

# Get Found. Win More Work.

Why tradies need more than social media  
to grow their business online.



James Williams

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Author: James Williams

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## Introduction

Most trades did not start a business because they wanted to learn marketing.

They started because they know their trade. They know how to build, fix, install, quote, solve problems, and get the work done properly. The business usually grows from there. A few private jobs become regular work. A good name starts to spread. Before long, there is a real business on the go.

For a long time, that was enough.

If you did good work, turned up when you said you would, and treated customers fairly, people talked. A recommendation led to the next job, and the next job led to another one. In plenty of trades, that still matters. In fact, it still matters a great deal.

But it is no longer the whole story.



People still ask around when they need a tradie, but they also look online. They search Google, check Maps, read reviews, look at websites, and sometimes glance at social media. More recently, they are also starting to use AI-assisted search tools to compare options more quickly. They do this even when they already have a name. In many cases, especially for larger jobs, the online check is now part of the buying process whether the business likes it or not.

That means the online side is no longer just a nice extra.

It is part of how trust gets built.

This book is not about hype. It is not about making tradies behave like influencers. It is not about chasing every online fad. It is about understanding how customers make decisions now, why some good businesses still miss out on work, and how to build a clear online presence that actually helps.

If you do good work, your online presence should make that easier to see.

That is what this book is for.

## Chapter 1 - How customers choose a tradie now

For years, most tradies got work the simple way. They did a decent job, the customer told a few people, and the phone rang again. In a lot of businesses that still happens, and it still matters. A recommendation from someone you trust has always carried weight because it lowers the risk. If your neighbour says a plumber turned up on time, fixed the leak, charged fairly and cleaned up afterwards, that says more than a clever advertisement ever will.

But the way people act on that recommendation has changed. A name passed on over the fence or at a barbecue is no longer the finish line. It is usually the starting point. Before they call, most people now look the business up. They want to see whether the business feels current, whether it really does the kind of work they need, whether it covers their area, and whether there is enough proof to make the next step feel sensible.



This is true even when the customer seems old school. Plenty of people who would never describe themselves as digital still pick up the phone, search a business name, glance at reviews, check a map listing, or visit a website before they make contact. They may do it quickly, almost without thinking, but it is still part of the decision. The online check has become part of the way people confirm what they have heard.

Then there are the customers who do not start with a name at all. They start with the problem. The hot water has gone. The deck is rotten. The kitchen needs renovating. They type in the job they need done and the area they live in, and they expect a useful answer. Sometimes that answer comes from Google. Sometimes it comes from Maps. Sometimes it comes from reviews. Sometimes it comes from an AI-assisted search result that gives them a quick summary and a shortlist of options. The path varies, but the pattern is the same. People want confidence before they commit.

That matters because customers do not usually judge a tradie the way another tradie would. They cannot look at a website and decide whether your flashing detail is sound, whether your tile layout is true, or whether your quoting method is efficient. They judge through signs. They look at what they can see from the outside. Does the business look real. Does it look clear. Does it look like it knows what it is doing. Does it look as if it will answer the phone, turn up, and do what it says.

Those signs are built from small things. A proper website is one sign. Good reviews are another. Clear service information is another. Photos of real work are another. Even the ease of finding a phone number matters. If everything feels straightforward, the business feels safer. If the information is scattered, vague, or stale, the customer feels uncertainty.

Most customers are not doing a full research project. They are making a practical decision in a short window of time. They are comparing a few options, knocking

some out quickly, and moving towards the one that feels easiest to trust. That means clarity often beats cleverness. The business that explains itself well has an advantage over the business that leaves too much unsaid.

This is why some excellent tradies lose work to businesses that are weaker on the tools but stronger in how they present themselves. From the customer's side, they are not necessarily choosing the best craftsman. They are choosing the business that feels most likely to give them a good experience. That experience begins before the first conversation. It begins at the moment they search.

It is worth pausing on that, because it is the part many trade businesses miss. They think the competition starts when people call and ask for a quote. In reality, a lot of the competition is happening earlier. It is happening when someone searches your name after hearing about you. It is happening when they compare your business with two others on a map listing. It is happening when they land on a social page that has not been updated for months, or a website that tells them exactly what they need to know.

That does not mean the old ways have stopped working. It means they now work alongside a new filter. A good reputation opens the door. Your online presence decides whether the customer walks through it.

The stronger trade businesses understand this. They do not assume customers will join the dots for them. They make the dots obvious. They make it easy to see what work they do, where they do it, and why someone should feel comfortable making contact. They understand that modern marketing is not about shouting louder than everyone else. It is about removing doubt.

Once you see it that way, the online side becomes less mysterious. You are not trying to game a machine. You are trying to help a person decide. The question is not whether you need to be flashy. The question is whether you are easy to choose.

That is how customers choose tradies now. They still listen to people they trust. They still care about a good name. But they also want proof, clarity, and a reason to feel safe before they pick up the phone. A business that understands that is already ahead of a business that assumes word of mouth will do all the work on its own.

There is another change worth noticing. Customers now expect a business to answer the unspoken questions without being asked. They expect to know whether you work on small jobs or only larger projects. They expect to get a sense of your standard from photos. They expect to see whether other people had a good experience. They expect the business to feel settled enough that they are not taking a wild chance. None of those expectations are extreme. They are just part of normal buying behaviour now.

That expectation has grown because people are surrounded by information in almost every other part of life. They can compare products, services, restaurants, mechanics and accommodation in minutes. Rightly or wrongly, they bring the same habit to trade services. Even if they only spend a short time looking, they still expect something to look at. They want enough to reassure themselves that this is not a stab in the dark.

