

**BUSINESS SYSTEMS** **BEGINNER** 10 min

# How to Plan Your Business Online Presence

A practical guide to deciding what your business actually needs online, from a domain email and basic website to Google Business Profile, reviews, social media and content.

Online presence is not about being everywhere. It is about making sure the people you want to work with can find you, understand what you do, and feel confident enough to take the next step.

Start with your audience. A local trades business, a B2B consultancy, a visual consumer brand and a referral-led professional service do not need the same channels. The minimum standard is that when someone searches for you on the web or on their phone, what they find supports the sale rather than creating doubt.

8 STEPS

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## 01 **Decide who needs to find you**

Before choosing platforms, describe the audience. Are they consumers, business owners, finance teams, homeowners, local residents, recruiters or professional buyers?

Write down where they are likely to search first: Google, Maps, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, directories, personal recommendations or industry networks. This decides what matters.

Do not build channels for a generic audience. Build for the people most likely to buy.

## 02 **Cover the minimum credibility layer**

The minimum layer is not glamorous: a domain you own, an email address on that domain, a current website or landing page, and accurate contact details wherever you appear online.

For many referral-led businesses, this is enough to stop warm leads dropping out during due diligence.

A custom email address is usually the fastest credibility improvement.

## 03 **Choose the right website level**

A digital business card confirms who you are, what you do and how to contact you. A trust-builder adds positioning, process, case studies, testimonials and stronger service pages. An active marketing site adds content, search strategy and ongoing lead generation.

Choose the level that matches the business now. You can grow into the next stage later.

Do not pay for a marketing engine if you only need a clean verification page.

## 04 **Set up Google Business Profile where relevant**

If customers search locally, visit you, or expect to see you on Maps, Google Business Profile is one of the highest-return tasks. Add accurate categories, service area, opening hours, contact details, website link, photos and a short description.

Then create a simple habit for asking satisfied customers for reviews.

Local businesses should treat Google Business Profile as core infrastructure, not optional marketing.

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## 05 Pick one or two sustainable channels

LinkedIn is usually strongest for B2B, professional services and founder-led expertise. Instagram or TikTok suit visual products and consumer brands. Facebook still matters for many local businesses. YouTube can be valuable where educational content has a long shelf life.

The right channel is where your audience already spends attention and where you can maintain a credible presence.

An abandoned profile can damage trust. Choose fewer channels and maintain them properly.

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## 06 Make the website pass the phone test

Most prospects will check you from a phone. The site should load quickly, explain what the business does within seconds, make text easy to read, and keep enquiry or booking routes visible.

If the mobile version is slow, cramped or unclear, the desktop version does not matter as much as you think.

Open the site on your own phone and ask whether a stranger could understand it in ten seconds.

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## 07 Decide whether content is worth maintaining

A blog, guide library or video channel can build trust and search visibility, but only if it stays current. One useful article a month is better than an ambitious launch that stops after six weeks.

If you cannot maintain content, keep the website evergreen instead: services, audience, process, contact details and proof.

The question is not whether a blog is good. The question is whether you will maintain it.

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## 08 Review the setup quarterly

Check the basics every quarter: contact details, services, pricing signals, reviews, profile links, opening hours, broken links and whether your current positioning still matches the business.

Online presence is a business system. It should be reviewed like any other system that affects enquiries and revenue.

Small, regular updates prevent the site and profiles becoming stale.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

The right online presence depends on your audience, stage and capacity. A small, current setup that fits the business is better than an ambitious setup that goes stale.

If you are unsure where to start, fix the domain email first, create or refresh the basic website, set up Google Business Profile if local search matters, and then choose one sustainable channel to maintain.

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**LEAN LEDGER**

For guidance only. This guide does not constitute legal or financial advice. Always verify with HMRC or a qualified adviser.