

# Content

If you have a website, it needs content to make it interesting and attractive. This can come as a blog, picture gallery, contact information or FAQ page, but the aim is always to give your customer as much relevant information as possible and help them to choose your business over competitors.

## Video and photography

Photos and videos are proven to help people remember information. A study entitled '[Vision Trumps all Other Senses](#)' by developmental molecular biologist Dr John Medina revealed that when people hear information, they're likely to remember only 10% of it three days later. But if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information in it three days later. Your site may be more likely to stick in customers' minds if it has strong visual elements alongside written information.

Other reasons why photos and videos are important to your website include:

- Images will help tell a story about your brand, location and business.
- Featuring pictures on your website can help search engines like Google and Bing understand the context of your website and can have a positive effect on where your site ranks on search engine results pages (SERPs). Include details that help search engines recognise images by using alt-text. Alt-text also helps the visually impaired to understand the images you are using, as it is read by screen readers.

- Website images make it easier for people to share your content through social media channels, which could help to get your business seen by more potential customers.

Images and video content make your website more attractive and memorable. If your visual content is properly labelled using captions that are 'search friendly' (relevant terms that people might be using when they search for your kind of business), search engines will see your content as more relevant.

Adding alt-text (text that is usually added to an image within the CMS of a website to describe the contents of the image) helps search engines to understand what's in an image and whether it's relevant to a search too.

However, be aware that images can affect site speed. Users will become frustrated if images take a long time to load and poor-quality images can make your website look untrustworthy. Read '[Image SEO: How Images Impact Search Engine Rankings](#)' from Emfluence to gain a better understanding.



## Case Study



### Seaham Hall, Northumberland

Seaham Hall sits on Durham's Heritage Coast amidst 37 acres of beautiful landscaped gardens. It offers luxury stays and has an on-site award-winning spa.

“Our video content tends to focus on the guest experience. We demonstrate the visual journey from the moment guests enter the hotel to check out, focussing on key features like our spa and dining. We recently launched a new hot tub suite and used video content to ‘tease’ the new room online, then used a professional video for the opening.

User-generated content is an effective tool we use across all our social channels. Customers that have visited and had a positive experience with us are very good at sharing this to their followers. By reposting customer imagery, we are expanding our customer base quickly in a cost-effective way and are seeing a rise in engagement. We use user-generated content most regularly on Instagram because it's easier to share guest photos and we find users often share our posts featuring their content, helping us to reach their social network.”



Tais Polcanti, Moment

When including visual content you could have professional photos taken, take them yourself or set up an account on Instagram and use the feed on your website to automatically update your site with images you add to the social media platform. Find out more about using Instagram in the [Social media section](#) of the toolkit.

When it comes to videos, a good place to get started would be on YouTube. This is a social media platform where you can upload video content onto your very own channel. You can then look to use your website CMS to make the video appear on your website. We look at YouTube in the [Social media section](#) too.

**Images and video content make your website more attractive and memorable.**

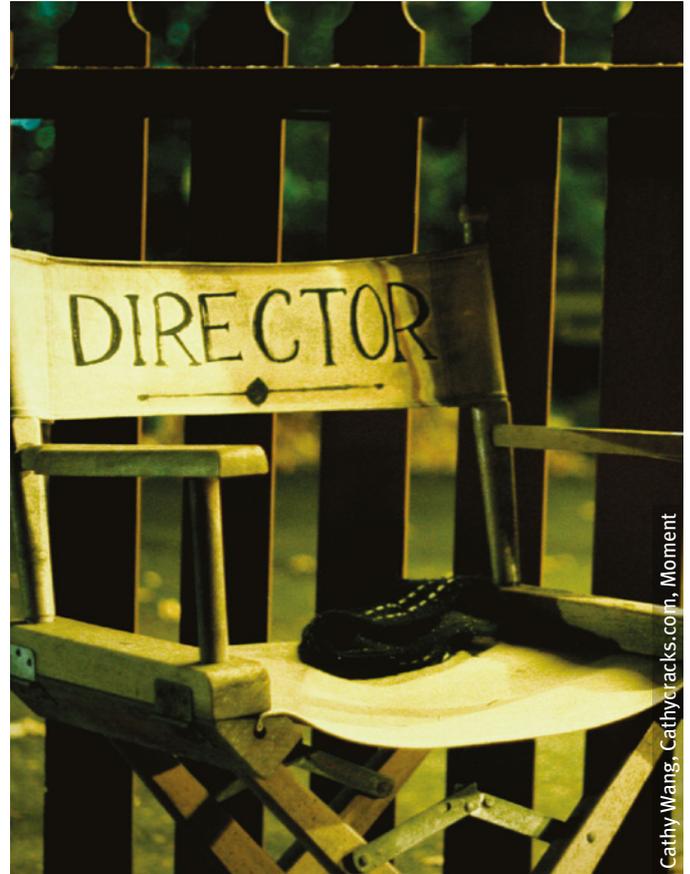


## Checklist

- ✓ Make sure you use good quality photos and videos that show off the best of your business and its location.
- ✓ If you don't feel confident taking the photos or filming yourself, it could be worth employing a professional to do it for you. Remember to factor this into your digital marketing budget.
- ✓ If you do choose to use any stock imagery, check that it isn't copyrighted and that you aren't using a frequently used image that your competitors also have on their site.
- ✓ Remember that video content will take up more of your time than a few well placed, good-quality photos. If you don't have a lot of it, it might be best to focus on photography first, before branching out into videos.
- ✓ Tag images with Alt-text in your CMS to improve search-ability and site accessibility.

