



Strategic Website Builds

The complete guide: philosophy, scope, tiers, and what happens at every phase.

This is the full reference for how AK Randall Digital approaches a website build — not a summary, but the actual reasoning behind the scope, the tier structure, and the boundaries we hold. Read it end to end if you're evaluating whether this is the right engagement, or jump to the section you need.



IN THIS GUIDE

01 — Overview & Philosophy

02 — Why This Matters

03 — How We Think About the Web

04 — Tiers in Depth

05 — What's Not Included

06 — How It Works, Phase by Phase

01

Overview & Philosophy

A Strategic Website Build is the foundational digital presence for a business that needs to be taken seriously online — not a template thrown together in an afternoon, but a site built on real information architecture, real copy, and real technical groundwork. The approach is scope-matched delivery: a five-page site for a solo operator gets the same care as a data-driven build for a multi-location company, just less of it.

We treat a website the way an operations team treats infrastructure, not the way a marketing team treats a campaign asset. A campaign ends; infrastructure doesn't — it has to keep functioning, keep capturing leads, and keep being measurable for as long as the business relies on it. That's why every tier, even Starter, ships with the plumbing — a working form, an analytics install — rather than treating those as upsells. It's also why revisions are bounded and explicit: an open-ended revision process is how a simple five-page site quietly becomes a six-month project, and we'd rather set that expectation upfront than let scope drift discover it later.

02

Why This Matters

Most small businesses lose credibility before a prospect ever picks up the phone — a dated, slow, or broken-feeling website reads as a signal about how the business itself is run, fairly or not. The cost isn't abstract: it's the referral who checks the site at a stoplight and quietly moves on, the reviewer who screenshots a broken layout, the good lead that never fills out a form because there wasn't one.

The failure mode is rarely a business having no website at all — it's having one that technically exists but doesn't do anything: no way to measure who's visiting, no working form to capture the people who do, copy written once and never revisited as the business changed. A site like that isn't neutral, it's actively costing the business the ability to know what's working — which means every other marketing dollar spent driving people to it is partially wasted, because there's no feedback loop telling anyone whether it converted.

03

How We Think About the Web

Three things shape how we scope every build, regardless of tier:

- **Most traffic arrives on a phone, not a desktop.**

That's why mobile-first isn't a checkbox for us — it's the primary layout we design against, with desktop treated as the expanded view rather than the default.

- **Attention is short, and always comparative.**

A visitor is usually comparing this site against two or three others open in the same session, so the site has to establish credibility fast, not build up to it over several scrolls.

- **A site that doesn't measure itself can't improve.**

Analytics and lead capture aren't reporting overhead — they're the mechanism by which a Starter build earns its way into a Growth rebuild later, backed by real data instead of guesses.

These are operating principles drawn from how we scope engagements, not third-party research citations — we'd rather tell you plainly how we think than dress up a generic statistic as if it were specific to your business.

04

Tiers in Depth

	Starter	Growth	Custom
BEST FOR	First credible presence, live fast	Multiple service lines, real proof	Needs real data — maps, filters
PAGE SCOPE	Up to 5 pages	Up to 10 pages	Unlimited, CMS-driven
LEAD CAPTURE	One contact/lead form + basic SEO + analytics	Multiple forms + conversion tracking	Custom data integration (maps, filters, dashboards)
CONTENT & BRAND	Existing copy, hosting/domain guidance	Custom copywriting, style guide, sourced imagery, blog template	Full brand system documentation, advanced interactions/animation
REVISIONS	1 round	2 rounds	3+ rounds, staging environment
AT LAUNCH	Setup guidance	—	Training/handoff + 30-day support window

Tiers aren't discrete products so much as a single build scaled to what the business needs to prove first. Most Growth clients start at Starter and rebuild once the site has generated enough real traffic and inquiries to justify the expansion — the analytics installed on day one are what make that decision an informed one instead of a guess.

05

What's Not Included

- **Ongoing content writing or blog authorship after launch.** We build the template; authoring new posts on a recurring basis is a separate content relationship.
- **Paid ad spend or campaign management.** We can size the site to convert ad traffic, but media buying and spend sit outside this scope.
- **Software, hosting, or CMS subscription costs.** Accounts and billing stay in the client's name so there's no vendor lock-in on our side.
- **Data migration beyond a reasonable starting set of content.** A full historical migration is scoped separately once we know the real volume.
- **Legal review of site copy, terms, or privacy language.** We'll flag where it's usually needed, but review itself is outside our scope.

* These boundaries are inferred from what's in scope, not itemized separately in every contract — worth confirming case by case.

A FEW QUESTIONS WE GET

"Can you also write our ongoing blog content?"

Not as part of a build engagement — we set up the template, and authoring is a separate relationship.

"Do you manage our ad campaigns too?"

No — we build the site to convert that traffic well, but media buying is out of scope.

"We already have years of content on our old site — does that carry over?"

A reasonable starting set does. A full historical migration gets scoped once we know the volume.

06

How It Works, Phase by Phase

● 01

Map

We map the site's real purpose: who needs to find it, what they need to do once there, and what proof has to appear on the page for that action to happen. This becomes the sitemap and content plan.

From you: existing materials, service list, and access to any current analytics.

● 02

Design

The map becomes a working layout, grounded in the brand palette and type, built mobile-first. Wireframes and visual direction are reviewed before any page is built.

From you: feedback on wireframes within the round(s) the tier includes.

● 03

Build

The approved design is built page by page, wired to forms and analytics — and, at Custom, the data integrations the plan called for — then tested across devices.

From you: final copy and image assets not covered by sourcing.

● 04

Operate

The site launches with the handoff the tier includes — from setup guidance at Starter to a training session and support window at Custom — so it's the client's system to run, not a black box.

From you: hosting/domain account access at launch.

WHO THIS IS FOR

Businesses that need a credible, working presence and are ready to actually use what it captures.

NOT A FIT IF

You need daily content updates or ongoing marketing execution — that's a retainer relationship, not a build.

Starting range: varies by tier and scope — discussed once we've mapped the build.