

Setting Up a Blog for Business



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For many newcomers to the online marketing world, the learning curve for the tech aspects can be overwhelming. It's daunting to look at the process overall, but if you break it down into bite-sized steps and strategies, it's easily doable for anyone who wants to succeed online.

Get a Profit-Pulling Domain

Consider your domain name to be a part of the branding your company will use to attract customers. It should be well-thought out and not chosen with a knee-jerk reaction to something that sounds nice in the moment.

There are many ways people mess up this aspect of setting up their online business. There are several ways to choose a domain, and it depends on how you approach the process of customers finding your business.

For some, the branding of a quirky business name is very important. This can work well if you strategize a way to explode name recognition for your business. But keep in mind, if you have a strange name that doesn't explain to the visitor what your domain is about, it might be prohibitive in how people view your site.

Take these two examples:

If you chose a domain name based on a business called FightThe20.com, nobody would have any clue what that site is all about. They'd wonder what the 20 was, who's fighting what and so on.

But if you had a domain name based on keywords or phrases, it would help prospective visitors understand instantly what your site is about. For example, Lose20Pounds.com instantly tells you all you need to know to have a general idea that this is a weight loss site – and not just weight loss in general, but for those who have 20 pounds to lose.

Keywords help consumers navigate the web to find the best options for them. But even then, there's a right way and a wrong way to use them in a domain name. First, you need to conduct keyword research.

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There are countless paid and free tools you can use to get an idea of how consumers are searching online for business topics like yours. You'll find broad phrases like "lose weight" and narrow phrases such as "lose weight over 40."

You can drill down your keywords until you find something that attracts your audience perfectly. You don't want to go too narrow – so much that you alienate potential customers who would also be a good fit.

For example, you wouldn't want to choose a domain like LoseWeightForBikiniSeasonOver40.com. This is too long and clunky, for starters. You want a short, memorable domain.

But aside from that, you also are alienating anyone under 40 as well as men. Now if your program is for women only, it's fine to have a domain such as WeightLossForWomen.com or something similar, but the more barriers you put on it, the more you restrict potential sales of your products or promotions.

Another thing you don't want to do is use oddball, quirky names like Zirba.com, for example. You may have come up with a neat business name, but unless you can really brand that well, it's going to be confusing for online consumers.

Even if Zirba is your business name, you can still use a keyword-based domain to promote the brand Zirba. The two aren't mutually exclusive. Whenever you do your domain name research, make a list of everything you find that's available and give it a short amount of time to see which one feels like the best fit.

The domain buying process can be confusing, too. Keep in mind that all you need is one year of the domain only. You don't need hosting through your domain registrar. You don't need to add on site builders or emails or anything else.

If you end up adding on all of their suggestions, the domain cost will skyrocket from £12 to £100+, and it's not necessary. You can easily set up

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your own email and install WordPress free to build a site. You don't need all of their bells and whistles.

To save money on your domain purchase, look for a coupon code for the place you're buying it from. For example, you can search for discount coupon and find codes that will give you the domain for little cost.

Make sure you obtain a dot com domain (or dot uk domain if you are in the UK). It's the most recognized extension for domains, so even if something is taken as a dot com and available as a dot net, keep brainstorming until you hit on an available dot com. You don't want your competition siphoning off interested customers because they own the dot com extension and you don't.

Keep in mind that consumers want to learn action steps that provide excellent results. If you can obtain a domain like Lose20PoundsIn30Days.com, it will give the prospect incentive to click on the URL and find out how you propose that they achieve that.

Whenever you sit down to brainstorm your domain, think like a consumer. If you went to Google and typed in a phrase about weight loss, and saw a results list of 10 domains, which one would most entice you to click on it?

Would it be a random site like AnswerMyQuestion.com? Or would a site like FastWeightLossTips.com pull you in more? The weight loss one is more targeted to their exact needs, and looks more professional than a broad, generic domain that might have everything from weight loss to organizing their wardrobe on it.

