

DigiFE Digital Education for
Food Entrepreneurs

MODULE 2



Creating Online Sales for Agri-Food Businesses



Co-funded by
the European Union

Learning Outcomes

The **Creating an online platform for Agri-Food businesses** session has been developed to support agri-food entrepreneurs develop an online platform for their business and gain a better understanding of their consumer behaviours and needs.

On completion of this session, learners will/should be able to:

- ✓ Identify the positive and negative aspects of developing their business online
- ✓ Identify different types of website platforms
- ✓ Describe the steps involved in developing a business website
- ✓ Understand the role social media can have in creating an online profile for business
- ✓ Create and manage social media content

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1. The positive and negative aspects of developing an online presence for your Agri-Food business

Positives

- It allows for market expansion
- It creates visibility amongst target audience
- Consumers have easy access to products and services
- It allows for consumers to give feedback

Negatives

- It can involve additional costs
- Agri-Food entrepreneur need a certain level digital competencies and understanding of digital marketing to manage create and sustain the online presence
- The entrepreneur requires a certain understanding of associated regulations and policies

2. Website Development

2.1. Types of website development

- Developing a website provides agri-food businesses with a low-cost method of engaging a larger customer base, increasing sales, and gaining valuable feedback from customers.
- Websites are divided into two main sections a) the server end and b) front end
- The server-end of the website is developed by a website builder or designer and will create the layout and functionality of the website



Front-End

What the user will see and interact with, including designs, colours, images, and fonts.

Server-End

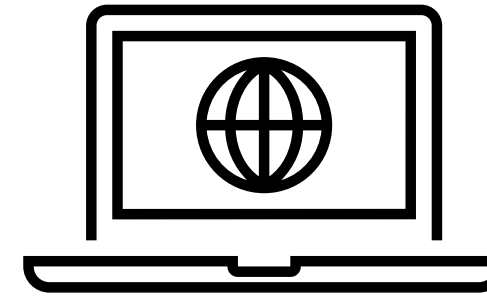
What the user does not see, including how the website works and responds to interactions.

2. Website Development

2.2 Developing a website

Developing a website can be separated into 8 key steps:

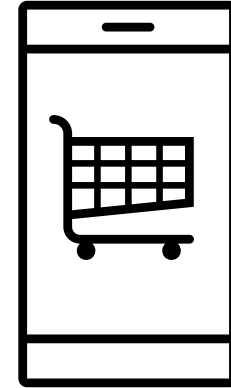
1. Identify the type of website to create
2. Identify who will build the website (internally or outsourced)
3. Choose a domain name and register it
4. Decide on design, structure and content
5. Consider a web hosting service
6. Research and set up search engine optimisation
7. Using website data and statistics
8. Review the website privacy policy



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

1. Identify the type of website to create



The creation process starts with the design phase. Points to consider:

- What are the objectives of the site?
- Who are the target audience?

Setting clear objectives makes it possible to work out which platform is best suited to the requirements of the business and what functionality and content will be needed on the website.

2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

2. Identify who will build the website (internally or outsourced)

There are different strategies for creating a website and various tools that can help, depending on the experience, skills, and needs of the user.

Website creators – There are a number of free and fee paying online website creators. They provide the necessary tools to create, customise and edit the website.

Some examples: [Wix](#), [Weebly](#), [Squarespace](#)

Hiring a professional – Engaging a website designer is more expensive but provides assurance that the site will look more professional and is hosted and managed appropriately.



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

3. Choosing a domain and register it

The domain name (website name) is the same as, or similar to the brand name.

What is a Domain?

It is the address that is typed into the browser to reach a site. Each domain name is unique and points to a specific site. It cannot be shared or duplicated with other web pages.

Domain names are registered with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which allocates and assigns addresses, manages the accreditation systems of domain registrars and maintains a centralised database of all domain names.

