

# Everything you need to know when owning a website

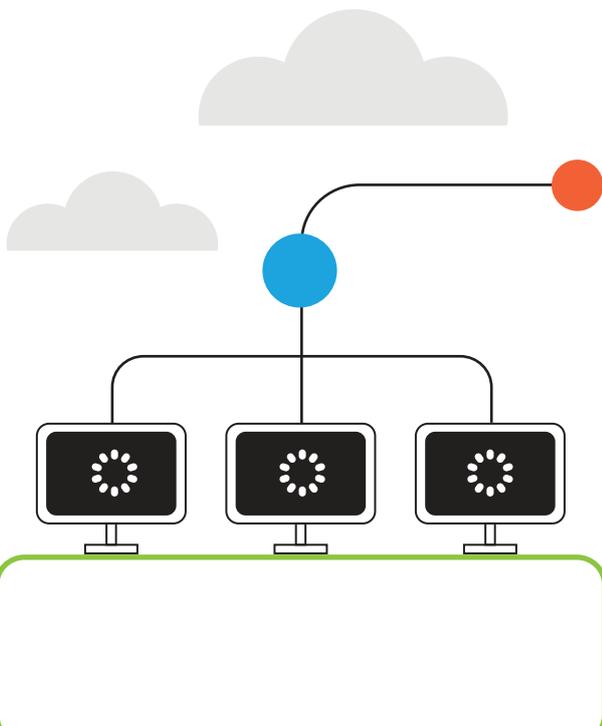
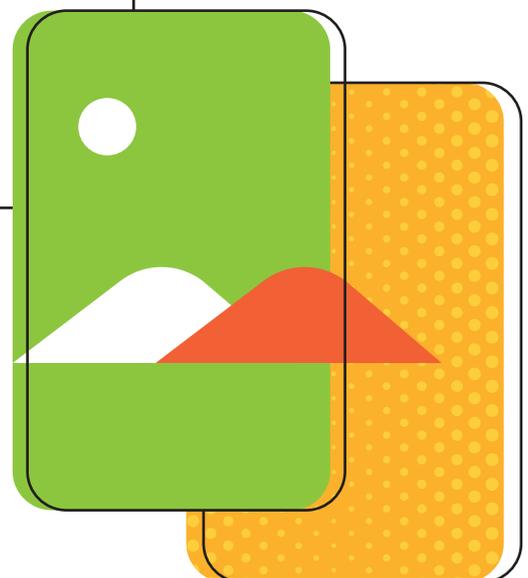
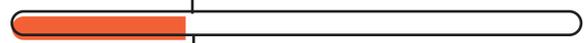
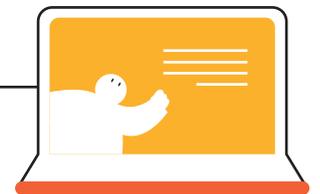


## What is a website?

On a website you can display information on the internet. Websites are programmed through 'programming languages' which are instructions for computers - the most common ones are Python, Java, and JavaScript. Websites are accessed through web browsers such as Safari, Firefox, and Google Chrome - to only name the most popular ones.

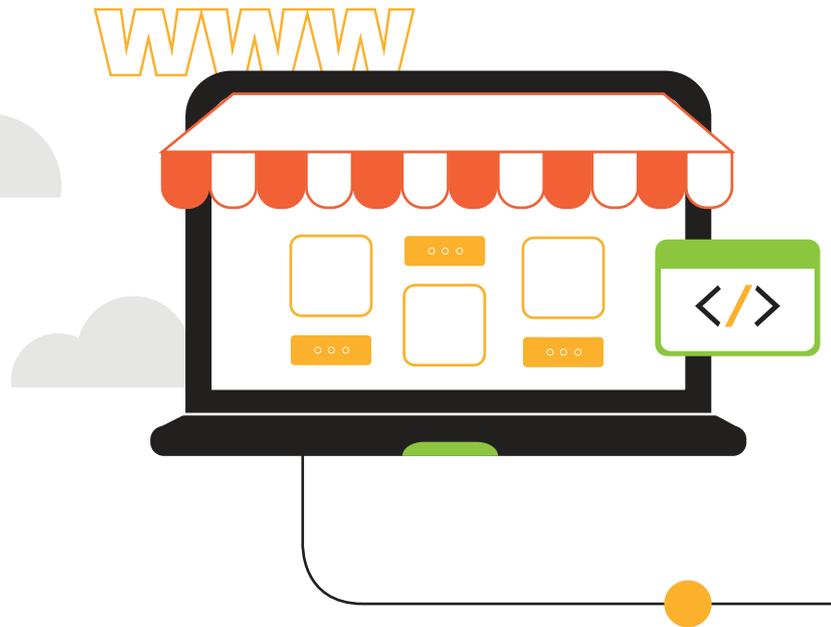
## Fun fact

Did you know that each web browser displays things differently, especially colors and fonts? So don't be surprised if you see differences amongst them!



