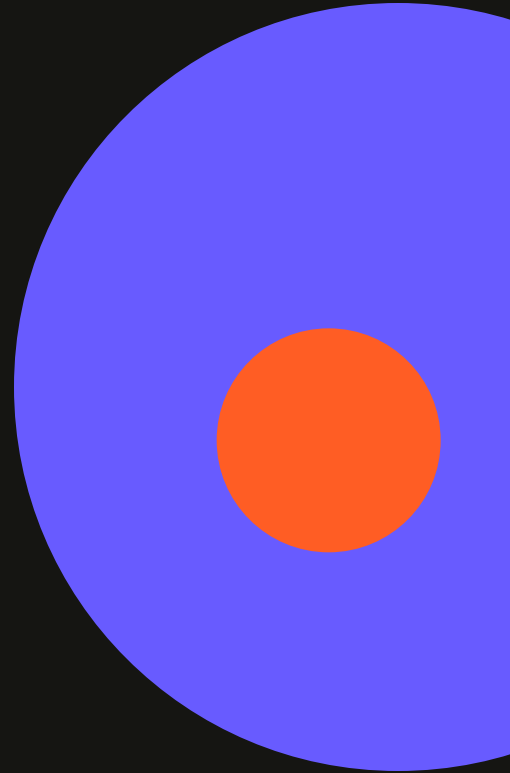


2026

Small Business Website Planning Checklist



A printable worksheet for a clearer website project.

PLAN

WRITE

BUILD

LAUNCH

START HERE

Use the checklist to make decisions visible.

Work through it once on your own, then review uncertain items with the people who sell, deliver, approve, or maintain the website.

01 Project snapshot

BUSINESS NAME

TARGET LAUNCH WINDOW

PRIMARY WEBSITE CONTACT

COMFORTABLE INVESTMENT RANGE

02 Business goals

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT THIS WEBSITE SHOULD SUPPORT

WHAT IS NOT WORKING WITH THE CURRENT SITE OR PROCESS

03 Target customer

WHO IS THE WEBSITE PRIMARILY FOR

WHAT DO THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND BEFORE THEY CONTACT OR BUY

DECISION RULE: If an idea does not help the primary customer understand, trust, or act, mark it as a later-phase idea.

PAGE INVENTORY

Choose pages by customer need—not an arbitrary count.

Mark what the first version requires. Add a name beside any page that needs a content owner or legal approval.

04 Core pages

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Homepage: clear offer, audience, proof, and next action | ☐ Privacy notice appropriate to the data collected |
| ☐ Services or products overview | ☐ Terms, returns, shipping, or policies when the business requires them |
| ☐ Individual page for each priority service that needs a distinct explanation | ☐ Frequently asked questions based on real customer questions |
| ☐ About: real people, approach, and relevant background | ☐ Team or staff profiles when relationships or credentials matter |
| ☐ Work, portfolio, products, menu, or other concrete evidence | ☐ Articles or resources only if someone will maintain them |
| ☐ Contact or inquiry page with monitored contact details | ☐ Accessibility statement or help channel when appropriate |

05 Navigation and ownership

PRIMARY NAVIGATION LABELS IN ORDER

WHO SUPPLIES AND APPROVES COPY, PHOTOGRAPHY, CREDENTIALS, AND POLICIES

PAGES OR IDEAS SAVED FOR A LATER PHASE

KEEP IT HONEST: Do not create empty sections, invented testimonials, fake locations, or placeholder pages just to make the site look larger.

HOMEPAGE WORKSHEET

Give a first-time visitor enough context to choose a path.

Write rough answers before writing polished headlines. Plain language makes a better starting point than a clever slogan.

06 Above the first scroll

WHAT THE BUSINESS DOES—IN ONE PLAIN SENTENCE

WHO IT IS FOR AND THE LEGITIMATE SERVICE AREA

PRIMARY ACTION: CALL, INQUIRE, BOOK, BUY, VISIT, OR SOMETHING ELSE

07 Homepage content checklist

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Priority services or products are easy to find | ☐ Primary and secondary calls to action match customer readiness |
| ☐ Benefits and boundaries are specific rather than generic | ☐ No outdated offers, staff, hours, awards, or unsupported claims |
| ☐ Real work, products, credentials, process, or people support trust | ☐ Images have permission, useful context, and appropriate alternatives |
| ☐ The service area and contact expectations are accurate | ☐ The page points to detailed pages instead of explaining everything |

08 Message decisions

THE STRONGEST REAL REASON A CUSTOMER SHOULD TRUST THIS BUSINESS

THE MOST COMMON QUESTION THE HOMEPAGE SHOULD ANSWER

INQUIRY AND USABILITY

Make the next step obvious, proportionate, and reliable.

Test the complete customer path on a phone—from finding the right service to receiving a successful form confirmation.

