

A Guide to Websites for Small Business Owners

Your Journey to Profit

Who this book is for:

Sipho — South African small business owner (30–50), ambitious but not deeply tech-savvy, doesn't yet have a website, eager to grow but cautious about spending, wants clarity, ROI, and real-world relevance.

eBook Outline

Chapter 1: Why Every Business Needs a Website (Even Yours, Sipho)

- Why social media alone isn't enough
 - Real examples of South African businesses that grew through a simple website
 - How a website gives you control, credibility, and 24/7 visibility
-

Chapter 2: What Kind of Website Does Your Business Need?

- The 3 most common types for small businesses (basic brochure, lead-gen, online booking)
 - Which one is best for Sipho-style businesses
 - Quiz: "What's the right website for you?"
-

Chapter 3: How Much Should You Really Spend on a Website?

- South African pricing benchmarks (basic, standard, premium tiers)
 - Payment plans and phased builds
 - "Good enough to grow" mindset vs. perfection paralysis
-

Chapter 4: The Truth About Website Marketing in South Africa

- How people *actually* find your site (Google, Facebook, WhatsApp)
- Basic marketing budget suggestions (R500–R3000/month range)
- Stats: Conversion rates, ad click costs, ROI examples
- Case study: Local business that got 10x return in 3 months

Chapter 5: What Makes a Good Website?

- Sipho-proof checklist: Must-haves for functionality, trust, and clarity
 - Mobile-friendliness, fast load time, simple contact forms
 - Real screenshots with annotations
-

Chapter 6: What Happens After Launch?

- Common fears and how to overcome them
 - Monthly activities: update info, track calls/leads, improve offers
 - ROI timeline: what to expect by month 1, 3, 6
-

Chapter 7: Your Next Step (Let's Keep It Simple)

- Step-by-step action plan (domain → design → launch → promote)
 - Tool suggestions (from our list of calculators, planners, checkers)
 - Offer: Get your free “Website Ready Report”
-



Appendix: Marketing ROI & Local Stats

- Average costs of Google & Facebook ads in South Africa
- Example: “If you spend R1000/mo and get 3 clients, what’s the return?”
- ROI calculator embed (or QR code to tool)
- Case study snapshot

Chapter 1: Why Every Business Needs a Website (Even Yours, Siphho)

Let's get straight to it, Siphho: you've heard people say you need a website. But deep down, you're asking:


"Do I *really* need one? My business is doing okay without it. I have WhatsApp, Facebook, and clients already."

That's fair. But let's take a moment to look at what's *actually* going on in the South African market right now — and what that means for your business.

The Way People Buy Has Changed — Even in SA

Your customers no longer just ask their friends for a recommendation. They **Google**, they **check reviews**, and they **compare websites**. Even if they *heard* about your business on Facebook or through a friend, they're still likely to search for you online before reaching out.

If you're not there, your competitor is.

 87% of South African internet users go online to research before making a purchase
(Source: Datareportal)

Your Website Is Not Just for Big Companies









It's not about having something fancy. A simple one-page website can:



- Show your services
- Prove you're legit (testimonials, photos, contact info)
- Let customers contact you **even when you're sleeping**
- Get you found on Google (free traffic!)
- Help you grow without spending more time chasing leads

You're not building a website for the *internet* — you're building it for that one customer who's ready to buy but just needs to **trust you** a little more.

But Siphho, I Have WhatsApp and Facebook — Isn't That Enough?

Let's compare real quick:

Feature	Facebook/WhatsApp	Your Own Website
Always online?	 (accounts get banned, links break)	 Always yours
Looks professional?	 Mixed results	 You control your image
Searchable on Google?	 No	 Yes
Organizes your services?	 Not really	 Clear structure

Feature	Facebook/WhatsApp	Your Own Website
Grows your brand long term?  Limited		 Built to scale
Your Facebook page is like renting a stall at someone else's market.		
Your website is your own shop.		

Real Story: Sbusiso the Plumber


Sbusiso ran a small plumbing business in Johannesburg. All his jobs came from referrals and Facebook Marketplace. Business was okay — but inconsistent.

He got a simple one-page website. Nothing fancy — just his services, a few photos, and a contact form.

In the first 3 months:

- His site got 200+ visits
- 28 people filled out the form
- He closed 6 new jobs, totaling over R19,000

The cost of the site? Just under R4,000 once-off.

