

# WHAT MAKES A WEBSITE GOOD?

## Essentials to make your shop's site a star.

Your website is one more dependable tool that helps you run your business. Just like buying and maintaining your other tools, make sure you invest the time to know what works, and doesn't, and how to use your site to better serve your customers.

Face it, customers almost always start their search for a shop when something breaks, they're in a pinch, or need something done fast. By the time they get to your site they may be stressed and impatient. So you have 3-5 seconds to convince them you're worth looking into further. Here are a few things to consider in getting your shop considered.

## Make a great first impression.

Your website might be the first experience customers have with your business. So make sure your site, like your shop, is clean, inviting, organized, friendly, informative and helpful. You can turn the first 3-5 seconds into the beginning of a great relationship.



### BE PROFESSIONAL

Make the site clean and simple and immediately relevant. Star bursts and wacky backgrounds are not your friend.



### MAKE IT 'SCANNABLE'

It's a sad truth but no one reads anymore. So organize the site into quickly digestible chunks for easy reading.



### USE FRIENDLY COLORS

Make your site fresh and inviting. More like a physician's site than a heavy metal band. As much as we all love black.

## Give them a good handshake.

When you meet someone for the first time, it almost always goes something like, "Hi. I'm John Smith, owner of Smith Auto Repair. How can I help you?" It's about setting context.

It's about demonstrating relevance. It's about making sure the customers understand exactly how you can help them. When customers arrive at your home page, they should immediately know what you and your shop can do to solve their problem or fill their need.

### SAY WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO!

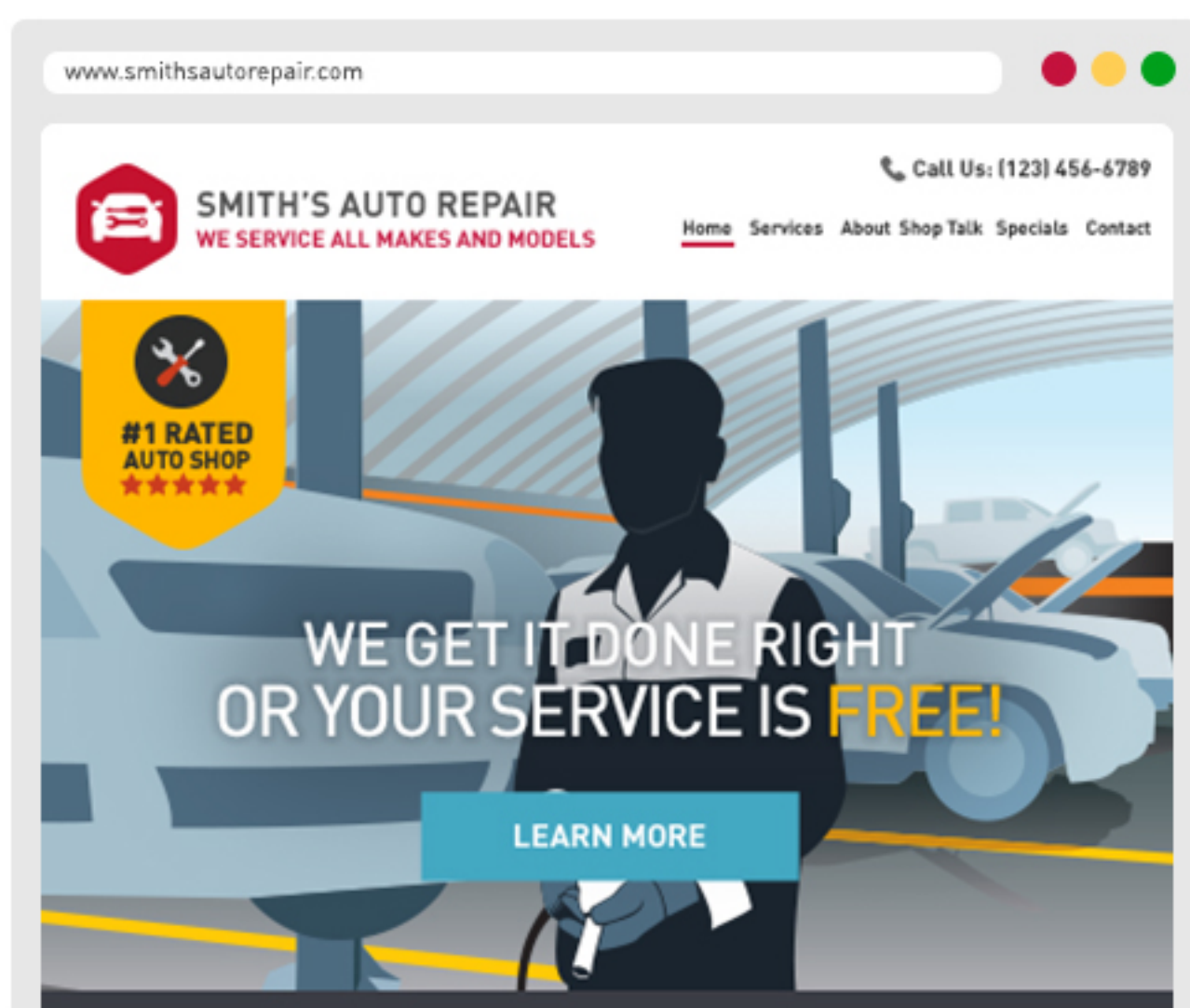
"Smith Auto Repair. We service all makes and models..."

