



Building Your First Website

A Guide For Small Businesses



A Little About Me

- My name is Jon Teodoro
- Founder and marketing strategist at Verde Media & Local 360 - based out of Metro Detroit
- Bachelors in Economics from Wayne State University w/ emphasis in Behavior Economics
- Founded VM in 2011
- Self taught web developer since 1999, digital marketer since 2006



About Our Companies

- Over 500 websites built in various sectors, mostly focusing on B2B, eCommerce, and small business
- Won numerous web design and development awards
- Over 5 million dollars managed in Google Ads
- Portfolio includes professional athletes, international B2B companies, and U.S. based multi-million dollar corporations
- Extensive experience in local business marketing - over 250 campaigns managed



What We're Covering

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Website Platforms

Best alternatives, pros & cons, and costs

02

Building It Yourself

Tips for DIY-ing it

03

Hiring a Professional

How to find the right person for the job

04

Questions

Open floor for any questions





01

Website Platforms

Which platforms are the ideal for a new site?
How do they stack up against each other?
What are the costs associated?



When evaluating a website platform, you want to consider the following things:

- ✓ Ease of Use
- ✓ Flexibility/Scalability
- ✓ Maintenance/Security
- ✓ Performance/Speed
- ✓ Marketing Features
- ✓ Cost



The Top 6 Contenders



SquareSpace



Ease of use: 7/10

Flexibility/Scalability: 3/10

Maintenance/security: 10/10

Performance: 6/10

Marketing Features: 6/10

Cost: Starting at \$12/month

Made for businesses who aren't comfortable with coding at all and don't have a developer or designer available. Best for those who need a very simple website.



SQUARESPACE

Ease of use: 7/10

Flexibility/Scalability: 3/10

Maintenance/security: 9/10

Performance: 5/10

Marketing Features: 5/10

Cost: Starting at \$18/month

Similar to SquareSpace, Wix is geared toward those who need a simple website but also want to try to do it on their own.



Weebly



Ease of use: 7/10

Flexibility/Scalability: 3/10

Maintenance/security: 9/10

Performance: 6/10

Marketing Features: 5/10

Cost: Starting at \$12/month

Also similar to SquareSpace and Wix, Weebly is made for businesses that need a basic starter site with no experience or sources available in terms of coding or design.



Shopify



Ease of use: 6/10

Flexibility/Scalability: 7/10

Maintenance/security: 9/10

Performance: 6/10

Marketing Features: 8/10

Cost: Starting at \$29/month

Shopify is a DIY eCommerce platform made for businesses that want to sell their products online that don't have the technical expertise to start a full eCommerce store.



WebFlow



Ease of use: 4/10

Flexibility/Scalability: 7/10

Maintenance/security: 10/10

Performance: 10/10

Marketing Features: 8/10

Cost: Starting at \$12/month

WebFlow is a website platform that allows your full flexibility to design your own interactive websites. Made for those who have a background with HTML and CSS. Best for businesses who want a website that has to “stand out” but still only need a brochure-type website



Wordpress



Ease of use: 3/10

Flexibility/Scalability: 10/10

Maintenance/security: 6/10

Performance: 7/10

Marketing Features: 10/10

Cost: Free

Wordpress is an open-source platform, meaning the code is available to customize it exactly to your liking. Made for those who are comfortable with front-end and back-end programming. Best for those who need a larger or more complex website.



More On Costs



The cost to access the website platform is only one factor to consider. The following also factor into the cost of building and launching a new website, regardless if you hire a professional or do it yourself:

- Costs for designing and developing it
- Costs for multimedia & content (videos, photos, written content)
- Hosting costs (sometimes is included with the platform fees)
- Domain name fees
- Ancillary software fees (like e-mail marketing, CRM, LiveChat, etc.)

If you do it yourself, **you will be saving on cost at the expense of your time.**

DIY vs DIFM Platforms



DIY (Do It Yourself Platforms)

SquareSpace, Wix, Weebly, Shopify

- Typically have hosting and domain included
- Drag & drop interface with templates - easier to build
- Lacks flexibility for expanding in the future
- Little control of website speed/performance
- Has basic marketing features built in like Analytics, mobile-friendly website, and ad vouchers

DIFM (Do It For Me Platforms)

WebFlow, Wordpress

- Domain and hosting are separate costs (except WebFlow)
- Requires a professional to get the most of out of platform
- Lots of opportunities to expand with custom code and functionalities
- More options to optimize the website for speed and performance
- Access to advanced marketing features to help you grow your business

Key Takeaways



- If you want to build your own website, Wix, Weebly, SquareSpace, Shopify are great alternatives
- If you are more advanced or have experience in design and coding, WebFlow and Wordpress are a better fit
- When evaluating which platform is right for you, consider the **ease of use, flexibility/scalability, maintenance & security, marketing features, and cost**
- The platform that you select should be dictated by your business goals. If you plan to grow significantly in the near future, using an DIFM platform could help you avoid a costly rebuild
- If you are thinking about doing it yourself, consider the opportunity cost of trading your time to build out the website



02

Building It Yourself

What design elements are important?
How do I create content for my site?
How do I optimize my site for search?