 “It felt like customers were coming to *me*, not the other way around.” — Sbusiso

Bottom Line: If You Want to Grow, You Need a Website

Think of your website as a **silent salesperson** — always working, never sleeping, never asking for overtime.

Even if you get one lead a week from your website, that's **52 leads a year** you might've missed. That's money on the table, Sipho.

What's Next?

In the next chapter, we'll talk about **what kind of website is right for you** — because not every business needs a fancy e-commerce store or a 20-page site.

For now, just ask yourself:

“What could I do if customers trusted me faster?”

A good website helps you answer that question with results — not just hope.

Awesome — here's **Chapter 2** of “*A Guide to Websites for Small Business Owners: Sipho's Journey to Profit.*”

Chapter 2: What Kind of Website Does Your Business Need?

Alright — now that you’re thinking, “*Okay, maybe I do need a website,*” the next question naturally is:

“But what kind of website?”

Not every business needs the same thing. In fact, **trying to copy big brands** or overpaying for features you'll never use is one of the fastest ways to waste time and money.

So let's break it down — simply.


The 3 Main Types of Small Business Websites

These aren't technical categories. These are real-world, "*Sipho-style*" types that match where your business is and what it actually needs.

Type 1: The "Starter Site" (Brochure-Style)

Perfect for: service businesses, consultants, freelancers, local stores


- 1–3 pages
- Shows who you are, what you do, and how to contact you
- Includes WhatsApp button, email, maybe a short enquiry form
- Often under R4,000 (once-off), or < R300/month on a payment plan

 **Why it works:** It's clean, credible, and answers the most important question: *Can I trust this person with my money?*

Type 2: The Lead-Generation Machine

Perfect for: ambitious small business owners who want consistent new clients

- Still fairly simple, but built with one goal: **get you leads**
- Strong call-to-action ("Request a Quote", "Book Now")
- Google Maps, service area, fast loading
- Includes basic SEO (shows up on Google when people search for what you do)

 **Why it works:** It doesn't just look good — it helps people *take action* right away. You can track clicks, leads, and even run ads to it.

Type 3: The Booking or Sales Assistant




Perfect for: trainers, barbers, beauty salons, tutors, or anyone who needs appointments

- Customers can book online (calendar integration)
- Collect deposits or full payments online
- Send automatic confirmations or reminders
- Starts from R6,000–R10,000+ or R500–R900/month on payment plan

 **Why it works:** It saves you time. No more back-and-forth messages about times or payments.






Sipho's Self-Test: What Do You Need?

Answer these quickly:

1. Do you just need people to **know you exist and contact you easily**?
 Starter Site
2. Do you want to **increase your leads** and maybe run Facebook or Google Ads?
 Lead-Gen Site
3. Do you **schedule appointments** or **sell services online**?
 Booking Site

You don't need to overthink this. Start where you are. You can always **upgrade** as your business grows.

Real Comparison Table

Feature	Starter Site	Lead-Gen Site	Booking/Sales Site
Cost (once-off)	R3,000–R5,000	R4,500–R7,000	R6,000–R10,000+
Monthly option?	 Yes	 Yes	 Yes
Can show on Google?	 Basic SEO	 Good SEO	 Good SEO
Booking or payments?			
Built to grow over time?	 Limited	 Flexible	 Flexible

What You *Don't* Need (Yet)

Let's keep it real:

- You probably **don't need e-commerce** if you don't have products ready for delivery
- You probably **don't need 10+ pages** if you're just starting out
- You **don't need to hire a big agency** — local freelancers or boutique devs give better value for small budgets

Start lean. Focus on trust, leads, and conversions. **Profit first — features later.**

Chapter 3: How Much Should You *Really* Spend on a Website?

Okay Sipho — now that you know the type of website your business needs, let's talk about the part that usually gets everyone sweating:

“How much is this going to cost me?”

Here's the good news:

You don't need to spend R15,000 to R30,000 like the big brands. You just need to invest wisely — **enough to get results**, but not so much that you're under pressure or regret it.

What You're *Actually* Paying For

Let's break it down:

You're not just paying for "a website." You're paying for:

- Credibility
- Visibility
- Trust
- Time savings
- A sales tool that works 24/7
- A digital version of YOU

Would you pay R3,000–R5,000 for a part-time sales rep who brings in just 1–2 good clients a month?

