

RSW/US

New Business Solutions for Marketing Agencies

Putting Your Website To Work

The Most Important Member of Your
Agency New Business Team



Your Website 101

Before the internet, if you had a simple need like getting your roof fixed, how did you identify businesses that could fulfill that need? What was the pre-internet equivalent of the modern business website?

Outdoor advertising, a Yellow Pages listing, or maybe even word of mouth?

It's hard to believe but working amongst us are colleagues that were born after the first web page went live on August 6th, 1991! They've always lived in a world where information is just a few clicks away. For businesses, the advent of something as seemingly simple as a website, has opened up their products and services to countless potential customers.

As an agency interested in generating new business, your website is the centerpiece of your efforts. It is the tireless, always-on, most consistent member of your team. But what does your website communicate to prospects? Unless it was designed with new business acquisition in mind, it may not be helping you get closer to closing business.



Who is this guide for?

Redesigning your website can be daunting and costly. Best practice guidelines differ but most companies will redesign their site every 18 to 30 months (Business2Community, 2019). Regardless of your timeline, your agency should make changes right now if your site isn't getting the job done! Disappointing lead generation, poor visual design, low search rankings, inability to make changes easily, and outdated messaging are all reasons to take action.

Luckily, making changes doesn't mean razing your website and starting from scratch. Even incremental adjustments to messaging and content can reap rewards. So to anyone who loads up their homepage and thinks, "We can do better" read on and know that there are things you can do to improve the new business functionality of your site, in the short and long term.



Agency New Business Website - First Principles

During the onboarding process, whenever we take stock of a new client's website there are three questions we want answered within the first few seconds.

- What does this agency do?
- What makes them different or better than other agencies?
- Why would a prospective client work with this agency?

As an exercise we try to approach each website from a marketer's perspective. The things that might seem achingly clear to you and your staff, your website must communicate, optimistically in minutes, but realistically in scant seconds.

As with any new business initiative, honing your messaging and defining your target audience are unavoidable first steps. They will segue directly into other questions:

- What are your visitors' objectives while on your site?
- How can you help visitors fulfill their objective?
- What are your agency's objectives while visitors are on your site?
- How can you achieve those objectives?

These will shape the overarching goals of your website and its eventual success, or failure, as a new business tool.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and You

According to SEOClarity, the first organic search listings on desktop and mobile get 19.3% and 27.7% of clicks, respectively. So while the ways of the Google Search Algorithm are complex, taking basic first steps to improve website visibility is key.

Many businesses see SEO as a race - who can overtake their rivals atop Google Results Mountain? In actuality, most SEO practices are implemented simply in the pursuit of telling search engine "crawlers" what your site is all about, so that it's featured in only the most relevant searches.

The first steps you can take to improve new business SEO:

Know your keywords: The first step is one of evaluation: what ideal terms should bring a prospect to your site? Whether it's "paid search," "digital video," or any number of marketing terms, include these keywords prominently (but organically) in content pages across the website.

Use meta tags: SEO is meant to tell Google what you're all about, and meta tags are a simple way to do just that. Once implemented directly into your website's code, these tags allow SEO crawlers to sort you into the correct bucket of searches, essentially making sure that prospects are getting the right message at the right time for them. Sound familiar?

Link...to yourself: One component of SEO is providing an easily navigable site for readers and crawlers alike. One of the simplest ways to do this is through internal linking - connecting content pages with one another through hyperlinks. This allows the full range of pages (ideally relevant to one another) to be easily accessed, providing a fuller picture of who would find the site valuable, and the terms these searches might use.

Website Analytics - Do Agencies Practice What They Preach?

It's surprising when we find out an agency client hasn't set up even rudimentary website tracking and analytics. But it's also understandable. Without a new business mindset or strategy in place, the data gathered could be considered moot - why get a compass if you don't plan on going anywhere, right? For the rest, the overwhelming quantity of data provided by Google Analytics and similar software can be intimidating.

