



From Browsing to Business

Creating Economic Development Websites That Convert

Shanleigh McStay, VP of Technology Innovation, DCI

SECTION 01

Introduction





Shanleigh McStay

Vice President, Technology Innovation
Development Counsellors International



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM

TALENT ATTRACTION

CITIES

REGIONS

STATES

COUNTRIES

The Leader in Marketing Places



65 YRS

Specializing in marketing places



700+

Unique places and destinations



80+

People with a passion for places

NEW YORK

DENVER

TORONTO

AMSTERDAM

LONDON

PARIS



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



TALENT ATTRACTION



TOURISM



investinholland.com →



mississippi.org →



howardcountyeda.org →



choosedelaware.com →



roundrockchamber.org →



coloradospringschamberedc.com



gnoinc.org →



choosetacomapierce.org →



clecodev.com →



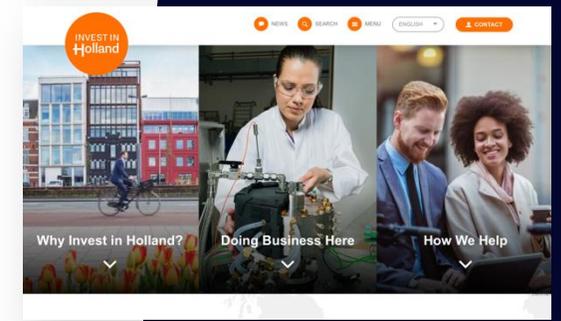
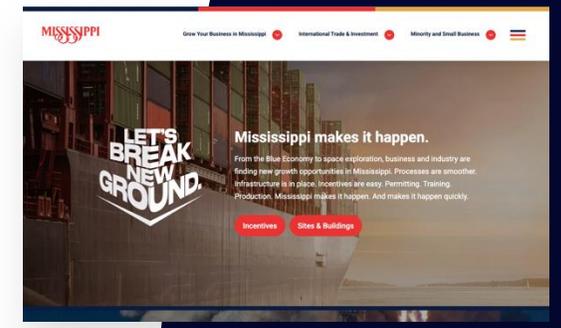
fairfaxcountyeda.org →