A lot of tradies resist that because it can feel superficial. They may think, and sometimes say, that the work should speak for itself. In the end it should. But the work can only speak for itself if people get far enough to see it. Online, that means showing enough evidence for the business to feel credible before the job is won. The website, the reviews, the map listing, and the examples of work are not replacing skill. They are creating the conditions for skill to be noticed.

That is the real shift. The customer does not only choose a tradie. They choose a level of certainty. The business that provides more certainty tends to get more calls.

And when people are under pressure, certainty matters even more. A leaking roof during a storm, a failed hot water system, or a renovation that has dragged on too long will not make people patient. In those moments they are drawn to the business that looks calm, clear and ready. They are not looking for poetry. They are looking for confidence. The businesses that understand that are the ones most likely to stay on the shortlist and get the call.

## Chapter 2 - Why good tradies still miss out on work

One of the hardest things about missed work is that it rarely announces itself. A customer almost never rings to say they looked you up, felt unsure, and chose someone else. They do not send a message explaining that they liked what they heard but could not tell whether you covered their suburb. They do not tell you that another business looked easier to trust. They simply move on, and from your point of view the opportunity never existed.

That is why weak online marketing can sit quietly in the background for years. It drains business without producing a single clear event you can point to. The phone still rings sometimes. Referrals still come in. Old customers still call back. Work still happens. So it is easy to assume everything is fine. The business is moving, and if the business is moving there is always something more urgent than sorting out a website or tightening up your online presence.



But there is a big difference between getting some work and getting the work you should reasonably be winning. A business with patchy visibility often leaks opportunity in ways that are easy to miss. Some people never find it at all. Some find it but cannot work out if it is the right fit. Some find it, hesitate, and keep looking. Some compare it with a competitor that looks clearer and decide not to take the risk.

This is not always about losing to a better tradie. Quite often it is about losing to a better first impression.

That can be frustrating because it feels unfair, and in one sense it is. A business that has spent years building skill, reputation and reliability can be made to look uncertain by a weak online setup. Meanwhile a newer operator with less experience may look more established simply because the basics are presented well. From the customer's point of view that presentation matters, because they are not judging workmanship directly. They are judging the chance of a good experience.

That chance is shaped by trust, and trust is shaped by signs.

If the signs are strong, customers move forward.

If the signs are weak, they hesitate.

The size of the job changes this as well. On a small repair, some people may be willing to take a chance. On a larger project they usually want more reassurance. A person spending serious money on a bathroom renovation, extension, roof replacement or major landscaping job is not likely to rely on a half-empty social page and a couple of blurred photos. They want to know who they are dealing with. They want to see proof. They want the business to feel stable. The bigger the investment, the more important those signs become.

There is another cost that often goes unnoticed. A weak online presence can lower the quality of the enquiries you do receive. If your services are not clear, you get more tyre-kickers and more unsuitable leads. People ring for work you do not do, jobs outside your area, or price checks with no real intention to proceed. When the business is explained properly, the wrong enquiries fall away more often and the right ones arrive better informed.

That is not a small benefit. Time matters. A lot of trade businesses think only in terms of more leads, but better leads are often more valuable than more leads. If your online presence filters out work you never wanted and attracts work you actually do well, it improves the business in a practical way. It means less wasted time on pointless back and forth. It means a better match between what you offer and what the customer expects.

Referrals can hide this problem for a long time. A strong local reputation can keep feeding the business enough work that the gaps do not feel obvious. But referrals are not a system you fully control. Some months they are strong. Some months they are quiet. The market changes. People move on. Old contacts dry up. If the business has no reliable way for new people to discover and judge it, those quiet patches feel much harder than they need to.

A stronger online presence gives the business another channel for trust to form. It helps people who have never heard of you find you. It helps people who have heard your name confirm that they should get in touch. It keeps the business from leaning too heavily on chance and memory. That matters most when work slows, but it matters all the time.

There is also the issue of perceived scale. A solid business with years of experience can look smaller, shakier or less established than it really is if there is little online to support it. Customers may not mean to judge harshly, but they do read signals. They notice whether information is up to date. They notice whether reviews exist. They notice whether the business seems active. A thin presence can

make a good operation feel uncertain. A clear presence can make the same operation feel capable and dependable.

The cost of poor visibility is not only lost calls. It is also lost confidence, lost trust, and lost positioning. It affects who finds you, how they judge you, and whether they feel ready to take the next step. That is why this is not just a marketing problem. It is a business problem.

Good tradies miss out on work when the business side of trust is left to chance. They miss out when customers cannot see enough to feel comfortable. They miss out when online information is scattered, stale or missing. And because those missed opportunities leave so little trace, they are easy to ignore until someone else seems to be winning the jobs you thought should have been yours.

That is the central point. The issue is not whether online marketing matters in theory. It already matters in practice. The only question is whether your business is being helped by what customers find, or quietly held back by it.

The answer is not to turn into a full-time marketer. It is to stop letting uncertainty do the selling against you. Once that uncertainty is reduced, good work has a much fairer chance of being chosen.

It is worth remembering that customers do not experience your business the way you do. You know the quality of your work, your reliability, your standards and your intentions. They do not. They only know what they can see before contact. If what they can see is incomplete, they fill the gaps with assumptions. Sometimes those assumptions are kind. Often they are not. That is why businesses with weak online signals can be judged more harshly than they deserve.