That being said...your agency should be tracking its website traffic.

Hold the efforts you undertake on your own behalf to the same standard as you would for a client. Getting prospects to your website is vital but you also need to have a picture of what they're doing when they get there.

Among other things, website analytics can help you track:

Page Views: Zero in on your most popular pages. Is one example of client work outperforming others? Perhaps you should create additional case studies highlighting other aspects of that work. Are vital pages underperforming? Link to those pages from your homepage to increase views.

Source of Traffic: Are people finding your site through organic search, referrals from social media, direct hits, or paid advertising? Monitor traffic sources to see which marketing efforts generate a positive ROI.

Session Length: How long are people sticking around? If visitors are leaving immediately, maybe you're attracting the wrong people to your site and/or visitors aren't engaging with your content. It may be time to tighten up your SEO or content creation game.

Bounce Rates and Exit Pages: Like session length, bounce rate illuminates how visitors interact with your site. A high bounce rate could mean people aren't finding what they need. Or...that they are finding what they need and leaving before they view additional content. It's a tricky metric to interpret but tracking exit pages will tell you what people are viewing right before they leave.

Concentrate on these low-hanging fruits of web analytics. Practically speaking, a small new business team (especially a team of one) won't have the time or experience to dig too deeply but even a monthly or quarterly analysis can provide enough to chart major trends.

A piece of good news is that Google Analytics is free to use and powerful. If you're looking for additional functionality there are hundreds of platforms that offer the right mix of anonymous lead tracking, link tracking, web forms, etc. to fit your new business strategy and budget.

Security and Website Hygiene - Keep it Clean

- Ensure that your site is compliant with all recommended security practices.
- Keep your digital security certificate up-to-date. This refers to the "S" at the end of HTTPS that precedes your site's URL. A lapse might cause visitors to get an error warning that your site is unsafe to visit. Good luck trying to get over that impression.
- Find and fix broken links - The familiar "404 Not Found" error occurs when content has been removed or replaced on your site. Not only does it make your visitors frown but it can potentially harm your search rankings.
 - Various plug-ins and 3rd party tools will help you search your site for broken links.
 - Instead of removing a content page from your site, update it.
 - Use a 301 redirect if you're moving the location of content on your site.

Website Design - Know the Basics

Websites have come a long way since that first page went up back in 1991. Because early sites were entirely focused on content, aesthetics took a back seat to utility. Modern website design seeks to marry form and function to a higher degree.

The finer points of website design are outside the scope of this ebook. Besides, we wouldn't want to get angry emails from your designer after you saunter into their office waving this guide! However, there are general principles you should be aware of to help your website achieve your new business goals.

Your website's design is the digital personification of your agency culture, brand personality, and technical expertise. But it's safe to say that an agency primarily concerned with customer loyalty doesn't have to meet the bar set by a website design firm. Modern website design is important but...

Style shouldn't trump substance and user-friendliness.

- Design your website for scanning, not reading.
- Break pages up into clearly defined areas.
- Eliminate distractions around your most important content.
- Write in short paragraphs vs. walls of text.
- Use formatting to guide visitors to important information.



The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Homepage - Top-to-Bottom

Start your new business website optimization with your virtual front door. Generally, your homepage draws the most traffic and improvements here will trickle down to the rest of your site. You need your homepage to quickly introduce your agency and to act as the jumping-off point for prospects to explore your site.

The Header

The very first thing visitors see on your site must tell them what you do! Maybe you've agonized over crafting the perfect agency mission statement but first prospects want to know if you, for example, work with healthcare brands or can manage their social media program.

The Navigation Bar

- Clarity trumps novelty.
- Limit your primary navigation menu to the essentials.
- Use sub-navigation menus to further refine navigation options.



Who are you?
What do you do?
Announce it

Capabilities

After you've stated clearly and simply what you do in the header, you can take a breath and expand on it.