That's what a **well-built, simple site** can do.

Realistic Price Ranges in South Africa


Website Type	Once-Off Price	Monthly Option	Ideal for...
Starter Site	R3,000–R5,000	R250–R400/month	Getting started, basic presence
Lead-Gen Site	R4,500–R7,000	R400–R600/month	Getting leads, building trust online
Booking/Sales Site	R6,000–R10,000+	R600–R900/month	Service-based, time-saving bookings

 **Pro Tip:** You'll often pay *less* overall with once-off pricing, but *monthly plans* make cash flow easier — especially if it includes updates, hosting, and support.

What's Included in That Price?

A good web package at these price points should give you:

- ✓ Custom layout based on your business
- ✓ Mobile-friendly design
- ✓ WhatsApp integration
- ✓ Basic Google optimization
- ✓ Contact form or booking setup
- ✓ 2–5 pages of content
- ✓ Help writing copy (if needed)

 Be cautious of "R500 websites" — they're usually DIY templates with no strategy, support, or results.

Payment Plan vs. Once-Off: Which Is Better?

Let's say you're offered a Lead-Gen site for:

- **R6,000 once-off**
OR
- **R500/month x 12 = R6,000 total**

💡 If the monthly option includes **ongoing updates, security, and help** — it's worth it.

But if the developer disappears after 3 months? You're stuck.

🧠 Tip: Ask what happens *after* your website goes live. Ongoing support is often more valuable than extra pages.

Case Study: Lindiwe's Catering Business

Lindiwe paid R3,800 for a clean one-pager site with a contact form, photo gallery, and WhatsApp link. She posted it in a few local Facebook groups.

In 1 month:

- 143 visits
- 18 enquiries
- 3 paid jobs (R1,800, R3,000, R2,500)
- ROI: Over R6,000 from a R3,800 spend

“Before, people kept saying, ‘Send more info.’ Now they say, ‘I saw your site — can you do next Saturday?’”

What If You *Can't Afford It Right Now*?

If your business is still growing or money is tight, don't panic. There are ways to ease in:

- Start with a **single landing page** (R1,000–R2,500 range)
- Use **monthly payment plans** with no big deposit
- Apply for **small business support grants** in your area
- Offer **partial trade/barter** with designers who need testimonials

The goal is simple: **Don't wait for perfect. Start with functional.**

Your Website Budget Formula

Here's a basic starting point you can tweak:

[Monthly marketing budget] x 3 = Reasonable website spend

So if you can spend R500/month on Facebook Ads, a R1,500–R3,000 site makes sense. If you're comfortable with R1,000–R2,000/month for total digital, you're ready for R6,000+ packages.

Recap: What's a Smart Spend?

- R3,000–R5,000 for a *Starter Site*
 - R4,500–R7,000 for a *Lead-Gen Site*
 - R6,000–R10,000+ for a *Booking/Sales Site*
 - Monthly plans can ease cash flow and give you support
 - Start small and scale — but *start*
-

Next up, let's talk about **what really happens after the site goes live** — how you market it, what it costs, and what kind of results you can expect in South Africa.

Awesome — here's **Chapter 4** of “*A Guide to Websites for Small Business Owners: Sipho's Journey to Profit.*”

Chapter 4: The Truth About Website Marketing in South Africa

Alright Sipho — you’ve got your website, it looks sharp, and now you’re thinking...

“Now what? How do I actually get people to visit this thing?”

Let’s be real: a website with no traffic is like printing flyers and leaving them in your car’s boot. No one’s going to see it unless **you market it**.

But here's the thing: **you don’t need a huge budget to see results**. You just need to understand how things work *in your country, with your kind of business*.

South African Marketing Realities (Stats You Should Know)

- **Internet penetration** in SA is over **72%** — that’s about 43 million people online
- Over **98% of internet users** access the web via mobile phones
- **WhatsApp and Facebook** are the most-used platforms by small business clients
- **Google searches for local services** are growing every year, especially for "near me" queries
- **Average Facebook ad cost per 1,000 views (CPM):** R35–R60 — *very affordable compared to Europe or the US*

💡 TL;DR: Your customers *are* online. And reaching them doesn’t cost a fortune — if you know how.