And once a customer has moved on, the moment is gone. Most do not come back later after more thought. They choose the clearer option and keep going. That is why the cost is real even when it is invisible.

The good news is that this problem is fixable because it is not mysterious. You do not need to become someone else. You need to make the business you already have easier to trust. That means giving customers fewer reasons to hesitate and more reasons to feel certain. When that happens, the business is no longer fighting with one hand tied behind its back.

## Chapter 3 - What social media can do, and what it cannot

Social media can help a trade business. It can show life. It can show movement. It can remind people that the business exists. A decent photo of a finished deck, a tidy bathroom renovation, a neat landscaping job or a before and after repaint can do useful work. It gives people a glimpse of your standards. It can support referrals when someone checks you out after hearing your name. It can keep the business familiar in the local area. For some tradies it also brings in the occasional direct enquiry.

So the point is not that social media is bad.

The point is that social media is limited, and a lot of businesses expect too much from it.

A social account feels easy because it is quick to start. You create a page, upload a logo, post a few photos, and the business is officially online. Compared with doing nothing, that feels like progress. And in a narrow sense it is. But it is not the same thing as having a proper online presence. It is one piece of the picture, not the picture itself.

The reason is simple. Social media is built for feeds, not for clarity. It is designed for scrolling, not for structure. The next post shoves the last one down. Important information gets mixed in with everything else. A customer who lands on your page has to piece the business together from fragments. They may see a good job photo, then a holiday closure notice, then a supplier shout-out, then a half-finished caption from six months ago. Somewhere in there might be your service area, contact details, and best reviews, but the customer has to work to find them.

Most customers will not.

They are busy. They want the obvious questions answered quickly. What do you do. Where do you work. Can I trust you. How do I contact you. A social page can hint at the answers, but it is not very good at presenting them in a settled, organised way. That is why a business can look active on social media and still be hard to choose.

There is another problem. Social media gives the illusion of progress. Posting often can feel productive. Likes and comments can feel like momentum. The business seems visible, and visible feels good. But attention is not the same as trust, and activity is not the same as conversion. A page can be busy while the actual business setup remains weak. Plenty of small businesses spend time feeding platforms that do very little to help customers understand what they are buying.

This is where frustration creeps in. A tradie can put effort into social media and still wonder why it is not turning into the right kind of work. The answer is often that the platform is doing what it is meant to do, just not what the business hoped it would do. It is keeping the business in view, not replacing the need for a proper base.

Control matters as well. On social media, the platform is in charge. It decides the layout. It influences who sees what. It can change the rules, the reach, or the format whenever it likes. That makes it risky as the main pillar of your online presence. You are building on borrowed ground. If the platform changes direction, your business has to adjust whether it suits you or not.

That is fine if social media is one supporting tool among several. It is much less fine if the whole business is leaning on it.

There is also a credibility issue, especially on bigger jobs. A social page can be enough for a quick look or a casual browse, but it rarely gives the full sense of a settled business. For a customer making a larger decision, that matters. Someone spending significant money usually wants more than a feed. They want a place that explains the business properly, shows the work clearly, and feels stable.

This does not mean tradies should stop using social media. Used well, it can do several valuable things. It can show recent work. It can add personality. It can keep the business visible to people who may not need you today but might need you later. It can also create a steady stream of proof that real jobs are being done. That is useful.

The mistake is treating it like a substitute for a website.

Social media works best when it supports a stronger central asset. It should send people somewhere more complete. It should help them notice the business, then point them towards a place where the business makes full sense. Without that second step, the customer is left with a sketch instead of a picture.



A good way to think about it is this. Social media is the shop window, not the shop. It helps people see that you are there. It gives a taste of what you do. But if the whole business exists only in the window, customers never get the full experience they need to feel sure.

That is why many tradies who rely only on social media end up feeling that online marketing is not working for them. In reality, part of it may be working just fine. They are being noticed. What is missing is the next stage. There is nowhere solid for interest to land. There is no proper base that turns passing attention into real confidence.

When you understand that, the role of social media becomes much clearer. It is not the foundation. It is support. It helps with visibility, familiarity and proof, but it cannot carry the whole business on its own. Expecting it to do that is like expecting a signboard to do the work of the workshop behind it. It can point people in the right direction, but it cannot replace what needs to be there when they arrive.

Used in that way, social media becomes useful again. Not magical. Not enough by itself. But useful in the right place, doing the right job, without pretending to be more than it is.

It also helps to remember that not every customer even likes social media. Some use it rarely. Some distrust it. Some do not want to search through posts to work out whether a business is right for them. If the only real online presence you have sits on a platform the customer barely uses, you are forcing them to meet you on ground that does not suit them. A proper business presence should not depend on that.

The strongest approach is to let each tool do the job it is best at. Social media can create visibility and show fresh proof of work. It can help people stay aware of the business over time. But when the moment comes to make a decision, most customers want more than a feed. They want a clear place to land, and they want that place to make sense quickly.

That is the line social media cannot cross by itself. It can start the conversation, but it struggles to close the gap between interest and trust. Something else has to do that heavier work.

## Chapter 4 - Why a proper website still matters

A proper website gives a trade business something social media cannot. It gives it shape.

That matters because the online world is full of bits and pieces. Reviews sit in one place. Photos sit in another. Business listings sit somewhere else. Social posts drift past in a feed. A website brings the important parts together and puts them in an order that makes sense. It gives the customer one clear place where the business can be understood.

