

FORMS OF MARKETING

	Pros	Cons
Word of mouth/referrals	Free Personal (trust issue)	Reach small numbers Limited info conveyed
Business cards	Cheap	Reach small numbers Limited info conveyed
Paid print ads: YP, other ads	Reach many people	Cost Can't be changed
Car lettering	Relatively inexpensive Fairly good exposure	Limited info Can't be changed easily
Web	Huge exposure Can be changed quickly Can contain a lot of info Ongoing cost is low	Hard to find Requires either start up hired help or start up software/time

Marketing is circular. Each type reinforces the other.

COSTS

Domain registration	\$0 to \$12/yr
Web hosting account	\$5-10/mo
Web design contracted out	Depends on what and how much info you want on the site and who you hire. A respectable site of 5-10 pages can be made for about \$200.
Web design do-it-yourself	You may need to purchase software (several hundred dollars); you will invest a lot of time learning how to use your software or online web building program, and may not be satisfied with the results.

Consider cost of your time and the results achieved. Time vs benefit.

GOALS

- Provide useful INFORMATION about you and your business. Written, photos, PDFs
- Be easy to use; user must be able to FIND INFO
- Relieve yourself of some phone time
- Should be "FINDABLE" through search engines, but NOT mainly intended to ATTRACT business. "If you build it, they will not know it is there."

Website is ONE tool – must work in conjunction with other marketing.

This is your PROFESSIONAL IMAGE to the world

DO IT YOURSELF VS HIRING A PRO

The main reason people don't hire someone to design their website is cost. However, the cost in dollars should be weighed against your cost in time and money if you do it yourself. You also need to take into consideration how effective your DIY site will be.

Drawbacks to making your own web site:

- Need to buy software (usually)
- Need to get training (free or paid)
- Learning curve, time investment
- Your first web sites may or may not be better than no web site at all
- Takes a lot of time and experience to get good AND fast

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

"A" web site vs a "Good" web site

From the book *Don't Make Me Think* by Steve Krug

How we really use the Web

When we're creating sites, we act as though people are going to pore over each page, reading our finely crafted text, figuring out how we've organized things, and weighing their options before deciding which link to click.

What they actually do most of the time (if we're lucky) is glance at each new page, scan some of the text, and click on the first link that catches their interest or vaguely resembles the thing they're looking for. There are usually large parts of the page that they don't even look at.

Many websites, even those designed by professionals, get in the way of the user.

Websites are different from print media. Info must be concise or users will flee.

PURPOSE OF WEB SITE

If you cannot articulate the purpose of your site, you are not ready to have a web site.

From webpagesthatsuck.com:

Write these two sentences where you can see them as you're working:

- 1. The only reason my web site exists is to solve my customers' problems.*
- 2. What problems does the page I'm looking at solve?*

Nobody cares about you or your site.

Really. What visitors care about is solving their problems. Now. Most people visit a web site to solve one or more of these four problems:

- 1. They want/need information*
- 2. They want/need to make a purchase / donation.*
- 3. They want/need to be entertained.*
- 4. They want/need to be part of a community.*

CONTENT

How to decide what you will put on your web site:

- Think of the questions you answer over and over for customers, and think of the questions you WISH they would ask.
- If you were looking for these services, what would you want to see on a web site?
- What do YOU think people need to know?
- What distinguishes you from your competitors?
- Extras: PDF docs? Online forms to fill out? Audio or video?

Writing for the web is a special skill and can make the difference between an OK website and a highly effective website. I'm a "good writer" and a great editor, but I do not write content for other people's web sites because I don't think I am good at it. (I will edit for grammar, spelling, and clarity, and give general advice on content.) Marketing writing has to tell people why your product, service, or organization is special.

See these articles at Search Engine Watch:

www.searchenginewatch.com/3632183

<http://searchenginewatch.com/3641583>

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- What will the site look like?

Use a piece of paper turned sideways to emulate the monitor, make a sketch of the general page layout. Make copies to use for other pages if it helps you visualize the site.

- Structure: What will main navigation links be? “Sub” navigation?
- Usability: Orient the user on every page, easy navigation. Make a simple diagram of “areas” of the site, if you have enough pages to warrant it
- Browser issues: HTML is not interpreted consistently across browsers. Your site will not look exactly the same in all browsers, but it should look good in all browsers.
- Accessible for visually and physically impaired?
- Separate content from design.

GRAPHICS

Web is a graphic medium ... but ...

- Graphics are not the focus of the site - information is.
- Incorporate existing logos and color schemes into your site.
- NEVER use graphics for “words” unless you have a work around for search engines and visually impaired people. Include ALT tags for all graphics.
- Consider hiring a professional graphic artist to design the main graphics.

