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SIGNS YOU NEED A
NEW WEBSITE

standing
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Most companies are settling for websites that don't drive business results. If you downloaded this e-book, it's probably because you think you can expect more.

You're absolutely right.

We talk to clients every day who recognize big problems with their existing website, but are forced to keep the project on the back burner because of time, cost or a million other excuses.

We hope this e-book helps you get your website project on the front burner – whether it's convincing yourself, convincing leadership, or just getting the time and budget you need to do it right.

standing partnership

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Sign #1: You Love Your Design, But **HATE** Your Metrics

As more and more organizations redesign their websites, there is an undeniable pressure to modernize your site. Luckily, there are great resources out there that deliver a new or re-launched website that looks great. So good, in fact, that you wonder why the sales aren't just rolling in.

A great design alone doesn't fix poor website engagement. Building a website is a very visual process. But, when design and development priorities drive the creation of a website, organizational goals and strategy get left behind.

We see organizations of all sizes and types make the same critical mistakes when they invest in a new website:

- Updating the look and feel (and nothing else) to match new branding.
- Targeting everyone instead of critical stakeholders or buyer personas.
- Focusing too heavily on design trends. (Don't get us started on one-page scroller sites.)
- Rushing through a project to meet arbitrary deadlines.
- Moving ineffective, weak content from your old website to your new website.

Sign #1: You Love Your Design, But **HATE** Your Metrics

If you love your website and hate your metrics, you might not need a new website design. But, you'll need a new website strategy. Here's how to fix it:

Step 1: Review your organization's goals
Start with your organization's marketing plan (or the strategic plan if there's no marketing plan). If you don't have access to it, ask for it. If there aren't written organizational goals, talk to your chief marketing officer, president or CEO, and ask about your organization's strategic priorities. These goals help you create a better website because they're aligned with all parts of the organization and approved by key internal stakeholders.

If you still don't get clear answers – your organization is probably in need of strategic planning before you can address the website.

Step 2: Determine which goals your current website is supporting
With your organizational goals in hand, put a check next to each goal the website is currently helping achieve.

Expert Advice:

If someone tells you that your website's goal is to generate awareness, **challenge them**.

Ask, "Which organizational goal does awareness building help achieve?"

This questions steers the web strategy conversation in the right direction.

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Sign #1: You Love Your Design, But **HATE** Your Metrics

Step 3: Facilitate a strategy alignment meeting
Call together 8-10 key stakeholders from across the organization. Make sure that you have representatives from each department with a key role in approving and managing the website (example: communications, marketing, sales, IT, and operations).

Step 4: Spend about four hours with that team to get alignment around the website's purpose

After the session, your team should be aligned and excited about:

- **The goal of the website**
- **The audience you'll need to reach to achieve the goal**
- **The actions each audience needs to take on the site to achieve the goal**
- **The metrics you'll track to measure success**

You now have a road map for creating a website strategy you'll love just as much as the design.

Web strategy meeting sample agenda:

I. Intro and Welcome

II. Website Goals
What are the key objectives for the website?
What will your website help you achieve?

III. Key Audiences
How likely are they to find you on your website?
How are they currently getting your information?

IV. Calls to Action
What do we want our target audience to do on the site?

V. Audience Needs
What information will our audiences need to act?
What questions do we need to answer?

VI. Website Metrics
How will we know if the website is successful?

VII. Review Next Steps on Website

Sign #2: Your Target Audience Is "**Everyone**"

We get it. Your organization is complex and has many stakeholders to engage, and every department wants their content front-and-center. Human resources, sales, customer service, investor relations, etc., all reach different audiences, and they all want the website to reach them, too.

But, if you make your website for everyone, users struggle to know where to go on the website, and the information you provide is generic and doesn't solve problems for your most important stakeholders.

Websites that drive business results have clearly prioritized audiences, and strong design and content that guides them to the actions you need them to take. If your website was designed to reach more than two or three audience types, you run a major risk of creating a website that has no real value to anyone.

If you feel like you have strong, audience-focused content and your audience just isn't seeing it, they probably can't find it.

How to fix it: Perform the friends and family user experience (UX) test. Write down 3-5 critical pieces of information/calls to action on your site. Ask a friend or family member to find that information on your site. Watch to see if they find it. Note where/how they started looking.

