

Getting an Internet Presence

In today's marketplace there can be no excuse for any business not to have an internet presence. Domain names can be registered for a low cost and web space can be secured for a small monthly fee. Web designers can be expensive, but the cost of developing a web presence is far less than the cost of constructing a physical building, or even the cost of other more traditional forms of marketing.

As with any business venture, the first step to getting online is to draw up a plan. You need to think carefully about what you want your site to deliver and who your target audience is. For example, do you want to sell your products online, or do you just want to impart information. Whatever its purpose, listed below are three key steps that will help get your business online.

1. Choose a Web Designer

There is plenty of truth in the old adage "You get what you pay for" and if you think it's expensive to hire a professional just wait until you've hired an amateur. Your choice of web designer is an important part of getting an Internet presence, so be prepared to pay the going rate and get it right.

When choosing your web designer, ask to see a portfolio of their work and don't be afraid to contact previous clients to ask them what their experience was. Any reputable web designer will have no problem with this approach; if they do then they may not be the one you should choose!

Your chosen web designer obviously needs your input, which should be as descriptive as possible whilst leaving them room to add their creative flair. Remember, you may be paying for their services by the day, or even by the hour, hence the reason for planning your requirements beforehand.

2. Choose a Web Host

There are literally thousands to choose from, but with a little careful research it's not difficult to find a reliable and dependable hosting company. Most web hosts will give you your own control panel that allows you to carry out and control many simple operations within your web space.

You will also be given a specified amount of web space for your files, and a specified amount of bandwidth to use. If you exceed these amounts you will usually just be charged more. It is important, therefore, to have some idea of the amount of space and bandwidth you might need, rather than playing catch up later. Your web designer should be able to guide you through this stage.

3. Choose your Domain Name

This is where you decide on the name for your site and is therefore a very important step. For instance, you may want to create your own brand image, and while that is certainly possible it can take time to do this properly from scratch. If, however, you already have a well-known name, at least locally, then that would be the obvious choice.

When choosing a name you should aim to keep it short and relevant and consider whether or not to have the name as one word, or several words separated by hyphens or underscores. It is probably best to consider a few alternatives as well in case your first choice of name has already been registered.

You can easily check if a name has already been registered by going to a search site, such as Google, and typing the name in the search box. You will either be directed to an actual website (i.e. the name is already in use) or be presented with a choice of web hosting companies willing to register the name for you. You should also search for variations on the name with different site extensions such as .com, .co.uk, .net, and so on. If more than one variation is available you now have to choose which one works best for you – you may even decide to register several variations to prevent a competitor taking a similar domain name to yours.

Once you have your domain name you will need to point it at the web space purchased earlier. If your domain was purchased through a domain provider, then it's a simple matter of pointing the domain to the name servers supplied by your web host. Again, your chosen web designer will be able to help you this stage.

A successful Internet presence will let you communicate better with existing and prospective customers. It may allow you to reduce operating costs, because of lower overheads, and while not guaranteed, it is likely to increase your sales and therefore profits.

For the comparatively small startup and maintenance costs, ask yourself: "Can my business really afford not to be on the Internet?"

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Bad Robot Design Agency

We're experienced marketers, so we know how to help you fire up your business engines and become a roaring success in your marketplace

And our IT and Internet expertise means that you're going to be as visible online as off-line.

Because we believe you deserve nothing less than **a remarkable service**, we also work with a number of outstanding individuals who share our passion and pride for delivering. So if we don't have the expertise you need in-house, with our associates we can put together a **team that works for you**.

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