

 HOW-TO GUIDE

Website Evaluation Kit

MIGHTY  CITIZEN

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How Well Does Your Website Serve Your Users' Needs?

Your website's job—its *only* job, really—is to give your users what they need and want. The good news? Your users' needs and desires are pretty straightforward. They want to be able to:

- Easily find and load your website on their device
- Quickly find the information they need
- Complete tasks
- Feel well taken care of

With that in mind, successful websites share certain characteristics. They are:

1. Accessible
2. Communicative
3. Useful
4. Credible
5. Valuable
6. Delightful

Let's take a look at each of these in detail. And let's ask questions that will reveal whether your website is doing what it's supposed to.

1. Is your website accessible?

“Accessibility” refers to how usable your site is for the 50+ million Americans with disabilities. It's become quite the hot topic in marketing as more companies are [being sued over inaccessible websites](#). But having an accessible website also means that it meets the needs of *all* users, including being accessible on mobile devices and older web browsers.

Questions to ask:

1. How does our site look and function on smartphones and tablets?
2. Is our site usable by people with disabilities, including those who use screen readers and other adaptive technologies? Have we put [accessibility best practices](#) in place to meet their needs?

3. Is our site viewable on older versions of common web browsers?

2. Is your website communicative?

Your website *must* clearly, compactly, and concretely explain what your organization is and does. At every step of the user’s journey through your site, they should know precisely what’s being communicated.

Questions to ask:

1. Is our site informative, easily understood, and timely?
2. Does our site use [the language of our audience](#) so that it speaks directly to them?
3. Is our copy written with enough personality to convey our brand and its personality?
4. Do our images and content match our brand style guide?

3. Is your website useful?

Users visit your website because they suspect—they *hope*—that it can help them do and/or know something. Does your site do that for them? Making your website highly usable is one of the most important investments your organization can make.

Questions to ask:

1. Does our site meet our users’ needs? Does it meet *all* of their needs? (Organizations typically have multiple types of users who each have different goals.)
2. [Is it clear what users are supposed to do at any given point?](#)
3. Does our site prevent errors our users might make?
4. Is our site predictable—and can it be learned quickly?

4. Is your website credible?

Trust is critical—especially online, where it can be hard to come by. Boost your website’s credibility with testimonials, external references, awards, stats, and social proof to help your users know they can trust you.

Questions to ask:

1. Does our site have authority and instill trust?

2. Does our site share testimonials and other sources of external credibility (e.g. awards, reviews, industry approval, etc.)?
3. Do we share sufficient details to be seen as an expert?
4. How are promotions or advertisements used?

5. Is our website valuable?

At the end of the day, your website has to meet your organizational goals. What does your website have to *do* or *be* for your organization to be successful? Is it accomplishing that? If not—and if you’ve answered positively to the rest of these questions—something’s amiss. Go back and look carefully at your answers. Be hard on your website.

Questions to ask:

1. [Does the site help our organization achieve our goals?](#)
2. Are the goals of the site obvious?
3. Does our site present a clear brand identity throughout?

6. Is our website delightful?

Last but not least: Does our website make our users’ smile a bit? This isn’t something a lot of organizations consider, but it represents the *pièce de résistance* for your site. Do your users leave your website feeling positive? Have you given them a reason to chuckle and grin?

Questions to ask:

1. Is our site beautiful?
2. Is our site occasionally surprising (in a good way)?
3. Is our site memorable?
4. How are user expectations not just met but exceeded?

If you answered positively to most of these questions, pat yourself on the back: You’re doing a great job. And now you may have ideas for taking your website to the next level of effectiveness.

But if your answers were more critical and eye-opening, don’t panic. Make a plan, today, to get your website back on track. [Mighty Citizen is here to help!](#)