yeslynchburgregion.org →



partnertulsa.org →



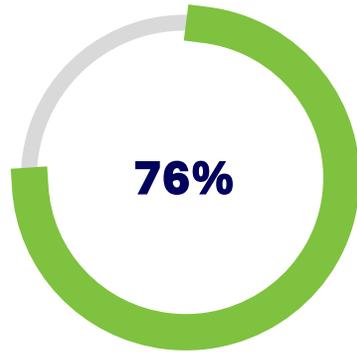
SECTION 02

The Stakes

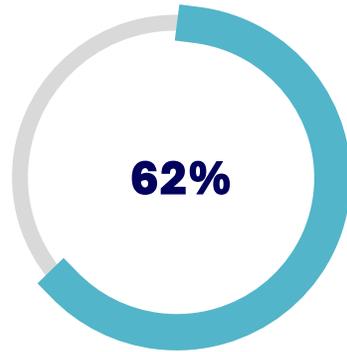


Most Effective Marketing Techniques

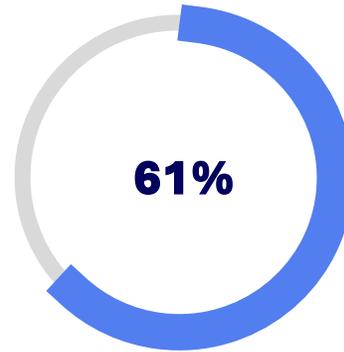
For Business Attraction



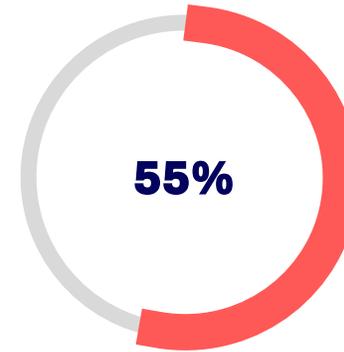
Internet / Website



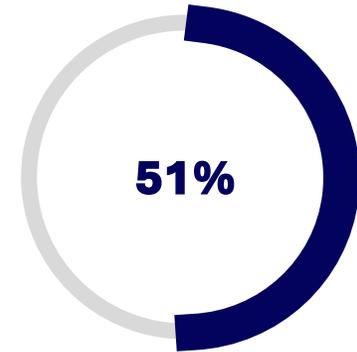
Planned Visits



Media / Publicity



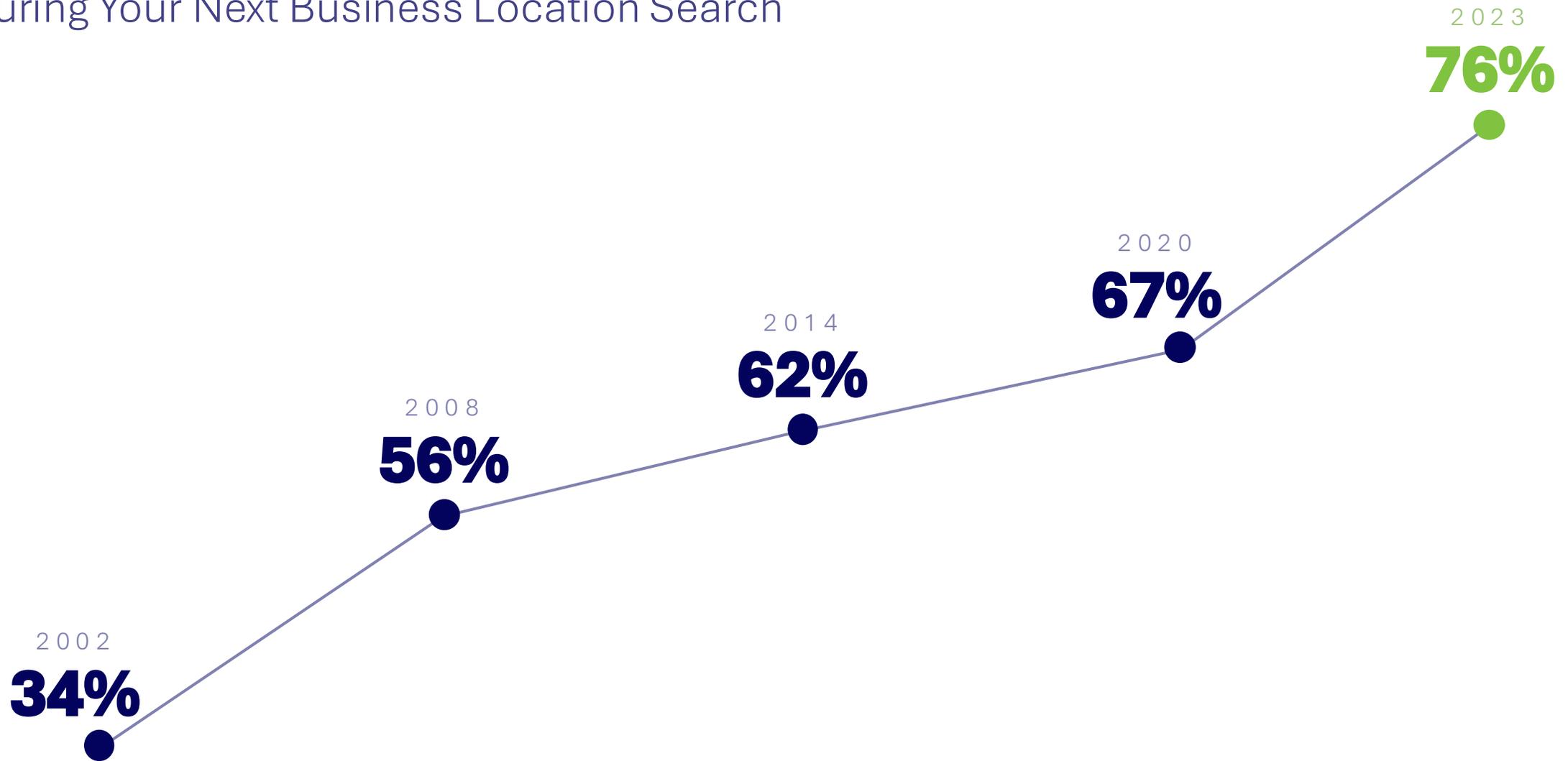
Hosting Events



Social Media

Likelihood of Visiting an EDO's Website

During Your Next Business Location Search

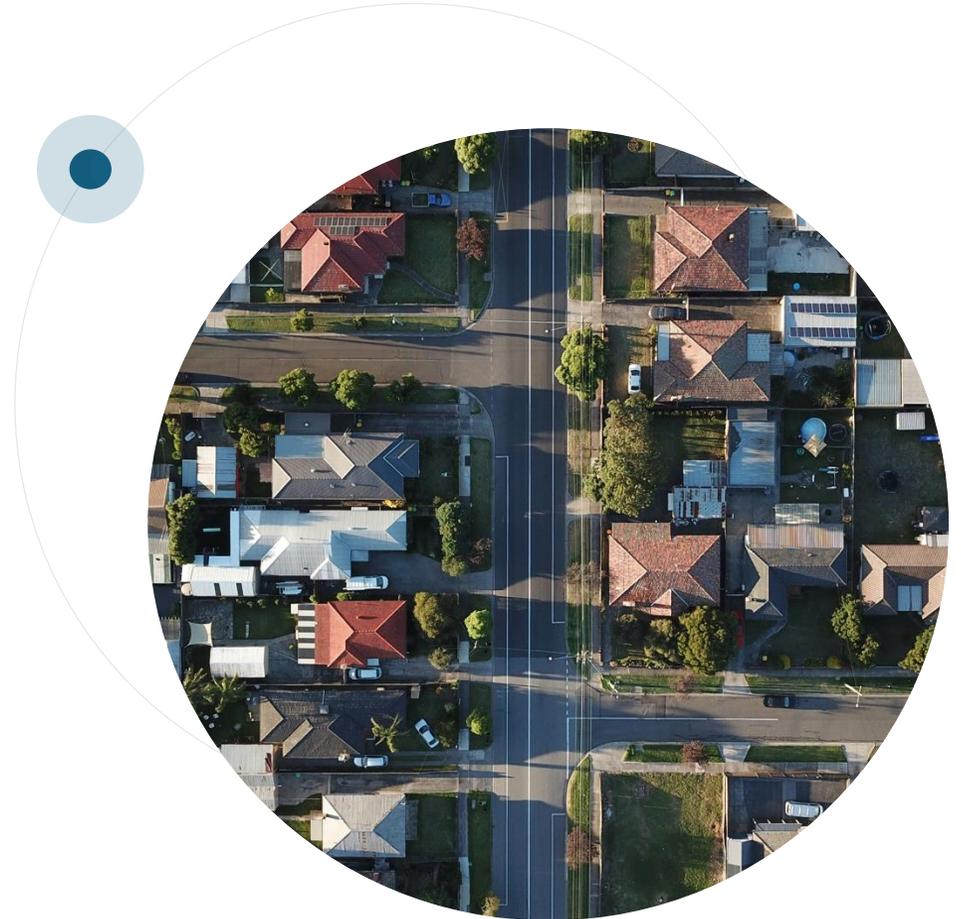


Inform

Most economic development and business attraction websites are built to answer questions.

Convert

The best websites are built to build confidence and move people toward action.



SECTION 03

Successful Website Habits

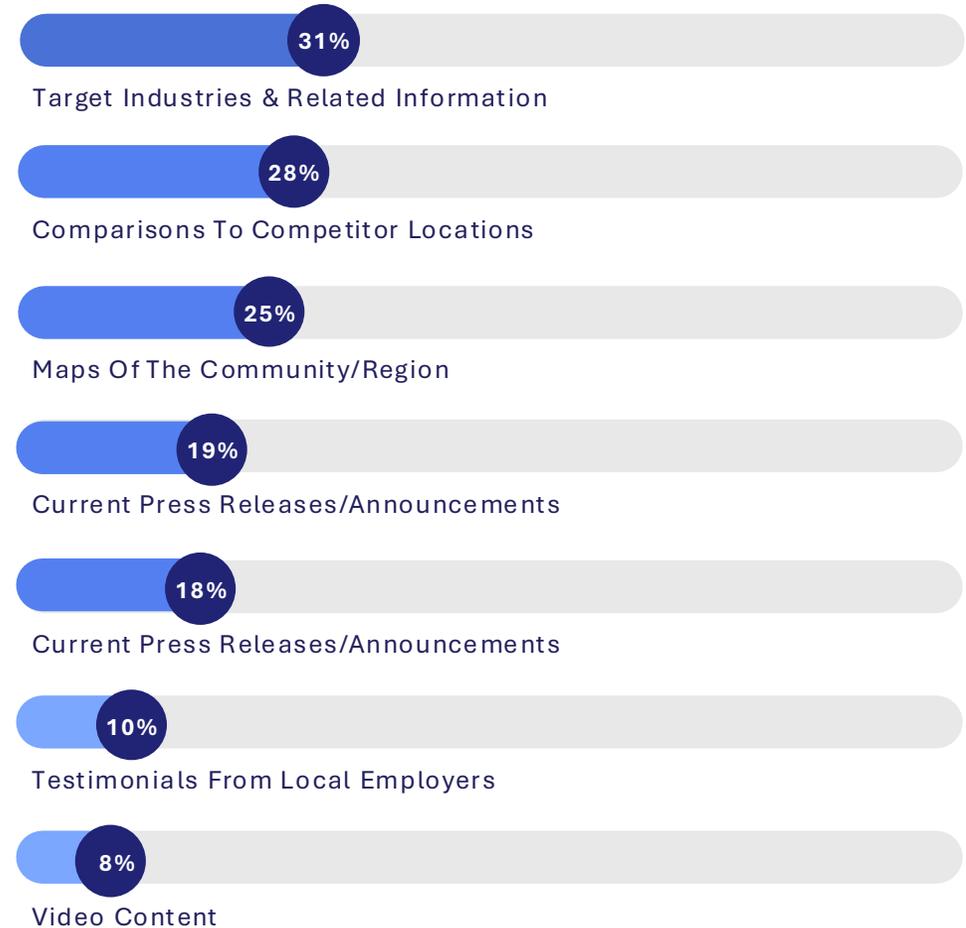
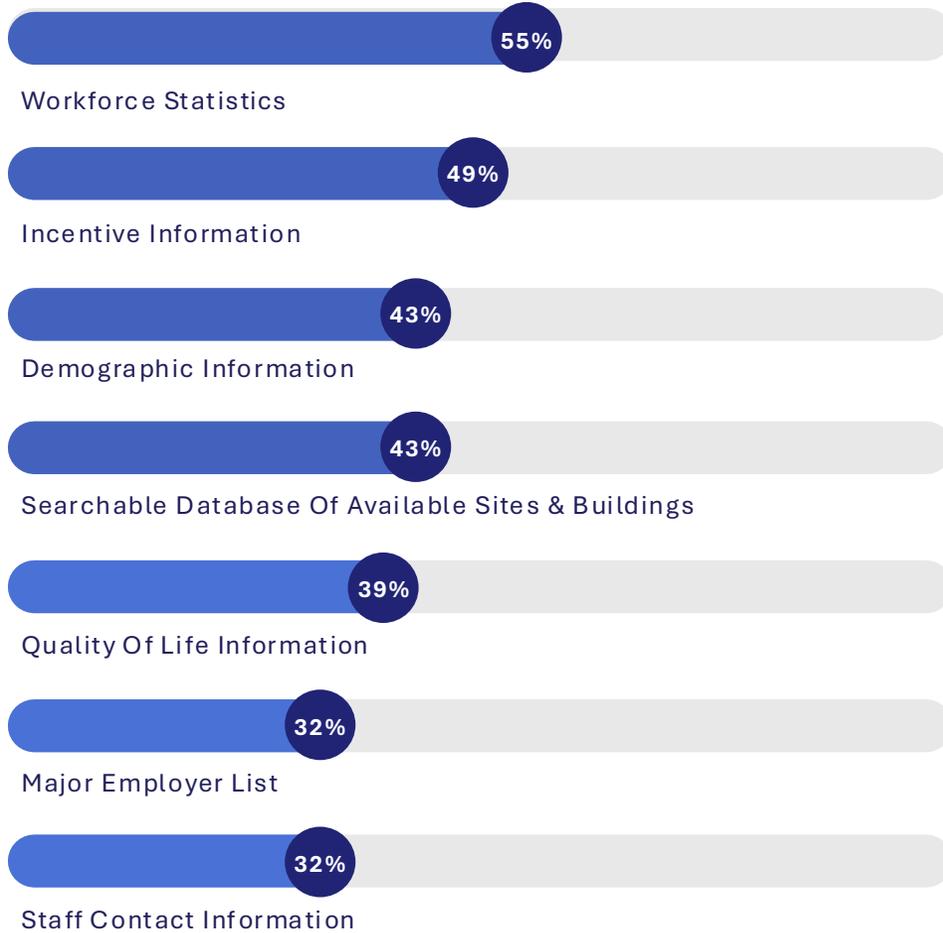
Four Habits of Successful Websites



