

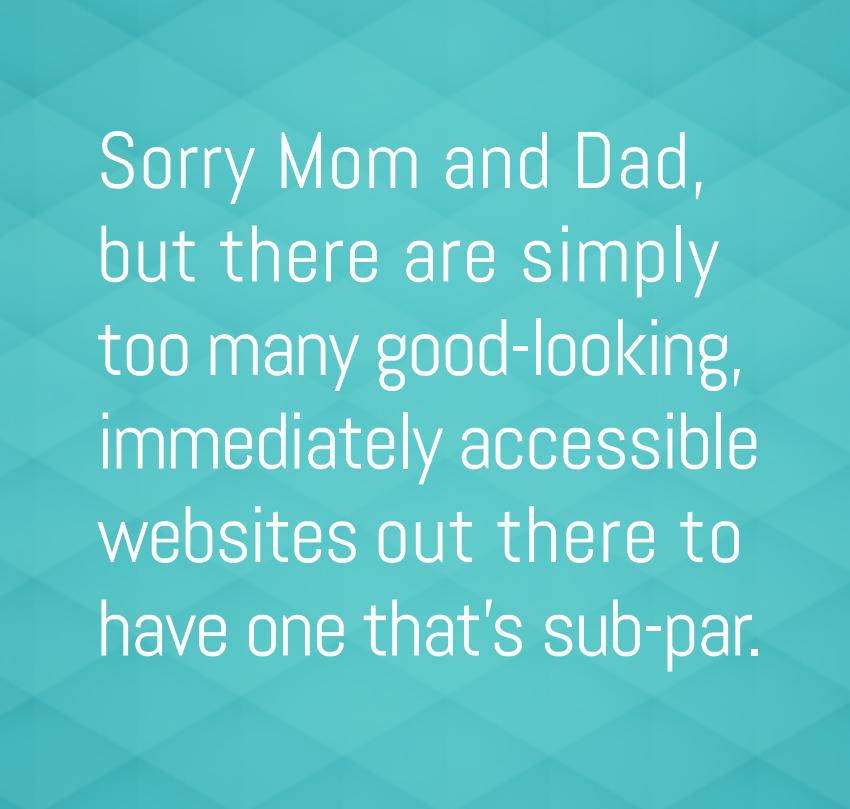
A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a laptop screen together. The man, on the left, wears glasses and a white shirt, looking down at the screen. The woman, on the right, has blonde hair and is smiling, also looking at the screen. They are in an office environment with bookshelves in the background.

Build an  
Impressive Website  
From the Ground Up



A website is more than your company's "face" on the internet. It has to contain all valuable company information and news, comprehensive product information, regularly updated content, and contact details, all while ensuring that you give a positive impression to potential customers.

And make no mistake, first impressions are a big deal. Our parents may have taught us to never judge a book by its cover, but that doesn't mean we're not constantly doing just that. Whether we're scoping out new people, places, or situations, our human nature is quick to snap off a judgment—and [research](#) reveals that takes just seven seconds to form that first impression. The same goes for your website, and it's likely that a customer's first impression of your brand will already be formed before they even get to your "About" page.



Sorry Mom and Dad,  
but there are simply  
too many good-looking,  
immediately accessible  
websites out there to  
have one that's sub-par.

Your brand is dynamic; it's always evolving and growing. Your website—as the fundamental and ultimate representation of your business, unique value proposition, and identity—should be just as dynamic.

So, while it's probably common knowledge that everybody needs a good website, most brands are probably unaware of why. The multitude of SEO benefits from multiple landing pages, prioritizing responsive design, and adding new functionalities, are all reasons to strongly consider a new site, or at least apply a much-needed revamp.

# Know your role (and optimize your site)

Before you do anything else with your current or future site, you need to establish a purpose for its existence. This is more than just showing off products and services to your potential customers. Instead, it's determining what value the site will bring to audiences:

- What will they be looking for?
- Why do they need you?
- What do they need (and not need) to know?

Your website should have a clear role in the [customer journey](#), as should every page within.

Never over-complicate your website with useless pages or additional unnecessary clicks. Just make sure that all the information users need is easily available to them in a simple and concise manner. If you can explain the purpose of every page on your website, you have the basis of a positive web experience.

## How does your site look (and work)?

You see, we live in an age of immediacy (which is our nice way of saying people don't prefer to read anymore). Reading too much text can get tiresome, especially on the web, so colors, images, and spacing are as important as the copy you post.

Using complementary colors will create design balance, while contrasting colors for the text and background will make reading much easier. And strategic image placement that breaks up lengthier



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copy (without being distracting) makes the reader more likely to stay engaged.