09 Contact and conversion

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ A primary call to action appears on every priority page | ☐ Required fields, errors, and successful submission are clear |
| ☐ Phone and email links use the correct monitored destination | ☐ Response expectations are accurate and achievable |
| ☐ Forms ask only for information needed at this stage | ☐ Booking, payment, or CRM connections are tested end to end |

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SOMEONE SUBMITS THE FORM OR CALLS

10 Mobile usability

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Text is readable without pinch zoom | ☐ Forms support mobile keyboards and autofill |
| ☐ Menus open, close, and work with keyboard input | ☐ Important information appears before secondary decoration |
| ☐ Buttons and links have comfortable spacing | ☐ Phone, maps, and directions work as expected |
| ☐ No horizontal scrolling or clipped content | ☐ Pages remain useful on a slower connection |

PHONES OR BROWSERS THAT ARE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO TEST

LOCAL DISCOVERY

Help customers and search engines verify the same real business.

Accuracy and useful service information matter more than repeating city names. Never publish a fake address or doorway pages for places you do not serve.

11 Business information

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Business name is written consistently | ☐ Hours are accurate where customers rely on them |
| ☐ Primary phone and email are current | ☐ Real service area is described naturally |
| ☐ Public address is accurate—or omitted for a service-area business | ☐ Google Business Profile points to the canonical website |

12 Search-ready pages

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Each public page has one clear main heading | ☐ Canonical URLs use one HTTPS domain consistently |
| ☐ Page titles and descriptions are unique and accurate | ☐ Robots.txt allows public pages and points to the sitemap |
| ☐ Priority services have enough distinct information | ☐ The sitemap lists canonical public URLs and accurate last-modified dates |
| ☐ Important pages are linked through normal navigation or related content | ☐ Google Search Console is verified and the sitemap is submitted |

TOP SERVICES CUSTOMERS ACTUALLY CALL THEM

REAL LOCATIONS OR AREAS THE BUSINESS SERVES

NO RANKING GUARANTEE: Technical readiness and useful content make discovery possible; they do not guarantee crawling, indexing, leads, or a position.

DURABLE FOUNDATIONS

Build a site more people can use—and the business can safely maintain.

These are baseline planning checks, not a complete accessibility, legal, performance, or security audit.

13 Accessibility basics

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Keyboard users can reach and operate navigation, controls, and forms | ☐ Meaningful images have useful text alternatives |
| ☐ Visible focus shows where keyboard input is | ☐ Decorative images are ignored by assistive technology |
| ☐ Headings follow a meaningful order | ☐ Text and controls have strong color contrast |
| ☐ Form fields have persistent labels and understandable errors | ☐ Motion can be reduced and does not block content |

14 Performance and security basics

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Images are sized, compressed, and given dimensions | ☐ Domain, hosting, and third-party accounts use strong access controls |
| ☐ Fonts and scripts are limited to what the page needs | ☐ Software and dependencies have an assigned maintenance owner |
| ☐ Pages are tested on mobile and slower connections | ☐ Forms include spam protection and safe data handling |
| ☐ HTTPS is enforced on the canonical domain | ☐ A recovery or rollback plan exists for launch and maintenance |

ACCESSIBILITY OR USABILITY NEEDS SPECIFIC TO THIS AUDIENCE

WHO OWNS THE DOMAIN, HOSTING, AND CRITICAL ACCOUNTS

GO-LIVE OWNERSHIP

A launch is a handoff between systems, people, and responsibilities.

Assign a name beside each item. A task without an owner is a launch risk, even when the website itself is ready.

15 Website launch checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Final copy, images, services, staff, hours, and policies are approved | ☐ Robots.txt and sitemap use the production domain |
| ☐ Forms, email delivery, booking, payments, and integrations are tested | ☐ 404 responses, favicon, mobile layout, and print/download behavior are verified |
| ☐ Navigation, internal links, downloads, and external links work | ☐ Analytics and Search Console are connected only with approved data practices |
| ☐ Page titles, descriptions, canonicals, sharing images, and structured data are checked | ☐ Domain and DNS changes have an owner and rollback plan |
| ☐ Redirects from changed or removed URLs are tested | ☐ A real inquiry is submitted after production launch |

16 Post-launch maintenance

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Inquiry delivery and response process | ☐ Backups or recovery appropriate to the platform |
| ☐ Content, hours, staff, service, and policy updates | ☐ Search Console indexing and crawl issues |
| ☐ Dependency, platform, and security updates | ☐ Performance, accessibility, and broken-link checks |

MAINTENANCE OWNER AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

WORKING DECISIONS

Turn the checklist into a first-version brief.

Summarize what must launch, what can wait, who owns the open questions, and what a designer needs to estimate responsibly.

MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE FIRST VERSION

LATER-PHASE IDEAS

OPEN QUESTIONS AND DECISION OWNERS

NOTES FOR A DESIGNER OR DEVELOPER

WHEN YOU ARE READY FOR A SECOND OPINION

Bring the decisions. Skip the polished brief.

Visit cintavodesigns.com to start a straightforward project conversation.