

A GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Improve Your Website This Weekend.

*A simple way to look at your website through
your customer's eyes.*

By Cary Weston

caryweston.com

No redesigns. No big budgets. Just a few smart things to look at this weekend.

Most websites don't need a redesign. They need a fresh set of eyes.

If you're a small business owner, you've probably been told your website needs work. Maybe more than once. Maybe by someone trying to sell you a redesign.

That's not what this is.

This is a short guide built on a simple idea. You know your business too well to see your website clearly. That's not a flaw. It's just the truth of being the person who runs the place. You see what's there. Your customers see what's missing.

So this weekend, we're going to borrow their eyes for a little while.

We'll walk through six small things together. None of them require a designer, a developer, or a budget. You can do all of them in a Saturday morning with a cup of coffee and your phone.

You won't need to fix everything you find. In fact, you shouldn't. By the end, you'll know which two or three things are worth doing first. That's the whole point.

Before we look at any pages, there's one shift worth making first.

You know your business too well to see your website clearly.

You live this every day. You answer the same questions. You explain the same things. You know what you do, who you do it for, and why you're good at it.

Your customer doesn't.

They're showing up to your site for the first time, often on a phone, often in a hurry, often distracted by ten other things. They don't have your context. They don't have your patience. And they aren't going to work very hard to figure you out.

Three things are worth remembering before you look at a single page.

They don't know what you do. You live it. They don't.

They don't care, until they need it. Your job isn't to convince them. Your job is to be ready when they show up.

You get seconds, not minutes. Whatever's on your homepage has to work fast.

The shift is small but it changes everything.

Stop asking *what do I want them to know?* Start asking *what are they trying to figure out?*

That's the whole guide in one sentence. Keep it in your head as we walk through the six reviews.

Six small things. Do them in any order. You don't need to take notes. Just look. By the end, the two or three that bothered you the most will be obvious.

REVIEW ONE

The 5-Second Test

If a stranger landed on your homepage and only had five seconds, could they tell what you do, who you do it for, and what to do next?

Why it matters

People don't read websites. They scan them. They show up with a question in their head, give you a few seconds to prove you might be worth their time, and move on if they're not sure. They won't work to figure you out. There are too many other tabs open.

What this does for you

A homepage that's instantly clear does two things at once. It tells the right people they've landed in the right place. And it builds quiet confidence, because if you can explain what you do in plain language, people trust that you understand it.

Try this

Pull up your homepage. Don't read it. Glance at it for five seconds and look away. What did you remember? What stuck? If it took you longer than five seconds to know what your business does, your customer won't make it that far.

What you might find

A hero image with no clear message, a clever tagline that doesn't say what you sell, or a long list of services without any sense of who they're for.

Where to start

One clear sentence at the top of the page that names what you do and who it's for. Not clever. Clear.

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A Website's First Impression Matters →

caryweston.com/a-websites-first-impression-matters

REVIEW TWO

The Phone Test

More than half the people looking at your site are on a phone. They're usually in a hurry.

Why it matters

Phones aren't just smaller versions of a computer screen. They're a different kind of moment. The person looking at your site might be in a parking lot. Standing in their kitchen. Walking the dog while figuring out who to call. They're not browsing. They're deciding.

What this does for you

When your site works well on a phone, you catch the customer at the exact moment they're ready to act. A tappable phone number turns a thought into a call. Clear hours turn maybe into yes. Easy contact turns hesitation into a message. Friction at this moment is lost business.

Try this

Pull your site up on your phone right now. Try to call you. Try to find your hours. Try to send a message. If any of that took more than two taps, that's a problem.

What you might find

A phone number that isn't tappable, a menu that takes four taps to reach contact info, or text so small you have to pinch to read it.

Where to start

Make sure the basics, your phone, address, hours, and contact link, are reachable in one or two taps from any page.

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Consider How Your Website Is Used On A Phone →

caryweston.com/consider-how-your-website-is-used-on-a-phone

REVIEW THREE

The Navigation Test

Your most important next step should be the easiest thing to find. Often, it isn't.

Why it matters

Most websites are organized the way the business is organized, not the way the customer thinks. The customer didn't come to browse your services. They came with one question in their head. *Where do I do the thing I came here to do?* If they can't find it in a few seconds, they leave. They don't email asking for help. They just go.

What this does for you

A while back I worked with a building supply company whose "request a quote" button was buried four clicks deep. We moved it to the top of the navigation. Quote requests went up six hundred percent. Same product. Same customers. Same demand. The only thing that changed was the path between the visitor and the action.

Try this

Look at your top navigation. Ask yourself one question. *If a new customer wanted to start a conversation with us, where would they click?* If the answer is "I'm not sure" or "they'd have to dig," that's the fix.

What you might find

The most important action is missing from the main nav, or it's there but labeled in a way only you would understand.

Where to start

Make the most important next step the most visible thing on the page.