Keep in mind, we also live in an age of 4k monitors, so image quality is hugely important. Pixelated images are more noticeable now than ever, so wherever possible, get high-quality professional photos to use on your website.

Regarding the copy layout, make sure you test to see if your content is too close together. Or, for that matter, too far apart. Spacing your website effectively is important, as it is easily possible to make it difficult or laborious to read; making sure there is white space greatly increases readability.

Don't feel a need to cram everything onto one page. The temptation to fill negative space can be strong, but it's useful for adding proportion, balance, and contrast to a page. In fact, a lot of negative space can give the impression of being upmarket. Think of those shops on Rodeo Drive that have very little in the shop windows, but more than enough digits on the price tags.

# Strive for consistency

What happens when you use one design on your homepage, another on an About page, and another on the blog? You end up with an inconsistent mess that will confuse and drive away potential customers.

What you need is to have an overarching design coherency. Keeping design elements (like heading sizes, fonts, colors, button and image styles) consistent ensures that the site looks and feels cohesive, even if the content changes from page to page. Messaging and tone are also key to achieving this.



You always want your website to have simplicity on its side.

## Know what customers want (and deliver it)

If every page on your site has a purpose, then it's your job to make it as easy as possible for users to move around and find what they want. Keep this fact in mind: [73% of people](#) in the U.S. say a poor website negatively impacts their opinion of the brand.

People know how to use websites and there are certain things they will expect. For example, if text is underlined or a notably different color to the main text then people will assume it is a hyperlink. (Much like [this](#).) If it isn't, they'll get confused. Use common sense and be mindful of best practices. Things like providing an easy to locate menu with a logical page hierarchy are basic usability requirements that will go a long way.

While it is okay to not follow all conventions, just make sure to adhere to established standards wherever appropriate—something that will aid in providing accessible pages that will lead to a positive user experience.

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# Create a seamless experience

Is your website functional? While it is often a simple fix to correct broken elements, it could indicate a bigger issue, such as your site coming across as disorganized, mismanaged, and untrustworthy.

Don't think this is a big problem? Think again. According to Radware, a mere TWO-second delay in page load time [resulted in abandonment rates of up to 87%](#). That's a lot of money left on the table, all because your site isn't doing what it's supposed to do.

This is an even bigger issue today, with internet providers and mobile carriers placing limits on the amount of high-speed data a user can consume

during a set period. If your site is a slow loader to begin with, a drop to sub-4G speeds will only further damage the experience, driving users away, possibly to competitors.

If you have broken links, error messages, and missing images, then you should consider a complete website redesign that will include the installation and use of a content management system. Also, hiring a web designer or developer to look into why your site is taking so long to load will enable you to optimize unreliable or slow-loading elements (like background images, textures, custom fonts, etc.).

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# Make sure your website works for you

## Is your website responsive?

Here's why it's important: Each day, millions of people access the web on their smartphones, tablets, TVs, game consoles, and even dedicated music devices. In fact, [mobile devices](#) accounted for 55% of Internet usage in the U.S. in 2014.

In 2016, your website needs to be multiple device-friendly. Period. Hiring a good web developer, or brushing up on the ideas and principles of responsive web design will help bring your website up to par with the multitude of devices available.

## Are visitors navigating past your home page?

Perhaps your website's issues go beyond "tangible" factors like design or layout. If you are starting to notice a drop in visitor traffic, then you should either take a look at your home page to see if you can make it more enticing, or consider what's stopping your visitors from navigating further into your site (design, user experience, load times—these are all things that might be at fault.).

This may be hard for you to gauge unless you have special analytics software running on your site that lets you see what visitors are doing. [Google Analytics](#) is excellent in this case and is free to sign up and put on your site.

(And, if you have the means, enterprise-level metrics will allow you to dive deeper into your site's functionality and effectiveness.)

Regardless of which analytics solution you use, you should be able to determine if people are going past



94% of people cited web design as the reason they mistrusted or rejected a website.

your homepage, and if so, where to. Likewise, these platforms can also tell you if visitors are entering your site from other points—perhaps a landing page, store page, or even your About page, which are usually driven by SEO.



If your site doesn't instill feelings of trust, security, and authority, you need to rectify the way your brand is conveyed.

## Are visitors even getting there in the first place?

Very closely related to the above is determining if there's a slowdown in visitors coming to your site at all. If this is a possibility, then a redesign and content revamp is in order.

If you're offering the world's greatest X, and people continue to bounce from your page to the much-less-impressive Y, then it's safe to assume your initial impression is missing the mark (and costing you sales).

