

SelfInformed

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6 TIPS TO KEEP



PEOPLE ON YOUR SITE

Maybe you're in the beginning phases of growing and building a business and are just starting to put your website together. Or you've already built a website for your small business and have been online for years.

Once your website is live, you want to drive traffic to attract more customers and get more sales.

Getting traffic to your website is one thing. Keeping people on your website is an entirely different skill.

What if no one is sticking around once they land on your website?

Did you know that your website's rankings in Google can be negatively affected if your bounce rate* is too high?

Read on to learn common reasons why people leave your site early and what you can do to keep them there for longer.

* Bounce rate: The percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page.



1. ADD ANALYTICS TO YOUR WEBSITE

The first step in tracking your website visitor's behavior is to actually set up tracking. A few of the behaviors that tracking lets you monitor include:

- ▶ How people are getting to your website (i.e. via email, Google search, social media, another site, etc.)
- ▶ What region of the world they are from
- ▶ What pages they click on while on your small business site
- ▶ How long they stay

How do I add tracking to my website?

The most common analytics program used today is **Google Analytics**. If you sign up for Google **Search Console** too, you can even see what search terms people are typing in Google to get to your website.



2. CREATE A BLOG

A surefire way to keep visitors on your website is to maintain a blog for your small business. Dependent upon what type of business you have, whether you're a micro business owner or you run a family business, you could blog about:

- ▶ Yourself or your family
- ▶ Helpful articles that complement products/services you offer
- ▶ Local topics if you cater to your community

The possibilities are endless! In the beginning, try mixing it up to see which posts are getting interacted with most and what your community responds to the best. Frequency is also up to you. NASE suggests blogging at least once a week.

As a business owner, if you don't have the time to blog or you're not a great writer, you can contract a freelance writer to help you. Freelance websites like **Upwork** make it easy to find affordable writers with a variety of experience.

Examples of Excellent Company Blogs:

- ▶ **The Official Slack Blog:** Slack.com uses their blog to interview their current customers, release product updates/integrations, and even recently posted a diversity report of their staff.
- ▶ Eataly is a grocery store with physical locations as well as an online shop. They use **their blog** to share recipes, how-to's, cultural articles, and profile chefs.
- ▶ Even though ModCloth is a clothing and home goods store, the company uses **their blog** to cover a range of topics that their target audience is interested in, including beauty and lifestyle topics.

Learn more: **ProBlogger** is one of the best resources on the internet for new bloggers.



3. REFINE YOUR ABOUT PAGE

Learning about who is behind a company is more important to consumers than ever. Customers want to have a connection with the people they are buying from, especially when the company's values line up with their own.

If your about page is composed of one or two generic sentences about your small business, it might not be enticing enough to keep visitors on your site or get them interested in your products and services.

Examples:

Dollar Shave Club: In a few short paragraphs, Dollar Shave Club's about page offers history about how and why the company was founded and dives into their product line.

The Honest Company: Here is another example of a short blurb explaining why the company was founded and a little bit about the people behind it. On the side, you will see links to more in-depth explanations of each aspect of the company.

Yellow Leaf Hammocks: This company does a great job of adding visually appealing elements to their about page with links to learn more within each section for those who are interested.

What you can include on your about page:

- ▶ The mission and vision of your small business
- ▶ Why you created your company
- ▶ A little bit about your professional background (and even your personal background)
- ▶ A high quality image of yourself, your office, or your staff

4. CREATE A FAQS PAGE

If you are growing a business and you receive a lot of support questions, you can provide answers to the most common questions in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions page.

Link to your contact page or provide an email address where current and potential customers can ask their questions, and promise to update the page regularly.

As an entrepreneur, responding to the same questions over and over can be a time drain. Creating and updating an FAQ page essentially kills two birds with one stone.

5. INVEST IN GOOD DESIGN

There are some pretty stunning websites out there. How does yours stack up? If you've created your website yourself using a free software, or if you launched it years ago when you were first building a business, it's very likely that you are in need of a brand new design or at least a few updates.

An ugly or outdated design can scare your traffic off in droves. A confusing design without a logical navigation system will have a similar effect.

Ask friends and family to rate your website compared to your competitors or other websites relevant to your industry. Ask them to be as honest as possible and provide detailed feedback.

Sample questionnaire:

- ▶ Are the website graphics fresh, modern, and visually appealing?
- ▶ Is the design and the overall look and feel of the site welcoming and interesting?
- ▶ Are product images high quality?
- ▶ Does my logo express the products/services we offer?
- ▶ What is the overall experience of your website visit?

