

Elements of an Effective Website

Domain Name (URL) - The cost to register a name is about \$15.00 per year. When selecting a domain name think about; how people will learn about it, can they spell it, and do they need to remember it? Always go with the .com when possible. This is the first thing people will try. If your company name is taken, use a tag line or catchy phrase.

Design of the Website - This is the look, feel, and content of the website. Your website is a marketing tool to sell your products and services. Think about what you want the site to do for you and build the site with content and images that will do that. To have a site created you can do it yourself, use someone who knows HTML or hire a professional website designer.

Here are pros and cons to each –

	Pros	Cons
Do It Yourself	Little cash outlay, faster updates, can “play” with design, more control	Learning curve, longer to completion, can't create effects or graphics, large time investment
Someone Who Knows HTML	Less expensive, helping out a friend/relative, has some knowledge with design and graphics	Limited knowledge, longer to completion, can't create all effects or graphics, moves away or loses interest in design work, having to fire a friend/relative
Hire a Professional	Professional looking site and graphics, special effects, knowledge about what does and does not work, latest trends and technical workings	More expensive, less control over daily changes, possible delay in updating

Hosting your Website - You rent space on a computer that is always connected to the Internet. Hosting providers also offer email accounts and online stores. Ask questions about their servers, support and uptime.

Marketing Your Website - You should be thinking about the marketing of your Website as it is being designed. The content of the site needs to reflect the search terms you will want your site to appear for on search engines.

Traditional Marketing – you will continue to use print, radio, TV, etc but the ad you place will change. Be sure you are including your domain name on all ads.

Search Engines - You will need to ensure your site is optimized for search engines. This includes having your search terms within the content of the website, as well as in the META tags. You will also want to submit your site to the search engines and Internet directories every 4 to 6 weeks.

Pay-per-Click – These are the ads you see on Google, Yahoo and Bing. You select search terms, write ads and create campaigns. You are charged every time someone clicks on your ad and visits your site. You can control the amount you spend per month.

Link Building – This is getting as many sites as possible to link back to you. These links will come from other websites, blogs, articles, press release, etc.

Email Marketing Campaign – Creating and sending email notices of new products, services or specials. These are most effective if sent on a regular basis (quarterly, monthly), and to opt-in email addresses. Icontact is an online program that offers templates to use and can also track the emails.