The Non-Technical Guide For Creating

A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE

WPSCULPTOR.COM

Brought to you by Josh Jackson

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Introduction

Up to this point, I have focused my "how-to" tutorials exclusively on the technical side of creating websites. Thousands of people have been able to use my video tutorials to create their own websites — which is amazing, but something has been troubling me.

Tragically, over the last couple of years I've observed that, a lot of the people who use my tutorials end up creating websites that don't last very long. They may get off to a great start, but many of their sites don't survive longer than a couple of months.

I put this "non-technical" guide together to help you get past those first couple of months and create a website that is successful. There are several things you need to do (depending on the type of website you have) to ensure your website's success and I wanted to share some of those things with you, as well as some lessons I've learned along the way. There are a few pieces of advice that have been incredibly helpful and inspiring to me throughout my online journey, and I want you to benefit from those things —just like I did.

Creating a successful website is within your grasp. If you are willing to put in the work, (even just a little bit of work, every single day) your efforts will have a cumulative, even exponential, effect on the success of your website.

Even if you walk away with only one piece of helpful advice or just a little bit of inspiration, it will have been worth the trouble of putting this eBook together.

I wish you all success.

Josh Jackson, wpsculptor.com

Avoid Overwhelm
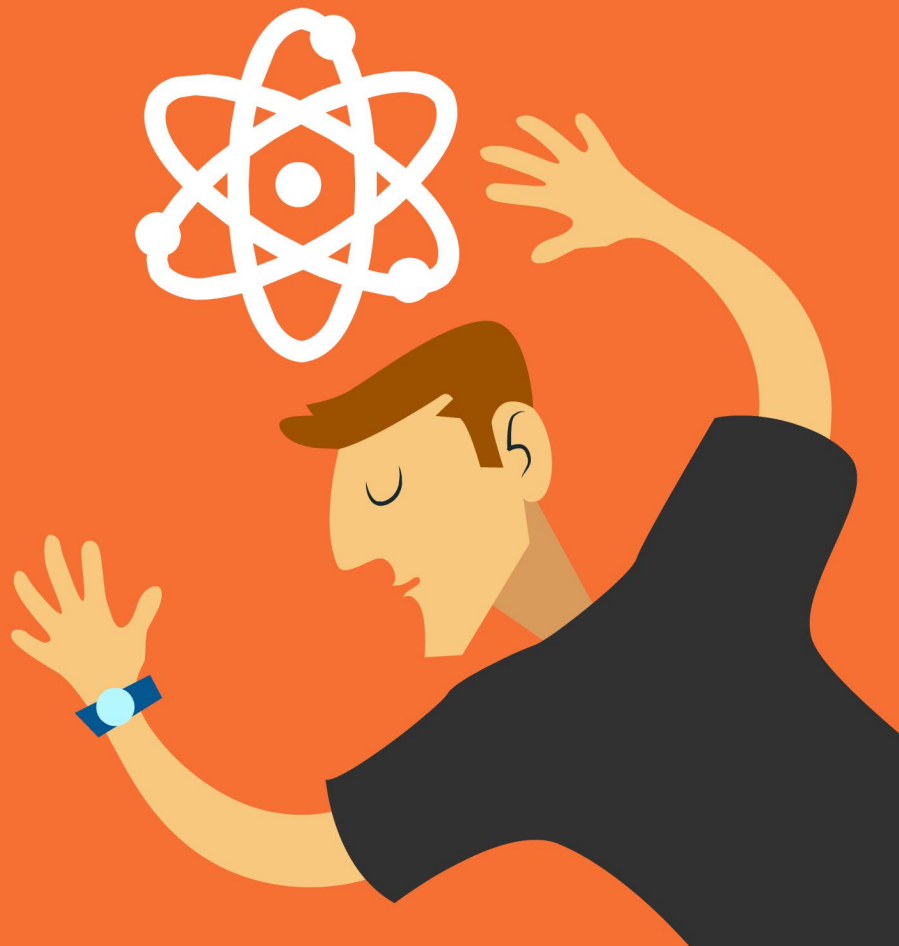
Getting Started

When you create a new website, you begin the process incredibly inspired - you have so many ideas about all the great things you will be able to do with your very own piece of online real-estate.

You already possess all this wisdom and knowledge that you'll soon be able to impart to your followers! Everything is so exciting! You know you want to use WordPress to make your site and you've finally taken the time to sit down and figure it all out. You begin learning about site building, and suddenly, you find yourself capable of actually doing it!