Learn more: [11 Website Design Trends You Need To Know About](#)

6. USE VIDEO

Using a creative video is an excellent way to increase the time that visitors stay on your website. If the video is interesting enough, people will at least stick around on your website long enough to watch it.

You can create a video introducing your company, make an instructional series to complement your product, or even post fun updates.

For example, if you are a small business owner with a bakery, you can create how-to videos like:

- ▶ How to create the perfect sandwich
- ▶ How to create a stunning buffet table for your next dinner party
- ▶ Tips for decorating for a birthday party

Example: **The Container Store** creates videos using their products in different ways to give customers ideas of how they can be utilized in their own homes.

Learn more: [7 Ways Entrepreneurs Can Use Video To Grow Their New Business](#)



Tip: Not only will videos keep people engaged while on your website, they can also be shared on social media.

FINAL ADVICE FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

Take the time to research your competitors and other successful businesses. Visit their website and see what ideas you can draw for your own and how you can improve your own online presence.

Once you make changes, assess the results using your analytics program. Are people staying on your website longer and clicking on the pages you want them to? Continue to make tweaks to improve your website's performance.



Ask the Expert

Q: *I saw one of your seminar videos and you talked about creating a job for my child. How do I know if this works for me?*

A: First of all, thank you for viewing the on-line seminar and I hope you found many ways to save thousands in tax dollars including my favorite which is to Hire Your Kid. If you operate a sole proprietorship and you have a child that can help in the business this idea is right for you. Period! Those are the only two factors that matter in putting you in position to reduce your overall tax liability by as much as \$2,500.

The best part about this tax savings idea is that you are already spending this money anyway. Rather than just giving your child money, create a job within your business so that the child can earn the money. There are many intangible benefits for your child such as learning responsibility, gaining experience and knowledge, increased maturity and confidence which most likely outweigh the tax benefits but why not save taxes at the same time.

The technical process that makes this possible is effectively moving taxable income from your tax return onto

the tax return of your child where income will be taxed at a much lower tax rate. In fact, if your child earns less \$6,300 in wages they will most likely pay no tax at all. If they are under age 18 working in their parent's sole proprietorship, there is no federal income tax, no social security tax, no FICA or Medicare tax, no state unemployment tax, no tax at all. At the same time, the \$6,300 paid in wages is fully deductible as a business expense right on your Schedule C. If you are in the middle income tax bracket of 25%, that deduction will save approximately \$1,575 in federal tax and another \$945 in self-employment tax for a total savings of \$2,520. They are rare, but this tax savings idea truly is a "no brainer!"

A quick warning! Don't just pretend. Don't say your child has a job and then just include \$6,000 on line 26 of your Schedule C and take the savings to the bank. Actually put the child to work. Create a job, including a job description, time cards, pay stubs, etc. At the end of the year, do the



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paperwork. File a Form 944 payroll tax return and prepare and submit a W-2 for your new employee. Don't take shortcuts. The paperwork is not difficult but avoid the temptation to skip the work. Maybe the best news is that for a couple of hundred dollars you can probably have someone do the work for you. We even have a new benefit here at the NASE to do all the detailed paperwork for you. Check out www.NASE.org/HireYourKid to see how easy this can be. Regardless of who does the paperwork for you, don't let this idea slip away.



As always, don't forget that you are not alone. Bookmark our website at **NASE.org** as well as the IRS website at **IRS.gov** you will always be able to find the help you need.



Member Benefits

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SAVE THE DATE: 2015 ANNUAL MEETING

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we would like to invite you to the 2015 Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Self-Employed.

When: December 10, 2015, 4:30 p.m. CT

Where: Plano Keller Williams Office
3600 Preston Road,
Plano, Texas 75093

No registration is required, NASE members are encouraged to attend and meet with the NASE staff and Board of Directors.

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Underwritten by Hiscox Insurance Company Inc., a Chicago-based insurance company. Coverage is subject to underwriting and is not available in all states.

Member Spotlight



Picture Yourself in the Spotlight

*Do you want free publicity for your business? If you're an NASE Member, the NASE can help you promote your business! Simply fill out our **"Get Publicity!"** form here, and you and your business could be featured in an NASE publication, like our monthly member e-newsletter, *SelfInformed*.*

Not only will you be getting free publicity by sharing your story, you will be giving other members an insight in your journey of self-employment. By sharing your struggles and challenges to your successes and achievements, others will be able to relate and gain insight into how they can also be successful as self-employed entrepreneurs.