# How to build a website

Like always, there are different ways to Rome. There are also different ways to build a website. We will look into the most common three ways to do so.



## 1. Create a new website with custom code

A developer can help you out if you don't have the skills to build a website from scratch. Developers often have a lot of freedom and creativity. The flipside is that it can be very expensive and you are dependent on your developer at all times. Keep in mind that you would have to contact your developer for even the smallest changes you want to make.

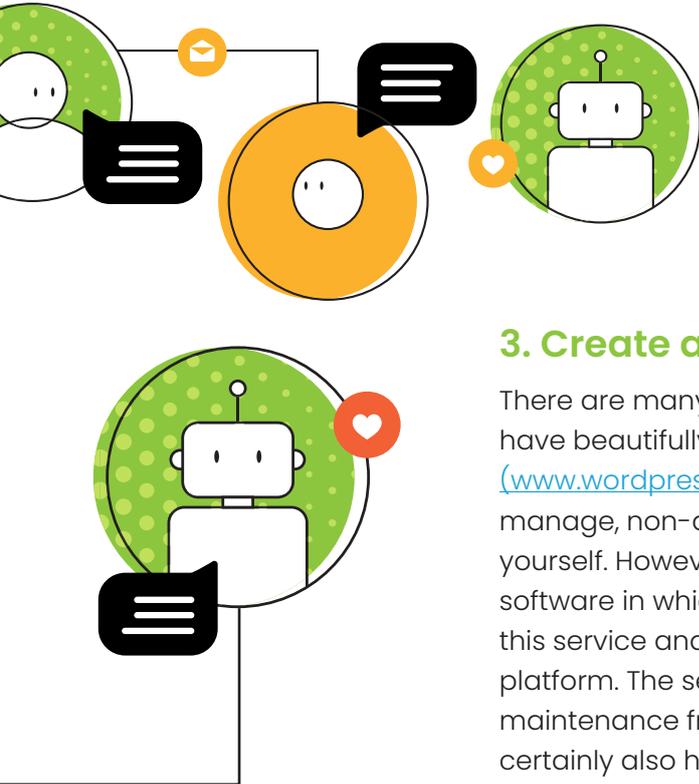
## 2. Use a CMS

A CMS, or Content Management System, is a software that lets you work on a website without the need of using code. Examples of CMS are Wordpress ([www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org)), Magento, Joomla, and many more. Most CMS systems offer templates (for the not-so-design-savvy) and plugins that will help you to virtually create almost anything you'd like. This option is a lot cheaper and you will be less dependent on developers. How can you work on a CMS? You have to install the CMS on your server. It's an open source software and you own a property of this software. You can now code in this system to edit and customize the design and content to your desired website.

**Interesting fact:** If you want to build a CMS website with wordpress you go to [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org) and if you want to use Wordpress's website builder you go to [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com).

**Difference with a website builder:** You can see a CMS system as your own house and a website builder as you renting a house.





### 3. Create a website with a website builder

There are many website builders out there that are easy-to-use and have beautifully designed templates. Amongst them are Wix, Wordpress ([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)), Squarespace; to name a few. They are easy to manage, non-dependent on developers, and you can customize them yourself. However, the possibilities are more limited. You don't own the software in which you build a website with a website builder. You pay for this service and you can customize, but only what is offered within the platform. The setup is easy and a website builder doesn't need maintenance from you (because it's done by the website builder) but it certainly also has limitations.

**Interesting fact:** Custom website and CMS websites need a hosting space whilst website builders are already hosting the website on their own server. On top of that, custom websites and CMS websites need to be maintained and updated regularly.

**Fun fact:** Did you know that Wordpress is the most popular CMS, by far! It powers 60% of all the websites on the web. That's huge! We are not surprised. This is because Wordpress offers the widest range of integration of plugins and is very user-friendly.

