

Guide to developing your online presence

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# How to get your business online and growing.



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# Get yourself online

With any new venture, the excitement to jump right in is high—something we all understand at InternetNZ. Sorting your online presence is no different, and it's never been easier to do, but to make sure you get the most out of being online, there are some things to consider first.

**Follow these steps to getting online and make sure there are no obstacles in your way.**

## Before you're online

Consider the following points before taking action and you'll make things a lot easier on yourself.



### Set your goals

Start by setting goals. The temptation to rush ahead and build a website is strong, but having a plan in place will make sure it does everything you want. It's easier to do this now rather than try and fix what's been done later.

Think about what you want to achieve and what your goals are. Ask yourself who the audience is, and what they're looking to do. Then write down as many reasons as you can about why you want to be online. Some examples could be:

- ✔ **Offering your expertise**
- ✔ **Providing goods and services**
- ✔ **Telling your story**
- ✔ **Raising awareness about topics and issues**
- ✔ **Educating others**
- ✔ **Growing to new areas**
- ✔ **Reaching a wider audience**

There are many more, but knowing what your goals are will help in developing your online presence.

## Think about your brand

Some people don't do this until after registering their domain, and it can work, but we'd advise you to think about your brand first. This lets you address anything that comes up in the most efficient and straightforward way.

Even if your web presence is for personal use, there's going to be a reason behind having one. Treating it as a branding exercise will go a long way to making sure you get the most out of it. Consider:

- ✔ **Have you identified your primary audience?**
- ✔ **What kind of image do you want to present to your audience?**
- ✔ **Do you have clear goals and a plan to achieve them?**
- ✔ **Is your message/service/offering consistent across all platforms?**  
(This includes both online and offline mediums.)





## Register your .nz domain name

With your goals set out, and an idea of your brand, it's now time to register your domain name, which is essential for you to set up your website and email address.

Unsure what a domain name is? It's a series of characters to identify your website in a memorable way, made up of:

- ✓ **The name you choose**
- ✓ **The top-level domain** (the last part, such as .nz)
- ✓ **The second-level domain** (this is optional, in between the two parts above. Examples include .co.nz or .net.nz - these make it easier for people to identify the purpose of your website).

For example, our domain is internetnz.nz. It clearly identifies InternetNZ as our organisation name and the .nz domain indicates we have a connection with New Zealand. No one else can use this domain while it's registered to us.

There are hundreds of top-level domains, some general and some location specific, but choosing .nz is a great way to show the world your Kiwi pride. It also helps New Zealanders looking for local brands know that you're what they're looking for. There are plenty of benefits to choosing .nz as a top-level domain.

The Domain Name Commission is the regulatory body for .nz domains, and is open to everyone looking to resolve disputes on domain names. They offer a range of services, and you can find more information on what they do at <https://www.dnc.org.nz/>.



## Once you're online

Okay, now it's time to get your online presence sorted. Follow these steps and you'll be ready in no time at all.

### Build your website

Think of your online presence like a home, and the website is what people will see when they visit, and it has to do a lot of things straight away. These first impressions matter, as the user needs to know they've come to the right place, see the key messages being delivered and understand them, be able to find important details and information and much more.

Users should be able to figure out exactly what your website is about from the first glance. That doesn't mean your website has to be huge at first; start small and build it over time to make sure it matches your needs.



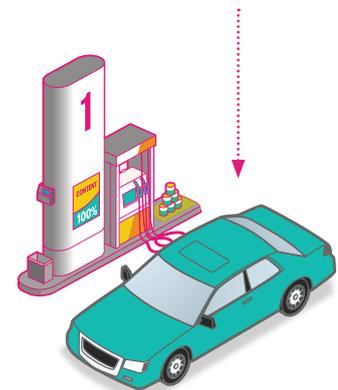
### Design

Don't rush the design and layout of your website, as this is going to be the first thing users notice when they visit you online. It is an absolute must to make sure your design works well on mobile devices and smaller screens, as your audience will most likely use these every day. You have plenty of options at this stage, including doing it yourself, hiring a professional and using pre-built templates you can customise.