This is the real strength of a website. It does not have to be fancy. It has to be clear.



When someone lands on a good trade website, they should know within moments what the business does, where it works, and how to take the next step. They

should not have to scroll through months of posts, search around for a phone number, or guess whether their suburb is covered. The best websites remove uncertainty. They answer the obvious questions before the customer has to ask them.

That is powerful because most customers are trying to reduce risk. They are not only buying a service. They are buying peace of mind. They want to know they are choosing someone who looks credible, organised, and suited to the job. A website helps create that feeling because it gives the business a settled presence. It says this is not just a name and a phone number. This is a proper business with a clear offer, visible proof, and a sensible way to make contact.

A website also lets you explain the business properly. Social media is good at snippets. A website is good at structure. If you are a bathroom renovator, the site can show what sorts of bathrooms you do, how your work looks, which areas you cover, and what kind of customer you are best suited to. If you are an electrician, it can explain whether you do residential work, upgrades, safety checks, lighting, or fault finding. If you are a landscaper, it can show whether you handle paving, retaining walls, drainage, full garden builds, or all of the above. That kind of clarity does not only help the customer. It also helps the business attract the right work.

Search visibility is part of this too. Search engines and AI-assisted search tools work better when they can read clear, well-structured information. A website gives them that. It provides a home for service pages, location information, proof of work, and consistent business details. That makes it easier for search tools to understand what the business does and when it is relevant.

As search becomes more natural, this matters even more. People ask longer questions now. They search by problem, location, and job type. A website that explains things properly has a better chance of matching that search behaviour than a scattered online presence made mostly of listings and posts.

There is also the issue of ownership. A website is an asset you control. You choose the structure, the wording, the images, and the path the customer takes. You can improve it over time. You can add to it. You can shape it around the work you most want. That gives the business a stable base. Social platforms come and go, change their rules, and limit what you can do. A website sits at the centre and gives everything else somewhere to point.

For many tradies, the word website still brings to mind something expensive, overcomplicated or full of technical fuss. That is one reason some keep putting it off. But a proper website does not have to be large to be effective. In fact, many trade businesses are better off with a simple site done well than a bloated site trying to do too much. Clarity is worth more than size. Usefulness is worth more than cleverness.

This is where a lot of poor websites go wrong. They try to impress rather than explain. They use vague promises, generic slogans, and cluttered layouts instead of answering the customer's real questions. A good trade website should feel like a calm, capable conversation. It should make the customer feel that the business knows what it is doing and will be easy to deal with.

That sense of ease matters more than flashy design. Customers are not handing out style awards. They are deciding whether to make contact. A site that is simple, clear, and trustworthy will usually outperform a site that is more impressive on the surface but harder to use.

The website also becomes the place where the other parts of your online presence connect. Your Google Business Profile can point to it. Your social media can point to it. Reviews support it. Referrals are strengthened by it. Instead of the business existing in fragments, the website gives the whole picture somewhere to live.

That is why websites still matter despite everything else that has changed. In some ways they matter more now, because the rest of the online environment is so

messy. Customers do not need another fragment. They need somewhere solid to land.

When a website does that job well, it becomes more than a digital brochure. It becomes part of how the business wins trust. It becomes part of how the business is found, judged and chosen. That is not old-fashioned. It is practical.

A proper website matters because it does the heavy lifting that other tools cannot. It turns scattered attention into a clear impression. It turns curiosity into confidence. It gives the customer a reason to stop looking and take the next step.

That is what most tradies actually need. Not a flashy online presence. A reliable one. A website is still the best way to build it.

It is also the best place to present proof in context. A good review means more when it sits beside the sort of service it refers to. A strong project photo means more when it appears on a page explaining that type of work. The website lets you arrange evidence so that it supports understanding, rather than floating around without much meaning. That arrangement is part of how trust is built. It feels considered. It feels professional. It tells the customer that the business has taken the time to present itself properly.

There is a quieter benefit too. A website helps the business owner think more clearly about the business itself. To build a good site, you have to decide what work you want, what areas you cover, what proof you have, and what message you want customers to hear first. That process often sharpens the business. It brings focus. It exposes confusion. It helps separate the work you truly want from the work you have simply ended up taking. A better website can improve not only how customers see the business, but how the business sees itself.

In that sense, the website is not just an online tool. It is a statement of intent. It says this is the work we do, these are the people we help, and this is how to move forward. That clarity has value well beyond the screen.

That is why the strongest trade websites feel less like marketing and more like a clear handshake. They explain, reassure and guide. Nothing fancy, just enough to make the next step feel sensible.

## Chapter 5 - What a tradie website actually needs

Once you begin to accept that a website matters, the next question is usually what that website should include. This is where many people drift into the weeds. They start thinking about colour schemes, animations, trends, and features they do not understand. They compare themselves with big national brands or sleek agencies and end up feeling as though a useful website must be complicated. It does not.

A trade website needs to do a handful of jobs well. If it does those jobs, it is useful. If it does not, it is decoration.



The first job is to say clearly what the business does. That sounds obvious, but plenty of websites still fail at it. They lead with vague lines about quality, service, passion, or solutions and never plainly explain the actual trade. A customer should not have to guess whether you are a painter, an electrician, a builder, or a bathroom renovator. They should know straight away. Plain English is your friend here. Customers do not want to decode clever wording. They want clarity.

The second job is to say where the business works. This matters because local relevance is one of the first filters customers use. A person in Canberra, Googong, Queanbeyan or Jerrabomberra wants to know whether their area is covered. If that is hard to work out, uncertainty rises and the customer may leave. The best websites make service areas easy to understand without making it feel forced. If you only take certain types of jobs in certain areas, that should be clear too.