Know Your Audience

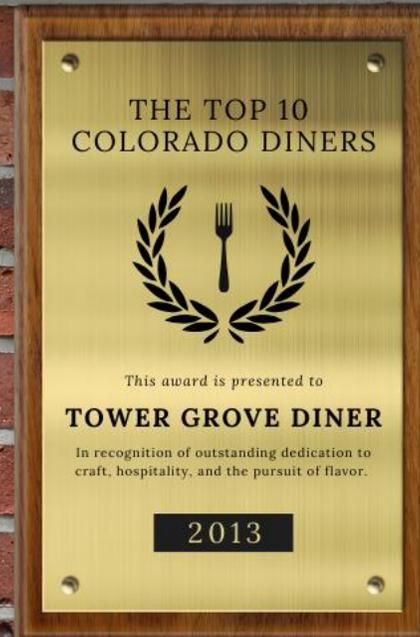
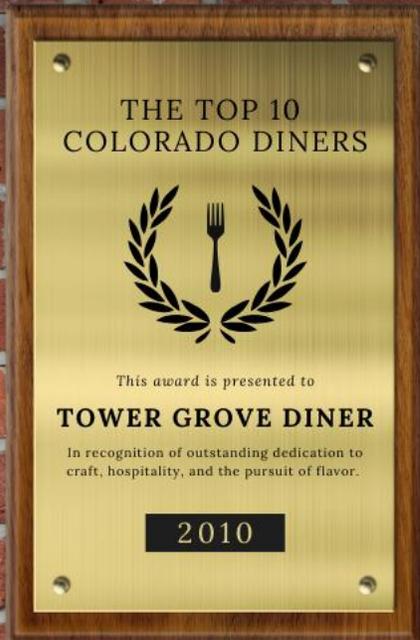
Include the Basics

We know what your audience is looking for. Make sure you have it on your site.



Keep Content Up-to-Date

Nothing kills credibility faster than stale information





Bring Properties to Life

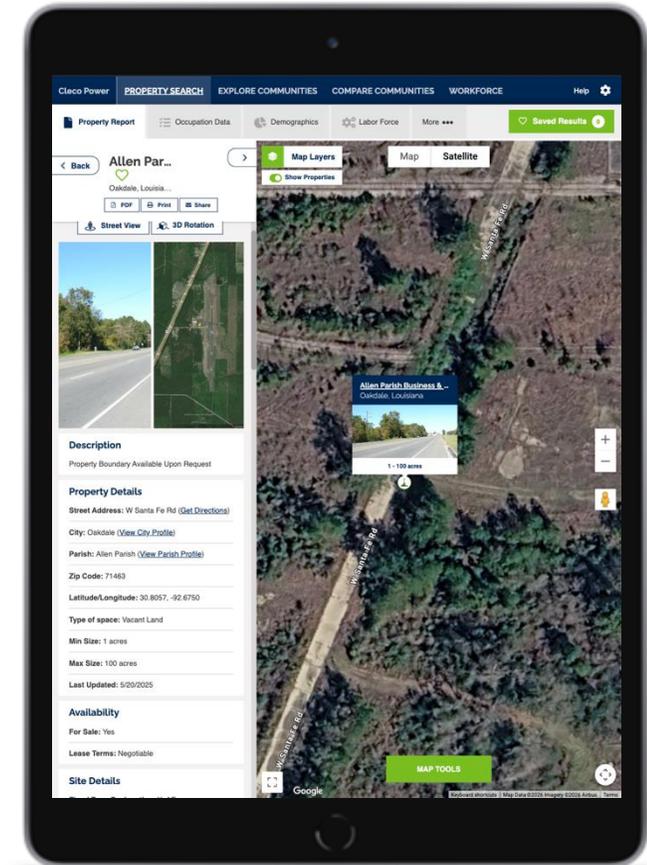
Your most valuable content shouldn't feel static.

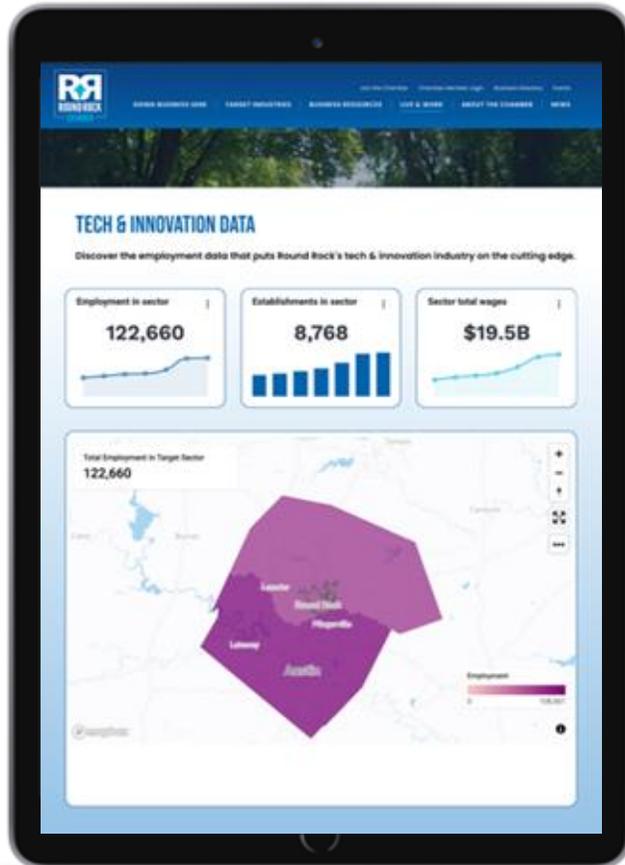
Available properties are the 4th most important feature on an economic development website.

The most successful websites move beyond static listings by using interactive maps and searchable property tools that help investors quickly evaluate location opportunities.

A Few Providers To Explore (click to open link)

GIS WebTech





Turn Data Into Insight

Data should clarify your story, not complicate it.

Interactive charts, graphs, and mapping tools help users quickly grasp key metrics like talent availability, wage comparisons, and industry trends without navigating complex datasets.

