

10 Tips to a Better Website

Your website is your gateway to the world. It is open to the public 24/7 regardless of where you are in the world. For your website to work for you, you need to ensure that it is working in your favour and not doing damage to your business. Here are 10 easy tips that we have put together to help you get the most out of your website.

1. Content is King

Spend time writing your website content as this is the conversation you will be having with your viewer without actually talking to them. If you're not good with words or find it hard to express what you do and how you do it – outsource! Copy Writers are trained to do exactly that – write copy. To improve your Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) ensure that your Home Page contains key searching words for your industry. Last but certainly not least – get your site proof read!

2. Dynamic Design

The screenshot displays the homepage for Dance Avenue. The design is clean and modern, featuring a prominent navigation menu on the left with options: HOME, ABOUT, CLASSES, GALLERY, and CONTACT US. The main content area is organized into a grid of sections:

- TIMETABLE:** Click here to download the Timetable & classides >>
- GALLERY:** Take a look at some of our previous >>
- REGISTRATION:** Click here to join the Dance Avenue team >>
- CONTACT US:** Click here to get in touch with Dance Avenue >>

Below the grid, there are four columns of content:

- MEET THE TEACHERS:** The creative staff of Dance Avenue are passionate, qualified, industry professionals. We strive to help our students achieve their personal best in dance whether it be for fun or a career in the entertainment industry. To find out more about the amazing Dance Avenue team please click above and have a read through our team impressive bios!
- SEE WHAT WE OFFER:** Dance Avenue, located in Sydney, offers all styles of dance from Ballet to Breakdance! We provide classes for all ages and abilities, for those who dance for fun and those to those who strive towards a career in the entertainment industry! We pride ourselves on CREATING STYLE in a fun and positive dance environment for all!
- WATCH US PERFORM:** Our dancers can be spotted performing at various community events such as the Penrith Show, Penrith Festival and Penrith For Life to name a few! Our dancers have also been called in for Musicals such as Chicago, Dirty Rhythm & performed with artists such as Ricki-Lee Fowler, Willmette & Kelly Clarkson. And also featured on TV shows such as So You Think You Can Dance & My Personal.
- CONTACT US:** TAP, BALLET, CONTEMPORARY, HIP HOP, JAZZ, BREAKDANCE, creating style.

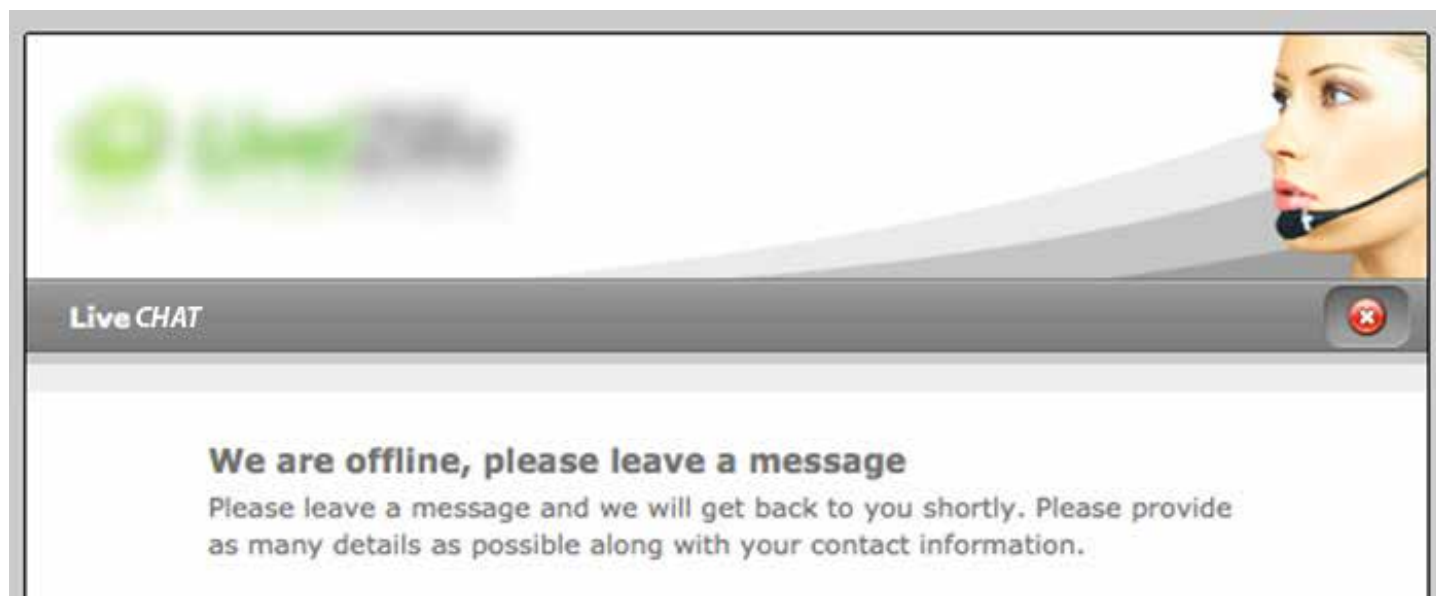
At the bottom left, there are social media icons for YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, along with the phone number (02) 4722 8020. The footer includes the text '© 2017 Dance Avenue'.