## Why do you both need a server and a domain?

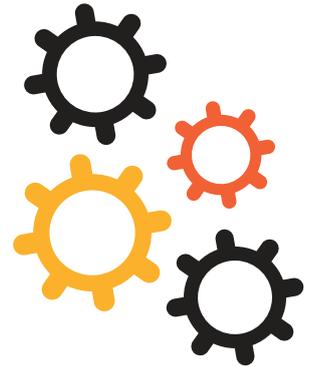
Every website has a unique address, called a domain name. This is what you type in your browser's search bar to access a website. For instance: [www.bemowgli.com](http://www.bemowgli.com). A common misconception is to think that when buying a domain name, you can store information on it. However, your domain name is just a name and it has to be linked to a server. A server is a computer space for your website to live on. You need both a domain and a hosting service for users to be able to access your website.

**Extra tip:** Make sure that you are the full owner of your domain and the hosting space. You can always let an agency or a freelancer suggest the best domain and hosting space for you, but make sure to always purchase them yourself.

# Where do websites live?

As mentioned before; website data (text, images, buttons, links) are stored in servers. Servers are big, powerful computers that contain information. Website hosting services rent out storage space on their server for you to upload your website and make it accessible on the web.

Based on the goals of your website you might need different hosting settings and packages. Let's look at shared hosting, semi dedicated and dedicated servers, and cloud servers.



## Shared hosting:

Shared hosting is often suggested for portfolio-based websites or websites that don't need much functions or speed. On this 'cheaper' option, your website will be on a server that is shared with other users/websites.

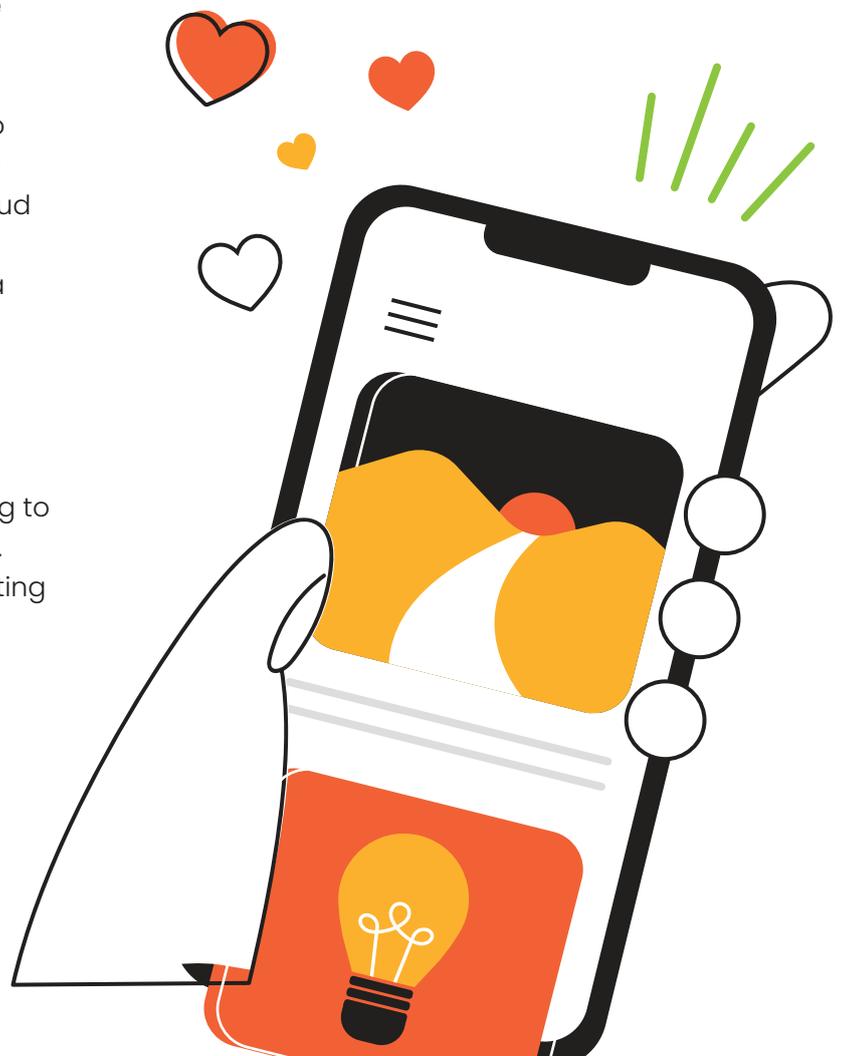
## Cloud servers:

Cloud servers are often the best solutions if you have a complex website or an e-commerce website. These servers often use cloud resources that can be changed in real time. This is ideal for websites that are planning to scale quickly. You will usually pay for just the resources that you use. The downside to cloud servers is that it requires developer skills to maintain and manage. You can opt to use a managed cloud hosting platform, such as [Cloudways](#).