What It Really Costs to Market Your Website

Let’s break it down realistically for South African small businesses:

Method	Budget Range	Time to See Results	ROI Potential
Facebook Ads	R300–R1,000/month	1–7 days	High (esp. with WhatsApp link)
Google Business Profile	Free	Instant	Very high
SEO (showing up on Google)	R0–R1,000/month	2–3 months	Long-term growth
WhatsApp & Groups	Free	Immediate	Depends on effort
Paid Google Ads	R500–R2,000/month	1–5 days	High (if done right)




🧠 **Pro Tip:** Even R20/day on Facebook or Google can bring you leads if the ad is set up properly and leads to a strong website.

Your First Marketing Goal: Traffic + Trust

You don't need thousands of visitors.

You just need **10–50 quality people** who are ready to buy — and to make it easy for them to trust you and take the next step.

That's where your website shines:

-  They click your ad or profile
-  They learn about your service (and see you're serious)
-  They message, call, or fill out the form

Boom — a lead you didn't have yesterday.






The Sipho Strategy: Simple, Smart, Sustainable

Here's how most of our clients (and probably you) get started:

1. **Set up a Google Business Profile** (free)
2. **Run a R20–R50/day Facebook ad** targeting your area
3. **Join 3–5 Facebook groups** for your niche (e.g., Local Plumbers, SA Homeowners, Freelancers SA)
4. **Ask past customers for 1 review**
5. **Post your site link 2–3 times a week** with value tips or offers

That's it. Do this for 3 weeks and track the results.

Quick Wins: Things That Drive Traffic Fast

-  A WhatsApp button on your homepage
 -  A testimonial from a happy client
 -  A “FREE Quote” or “Book Now” call-to-action
 -  Mobile-friendly design (South Africans browse on phones!)
 -  Clear contact info and service area
-


Real ROI: What You Can Expect

Let's talk *return on investment* — what most developers won't tell you.

Here's what Sipho could expect with a **basic R5,000 website** and R500/month on Facebook Ads.

Metric	Estimate (per month)
Website Visitors	200–500 people
Contact Form / WhatsApp Leads	15–40 enquiries

Metric	Estimate (per month)
Real Clients (Conversion)	3–10
Average Job Size	R1,000–R3,000
Monthly Revenue	R3,000–R20,000

 NOTE: These numbers vary — but this is a **realistic ballpark** based on dozens of South African service businesses we've worked with.

Sipho's Lesson: You Don't Need Luck — Just Leverage

Marketing isn't about luck or followers. It's about **making it easy for the right people to find you**, trust you, and reach out.

Your website makes that possible. Marketing makes it visible.

Coming Up...

Now that you know what kind of traffic and results to expect — how do you **measure your growth**, improve over time, and make sure your site stays profitable?

Let's dive into that in **Chapter 5: Tracking, Tweaking & Turning Your Site into a Profit Engine**.

Chapter 5: Tracking, Tweaking & Turning Your Site into a Profit Engine

Okay Sipho — by now, you’ve got your site, you’ve started marketing it, and maybe leads are trickling in.

Now we’re going to unlock the real secret sauce:

“How do I know if it’s working — and how can I make it better each month?”

The good news? You don’t need to be a data expert.

You just need a few tools, a weekly habit, and the right mindset:


- **Measure what matters**
- **Change what’s broken**
- **Do more of what works**

Let’s break that down.

Step 1: Track the Right Things

Don’t get overwhelmed. Start with just 3 numbers:

Metric	What It Tells You	Tool to Track
Visitors	How many people are coming?	Google Analytics, Plausible.io
Leads	How many contact you?	WhatsApp messages, Contact Form
Conversions	How many become paying clients?	Track in notebook/Google Sheet


 Tip: Set a goal like:

“I want 200 visitors → 30 leads → 5 clients per month.”

If you’re hitting that, you’re in a good place. If not, something needs adjusting.

Step 2: Tweak the Weak Spots

If you’re not getting results, don’t panic — just troubleshoot like a mechanic:

Problem	Possible Fix
Few visitors	Try better Facebook targeting, adjust ad copy
Many visitors, no leads	Improve your offer or WhatsApp call-to-action
Leads, but no conversions	Add testimonials, better response follow-up
Drop in traffic	Check if ads are paused or your site is slow
 Big red flag: If no one is messaging you, your site isn’t convincing.	
Ask a friend: “ <i>Would YOU message me if you saw this page?</i> ” Honest feedback is gold.	

