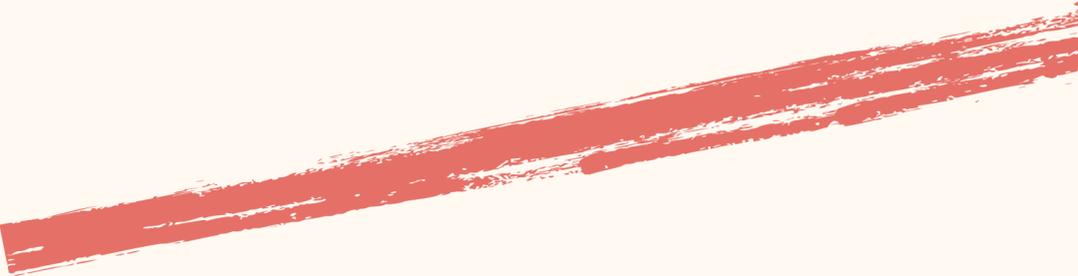


ANN VOORHEES BAKER

**10 THINGS
TO MAKE
YOUR
WEBSITE
GREAT
(OR SUCK-Y)**



**A book on how to get SMARTER
about your website BEFORE you
hire a pro to fix it.**



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HELLO - LET ME EXPLAIN SOMETHING

You have a beehive. That's a metaphor for your business.

You want your beehive to make honey. That's a metaphor for your business revenue.

You plant flowers to attract the bees. That's a metaphor for your website.

The flowers have to bloom. They have to be pretty and highly visible. They have to smell good. They have to contain the pollen that the bees want.

That's a metaphor for your website's appearance, its ease of navigability, its quality content.

The bees need to be able to *find* your flower garden.

That's a metaphor for the online visibility, or findability, if you will, of your website.

The garden has to be there, and in good shape, when the bees arrive, which means you must constantly weed and fertilize and monitor and fence your garden to protect it from animals and insects.

That's a metaphor for the security on your site to protect it from hackers and technical glitches.

There you have it - the complete metaphor for a website that looks good, is easy to use, delivers great content, is quickly found on the web, and is protected from hackers, loss, or technical glitches.

So let's begin.

WHAT'S FIRST? NOPE, NOT LOOKS

Websites are fun and exciting and really a thrill when they first go up: So pretty! So sleek! So cool! But many entrepreneurs get caught up in the creative burst that goes into having a website created. What color palette to use? What images? What font? What kind of page layout?

Don't get me wrong. All these factors are important. But often, business owners use up a huge amount of time and energy focusing on the look of their website. Then, when it's launched, they consider it "done" and wait for the orders or the clients to come rolling in.

Uh uh. That's now how it works. Yes, your website should look good. But believe me, it doesn't look like *anything* if no one is standing there looking at it. "If a tree falls in the woods..." and all that.

The first and foremost thing, the most *important* thing, is to make sure that people *can* and *will* find and look at your website. So how do you do that?

1) Keywords

You've probably heard about keywords. But it's not good enough to just say, "My site is about dog food, so I'm going to use 'dog food' a lot in my website copy." What if most people on the web use the word "kibbles" when searching for dog food? None of them will find you if you don't have "kibbles" on your pages. What you need to do is start with a list of keywords that you think are perfect for your website, then run them through a keyword analyzer tool to get more ideas, then curate that bigger list, create a 'phase two' list, and then compare data on popularity versus competition of each keyword in your list to determine - and then use - the very best keywords to attract visitors. These include long-tail keywords, which is techno-speak for *phrases*, such as 'vegan wheat-free certified organic kibbles, dog food, and cat food.' And you need to use those keywords *strategically* - in headlines, in boldface type, in metadata - and *frequently*, but not so much that Google thinks you're trying to game the system - and *naturally*, so your pages don't sound "keyword-stuffed."

2) Social Media

Keywords alone won't get people to your site. Sure, if someone searches on Google using a keyword you've used on your pages, your website *will* be listed on the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs). But it will likely be listed

somewhere around position #650,378. That's not gonna be seen, because SERPs show about 10 sites per screen, and most people don't scroll past the first screen they see, much less past two or three screens.

That's why you need to have a great social media presence on the platforms where your potential buyers or clients are likely to hang out - be it Facebook or Instagram or LinkedIn or Twitter or YouTube or any number of other platforms. The more you're out there being seen and informing or entertaining people, promoting your website, and attracting followers, the more they'll come to your site. And interestingly, the more people are coming to your site, the more Google considers your site a "good" one that people are going to like, and the higher they'll place you on the SERP. Your goal is to be so active out there on the internet that you attract followers, and then to keep inviting those visitors to your site and then provide them with high-quality and lively content so that they come back. In other words, to not only attract visitors to your site through social media, but show Google what a lively, well-liked site you have so that Google keeps moving you up on the SERPs.

3) Paid Advertising

You can spend as little as \$2 a day on Facebook or Google Adwords to run ads and promote your site. There's a whole world of learning around how to run effective advertising and get conversions when people come to your site, but the good news is that advertising is available and it can be done full bore or on only a few dollars a day.

4) Backlinks

Getting other places on the web to mention your site and link to it is a great way to attract visitors, and - again - show Google that you're a quality, popular site. Google monitors how many other sites link to yours, and it factors in the quality of those other sites (called referring sites) to adjust your position on the SERPs even further.

HOW WELL DOES YOUR WEBSITE RANK?

Want to know a quick and dirty way to find out how good or bad your website is ranked on the web? Go to this website:

<https://www.alexacom/>

Now, scroll down almost to the bottom of the screen and type your website's domain into "Browse Top Sites."

You'll be taken to a page with all kinds of info about your website's traffic, keywords, and more. Scroll way down on that page until you see a box titled "Alexa Traffic Rank." Now, it's important to understand that Alexa Traffic Rank is similar to seeding in sports; in other words, if your rank is 1, you're "number one" and you have the "best website in the world." (That's Google, of course.) For most solo entrepreneurs, a rank of 2.5 million or less is pretty respectable. If your website's rank is up in the 6 to 8 million range, don't despair; you just need some improvement. And if you have "no rank data," what that means is your rank number is so high that there are tens of millions of websites doing better than yours and it's not meaningful to give you a score. If that's the case, don't give up hope. You simply have more work to do to attract visitors than if your score was at least low enough to show up as a number.

If you're able to get your rank as low as 300,000 globally and 85,000 within your own country, you're doing pretty darned well - kudos to you. There are over 10 billion websites on the web. If your rank is even 2 million, you're in the top one-tenth of one percent of all websites on earth.

Think of your Alexa score as a call to action, not a call to freak out. You'd be surprised how quickly your rank shrinks (i.e. gets better) when you start taking the actions recommended in this chapter.

APPEARANCE - YEP, NUMBER TWO

Now it's time to talk about the fun stuff - the design of the page, the font library, the color palette, the images - woo hoo!