

START NOW

Business and Branding Coaching Series



Business Focus: Getting Started on Your Website

The information you
need to get started on
building your cyber
real estate.



Vanessa Collins LLC

START NOW Business Focus – Getting Started On Your Website

Introduction

This month our business focus is your website. Your website is your key piece of real estate in cyberspace. This is where the magic happens. This is your home. This is where you want to invite your customers to come, interact and learn how you can help them with their problems. Unlike our private real estate, which is about our likes and preferences, your website should be about your customer. It should be inviting and easy to navigate. The goal should be giving the customers what they need.

How to Use This Document

In this lesson, we will look at what you will need in order to get started building your website. I suggest that you read the entire lesson first and then work through the checklist at the end. The purpose of this lesson is to give you an overview of what you need in order to build your site. If you need detailed explanation on how to complete each step, please consider one of my detailed training programs listed at the end of this document.

Website Basics

Having a website built by a professional can be expensive. A basic website consisting of 3 to 5 pages can cost well over a \$1000. If you add ecommerce functionality where you are actually selling products and services directly from your site, that price can double.

If you are just starting to develop your internet presence, you may choose to design your own website. With all of the great tools available online and a little patience, time and focus, you can have your site up in no time. Before you begin building your site, let's examine what you will need to get this done.

What You Will Need

You will need to purchase your domain name. This is your uniform resource locator (url) or web address. Although I said "purchase" it is really more like renting. You will pay a yearly fee to keep your name. If you miss paying the fee, the domain name will no longer be yours.

There are many places to purchase domain names. I personally use GoDaddy because I can always find great coupon codes. I rarely spend over \$10 for a domain name and usually can find a deal where I spend only \$2 or \$3 the first year.

You will also need a company to host your website. There are a huge number of companies to choose from. I personally recommend Hostgator. You should not pay more than \$8 per month for web hosting. Look for a service that offers unlimited bandwidth, unlimited emails and a generous allotment of disk space. You also want to be able to host unlimited domain names. Hostgator also offers a ton of free software including WordPress.

You will also need an email capture client like MailChimp or GetResponse. I personally use MailChimp because they have a free package that is great for most beginners and that is where I started. However, I now use GetResponse because of the advance functionality and beautiful lead capture forms they have.

Make sure that you have good quality images for your website. You can use images of your products as well as stock images. Make sure you are familiar with licenses for any image that you use. Do not just grab an image from Google. Most of these images have copyright protection and you can get into trouble if you are caught.

Components of a Typical Site

A typical website consists of a home page, supporting pages that can be reached via a navigation bar and other auxiliary pages that are not on the navigation bar. The home page is the page that your visitors will land on if they type your domain name. This is the virtual “front door” to your internet real estate.

The top section of the home page will usually contain your name and/or the company name. You may also include a logo, slogan or other image. This is usually followed by a navigation bar. The navigation bar allows visitors to go directly to other pages that you feel would be important to them.

The middle section of the home page, under the navigation bar, should contain some type of lead generating element. Although there are analytical tools to tell you how many people visited your site, you will not know exactly who those people are unless they give you their email address. A good lead magnet can help you accomplish this.

After your lead magnet, the content on your page should be attention grabbing and directed to the audience. If you want to keep people on your page longer, you must answer the following questions from your audience’s perspective using your content:

- Why do I need to be here?
- What can you do for me?

The bottom of your home page should highlight other pages from your site. This can be blurbs about items you have on sale, a listing of your latest blog posts or feeds from your social media streams. However, if you don’t do a good job with the content in the middle section of the home page, no one will scroll down to see this other stuff.

The footer of your site should contain your copyright statement, contact information, social media connection information and links to your other policy pages like your privacy policy and terms of service.

Supporting Pages

You should have an “About Us” page that gives information about you and your company. While you want to maintain a professional tone, your bio here should be engaging and not stiff. Unfortunately, most About Me pages sound like obituaries. Since the About Me page is usually accessed from the navigation bar, a person who clicks this link is genuinely interested in learning more about you. Make sure that your personality shines through the words.

You should have a page where all of your product and service offerings can be accessed. Even if you have separate pages for each of your products, you should have one portfolio type page where

the visitor can see a listing of all of your items. The worst thing in the world is to have a visitor come to your site to purchase a product but they can't find it.

Lead Generating Page

In addition to the lead magnet we had on the first page, you should have a landing page on your site that is designed to capture your opt-ins. There should always be a link in your navigation bar to your latest opt-in offer.