Prepping graphics for the web:

- Resize to pixel height and width you want the graphic to be (when viewed at 100% in your graphics software)
- Reduce “quality” until graphic is 40KB or less
- NEVER put the graphic into the web page and then resize (like you would in Word)
- JPG for photos/gradations, GIF for solid colors

WEB DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE SOFTWARE OPTIONS

Website Design Options:

- HTML Text Editing software – if one character is typed in wrong, whole page may be scrambled – NEVER recommended!
- Dreamweaver/Fireworks (from Adobe) – for professional web designers; steep learning curve, high price
- Online “do-it-yourself” site building tools (although free, these are not as user friendly as people expect them to be)

Website Maintenance Options:

- Pay the designer to maintain site s/he built or maintain it yourself if you built it
- Content Management Systems (CMS):
 - Contribute (from Adobe) for sites created in Dreamweaver
 - Free CMS like Joomla and Drupal (I don't work with these)

MARKETING A WEB SITE

How will people find your site? You must market your site!

TRADITIONAL MARKETING

Put web address on EVERYTHING: cards, handouts, all ads, Yellow Pages listing
Mention on the phone
List with professional organizations
Lettering on vehicle
Donating products or services to fund raising auctions

ONLINE MARKETING

Links from other appropriate sites (not just any site)
Pay-per-click advertising

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

"I want my site to rank high in the search engines!"
What does this really mean?

Before explaining how to optimize a site for search engines, let me state that I do not believe anyone should depend on search engines to drive traffic to a site. I believe most of your web traffic will probably come from other marketing efforts: putting your web address on all your print media (business cards and any other advertising), word of mouth, email marketing of your web address (including putting it in the "sig line" of all your outgoing emails), etc. Just as with a brick and mortar store front you cannot depend on walk-by traffic, with a website you cannot depend on most of your traffic coming from search engines. You must market your website through other traditional means.

That said, of course I optimize every site I do for the best Google ranking possible. But much of the work of SEO must be done in collaboration with the site owner or a marketing consultant.

Sites are ranked by a *specific* search engine (like Google) on *specific* search terms. A site does not "rank high in the search engines". rvpianotuner.com might rank high in Google on a search for "piano tuner rogue valley" because that is a pretty narrow search. It would not rank high on a search for "piano tuner" because there are too many sites that fit that search term. So the first thing you have to do is decide which search engine and what search terms you believe people will use to try to find a site like yours. This requires considerable thought a research. Then we optimize for those specific words.

Google and most other search engines weigh the following in ranking a site:

- "Words" in domain name (for instance, the words "piano tuner" appear in rvpianotuner.com)
- Words in the title tag (this is an html tag that contains words that appear at the top of the browser window in the title bar)
- Words in the description meta tag (hidden from the web user's view, but seen by search engines; should be limited to about 150 characters)
- Words in content (text) on page
- Links from other appropriate sites

Over time, make a list of "keywords" - words that you think people would use to find a site like yours. Then incorporate as many of the most important words into as many of the first four items above as possible. This is the most important part of search engine optimization.

It takes 2 to 8 weeks after the above steps have been done for search engines to "spider" a site and index or re-index it. Do not check Google two day after you make those changes and expect to see a change in your ranking! Even after the site is spidered, it can take 3 to 6 months to move up in the rankings.

If basic search engine optimization does not get the result you want, even after you "tweak" the things in the list above, the next step is pay-per-click web advertising, and you will have to determine if the benefit will outweigh the cost.

RESOURCES

Domain registration:

www.GoDaddy.com [there are hundreds of domain registration sites, this is just one]

Web hosting:

www.hostmonster.com [there are many excellent web hosting services, this is just one]

Professional web design software:

Dreamweaver and Fireworks: www.adobe.com/products/dreamweaver

Do-It-Yourself web design interface:

Various tools are available free at all good web hosting services

Design issues:

www.webpagesthatsuck.com/biggest-mistakes-in-web-design-1995-2015.html

www.w3c.org (World Wide Web Consortium)

Search engine optimization:

www.searchenginewatch.com/3632183

Separate content from design – examples:

www.csszengarden.com

Training/tutorials:

Online or DVD training in all web-related programs (and others):

www.lynda.com

www.vtc.com

Dreamweaver has its own built-in tutorial.

For help on any aspect of web design, just type the topic you need help on into the Google search box. Example: CSS tutorial

Web Usability:

Gerry McGovern, author of *Killer Web Content*

www.gerrymcgovern.com

Steve Krug, author of *Don't Make Me Think*

www.sensible.com

Jakob Nielsen, “the guru of web page usability”

www.useit.com/alertbox