- Avoid simply listing your services.
- Begin to weave in language that touches on your agency's culture and approach to work.
- Tease unique processes or service offerings.
- Be thorough but not exhaustive.

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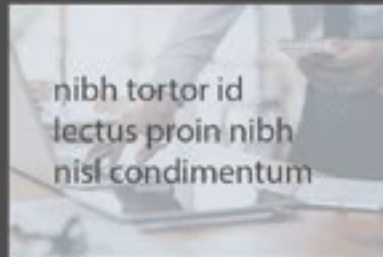
Social Proof

Featuring client logos and testimonials are one of the key shortcuts to communicating to prospects that you are worthy of their time and trust. For more on this topic please see page [21 of the Addendum](#).

CLIENTS



WORK



Case Study Links - The Picks of the Litter

- Choose the most representative pieces of work for each vertical you're pursuing.
- Use bold visuals as thumbnails.
- Optional: Give a taste of the results or scope of the work but keep it brief.

Awards

- Crow about your bona fides but do so moderately. Instead of a shock and awe approach, choose the most significant and well-regarded awards for your industry.
- Create case studies around the awards you will feature and link to them. An award is a great way to draw a prospect in to learn more about your work.



Our Thoughts

Thought Leadership Links

- Assess your thought leadership content honestly and choose pieces that represent you well.
- Feature evergreen content that vibes with your positioning to ensure visitors receive a consistent message.



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Want to learn more
CONTACT US

Call to Action

Always make it easy for the prospect to contact you. According to Smallbiztrends, 70% of B2B sites don't use calls to action. Don't be like them.

Footer

- Social Media Links ([See addendum](#))
- Copyright - Anything that appears on your site is instantly copyrighted, however, keeping the copyright year updated shows visitors that the information on the site is current and that you pay attention to detail.



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The Anatomy of a New Business Website

About Us

The RSW/US Story

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Your Story

Include a few details about your agency's history and background, but...

Don't be that person at the party that recounts their entire life story. Prospects only care about your history insofar as it helps them understand how it shaped who your agency is now.

Culture

Describe your agency culture but always as a way of contextualizing your approach to your work. How does your culture help you make a difference for your clients?

Our Values

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The Team

Do you limit this to your senior staff or recognize your wider team? It's a choice that carries particular subtext with it.

The Team



The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Work - The Big Show

Superman vs. Batman. Coke vs. Pepsi. Cats vs. Dogs. Homepage vs. Work Page.

Ok, the last may not really be one of the classic matchups...but to some, it's a dichotomy to worry over. More than one client has asked where they should spend their focus during a website optimization. Unfortunately, they're thinking about the relationship between the homepage and work page the wrong way.

Your homepage will do the heavy lifting when it comes to shaping a prospect's impression of your agency, while your case studies will give them reasons to believe you can get the job done. Ideally, your work page serves to seamlessly connect the two. It can serve as a view of the breadth of work your agency has performed, but it must also get your prospect to the right case study as quickly as possible. Let's say it again...the *right* case study.



The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Work Page

About

Work

Blog

If you can, make case studies sortable. The seconds lost searching can easily cost you views.

RETAIL
NON PROFIT
HOSPITALITY

Use a clear organizational structure. Categorize your case studies by the verticals you are currently pursuing or by services rendered.

Retail

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Raise some eyebrows. Now is the time to feature breathtaking visuals and impressive results.

Even displaying case studies in order of scope or significance is better than nothing. A prospect's attention is priceless, so focus it like a laser on your most significant work.