## Resources

For more information on why images are important when you're planning your website and deciding how it will look, read '[Why Images Are an Important Part of Your Website Strategy](#)' from Yellow Pages for Business.



Cathy Wang, Cathyracks.com, Moment

The '[Make Your Property Stand out with Quality Photos](#)' article from Eviivo provides helpful tips on how to take excellent photography that you can use on your site, and why it is so important for your business.

The '[42 Visual Content Marketing Statistics You Should Know in 2019](#)' article from Hubspot also highlights some priorities businesses should be making when it comes to using images in their content.

If you decide to take the pictures yourself, read '[How to Take your own Business Photos for your Website](#)' by Web Ascender.

# Blogs

A blog is a regularly updated page on a website, usually written in a more informal style, that can be an incredibly powerful digital marketing tool. Every time you write a blog post, it becomes another indexed page on your website that a search engine can use to drive people to your site. A regularly updated blog will also signify to search engines that your website is active and encourage them to check back more frequently to review your content and rank it.

One of the most important factors with blogging is time. How regularly you post is something you should decide early on and try to stick to. Once a month may be a good starting point for publishing blog posts if your business is on the smaller side, while larger tourism businesses may have the resource to publish more. However, consistent updating, whether you decide on once a month, once a week, or somewhere in between, is an important factor.

Reasons to include a blog on your website:

- You may be able to convert the traffic coming to your website via the blog by including a call to action (CTA). This is essentially a button that will guide them to perform an action like making a booking, purchase, or enquiry.
- Blogs can help your website appear authoritative. You can write content that answers common questions, helps customers understand something, or solves problems (like things to do on a rainy day in your location).

- Blogs drive long-term results. Once you have posted a blog it begins to be ranked by search engines and it continues to do this for weeks, months and even years. This kind of content is called 'evergreen' content.

## A regularly updated blog will also signify to search engines that your website is active.

Blogging can help you to update your website more regularly. You are unlikely to be changing the content on some of your pages (for example an 'about us' page or the location of your attraction), but a blog is something you can use to tell people about things that are happening seasonally or show a little behind the scenes to interest and inform customers. You can also answer questions or discuss issues that will help people to see your business as authoritative, helpful and one that they can trust.

Blog content is also often shared via social media platforms. If it is interesting, useful and attractive content, people will want to share it with others online, exposing your business to more people and a potentially larger audience.



### Checklist

- ✓ Consider how much time it will take you to write a blog. If it's not possible to write longer posts it might be better to try shorter ones, but in a more regular time-frame. If a commitment to regular posting isn't feasible, blogging just may not be right for you and your business.
- ✓ Use other blogs as inspiration for topics you could cover or would help your customers know more about your business.



## Case Study



### York Gin, York

“We have found that trying to make our content fun, likely to engage people and get them involved can have a positive effect on our brand. We run the hashtag #yorkginontour, which encourages customers to take and share photos of their York Gin bottles or merchandise from their holidays. We also run #yorkgindogs by taking photos of the dogs who come to the shop. Dog owners are incredibly proud of seeing their pups on social media and who doesn't like the odd cute dog post on their timeline?”

We have around 6,000 followers on Twitter and Facebook and over 8,000 on Instagram. Reaction to our posts varies, but we get the most likes and shares when we have something positive to share — an award win or new gin. In a world of information overload we try to be entertaining and happy - our posts are designed to raise a smile when lots of other content they see does the opposite!”



### Resources

For more detail on calls to action (CTAs) read The Balance's blog post [‘What is a Call To Action and How Do I Make One?’](#)

As a tourism business, it is particularly important for you to be aware of the benefits of blogging. Tourism eSchool's post [‘Why Blogging is a ‘Must’ for all Tourism Destinations’](#) details the most important reasons and includes examples.

The Hubspot article [‘Why Blog? The Benefits of Blogging for Business and Marketing’](#) expands on all the reasons you should blog as a business.

# Email

Although a lot of digital marketing is conducted through [Search Engine Optimisation \(SEO\)](#) and [social media campaigns](#), email remains a popular way to reach your customers.

Using emails to market to customers allows you to include a variety of information in one space (whereas some social media platforms like Twitter have a character limit), plus the information you can gain from asking questions or sending surveys through email can be valuable and inform your digital marketing strategy over time.

Most people check their emails at least once a day and according to [superoffice.com](#) over 60% of people open emails on a mobile device, therefore it is important to ensure that your email templates are optimised for mobile. Similar to considering responsive design when building a website (see the [Website Structure section](#)), you need to take into consideration how easily customers can read your emails on their mobile devices well as their computer.