<https://www.digife.eu>

https protocol

www subdominium

digife name

eu extension

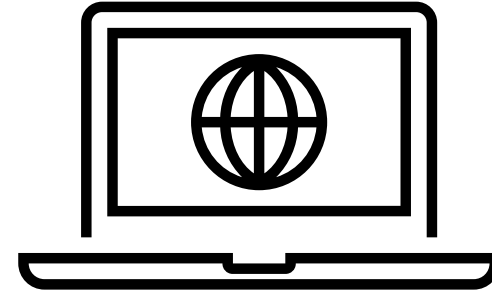
digife + eu domain name



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

4. Deciding on design, structure and content



The design of a website is one of the main factors in establishing the credibility of a brand, so the design of a website is crucial to its success. Design and content go hand in hand and tell the story of a brand and are ultimately what allows visitors to interact effectively with the site.

Design

Web design is often the first thing customers notice when entering a business website. These visual elements are what help site visitors understand, interact and engage with what they see on their screen.

Content

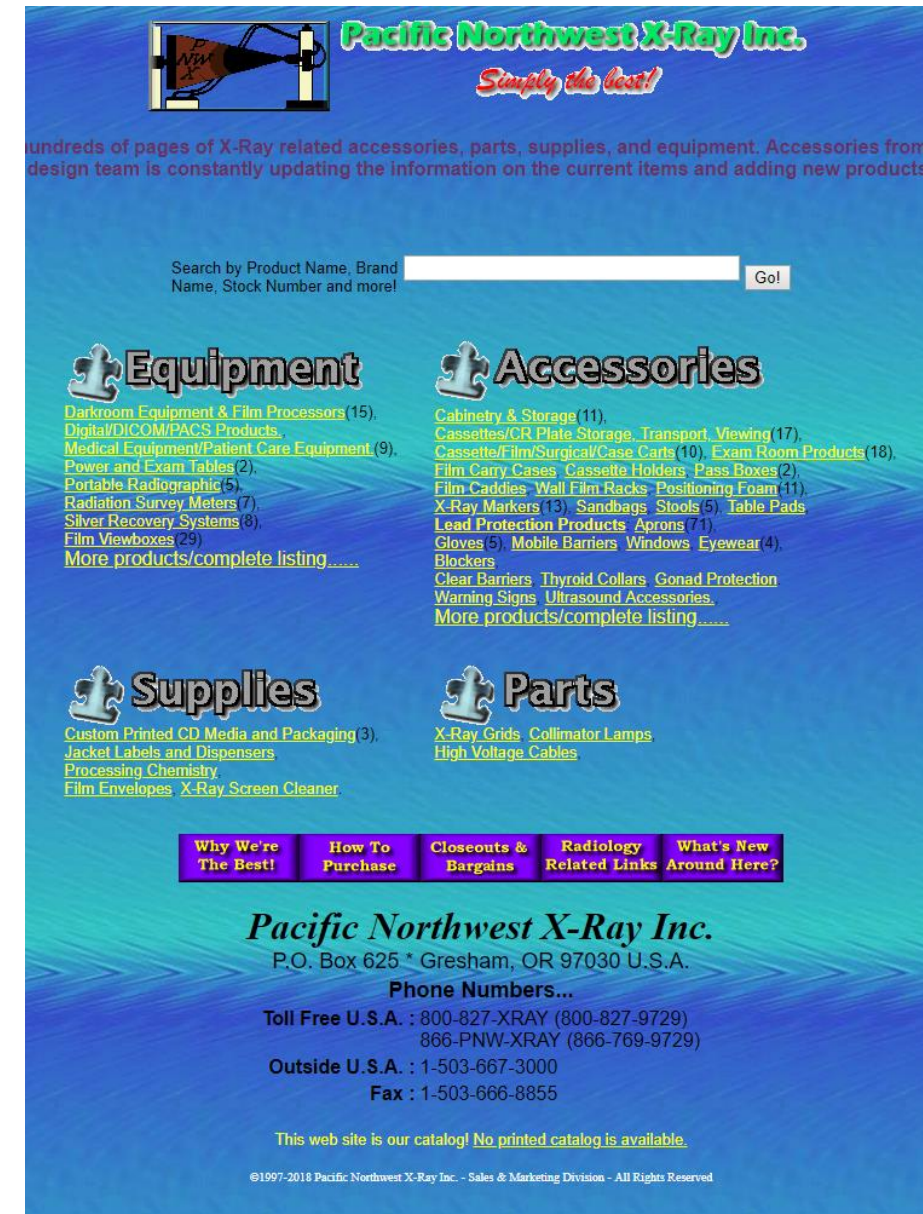
Content can be visual or textual and is essential because it helps visitors understand the nature of the business and the product/service on offer. It is common to combine the two types of content, textual and visual, by including text and images in the form of photos or videos.