The third job is proof. Good businesses often underestimate how much customers want to see. Real photos of real work are powerful because they show standards in a way words never can. Reviews are powerful because they prove that other people trusted you and were pleased with the result. Qualifications, licences, years in business, guarantees, memberships, or insurance may also help depending on the trade. The key is that the proof should feel genuine. Stock images and generic claims do not create the same confidence as real examples.

The fourth job is to make contact easy. It is astonishing how many business websites bury their phone number, hide their contact form, or make the next step harder than it needs to be. A trade website should feel easy to act on. The customer should not need to hunt around just to ask a question. If someone is ready to ring, the number should be obvious. If they want to send a message, the form should be simple and sensible.

The fifth job is mobile usability. A large share of visitors will see the site on their phone. If the pages are awkward, slow, cluttered or difficult to read, trust drops immediately. A mobile-friendly site is not a technical bonus anymore. It is basic hygiene. The business is being judged there and then, and customers are quick to leave if a site feels annoying.

Beyond those basics, good structure matters. Many tradies are better served by a small number of clear service pages than by one homepage trying to do everything at once. If you offer several distinct services, separate pages help both customers and search systems understand the business more clearly. A page on bathroom

renovations, a page on deck building, or a page on switchboard upgrades gives more useful detail than a rushed paragraph trying to cover all services at once. It also helps the right customer land on the right information faster.

A strong homepage still matters, but it should guide rather than carry the whole site. Think of it as the front door. It should quickly say what the business is, who it helps, and where people can go next. It should not try to say everything in one breath. The pages underneath can do the deeper work.

Tone matters too. A lot of trade websites sound as if they were written by someone trying to impress another marketer. Customers do not respond well to that. They are looking for confidence, not theatre. The best websites sound clear, straightforward and human. They do not over-promise. They do not rely on clichés. They explain the work, show the proof, and let that do most of the talking.

It is just as important to think about what the website does not need. It does not need jargon. It does not need bloated paragraphs saying the same thing three different ways. It does not need every possible feature a sales rep can talk you into. It does not need to be visually busy. Most of the time, less is better, provided the important information is there.

There is a practical test that helps here. If a good customer lands on your site for the first time, can they tell within a minute what you do, whether you work in their area, what your standards look like, and how to contact you? If the answer is yes, the site is doing its job. If the answer is no, it needs work.

That simple test matters because customers rarely reward complexity. They reward ease. A website that feels easy to use feels easier to trust. A website that feels hard work creates drag, even if the business behind it is excellent.

That is why a useful trade website is often simpler than people think. It is not about bells and whistles. It is about useful information, arranged in the right order, with

enough proof to back it up. If those pieces are in place, the site can work very hard for the business.

In the end, what a tradie website really needs is not mystery or flair. It needs purpose. Every page should help answer the customer's question, strengthen their confidence, or move them one step closer to contact. When that happens, the website stops being a box to tick and becomes a proper part of how the business wins work.

Another useful way to think about it is to ask what the customer would complain about if the website did not exist. They would complain that they could not tell whether you serviced their suburb. They would complain that they could not find examples of your work. They would complain that they had no idea whether you handled the kind of job they needed. They would complain that making contact felt clumsy. Those complaints point straight to what the site needs to solve.

A good site also reflects the pace of the customer's decision. Some people are ready to call quickly. Others want to browse a little first. The site should work for both. It should give fast answers for the ready buyer and enough depth for the cautious one. That balance is one reason simple structure matters so much. The site needs to feel useful whether someone spends one minute or ten.

When those basics are done properly, even a modest website can outperform a more expensive one that chases style over substance. Customers notice usefulness. They notice honesty. They notice when a business makes their decision easier. That is what the site is for.

In practical terms, that means every element earns its place. If it does not build understanding, trust or action, it is probably not needed. That discipline keeps the site working hard instead of merely taking up space.

## Chapter 6 - How tradies get found online

The phrase “get found online” can make straightforward business owners feel as though they are about to be dragged into a swamp of jargon. Search terms, algorithms, optimisation, content strategy, local ranking, AI search. It can sound as if the only people allowed to understand it are people who talk for a living. The truth is much simpler. Trade businesses get found online when they give customers and search systems clear reasons to connect the dots.

That starts with relevance. If you are an electrician in Canberra, your online presence needs to make it obvious that you are an electrician in Canberra. If you are a deck builder working around Googong and Queanbeyan, that needs to be obvious too. The more clearly your business states what it does and where it works, the easier it becomes for search systems to understand and for customers to trust what they see.



One of the most important tools for this is the Google Business Profile. For many local service businesses, this is where the first proper impression happens. People see your name, reviews, phone number, hours, service area, photos, and map listing. If that profile is complete, current and credible, it helps. If it is neglected or inconsistent, it creates doubt before the customer even reaches your website.

A strong profile does several jobs at once. It helps people discover the business in local searches. It helps them judge whether the business seems active and legitimate. It gives them a quick way to call, get directions, or look deeper. Reviews play a big part here because people read them as proof. A decent collection of genuine reviews can do more for local trust than almost any slogan.

But the profile is not the whole game. It gets you seen. Your website helps get you chosen.

This is where the two need to work together. When a customer moves from your map listing or search result to your website, the experience should feel like a continuation, not a drop in confidence. The details should match. The message should feel consistent. The website should deepen what the profile begins. It should answer the next questions and make the next step easy.

