

River Media

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Establishing your Internet Presence

Introduction

This article shows you what is involved to get your own website up and running. This information can help you with preparing the requirements for your website. Having well defined requirements will result in a better website while making it easier for both you and the web designer to whom you outsourced your project.

Outsourcing your web development project

You are planning on outsourcing your web development project, right? A mistake commonly made by small businesses is to think that they can simply throw together their own website by using basic knowledge of HTML, the language in which webpages are written.

I agree that having a basic understanding of HTML or tools such as Microsoft Frontpage and Macromedia Dreamweaver can lower your costs in the long run. This allows you to do the maintenance on the website contents yourself. However, please don't make the mistake of setting up your webpage yourself. Trust me that outsourcing your web development project will save you a significant amount of time and frustration.

Making preparations

Before outsourcing your project, collect the information as written in this section.

Domain name

Your website requires an Internet address such as <http://www.yourname.com>. Brainstorm a few domain names that are short and descriptive for your type of business. You can check availability yourself or ask your web designer to take care of the registration.

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Content

Don't expect your web designer to create all the contents of your website. they do not know your business as well as you. Create a simple document with: your mission statement, history of your business, customer testimonials, contact information, and an introduction to your company.

Layout

A good logo can spark the creativity of the web designer. If you want to further steer this creativity, provide your web designer with your preferred color scheme. It's even better if you can provide a list with Internet addresses of websites that you like.

Images

Most businesses have digital versions of their logo and products. Collect these and pass them on to your web designer.

What to ask for

After collecting all this information, you are ready to contact your web designer. Here is a good hint: request your web designer to first deliver a design of your website for your approval before they start implementing the website. Ask for at least the following tasks to be completed:

Domain name registration. Your web designer will know where to go for this and who is offering a good mix between reliability and cost.

Obtain hosting account. You need to be able to store your website on a server computer that is connected to the Internet 24-7. For this a hosting account is needed.

Website development. This consists of your web designer making a design and then implementing the design of your website.

Search engine submission. Make sure your customers can find your website on the Internet. For this it has to be submitted to the search engines.

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Free support. If a web designer believes in the quality of their own work, they won't mind giving you free support for at least a few weeks regarding their work results.

How much it will cost

There are two types of costs involved, one time costs and recurring costs. The latter consist of your hosting account and the renewal of your domain name. Even if your web designer obtained these for you, they are your responsibility. These can vary greatly depending on your provider and website size and complexity. For a basic website you can expect these recurring costs to be approximately \$100 to \$200/year.

The one time costs consist of the actual website development. A basic website containing up to 10 pages will take approximately 2 weeks to design and implement. The hourly rate for web designers varies greatly based on their location and skills and will be somewhere between \$50 and \$150.

Conclusion

The contents of this article outlined what you should do to obtain a website that satisfies your requirements and expectations. It also gives you a guideline for calculating the costs allowing you to properly budget your web development project. Let me emphasize it one more time: don't waste your time and energy, outsource your web development project to a professional web designer.