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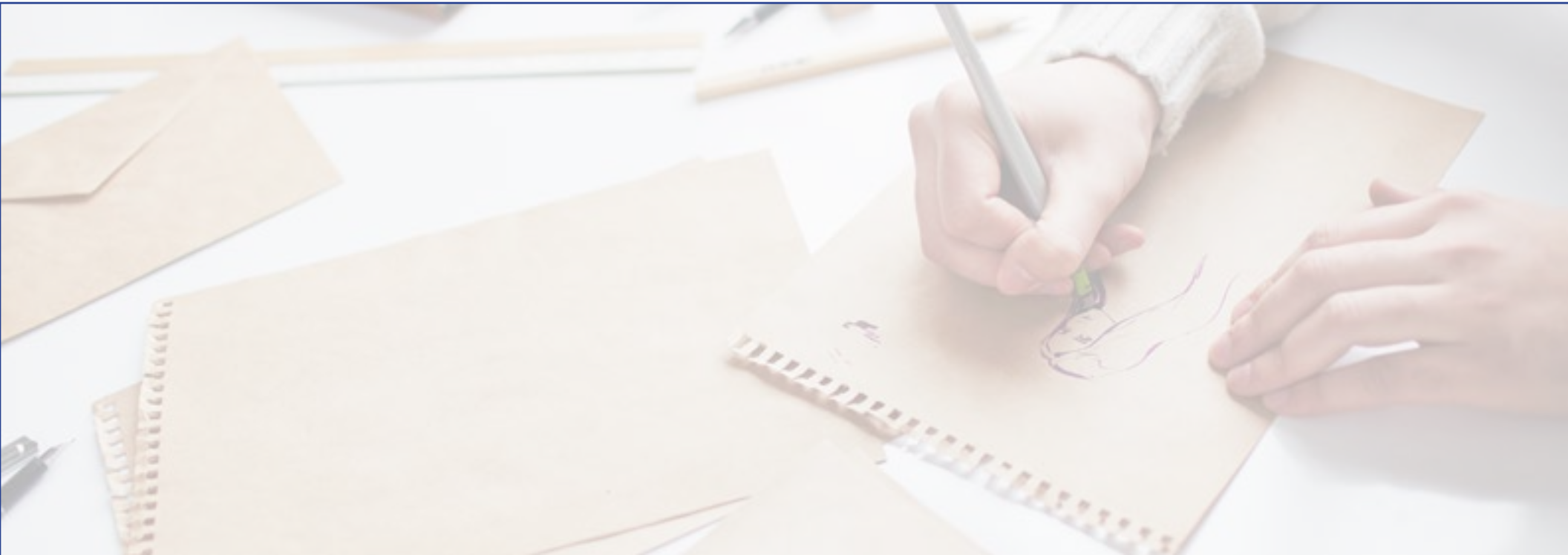
The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Online Case Studies

For additional details about the shape and concepts behind case studies, download our case study guide. [\[Link to case study ebook\]](#)

But here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Keep the copy between 300-1200 words. Tell the story but leave room for follow-up and entice the prospect into wanting to speak to you more.
- Take advantage of the online medium to incorporate video, sound bites, and high-res visuals.
- Update your case studies to reflect recent work. Directing prospects to new case studies on your site is a way to re-engage them when they've gone cold.



The Anatomy of a New Business Website

The Elements Of An Online Case Study



Headline: Capturing Attention

A few words summarizing the process and hinting at the results to give a solid impression of what you did for your client.

PROBLEM

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Problem

Mirror your prospect's pain points in the challenges your clients have faced. Get the prospect to exclaim, "That's exactly what we're going through right now!"

SOLUTION

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Solution

Highlight your agency's unique strategy, execution, key findings and proprietary processes you used to get the job done.

RESULTS

400%

Increase in

90%

Lift in cor

Results

Prospect's will often jump straight to results, so instead of simply listing results in the body copy, also display them boldly in a sidebar. Use meaningful metrics and KPIs.

