

The REAL Front Door: Guests Visit Online Before Onsite

Imagine if it was your first day on staff and you just discovered that your church's front door was:

- hidden from view and hard to find
- still decorated from last Christmas
- covered in dirt and cobwebs
- cluttered with ministry flyers and notices.

Without hesitation, you would clean and repaint it immediately. You would then find a way to use people and signage, while leveraging every resource possible, to make the entrance beautiful, easy and obvious to find.

Your church website is more important than your front door.

In fact, *nine out of ten first time Guests visit online before visiting onsite*, so your church website IS your front door. In 2015, the number of networked devices (phones, tablets, laptops) more than doubled the global population. Today, your church website is your digital front door for nearly everyone who will consider visiting your church, and ***then reconsider*** based upon what they find, or don't find.

Here are 23 ways your website may be driving away first time Guests:

1. If it projects an "us vs.them" dynamic, using a term like Visitor instead of Guest.
2. If it has your Christmas graphic on rotation... in February.
3. When 80% of your web content is actually geared for members, making it little more than a very expensive calendar for a select group of people.
4. If there are too many written words and the menu navigation becomes complex and confusing.
5. When there are too many ministries and activities... because we all know today's average family sits around looking to be busier.
6. If your stock photography of diverse people projects an image far from your congregational reality.
7. When you do not have a picture of the church building or of the front door.
8. If your photos and videos are poor quality and improperly sized.
9. If you have not given the Guest a clear next step to take in visiting.
10. When you are missing a clear and obvious welcome of Guests with a link to critical information on visiting.
11. If your service times are anything less than large and obvious, because that is really the main thing a Guest is looking for.
12. When you have different service styles but they are unexplained... remember, one

Guest's idea of traditional worship might be another's idea of contemporary.

13. When your worship services or small groups have cute and creative names that are ultimately meaningless outside of those circles.
14. When the pastor's welcome letter is more about a Reformational Theology than a Great Commission Cardiology.
15. When the pastor's welcome video is too long and too creepy, and therefore not too inviting.
16. If your photos are of lobbies and hallways instead of worship gatherings and people groups.
17. When you are assuming that free coffee (which doesn't taste all that great) is still attractational to lost people.
18. If you have forgotten that social media is a great connector, because you still have a church directory and yellow page ads... it's called Facebook.
19. When you have made an obvious choice toward a low-cost and generic "church website" over a useful and attractive "digital front door."
20. If your content requires updating from multiple people, which never actually happens.
21. When you post links for giving money when you have not linked giving to a vision beyond money.
22. If the primary URL is a tagline or slogan instead of your church name.
23. If there is no responsiveness to mobile device viewing, because smart phones are the new desktop computer.

At [Auxano](#), we love serving as strategic outsiders to help churches realize breakthrough effectiveness on their website, through the lens of vision clarity. No service style or theological treatise will impact a true First Time Guest more than a clear sense of "who we are" and "what we are called to do" will.

[Start a conversation with an Auxano Navigator today](#) to learn more about our [Vision](#) and [Communication](#) services.