2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

Poor Website Design Example

- Overwhelming home page.
- Poor colour choice – hard to read the information.
- Poor layout – hard to decipher the various sections of the page.
- Difficult to navigate.



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

4. Deciding on design and content



- **Colours** – help distinguish different parts of the website, should represent the brand and its values



- **Menu** – allows easy navigation around the website and should be easy to notice on the page



- **Buttons** – these take visitors to various pages and sub-pages which should be related to one-another



- **Visual Elements** – shapes, images, videos and scrolling effects should align with the business and previous design elements



Mobile Design – a specific layout should be developed for accessing the site from a phone

2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

5. Considering a web hosting service

Web hosting is a network service to store and transmit the files, elements and content that make up a website to an Internet browser. The server provides the content of the site to the user who requested it so that the homepage is displayed by the user who typed in the domain name.

Hosting service characteristics: Safe and reliable

Positives: requires less digital aptitude

Negatives: hosting sites have additional costs and sometimes have limited control over page features

Type of hosting to choose depends on the size of the site and the amount of traffic (users) expected



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

6. Setting up Search Engine Optimization

SEO (search engine optimization) refers to all activities aimed at improving the finding, indexing and positioning of information or content on a website by search engines (e.g. [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), [Bing](#), etc.) to improve or maintain positioning in the search engine results page.

Benefits of SEO:

- Can improve positioning (ranking) of a website on search engines
- May increase direct traffic to the site
- More traffic to the site may result in increased sales



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

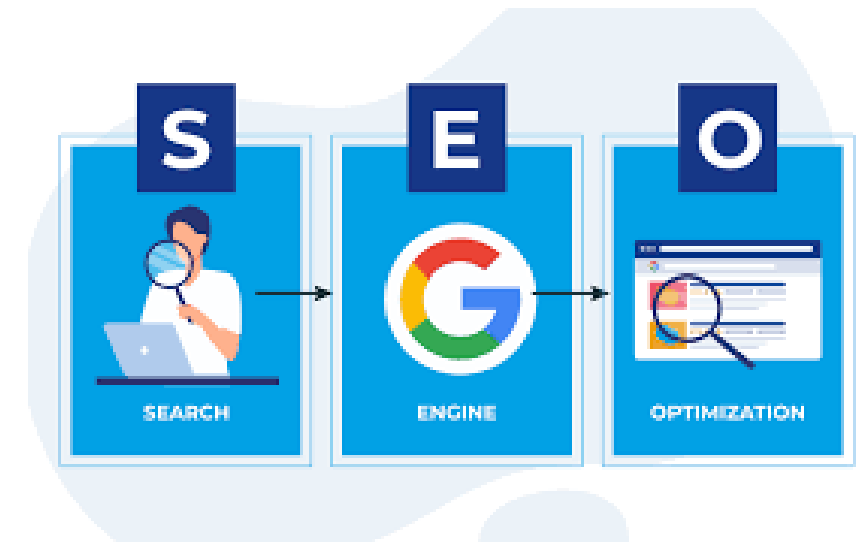
6. Research and set up Search Engine Optimization

On-Page SEO is implemented within a webpage through using keywords throughout site content. These should be:

- Unique and original, i.e. not copied from elsewhere
- Useful and interesting.
- Up-to-date.
- Relevant to your business

Off-Page SEO strategies include inbound link management and wording. These can be implemented with the help of professionals or using the various tools available online:

- [Keyword Planner](#), [Google Trends](#), [Search Console](#)



