MISSIONAL MARKETING.
CHURCH GROWTH STARTS WITH A CLICK

missionalmarketing.com
Phone: 480-420-2007
Email: info@missionalmarketing.com

100 Point Church Website Checklist

Content Strategy

1. Define site goals

Get crystal clear on what you want visitors to do when they visit your website. Do you want them to plan a visit, complete an online form? Map out your user journey.

2. Site Architecture

Take a step back and build out the navigation of your website. This checklist is here to help. Get in the mind of your website visitors and map out the user experience step by step.

3. Brand Voice

Determine how you wish to speak to the unchurched. How will you convince new visitors to go beyond the website and enter your church?

4. Proofread your content

Don't miss the opportunity to connect with your audience because of a silly typo. Get someone to proofread all of your content.

5. Incorporate search functionality

Allow visitors to search your website using a search feature that is easily identifiable

6. Content Calendar

Before launching your website, create a plan to keep your content up-to-date. Identify a support system that can make regular updates to each page when information or events change.

7. Target Audience

Create an engagement strategy for each member of your target audience from long-time members to the first-time visitors. Create avenues for them to engage with your church and become ambassadors for your message. Why would they come to your website and how can your website take them a step further?

Website Design

8. Think mobile-first

Many of your potential guests will visit your website from the smartphones. Design for the mobile experience and build from there.

9. Logo

Logo should be demonstrated consistently across all pages and should link to the home page of the website

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10. Site Architecture

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11. Brand Aesthetic

If you haven't already, develop a style guide that outlines your brand colors, textures, typography and image style. Website should align with brand colors and logo.

12. Main Navigation

Main Menu and additional navigation menus should be easy to find and read

13. Plan structure of your site

How will your website flow? Review parallax options vs. scroll options. Locate a few websites that you would like to emulate in your strategy.

14. Determine icons and thumbnails

Choose the style of icons and thumbnails. Determine use of color, typography, etc. on buttons.

15. Decide on use of animation

Do you want your site to be interactive as users engage with your content?

Technical Elements

16. Robust web platform that meets your church's needs

Determine how you would like your website to function and then choose a platform that enables you to develop your site

17. Select church website domain name

Select your church's web domain name to accurately represent the church including location specifics

18. Setup hosting for your site

Choose a hosting platform for your website.

19. Site fully secured with https

Give users confidence that your website is secure by installing SSL security.

20. Local schema set up in sites code

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21. Google Analytics set up

Install a Google Analytics plugin to improve your search engine rankings on Google.

22. Google Tag Manager set up

Add tracking codes to your website easily using Google Tag Manager.

23. Google Search Console set up

This tools helps you understand how your website is performing.

24. Website loads fast

Try to keep pages under 3MB in page size. Host images using a Content Delivery Network such as CloudFare.

25. Well conceived SEO Meta Data present

Place keywords within the metadata on each page.

26. Install plugins to enhance functionality

Choose plugins that help you accomplish your website goals

27. Install Event plugin

An event plugin will help your church share events and time-sensitive updates with members and friends of your church.

28. Install Email plugin

Stay connected with your church with a weekly newsletter. People should be able to opt-in to your church's mailing list on your website.

29. Permission to Index

Give Google permission to index your website. Without this permission, Google will be unable to find your site.

30. Choose a website theme

Select a website theme that helps you acheive 75% of the design and function you want for your website.

31. Install a SEO plugin

Optimize your site with an SEO plugin such as Yoast SEO or All-In-SEO to help you see what needs to be done to improve your rankings.

32. Backup your website

As you build and update your website, back up your site regularly on a hard drive so you won't lose your progress

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Homepage User Experience

33. Above-the-Fold Content Built for Unchurched New Visitors

The content immediately visible without scrolling (this is considered 'above-the-fold') on your church homepage should be designed with unchurched/seekers in mind.

34. A Benefit Statement

A clear, concise and compelling statement to establish your church's identity and what you have to offer to an unchurched visitor.

35. Call(s) to Action

A new visitor shouldn't have to scroll down your homepage in order to engage. At a minimum, a primary "Plan a Visit" call to action should exist within your above-the-fold content. Additionally, many churches have great results including a secondary call to action for new visitors wishing to find out more about what your church is like. Thus, we frequently recommend having a "Watch a Sermon" or similar call to action present above-the-fold as well.