The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Thought Leadership

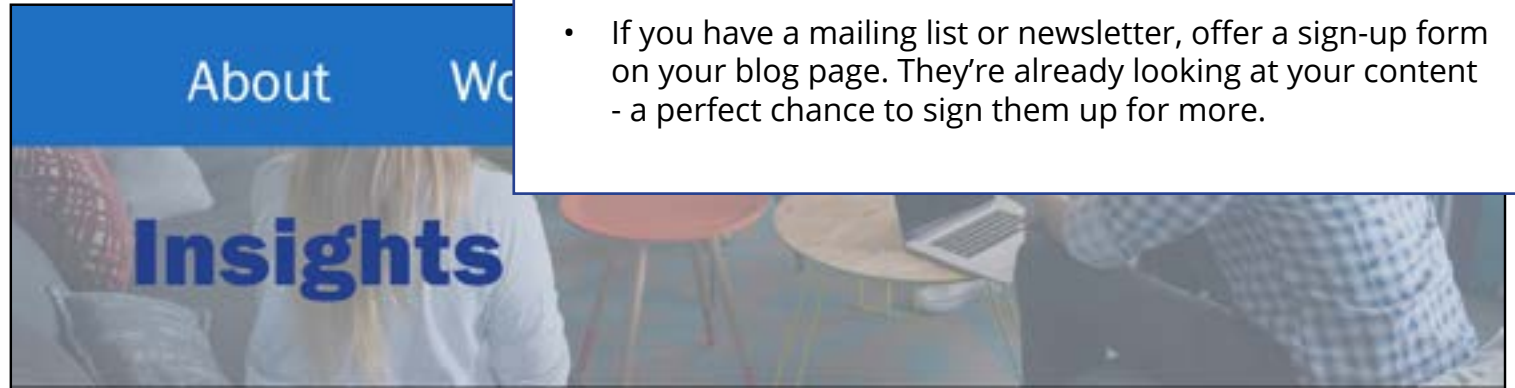
The short answer to the question, “Should my agency create thought leadership content?” is an emphatic “Yes!” We’ll soon cover the fundamentals of blogging and thought leadership content in a separate ebook, but here are a few things to consider.

Why create thought leadership content?

- **Gets more traffic:** You have a 434% higher chance of being ranked well on search engines if you feature a blog as part of your website. <https://www.techclient.com/bloggng-statistics/>
- **Keeps visitors longer:** Businesses using blogs as part of their content marketing mix get 67% more leads than those who don't. (Content Marketing Institute)
- **Encourages self-evaluation:** If your senior leaders aren't the ones defining your agency's approach and pushing it to evolve, who the heck else should be doing it?

The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Blog Page



- If you have a mailing list or newsletter, offer a sign-up form on your blog page. They're already looking at your content - a perfect chance to sign them up for more.

- Promote popular posts and those that encapsulate the pillars of your agency approach using sidebars, "sticky" functionality, and other prominent spots.

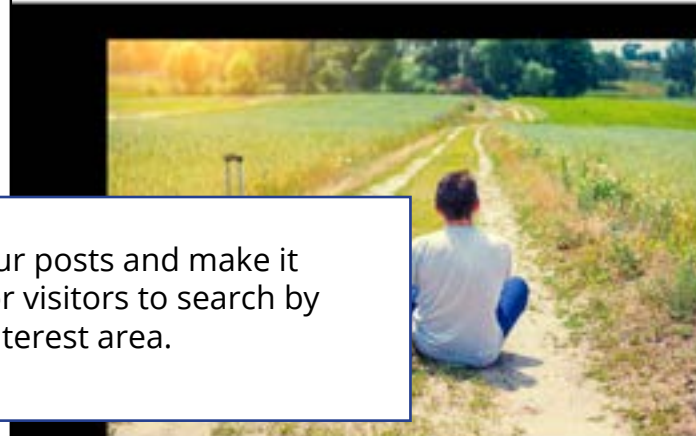


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- Tag your posts and make it easy for visitors to search by their interest area.