**Interesting fact:** We recommend committing to server providers for a maximum of one year. This is because you are likely to change hosting servers over time. Maybe the server loses quality or you might need to upgrade your service. We advise you to keep that in mind when choosing your hosting service.

## (Semi) Dedicated Servers:

This option is more expensive than the shared hosting option, but it will most likely also perform better. Your website will have its own 'dedicated' server. A server you will not share with others. The server is quite fast and therefore often suggested for more advanced websites or web apps that have a stable traffic flow.

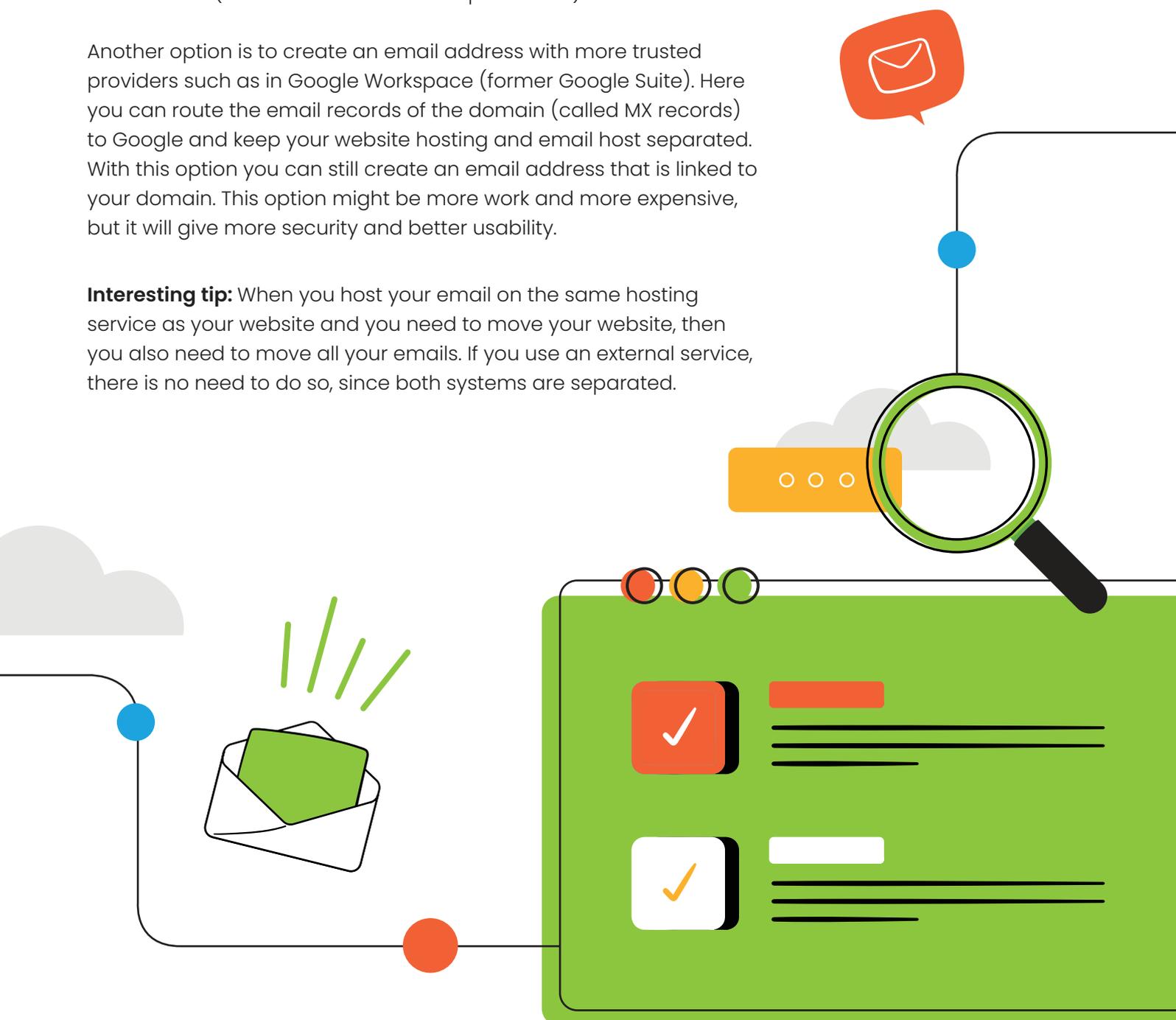


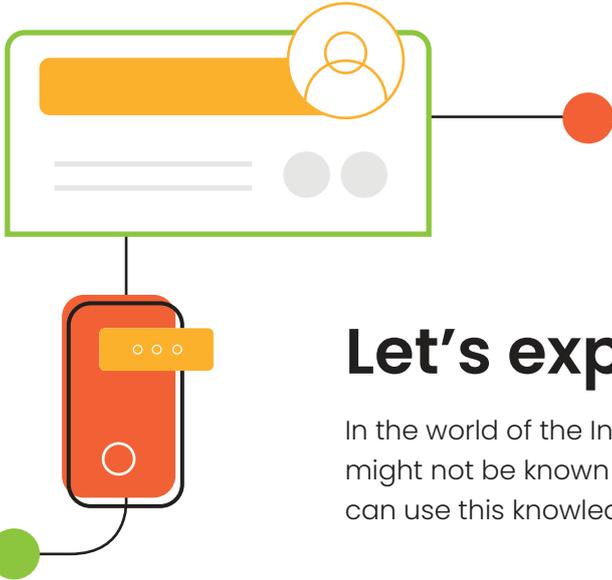
# Branded emails

Now you know how to create a website linked to a domain name, you might want to have an email associated with this domain as well. An example of such an email address could be: [info@yourdomain.com](mailto:info@yourdomain.com). Generally, creating an email is free and can be hosted on the same hosting service of your website. This is an easy option but possibly not the best option out there. Servers are often shared by different companies and websites which can make the server less trustable. This might impact the way your emails will be delivered (often in someone else's spam inbox).

Another option is to create an email address with more trusted providers such as in Google Workspace (former Google Suite). Here you can route the email records of the domain (called MX records) to Google and keep your website hosting and email host separated. With this option you can still create an email address that is linked to your domain. This option might be more work and more expensive, but it will give more security and better usability.