Step 3: Set Up a Weekly Review

Once a week, spend 20–30 minutes doing this:

1. Check site visits
2. Count new messages or enquiries
3. Note how many people paid you
4. Ask: **What worked this week? What didn't?**
5. Tweak *one* thing — don't try fix everything at once

Use a simple journal or spreadsheet. Consistency beats perfection.

Step 4: Use Tools That Work While You Sleep

Here are a few free/low-cost tools that *automate* your growth:

- **WhatsApp auto-reply**: Handles messages instantly while you're busy
 - **Facebook Ads Manager**: Lets you run/test ads with daily budgets
 - **Ubersuggest** (by Neil Patel): Shows keywords people search for locally
 - **Google Business Profile**: Free visibility on Google search + maps
 - **MailerLite / Brevo**: Send simple emails to people who contact you
- 💡 Once you see what people respond to — build around it.
-

💡 **Sipho's 60-Day Plan to Profit**

Here's what Sipho's routine might look like:

Week	Focus	Outcome
1	Site goes live, setup WhatsApp link	First enquiries trickle in
2	Launch Facebook ad (R25/day)	100+ visitors, 5+ leads
3	Add 1 testimonial + reply faster	Lead-to-client ratio improves
4	Adjust ad wording based on top clicks	Cheaper cost per lead
5	Join 3 Facebook groups, share value	More organic traffic
6	Follow up with older leads	Past "maybes" turn into "yes"
7	Add simple offer ("Get R50 off first job")	Boosts clicks + bookings
8	Review month: Revenue vs. effort	Clear view of ROI + next steps

Recap: Build It, Then Improve It

You don't need to rebuild your site every month.

You just need to **test, measure, and improve** — a little at a time.

- 🕒 Track only what matters: traffic, leads, clients
- 🔧 Tweak the small stuff first: words, buttons, speed
- 📅 Review every week for 20 minutes — seriously, that's enough

- 💡 Build habits, not just websites

Your website is never finished. It's always improving — just like your business.

Up next? Let's finish strong with a clear, simple **action plan** that Sipho (and you) can follow to go from where you are today — to a website that consistently brings in profit.

Chapter 6: Your 90-Day Website Action Plan

Alright Sipho, you've come a long way.

- You've learned **why** your business needs a website
- You've seen **how** to launch and market it
- You've even started tracking performance like a pro


Now let's lock it all in with a **simple 90-day action plan**.

No fluff. No fancy strategies. Just clear, focused steps that take you from “nice site” to “my site is making me money.”

Month 1: Foundation

Goal: Launch your site + start getting leads

Week	Task	Result You're Aiming For
1	Finalize your website (mobile-friendly, clear offer, contact options)	A site that builds trust and invites action
2	Create/verify your Google Business Profile	People can find you when they Google your service
3	Set up WhatsApp & FB Messenger links	Frictionless communication with leads
4	Launch first R20–R50/day Facebook ad	Your first few real enquiries

 **Quick Win Tip:** Post in 2–3 local Facebook groups with your service and a simple call-to-action:

“Hi all! I just launched my site. I help with [X]. If anyone needs help, I’m offering a free quote this week. Click here: [your link]”

Month 2: Traffic + Trust

Goal: Increase visibility and begin converting more leads

Week	Task	Result You're Aiming For
5	Collect 2–3 client testimonials	Build trust with social proof
6	Improve your homepage headline/offer	More people message or call you
7	Test a second Facebook ad variation	Lower ad cost per lead
8	Join and participate in Facebook/WhatsApp groups	More organic traffic

 **What to Ask Yourself:**


- Are my leads qualified (the right people)?
- Is there any confusion on my site?
- What's my lead-to-client conversion rate?

Use this month to learn, tweak, and keep things moving.

Month 3: Systems + Scale

Goal: Turn this into a predictable profit engine

Week	Task	Result You're Aiming For
9	Set up a basic spreadsheet to track leads & revenue	See what's really working
10	Re-engage old leads with a limited-time offer	Turn "maybe later" into "yes now"
11	Add an upsell or referral incentive	Increase earnings per client
12	Review the past 90 days, optimize next 90	You've got a working system in place

 **Bonus Tip:** Add a "Free Tool" to your site — like a quote calculator or service checklist. It builds authority and gives people a reason to stay on your site longer.