Invest in a good quality design layout for your site. You only have a few seconds to grab the viewers attention, so if the site doesn't look good people are less likely to stay. Remember that over designed sites can be hard for the viewer to navigate. Try and avoid templated sites – everyone has access to the same templates so this removes your ability to be unique. Keep in mind that colour is important but more colour does NOT mean that people will notice you more – stick to your colour palette. Please note that 'white space' is your friend – it makes it easier for the eye to move around the page. If you have an empty space don't feel the need to have to fill it.

3. Type is Important

Your web designer should try and avoid set font sizes so that viewers can enlarge text if they want to. A BIG no-no is black backgrounds with white text – it's the hardest combination to read. Other hard to read combinations are light text on light backgrounds and complimentary colours. No line of text should be longer than 650 pixels wide. Newspapers & magazines use columns as they shorten the sentence making the article easier to read – try and use the same principle for web.

4. Function as a Feature



Make sure your website functions correctly. A good site has content that is only One Click Away. Don't add fancy features 'just because'. For example there is no point in having a fancy online calendar for events if you only put on 2 events a year. Keep your site and it's functionality relevant. If you do have innovative features – make sure they work! A great example of this is having a Live Chat feature but when you try and chat there is no one there to answer your questions.

5. Keep your site current

Invest in a Content Management System (CMS) Update your website regularly. At least once a month advised – once a week is better – every day is best. Naturally the latter may not be possible without time and resources so do what you can when you can. If you have a news feed ensure it's current news. There nothing worse than heading to a website half way through the year and hearing that their latest news is from January – it makes the site look neglected. If you participate in social media think about getting a Facebook or Twitter feed to show additional activity if you don't have a CMS.

6. SEO is the new black

The screenshot shows a Google search for "graphic design Penrith". The search results include several ads and organic listings. The ads are:

- Penrith Web Design | webmagix.com.au** (www.webmagix.com.au/): Web Design, Domains, Hosting & Online Marketing. Contact us - see our portfolio.
- Boutique Design Agency - Savvy designers, studio in Sydney** (www.attractivo.com.au/): Our Designs Will Impress You.
- Graphics Penrith | Signwave.com.au** (www.signwave.com.au/Sydney): Use Signwave graphics expertise To Make All Your Signs Stand Out.
- White River Design - Penrith graphic design, web design, branding ...** (www.whiteriverdesign.com/): Award winning graphic design studio, white river design is reputedly Penrith's leading graphic, web and print design agency. Having built a business on strong ... - Hide map of 111 Henry Street, Penrith NSW 2750.
- White River Design** (111 Henry Street, Penrith NSW 2750, (02) 4732 4766): Get directions - View larger map.
- \$33/Hour - Graphic Design** (serviceseeking.com.au/GraphicDesign): Free Quotes From Graphic Designers! Graphic Designer Penrith from \$33/Hr.
- Graphic Design Agency** (www.121creative.com.au/designagency): Full Service Creative Agency. View our design portfolio today..
- Web Design \$495-\$6995** (www.thewebshowroom.com.au/): Check Out Our Portfolio! Great Solutions For Most Budgets.
- Sixtyone Design** (www.sixtyonedesign.com.au/): in house design.print.web dont pay too much for your website.

Organic search results include:

- Designer Graphic+Designers** (website for Search Now).

The search interface also shows the Google logo, search bar, search button, search results count (About 1,060,000 results), and navigation links (Everything, Images, Maps, Videos, News, Shopping, More, Sydney, NSW, The web, More search tools).

To get your site high on the organic Google listing there are a few things you need to be aware of. Don't have a splash page – if there is no text content there is nothing for Google to read. Ensure that your Home Page contains search keywords relevant to what a layperson might search for when looking for your services or products. Add titles, descriptions and keywords to boost your rankings. Include alt tags on your images and if possible include a Google map. Having a YouTube account can also help!

7. Speedy Gonzalez

By nature people are impatient. To minimise frustration when they are on your site ensure that it loads quickly. Flash, video or fancy features can slow your site down so get your images web optimised. Shorter code = quicker loading so encourage your developer to tidy up after themselves when they are coding and get rid of everything that is not necessary. Remember – you can still have a great design AND have cool features or images – your developer just needs to know how to optimise the site for you.

8. Be consistent

People are creatures of habit and like to navigate a site they are comfortable with. As a rule of thumb always start with HOME and end with CONTACT US. Your logo should always appear at the top of the page. Navigation at the top or down the left is preferable – don't try and be smart by changing the navigation around – it's like trying to read a newspaper from the inside out – doable but not easy. Keep navigation consistent – don't chop and change from page to page.

9. Engage your viewer

People like to be entertained – so do just that! Add movement in your website in a subtle way without being distracting. Add videos that they can click on and watch. Integrate a blog or forum into your site where they can be educated, engage or leave a comment. Add surveys, form or tests. Add social media links or updates.

10. Test and measure

Before going live ALWAYS test your website – links, features and most importantly the Contact Form. Always get Google Analytics or similar added to your site. You can then check your website activity on Quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily basis. Traffic stats can show you what words are being searched to find your site. Once you know this information you can tweak your content to take advantage of this and boost your organic ranking even further. Do periodic Google searches on your business to see where your website ranks – this is also a great way to see if there are any new competitors in your area. Ask new clients how they heard about you – if the web becomes a regular answer you know that your site is working well.

For assistance in getting a beautiful website that works, please feel free to contact our team for an obligation free quote. To view our portfolio and the sites we have designed, please head to www.whiteriverdesign.com.au