

Blog posts (samples)

For use with **Build Your Own Website With WordPress** book

Blog Post #1

Website question #1: How many pages should I have?

This is the first part of a 5-part series on Planning Your Website Structure

“I’m just starting my business. How many pages should my website have?”

If you’re starting out, it is unlikely you will want a 30-page website. Generally, a small business website plans for 4 to 5 pages. Or, as a recent viable option, you can just have a SINGLE page website. Read on.

The 4-5 page structure

Standard web pages with this structure are generally:

- A **Home page** to upfront introduce the benefit of doing business with you
- A **Services page** (or products page) to show what you have to offer
- An **About page** to talk about the people behind your business with photos, backgrounds, social media links, personal details, etc.
- A **Contact page** to share your address, phone number, social media links, and a contact form for visitors to reach you
- A **Blog page** if you choose to have one

The single-page structure

The single-page structure is great for some small business websites. It has all the important parts of a website as sections on a single page rather than separate pages.

So the top section of the site (‘above the fold’ as it’s called) is the Home section, followed by an About section, a Services section and a Contact form section at the bottom. You can even include a Testimonials section if that’s important to you.

The advantage of the single-page structure is that it makes for a brief and crisp introduction to your business. It is also cheaper to build. Done well, it can be stylish too.

The multi-page website is perfect when you have more information to share than can be reasonably fitted into a single page. You can devote a whole page to testimonials alone if there are enough of them you want to share.

How about a combination?

A cool option is to combine the two approaches: Have a crisp home page that touches upon all the important sections – but with a ‘Read more’ or ‘Know more’ button below that links to a dedicated page inside.

This way, your users get a good overview of your business from your home page alone. And they have the option to explore deeper any section that they want to know more about.

Next part: Do you really need a blog for your site? (Surprise answer: You probably do!)

Blog Post #2

Website question #2: Do I need a blog?

This is the second part of the 5-part series on Planning Your Website Structure

“I’m a business owner, not a blogger. Do I really need a blog on my website?”

What is the point of a blog on a small business website? It has to do with building authority in your industry. Over time, you and your business will gain a reputation for your opinion.

This may or may not be true of every industry but if it is a prevalent norm in your industry, you should seriously consider having a blog.

Having a blog increases the website build costs, but not by much. Web software like WordPress (the most popular one for building small business sites) started life as a blogging platform, so you’re in a good place.

A blog is good for SEO

If your blog posts are well written and informative using popular keywords (words and phrases that people in your industry are searching in Google), you will eventually receive a lot of traffic to your website. Eventually, not immediately. Google takes time to rank your article.

Google loves well written articles on popular search phrases and will reward you with traffic. Writing with search engines in mind is called search engine optimization or SEO.

With more people landing on your site, you have a better chance at selling them your services or products. Remember, though, that SEO is a long-term game. It will take a year or more of regular posting to see results. Since the next year will come along any way, it's better to start the blog as soon as you can (if you see it brings value for your industry or niche.)

Who will write the blog posts?

Your web builder will provide the blog functionality for a cost. But writing the actual posts is not included in that cost.

Some web builders do offer blog writing as an additional service. There are professional writers available on freelance sites like Upwork and Fiverr. About \$75-\$100 is a common rate for a single post.

Sometimes, your best bet can be a spouse or colleague with good writing skills. A college student down the road who will do it for not much can be handy.

A blog requires long-term commitment to a consistent strategy to gain traffic. Because of this, it may not be suitable for every business website.

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COMING UP: How many images do you need for your site? (A handful is fine but more is better!)

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Blog Post #3

Website question #3: How many images should I have?

This is the third part of the 5-part series on Planning Your Website Structure

"I want lots of images on my website... it should be visually striking!"

The visual language of your website comes from:

- a consistent color scheme
- choice of typography
- graphic elements like lines and shapes (if any)
- use of photographs

Use of photographs

How many photos do you need for impact? You will need about 5-15 illustrative photos for a small website of 4-5 pages. Such images illustrate aspects of your business or those running it and are often homespun photos taken on your cellphone. Examples of illustrative photos:

- You and your business partner in the office
- Your key people (individual shots)
- Your client photos (individual shots, useful for testimonials)
- Your service or product offering(s)
- You and your spouse near a mountain stream to show you have a life outside of work
- A photo gallery of images of your key people at an industry seminar

Such photos that accompany your narrative are considered as part of content and your web builder will not charge you for putting them up. (A specially designed photo gallery can be an exception and you will probably be charged for it.)

Stock images for making an impression

Often, you will also need images for impact – professionally shot photos that enhance or dramatize the visual appeal of your site rather than act as just supportive content.

There are many stock image sites online like Shutterstock, Adobe Stock, iStock, Dreamstime, 123rf.com and many more. You can get high-quality images for a one-time payment of \$3-\$10 per image for web use.