Best DIY Platforms



Selecting a Template



- DIY Platforms have libraries of templates to start with
- Templates help you minimize the amount of work needed - just need to change the colors, fonts, logos, and style to match your business
- Always remember to select a mobile-friendly template for usability and SEO

10 Elements Every Website Should Have:



Logical Website Navigation



Web Design and Layout



Responsive Design



Content is Key



Call to Action



Testimonials



An Opt-in Offer



Story Telling



FAQs Section



Contact Info.

Picking The Right Photos



- When selecting photos for your site, **it is best to use your own photos and not use stock photos**
- Many businesses who want to save on time will use stock photos, but **images are where the eye is naturally drawn first**
- Using a template **and** stock photos is a sure fire way to make yourself look generic, or even worse - like the competition
- Newer smartphones have excellent cameras to assist you in creating your own photography - for free!
- 2022 update - Google has recently announced that their search results will be more visual, which means it will be pulling photos from your website to show in the search engine results. This means that proprietary, attractive photography is a **must!**

Getting The Content Written

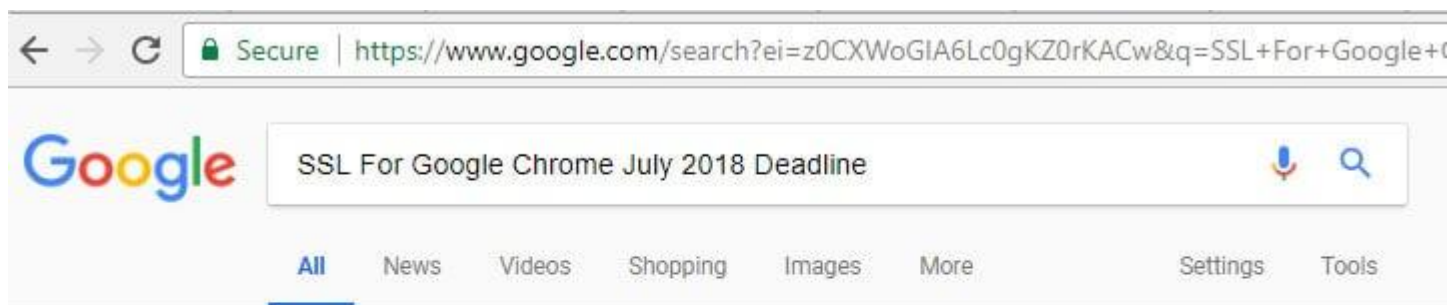


- If you don't feel comfortable writing, then hiring a professional copywriter might be the best option for you.
- Writers can be found on sites like UpWork.com or Freelancer.com - try to stay away from Fiverr.
- When writing your own content, craft your voice and message from your customer's perspective, not your own
- Make sure your content appeals to their pains and problems, not showing off features and "shiny objects"
- If you are writing your own content, use a tool like Grammarly to help spell check and grammar check your work.

Optimizing Your Site For Search



- Content isn't just for customers - it's for the search engines, too
- Use the right keywords and synonyms when you're writing your content - make it flow naturally
- Implement the proper SEO tags (H1, Title, Meta Description, Alt Tags - just to name a few)
- Make sure your website is mobile-friendly
- Enable the Blog feature to continually publish content on your site to keep it "fresh"
- Examine your website performance using Google PageSpeed Insights - performance is key
- Make sure you have an SSL certificate



- Title** → **SSL For Google Chrome - July 2018 Deadline to Secure Your Website ...**
- Meta Description** → **Feb 9, 2018 - But, this is going to change in July of 2018, when Google is implementing an update (July 2018) in Chrome version 68 that will explicitly warn all users if they travel into a domain that is not HTTPS secure.**



<H1>

POST TITLE

CONTENT SEO

KEYWORD

ALT TEXT



<H2>

HEADINGS

KEYWORD

INTERNAL LINKS

LINK

LONG TAIL KEYWORDS

EXTERNAL LINKS

LINK

COMMENTS



MOBILE FRIENDLY

SPEED



Website Performance/Speed



- With DIY Website builders, you don't have a lot of options to improve your website in terms of speed
- DIY website builders host your website on a server with thousands of other sites, so speed can vary based on time of day
- Slow load times = frustrated customers and poor SEO results
- Check your page load times with Google PageSpeed Insights or Pingdom Tools

Website Add-Ons



- **Email Marketing & Lead Collection** - MailChimp or ConstantContact have basic free options
- **Analytics** - Always use Google Analytics to get more data. It's free!
- **Call Tracking** - Suggest to track your phone calls with a tool like CallRail
- **CRM** (Customer Relationship Management - House your call and lead data to prevent customers from slipping through the cracks - ActiveCampaign, ZoHo, and HubSpot are good choices
- **LiveChat** - Use a tool like Olark or Drift to chat with your customers as they are browsing your website

Key Takeaways



- SquareSpace, Weebly, and Wix are great DIY platforms
- Craft your content purposefully - try not avoid using stock photos
- Don't skip over the search engine readability of your website
- Get the most out of your website by implementing e-mail marketing, call tracking, analytics, CRM, and live chat features.