2. Website Development

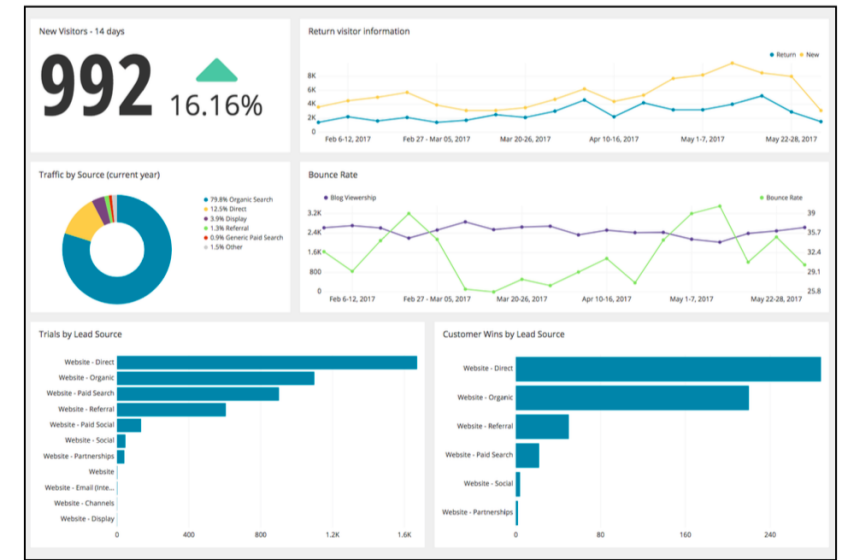
2. Developing a website

7. Using website data and statistics

Web data and statistics help to understand whether a site is performing well and how people interact with it, so that weaknesses can be identified and informed decisions can be made.

Data includes how many people visited the site, where they clicked, how many people bought a specific product, or which geographic regions brought in the most revenue, etc. This data can provide insight into consumer buying behaviour

Numerous Web Analytics tools are available for example; [Google Analytics](#), [Clicky](#), [Awstats](#), [Piwik](#), [Open Web Analytics](#), [Superstat](#).



2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

8. Review the website privacy policy

This is a document of information on how the owners of the site and operators connected to it will collect, store, use and protect the personal data provided by users when browsing.

- It informs users on how to protect themselves in the event of possible violations of privacy regulations by the company providing the web service.
- Managing this allows analysis of the audience in all aspects and helps planning marketing campaigns.

The collection of this sensitive data is governed by precise regulations: the collection of personal data must be tracked by precise measures that give the site owners the chance to make the best use of the information provided.

A privacy policy for a website is compulsory: treating the data and rights of those who voluntarily choose to provide their personal details with care is essential.

Often, website-builders will offer support in this, for example:

<https://www.wix.com/blog/how-to-write-website-privacy-policy>

2. Website Development

2. Developing a website

8. Review the website privacy policy

What must a privacy policy contain?

- outline the specific information the site will collect from users
- how the data will be collected and stored
- how the data will be used and will be shared with third parties
- how such information will be protected
- what rights the user has over the data he/she releases
- how users may decide not to share their data and what influence this may have on their use of the site
- what is the identity of the site owner and/or data controller
- what are the references to contact him to request changes and/or cancellations
- how the user will be notified of any changes to the above points
- how the site will have access to payment data and how these will be stored and protected

How to create a privacy policy?

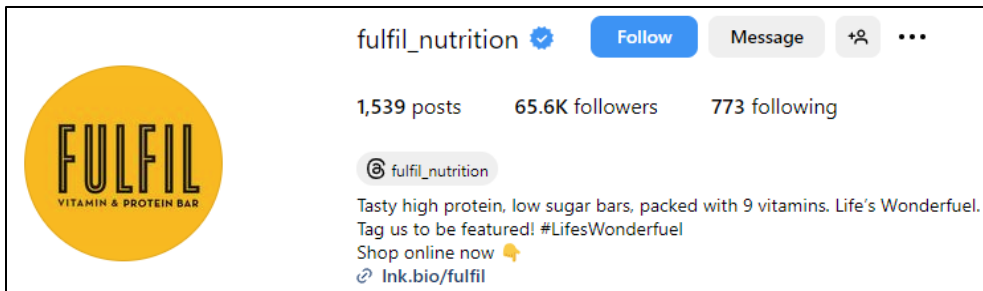
- Do-it-yourself without the support of tools or people
- Use specific online tools (es: iubenda.com, usercentrics.com, wordpress.com)
- Hire a lawyer or digital expert team