### MAKE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION CLEAR.

"We're the number 1 rated..."

### TELL THEM WHY THEY SHOULD CARE.

"We get it done right or..."



## Just the facts (KISS), Ma'am.

The tried-and-true KISS (Keep it Simple, Stupid) principle definitely goes a long way here. Just as you make the most essential inventory items easy to find in your shop, you want to make the important aspects of your site as simple and easy to find as possible. You'd be surprised at how many sites bury the exact things customers want first—basic contact information, location, etc. Make these mandates front and center:

### NAME

It should be the first thing customers should see, simply.

### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Say where...show where...help them get there.

### HOURS

Assume that people want to make an appointment. Make it easy by telling them when you're open.

### PHONE NUMBER

People are using mobile more and more and if they're looking for you on their phone, help them make the call to come see you.



## Go beyond the expectations.

Remember this: "Customers demand value but they value delight." They demand to know the basics, but they'll delight in knowing you're giving them just a little bit extra. Little bits of added value will go a long way in establishing why you're the better choice, and the better shop. Try these out:

### PLUS THINGS UP

In addition to the basics, share some helpful hints, articles on car issues, even seasonal things to consider.

### TELL THEM WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW AND MORE

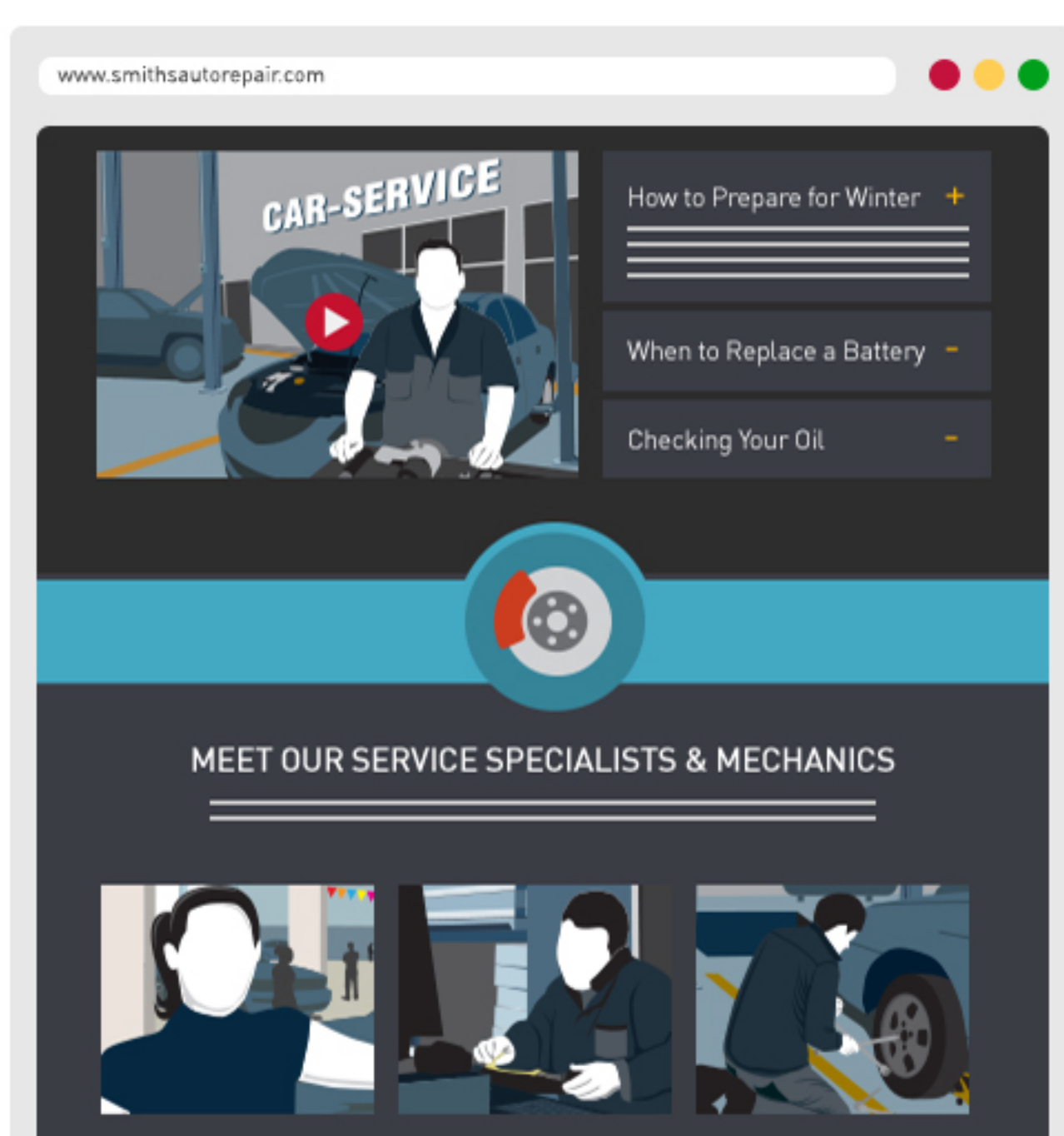
Be honest, and tell them when they don't need service as often as when you'd recommend it. That builds trust.

