AFFILIATED CORPORATE SERVICES, LLC

ACS RESOURCE CENTER

SMALL BUSINESS WEBSITE ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

A practical review of the fundamentals every small-business website should address

A business website does not need to be elaborate to be effective. It should help a prospective customer understand the business, trust it, find what they need, and take the next step.

FIND → UNDERSTAND → TRUST → ACT → MEASURE → MAINTAIN

How to use this checklist: Check items you have verified. Leave unchecked items for follow-up; mark N/A where appropriate. Review the site on a computer and smartphone, and test important customer actions. Use page 5 to assign priorities.

1 Make the Business Immediately Understandable

A visitor should not have to study the homepage to determine what the company does.

☐ Business name is immediately visible.

☐ Primary service or business purpose is clear.

☐ Geographic service area is identified where relevant.

☐ Homepage explains who the business serves.

☐ Primary value proposition is understandable.

☐ Important services are easy to locate.

☐ Industry jargon is minimized or explained.

☐ The site communicates what makes the business worth considering.

THE FIVE-SECOND TEST

A new visitor should quickly be able to answer: Who are you? What do you do? Where do you do it? Why should I keep looking?

Quick Homepage Review

Business: _____

Primary Service: _____

Service Area: _____

Primary Customer: _____

Main Reason to Choose Us: _____

INFORMATION AND CREDIBILITY

2 Make Important Information Easy to Find

Navigation should reflect what customers need, rather than the company's internal organization.

☐ Main navigation is simple and understandable.

☐ Home page is easy to reach.

☐ About information is available.

☐ Primary services have clear descriptions.

☐ Contact information is easy to find.

☐ Service area or location information is available.

☐ Relevant policies, FAQs, or customer information are accessible.

☐ Important information can be reached without excessive clicks.

☐ Links and buttons lead where expected.

☐ There are no obvious broken or unfinished pages.

DON'T MAKE THE CUSTOMER HUNT

A visitor who cannot quickly find a service, phone number, location, or next step may return to the search results and choose another business.

3 Establish Trust and Credibility

A website makes claims. Strong websites also provide reasons to believe those claims.

☐ Business contact information is current.

☐ Business address is shown when appropriate.

☐ Professional email address is used where possible.

☐ About page identifies the business and its experience.

☐ Real photographs are used where practical.

☐ Customer testimonials or reviews are presented appropriately.

☐ Relevant certifications, licenses, affiliations, or credentials are current.

☐ Portfolio, projects, case examples, or work samples are available where appropriate.

☐ Privacy information is available when visitor information is collected.

☐ Copyright information is current.

☐ Claims made on the website are accurate and supportable.

☐ Branding is consistent throughout the site.

SHOW — DON'T ASK THE CUSTOMER TO IMAGINE

Show examples of good work, legitimate reviews, and evidence of experience. Explain what each service includes.

CUSTOMER ACTIONS AND WEBSITE FUNDAMENTALS

4 Make It Easy for the Customer to Act

Every important page should help the visitor understand the next logical step.

☐ Primary call-to-action is obvious.

☐ Phone number is easy to locate and phone links work on mobile.

☐ Contact form works and asks only for useful information.

☐ Form submissions reach the correct person.

☐ Confirmation is provided after form submission.

☐ Email links and any appointment or booking links work correctly.

☐ Calls-to-action use clear language.

Use specific labels such as “Request a Quote,” “Schedule a Consultation,” or “Request Your Complimentary Assessment” instead of a generic “Submit.”

TEST THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY YOURSELF

Periodically test forms, phone links, downloads, and booking buttons from the customer’s point of view. Launch-day testing is not enough.

5 Confirm the Website Works Well Technically

Mobile and Usability

☐ Site and navigation work properly on a smartphone.

☐ Text is readable without zooming; buttons are easy to use.

☐ Images fit the screen and forms are usable on mobile.

Speed and Reliability

☐ Pages load reasonably quickly and images are appropriately optimized.

☐ Site uses HTTPS and visitors receive no browser security warnings.

☐ Important pages consistently load and broken links are corrected.

Search Fundamentals

☐ Each important page has a descriptive title and clear headings.

☐ Services use language customers might search for.

☐ Business location or service area appears naturally where appropriate.

☐ Images use meaningful alternative text where appropriate.

☐ Search engines can access intended public pages.

☐ Sitemap is maintained where appropriate.

☐ Business information is consistent with important online listings.

SEO STARTS WITH CLARITY

Useful content, clear page structure, accurate business information, sound technical performance, and answers to customer questions create a strong foundation.

MEASUREMENT MAINTENANCE AND A QUICK REVIEW

6 Measure and Maintain the Website

A website is not finished simply because it has been published.

☐ Website analytics are installed.

☐ Business knows approximately how many people visit the site.

☐ Important traffic sources can be identified.

☐ Contact and lead activity is monitored where practical.

☐ Search performance is reviewed periodically.

☐ Forms are tested periodically.

☐ Phone numbers and contact details are reviewed.

☐ Service information is updated when offerings change.

☐ Staff and team information remains current.

☐ Old promotions and outdated notices are removed.

☐ Software and platform updates are managed where applicable.

☐ Backups or recovery provisions exist where appropriate.

☐ Domain ownership and renewal information are known.

☐ Hosting and account credentials are controlled by appropriate people.

KNOW WHO CONTROLS YOUR WEBSITE

Know who controls the domain, hosting, website platform, analytics, forms, and other core digital assets. Critical business accounts should not depend entirely on an outside provider whose access or availability could disappear.

Website Essentials Quick Review

☐ Visitors immediately understand what we do and our major services.

☐ Our service area or location is clear.

☐ Navigation is straightforward and contact information is easy to find.

☐ The site provides credible reasons to trust us.

☐ Important calls-to-action are obvious.

☐ Phone, email, and forms have been tested.

☐ The site works well on mobile and uses HTTPS.

☐ Important pages load properly and search fundamentals are in place.

☐ Analytics are installed and website information is current.

☐ Domain and critical accounts are under appropriate business control.

☐ Someone is responsible for maintaining the site.

Website reviewed: _____

Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

Next review date: _____ Site owner: _____

QUESTIONS PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

Five Questions Worth Asking

1. Would someone unfamiliar with our company immediately understand what we do from the homepage?
2. What evidence gives a prospective customer reason to trust our business?
3. Is the next step obvious when someone decides they are interested?
4. Have we personally tested every important customer action recently?
5. Who owns and controls the domain, website, analytics, forms, and other critical accounts?

Turn Findings Into Action

Choose the most important gaps. Assign responsibility and a date to verify the correction.

Priority or required action	Responsible person	Due / verify date

From Website to Digital Presence

FIND → UNDERSTAND → TRUST → ACT → MEASURE → MAINTAIN

Find — Customers and search engines can discover the business.

Understand — Visitors quickly know what the business does.

Trust — The site provides credible reasons to consider the company.

Act — Visitors can contact, inquire, schedule, purchase, or take the next step.

Measure — The business can see whether the website is being used.

Maintain — Information, functionality, security, and ownership remain under control.

A small-business website should help the business be found, understood, trusted, and contacted.

This Resource #8 examines the website itself. Upcoming Resource #9, Local Business Digital Presence Checklist, examines the wider ecosystem: Google Business Profile, search visibility, reviews, business listings, social presence, reputation, consistency, and local discovery.

READY FOR AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE?

Request the Complimentary Web & Digital Presence Introductory Assessment from ACS. Call 336.338.3454, email info@acsllc-nc.com, or visit acsllc-nc.com.

EXPECTATIONS DEFINED. PERFORMANCE MEASURED. RESULTS MANAGED.