If it takes more than 1-2 clicks to find it, reorganize your site appropriately.

If you have identified your priority audience, but have no indication they're finding your site, it may be because your site is too content thin.

It doesn't matter how good your website looks on mobile if it doesn't answer your target audience's questions or give them the information they need to act.

How to fix it: Gather your audience's most frequent questions and ensure your website answers ALL of them.

Sign #2: Your Target Audience Is "**Everyone**"

If you need to categorize and prioritize your audiences, try this approach:

Step 1: Determine who you need to reach to achieve your website goal

Have your key internal stakeholders select your most important audiences.

- **List all important audience groups**
- **Discuss which audience is most important**
- **Force rank these groups if your team of internal stakeholders aren't aligned**

Step 2: Break out those audiences to get even more specific

Are there specific job roles that your audiences naturally break into? Types of industries they work in? Stages in the decision-making process? It's not enough to say "customers" or "stakeholders." Push the conversation further to find your stakeholder personas, including influencers and decision-makers in the buyer's journey.

Step 3: Understand what each audience needs from you

To make your website strategy more audience-focused, you'll need to create content that solves their problems. Ask these questions to connect their greatest needs with ways you can help them:

- **What problem does your organization help them solve?**
- **How are they solving that problem today?**
- **What does you organization offer that's equal or better?**
- **What can you tell them to prove you offer something better?**

We're so passionate about useful, audience-specific content on your website, we could write a book about it. Fortunately, someone already has.

For more on this topic, check out "Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is About Help Not Hype" by Jay Baer.
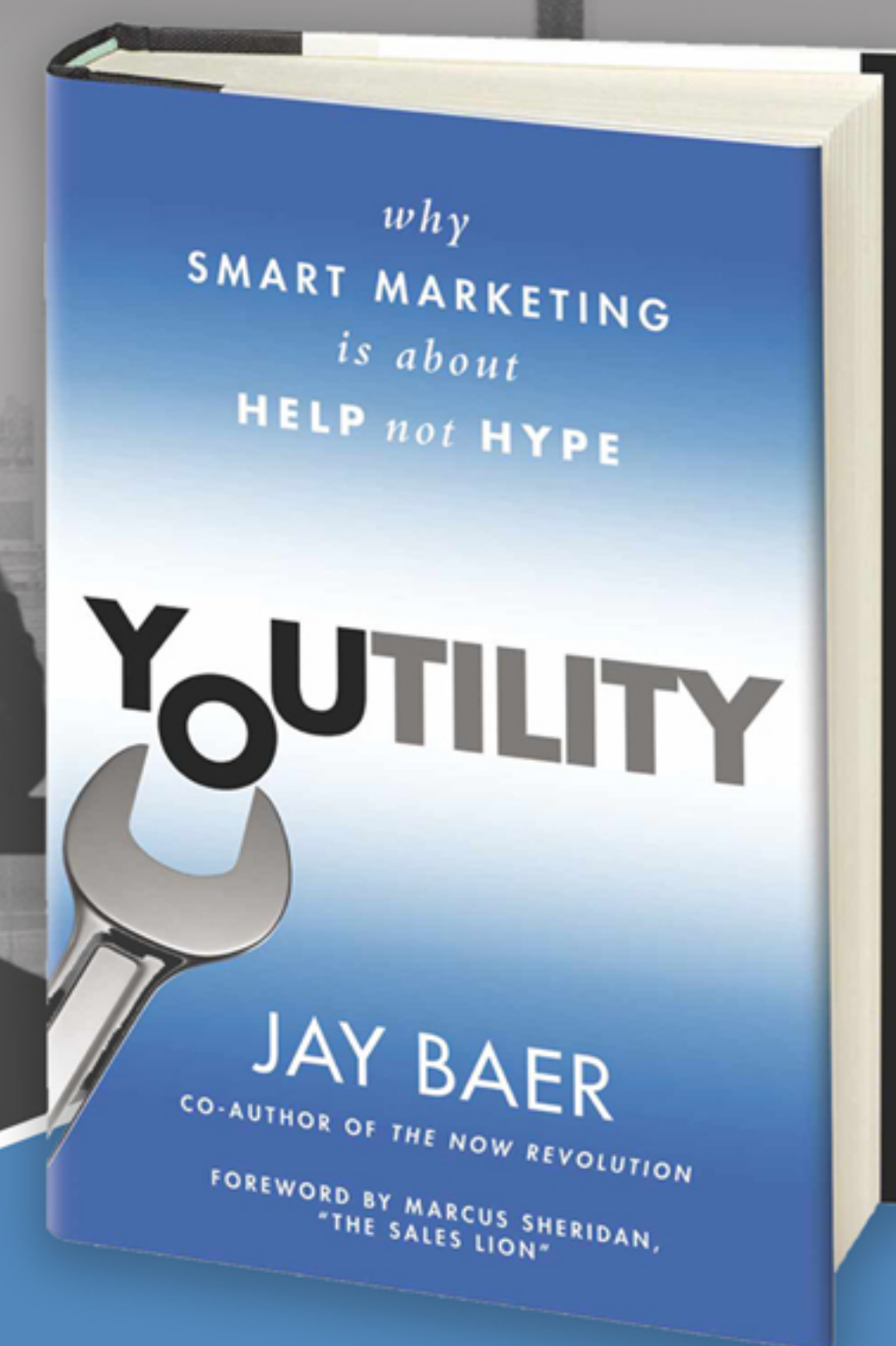
Quick Tip: For existing websites, make sure you understand who is already using your site.
Use tools, like Google Analytics and marketing automation software, to discover the demographics and characteristics of your site's visitors. If your site is already reaching one group effectively, be careful not to abandon that group with any changes to your site.

Sign #2: Your Target Audience Is "**Everyone**"

Step 4: Create personas for your audience
Personas are fictional characters you create that represent customer characters that share the same needs, goals and behavior. HubSpot's MakeMyPersona website has everything you need to create great personas based on your work to understand your audience. Creating these persona characters helps you develop content that's truly meaningful because it addresses the exact needs and goals of the audience you want to attract to the site.

Step 5: Map content to personas
Once you have those personas in place, start mapping the type of content they want on your website. Begin by picking a major opportunity, challenge or question they have. Then create brainstorming content for each stage of the buyer's journey:

- **Awareness:** They've just realized the challenge or opportunity that exists.

- **Consideration:** They clearly defined and named their opportunity or challenge.

- **Decision:** They know the method or strategy they want to pursue to solve their challenge or opportunity.

Expert Advice:

Don't automatically align your personas by job title or industry.

With traditional executives and sales teams, they may tell you that their ideal buyers are the CEO in manufacturing or directors in health care.

This is a good start to get the audience discussion going, but avoid the trap of stopping there.

A great website solves problems for it's customers, but not just by telling potential customers about the products and services that the company offers.

Instead, it uses the thought leadership in your organization to answer your prospects' challenges and helps them with their greatest opportunities.

Focus on those challenges and motivations for your potential customers to find the commonalities. You'll have stronger personas and a much clearer path to mapping the right content to their needs.

@NickSargent

Sign #3: To Update The Site, You **Need To Call** IT Or A Developer

Many companies think of websites the same way they think of print brochures. You build it. You get it approved. You take an enormous sigh of relief, and then you leave it alone until you need a new one.

Here's the hard truth: Organizations don't succeed by treating their website like a digital brochure. Websites can be dynamic and too many organizations don't take advantage of their capabilities. You should be regularly updating and tweaking to align with your business goals.

If the words "website updates" or "site edits" make you shudder, the idea of updating your website every few days may make you want to pass out. But, companies that blog 16+ times per month have 3.5 times more traffic than companies publishing 0-4 times per month.

Making simple edits to your website should be a quick and pain-free process. If it's like pulling teeth, you need a new website.

Search Engine 125: Why you need to update your site regularly.

You may have heard "Google loves fresh content" before, but Search Engine 125 is the reason why.

This algorithm judges the freshness of content on your site. That's why websites that have a blog perform so much better in search.

It's also a good way to motivate your leaders to invest in a new site. Generally, you want to update 30-50 percent of your content each year to optimize for Search Engine 125.

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Can you confidently check all of these things off the list? If not, you may need a new website.
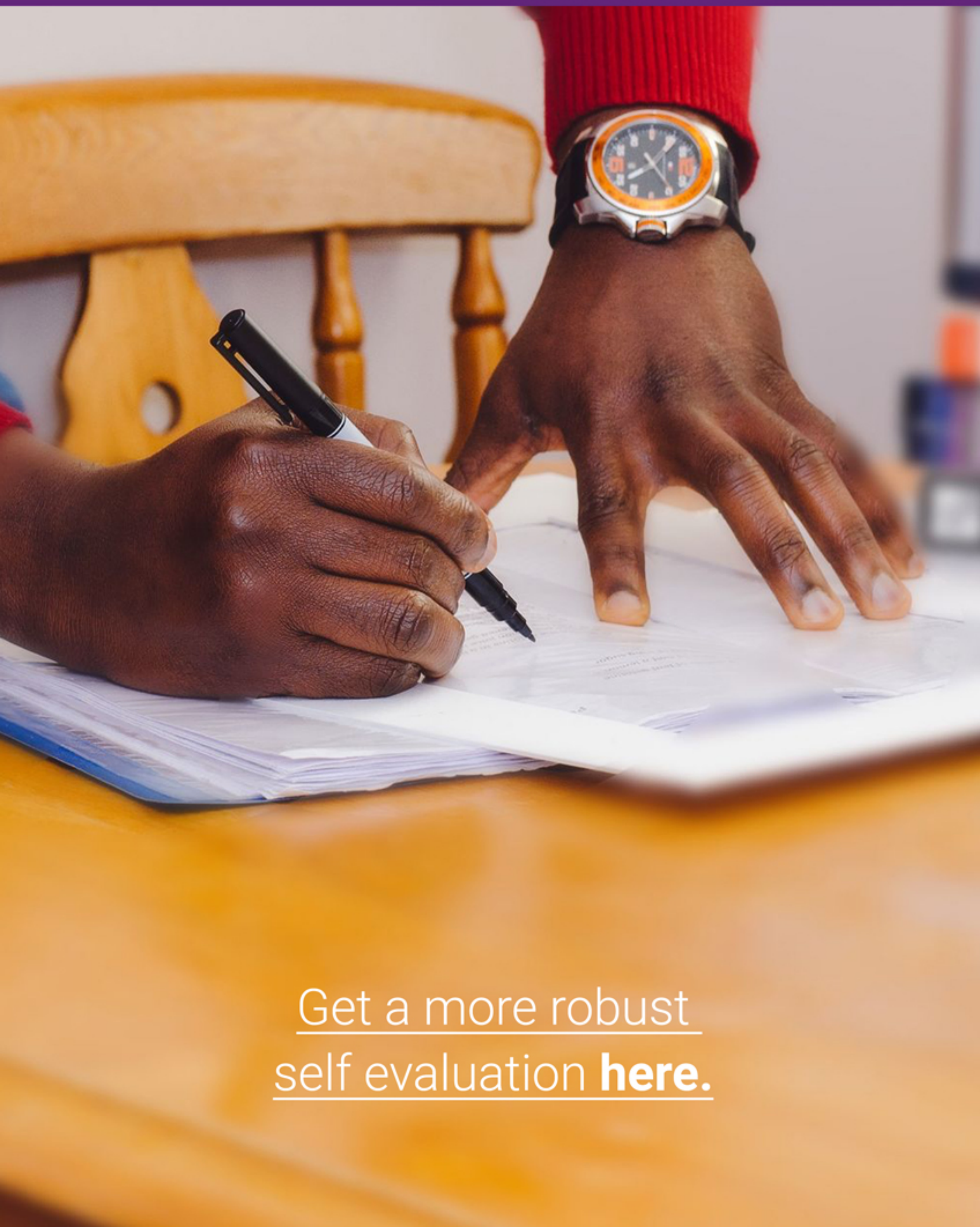
Get a more robust
self evaluation **here.**

Sign #3: To Update The Site, You **Need To** Call IT Or A Developer

- [ ] I can add a new blog post or landing page in less than 15 minutes

- [ ] I can easily update my site with new content, pages, graphics or digital media

- [ ] I don't have to call another firm to make changes to any part of my site

- [ ] Someone on my team has full administrative access to the site

- [ ] My CMS (content management system) is updated to the most current version

- [ ] If my company purchased a new CRM (customer relationship management), marketing automation tool, etc., I could easily integrate it into my website

- [ ] The site includes interactive components, like images or videos

- [ ] My site doesn't use any outdated elements (like Flash, auto play music, etc.)

- [ ] I can easily leverage plug-ins and integrations to keep things current

- [ ] The site accurately reflects my organization's current branding and structure

- [ ] There is no outdated or inaccurate content on my website

Sign #4: Your Site Is **Not Optimized** For Mobile

In spring 2015, Google made good on its promise to take mobile more seriously. It changed its algorithm to penalize mobile-unfriendly websites in mobile search results. If your search traffic dropped around that time period, that's probably the reason.

At the same time, mobile adoption continues to grow. If your target audiences aren't already accessing your site via mobile, they probably will be soon.

You already know about the importance of creating useful content and the value it brings to your most important audiences. But, it's not just about creating the right content – it's about making sure it's accessible in your audience's preferred method – including mobile.
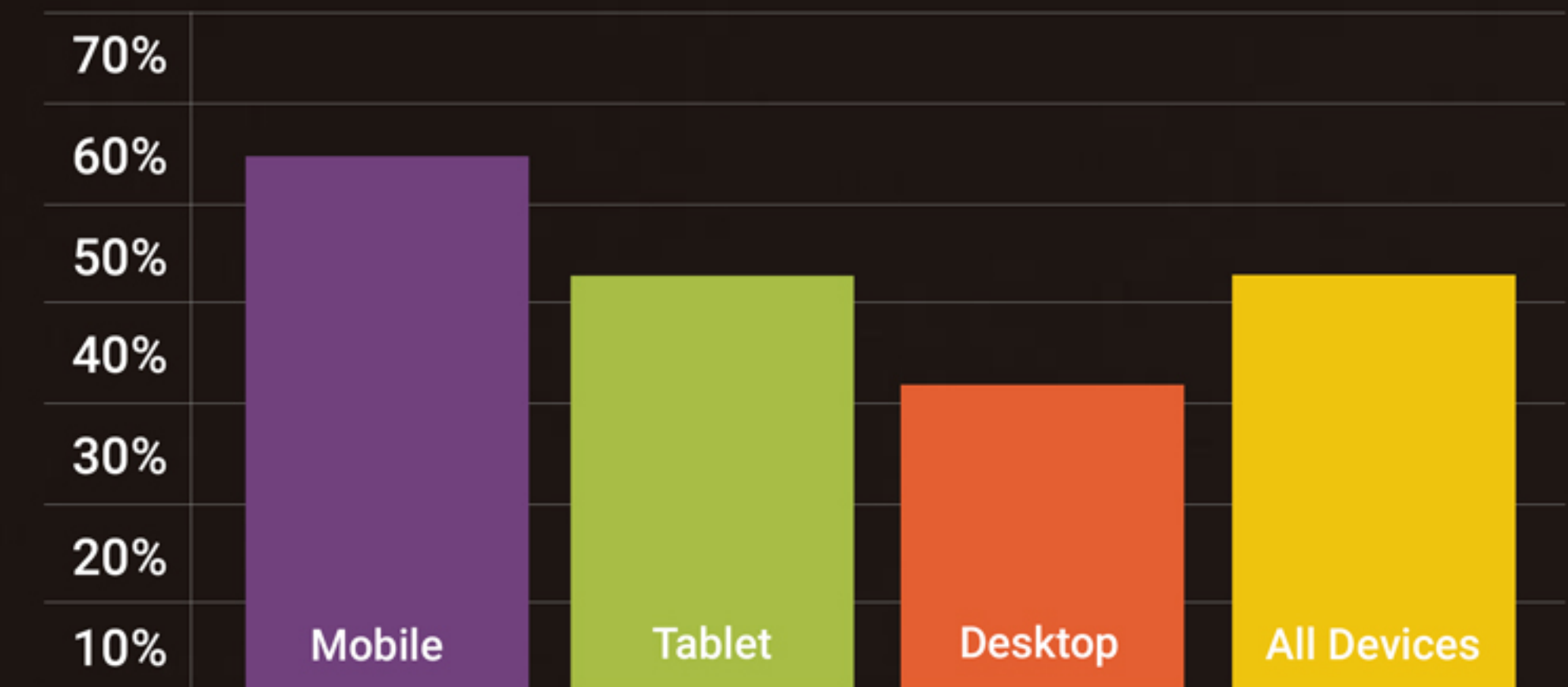
BOUNCE RATE
Average bounce rate by device type.

70%			
60%			
50%			
40%			
30%			
20%			
10%	Mobile	Tablet	Desktop	All Devices

Sign #4: Your Site Is **Not Optimized** For Mobile

Here's some good news. The fix isn't as painful as you might think.

Step 1: Test your site for mobile readiness

Go to: https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/. Google will show you how your site renders on a mobile screen and tips for fixing it.

Step 2: Follow Google's directions

Frankly, it's a great resource. In some cases, your solution may be as simple as updating to the latest version of WordPress or maybe something more complex like moving to a mobile-friendly template in your current CMS. If you have custom CMS, an outdated CMS or your website is hard-coded, your solutions might be more difficult.

Step 3: Evaluate your options: responsive, mobile-first or standalone mobile

Mobile friendliness is not one size fits all. Develop your mobile strategy to fit your goals and target audience. You don't have to select the newest or slickest mobile option – just the one most likely to achieve your objectives.

Mobile-Friendly Test

Awesome! This page is mobile friendly.

Not mobile friendly.

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Sign #5: You Have **No Calls To Action**

Perhaps your website traffic numbers are already awesome, but you're ready to amp things up. **Great traffic doesn't equal a great website**. You need to compel those visitors to take action to truly show the value of your website.

To be successful, you must answer the question, **"What do you want your target audience to do on your site?"**

Design your site's calls to action (CTAs) to drive the behavior that will fulfill the site's purpose and show amazing progress toward your business goals.

Strong CTAs drive measurable actions – and give you powerful and compelling metrics to show how your work ties directly to your organization's strategy.
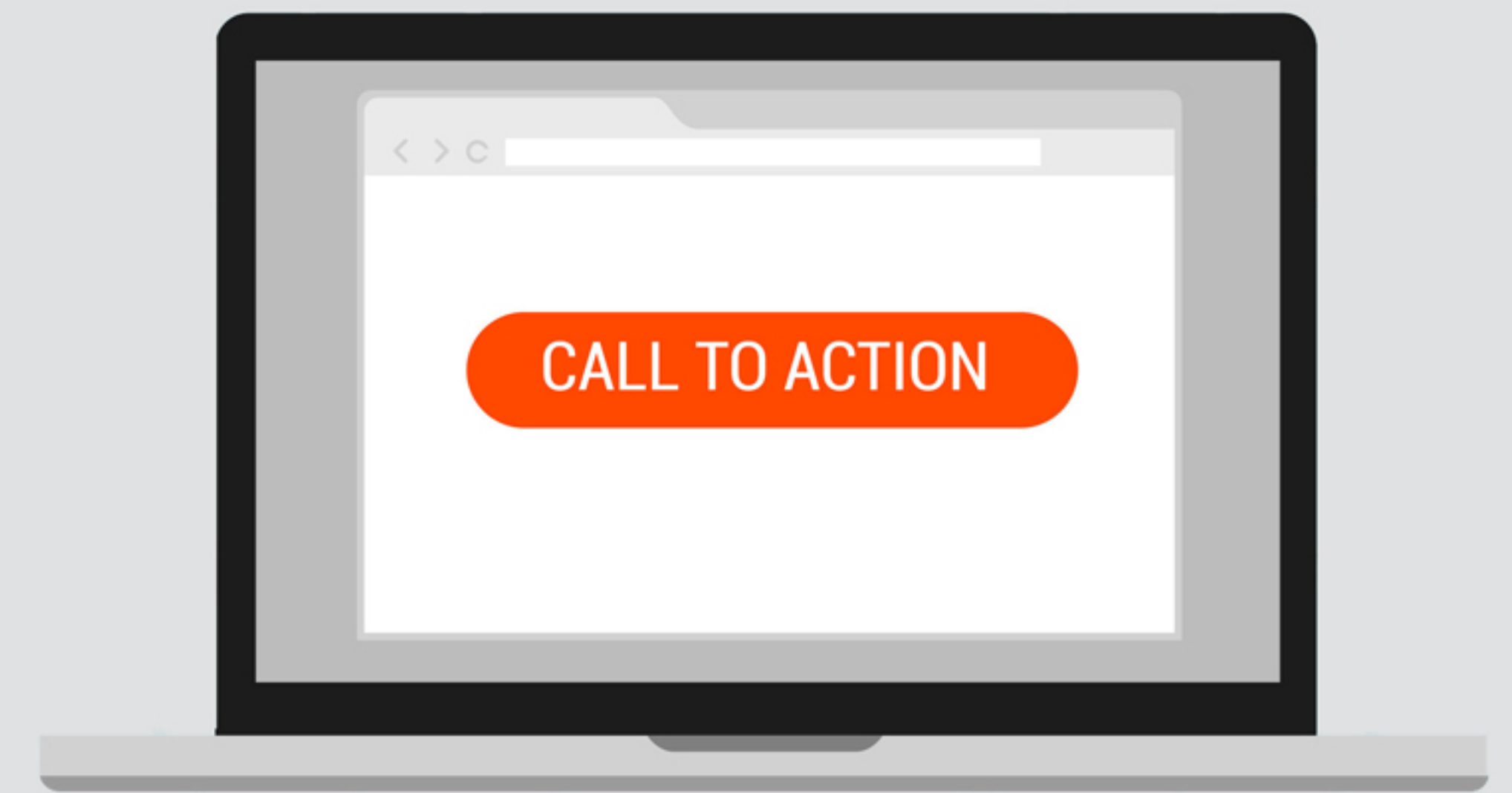
What are CTAs?

CTAs are action-oriented requests for a visitor to follow. It's an explicit and inviting request to take another action once they visit your site.

What makes a good CTA?

- Relevant to your audience
- Connected to your website goal
- Specific and clearly defined
- Persuasive and compelling

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Sign #5: You Have
No Calls To Action

Think you need to improve your CTA game?
Follow the two-step process below.

Step 1: Audit each conversion path

Review each page on your site and determine the next action you want your target audience to take. Is there a clear call to action asking them to take that step? If not, you need to add a CTA.

Step 2: Consider a complete redo

If you're adding CTAs to every page or just having trouble understanding how your website pages work as a conversion path, it's a good time to take a step back and consider a more comprehensive revamp of your site.

Expert Advice:

"With social sharing and search, every page on your site is conceivably the front door to your company. That's why we recommend clients have one clear CTA on every page – even blog posts – to guide a visitor to the next action."

@NickSargent

Sign #6: Your Business **Changed**

When your organization goes through big changes, marketing and communications teams play critical roles. Even if your company is more focused on the immediate legal and financial issues, the impact on reputation is huge.

Whatever your company's change may be, your website isn't a back burner issue. Big changes drive traffic. Key stakeholders affected by the change (whatever it is!) will seek you out for information. If your website isn't updated, it's obvious – and frustrating.

If you're merging or acquiring a new business because they integrate well with what your company already does – what does it tell customers and stakeholders when you keep two separate web identities?

If you're changing your product offerings, you've got to do more than take down the old products and add the new ones. Do your new products/services serve different audiences? Does the content on your site serve those new audiences? Have you updated those pages, too?

When your organization undergoes a significant change, your website should too.

Before building or updating your new site after a change, follow this three-step process:

Step 1: Audit all of the old web resources/content

Review all pieces of your current site and note the pieces that are performing well.

- What can stay and what can go?
- What pages need to be updated? Don't limit just to the pages directly affected by the changes, but make sure all links and messaging are updated as well.
- Before making any changes to the site, inventory all of the URLs so you can set up redirects on the new site.
- If you're merging sites, you want to maintain both URLs and set up the appropriate redirects.

Step 2: Review the organization's new strategic goals

- Which goals should the site support?
- Who are the firm's critical audiences for those goals?
- Rank those audiences in terms of importance to achieving those goals.

Step 3: Develop a new site map

Don't just start creating a ton of microsites or new pages to placate internal stakeholders and avoid difficult conversations. Keep your target audience in mind. How do they want to experience your new company and its products/services?

- Does the site map have clear conversion paths for your CTAs?
- Does the site map reflect how your users would search for content, or is it just a digital copy of your company structure?
- Is all content easy to find and access?
- Is it easy to discern what is the most important information?

Download Standing Partnership's Website Audit Template

Download

Convinced you need a new website?

Contact Standing Partnership

If one or more of these situations resonate with you, we can help. Websites are critical to achieving any organization's objectives. Maximizing a website's ROI begins with solid strategy.

Standing Partnership can help you develop a website that drives results for your business. Get a free website consultation from our experts.

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