Then, it's time to **take action** - to actually *create* your website.

You start by making a list of all the things you need to do, but then, the list-making process doesn't end. Instead of checking things *off* the list, you find that you just keep

adding to it. A logo, a color scheme, plugins, photos, written content, and so forth…

This never-ending list can easily lead you to feeling overwhelmed. What started out as an exciting and inspired endeavor is now quite the opposite. You have so many things to do and you find yourself in a state of productive paralysis. Trust me, I've been there. In fact, I continue to struggle with feelings of overwhelm on occasion. However, I've learned something very important about these feelings. Being aware of this "in-over-your-head" feeling is actually helpful in overcoming it.

> **Try this:** Instead of viewing your entire to-do list all at once, focus on each item individually. When you do this, when you isolate a single goal, and ignore everything else, suddenly that one item is *manageable*.

By disciplining your mind to focus on specific tasks (rather than seeing everything clustered together as a one big problem) you will find yourself steadily chipping away at your big list. It's amazing how much you can accomplish simply by showing up everyday, and focusing on one thing at a time.

Let's take a look at what a list-management scenario might look like:

1. Make a general list of everything you need to do.

For this step, focus on the broad categories, don't worry about specific details within the categories - we'll get to that later.

When starting out, this list may include things like: Choose a WordPress theme, create a logo, choose a custom color scheme, write website copy, etc…

(If you've already created your website, your general list will look different. You'd include things directly related to making your website successful. Items such as: create a YouTube video (on a specific topic), integrate email marketing, write an Ebook as a lead magnet for building an email list, create an email autoresponder series, etc…)

2. Rearrange your general list in terms of importance.

The things that are most important are the things that will have the biggest impact on the success of your website. Those items should be listed first.

3. Look at your first item.

Now, focus on it, and nothing else. Work at this task until it is complete and can be checked off the list. Then move on to your next item.

4. Set deadlines for each list item and stick to them.

This step is crucial to successfully accomplishing your goals and completing your list.

In his book "Mastery", Robert Greene emphasizes the importance of setting deadlines for yourself:

"The feeling that we have endless time to complete our work has an insidious and debilitating effect on our minds. Our attention and thoughts become diffused. Our lack of intensity make it hard for the brain to jolt into a higher gear. The connections do not occur. For this purpose you must always try to work with deadlines, whether real or manufactured."

Greene subsequently discusses how Thomas Edison would create deadlines for himself when it came to his own inventions. He did this by utilizing the press to publicly broadcast his ideas - ideas that weren't actually ready to be implemented. This would create public excitement for these ideas and force him to expedite their development. He created accountability for himself by putting his reputation on the line. Like Edison, we should always work with deadlines.

> **Productivity Tip - Parkinson's Law:** Parkinson's Law states that the amount of time required to complete a task is the same as the amount of time allotted for its completion. Simply put, if you give yourself a week to write a blog post, you'll be working on it all week. Let your brain surprise you: give yourself a strict deadline for completing that same blog post in one day. You'll be amazed at how much you can accomplish with strict deadlines.

Here's an example of these steps in action:

On my list, let's say my #1 item is "Write an eBook as a lead magnet for building an email list," First, I'm going to break that task into bite-sized chunks that I can more easily address one piece at a time.

Here's the breakdown:

- Choose a topic for the eBook
- Research
- Brainstorm (broad)
- Create an Outline (more detailed)
- Begin Writing (even more detail—fleshing out the outline)

- Begin Editing (narrow it)
- Learn how to use software to format the eBook
- Make eBook more visually appealing by adding graphics, images, bullet points, sub headings, etc..
- I would start by setting a deadline for completing the entire list. Then, I would focus on my first item by devoting 100% of my energy to choosing a topic for my eBook.

It is imperative that I block out everything else on my list - to the point where "Choosing a topic for my eBook" is literally the *only* item on my list. Nothing else exists. If I start worrying about all the other list items, I quickly become overwhelmed and nothing more will be accomplished. Only after I have chosen a topic for my eBook will I move on to the next item, and then the next—until the list is done.

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

-Chinese Proverb

Gain Clarity

At a basic level, there has to be a reason for your website's existence, otherwise you wouldn't have one. It may *seem like* that should go without saying, but you need to get really specific about *why* you have a website so that you know exactly what you need to do to make it successful. Your viewers will have certain expectations depending on the type of website you create.