3. Creating Social Media Accounts

1. Introducing your Agri-Food business on Social Media platforms

- **Grab the audience's attention** – Your description/biography/”about me/us” section on social media platforms is your initial opportunity to portray your business and get your audience's attention. There are some aspects to consider when setting up this section:



https://www.instagram.com/fulfil_nutrition/



<https://www.instagram.com/innocent/>

1. **Photo/Logo** – that’s clear, linked to the business and is used consistent
2. **Choose a username** – close to your brand and keep the same on all platforms
3. **Headline** – business name and nature of the business
4. **Keep it short** and to the point – aim or 3 lines
 - Who are you
 - Why are you here
 - How can you help
 - Contact info/link

3. Creating Social Media Accounts

2. Creating content

1. **Organisation** - Instead of randomly creating content, pillars help cover topics aligned to your business and ethos
 2. **Target** - Defined pillars will guide you when creating content to speak to your specific target audience
 3. **Ideas** - Creating new ideas can be difficult; the content pillars will automatically focus the nature of the content
- Use customers (feedback - polls, stories) and peers (other food entrepreneurs) for inspiration and feedback to help develop new content
 - Aim for content to relate to one of 3-4 chosen pillars



3. Creating Social Media Accounts

2. Creating content

Education



Product/business description and any unique aspects/insights into product development

Photos, behind the scenes, recipes, videos etc

Entertainment



Quick, easy, fun, light content

Reels, memes, podcast/video snips

Inspiration



Quotes, sayings, images, fun facts

Product spotlights, quotes, short videos

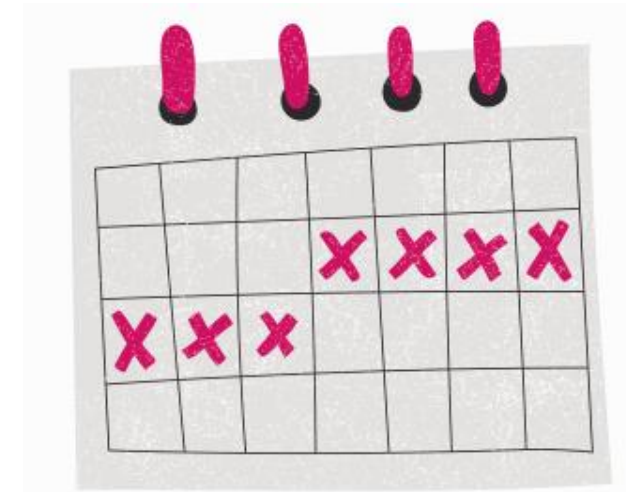
Content Calendar

2. Creating content

Creating a content schedule will keep business social media activity consistent

Points to consider when developing a content schedule:



- What should the content convey
- Timing for content release (when is the target audience most active online – are your target group young adults online after approximately 5/6pm?)
- Possible collaborations – are there opportunities to collaborate with individuals or businesses that align to the business ethos that will increase the outreach of the content
- Posts do not have to be very informative. Being consistent is more important and maintains the business-consumer relationship. Consider always having a collection of pre-made social media posts that can be used when times are too busy to develop new posts.



Developing a Hashtag Bank

2. Creating content

- Hashtags are used across social media platforms to link individuals to their interests (for example, a health-conscious user may follow #HealthySnacks)
- Having a collection of hashtags to use on social media posts is a great way to reach the target audience.

 <p>Up to 30x #Hashtags</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Content specific (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Brand specific (1) ✓ Unique to Product/ service (9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Location (5) ✓ Audience/ Customer focused (10) 	 <p>2-3 Max #Hashtags</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Content/ target specific (1-2) ✓ General (1)
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- ✓ Helps to increase the number of users viewing content
- ✓ Brainstorm hashtags to include in posts and save time
- ✓ Know the platform limits and popular hashtags

Key Questions to Stay on Track

1. Do I spend more time scrolling on social media than I do creating for my brand and audience?
2. Do I lack ideas or motivation for new content development ? What is not working?
3. How can I track my ideas better while I am on social media instead of getting lost scrolling? Am I sticking to my content schedule?



Remember



Social media is like walking in the door at an in-person event, you need to mingle and meet new people to expand your network and create opportunities.



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