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Simplify Your Website's Navigation →

caryweston.com/simplify-your-websites-navigation

REVIEW FOUR

The Read-It-Out-Loud Test

Read your homepage out loud, slowly. If it sounds like a brochure, it's not working.

Why it matters

Most business websites are written in a voice no real person uses. They have features. They serve markets. They leverage solutions. None of that is how customers talk, and none of it is how customers think. When your writing sounds like marketing, the reader knows they're being sold to. The wall goes up before they finish the first paragraph.

What this does for you

When your website sounds like a person, the reader feels like they're being talked to instead of pitched at. That's the difference between "this place understands me" and "this place is trying to close me." One earns a conversation. The other earns the back button.

Try this

Read your homepage out loud, slowly. Listen for where you'd naturally pause. Listen for where you'd cringe. Listen for sentences that no real person would say in conversation.

What you might find

Industry jargon, long sentences that should be two short ones, and phrases that sound impressive but don't actually mean anything to a customer.

Where to start

Rewrite the first paragraph the way you'd explain your business to someone sitting across the table from you. That's the version your website needs.

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How to Take an Empathetic Position in Your Website & Marketing →

caryweston.com/how-to-take-an-empathetic-position-in-your-website-marketing

REVIEW FIVE

The Contact Form Test

Have you ever filled out a form somewhere and heard nothing back? That feeling is what your customers might be feeling.

Why it matters

The moment someone fills out your contact form is the moment they've decided to trust you with a small first step. They've handed over their information. They're waiting for some sign that you got it, that you're real, that someone is going to actually reach out. If nothing comes back, the doubt creeps in. *Maybe it didn't go through. Maybe these people don't follow up. Maybe I should call someone else.*

What this does for you

A simple confirmation does a lot of quiet work. It tells the visitor they were heard. It sets the expectation for what happens next. It signals that you operate the way they hope you do, with attention and follow-through. That's the first impression of how you do business.

Try this

Fill out your own contact form. Use a fake name. Send it from your phone. Then watch what happens next. Did anything confirm it went through? Did you get an email? Did you get a sense of when someone would actually be in touch?

What you might find

No confirmation message, no follow-up email, no clear sense of what happens next, or a form so long the customer gave up before finishing.

Where to start

A simple thank-you message on the screen and a one-line confirmation email that says when you'll be in touch. That's it.

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The Importance of Contact Forms On Your Website →

caryweston.com/the-importance-of-contact-forms-on-your-website

REVIEW SIX

The FAQ Test

Your sales team hears the same questions every week. Are those answered anywhere on your site?

Why it matters

The questions you hear on sales calls aren't unique to those callers. Hundreds of prospects are asking the same things before they ever pick up the phone. Most don't call. They search. If your site answers their questions, you've started building trust before they reach out. If it doesn't, someone else's site has.

What this does for you

Having those answers on your site does two things at once. It helps prospects feel confident about you before they ever ask. And it shortens the sales conversations you do have, because the easy questions are already handled.

Try this

Make a list of the five questions you get asked the most. The real ones. About pricing, about timing, about how you work, about what makes you different. Then look for those answers on your site.

What you might find

They aren't there at all, or they're buried inside long paragraphs no one will read, or they're answered in language that hides the answer instead of giving it.

Where to start

Pick three of the five questions and write a short, plain answer to each one. That's a real FAQ page. Not technical. Just honest.

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[Website FAQ's Can Add Great Value To Your Website →](#)

caryweston.com/website-faqs-can-add-great-value-to-your-website

You don't need to fix everything you found.

In fact, you shouldn't.

A long list of "should do" items is the reason most websites stay broken. The list gets handed off, gets buried, and nothing changes. Six months later, the same things are still there.

Here's what to do instead.

Pick the two or three things that bothered you the most. Not the longest list. The shortest one.

Write them down. Be specific. Not "fix the navigation," but "move the contact button to the top right of the menu."

Decide who's going to handle each one. You, your team, or someone you trust.

Pick a date.

That's it. That's the plan.

You're not trying to build a perfect website this weekend. You're trying to make it a little better than it was on Friday. If you do that two or three times this year, you'll have a website that's doing real work for your business.

Marketing isn't a project. It's a system.

This is how the system starts working for you.

NICE WORK

If you walked through those six reviews, you saw your website more clearly than most business owners ever do.

That matters.

Your website isn't the whole picture. It's one piece of how customers find you, decide to trust you, and choose to buy from you. The same kind of thinking applies to the rest of it.

Can I help you with the goals you have? We can find out. It starts with a single conversation. We sit down together, look at where you are, what's working, and what's getting in the way. From there we build a clear picture of what to focus on first and what moving forward actually looks like.

Simple as that.

You can reach me at caryweston.com.

WHO WROTE THIS

I'm Cary Weston. I'm an independent marketing coach and consultant. I work with small business owners and marketing directors who know they need to do something with their marketing but aren't sure where to start.

You can find out more about what I do and how I help businesses get more from the time, talent, and money they spend on marketing on my website www.caryweston.com.