Three Common Types of Websites:

1.   A community Resource

One example of this would be a church website with a wide range of information and functionality. Your pre-existing community members might be interested in having access to resources such as sermon audio, event calendars, images/videos of members at church events, online giving/donation opportunities, live-streaming, etc… A church may also be interested in cultivating relationships outside of the congregation, which could be done with a weekly blog or a monthly newsletter specifically tailored to people outside of the community.

2. A Portfolio

A portfolio website has a simple objective: Tell people who you are, what you can do and why they should hire you.

Displaying your body of work comes first. Choose the work that best represents your abilities and is most likely to appeal to your target market/audience. You can do this by adding organized photo, audio and video galleries to your website. Depending on the type of work you've done, you can also highlight your experiences and other elevating accolades that may be taken under consideration by your potential employers or clients.

You also need to tell people who you are. People want to know the person and personality behind the work—even if your work speaks for itself. *You* are the one they will be interacting with, whether in-person, email, phone or video conferencing. By showcasing some of your better personality traits and quality photos of yourself, you will become more likable, more memorable, and more likely to be considered for the job.

3. Building an Online Business

This is another common website type. Twenty years ago, if you wanted to start a business, you needed significant start-up capital. This cash would pay for physical goods, payroll, monthly leasing fees, advertising, and all the other expenses that come with running a brick-and-mortar business. As a result of the huge expense and the associated risks, "starting your own business" wasn't very accessible to most people. But now, using the internet, you can create a complete online business for next-to-nothing.

The cost difference between starting a physical brick-and-mortar business vs. an online business is enormous. A website can literally be started for less than $15 (for a domain name and your first month of hosting). WordPress and many WP themes are free, you just need to know how to use them. You need a computer, but no extra cost there - you already own one. Throw a little more money in for an inexpensive camera and microphone, or just use your smartphone for free. You now have all the physical resources in place to start an online business. Websites built for complete online businesses are my favorite type of website.

In the next section, we'll discuss the most important determining factor for creating a successful online business.

Create Valuable Information

Creating valuable information is paramount to the success of an online business. You need to prove to your viewers/audience that you both understand their problem *and* possess the solution. When you do this, you are providing something of value. Useful, practical, actionable value - the good stuff that gets results! So how do you create enough value to succeed online?

By becoming an expert.

Becoming an Expert is Easier than it Sounds

In *The Four Hour Workweek*, Tim Ferriss says:

> *"If you aren't an expert, don't sweat it. First "expert" in the context of selling product means that you know more about the topic than the purchaser. No more. It is not necessary to be the best— just better than a small target number of your prospective customers."*

That quote completely altered my way of thinking. I used to think that if I wanted to teach something, even at a basic level, I had to be an *expert*. Of course, my definition of *expert* was "being the best." Being the best is great, but it's also an incredibly difficult goal to achieve. When I realized that I needed to change my definition of *expert* from "being the best" to "knowing

more than my target audience," I opened myself up to all kinds of possibilities. These possibilities eventually enabled me to earn a living online by creating WordPress tutorials.

You Don't Have to Be the Best in the World

I want to emphasize how freeing it can be to realize that you don't have to be 'the World's best' in order to be successful. I have a friend who is a professional musician. One night we had a conversation about how he dealt with performance anxiety. When I asked him if it was an issue, he responded that to get around it, while performing, he never compared himself to other musicians. Instead, he would think about the present audience, and focus on the fact that he was more skilled at his particular instrument than they were. That was enough. This realization was enough for him to control his stage fright, and perform well in front of large crowds.

I hate to break it to you…but if you think I'm the best web designer in the world, you'd be very wrong. I've never had any formal web design training, and most people that do probably know more about web design than I do. I did, however, spend time here and there over a year or two learning about all the different aspects of web design. I created a handful of custom

websites for various businesses and continued to learn as I went. That's it. After that experience, I was able to take what I'd learned, and teach people how to make professional websites, even if they had little or no knowledge of web design.