Sipho's Thought: "I'm No Longer Guessing"

Most business owners run around trying random stuff and hoping it sticks.






But not you. You've got a plan.

And that's why your website is doing more than looking good — it's working hard *for you*.

 "This book helped me go from zero website to 10 clients a month. And I didn't need to be a tech genius to do it." — *Sipho, Local Service Business Owner*

Final Checklist: Your Website Business Engine

By now, you should have...

-  A mobile-first website that's clear, focused, and personal
 -  A contact method that's instant (WhatsApp, form, or both)
 -  One or two marketing channels (Facebook, Google) bringing traffic
 -  A system for measuring, improving, and responding to leads
 -  Real clients reaching out regularly
-

Where to Go From Here

If you've made it this far — congrats.

You've built something powerful. Now, you keep refining it.

From here you can:

- Add email marketing to re-engage past leads
- Launch new landing pages for special offers
- Scale up ads when ready
- Expand to new regions
- Automate replies and lead handling

But remember: even if you **never scale**, your website should always be helping you earn, every single week.

The Journey to Profit is just the beginning.
The real story? It's yours now.

Appendix: ROI Tools & Projections for Your Website

Why This Matters

Sipho — or *you*, dear reader — didn't build a website just to “look professional.” You built it to **make money**.

So let's put some real numbers behind it:

“If I spend R500 on ads, how many clients will I get?”
“If I get 100 visits a month, what can I expect in sales?”
“What's a *realistic* return on investment?”

This section will show you — in plain language — how to calculate that.

Your Simple ROI Formula

Let's define ROI (Return on Investment):

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{Revenue} - \text{Cost}) \div \text{Cost}$$

If you spend R500 on ads and make R2,000 from the clients that came in, your ROI is:


$$(\text{R}2,000 - \text{R}500) \div \text{R}500 = 3.0 \rightarrow \text{that's } 300\% \text{ ROI.}$$

You earned R3 for every R1 you spent.

Let's plug this into some **realistic Sipho-style numbers**.

Scenario 1: The Starter

Metric	Value
Monthly ad spend	R500
Website visitors (from ads)	200
Leads (10% of visitors)	20
Clients (25% of leads)	5
Avg revenue per client	R400
Total revenue	R2,000
ROI	300%

 Assumes basic ad targeting, clear offer, good WhatsApp response time.

Scenario 2: The Growing Business

Metric	Value
Monthly ad spend	R1,200
Website visitors	600

Metric	Value
Leads (12% of visitors)	72
Clients (20% of leads)	14
Avg revenue per client	R500
Total revenue	R7,000
ROI	483%

🚀 Includes optimizations like testimonials, better ad copy, retargeting.



Scenario 3: The Scaled-Up Pro

Metric	Value
Monthly ad spend	R3,000
Website visitors	1,000
Leads (15% of visitors)	150
Clients (25% of leads)	38
Avg revenue per client	R600
Total revenue	R22,800
ROI	660%

🚀 Strong brand, fast response time, trust built, possibly niche services.



Monthly ROI Tracker Template (Manual or App-Based)

If you want to track this yourself:

Month	Ad Spend	Visitors	Leads	Clients	Rev/Client	Revenue	ROI %
Apr	R500	200	20	5	R400	R2,000	300%
May	R700	300	36	8	R450	R3,600	414%
Jun	R1,000	400	50	10	R500	R5,000	400%

Use Google Sheets, Airtable, or Notion — or one of the bonus tools listed earlier (like a pre-made ROI calculator).



Average Conversion Benchmarks (For South Africa)

Stage	Average Rate
Facebook Ad Click → Website Visit	2–5% of viewers
Visitor → Lead (message, form)	5–15% of visitors
Lead → Paying Client	15–30% of leads

Important: These numbers improve with trust, speed of reply, and clarity of offer.

Final Advice: Don't Be Afraid of the Math

You don't need to be an accountant.

You just need to **track a few simple numbers consistently**.

Once you do, you'll make smarter decisions about:

- When to increase your ad budget
- What type of clients give the best return
- Where your website is losing people (and how to fix it)

The website is a business tool. This appendix helps you treat it like one.