### Content

You might have come across the phrase 'content is king' over recent years, but the message behind it is as important as ever. Google, and the other search engines, values fresh content and it helps bring traffic to your website, but it also shows your users that you're active by investing and developing your brand. Depending on your goal, there's plenty of content to choose from including blogs, guides, product information, testimonials, infographics, video, data and more.





## Resources

Take some time to think about the resources you'll need online. Some websites are very image or media heavy, so having the storage space to accommodate that is important. Likewise, consider hosting options, email addresses and more. From registrars to web design companies, there's no shortage of options.



## Hosting

Hosting is an important part of any web presence. Some registrars provide it, web design companies can also help and content management system (CMS) providers also have options. You can also choose to source hosting for yourself, but this will often mean having to maintain everything yourself, from updates to security patches to CMS upgrades and more. Think about what works best for your needs when sorting this.



## Setup your email address

With your website ready, it's time to get your email address sorted. This adds another level of professionalism to your communications by linking it to the domain you've registered. It shows your audience that you're taking this seriously, and provides another avenue to get your personalised brand in front of people—a key difference from using a Gmail or Hotmail email address.

To set up an email linked with your domain, you need to contact your registrar or web hosting service and activate the service. You can choose an independent provider but there are more technical steps to complete, and that's not for everyone.

*Then you just need to choose an address. Here's an example:*

### Web address

✔ [www.yourbusinesshere.co.nz](http://www.yourbusinesshere.co.nz)

### Email address

✔ [hello@yourbusinesshere.co.nz](mailto:hello@yourbusinesshere.co.nz)

This is a much better look than an email address like 'yourbusinesshere@gmail.com'. It's worth checking if your registrar or web host has this functionality, so you can use it when you're ready. It's a lot easier than you think, and your provider will help guide you through the setup.



## Growing your business

You've done it! You're online, you have a website and can start working towards achieving the goals you wrote down before starting this venture—and it wasn't as hard as you might have thought, right?

This isn't the end, though. In fact, all of these steps were just the beginning. You see, now that everything is up and running, it's time to grow and develop your presence to get the most out of it.

You want to encourage visitors to return once they've visited, as well as attract new users to the website, too. There are various ways to do this, such as through search engines, social media marketing and engagement, newsletters, promotions and much more. Depending on the type of brand, business or web presence you've created, some of these, if not all, will be useful.

We've pulled together some of the most common and popular channels you can use to reach your audience.

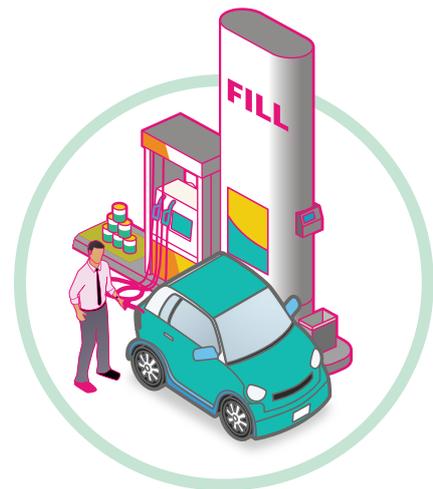


### Content

Consider content the fuel of your online activity. Google, and other search engines, use content to decide what websites to show for different queries people look for online. The more relevant and accurate the information, the more likely your website is to feature higher in the list.

This can mean updating pages as well as regularly creating new content, but also means you can figure out what your audience is looking for and cater your content to those topics. Make your content do as much of the work as possible and your web presence will benefit from it.

Written content, like blogs and news stories, are just one format you can choose. Images, videos, emails and more are all different avenues to explore.



## Social media

A big part of everyday life revolves around social media, and with so many platforms to choose from, it's very easy for brands to ruin themselves without careful thought. You must identify your audience and what platforms they're likely to use rather than trying to cover them all, and if you do use multiple platforms, ensure the content is unique for each.

The topic may be the same but the language should be different. Also consider how to interact and respond to your audience with care, and decide what your goals for each platform are.