Capitalize on Your Own Journey

While I was learning web design, I had a very difficult learning experience. I discovered that there wasn't enough good information or enough well-organized information available for beginners. After I finally learned how to use WordPress, and once I realized that I didn't have to be the best web designer in the world to teach it, I saw an opportunity. Reflecting on my personal learning experience, I realized there would be plenty of people who felt the same frustrations I felt when starting out. By going through the process of learning web design on my own, I *was* my target audience. Naturally, I was better able to understand the potential road blocks and frustrations others might face. With this knowledge, I was able to create valuable information for people just like me. You can use your own journey to better understand the needs, challenges, struggles and road blocks that your audience may encounter.
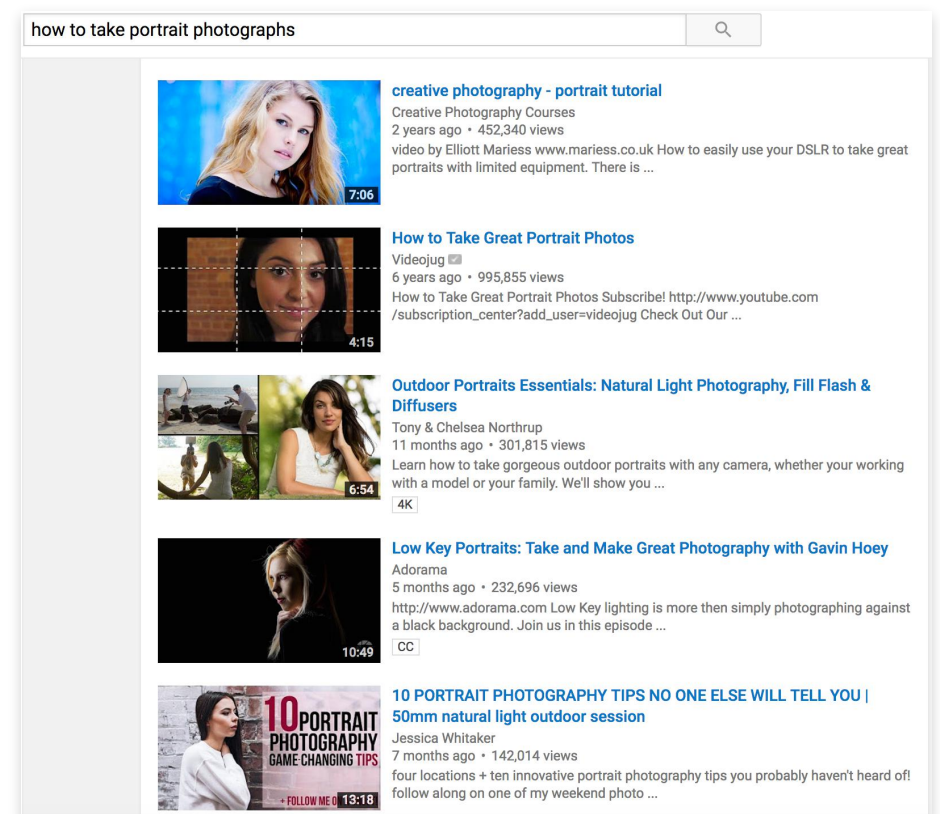
What's Stopping You?

You don't have to be *the best* to provide valuable information - you just have to know more than your target audience. You can accomplish this by choosing a subject that really excites you, *something that you won't lose enthusiasm for*—and learn everything you can about it. Watch YouTube videos, take online classes, read books, magazines, and blogs, listen to interviews of experts, etc… Then, take your unique knowledge of that subject along with your personal experience and use *that* to teach other people who have the same desire to learn as you did.

What if Other People Are Already Doing What You Want to Do?

It's extremely likely that someone else is already doing the same thing (or close to the same thing) you want to do—that is a *good* thing. It tells you there is already an audience out there demanding information related to your niche.

How to Quickly Compare and Discover Different Niche Opportunities

Go to youtube and start searching for different "how-to" videos related to a possible niche that interests you. I did a search for "how to take portrait photographs" and this is what I got:

Take a look at those view counts. The top 5 results have a total of 2,124,720 views! I'd say there's definitely demand there.

You could take it a step further and look at how many subscribers each channel has—the more, the better because, again, it tells you if there's a large enough audience for you to reach.

Because some of the videos above are over 2 years old, I'd want to make sure that there is still a strong demand for that particular niche. You can figure that out by writing down the number of views each video has and check back a week later to see if it increases substantially.

If you really want to find the best opportunities, you can go *even further.* First of all, you would want to try and figure out if these people make a full time income from these videos. You can't always know for sure but sometimes you can guess by watching how frequently they post videos and then trying to figure out how time consuming their production process is. Also, if it seems like they are hiring other people to help them with any of the production, they're probably quite successful.

If I felt like someone was doing really well financially—well enough to make YouTube videos teaching other's what they've learned for a living, I would look at where the money comes from. If they don't sell their own products (courses, ebooks, useful tools, etc…) and their only income is from advertising and/or affiliate marketing, you've found a golden opportunity, especially if *you* are willing to create your own products to sell.