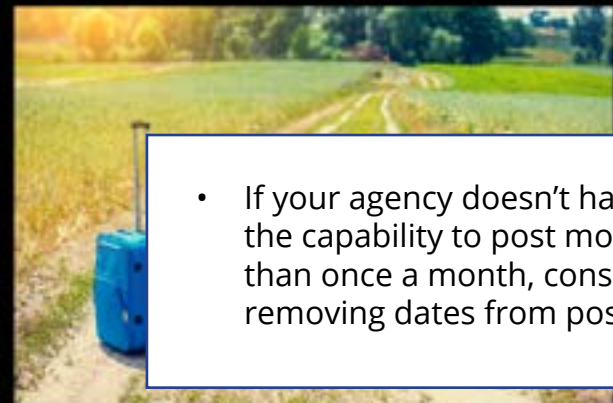


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- If your agency doesn't have the capability to post more than once a month, consider removing dates from posts.



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Rhonus est pellentesque elit ullamcorper dignissim cras

The Anatomy of a New Business Website

Contact Us

Perhaps there is someone somewhere blazing a trail when it comes to how a “Contact Us” page functions and, if so we hope they get in touch! Otherwise, we assume you know what to do. One note: You should make it so easy for a prospect to contact you from any page on your site that actually visiting your “Contact Us” page is a last resort.

CONTACT US

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Fields marked with an * are required

Name *

Email *

Please tell us what service you are interested in. *

General Inquiry

Message

Conclusion

Measuring the success of a website is difficult for most agencies, but it's the most important tool in a new business director's toolbox. If your efforts fall flat online, the rest of your new business program will suffer an uphill battle. If your agency was a B2C retailer, then the website is your storefront: it's a homebase that's yours to build as an accommodating and frictionless experience for those looking to do business with you.

So while billboards, phonebook entries, and the like haven't yet gone the way of the Dodo Bird, make sure that your agency is making the most of post-1991 technology and, with the tips contained in this eBook, building a website that communicates effectively and drives value for your new business program.



Addendum

Client Logos & Testimonials

Embedded in the DNA of any agency new business website is the need to signal capability and worthiness as a partner. The fastest way to do this is to employ social proof in the form of client testimonials and a client logo display.

Testimonials: Done well, there is no more powerful “reason to believe” than a strong client testimonial.

- Aim to feature testimonials from titles of the same level as your prospects.
- Consider how much control you want over the client’s testimonial. Requesting freeform responses is fine but, if you want to craft a narrative, ask your clients a series of specific questions.

Client Logos Display: Ah, the client logo splash - an example of the need for balance in all things. Display client logos on your site, but don’t succumb to the temptation to shoehorn in the logo of every client you’ve ever worked with.

- Start with the big names then choose carefully from there. A deep client roster is enviable but displaying too many logos will increase visual noise.
- Remember your positioning. If your agency concentrates on one or two verticals, give clients from those verticals the focus in your logo splash.
- Don’t hide your client logos on an “Our Clients” page. Place your logo splash on your homepage where it can benefit from surrounding messaging.
- Logos need context, too! Show a person a logo and you’ll have their curiosity; back it up with a case study and you’ll have their interest.