A common way you might use email marketing is through a newsletter. A monthly newsletter that people can sign up to through your website reaches the people who are willing to receive news, offers and more information about your business; instead of people who may follow you on social media but do not wish to receive extra information they can't see on your site or feeds.

When exploring email marketing consider:

- You may want to use an email marketing tool like [Mailchimp](#) to send reminders, invitations or newsletters to a list of subscribers. You will also have the capability of testing the performance of the emails. A tool like this can tell you how many people open the email, click on included links or make a purchase.



Clem Onojeghuo, Pexels

## Using emails to market to customers allows you to include a variety of information in one space.

- When you use an email marketing service provider you are less likely to end up in potential customers' spam folders.
- The [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (or GDPR) has an effect on email marketing, including the legal gathering of personal data and individuals' right to privacy. Familiarise yourself with the regulation before getting started with email marketing.

From grabbing your reader's attention, to honing your language to increase the likelihood of a customer clicking your well-placed call-to-action, email is something you can use to reach and connect with customers. Plus, by analysing the way people are responding, you can constantly grow and develop your approach to truly give them what they want from remaining in contact with your business.



## Checklist

- ✓ Ensure that you adhere to any relevant GDPR compliance when gaining and holding customer details (whether email, phone, address, etc).
- ✓ Make sure your emails are valuable to your customer and don't come across as spam or intrusive.
- ✓ Make sure your headline clearly describes the content of your email.
- ✓ Is your subject line brief, clear and to the point?
- ✓ Use bullet points to help the reader's eye quickly scan what they will get from this contact with your business.
- ✓ Include images or other attractive visuals in your emails. This will help customers to remember your messaging.
- ✓ Avoid overly salesy language that may come across as disingenuous and discourage people from trusting your business to provide something useful.

Using an email marketing service provider will save you some time, but email is another aspect of digital marketing that takes time to get right and is constantly changing as customers' needs develop and the way businesses engage with customers shifts. You need to make sure you can put in enough time to develop emails that will perform well and help you reach the goals you have set for this particular strand of your digital marketing strategy.

### Resources

Read MOZ's '[6 Tips to Make Your Brand an Email Response Rockstar](#)' to practice sending more effective emails to customers.

We mentioned that using emails is part of a larger concept: marketing automation. The article '[A Beginner's Guide to Marketing Automation](#)' from MOZ will show you how extensive this aspect of digital marketing can be.



## Case Study

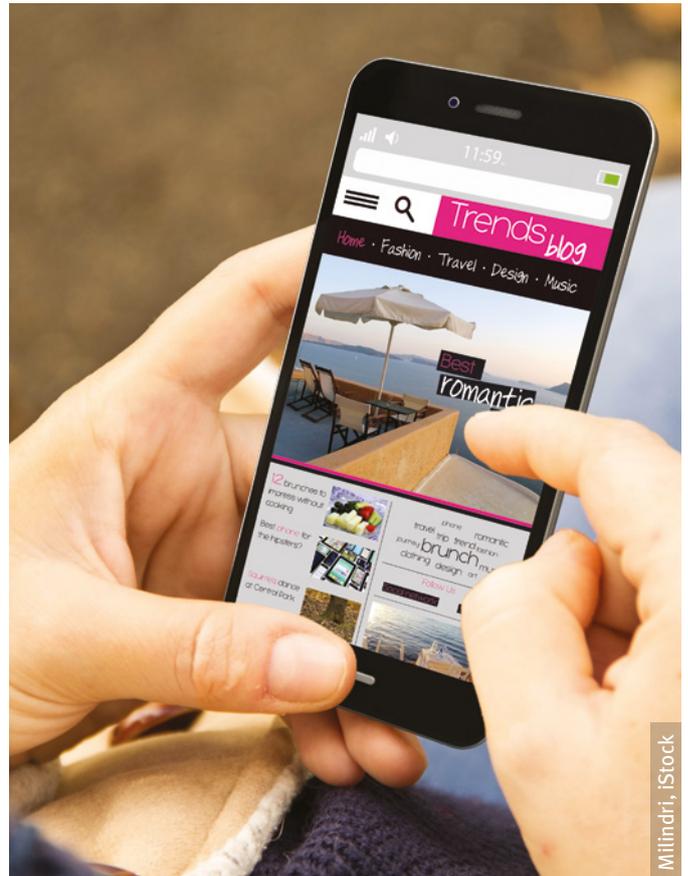


### Crystal Hotels, London

[Crystal Hotels](#) is a group of hotels in the Bayswater and Kensington districts of London. These converted Victorian Town houses are full of history and character with great amenities.

“We send monthly newsletters, usually at the beginning of each month. We used to have an open rate of between 16-18% but have increased this rapidly to 48-51% since we started to regularly clean our recipient database.

We clean the database every couple of months using segmentation options in Mailchimp, which is quick and very straightforward. If subscribers have not opened our last two newsletters they will be unsubscribed, which keeps our email database relevant and ensures we only communicate with people who engage with us. This also has the added benefit of keeping our e-marketing costs down.”



Milindri, iStock

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