Clear service pages help with this. So does clear location information. If your website explains the kinds of jobs you do and the areas you serve in straightforward language, search systems have more to work with. That matters whether the customer is using traditional search or newer AI-assisted tools that pull information from multiple sources and summarise options.

This is why online discovery is less about gaming systems and more about making sense. Businesses that are clear, consistent and useful are easier to surface. Businesses that are vague, patchy or contradictory are harder to understand. Search technology keeps changing, but that basic truth does not.

Reviews matter here as well, and not only because customers notice them. They also reinforce that the business is active. A trickle of genuine reviews over time tells a believable story. It shows that real people are hiring you and that the work is happening. For local trade businesses, that sort of proof is worth far more than manufactured polish.

Consistency is another quiet factor. Your business name, contact details, service area and basic description should line up across your website, profile, and listings. If one place says one thing and another place says something different, trust weakens. Customers may not always spot the inconsistency consciously, but they feel it. Search systems notice it too. A settled business leaves a cleaner trail online than a messy one.

Photos help discovery in a more indirect way. Good project images on your profile and website make the business look real, busy and trustworthy. They also help a customer picture the kind of work you do. A list of services is useful, but a list of services backed by visible proof is stronger. People do not only want to read what you say you do. They want to see it.

Another thing that helps businesses get found is specificity. A vague business description is a missed opportunity. If you say you do building work, that could mean almost anything. If you explain that you specialise in renovations, extensions, decks, or bathrooms, you become easier to match with the customer's search. The same applies across every trade. Specific businesses are easier to connect with specific needs.

As AI search becomes more common, this matters even more. People are asking full questions now, not just typing a few words. They want useful summaries. They want direct answers. The businesses that benefit are often the ones whose websites and profiles are easiest to interpret. Clear language, organised pages, real proof, and consistent business details help these systems understand what the business is about. That is not some futuristic extra. It is simply another reason to be clear.

The good news is that none of this requires magic. You do not need to become obsessed with technical tactics. You need the basics to line up. A strong Google profile. A clear website. Real reviews. Good photos. Consistent business information. Service pages that explain what you do and where you do it. Those are not glamorous things, but they work.

Getting found online is not about winning a battle with the internet. It is about making it easy for the right customer to recognise that your business fits what they need. The businesses that do that consistently are the ones that appear more often, look more credible, and convert more searches into actual work.

That is why the best online visibility often looks boring from the inside. It is not built on tricks. It is built on clarity repeated in the right places until the business becomes easy to find and easy to trust.

This is also why businesses should stop treating online discovery as separate from reputation. They are now tied together. Reputation still starts with the work, but online discovery is often where that reputation becomes visible to strangers. If the digital trail is weak, the reputation does not travel far. If the trail is strong, the reputation travels much further than personal word of mouth ever could.

And because trade businesses are local by nature, the payoff is practical. Better visibility means more chances to be considered by people who are already nearby and already looking. These are not random impressions. They are moments of intent. Someone is searching because they need the service. The more clearly your business matches that need, the more likely you are to be the one they call.

That is why a tidy online presence pays back in ways that feel very grounded. It does not simply raise awareness. It improves the odds that the next local search ends with your business being seen, understood and trusted in the same moment.

For a tradie, that can mean the difference between an empty Tuesday and a full book of work. Visibility is not vanity. It is opportunity made visible.

## Chapter 7 - Website builders, WordPress, or custom build

Once a tradie decides a website matters, the next problem usually turns up straight away. What kind of website should it be, and who should build it? This is the point where a practical decision often turns into a fog of opinions. One person says use a website builder because it is quick and cheap. Another says WordPress is the only serious option. Another insists on something fully custom. Everyone sounds sure of themselves, which usually makes the business owner less sure.

The best way through this is to stop asking which option is best in general and start asking which option suits the stage your business is at. A first website for a sole trader is not solving the same problem as a larger site for an established company with multiple crews, multiple service lines, and growth plans. The answer has to match the need.



Website builders can be a sensible starting point for some businesses. They are easier to use, often faster to launch, and usually cheaper up front. If the goal is to get a simple brochure-style website online and you are comfortable working within a template, a builder can do the job. For a tradie with little online presence and a tight budget, that can be enough to get started properly rather than waiting another year.

But there are trade-offs. Builders can be limiting. You are working inside someone else's system, which can affect flexibility, performance, and how much room you have to grow. If the business becomes more sophisticated, you may start to feel those limits. That does not make builders bad. It means they suit some situations better than others.

WordPress often sits in the middle ground. It can be an excellent option for a trade business that wants more flexibility, stronger long-term control, and room to add or improve over time. A good WordPress site can handle service pages well, support local search, and grow with the business. It is widely used and widely supported, which makes it practical. But WordPress is only as good as the way it is built and managed. A badly built WordPress site can be slow, messy and frustrating. A well-built one can be one of the strongest long-term assets the business owns.

Custom builds sit at the far end of the scale. In some cases they make sense. A larger business with specific needs, unusual functionality, or a more complex strategy may benefit from something built from the ground up. But many trade businesses do not need that, especially not early on. Custom can add cost and complexity without adding much practical benefit if what the business really needs is a clear, trustworthy site that gets found and converts enquiries.

So the platform question is less important than people make it sound. The real question is whether the site will be useful. Does it explain the business properly. Does it load well. Does it work on mobile. Does it make contact easy. Does it support visibility and trust. If the answer is yes, the platform is doing its job.