Consider this: [94% of people](#) cited web design as the reason they mistrusted or rejected a website. Remember what we said earlier about initial impressions? If your site doesn't instill feelings of trust, security, and authority, you need to rectify the way your brand is conveyed.

While having a slowing trend in visitors may not mean a complete redesign is necessary, it is often a good indicator that either your SEO is not working, or your site is becoming stale to the audience.

And if it has been a few years since you tackled a new website design, run—do not walk—to a web development team. When your website starts looking like it hasn't been updated in recent years, visitors will be turned off and will go elsewhere for their needs. Search engines will also not rank you favorably, as they prefer websites that are regularly updated.

# Why conduct a complete website redesign?

"But I don't want to change things. I LIKE my company's website."

We get it. Abandoning a website design is like trading in a reliable, beloved car. You become so accustomed to seeing it, that you don't notice its flaws, weaknesses, and lack of efficiency. Even if it's a decade old, it's YOUR site and you don't want to let go.

Now, try finding another website design from a decade ago and notice its poor interface, bad color schemes, and tacky overuse of video, slideshows, splash pages, and even the dreaded autoplay

music. Pretty awful, no? Well, that's how customers might see your page...and maybe why they're not coming back.

The truth is, redesigning your website doesn't just make it look more current. It can actually lead to a [33% conversion boost!](#)

And, search engines pick up on updates and site popularity. With fresher design and SEO in place, your website won't drop out of sight.

Technology and design trends have changed significantly since your last revamp, including post-web

2.0, responsive design, HTML5/CSS3, social media integration, minimalist layouts, and more.

Most importantly, a website that is dated or lacks optimization simply isn't meeting your objectives, or your customer's needs. But it's safe to assume your competitor's sites are.

While you hang on to a timeworn site design, your competitors are garnering sale leads, converting prospective clients, and giving visitors a better experience—one that will lead to long-term business.

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## Can search engines find your business?

If you aren't appearing on page 1 of searches, a new website can help right the ship through boosts in SEO and traffic. Since most people will find you through a Google search rather than directly typing in your URL, search results will go a long way toward getting visitors to come to your site, and stay there. Much can be said about good

SEO in terms of getting your site on search engines, but it actually doesn't require a lot of work for you to make certain things happen that are favorable for SEO. While you can often help by keeping your site updated yourself, making sure the site is coded properly is better handled by a web developer with SEO expertise who can look to see if there are any coding elements that could be causing problems.

In the end, search engines prefer sites that have content that is constantly changing, coded properly, and aren't heavily based on images.

## It can't just LOOK good...

Earlier, we discussed the importance of your site's purpose. This is reinforced through content. Your website should not only look good but also needs to continually BE good. Each piece of content on your website needs to have a purpose, and should provide the reader with standalone value, otherwise it is just pointless clutter.

We're not saying you can't sell your products or make jokes from time to time. Just make sure the lion's share of your content is designed to help move users into a funnel organically, through meaningful, relevant blogs, videos, and downloadable items that reinforce

your brand as a thought leader. And, this content needs to come at a regular pace. Continually updating your content used to be something that was important only to ensure reader retention. Now, because of Google's search algorithms, regularly updating content is going to help you find new visitors as well as retaining your old ones.

Making use of multimedia is also important. Images, videos, and interactive content will entertain your users and potentially keep them around. However, forcing them to endure too much for too long when they aren't interested will not end well for your repeat business. Make your point, then let users move along.

Finally, it's important to remember you can't get away with bad grammar. Typos and grammatical issues do not convey a level of professionalism or attention to detail, so either get someone to carefully proofread your site, or hire a copywriter to write the copy and get someone to proofread that, as well.

(Yes, we're "those people" when it comes to proper grammar and sentence structure. And you should be, too. If you find a typo in this article, [tell us about it!](#))



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# Let a web developer guide your company to ideal results

While your current website may have some of the issues we've addressed above, that doesn't mean that a costly, time-consuming overhaul is the only answer. For instance, things like long load times are frequently a matter of optimization and won't always require scrapping a website and starting again from scratch.

But you can't be blind to the idea that your company will likely benefit from a new site...in a very big way.

In the end, you have to make the decision on whether or not your website needs a refreshed experience. If you are starting to get the feeling that maybe it is time to redesign and overhaul all functionalities of your site, then contact a web developer and chat with them about why you feel your site needs an update.

A proper web development team can often help you determine if your site just needs some tweaks or if it is truly time for a brand new presence that best conveys your brand messaging. If you would like a free consultation for your website, or want to learn more about Lucid Fusion's suite of web development services, [contact us](#) today.