36. High-Quality Images or Video

Visuals to help establish your church identity and support your benefit statement should be used. This is your first impression - so it's time to put your absolute best foot forward. These images should produce a sense of "FOMO", or the "fear of missing out" people experience when they see others having a good time.

37. Upcoming Events

Invite visitors to connect with your church by attending an upcoming event.

38. Welcome

Create a welcome photo, banner or video that makes new visitors feel at home, gives them instructions on how to engage and provides a glimpse of your church culture.

Intuitive Menu Navigation

39. Plan a Visit Link in Main Menu

In case a new user misses your above-the-fold call to action, it should be easy for them to reach your "Plan a Visit" page via the main menu

40. Messages / Watch a Sermon / etc

New visitors like to watch recent sermons because it immediately provides them insight into what the church "feels like" in action. This content should be easy to find via the main navigation.

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41. About Us

Outside of planning a visit or watching a sermon, finding out more about the specifics of your church (what you believe, in particular) is the most desired action. Be certain that this content is easily accessible.

42. Find Help

For felt-needs-motivated seekers searching for help from one of your ministries, it's important that access to this content is intuitively available via a "Find Help" menu item or similar.

43. Support

Offer support to visitors who may be seeking prayer or counseling

44. Giving

Invite visitors to make an impact through giving or through volunteer work.

Avenues for Deeper Engagement

45. "Connect" / "Get Involved" / "Next Steps" / etc

Highlight opportunities to connect with small groups, first-time visitor meetings, classes, or other chances for in-person engagement. This content should emphasize that your church is a vibrant community while also providing a path to deeper engagement.

46. Latest Message / Livestream (if applicable)

Your church homepage should contain a content block promoting your most recent sermon as well as access to your sermon live stream with clear timing information (if applicable).

47. Events

Your website audience can benefit from seeing what's going on at your church in a nicely organized and easy-to-access way.

48. Serve

Invite members and guests to engage at a deeper level through volunteer work or through service.

49. Groups

Visitors may engage with like-minded people

50. Join the Church

Invite guests to become members online to streamline your church growth process. Be sure to have someone follow up with them to welcome them to your church family!

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Plan a Visit Page User Experience

51. Service Times

Simply put, people need to know when to visit. Be clear about any differences to expect if you offer multiple service styles.

52. Getting There

Potential visitors will need to know where you're located. A gracefully embedded Google Map is recommended.

53. Parking Instructions

Where should new visitors park? If your church does not have specialized parking set aside for new visitors, that's also something to consider.

54. Entering the Building

What do new visitors need to know to reach the right place after they've parked?

55. Service Description

What is the experience like at a service? How long are the services? What is the format?

56. Music

What is your music like?

57. Dress

Is there a dress code? How do people at your church typically dress?

58. Children

What does your Children's ministry offer? Where do kids of different ages go? Is registration necessary?

59. Giving

How is giving conducted? Are new visitors expected to contribute?

60. Pre-Service Check-In Page

Give visitors the option to check-in in advance by completing a form and opt-into a red-carpet experience.

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Watch Online User Experience

61. Featured Sermons

Feature a few of your top performing videos for people to watch

62. Watch Live

Create the option for people to watch your livestream

63. Video Gallery

Provide an archive of videos

64. YouTube

Invite visitors to connect with you and subscribe to your YouTube or Vimeo video channels

Giving Page User Experience

65. Giving in the Bible

This is a great opportunity to explain your church's giving culture. You should also provide the biblical perspective of giving.

66. Causes

Write a short description sharing why people should give. Share the causes and projects that are supported by donations.

67. Thank You

Thank givers for their contributions in advance.

68. Address security

Help givers feel safer and more secure

Call-To-Action Usage

69. Create compelling copy that directs visitors to take action.

Never underestimate the power of inviting people to take action.

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70. Instructions for Completing Forms

Provide instructions on how to complete the form and give a turnaround time if a response is expected.