A web builder, acting on your brief, can select half a dozen such images and use them on the site once you give your approval. This is a popular way of ‘stylizing’ a website because it adds visual quality in an affordable way.

Image carousel for impact

Stock images are often used as a leading masthead image on each of your pages. You can extend the image to fill the screen side to side and superimpose your message on top of it.

The home page masthead can be specially designed with an automatic image carousel of 3-5 high-quality moving stock images. Setting up an image slider or carousel is a special feature and your web builder will charge for it at the time of costing the site.

Bottom line, keeping about a \$100 handy for getting some relevant stock images is a great idea. This is true whatever industry you are in. For India, about ₹5,000 should be a good amount to keep for this.

COMING UP: Is email marketing for you? (As long as you're ready to give first and receive next!)

Blog Post #4

Website question #4: Is e-mail marketing for me?

This is the fourth part of the 5-part series on Planning Your Website Structure

“How is growing a mailing list helpful to my business?”

In an age when we all connect on social media, email feels ancient. Yet, email is still a potent and profitable tool for business. Because it is a one-to-one medium, not one-to-many.

Simply put, in almost every line of business, if you have a list of emails of potential customers, you are in a strong marketing position.

Depending on if your business is teaching (video course, pdf course, one-on-one classes), design (interior, graphic, landscaping), consultancy (business, marketing, life coach), professional service (financial, legal, medical) or something else, you will need a consistent method to bring in new clients.

A simple list of emails that you can grow and nurture is a good start.

There are many email marketing services out there: MailChimp, CovnvertKit, Aweber, Send in Blue, MailerLite and a whole host more. You need a yearly subscription with one of these (about \$300 per year) because the details are too tricky to manually manage on your own.

Some services like MailerLite offer a free service till you cross a certain number of subscribers on your list (1,000 at the time of writing.)

Why do you need an email marketing service?

Once signed up, the service will help you create your list from scratch (through 'subscribe' forms on your site), maintain various lists and help create/send newsletters and other promotional emails to them.

All sorts of automated email sends are possible. If you're serious about marketing your service online, it's difficult to ignore email marketing.

If you're new to the subject, this article gives a quick introduction to email marketing basics. (It makes use of MailChimp as the service provider, but the process is more or less the same with any other service.)

Web builder's charges

To integrate the chosen email marketing service with your WordPress site, a web builder will have a standard charge at the time of quoting. It is likely to be around \$300 although you may see prices many times higher than that!

Once the integration is done at the time of the site build, it is permanent. You will be dealing with the provider's services from then on. The only other cost you will have is if you take on a professional writer from Fiverr, Upwork, etc. to help you out with writing periodic newsletters (if you choose to send them.)

Email marketing is a time-consuming, attention-demanding activity. For some businesses, it can be very rewarding in building and persuading new customers as part of a constant and systematic process.

COMING UP: Should you hire a copywriter? (If you have other options, don't.)

Blog Post #4

Website question #5: Should you hire a copywriter?

This is the concluding part of the 5-part series on Planning Your Website Structure

"Is a professional copywriter necessary to build my website?"

The short answer is no. You don't have to hire anyone who will know nothing close to what you know about your own business. To write the main content of your website, the best helping hand is at the end of your arm!

If you aren't comfortable writing, you can ask your business partner or a senior colleague to help out. It can be your spouse who fancies some writing work. You want someone who is close enough to the business to pay attention to the words on your site.

That said, professional copywriters can be quite good at crafting the text matter on the basis of your brief. Many web builders double up as writers. As they work closely with you on other aspects of the site-building process, they will be in a good position to understand your requirements.

Copywriting rates are about ₹500 per page. A 10-page website will set you back by ₹5,000 right away.

What about blogs, newsletters and promotional mail?

These are the kind of areas where professional writers shine. They can provide the polish and sheen to a blog post in addition to doing the research to give it depth.

You can hire a writer (or writers at the beginning till you settle on one) from Upwork or Fiverr to do blog posts on a periodic basis. The topics should be selected by you and the word count expected should also be spelt out by you.

A rate of ₹500-₹750 for a fully researched blog post is usual. You can get a bargain rate if you book a writer for a set number of blog posts over a period of time.

Newsletters and promo email can also be entrusted to copywriters, but are best done by someone from your team (including yourself.) It's not just that the costs of hiring a writer pile up pretty fast, it's also that insiders will understand the promotions and news items much better and faster than a paid writer from outside.

So the recommendation is this: Use a pro writer for writing your content on the site. They don't have to write everything. You can ask them to write a handful of important pages like About, Services, FAQ and the key benefit copy on the Home page.

With periodic writing like newsletters and promo mail, use an insider preferably.

Blog writing can be an iffy thing – you can get excellent quality and readability (sometimes) with professional writers. And (sometimes) with a talented insider. It will vary from business to business.
