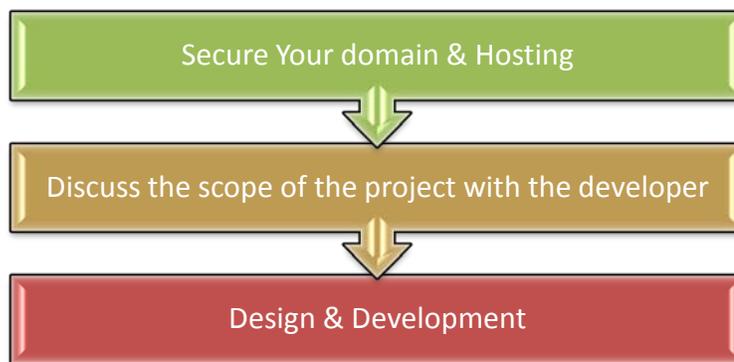# Starting a Website

So you've decided it's time for your business to get that website it deserves? There may be numerous reasons as well as benefits of having a website, some of them being:

**Benefits of having a Website**

1. Your open 24/7 (E-Commerce Business)

2. Market expansion can be simplified, and allow your business to cross states, as well as shores.

3. Product or service research is available at a click of a button.

4. Allow your business to better compete with competition that already has web presence.

5. An addition to the existing marketing strategies you have.


The following steps go through the process involved in starting a website:

- First but not least of all you need to secure a domain, ideally it would be best to have a domain name that is identical to your business name, alternatively a combination of keywords associated to your business.  For example if you're selling insurances, its most likely that your concentrating in specific demographic market(s), a typical example could be seattlelifeinsure.com.  Go to the likes of GoDaddy.com and search to see if the domain is available.  When found buy this, it should not cost more than $10, unless it is a premium name.

- Next find a web developer that you can work with. Discuss with him/her what your business goals are and what you wish to achieve from the website.  Following this conversation, there may be many suggestions from your web developer.

- Start the project, This will usually be broken down into 3 stages;

    a. Wire Framing and initial mockup design (Graphic Work)

    b. Development

    c. Testing & Deployment

| Secure Your domain & Hosting |
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| Discuss the scope of the project with the developer |
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| Design & Development |
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Of course each project is going to be different in terms of complexity and functionalities, so you may want to explore what solutions are available. The following list highlights options based on the type of site :-

E-Commerce web sites: Options available include OS Commerce, Zen Cart, Paypal, Google Shopping cart integrations, and of course the pricier option being a custom site, which would usually be built bottom up. In addition to this most of these off the shelf solutions will have CMS (Content Management Systems) which allow you as business/website owners to add/delete/edit the content of the website. Do remember that there will be limitations in terms of what can be done.

Standard web sites with CMS: Nowadays the trend for many websites is to have a CMS (Content Management System) in place which allows website owners to make content changes themselves. Examples of such CMS's include the commonly used Word Press, Joomla, and Drupal. So which one do you choose? Word Press is a basic blog website, Joomla provides many additional components you can add to your site i.e. Polls, and Drupal the high end of the three which allows more flexibility in terms of customizing the end product.

Static website: A standard HTML site built either via a text editor, or using the likes of Adobes Dream Weaver, or Microsoft's Expression Web. This is found to be better in terms of SEO tweaking compared, as the code can be directly tweaked, as well as the site optimized fully. Set back here is that you will need a website developer to do this, unless your techie enough to take the challenge.

There are other solutions available based on numerous web development languages used in the field, some of them being PHP (Open source), ASP (Active Server Pages by Microsoft), ColdFusion, JavaScript, and the list goes on…

Always discuss potential options available with your web developer, do note, that there are far and few web developers that will have every expertise in the field, so shop around first.

Other Web Development and Search Engine Optimization articles are available on the visualwebz.com website, under Web Design 101