**Interesting tip:** When you host your email on the same hosting service as your website and you need to move your website, then you also need to move all your emails. If you use an external service, there is no need to do so, since both systems are separated.





## Let's explain some things!

In the world of the Internet, there are many words that are often used but might not be known to you. Let's look into a few of those words, so you can use this knowledge when you're making decisions.

### Theme

Themes are files that define the style of web pages. They make it easy to create and customize content without the need of coding and hiring a developer.

### Plugins

Plugins can be added to a webpage in case templates lack functionality. Plugins allow you to add technical features to your website, such as: contact forms, payment gateways and many more.

### Frontend Builder

Frontend builders are like plugins and are used in the 'next generation of templates'. They can not only add technical features but they also allow you to build entire sections of a website.

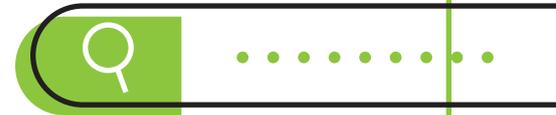
### Elementor (our favorite)

Elementor is the most powerful builder for Wordpress. It enables you to edit and create every single part of your website with the use of many handy functions. It makes it easier to not have to use templates and gives more flexibility and space for creativity for the designers.

### Why do you have a website?

When creating a website it is important to know what goal you have. What do you want to use your website for? These three goals are examples of reasons to create a website. Which goal do you have?

1. To inform
2. To generate leads
3. To sell products or services



## What should a website contain?

A website can vary from a one-pager to an elaborate page with a lot of information and content. Which elements should you implement in your website? Let's see.

### Business information

If you are a business, you do want to let everyone know what your business is all about. Make it easy for people to get to know your business. Explain who you are, what you do, and how people can contact you. All the essential information should be immediately identifiable. Place them at the parts of your website that are read or seen first.

