

“Competition whose motive is merely to compete, to drive some other fellow out, never carries very far. The competitor to be feared is one who never bothers about you at all, but goes on making his own business better all the time.”

-- Henry Ford

Welcome to 2019 where it seems like there are more businesses in your industry than ever before. How do you get your business to stand out? You make sure that you're competitive with your products and your marketing.

This doesn't mean that you need to spend tens of thousands of dollars, or that you need to develop a bunch of new products or offer new services. It **does mean** that you need to think smarter.

Here are 4 Things You Should Be Thinking About in 2019 To Stay Competitive:

1. Effective Website Design:

As a business owner in the 21st century it's likely that you already have a website. However, there's a huge difference between just having a website and having a website that's effective. How can you tell if your website is effective? **Ask yourself the following questions:**

Is my website functional? This may sound like a silly question but think about how many times you've been online and you clicked a link that didn't work or how many times have tried to view a video or image link only to find that it had been removed. These are "functionality" issues. When visitors to your site can't access content, for whatever reason, it lowers your credibility and increases the chance they take their business to your competitor. And, they are unlikely to ever return to your site.

Is my website fast? You know the phrase "Time is money." Keep that in mind when you're looking at the load time of your website. If it takes too long to populate you are losing visitors who are prospective customers!

Is my website easy to navigate? No one likes having to search for what should be easy to access elements of any website such as "About us" or "Contact". Making these pages difficult to find or disabling features like the ability to go back to the previous page can cause frustration and are an easy way to ensure you'll lose visitors and lose repeat visits.

Is my website visually pleasing? While matters of aesthetics are subjective there are some definite "don'ts" when it comes to the look of any site. In general you want to stay away from text in hard to read colors or fonts, tiled image backgrounds, and anything that creates chaos as opposed to harmony on your site. The reason for this is that sites that clash have a tendency to look amateurish and dated and even if you have a quality product or service this can be off-putting to visitors.

Is my website "safe for work"? Generally when people think of "Not safe for Work" (NSFW) content what they're considering is adult only content but there are a few other elements that make a site NSFW. Things like automatically loading videos or music, videos or music that can't be muted, and videos or music that are difficult to find the volume controls are all also NSFW. If your website has any of these issues then it is likely that it will receive more limited views and higher bounce rates.

In order to be competitive in 2019, one of your goals needs to be able to honestly assess the quality of your website.

2. High-Quality Branded Content:

Just as there's a difference between a business having a website and having an **effective** website, there's also a difference between a business offering content on its website or social media channels and offering **high-quality content**. High quality branded content has three key components, professional quality graphic and/or video components, professional quality copy and clear, consistent branding.