Don't Get Discouraged

It's easy to look at other successful websites or internet businesses and get discouraged. They already have such a huge following and you're at square one—just getting started. How will you ever get to where they are?

When your mind starts wandering toward these kinds of thoughts, it's important to remind yourself that those other successful websites and internet businesses started out from nothing—just like you. They slowly built up their following little-by-little and you can do the same.

There's an article called "1,000 True Fans" by Kevin Kelly that was a huge inspiration to me. It emphasizes the fact that you don't need a massive following to be successful. You can realistically earn a livable income by carefully cultivating relationships with only 1,000 true fans. *True fans* are the people who are highly engaged and

supportive of everything you do which means they will gladly support you financially by purchasing your products. If you can get 1,000 people to pay you $100 every year (roughly a day's worth of their income), this amounts to a very comfortable living: $100,000 a year.

The best part is that the number 1000 is attainable! You could surpass the 1000 mark in a single year by acquiring just 3 "true fans" per day.

I highly recommend reading the article, it can realign your perception by putting things in a more positive and realistic perspective.

Walk a Mile (or a Marathon) in Your Target Audience's Shoes

Always remember to put your followers first. These are the people who may support you financially, and by word of mouth in telling other people in their network about you. Without a loyal following, you will not be able to grow or sustain a successful online business. Put yourself in your audience's shoes by providing practical, timely solutions to their needs.

"The safest way to get what you want is to deserve what you want. Think about what you would buy if you were on the other end and offer that to the world."

-Charlie Munger, Vice Chairman
Berkshire Hathaway

Communicate with Your Audience

Another key factor for having a successful website is communicating with your audience on a regular basis. Communication doesn't necessarily have to be on a personal one-on-one level—you can communicate with your audience as a whole by producing valuable content and distributing that content in a variety of ways.

Use Your Website as Centralized Content Hub

You don't just have to create blog posts to communicate with your audience, you can use social media, YouTube, podcasts, or any other content medium to reach out and connect. You'll likely want to use these different platforms because it gives you the opportunity to get in front of more people, however, it's still a good idea to centralize or repurpose that content on your website in some form.

Getting your followers into the habit of going to your website is a good idea because you can *control* your website. You can't control YouTube, or iTunes podcast rankings—if they decide to change their search algorithm and you start losing views or downloads, your business will struggle if you haven't been cultivating a website following.

Here are a few ways to take content you've published on other platforms and add it to your website:

1. Publish the same content to your website without changing it.

You can do this by embedding your YouTube Video or a podcast audio episode)

2. Create additional companion information that is only available on your website.

As an example, if you make "construction how-to" videos on YouTube, you could provide downloadable PDF blueprints as a helpful guide for what you are teaching your viewers to construct. Then you can make those PDF files available only on your website. This will give your viewers an incentive to actually visit your website because it will have information that can't be found anywhere else. The more traffic you can drive to your site, the better.

> **Bonus**: You can use this kind of companion information as a lead magnet to grow your email list by requiring people to sign up to your list in order to gain access.

3. Take the same content and convert it to another form.

One practical application would be to transcribe your podcasts so users can download a transcript from your website.

> **Bonus:** Be careful with this one. In the past, I've taken a full length YouTube video tutorial and turned it in to a written guide. That guide has been downloaded thousands of times (which is good) but I feel like the actual YouTube view count for the video that the guide is based on would be much higher if I hadn't created it. This is bad because I rely on YouTube for organic search results. When I'm not getting as many views on a particular video, YouTube's algorithm may see this as the video not being as helpful as it could be so the video ends up not ranking as well on YouTube.

The Importance of Frequent Communication

When someone takes the time to actively follow you on youtube, social media, etc.. they genuinely want to hear from you. You are doing a disservice to yourself, and your followers, by not consistently communicating with them. Capitalize on their initial interest by cultivating relationships with them through frequent content publications.

Think about your favorite clothing store.

Each time you go to shop, you're generally greeted with new clothing options. Why is this? Why are they always replacing "old" merchandise with new? They do this because if they didn't, their business would die. They would go out of business because most of their customers want and expect new things to look at and purchase. If you show up two or three times in a row, and they haven't changed anything, you probably aren't going back. Why bother? You already have that shirt.

Websites work exactly the same way. In fact, it's probably even *more* important for a website to consistently have new content.

Communicating Through Email Marketing

Email marketing is another critical element to developing and maintaining a successful website. It's also a major problem area for WpSculptor.com.