71. Consistent Button Design in Bold Look

Keep button design consistent with hover animation

72. Integrate Social Media

Include social media icons on all pages to invite people to connect

73. Install Email Capture Plugins

Strategically place opportunities for visitors to opt-into your email list and stay connected

74. Follow Up Plan in Place for Forms

Ensure that all email addresses linked to form are being monitored regularly

On Page SEO

75. Purposefully Optimize Page Titles

The browser title of each important page on your church website should be crafted to describe the page in an engaging fashion within 50-60 characters. I

76. Write Engaging Meta-Descriptions

Each important page on your church website should have an individually written meta-description of up to 160 characters.

77. Use Headings Appropriately

Heading tags, (<h1>, <h2>, …) should be used to appropriately indicate the major topics of the page's content and provide a guideline as to what the page is about.

78. URLs Should Indicate Structure and Purpose

The URLs of your website pages have the opportunity to both indicate what the page is about and establish relationships between different pages on your website.

79. Use Alt Text So Your Images Contribute

Images can often be very important to the content of a web page, but search engines (and blind people) aren't able to interpret them in the same way they can text. To eliminate this disconnect, use the alt attribute of your <img> tags to describe images that are relevant to the content of the page.

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80. Implement 404 error redirect

Eliminate errors by installing a plugin to address broken links or missing pages

Speed Optimization

81. Focus on Timing Metrics that Impact User Experience

Focus on understanding several different load time metrics so that we can determine the impact of website speed on user experience.

82. TTFB (Time-To-First-Byte)

Time-to-first-byte reflects how long it takes for the user to first receive a response from your website.

83. FCP (First Contentful Paint) / FMP (First Meaningful Paint)

FCP (or if using an even more advanced tool, FMP) timing reflects when the first significant webpage content is visually displayed to the user. Typically, for appropriately optimized sites, this will be above-the-fold content.

84. Onload Time

The Onload timing metric will typically reflect when all the important resources (including images) have downloaded and the webpage is fully interactive to the user.

85. Lazy Loading

Lazy loading improves performance by allowing your site to load faster by delaying load until resources are needed

Data Optimization

86. Optimize Your Images

First and foremost, before images are uploaded and made use of on your website, they should be resized to proportions matching their intended use. Finally, images should be compressed to further reduce the amount of data transfer necessary.

87. Serve Minified Script Resources

Modern websites frequently rely on very high volumes of CSS and Javascript. These resources can be delivered far more efficiently if they are first minified by removing unnecessary whitespace and line breaks.

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88. Leverage Browser Caching

For return visitors to your site, make sure that expire headers are appropriately set on your website resources so that they don't need to be downloaded again.

89. Limit Number of HTTP Requests By Combining Resources

Remove unnecessary images and plugins. Reduce file sizes and optimize your site's content to make your website lighter and faster.

Website Security

90. Your Church Website Should Be HTTPS Enabled

There are two facets to website security: ensuring your website itself is not compromised and ensuring that the data sent between your website and its users is private and secure.

91. Force Usage of the HTTPS Protocol

This step should be considered mandatory for all church websites. For environments that support it, Let's Encrypt is a fantastic provider of free certificates.

92. Eliminate Problems with Mixed Content

When mixed content is detected, browsers will not display the padlock icon in the URL bar to indicate that a site is secure. Depending on your environment, you may need to address mixed-content problems manually, or you may be able to use a plugin driven solution to help.

Responsive Design Test

93. Test all devices and browsers across all devices

Test the user experience and design across all browsers, Google Chrome, Firefox, Edge, etc. on all devices from mobile to tablet.

94. Ensure all important content appears on all devices

Verify that your most significant content shows up on all devices.

95. Test for content order

Ensure that the content appears in the correct order on all devices.

96. Check load time

Test performance across all devices to ensure your mobile site speed is not compromised.

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97. Ensure smooth navigation

Test that the site is user friendly and easy to navigate on all devices.

98. Check images and text

Ensure all images and text appear accurately and are aligned and spaced properly.

99. Check for interactive design

Be sure that interactive experience is smooth and consistent across all devices.

100. Test mobile-friendliness

Use Google's Mobile Friendly Tester to check for your website's responsiveness.