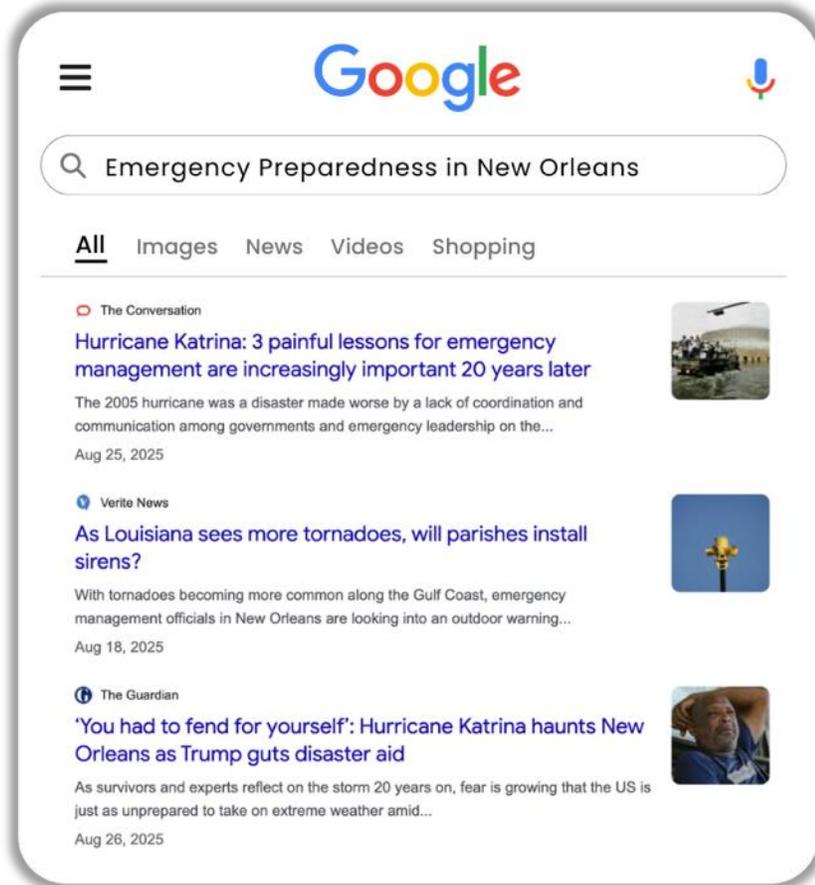
Strong data visuals allow prospects to evaluate your community faster and with greater confidence.

A Few Providers To Explore (click to open link)

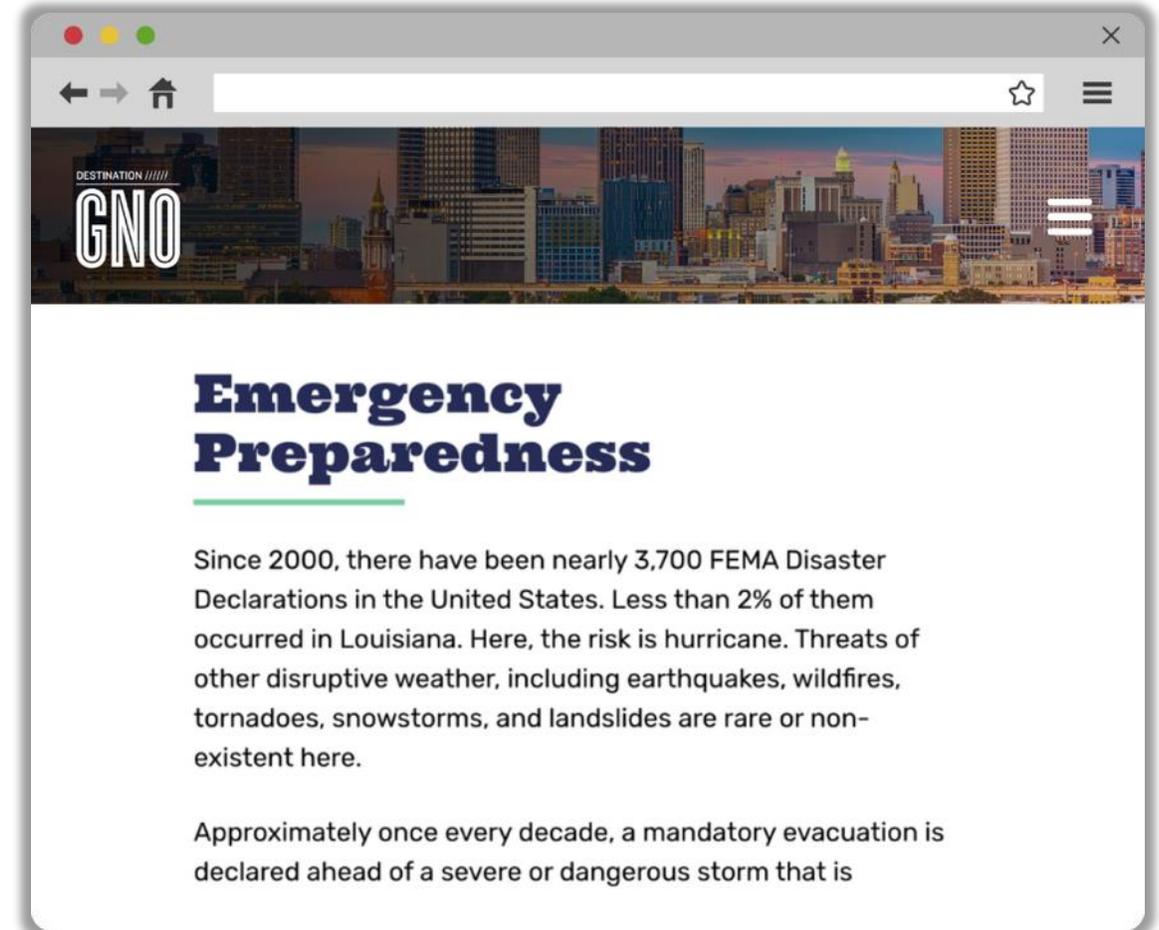


Say What They're Already Thinking

Your audience will search for answers. Meet them there first.