Time for a confession: While I do *have* an email list, I've made two major mistakes that we'll discuss in a moment.

When someone gives you their email address, they are giving you an opportunity to develop a real relationship. If you cultivate that relationship by consistently sending valuable information to their inbox, you give yourself a chance to gain a long-term fan who trusts you. That is everything with online businesses. *These* are the people who tell everyone in their network about you, *they* buy your products, and *they* make you successful.

Email Marketing Mistakes I've Made

1. Lack of Frequent Communication

Unfortunately, I have *consistently* failed to consistently communicate with my email list. The few emails I *did* send out were all "announcement" emails, just making sure people on my list were aware of my new youtube videos. I'm not saying it's wrong to promote your new content, I'm just saying that if that is *all* you are doing with your email list, you're missing out on so many opportunities. Take advantage of this chance to provide *additional* value that might inspire and encourage your audience, while also keeping them engaged and connected with you.

2. Failing to Incentivize People to Sign Up to My Email List

The second email marketing mistake I've made was not having an email opt-in lead magnet. An opt-in lead magnet is something that you offer for free (such as an eBook) when someone signs up on your email list. The eBook you are reading right now is my very first "lead magnet." Better late than never, but trust me, I have huge regrets about not creating this eBook sooner.   Had I created this eBook when I was first starting out online, my email list would be markedly larger.

Work Smarter Not Harder

When you are creating a website, it's important to remember that you only have a limited amount of time to devote to making your website successful. You should make the most of that time by being efficient and working on the things that will have the biggest impact on your success.

Time for a story.

Years ago, on one particularly hot and humid summer day, a friend and I were on our way to "float the river" (this is something you do if you grow up in the southern part of the US and don't have anything better planned). You go buy a cheap floatation mat and drive to the spot on the river called the "put-in." You then spend the rest of the day floating down river to the "take-out" spot where one of you parked the other car.

In route to the put-in spot, I began the tedious process of blowing up my mat, alternating between exhausting inhales and exhales. My friend however, pulled off to an air pump at a gas station and said 4 words:

"Work smarter, not harder."

That isn't to say you shouldn't work hard—you should and you'll have to if you want to have a successful business, but you need to couple "hard work" with "smart work" by working on things that will have the biggest impact. In regards to designing a website, you

can spend many hours, even days on something as specific as choosing a color scheme. Choosing a good color scheme is important and it needs to be visually and aesthetically pleasing, but at the end of the day, do your website visitors really care if you went with denim blue over cornflower blue? Probably not.

Don't spend too much time focusing on the minutiae when you could (and should) be focusing on reaching your audience. Remember, providing valuable information and cultivating trust among your existing and prospective followers is probably the reason you have a website - especially if you're building an online business. Don't lose sight of the bigger picture.

> **Solution: The Pareto Principle, or The 80/20 Rule**
> The 80/20 rule says that 80% of your output is a result of only 20% of your input.

The implications of the 80/20 rule are profound. Meaning, 80% of either your success or failure probably is a result of only 20% of your resources/financial expenditures/energy/efforts.

Just imagine what you could do if you were able to pinpoint which 20% of your activities led to the 80% of your results?! You would be able to minimize the wasted time (time spent on things that don't really matter) and repurpose that time towards the 20% of "high impact/high yield" activities — those that have the greatest effect on your business!

This is an excellent way to leverage your time and achieve exponential results.

Two Important Questions You Should Be Asking

1. **What things can I do that will have the biggest impact on my business?**

2. **What things do I spend a lot of time on that probably don't have that much of an impact?**

You should continuously test your assumptions in a systematic way so that your results are clear.

Practical Application

One way that I could apply this with WpSculptor is through testing my assumption that my YouTube video tutorials need to be verbally flawless. The web design tutorials I produce take a tremendous amount of time, but what if I could cut that time in half by not re-recording certain sections where I make just the smallest

verbal mistake? I could reasonably finish my YouTube videos twice as fast, which means I could produce twice as many videos.

If I learned that my YouTube audience wasn't bothered by the occasional verbal mistake, this could have a tremendously positive impact on my business.

Conclusion

Congratulations for making it through this eBook! I truly hope you were able to glean several positive and practical take-aways—things you can use to reach the next level of website success.

Remember that building a website is a great first step, but ultimately you want to create a *successful* website. I've given you several things to think about—both inspirational and practical—and I hope you are able to implement them in your own journey online.

I wish you all the best,
Josh Jackson, wpsculptor.com