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Hosting & Website Solutions for Small to Medium-sized Businesses

## Website Planning and Phases of Development

Are you considering a website, improving your existing site, or ready for a total redesign? This document provides tips and information about planning, building, marketing and maintaining your website. This is also a guideline to a typical website consultation and building process with Routine Hosting.

**Important:** Estimates are tailored to your needs and budget for custom or template-based websites being developed/modified by Routine Hosting, please complete as much information as you can from the information below prior to your consultation with Routine Hosting. You will need to refer to this when we discuss your needs for the website.



### PHASE 1 PLANNING YOUR SITE

Website "design" is based on its contents and is targeted to speak to your specific target audience. Please be prepared with as much information as possible prior to your consultation with Routine Hosting.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. The purpose of website
2. Your target audience
3. Keywords (or key phrases) used to find your type of product and/or service. Do some homework, find out what key phrases your competitors use.
4. Website content:
  - Write and gather your content and other materials needed for your website.
  - Text, and who will write or provide the text if not already available. Some very basic items might be:
    - a. who you are
    - b. what you do
    - c. how to contact you
    - d. list of services or products
  - Photographs (preferably at higher resolutions) or other images to use:
    - a. of each product
    - b. to use in interface
    - c. to accentuate text
    - d. explain concepts
  - Logo
5. Ways to bring in new and repeat visitors
6. Budget



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7. Other costs:

- Internet Service Provider (Hosting) Domain name and registration
- Database information to make available online (know existing database format, online password, access only or available to the public)

8. If you wish to sell products or services online:

- Secure server for processing transactions
- Merchant account through your bank (or alternatives)
- Online purchases by credit card or alternative purchases by postal mail
- Shopping cart software, if needed
- Set up a system that integrates easily with new or existing accounting software

9. Search engine registration and optimization.

**THINGS TO DO:**

- Write notes while you brainstorm, including questions you may have
- Make an outline of your needs, followed by writing all the details
- Organize folders to keep information and materials for your website:
  - a physical folder with photos, brochures, company logo, written materials
  - a directory folder on your computer with text for your website (in a Word DOC or TXT file), digitized photos, images, logos, and other pertinent information
- Look at as many websites as you can that are related to yours in some way. This will help you see what your competition is doing and will also help you brainstorm about your own site.

Make note of the following:

- Websites that you like and why
- Websites that you don't like and why not
- Websites that have elements that you like, such as colors, navigation, overall layout, and how content is presented



**PHASE 2  
BUILDING YOUR SITE**

**Sign contract and pay deposit and/or make full payment.** After we've received your deposit, the signed contract and received the website content (text, logo, photos, etc), the design and development process begins.

• **Design Process:**

- Custom designs developed (comps)
- Template chosen and/or purchased
- Templates customized (if desired)

• **Layouts** (For Custom Website Design Only):



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- Once the look and feel has been chosen, layouts will be populated with your content showing you exactly what the site will look like once coded.

**There is usually a phase payment required at this stage.**

- **HTML Coding and CSS:**
  - For template-based websites, content will be placed within the provided template
  - For template-based websites with Routine Hosting's modifications: changes to template will be made and content will be placed within the template
  - For custom websites, HTML coded will be written, CSS (Cascading Style Sheets will be written and linked to all pages).
- **A private test site will be available** for review at each step of the design creation and development process, with regular communications throughout.
- **When the site is completed**, we have your final approval, and final payment is received, we then upload (or FTP) your new site to the server.



### PHASE 3 MAKING YOURSELF KNOWN

**This part I want to stress very strongly - make a plan and work your plan!** Simply putting a site on the internet will not help your site to become known. You must plan a strategy and diligently work at it. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Blast your website description and keywords to as many search engines and directories as possible. "Blasting" is an electronic form of mass notification. This can usually be done inexpensively through an automated process.
- If you are hosting your website with Routing Hosting, you can login to your control panel and use the promotional tools that are included in your hosting package.
- Add your website and email address(s) to all your business cards and promotional materials.
- Begin a mailing list. Consider sending emails, newsletters, press releases, or other announcements of your new and/or redesigned website to everyone on your mailing list.
- Consider hiring a SEO (Search Engine Optimization) firm and/or using a pay-per-click marketing subscription.
- Plan a reciprocal linking strategy. You can individually make requests to exchange links with other websites, or you can purchase a software to manage your link requests, or you can use an online automated program.
- Begin a campaign of attracting visitors to your site. This can be done by offering items or information for free, showing entertaining video clips, establishing and maintaining blogs, writing and releasing articles in your area of expertise, offering industry news, etc.
- Continue to promote your website regularly. It takes time and diligence to promote a website and increase visitors



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and sales. There are a million websites coming online each day. Don't get frustrated and keep at it regularly!



#### PHASE 4 WEBSITE MAINTENANCE

- Keep your website content current and up to date. Consider rewriting your text to keep it fresh.
- Continue to provide reasons for new and return visitors to come to your site. Here are just a few examples:
  - Free Items. Nothing brings visitors to your site more than freebies do. You can give away products and/or information.
  - Joining your Newsletter
  - Tutorials
- Keep adding testimonials, case studies, references to build your credibility.
- Add new information as appropriate and update existing information regularly
- Check search engine rankings and tweak pages and/or meta tags if needed.
- If you are hosting your website with Routing Hosting, you can login into your control panel and view your website statistics which will give you a lot of data about your site and its visitors.