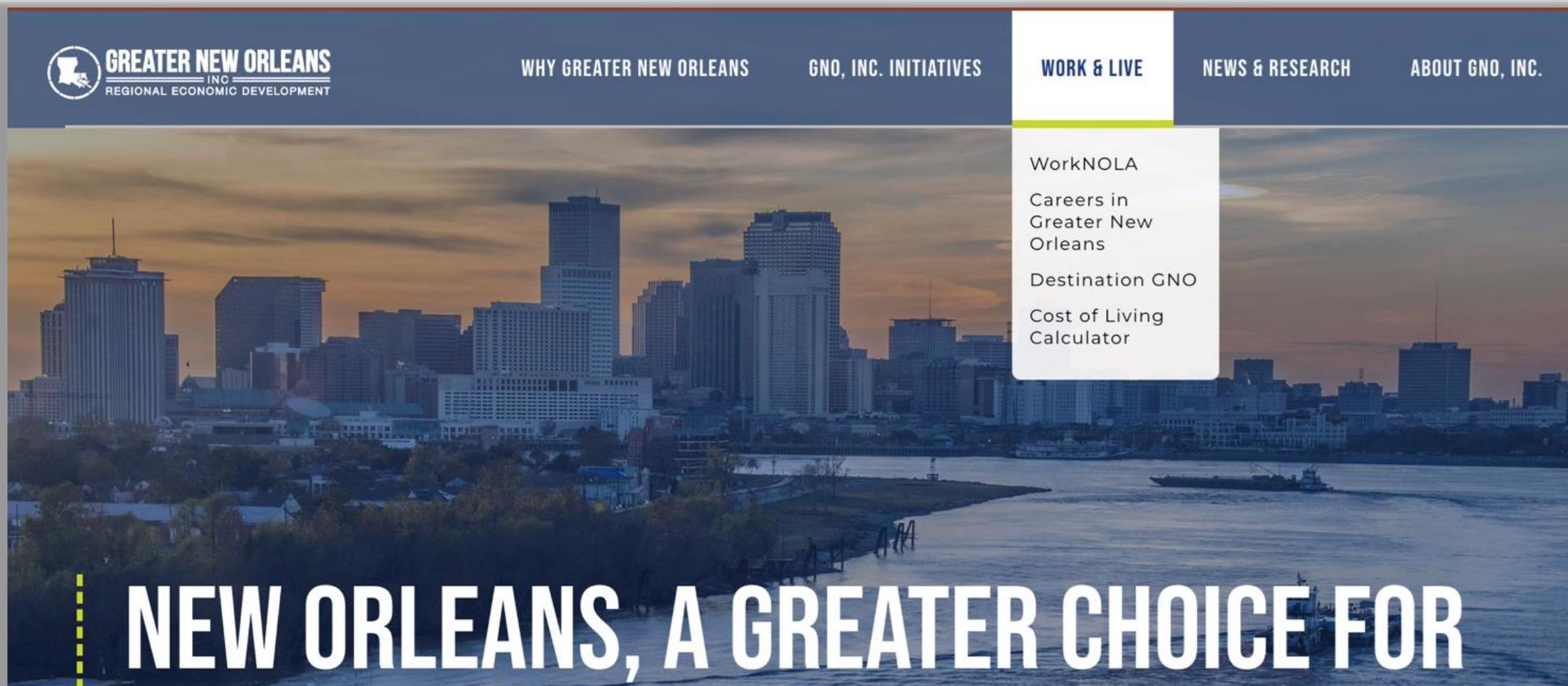


VS



Stay In Your Lane

You don't need to own every conversation



Shared Success Drives Growth

Working across organizations creates stronger outcomes for everyone.



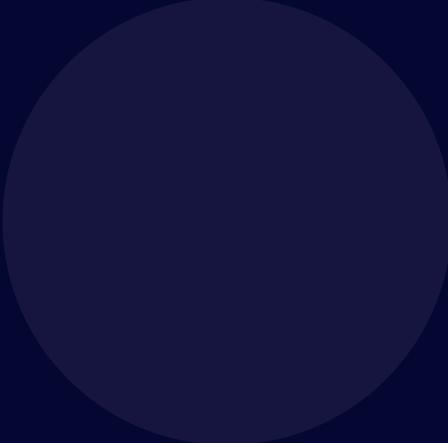
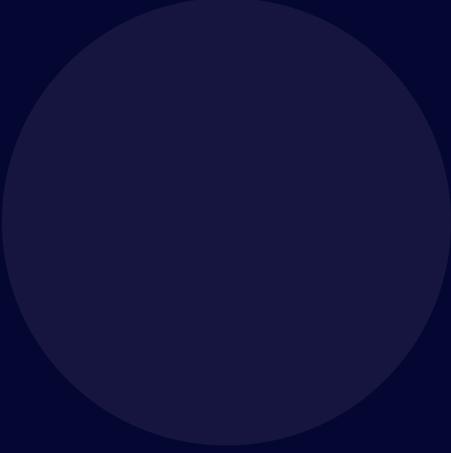
Four Habits of Successful Websites

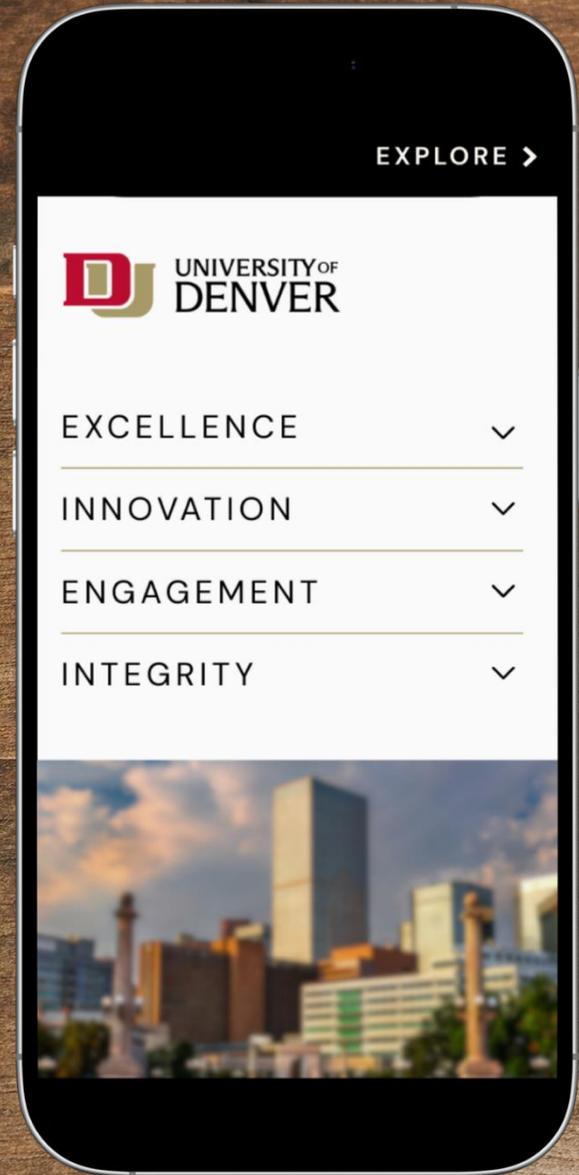
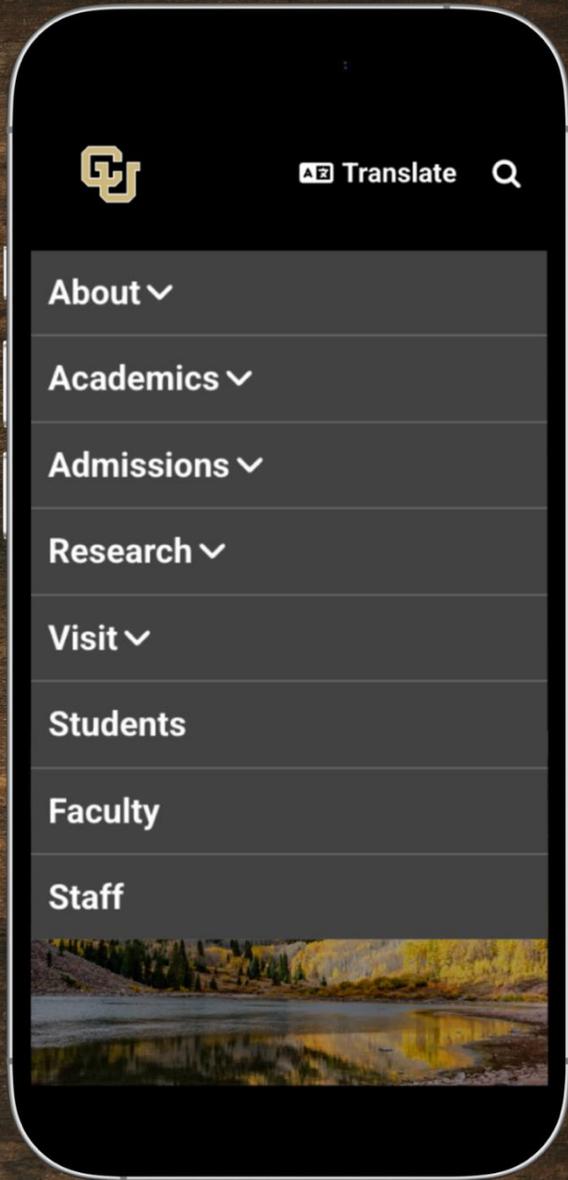


Know Your Audience



Provide a Clear Path





Don't Fear The Formula

Patterns often exist for a reason

 **Cedar Park**
Economic Development & Tourism

[About Cedar Park TX](#) [Do Business Here](#) [Live & Work](#) [Cedar Park EDC](#) [Contact Us](#)

 **CLARK COUNTY**_{NV}
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[News & Media](#) [About Us](#) [English](#)

[Clark County Advantage](#) [Growth & Developments](#) [Leading Industries](#) [Support & Resources](#)

 **SANFORD**
AREA GROWTH ALLIANCE
Economic Development • Chamber of Commerce

[About Us](#) [News & Events](#) [Become a Member](#) [Member Login](#)