Then there is the separate question of whether to build it yourself or pay someone.

Doing it yourself has obvious appeal. It can save money, and some tradies are more than capable of learning the basics if they have the time and patience. For a simple site, that route can work. But it is worth being honest about the cost. The cost is not only the hours spent setting it up. It is the risk of building something that technically exists without actually doing much for the business. A DIY site can look passable and still fail to answer the customer's questions properly. It can go live with weak wording, poor structure, or no clear path to contact.

Paying someone can fix that, but only if the right person is doing the work. There is no shortage of people who sell websites without really understanding how a local service business wins trust. A tradie does not need a designer who wants to show off. They need someone who understands clear messaging, good structure, mobile use, local search, and how customers move from curiosity to enquiry. The right professional help should reduce confusion, not add to it.

This is where a simple rule helps. A simple site built well is better than a clever site built badly. That rule cuts through a lot of noise. It shifts the focus away from shiny features and back to the real job of the website. Can the customer understand the business. Can they see proof. Can they take the next step easily. Everything else is secondary.

There is also nothing wrong with stages. A lot of trade businesses freeze because they think they need the final perfect site now. They do not. They need the next sensible site. Something clear, useful and professionally sound is enough to create momentum. You can improve from there. In fact, building in stages is often the healthiest approach because the business learns what customers respond to and what kind of enquiries it wants more of.

That is the practical way to choose. Match the tool to the business. Match the investment to the likely return. Do not buy complexity just because someone can

sell it to you. And do not stay stuck with nothing because the decision feels too big.

A website is a business tool. The right choice is the one that gets the tool working properly, in a way the business can live with and build on.

One of the best questions you can ask is not “What platform should I use?” but “What will this need to do for me over the next three years?” If the answer is fairly modest, a simpler option may be enough. If the answer includes multiple services, stronger search visibility, more pages, or plans to grow into a larger local brand, that points towards a more flexible setup. Looking ahead in that way stops the decision becoming about fashion and turns it back into planning.

It also helps to separate the website from the marketing promises that often get wrapped around it. A good site is not a magic tap that starts pouring in work by itself. It is the base that helps all the other pieces work properly. It supports trust, clarity and visibility. That is already valuable. When people oversell the website as if it will solve every business problem at once, they create the wrong expectations and the wrong buying decisions.

A sensible decision here often looks less dramatic than people expect. It looks like choosing something sturdy, understandable and fit for purpose. That may not sound exciting, but it is exactly what most good trade businesses need.

Good decisions here usually feel calm. They are based on fit, not pressure. They leave the business with something useful, manageable and ready to improve rather than something expensive and fragile. Practical beats impressive here, almost every time.

## Chapter 8 - Start simple, but start properly

The biggest mistake many tradies make with online marketing is not doing the wrong thing. It is doing nothing because the whole job feels too big.

That feeling is understandable. There are too many choices, too many opinions, and too many people trying to sell a grand solution. A business owner looks at all of it and thinks it will take too much time, too much money, or too much mental space. So the old Facebook page stays up, the website stays on the to-do list, and the business keeps relying on whatever comes through by chance.

The answer is not to do everything. The answer is to do the first proper things.



Starting properly means getting the foundation right before worrying about the extras. It means deciding what you want the business to be known for, what areas you cover, and what proof you can show. It means making sure your basic

business details are settled and consistent. It means setting up your Google Business Profile properly, getting a website in place, and treating social media as support rather than the whole strategy.

That already puts a business ahead of many competitors.

If you currently have almost nothing online, the path is straightforward. Start with the essentials. Get your business name, phone number and service area consistent. Claim or tidy your Google profile. Gather a handful of good job photos. Ask satisfied customers for reviews. Build a simple website that says what you do, where you work, and how people can contact you. Do not wait until every page is perfect. A clear and competent site live now is better than a dream site still sitting in your head six months from now.

If you already have some pieces online but they are messy, the same principle still applies. Strip things back. Tighten the wording. Remove clutter. Make sure the basics are obvious. Update stale information. Replace weak images with better ones. If your social media is more active than your actual website, reverse that imbalance. The website should become the place where the business makes sense at a glance.

A lot of businesses improve quickly not because they add more channels, but because they stop spreading themselves thin. They choose one clear centre and make everything else support it. For most tradies, that centre should be the website. The Google profile helps customers find you locally. Reviews reinforce trust. Social media shows freshness and proof. But the website is where people should land when they want the full picture.

This matters because customers rarely experience your business through one channel only. They may hear about you from a friend, search your name, read reviews, glance at your website, and then look at your photos before they call. Another person may find you through Google Maps, click through to the site, and

ring straight away. Someone else may notice a recent project on social media, then go to the website to confirm you handle that type of work. The journey varies, but the strongest setups make every step feel consistent.

That is what “properly” means in practice. It means the pieces support one another. It means the information lines up. It means each channel has a job. It means the customer never feels as though they have stepped from one business into another halfway through their search.

It also means keeping your expectations sensible. A stronger online setup will not fix poor workmanship, bad communication or slow quoting. It is not a replacement for running a solid business. What it does do is help the solid business become visible. It gives better work a fairer chance to win. It helps good customers find you, understand you, and feel sure enough to get in touch.

That is enough. It is more than enough, in fact. A trade business does not need digital theatre. It needs a trustworthy path from search to enquiry.

That path gets stronger over time. Reviews grow. Project photos improve. Pages can be refined. New services can be added. The site can become more targeted as the business becomes clearer about what it wants. But none of that happens unless the first step is taken. Waiting for the perfect moment only delays a useful one.

