror stories of businesses' websites getting hacked? Sadly, it's more often than not. Whatever platform you use, be sure to take advantage of all the software updates with the latest security features. You want to read the news, not be a part of it.

Now, when it comes to social media, you need to keep a few of the same things in mind. Nothing grinds our gears more than hitting up a businesses' Facebook or Instagram page only to find the content hasn't been updated in months. If it's June, we don't give a hoot about what specials you had on for the holidays. We are interested in *now*. What stock is in store that I might be interested in? Will I get a deal if I buy two or more of something? Can I watch a video tutorial to learn how to use one of your products? These are all things you need to think about, constantly.

While it varies company to company, our marketing coordinator recommends posting no less than two times a week, but no more than two times a day. (While you don't want to be forgotten, you also don't want to get on anyone's nerves – it's a delicate balance!).





#### Need ideas on how to keep your content as fresh as a daisy Here's just five ways!

- 1. **Offer a peek behind-the-scenes** People love seeing the inner workings of a team. Post pics of a meeting, or company lunch.
- 2. **Ask questions** Everyone loves to give an opinion, so let them! It doesn't matter what question you ask, just spark some conversation.
- 3. **Create infographics** If the information is useful, why not give it a shot?
- 4. **Post how-to videos** Video is one of the most shared mediums on social media. Utilize this. Create tutorials on how to use a certain product and watch views climb by the minute.
- 5. **Celebrate a funny holiday** Did you know there's such thing as National Paperclip Day? If you own an office supply store, make the most of this wacky celebration. There's also National Cappuccino Day, National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day, and National Greasy Foods Day. (We're seriously not making any of these up. Look for yourself!). The long and short of it is this: there are tons of national holidays out there (as peculiar as some of them are!), but you can absolutely use them to your advantage!



## Hostess with the Mostest

Purchasing a Hosting Package



#### Chapter Twelve:

#### Hostess with the Mostest

#### Purchasing a Hosting Package

Ok. Let's start out with a little analogy to paint a clear picture for you.

Web hosting can be thought of like a kitchen supply store. A store such as this would provide you with everything you'd need to whip up a gourmet meal; the spices, the bowls, the cheese graters, the garlic press, etc. However, the store actually doesn't do the cooking for you.

You decide what you need, get in your car, and head home to turn on the oven. Then you do the cooking yourself, or, you hire a chef. (Fancy!).

A web hosting company is kind of like this; they give you the tools you need, but they don't actually do any of the grunt work (i.e. cooking, or in this case, building the website.)





So how do you choose a hosting company?Well, it really depends on your needs. There are not only different types of hosting plans to look into (individual plans, dedicated servers, and reseller accounts), there are other things to consider as well, including the overall cost, and what type of customer support is available. (Our tip: check out some customer reviews before signing on the dotted line so to speak.)

To get you started, here's a list of some popular hosting companies for you to check out:

- 1. HostGator Web Hosting
- 2. GoDaddy Web Hosting
- 3. Hostwinds Web Hosting

### Happy hunting!



#### Chapter Thirteen

### Good Bye!

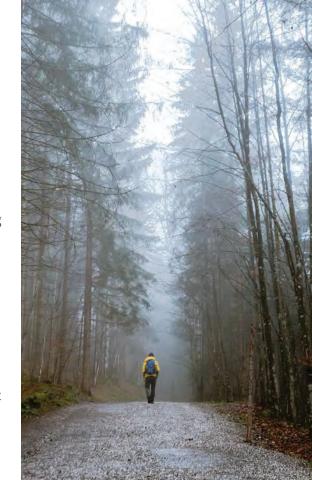
*In Conclusion* 

All good things must come to an end. So, at last, we bid you adieu.

Owning your own business is sure to be one of the most exhilarating things you'll ever do. With hard work, perseverance and a little bit of elbow grease, you'll be basking in an entrepreneurial glow in no time at all

There's one thing to always keep in mind as you get started, though – and it's important: Nobody is an expert at everything. You have to learn to let some things go, or you'll become quickly overwhelmed.

As soon as it's financially possible, surround yourself with a team. You may be great at selling, but have a hard time keeping books. So, hire an accountant. Conversely, you may be great with numbers, but lack skills in the creativity department. And what do you know? That's where we come in! (Did you like that segue?).





Here at Webworks, we're a full-service web development, branding, marketing and content creation company that's here to take a heck of a lot off your plate!

Schedule your free consultation and let us help get you and your business on the fast track to success.



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