[Why Sanford](#) [Sites & Properties](#) [Key Industries](#) [Business Resources](#) [Chamber of Commerce](#)

 **ROUND ROCK**
CHAMBER

[Join the Chamber](#) [Chamber Member Login](#) [Business Directory](#) [Events](#)

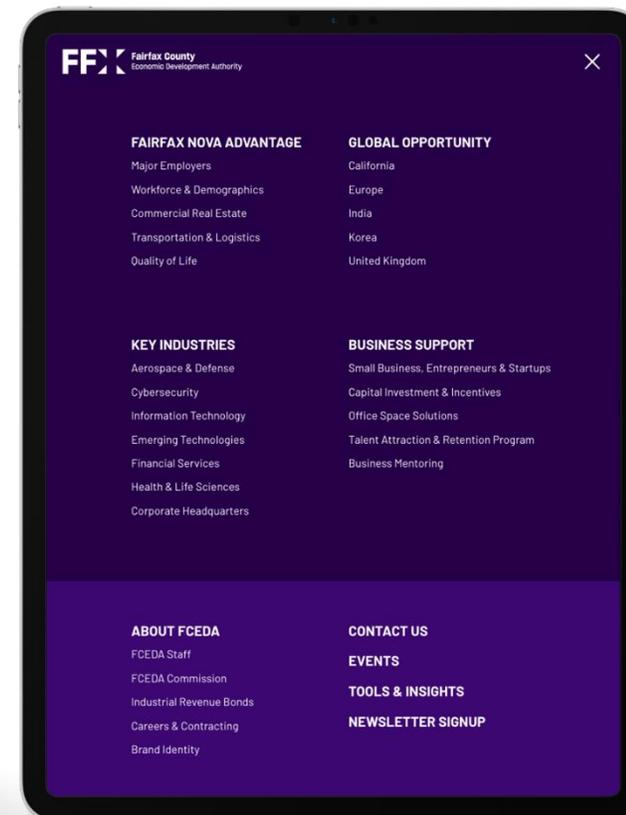
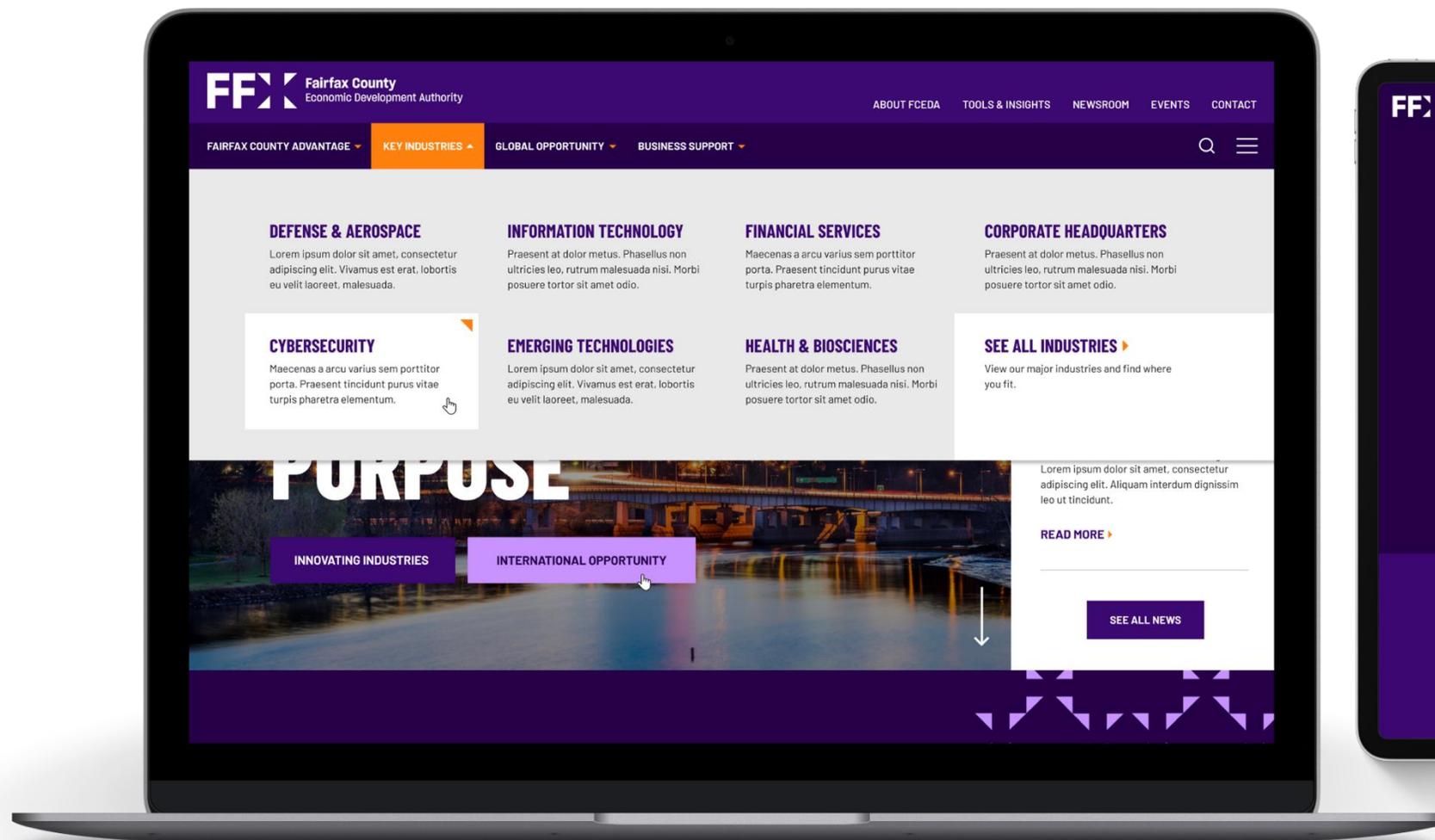
[DOING BUSINESS HERE](#) | [TARGET INDUSTRIES](#) | [BUSINESS RESOURCES](#) | [LIVE & WORK](#) | [ABOUT THE CHAMBER](#) | [NEWS](#)

61%

**of users will abandon
a website that isn't
easy to navigate.**

Your Navigation Should Be Obvious

Organize your sitemap in a way that makes sense.



Make sure each page has clear calls-to-action

Visitors don't want to dig for what they need.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Business Development Agency Bermuda. The background features a sunset over a harbor with a boat. The main heading reads "INVEST IN BERMUDA YOUR STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PARTNER". Below this is a paragraph: "As Bermuda's Investment Promotion Agency, the BDA connects global investors with opportunity — offering direct access to a trusted legal system, skilled professionals, and resilient, future-focused infrastructure." The navigation menu includes "EVENTS", "NEWS & MEDIA", "SUCCESS STORIES", "CONTACT US", "WHY BERMUDA", "KEY INDUSTRIES", "PROGRAMMES & RESOURCES", and "ABOUT BDA".