There is value in momentum. Once the foundations are in place, each improvement adds to something real. Without the foundations, every effort feels scattered. A social post disappears. A listing stays half done. Good photos sit on a phone. Reviews are left on the table because no one asked. The business remains harder to choose than it should be.

Starting properly prevents that. It gives all the future effort somewhere to land.

And starting simply keeps it manageable. The goal is not to launch a digital empire. It is to remove avoidable doubt. To make sure the next person who needs your kind of work can find enough of the right information to feel good about calling. To let your business look as capable online as it already is in real life.

That is the point of the whole book. Online marketing for tradies is not about pretending to be bigger, slicker or louder than you are. It is about making the value you already deliver easier to see. When the basics are clear, consistent and credible, more of the right people reach out. The business feels easier to trust because it is easier to understand.

That is why the smartest move is often the least glamorous one. Build the proper base. Let each piece support the others. Keep improving from there. Done that way, online marketing stops being a burden and starts acting like what it should have been all along: a practical tool that helps a good business win its fair share of work.

For tradies needing a website fast, a small business website package is the right place to start because it gets the basics right without adding unnecessary complexity.

You do not need a giant website on day one. You need a site that looks sharp on mobile, loads quickly, makes it easy for customers to contact you, and gives search engines the right local signals. That kind of package gives you a proper online presence now, while still leaving room to grow later.

Asporea Digital's small business website packages follow that model, with mobile-first design, lead-focused layouts, local SEO essentials, reviews, contact forms, and a low-risk start where the balance is only paid once the draft is approved for launch.

Instead of wondering whether the business looks legitimate, you know it does. Instead of hoping customers can figure things out, you can see that the path is

clear. Instead of relying on memory, luck and the odd referral, you have something working in the background that supports the business every day. That relief matters because running a trade business already involves enough moving parts. Your marketing should not add confusion where good structure can remove it.

It is also worth saying that “simple” does not mean careless. A simple online setup still deserves thought. The wording still matters. The photos still matter. The structure still matters. Simplicity done well takes intention. But once it is in place, it reduces friction for everyone. Customers find it easier to decide. You find it easier to explain the business. The work you want has a better chance of finding its way to you.

That is the sort of progress a sensible business can live with. It is not dramatic, but it is durable, and durable systems usually beat exciting ones in the long run. And because it is durable, it keeps paying back. Every review, every project photo and every customer who checks you out online is working with a structure that already makes sense.

## Conclusion

In the end, this is not really a book about websites, social media, or search tools. It is a book about trust.

That is what customers are looking for when they go online. They are not usually trying to become experts in your trade. They are trying to feel comfortable enough to make contact. They want to believe they have found someone who knows what they are doing, takes their work seriously, and is likely to make the whole process easier rather than harder.

For a long time, that trust was built mostly through reputation and word of mouth. In many ways, that is still true. A good name still carries weight. A recommendation from someone who has had a good experience is still one of the strongest things a business can have. But the way that trust is checked has changed. These days, even a strong recommendation is often followed by a quiet look online. A customer wants to see something for themselves. They want a few signs that confirm what they have heard and help them feel that calling you is a sensible next step.

That is why the online side matters more than many tradies first realise. It is not there to replace the quality of your work. It is there to make the quality of your work easier to believe before the customer has seen it in person.

A lot of businesses get this wrong because they treat online marketing as something separate from the real business. They think of it as an extra job, a technical problem, or a bit of modern nonsense they should probably deal with one day. But for the customer, it is not separate at all. It is part of the first impression. It is part of how the business feels before the conversation starts. If what they find is thin, confusing, or half finished, the business feels less certain than it should. If what they find is clear, useful, and grounded in real proof, the business feels safer to choose.

That is where so many good tradies sell themselves short without meaning to. The work may be excellent. The business may be honest, capable, and reliable. But if the online presence does not carry that same sense of confidence, customers are left to guess. And when people are left to guess, they often choose the clearer option.

None of this means a trade business needs to become flashy. In fact, most customers do not want flash. They want to feel that they are dealing with someone steady, competent, and easy to work with. The strongest online presence for a tradie is usually the one that makes the business feel exactly that way. Not louder than it is. Not more polished than it needs to be. Just clearer, more settled, and easier to trust.

That is why social media, for all its usefulness, cannot do the whole job on its own. It can show movement, recent work, and a bit of personality. It can help people notice you. But it cannot easily hold the full weight of the business. It is too scattered, too temporary, and too dependent on a platform you do not control. A proper website still matters because it gives the business somewhere solid to stand. It brings the important pieces together. It gives the customer a place where the business makes sense.

Once you understand that, online marketing starts to feel less like a performance and more like a form of good business housekeeping. You are not trying to impress strangers with clever tricks. You are making it easier for the right customer to see what is already true. You are making it easier for good work to be found. You are reducing the doubt that gets in the way of enquiries. You are giving the business a fairer chance to be chosen.

That is really the heart of it.

If you do good work, your online presence should help show that. It should not make people work harder to trust you than they need to. It should not leave them guessing whether you are active, whether you do the kind of work they need, or

whether you service their area. It should answer those questions quietly and clearly, and then get out of the way.

The businesses that do this well are not always the loudest or the most polished. They are often just the clearest. They make the customer's decision easier. They look organised. They look credible. They feel like a safe pair of hands.

And for a tradie, that is often what wins the job before the quote is even sent.