### Useful content

After having provided the necessary information for people to understand who you are, you can now provide content that will further inform them. You want to focus this content on 'the solution to their problem'. Create content that 'speaks' to your reader. You want them to recognize themselves or their values in the content that you provide.

**Tip:** Try to bring your message across using different types of media, like: text, video, infographics etc. In this way different people (visual, auditive or other learners) can pick up your message in their own preferred way.

### Calls to Action (a.k.a. CTA's)

A good website compels your target audience to take action. Visitors need to understand what next step they can take in case they have an intent to purchase. CTA's will help you guide your (potential) customer from a desire to purchase to actually doing so.

### Mobile ready

With more than 50% of internet traffic coming from mobiles or tablets, it goes without saying that your website should be mobile-ready. We even advise you to first design your website for mobile/tablet usage and then edit the desktop website accordingly.



# Let's build a website

When building a website we advise to do this in steps. The framework below will provide you with steps that you can follow to start building your website and strategy. Let's look into it.

## 1. Strategize

When building a website, you need to have a clear idea of the structure of your business or, if the scope of the site is testing an idea, a clear idea of what you want to test. Sit around the table and start brainstorming. Think about your brand identity and the placing of information of your website's content.

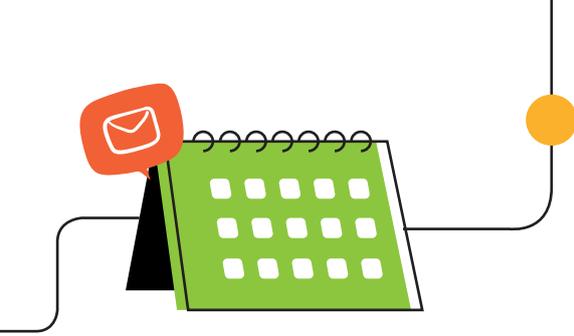
### Brand Identity

Having a visual identity is essential to creating a coherent experience for users across channels. It is the look and feel of your brand. The branding that makes your company unique and recognizable. Your chosen logo, color scheme, imagery and fonts all form part of your business' visual identity. Make sure you establish brand guidelines and use them consistently to help your target audience relate to your business.

### What goes where?

When creating a website you want to think about the user experience of your website. What content makes sense to place where? Define which content is static and which content is dynamic. Static content are information pages such as: the home page, contact page, about page, and your services page. Dynamic content are blog posts, products, portfolios, case studies, and events.



An illustration in the top left corner shows a green spiral-bound calendar with a white envelope icon on top. A black line connects the calendar to a yellow circle, which is further connected to a vertical line extending from the top of the page.

## 2. Plan

Who is your target audience and who will benefit from your website? Think about their customer journey. How do they navigate through your website? When planning out the structure of your website you will get better insights into how your customer moves through your website. By creating hierarchized and interconnected pages you make it easier for users and search engines to find relevant information on your website. This will not only create a better user experience but it will also help you to score better in Google, which will eventually help you with your (future) SEO KPIs.

### **Content Mapping**

Just like with design, your website copy should focus on getting your message across in the most straightforward way. Keep in mind that people often read in a different way online compared to reading on paper. Most of the time, people will scan pages and content for keywords or sections that are most relevant to them. With keeping this in mind you can make it easier for your readers to find what they are looking for. Use headings, short paragraphs, and clear and obvious Call to Actions. Your website copy should always be concise and to the point.

## 3. Maintain

Once your website is up and running, you need to make sure it is secure. Website owners must mitigate risk and apply security measures to protect their website from cyberattacks. The information on your website should be safe from hacking or data leaks. This is especially true if you are collecting customer data or payments. Make sure you update your website as soon as a new version of the CMS or plugins you are using are released. These updates may contain security enhancements that you don't want to miss out on.

Add SSL certificates to your website, they are used to encrypt data transiting between the web server and the visitor's browser. SSL certificates are also a badge of trust on your website. Most browsers will flag websites without an SSL certificate as "not secure". HTTPS (HyperText Transfer Protocol Secure) appears in the URL when a website is secured by an SSL certificate. Backup your website; backups are crucial to recover your website in case of an attack. It's not an alternative to website security but a good addition to your security strategy. Most hosting providers offer regular data backups as part of their service.

## Looking into optimizing your website?

A website is a complex and very important marketing source for many businesses. Making sure everything runs smoothly on your website can be time-consuming whilst running an online business. That's what we are here for.

[Get in touch](#) today to discuss how we can help you out with your website.