03

Hiring a Professional

Should I hire a freelancer or agency?
How do I evaluate a professional?
How do I maximize our relationship?



Your Options



Freelancer (single professional)



Agency (group of professionals)

Hiring a Freelancer



- Usually a single professional
- Less expensive freelancers will likely only be one or two dimensional
- More expensive freelancers are more likely to be multi-dimensional
- Can be found on sites like UpWork or Freelancer.com
- Stay away from sites like Craigslist
- You will most likely have to be more involved with managing the project and deadlines

Hiring an Agency



- Typically a group of professionals with cross-disciplinary skills
- Smaller agencies can be easier to work with due to a flatter structure
- Larger agencies have more people involved in the process which can present challenges but you have access to more talent
- If you hire a reputable agency you'll get more access to specialists, meaning an increased likelihood in positive outcomes
- Use sites like UpCity, Clutch.co, or perform a Google search to find a reputable agency

Evaluating a Professional



- ★ Established portfolio website
- ★ Reviews on third party sites
- ★ Recommendations from past clients - Don't be afraid to ask for these!
- ★ Do they practice what they preach?
- ★ Specific industry experience
- ★ Cost structure
- ★ Formal payment and contractual process
- ★ Established project management process

Costs of Hiring a Pro



Professionals typically bill using one of the three structures:

- **Hourly** - usually the most accurate, but can also be more expensive if your expectations and requirements are not set clearly
- **Flat fee** - if you have clearly defined expectations and requirements, this arrangement is the most advantageous for both parties
- **Retainer** - typically for larger projects where there aren't clear requirements in the beginning and the end product needs to be engineered from the ground up (mobile apps, online software businesses)

Watch Out For Scope Creep - when a project's budget or timeline gets extended due to expectations not being clearly set in the beginning, causing unforeseen additions to the scope of the project.

Be Prepared



- **A realistic budget** - simple sites can command a lower required budget but if you need all the bells and whistles, expect to invest more
- **Expectations for success** - tell your professional exactly what a successful outcome should look like after the website is launched
- **Technical requirements** - a list of technical features, like “a store locator” or “photo gallery” - be as specific as possible
- **Content direction** - it is best to provide your own photos to avoid costly photography fees, as well as a checklist of what content needs to be on the site
- **Your own hosting, domain name, and logo** - having the agency register and own these assets for you in the future could spell trouble if you break off your relationship
- **Access to an attorney** - Protect yourself by having a professional examine your contracts before signing anything.

Average Freelancer Rates:

\$25 to \$75 per hour

Average Agency Rates:

\$100 to \$250 per hour

Web Developer salaries by location

City	Average salary
Web Developer in New York, NY 2,197 salaries	\$97,528 per year
Web Developer in Chicago, IL 1,179 salaries	\$87,637 per year
Web Developer in Athens, GA 1,049 salaries	\$37,881 per year
Web Developer in San Francisco, CA 1,030 salaries	\$117,388 per year
Web Developer in Washington, DC 1,014 salaries	\$89,918 per year

How Much Does A Website Cost?

Factors That Effect Cost



Freelance



Web Design Firm

Marketing	\$0	\$1,000
Planning	\$0	\$1,250
Design	\$1,000	\$2,500
Project Management	\$500	\$1,000
Development	\$1,000	\$4,000
Testing & Launch	\$0	\$1,000
Maintenance & Support	\$0	\$500
TOTAL	\$2,500	\$10,250

Key Takeaways

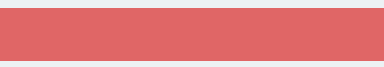


- When hiring a professional - you have two options: hiring a freelancer or hiring an agency
- Freelancers can be less expensive but might not have all the skills you need
- Agencies are typically more expensive but can handle all aspects of a project
- Avoid scope creep by being prepared before talking to a professional
- Costs for a freelancer can range from \$25 to \$75 per hour, whereas an agency can cost upwards of \$100 to \$250 per hour
- Do your due diligence when hiring a professional!



05

Questions?



Thank You!

Have any questions? You can reach me at jon@verdemedia.com or:

-**Phone:** (586) 806-6693

-**Schedule a consult** at [verdemedia.com](https://www.verdemedia.com)

-**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jon-teodoro/>