Callouts on the page include:

- REGISTER FOR THE BERMUDA RISK SUMMIT 2026** (dark blue bar with close icon)
- CONTACT US** (teal button)
- REGISTER NOW** (orange button)
- WHY BERMUDA** (teal button)
- KEY INDUSTRIES** (orange button)
- SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER** (teal text) with a **SUBSCRIBE** (teal button)

Four Habits of Successful Websites



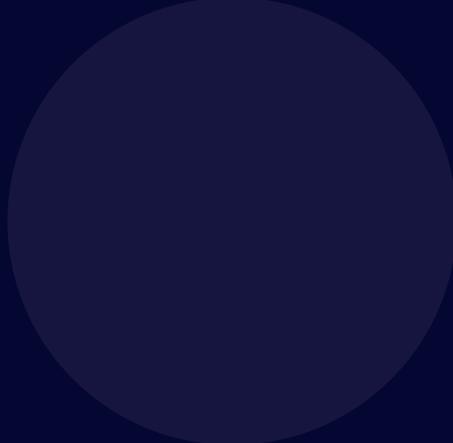
Know Your Audience



Provide a Clear Path



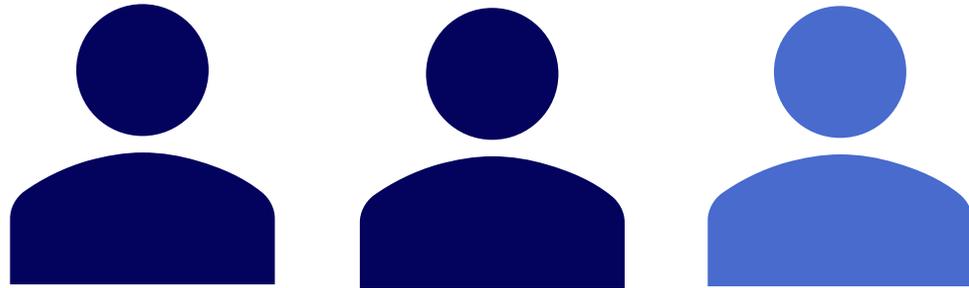
Reduce Friction



Our website is doing its job
when a visitor _____

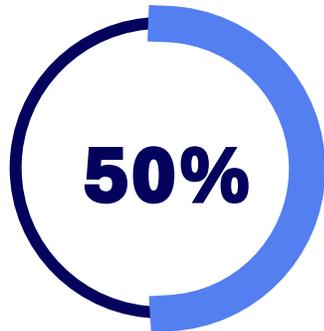
Use Gates Sparingly

Business attraction audiences hate forms.

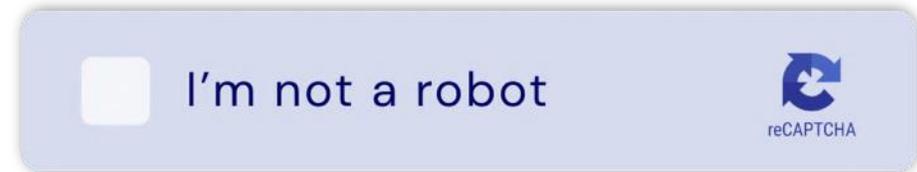


1 in 3

Users will abandon a form if a phone number is required (WPForms)



Reducing form fields from four to three can increase conversions by nearly 50% (Quicksprout)



CAPTCHAs can reduce form conversion rates by around **40%** (inc.com)

Forms Should Reduce Friction

Not create it.

Ask Yourself



Do we actually need this form?

What information do I truly need at this stage?

Who is managing these submissions?

Are the fields compliant with data privacy laws?

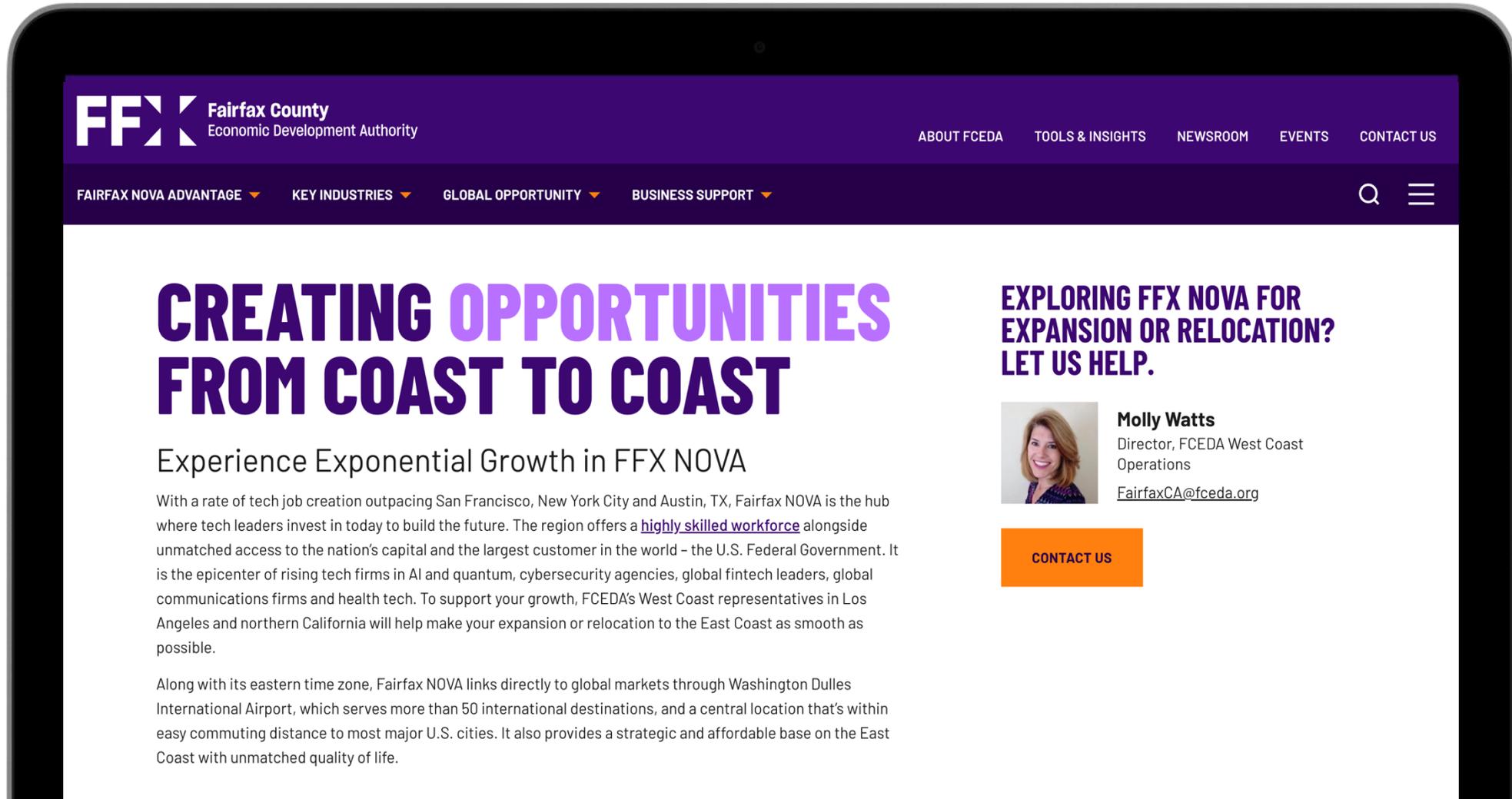
How long are we retaining submissions?

Are we measuring submissions or outcomes?

If I were a visitor, would I want to fill this out?

Make It Easy to Reach the Right Person

Clear contacts and real faces build trust and encourage outreach.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FROM COAST TO COAST

Experience Exponential Growth in FFX NOVA

With a rate of tech job creation outpacing San Francisco, New York City and Austin, TX, Fairfax NOVA is the hub where tech leaders invest in today to build the future. The region offers a [highly skilled workforce](#) alongside unmatched access to the nation's capital and the largest customer in the world - the U.S. Federal Government. It is the epicenter of rising tech firms in AI and quantum, cybersecurity agencies, global fintech leaders, global communications firms and health tech. To support your growth, FCEDA's West Coast representatives in Los Angeles and northern California will help make your expansion or relocation to the East Coast as smooth as possible.

Along with its eastern time zone, Fairfax NOVA links directly to global markets through Washington Dulles International Airport, which serves more than 50 international destinations, and a central location that's within easy commuting distance to most major U.S. cities. It also provides a strategic and affordable base on the East Coast with unmatched quality of life.

EXPLORING FFX NOVA FOR EXPANSION OR RELOCATION? LET US HELP.