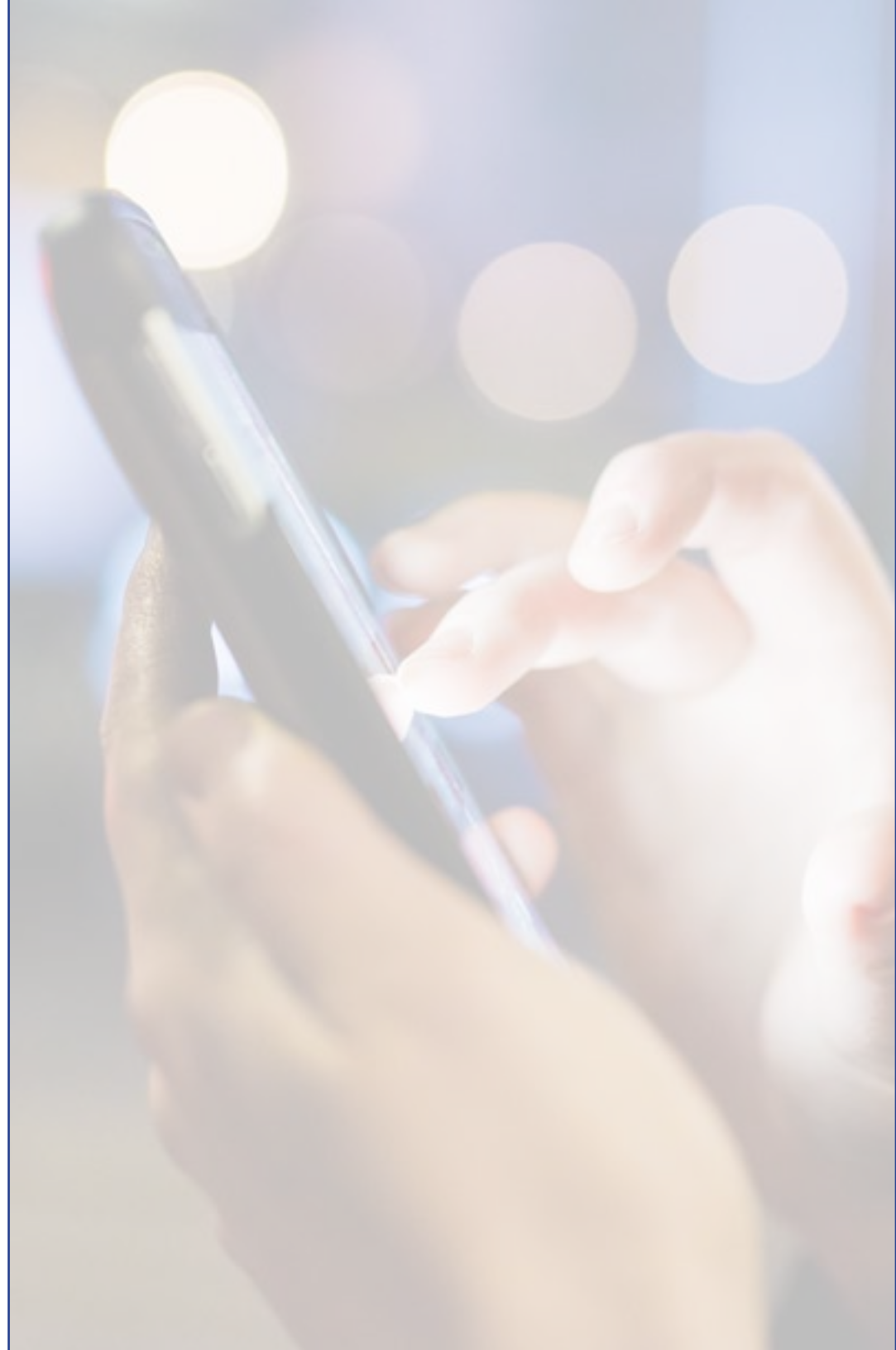
Addendum

A Note on Social Media Links

Is there anything more exhausting than keeping up with social media? On an individual level, neglecting to get on the 'Gram or update Facebook might get you shunned as a luddite by friends and family. But as a business, failing to engage meaningfully on social media can mean cutting yourself off from potential prospects.

A few thoughts when it comes to social media on your website:

- Link to the most relevant channels: Though it's natural to want to fill your footer with social media links like so many merit badges, don't do it. Besides LinkedIn, no current platform is indispensable. The nature of your agency's work and your audience will determine your most valuable platforms.
- If you don't got it, don't flaunt it: Feeding the social media beast is deceptively hard work! If your agency isn't keeping a platform current, remove the link. No one wants to read that post you wrote in 2013 connecting franchise marketing to the series finale of Breaking Bad. No one.





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