If you have a membership site, you will need a registration and login page that gives your current clients access to premium information on your site. This page will probably be automatically generated depending on the membership software or plugin that you use. Make sure that you have a link to this page on your navigation bar.

If you run an ecommerce site, you may need to have a home page for your store. This will depend on the software or ecommerce plugin that you use. This link should also be in your navigation bar. Many people will make this the last link in the row so that it will stand out.

It is a good idea to have a contact form on your site as oppose to having your email address listed. There are tons of spambots out there roaming the internet for email addresses on websites. A contact form will allow your visitors to submit a question or comment directly to any email you choose.

Other Auxiliary Pages

You may need to add other pages to your site that do not require direct access from the main navigation bar. These may include pages for your individual products and services, landing and policy pages.

Wordpress Platform

Now that you know the basic content you need, it's time to decide what type of platform you will build on. WordPress is a free and open source blogging tool and a content management system (CMS) that makes it easy to build great website sites. It is used by more than 18.9% of the top 10 million websites as of August 2013. This platform is the most popular blogging system in use on the Web, at more than 60 million websites. Although it is known as a blogging tool, WordPress is can be used to build awesome websites that do not include a blog. Building your own quality website can be a lot of work but it is not hard and it can save you a lot of money.

Search Engine Optimization

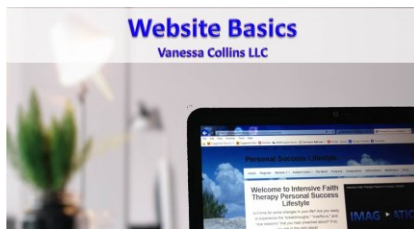
Make sure that your site is **search engine optimized** (SEO). Although Google and other search engines seem to change their search algorithms on a regular basis, there are still some best practices that never get old. Make sure that your domain name reflects your service, product or brand as much as possible. Avoid using "cute" names unless it is part of your brand or product name. I remember my first website which was geared towards moms making extra money on the internet. I thought momXtracash.com would be a cute name. However, I quickly found that not many people search on how to make "xtra" cash on the internet.

In addition to having a domain name that reflects your products and brand, try to get a domain name that reflects your actual name. This domain name can be for a simple, one page website that directs people to all of your other websites. People may forget your brand or product name; however, if you left a good impression with them, they may remember your actual name.

I have a number of products and services, all of which have their own websites and domain names. However, I also have VanessaCollins.me, a website that I use to direct people to all other sites in my network. Therefore, when I am out speaking or interacting with people, I will tell them to find me at VanessaCollins.me.

There are tons of good, free information about SEO and how to make sure that people can find your site. Take the time to do the research and get this step right.

Building your own quality website can be a lot of work but it is not hard and it can save you a lot of money. If you would like more information on how to build your own website, I would love to help. I have a 4 video series that will show you in real time how I built a WordPress website in about 90 minutes. I am also hosting monthly Website Basics Online Boot Camps where I not only teach you how to build your website but I virtually look over your shoulder as you do it and I am able to answer any questions you have, right on the spot.



In this course you will learn how to quickly and inexpensively build your first website. You will learn the basic components of a website, how to register your domain name, how to choose webhosting and the type of content you need to create for your site. You will also be able to look over my shoulder as I build a WordPress website from scratch in a little over 90 minutes. This course consists of 4 videos.

~~\$97~~ \$37

Buy Now



Is your website ready for 2015 or are you looking for something you can do from home to bring in extra income? In my Website Basics Boot Camp, I will walk you through how to set up your own website. The classes are small, virtual classes where I will not only teach you how to set up your site, but I will "virtually" look over your shoulder while you do it. My Website Basics Boot Camp will not only save you money with your next website, it will teach you a valuable skill that you can use to make extra income for yourself.

\$149

Buy Now

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Planning Checklist

(Print this out for your records)

Purchase your domain name

Company Purchased From	Cost first year	Cost subsequent year	User Name/Password
Domain Name			

Purchase Hosting Account

Company Purchased From	Cost per month	User Name/Password	Nameservers

Purchase Email/Auto Responder Service

Company Purchased From	Cost per month	User Name/Password

Information For Your Website

<input type="checkbox"/>	Website Name	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subtitle or Slogan	

- Copyright Statement
- Contact Information
- Social Media Connection Information
- Privacy Policy
- Terms of Service
- About Us" page
- Product or Service offerings (One for each)
- Lead Generating or Opt-in Page

WordPress

User Name	Password

Search Engine Optimization

<input type="checkbox"/>	Website Description	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keywords You Plan To Use	