Find where your audience is and start with that platform before branching out. Just because there are different social media platforms doesn't mean you need to be on them all just for the sake of being there.



## Search engines

As mentioned earlier, search engines show websites based on their relevance and accuracy to a query. Knowing this, and knowing what your audience is looking for, can help you beat the competition and get to the top of the list.

Rules around this have tightened over the years, no longer focusing on the number of keywords used or mentioned on a page (although still important) but a focus on content of value to the user is the driving force.

As the search engine algorithms evolve, this will continue and this is why your digital marketing strategy must be all-encompassing. Always ask yourself "what are my audience looking for"? Answer those questions, and you'll do well.





## Paid advertising

There are pros and cons to all aspects of digital marketing, and paid advertising is no different. Using Google, Bing or another search engine, you can pay for the chance for your website to show at the top of the page for certain words and terms.

The problem is, for smaller businesses, it's unlikely you'll beat bigger companies who put a lot more money into the system, even if you're more relevant to the user. The same is true on Facebook and social media platforms, too, where you have the same option. Also, keep in mind that once the money stops the placement disappears, so it's an ongoing investment, but it does have plenty of benefits, too.



## Reaching further

While there are other areas within digital marketing, the four above are the most common and should be the first steps in the field. Once you're used to those, there are other avenues to explore and further strengthen your brand and web presence. The goal of this activity is to bring people to your digital and real world locations, helping you achieve your wider goals.

In a perfect world, everything works fine and no arguments arise. While we might not be there yet, we have put in place a support network to help you with a range of issues you may face. We may not be able help directly but we'll do everything we can—or point you in the right direction.



## Jargon Buster

### **DNS**

The Domain Name System (DNS) is how we access websites. A domain name, which people can remember, is translated into a series of numbers, so computers know where we want to go on the Internet.

### **Domain names**

The domain name is what people use to find your website, and is usually related to your brand or company name for ease of use. These can be registered through companies online.

### **Registrars**

Registrars are companies where you can purchase domain names for your web presence.

### **DNC**

The Domain Name Commission (DNC) manages the domain name market, ensuring fair market competition between registrars and offering dispute resolution, among other services and information.

### **URL**

The Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is used to identify websites and resources online. Website URLs, for example, will take you to a specific website when typed directly into the address bar in your browser.

### **Mobile optimised**

To be mobile optimised, websites and presences must be designed and built to be usable on mobile devices, like phones and tablets, as well as they can be on laptops and desktops.

### **SEO**

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is an aspect of digital marketing used to help your website climb higher on the results page of a search engine, such as Google or Bing, when a specific term is searched for.

### **Content**

Content is anything and everything a user encounters on the Internet. It can be written, visual, audio and even video, and search engines use this to rank websites in their results. It serves a purpose, such as to inform, educate or entertain - among others.

### **Social media**

Social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and many more, are used daily by millions around the world. They can connect you to friends, families, celebrities, businesses and causes you're interested in.

### **Paid advertising**

Paid advertising is an online channel where real currency is used to put your content, brand and web presence in front of more people online. It's another aspect of digital marketing.

## Get online: a to do list

Looking to get online? Here's a checklist of things to do that will get you started:

- ✔ **Think about your goals and purpose about being online.**
- ✔ **Register your .nz domain name.**
- ✔ **Source high quality images and media for your website.**
- ✔ **Design, build and test your website.**
- ✔ **Ensure your website optimised for mobile devices.**
- ✔ **Setup an email address.**
- ✔ **Manage your domain name renewal details.**
- ✔ **Create a marketing strategy to promote your business.**

## Get online: questions for your web project

When starting a web project, it's common to seek professional advice and support. Before signing off on any work, ask the following questions:

- ✔ **Will this design/functionality work with mobile devices?**
- ✔ **Does my budget cover the design, build and functionality scoped?**
- ✔ **What steps will be taken to meet accessibility standards?**
- ✔ **What hosting/management options are available?**
- ✔ **What security measures are recommended/being implemented?**
- ✔ **What testing will be undertaken?**
- ✔ **What are the timelines for the project?**