Molly Watts

Director, FCEDA West Coast Operations

FairfaxCA@fceda.org

CONTACT US

Four Habits of Successful Websites



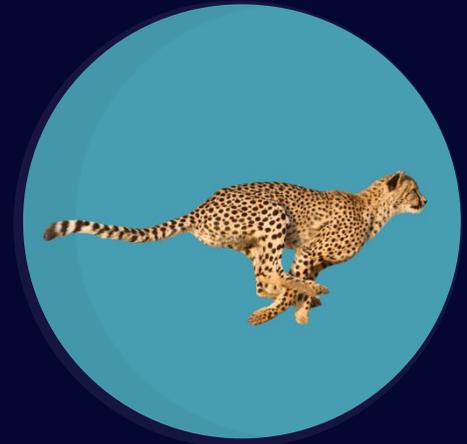
Know Your Audience



Provide a Clear Path



Reduce Friction

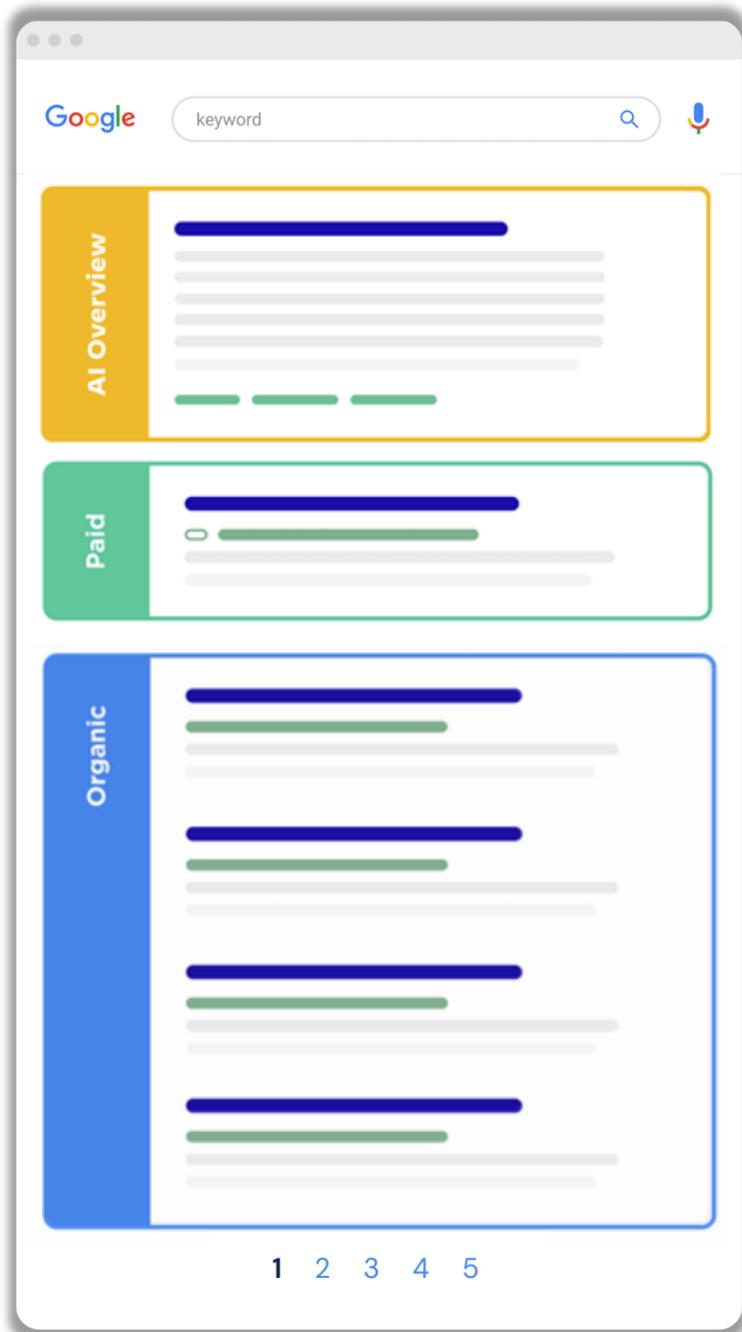


Prioritize Performance

Remain Calm.

AI Isn't Replacing Your Website

It's just changing how people discover it.



60%

Get what they need without ever clicking a link.

10%

Will click on a sponsored search result.

30%

Will select an organic search result.

<1%

Will click past the first page

Practical Tips

For your website in the age of AI

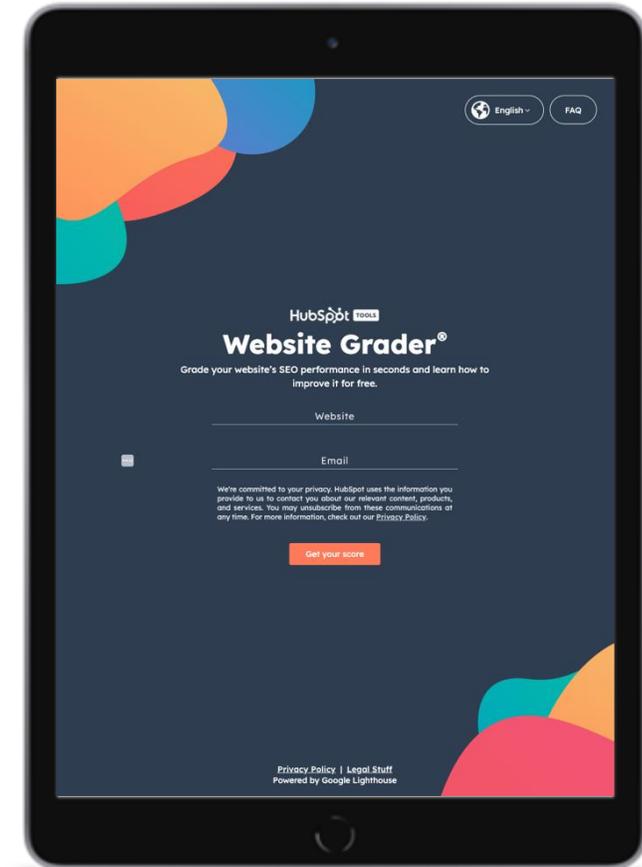
- 01 Keep your information clear and easy to understand
- 02 Answer the questions people are already asking
- 03 Keep key information current and relevant
- 04 Focus on expertise, not volume
- 05 Measure engagement, not just traffic



Site Health Matters

Search engines and AI reward websites that provide a smooth user experience.

- Fast loading pages
- Mobile-friendly design
- Clean, well-maintained systems
- Optimized images and tools
- Ongoing performance checks



website.grader.com

Google

Q Affordable beach town with career opportunities

All Images News Videos Shopping

AI Overview

For affordable beach town living with abundant career opportunities, consider **Hampton Roads, Virginia** (Virginia Beach, Norfolk), which offers Atlantic Ocean access, a robust job market in defense, maritime, and healthcare, and significantly lower housing costs than DC or Northeast coastal cities. Other options include Myrtle Beach, SC, Pensacola, FL, and Corpus Christi, TX.

VIRGINIA

Start in Hampton Roads

A vibrant coastal region. History, culture, innovation and community converge here as a dynamic hub. Start your new chapter with us.

VIRGINIA

ARTS & CULTURE

Creativity Powers Our Region

Hampton Roads is a vibrant center for arts and culture, where creativity drives economic growth, inspires community pride, and strengthens the local economy. Across the region, investments in cultural assets are fueling new opportunities — from major capital projects to record-breaking audience engagement. The arts are not just flourishing here — they are powering the future of South Hampton Roads.

Arts & Culture in Hampton Roads

94

www.startinhamptonroads.com

PERFORMANCE	24/30
SEO	30/30
MOBILE	30/30
SECURITY	10/10

HubSpot Website Grader

SECTION 04

Key Takeaways



- Include the content that your audience actually wants

- Keep your information current and relevant

- Make sure your navigation and site structure are clear

- Use clear call-to-actions on every website page

- Be strategic about where and when you use forms

- Make it easy contact your organization

- Make sure your content is clear and answers questions

- Maintain strong site health and performance



Thank you

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Scan For Contact Info

