

HOW can I GET a WEBSITE FOR my BUSINESS?



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DECIDE ON YOUR BUDGET

A website is basically an electronic showroom for your business that is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can use it to advertise your business, showcase your previous work, engage with prospective clients, sell products/services, take payments, link to your social media accounts etc.

With this in mind, the total price of a custom website should be compared with a static printed advertisement in a local newspaper or publication. For example, a local free directory with a circulation of just under 40,000 homes, currently charges over £6000 + VAT for a full-page (A5) advert placed for a year.

A basic website can cost anything from a few hundred to a few thousand pounds. Unlike the printed page, your website will be discoverable at all times of day or night by prospective customers and there is no danger of your advert being thrown out with the recycling! As with everything, you get what you pay for:

A top design studio will create you an award-winning, beautifully designed, highly effective, dynamic website that will boost your business and be a huge success but will blow your budget and might, in fact, even be too effective for the capacity of your business. (A nice problem to have!)

On the other hand, a template-based site although cheaper, will be somewhat less effective and indistinguishable from those created by thousands of others who took this option for their business. These types of sites are also less compatible with search engines, such as Google, thus making it less likely that prospective customers would find you easily when seeking to engage a business such as yours.

In the middle ground there is a plethora of web design companies, who can give you a website designed to promote your company's products and services and can also give your requirements personal attention.

In addition, you could also take advantage of other options commonly offered by them, such as;

- acquiring your domain name (i.e. your website's address),
- hosting your website (making your website available on the internet),
- SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) that increases your chances of being discovered in online searches,
- logo design and branding to ensure your business looks professional and credible.

Before considering any of the above options, it is a good idea to take some time to decide what you want from your website;

- do you have any particular items you want to be included
- how involved do you want to be in the maintenance of the site once it is live
- what is the goal of your website?

A help sheet is provided on Page 7 which, once completed, can be used to help engage a web designer.

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CONTACT WEB DESIGN COMPANIES

Once you have a budget in mind and you have completed your list of requirements, you can approach a number of web design companies and ask them to submit a proposal for your website. This should set out:

- what they advise in terms of design and function to fit your website's criteria,
- what other services they offer (such as domain names and hosting etc),
- when you can see the new website to make any amendments to style or content,
- what is their time frame for completion,
- how much is the deposit required to start work and what are their payment terms on completion.

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ENGAGE CHOSEN WEB DESIGN COMPANY

Having assessed the proposals submitted to you, and having spoken to each of them to determine their suitability, you can now choose the option that you feel would be the best for your business.

A good design company will stage the design process, first producing wireframe layouts of the website, followed by the first draft showing all the content and functions agreed in the planning stage. At this phase you can make any amendments to layout or content before the final site is completed and uploaded to the internet.

Most companies will take a deposit before beginning work that could range up to 50% of the agreed final cost. This is to cover their work at the most intensive stage of the process, i.e. designing and testing the new website.

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NOW YOU HAVE YOUR WEBSITE, WHAT NEXT?

Now your website is live on the World Wide Web, it is worth keeping notes of any other ideas you have, or you see on other websites that might develop yours in the future. You can then approach your designer with ideas to update and improve your site after its been live for a period of time, just to keep it fresh to attract search bots to improve your ranking.

Business Name.....

My products and services are (tick three that are the most important):

1		5	
2		6	
3		7	
4		8	

Answer Yes or No to the following:

I have my own logo		I need an online shop	
I have a domain name		I have photographs of my products/services	
I have arranged hosting for the website		I want to maintain the website once live	
I want to create a database of my customers			

What do I need my website to achieve (number in order of preference):

Sales		Publicity	
Leads		Other (Please specify)	

Description of the business: