Marketing a website isn't particularly difficult. It's usually just a matter of knowing what to do, how to do it and having the skills and time to get it done. With that said, marketing a website isn't particularly easy either. There are so many factors and variables in play that at any given time that the job can be quite overwhelming. Obviously I can't address the issue of whether or not you have the skills or time, but I can help you out with the "what to do" piece of the puzzle.

I've always been a lover of checklists, especially when it comes to getting things done. *Especially* when it comes to remembering what things need to be done! So over the last several years I've been putting together checklists for all kinds of things pertaining to website marketing.

Below is my master website marketing checklist covering over 400 specific items over 23 topics. These topics include things such as website development, SEO, usability, accessibility, etc. This list doesn't cover any "how tos," which are essential ingredients to successful online marketing, but sometimes you need to first know *what* to do so you can then discover *how* to do it.

For the sake of brevity, I have kept each check point to its briefest form providing very little explanation. I don't cover why any particular item is included, how important it might be, or what it even means. This is just the checklist in its rawest form.

Over the next couple of weeks I'll provide some additional explanation and insights to the lists below. And since this list is always a work in progress, any additional thoughts and insights are welcome. I'm always adding and removing things as I see fit. Which brings me to one more note: many items are included here based purely on my own preferences and by no means constitutes an absolute truth or necessity.

Domain name & URLs (click heading for additional details)

- Short and memorable
- Uses Keywords
- Used in email addresses
- Uses Favicon
- Site.com redirect to www. version:
- Alternate Domain redirects
- Home page redirect to root
- No underscores in filenames
- Keywords in directory names
- Multiple pages per directory
- Registered for 5+ years
- Multiple versions:
- .com
- .org
- .net
- .biz
- Hyphenations
- Misspellings
- Product names
- Brand names
- Type-in keywords URLs

Browser issues (click heading for additional details)

- Visible address bar
- Fully functional navigation tools
- Site works in multiple browsers
- No browser hi-jacking

- Visible status bar

Site logo (click heading for additional details)

- Displays company name clearly
- Isn't hidden among clutter
- Links to home page

- Unique and original
- Use tagline consistently across site

Design considerations (click heading for additional details)

- Instant site identification
- Crisp, clean image quality
- Clean, clutter-less design
- Consistent colors and type
- Whitespace usage
- Minimal distractions
- Targets intended audience
- Meets industry best practices
- Easy to navigate
- Descriptive links
- Good on-page organization
- Easy to find phone number
- Don't link screen captures
- Skip option for flash
- Consistent page formatting
- No/minimal on-page styling
- Avoid text in images

- Font size is adequate
- Font type is friendly
- Paragraphs not too wide
- Visual cues to important elements
- Good overall contrast
- Low usage of animated graphics
- Uses obvious action objects
- Avoid requiring plug-in
- Minimize the use of graphics
- Understandable graphic file names
- No horizontal scrolling
- Non-busy background
- Recognizable look and feel
- Proper image / text padding
- Uses trust symbols
- Works on variety of resolutions
- Works on variety of screen widths

Architectural issues (click heading for additional details)

- Correct robots.txt file
- Declare doctype in HTML
- Validate HTML
- Don't use frames
- Alt tag usage on images
- Custom 404 error page
- Printer friendly
- Underlined links
- Differing link text color
- Breadcrumb usage
- Nofollow cart links
- Robots.txt non-user pages

- Flat directory structure
- Proper site hierarchy
- Unique titles on all pages
- Title reflects page info and heading
- Unique descriptions on pages
- No long-tail page descriptions
- Proper bulleted list formats
- Branded titles
- No code bloat
- Minimal use of tables
- Nav uses absolute links
- Good anchor text

- Nofollow non-important links
- Review noindex usage
- Validate CSS
- Check broken links
- No graphics for ON/YES, etc.
- Page size less than 50K

- Text can be resized
- Key concepts are emphasized
- CSS less browsing
- Image-less browsing
- Summarize all tables

Navigation (click heading for additional details)

- Located top or top-left
- Consistent throughout site
- Links to Home page
- Links to Contact Us page
- Links to About Us page
- Simple to use
- Indicates current page
- Links to all main sections
- Proper categorical divisions
- Non-clickable is obvious
- Accurate description text

- Links to Login
- Provides Logout link
- Uses Alt attribute in images
- No pop-up windows
- No new window links
- Do not rely on rollovers
- Avoid cascading menus
- Keep scent from page to page
- Targets expert and novice users
- Absolute links

Content (click heading for additional details)

- Grabs visitor attention
- Exposes need
- Demonstrates importance
- Ties need to benefits
- Justifies and calls to action
- Gets to best stuff quickly
- Reading level is appropriate
- Customer focused
- Benefits and features
- Targets personas
- Provides reassurances
- Answers WIIFM

- Consistent voice
- Eliminate superfluous text
- Reduce /explain industry jargon
- No typo, spelling or grammar errors
- Contains internal contextual links
- Links out to authoritative sources
- Enhancing keyword usage (SEO)
- Date published on articles/news
- Web version of PDF docs available
- Consistent use of phrasing
- No unsubstantiated statements

Content Appearance (click heading for additional details)

- Short paragraphs
- Uses sub-headings

- No overly small text for body
- No overly small text for headings

- Uses bulleted lists
- Calls to action on all pages
- Good contrast

- Skimmable and scannable
- Keep link options in close proximity

Links and buttons (click heading for additional details)

- Limit the number of links on a page
- Avoid small buttons and tiny text for links
- Leave space between links and buttons
- Avoid using images as the only link

- Link important commands
- Underline all links
- Accurately reflects the page it refers

Home page (click heading for additional details)

- No splash page
- Instant page identification
- Provides overview of site

- Site purpose is clear
- Robot meta: NOODP,NOYDIR

About Us page (click heading for additional details)

- Adequately describes company
- Shows team biographies
- Shows mission statement
- Up to date information
- Note associations, certifications & awards
- Links to support pages:
- Contact page

- Investor relations
- Company news
- Registration info
- Job opportunities
- Newsletters
- Link to social media profiles

Contact Us page (click heading for additional details)

- Easy to find
- Multiple contact options:
- Phone
- Fax
- Email
- Form
- Chat
- Customer feedback
- Street map

- Multiple points of contact:
- Customer service
- Tech support
- Inquiries
- General info
- Job applications
- Billing
- Management team
- Ad-free

- Hours of operation
- Final call to action

- Form requires only essential info

E-Commerce considerations (click heading for additional details)

- Mini-product basket always available
- Displays payment options:
- CC
- PayPal
- Google Checkout

- No multiple paths to dupe product pages
- No tracking IDs in URLs
- Exclude shopping cart pages
- No (or nofollowed) links to secure pages
- Keep secure cert current

Product pages (click heading for additional details)

- Visible calls to action
- Clear contact info (phone #)
- Consistent layout
- Clear pricing
- Show additional fees
- Clear product presentation
- Show shipping cost
- Show availability
- Provide delivery options, details
- Estimate delivery date
- Link to site security info
- Return / guarantee info
- Allow "save for later"
- Related products & up sells
- Clear product image
- Describe images

- Enhanced multiple image views
- Product description
- Product details & specs
- Product selection options
- Customer product reviews
- Product comparisons
- Printer-friendly option
- "Add to cart" close to item
- Secondary "add" button at bottom
- Standardized product categorization
- Clutter-free page
- Provide International pricing
- Provide product search
- Emphasis brand quality and trust
- Compare to offline competitors
- Short URLs with keywords

Basket page (click heading for additional details)

- Obvious checkout link
- Product descriptions
- Product image
- Show availability
- Updatable quantities
- Ability to remove items
- Link to products
- Product price
- Payment options
- Promos/vouchers explained

- Link to guarantees
- Show delivery costs
- Show delivery date
- Allow gift options
- "Continue shopping" link or options
- Show contact information
- No advertising/upselling
- Don't keep personal info w/o authorization
- Shipping questions answered

- Link to security
- International shipping
- International address forms

Mini baskets (click heading for additional details)

- Make new products added obvious
- Link to full basket page
- Allow removal of products
- Show order total

Checkout process (click heading for additional details)

- No hidden fees
- No pre-registration
- Keep checkout process short
- Show benefits of registration:
- Faster checkout in future
- Access to order history
- Check order status
- Saved for later information
- Access to special promotions
- Personalization
- Joining a community
- Show checkout progress meter
- Effective after-order follow-up
- Receipt / Confirmation:
- Printable
- Emailed
- Thank you message
- Order number
- Order date
- Items purchased
- Expected delivery date
- Payment method
- Cancellation policy
- How to cancel
- Return policy
- Address return costs
- After-sale guarantees

Login & My Account pages (click heading for additional details)

- Easy to find login access
- Use security protocols
- Provide security assurances
- Link for new registrations
- Outline account benefits
- Reclaim lost password option
- "Remember me" option
- Link to privacy policy
- Logged-in status is clear
- Account info change access
- Confirmation of change info
- Links to financial info
- Transaction history
- Invoices
- Balances
- Payment methods
- Choose method of delivery:
- Text email
- HTML email
- Snail mail
- Overnight
- Etc.

Help and FAQ pages (click heading for additional details)

- Avoid marketing hype
- Allow Help search
- Provide printable text
- Link to additional resources:

- User guides
- Product support
- Customer support
- Downloads

Forms and errors (click heading for additional details)

- Flexible entry requirements
- Allow for tabbing between fields
- Proper tab order
- Clear field labels
- Text label above field box
- Only require necessary information
- Minimal instructions
- Instructions above field
- Friendly error output
- Errors obviously indicated
- Errors describe remedy
- Errors provide contact / help option
- Preserve data with errors
- Provide pre-selected choices
- Don't overdo choices

- Note required fields
- Progress indicator
- Progress navigation
- Remove navigation
- Link to privacy information
- Final info verification check
- Confirmation/thank you page
- Stack fields vertically
- Proper use of radio buttons
- Keep "submit" close to fields
- Field boxes adequately wide
- No "reset" or "cancel" buttons
- Autocomplete=off as necessary
- Buttons denote action

Site search (click heading for additional details)

- Located in top-right corner
- Search not case sensitive
- Properly labeled as "search"
- Link to "advanced search"
- Forgiving of misspellings
- Shows similar products
- Shows related items in results
- No "no products found"
- Provide refinement options
- Provide alternate spellings

- Provide links to relevant pages
- Show search string in results
- Don't place results in tables
- Display exact matches first
- Display close matches second
- Bold query words in results
- Display titles with descriptions
- No more than 20 results p/ page
- Option to increase result p/ page
- Link to additional results pages

Privacy and Security pages (click heading for additional details)

- Present info in easy to read format
- Make information easily scannable
- Provide section summaries
- Identify information types collected

- Explain how user information will be used
- Explain how info will be protected
- Provide additional protection tutorials

- Explain how cookies are used
- Link to these pages in footer
- Provide links to contact info

Site map (click heading for additional details)

- Keep information current
- Link to site map in footer
- Linked from help and 404 pages
- Provide overview paragraph
- Provide intro to main sections
- Visible site hierarchy
- Descriptive text and links
- Link to xml sitemap in robots.txt file