

5 Things Your Website Is Costing You

The hidden problems I see on 90% of local business websites and exactly how to fix each one.

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Why I wrote this guide

I spent 5+ years designing digital products for companies like Abbott, Walmart, Intuit, and Discover. When I started auditing local business websites, I was genuinely surprised by how much money was being left on the table by fixable problems.

These aren't obscure technical issues. They're the same five mistakes I see over and over again on plumber sites, restaurant pages, law firm homepages, and every other local business in between. Most of them can be identified in under 60 seconds.

This guide breaks down each one with specific, actionable steps you can take today whether you hire someone or not.

#1

Your Site Takes Too Long to Load

Google's own research shows that 53% of mobile visitors leave a page that takes longer than 3 seconds to load. For local businesses, that means more than half your potential customers may never even see your homepage.

Worse, Google uses page speed as a ranking factor. A slow site doesn't just lose visitors it ranks lower in search results, which means fewer visitors in the first place.

Common culprits:

- Uncompressed images (a single hero image can be 5MB+ on template sites)
- Bloated page builders like Wix, Squarespace, or WordPress with 30+ plugins
- No caching or CDN configured
- Render-blocking JavaScript and CSS files loading before content

ACTION: Test your site right now at PageSpeed.web.dev. If your mobile score is below 70, you're losing customers to load time. The #1 quick win is almost always image compression use TinyPNG.com or [ShortPixel](https://ShortPixel.com) to cut image sizes by 60-80% without visible quality loss.

#2

Your Mobile Experience Is an Afterthought

63% of all Google searches happen on mobile devices. For local searches like "plumber near me" or "best restaurant downtown," that number is even higher. Yet most local business websites are designed on a desktop monitor and then squeezed onto a phone as an afterthought.

What "bad mobile" actually looks like:

- Text too small to read without pinching and zooming
- Buttons too close together (especially "Call Now" buttons that are impossible to tap)
- Horizontal scrolling required to see full content
- Phone number isn't clickable (visitors have to memorize it and switch apps)
- Contact form fields that are painful to fill out on a phone

What mobile-first actually means:

It means designing the phone experience first and then scaling up to desktop, not the other way around. It means click-to-call buttons, thumb-friendly navigation, and content that loads fast on a 4G connection.

ACTION: Pull up your website on your phone right now. Try to find your phone number and tap it to call. Try to navigate to your services page. Try to submit your contact form. If any of those steps feel frustrating, your customers feel the same way.

#3

You Have No Clear Path to "Yes"

Most local business websites are digital brochures. They list services, show an address, maybe have a few photos. But they never actually ask the visitor to do anything specific.

In UX design, we call this "conversion architecture" building a clear path from landing on the page to taking the action you want (calling, booking, buying). Without it, visitors browse, feel vaguely positive, and leave.

Signs your site has no conversion strategy:

- No prominent call-to-action above the fold (the first screen visitors see)
- "Contact Us" buried in a nav menu instead of front and center
- No urgency or reason to act now vs. later
- Multiple competing actions confusing the visitor ("Call! Email! Visit! Follow us!")
- No trust signals near the CTA (reviews, guarantees, credentials)

The fix is simple:

Every page should have ONE primary action you want the visitor to take, and it should be obvious within 3 seconds of landing on the page. For most local businesses, that action is "Call now" or "Book online."

ACTION: Open your homepage. Can you identify the single most important action within 3 seconds? If not, neither can your customers. Add a clear, contrasting button above the fold with specific language ("Book a Free Estimate" beats "Contact Us" every time).

#4

Google Can't Find (or Understand) Your Site

If you're not on the first page of Google for your core local search terms, you're invisible to the vast majority of potential customers. 92% of searchers pick a business from page one.

Local SEO isn't magic. It's a set of technical and content fundamentals that most local business websites are missing entirely.

The basics most sites are missing:

- No meta title or description (Google writes its own, and it's usually bad)
- No schema markup telling Google your business type, location, and hours
- No Google Business Profile or one that isn't linked to the website
- Page titles like "Home" or "Welcome" instead of "Best Plumber in Chicago | 24/7 Emergency Service"
- No city/neighborhood names anywhere in the content
- Images with filenames like "IMG_4523.jpg" instead of descriptive alt text

ACTION: Google your own business name. Then Google your service + city (e.g., "electrician Chicago"). If you're not in the top 5 for your own name, or top 10 for your service, you have SEO work to do. The single fastest win: claim and fully complete your Google Business Profile with photos, hours, services, and a link to your website.

#5

Visitors Don't Trust You (Yet)

People are cautious about who they hire, especially online. A Stanford study found that 75% of users judge a company's credibility based on their website design alone. Your website needs to actively build trust, not just look professional.

Trust signals that actually work:

- **Reviews and testimonials** embedded directly on the page (not just a link to Yelp)
- **Real photos** of you, your team, and your work (not stock photos)
- **Specific numbers:** "Served 500+ customers since 2019" beats "trusted local business"
- **Credentials and certifications** displayed near your call-to-action
- **A real phone number and address** visible on every page (not hidden in the footer)
- **Fast, secure site** with HTTPS, a padlock icon builds unconscious trust

What doesn't work:

Generic stock photos, vague claims ("best service in town"), and "trust badges" from services nobody has heard of. These can actually reduce trust by making your site look like every other template site out there.

ACTION: Count the trust signals on your homepage. If you have fewer than 3 (reviews, photos, numbers, credentials), add them this week. Start with your best Google reviews copy and paste 2-3 directly onto the page with the customer's first name.

What to do next

If you recognized your website in two or more of these issues, you're leaving real money on the table every month.

I offer a free 30-minute site audit where I'll screen-share your actual website and walk you through exactly what I'd fix, in what order, and why. No sales pitch, no pressure. Just a clear roadmap.

Book your free audit:

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