

FREE GUIDE

The Nigerian Business Owner's Guide to Getting Online

A step-by-step path to being found, trusted, and chosen by customers online — starting from wherever you are today, even if you have nothing online yet.

Getting online is not just "get a website"

Most guides jump straight to "build a website" — as if a website alone makes customers appear. In reality, a website is only useful once people can already find you, trust you, and reach you easily. This guide flips the order: it walks you through the steps that actually bring customers to your business, and shows you where a website fits into that picture.

80%

of Nigerian consumers now search online — on Google, Instagram, or WhatsApp — before they buy or visit a business for the first time.

If your business isn't easy to find and easy to trust in those moments, you're losing customers to a competitor who is — even one with a worse product than yours.

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The 8-Step Getting Online Roadmap

Follow these in order. Each step makes the next one work harder — skipping ahead to "build a website" before Steps 1-4 is the single biggest reason websites don't bring in customers.

1

Claim your Google Business Profile

This is free and it's how you show up when someone searches your business name or "[your service] near me" on Google or Google Maps. Add your real address or service area, phone number, opening hours, and at least 5 photos of your work, shop, or products.

Why first: it's free, takes under 30 minutes, and is often the very first thing a potential customer sees about you.

2

Set up WhatsApp Business as your sales channel

Switch your regular WhatsApp to WhatsApp Business (still free). Add a business description, catalog of products/services, quick replies for common questions, and an away message for when you're offline.

Why: for most Nigerian buyers, WhatsApp is where the actual conversation and sale happens — even after they find you elsewhere.

3

Build a simple presence on one social platform

Pick the one platform your customers already use — Instagram for visual products/services, Facebook for a broader local audience, TikTok if you can show your process. Post consistently rather than trying to be everywhere.

Why: consistent posting builds familiarity, and familiarity is what makes a stranger comfortable enough to message you.

4

Collect and display real reviews

After every satisfied customer, ask directly for a Google review or a WhatsApp/Instagram testimonial. Pin your best ones to your social profile and Google Business Profile.

Why: Nigerians buying from a business for the first time trust other customers far more than they trust your own marketing.

Steps 5–8: Turning attention into a business

5

Post content that answers real customer questions

Not adverts — answers. "How long does delivery take?", "How do I know my size?", "What does the process look like?" Content like this is what actually gets shared and remembered.

Why: this is what turns a page nobody follows into one people trust enough to buy from.

6

Get found on Google search, not just Google Maps

Once your profile is live and you have a few reviews, focus on ranking for searches like "[your service] in [your city]." This mainly comes from having a Google Business Profile that's fully filled out, consistent business information everywhere online, and genuine reviews.

Why: this is "local SEO," and it's the main reason one business shows up on Google Page 1 and a similar one down on page 3.

7

Now build your website — as your digital home base

At this point, a website has a real job to do: give people who already found you elsewhere a professional place to learn more, see your full catalog or services, and take action (call, message, book, or buy). It should load fast on mobile data, and every page should make it obvious how to contact you.

Why now, not first: a website with no traffic behind it is just an expensive brochure nobody opens. Steps 1-6 are what bring the traffic.

8

Track what's working, and grow it with paid ads

Keep a simple record: where each new customer heard about you. Once you can see what's working, put a small, controlled budget behind it with Facebook, Instagram, Google, or TikTok ads — targeted at people similar to your best customers.

Why last: paid ads amplify what's already working. Without Steps 1-7 in place, ads just send strangers to a business that isn't ready to convert them.

How to get on Google Page 1 in your local area

Ranking locally on Google comes down to three things Google checks before showing your business to someone nearby:

1. Relevance

Your Google Business Profile category, description, and services clearly match what the searcher typed — use the exact words your customers use, not industry jargon.

2. Distance

How close your listed address or service area is to the person searching. You can't change where you are, but you can make sure your service area is set correctly.

3. Prominence

How well-known and well-reviewed your business is — this is where review count, review quality, photos, and consistent posting all add up over time.

Quick win: Make sure your business name, address, and phone number are written exactly the same way everywhere — Google Business Profile, Facebook, Instagram bio, and your website footer. Inconsistent details are one of the most common reasons a listing ranks lower than it should.

5 costly mistakes Nigerian businesses make online

× **Building a website before anyone is looking for you**

Money spent on a website before Steps 1-4 are in place usually goes to waste — there's no traffic to convert yet.

× **No clear way to contact you**

Visitors leave when a phone number, WhatsApp link, or "book now" button isn't visible in the first few seconds.

× **Going quiet after the first few posts**

A page that hasn't posted in three months signals "closed" to a new visitor, even if the business is thriving offline.

× **Ignoring reviews and comments**

Unanswered questions and complaints sitting in public view quietly convince new visitors to buy elsewhere.

× **A slow, hard-to-use mobile site**

Most Nigerian visitors will land on your site from a phone on mobile data — a slow site loses them before they see what you offer.

What turns a visitor into a paying client

Whether that visitor found you on Google, Instagram, or your website, the same things decide whether they message you or scroll past:

- ✓ A clear, specific offer — what you do, for whom, and what it costs or starts from
- ✓ Proof someone else already trusted you — reviews, photos of real work, client names (with permission)
- ✓ One obvious next step — a single WhatsApp link or call button, not five competing options
- ✓ A fast reply — Nigerian buyers move on quickly if a message goes unanswered for hours
- ✓ Consistency — the same story, prices, and tone across Google, social media, WhatsApp, and your website

Loses the customer	Wins the customer
"We offer quality services"	"Custom wedding cakes in Port Harcourt, from ₦25,000"
No reviews visible anywhere	5+ recent reviews pinned to your profile
"Contact us for more info"	One tap-to-WhatsApp button
Replies after 2 days	Replies within the hour, even if just "checking on this for you"

YOUR NEXT STEP

Start with what you're missing, not with everything at once

Go back through the 8 steps and be honest about where your business actually stands today. Most businesses are strong on one or two steps and missing three or four others entirely — that gap is usually where customers are being lost.

If you'd like a second pair of eyes on exactly where that gap is for your business — what's working, what's missing, and what to fix first — that's what a free site and online-presence audit is for.

Get a Free Site & Online Presence Audit

We'll review your Google presence, social media, and website (if you have one) and send you a clear, practical list of what to fix first.

[Get Your Free Audit →](#)

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