

Is your website undermining your credibility?

We are long past the time where having a website is optional for any type of organization. If you want business or support, you *need* a website, full stop.

But having any old website won't do. If you are a serious organization that is seriously looking to get donations, or to increase sales, or to advocate for a cause, or whatever your *raison d'être* is, you have to have a **credible** website.

To make sure your website has credibility, there are three areas you must address:

Safety/security

Credible websites are first and foremost **safe and secure** to use. As I wrote before, you must have an SSL. You should also be hosted on a trustworthy web host. There are many shady (and many times, cheap) web hosts out there. If your site is hosted on a shady web host, you are in fact, guilty by association. This happened to me a few years ago, when my website was hosted on a large, inexpensive web host that also hosted spammers and other questionable organization. Because I was on a blacklisted server, my emails would not be accepted by Yahoo and who knows what other email services. I changed hosts, and the problem has been resolved.

Up-to-date

I just came across a Washington, DC public relations agency that supposedly hosts industry learning events on a regular basis. The website has a tab for these events, and when I clicked on it, it took me to an event that took place in March. I happen to know this agency is hosting an event in August, so it is very clear it has not updated the website in

several months.

If you are wondering what you should be updating on a regular basis here's a non-comprehensive list: your blog, your events calendar, your personnel pages, your address, your social media links.

There is no excuse for not keeping your website up to date. If you use something like WordPress, updating is fairly simple. If you use something complex, you should have an IT person or a website developer who can do these things for you. And yes, it is worth the time or money investment because having an outdated website showcases many negative traits: disinterest, laziness, not prioritizing the website (and by extension your audience).

Design and UX

If you were around in the 1990s when websites first started getting launched, you know what an old-fashioned website looks like. It's pretty ugly. If you have a 1990s design, you probably haven't kept up with the times. It's like sporting a feathered Farrah Fawcett hairdo from 1978, and it's now 2018.

Design is important, but so is user experience (UX). How easy is it for people to use your website and find what they need? If people are having trouble finding what they need, then they will not use your website and go elsewhere.

Don't undermine your organization's credibility. Give your website some attention right now!