### POST A VIDEO TOUR OF YOUR FACILITIES

Show them you have outstanding bays as well as an immaculate waiting area.

### FEATURE EMPLOYEES IN PICTURES AND VIDEOS

People love to know who's taking care of their beloved vehicle.



## Build it well, and then they'll come. And come back more often.

You don't need to be a webmaster to build an effective site. There are plenty of low cost, even free, sites to do most of the work for you. You just need to know who you are and what you want to communicate, then get to making that great first impression.

Three examples include:



Boasting 20 million sites with 140 million unique visitors, this site builder is great solution when you want to get online quickly, with almost no technical know-how. You can even use their iPad app to build your site.



SQUARESPACE

The thing that separates Squarespace from other services is its approach to design. Websites made with Squarespace tend to be more sophisticated in look and feel. That can be a bad thing if your customer base is more coffee-and-doughnuts than cappuccino-and-biscotti. But if projecting "premium" is what you're after, the elegant Squarespace approach is a solid way to go.



Another incredibly easy sitebuilder that puts a premium on simplicity while still including essentials like contact forms, ecommerce, etc. Plus, their one-click-away tutorials and help screens are especially helpful when you're just starting out.

## One last bit of advice: don't build it then forget it.

Again, just as you keep your shop well maintained and improving, pay attention to your site and to it, change it... keep it fresh. You never know who's looking so it's important to look good. Make your site a trustworthy tool for keeping your business up and running for years to come.



FEDERAL-MOGUL  
MOTORPARTS