

Planning Your Web Business

- Developing a profitable strategy and business model
- Understanding the social media mindset
- Learning from successful web businesses
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2. Lay the Groundwork

- Clearly define your unique value proposition.
- Who are your users and where do they hang out?
- What is your main message(s)?

3. Define Your Objectives

- Do you want to generate qualified leads?
- Are you offering resources and information to your current customers or the public?
- Do you want to sell your product or service on the web?
- Do you need to appeal to multiple audiences?
- Defining your goals will help shape the design, functionality, and marketing plan for your web site.

4. Research the Competition

- Search the web for businesses like yours in other areas.
- Look up the web sites of your local competition.
- Make notes about features you like or dislike, and bookmark what you find for later reference.
- Bookmark web sites with visual designs you find appealing.

5. Consider Your Resources

- Are you a computer buff who likes to do stuff on your own?
- Are you busy with other obligations and a bit overwhelmed by the Internet?
- Are you an experienced Internet user or a novice?
- Regardless of where you find yourself on the spectrum of Internet expertise and the time and money you want to invest, there is a optimal solution that will work for you.

6. Are Your Plans Realistic?

- What return will you need on your website investment.
- How will people find your web site?
- Can you successfully position your web site using the resources you have?

7. Create a Budget

Your web budget should include the costs for:

- initial setup and design for a website
- development of other web properties (optional)
- monthly website hosting fees
- future changes and enhancements
- marketing of your site.

Plan a budget for both time and money.

8. Choose a Service Provider

- You'll need a place to host your web pages and you'll need to develop the web pages.

Some options:

- DIY static pages with low-cost hosting.
- DIY hosted solution.
- Web Designer, Static Pages, low-cost hosting.
- High-end hosted CMS/eCommerce
- Custom design, programming and dedicated hosting.

9. Register a Domain Name

Best domain names are:

- short
- end in .com
- have no dashes
- have descriptive words
- easy to type/easy to remember
- make search engines happy.

10. Domain Name Examples

Good

- www.alliedbingo.com
- www.bandoninn.com
- www.loveyourpets.com

Not so good

www.lane-county-and-eugene-audiologists.tv
www.andyschmidt.com

For help researching domain names, try:

www.nameboy.com

Use a reputable domain registrar like godaddy.com

Decide on Your Presentation

- Connect your presentation with your unique value proposition/philosophy
- Multimedia ... or not.
- Difference between print and web
- Usability

12. Map Out Content and Features

Create a rough outline of what pages or sections your web site will have.

Examples:

- Home Page, Description of Services, Return Policy

List any important features you need

Examples:

- Do you want to provide estimates, let visitors shop, accept catalog requests, opt-in email, or publish a calendar of events?

If you are working with a web developer, enlist their help during this part of the process.

13. Develop and Collect Site Content

- Write a short paragraph or sketch a simple drawing of what you want on your home page and how you want it to look.
- Use materials you already have, like your business plan, printed brochures, product data sheets.
- Gather text, graphics, your product database, and other materials you may be able to use on your web site.

14. Develop Your Marketing Strategy

- When your website is ready to go, you'll want to let the public know about it! You need to get the word out in as many ways possible.
- Add your website address to business cards, all print ads, catalogs, invoices, your email signature, etc.
 - Send a letter to all your contacts telling them about your website.
 - Email Marketing Campaigns
 - SEO/SEM
 - Press Releases
 - Blogs

15. eCommerce Issues

- Accepting Credit Cards
- Shipping
- Merchandising features
- Pricing
- Order Management/Processing
- Order fulfillment

16. Key Points

- Research your options
- You don't need to be a technology expert to make informed decisions.
- Set realistic goals
- Good planning will help your project progress quickly and smoothly.
- Have fun with it!

17. HEROweb Marketing and Design

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- o Next classes: four and six week classes begin in January in which we will go into more detail about good web site development practices, marketing, search engine placement and much more.