Fill out the information in our [Publicity form](#) so an NASE representative can reach out to discuss featuring you and your business next!

What's the best thing about being self-employed?

The best part about being self-employed is that it allows me to bring out my creativity and share it with others. It has also proven to me that I have even more creativity within myself that I did not know I was capable of. It allows me the freedom to do what I like and experience various things that I may not have otherwise done.

Elena Hines, Owner, Golden Leaf Café Menomonie, WI
December, 2014 Spotlight



How many employees do you currently have? Are you planning to expand the staff?

We have two full-time employees over the course of the farming season, a part-time bookkeeper and a part-time employee to help with harvest days, wine pourings and retail sales days. In the winter we drop to one part-time employee to help with continued sales and my time goes to the big, overarching infrastructure projects as well as repairing tools and equipment. We don't plan for any new staff in the next year but as the Farm Stand/Tasting Room develops and our crop production expands we expect new field and order fulfillment staff.

David Mostue, President, Dunbar Farms, Medford, OR
September, 2014 Spotlight



When and why did you start your business?

I started Insight Garden, Inc. in 2004. My old agency FCB was one of the last relatively independent major agencies to be purchased by a holding company. The new holding company flushed out many fairly senior people upon taking control. At that time, I interviewed at many media companies, but also started to develop a business plan as another possible path. That interview process opened my eyes quite a bit. Everyone I interviewed with was so corporate and impersonal. It really felt that another job at a large company was just a path to immersing into someone else's culture and beliefs. I decided not to go down that path and create a business that was definitely entrepreneurial and a real expression of who I was as a media professional and business person.

Mark Dominiak, Principle Strategist, Insight Garden, Whiting, IN
April, 2015 Spotlight



What does a typical day look like for you?

My days usually start with checking my inventory at the warehouse first thing. Once I check my inventory, I then make a plan on what we need to order, load the truck with supplies and head to locations. I'll fill machines, collect monies, update item prices, rotate inventory and then make a list of what is needed for the next time. My days are a cycle of maintenance on my current machines and planning for what I will need in the coming weeks.

Bridgette John, Owner, Get Snackin Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV
August, 2015 Spotlight,



What's the best compliment you've ever received from a client?

I know women feel great wearing my clothes; they are comfortable, flattering to the body, and have a distinct look. That is very rewarding. I was at a prestigious art fair showing and selling my clothes. A fellow artist told me I was a consummate professional in the way I dealt with my customers; it was very rewarding to receive that great compliment.

Marla Duran, Owner, Marla Duran Designs, Allentown, PA
July, 2014 Spotlight



What's the most important piece of advice you would give to someone starting their own business?

Research your business idea first! Ambition is essential, but glossing things over can land you in hot water. Do some careful exploration before taking the leap so you'll know the ins and outs from every angle. Knowing that you are knowledgeable and prepared is often more than enough motivation to start a business with confidence.

Seneca Brookins, Founder, Jasudo, Chicago, IL
August, 2014 Spotlight





RESIGNATION AVOIDS SHUTDOWN

In a stunning turn of events, Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) announced on Friday, September 23, 2015 he would resign from the speakership and Congress by mid-October, setting the stage for the election of a new Speaker amongst a fractured and dysfunctional Republican party.

Many analysts believe Speaker Boehner sacrificed himself in order to avoid another government shutdown. Increasing pressure by a small group of Republicans in the Senate and House to strip federal funding from Planned Parenthood in any measure that kept the federal government open was becoming a lightning rod for the Republicans, who hold a majority in the Senate and House.

However, with Boehner's resignation, challenges still persist for the Republicans and the Congress. A short term funding bill was approved by both Chambers that keeps the government operating through December 11th. The timing couldn't be worse, as the funding measure expires around the time that Congress will be asked to raise the debt borrowing limit and the Federal

Reserve will meet to consider raising interest rates for the first time in nearly 10 years.

The race for the Speakership is seemingly wrapped up, current Majority Leaders Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) is expected to be elected, even though Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), chairman of the house oversight and government reform committee, announced his candidacy on October 4th and Rep. Daniel Webster (R-FL) has also announced his candidacy. Elections for leadership will be held on October 8th.

The fight within the Republican caucus is not just happening on Capitol Hill but the Republican Presidential primary, where 15 candidates (two additional candidates have withdrawn, former Governor Rick Perry [R-TX] and Governor Scott Walker [R-WI]) are jostling for the party's nomination. The next 13 months will be full of political twists and turns.

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