# Creating a site for your business?
# Here are some do's and don'ts to help you along the way.

## Do…

Keep your design simple, clean and consistent.

Think of your site as having layers:

- the top layer where people arrive,
- the second layer, where they have a look around,
- then third and subsequent layers, where they pursue their interests in more detail.

Reflect this in the length of copy. Use short copy and plenty of pictures on the first level. Gradually add more detailed information the deeper in the site someone goes.

Design your site for your customers and your future customers and not for yourself.

Learn how to make images the right size and file size for your site – or find someone who can help you to do this (it's easy!).

Test your site out with your customers and ask for feedback.

Keep your key messages to the top of the page (online information is received differently from printed material).

Words are more difficult to read on screen than on paper. Keep sentences shorter than in print. Use bullets to break up blocks of text.

You can have as many pages as you want in your site – make each page distinct and present a succinct, single main piece of information, particularly if it is early on in the site.

Keep your information up to date. (Sooooo important!)

Make it easy for your customers to contact you by making contact information accessible in lots of pages on your site.
Make the most of the medium! – make links between pages, so that site users on one page are presented with options to visit other pages that have related or more detailed information.

Remember that websites are not read sequentially like printed items. Visitors can enter at any page and browse randomly. Always make sure that pages on your site can stand alone and that your visitor can navigate back to the home page, contact page and so forth.

Clear, easy-to-read text is important. Unless there is a particular reason, use colours that help this, like dark grey text on a white or pale pastel background.

Register your site with search engines.

Use statistics to monitor traffic to your site so that you can tell where your customers come from, what pages they are viewing, how long they spend on the site and so forth. There are many sites that provide tracking services absolutely free. Use this information to see which pages are popular and which are not. Try to adapt your site in light of this knowledge.

**Don't…**

Use every quirky design feature that you come across if you're producing your own site. If in doubt keep it simple. (Your site is your showcase to the world and should represent your business at its best.)

Don't lead your browsers up a dead end path. Always ensure that they can navigate to other pages. (A good idea is to use the logo as a link to homepage – particularly if it is in the site header)

Don't use long-winded text that is too technical. Keep to the subject and be succinct.

Don't use a font with serifs (these are the curly bits to the letters). These were developed for printed material and don't translate well onto computer screens. Try using a font like Verdana, Arial or Trebuchet. (NB – the font that the site displays in depends on the fonts available at the surfer's end, not the site owner's end. So a fancy font is unlikely to display.)

Use a web address that is long-winded and likely to be spelt wrong. Make life easier for your customers!

Use poor quality images of your product and logos.

Count hits to your site, count the number of visitors instead. A page with 8 images will produce at least 8 hits even if it is only visited once by one person.

Have too many moving/animated items on your site. Rule of thumb is max one animation per page.

**Good luck!**