Don't Get Duped Into Buying Too Much Hosting

Buying hosting is kind of like seeing how much square footage you'll have when you buy a property, only since this is digital space, the parameters are calculated in terms of bandwidth and uptime.

You want a reliable host with a solid reputation for serving your audience the pages they land on. If your site is constantly down for maintenance, you'll lose out on a lot of business.

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But one problem many beginners make when setting up their first online business is that they buy more hosting than they really need. If this is your first site – your first blog – you can get away with a small plan that only requires payment for a single site.

If you pay for a year's worth of hosting for a single site, you can get it for just under £7 a month in some cases. Some people mistakenly think they need a bigger plan. If you know you're going to build more sites, then it's fine to go ahead and get a hosting plan that allows for unlimited domains.

You can get plans like that for approximately £10 a month. But one thing you don't want to do, if this is your first foray into online selling, is pay a lot of money for a private server or reseller account that you don't need.

Keep it simple at first. Think about where you're heading and what you can afford. You always have the option to expand your hosting plan at a later date.

There's no company that says, "Sorry! You signed up for a small plan, so we're keeping you there." On the contrary! They'll want you to move to a bigger plan, so as soon as you're ready, you can do that without having to pay for it before it's necessary.

Make sure your host can handle the traffic load if you're planning a product launch. Even if you're new to the online business world, if you've taken the time to recruit top affiliates to promote your launch, they can send an avalanche of traffic your way, which could crash the site if you don't have adequate hosting.

When you settle on a hosting plan, make sure you log into your domain registrar and point the servers to your new host. The host will give you the server codes and you'll plug those into your domain registrar, where they should begin working within 24 hours, if not minutes.

Once your domain and hosting is all set up, log into your cPanel and familiarize yourself with the icons and what they mean. There are different sections within your cPanel that will help you manage your site.

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In the files section, you'll be able to upload and manage all files and images. You'll also be able to see disk usage and create a backup of your files, among other things. Your database will be managed from the cPanel, too.

You'll also find a domain section for redirects, addon domains and subdomains, to name a few. Your email section will enable you to create email accounts, forward them, and more.

In your metrics section within the cPanel, you'll gain information about your site visitors, errors within your site, bandwidth used, and more. You'll also be able to handle security issues on the cPanel and install software you might find useful.

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When you log into your cPanel, you'll find a Software section that has QuickInstall. In mere seconds, this tool will install WordPress into your domain so that you can begin building your site, sharing your message and stacking your credibility within the marketplace.

You can choose where you want to install your blog. Some people install it right on the root of the domain, such as BlogName.com. Others put something else, like a lead magnet (or opt in) page on the root, and choose to place their blog elsewhere, such as BlogName.com/blog.

Either way is fine, depending on the strategy you have in mind. You'll want to build a list, but you can always do that in the sidebar of your blog, as well as on a page like BlogName.com/subscribe if you prefer.

When the blog install is complete, you'll need to set up everything within the dashboard of your blog so that it will be ready to receive visitors and share your message to the masses.

Start by clicking on the Settings tab. The General settings will allow you to add the site title, tagline, and other admin settings like time zone and date. You can add a list of services to notify anytime you update your blog to the Update Services section under the Writing settings.

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For the Reading settings, you'll be able to choose what your home page displays (the latest posts, or a post that you choose. You'll also be able to choose how many posts are shown on the pages and how your feed syndication will appear to others.

One very important thing you want to check on this tab is the Search Engine Visibility option. It should be unchecked. If it's checked, it will deter search engines from indexing your site, making it difficult for you to get organic traffic.

Moving on to the Discussion settings tab, you can pick and choose who can participate on your blog and leave a comment, whether or not you have to approve it, and how you're notified.

You can also select the icon users have next to their name. If you choose Gravatar, for example, it will show the user's image they've uploaded to Gravatar.com for the email they've chosen to use when they submit a comment.

The Media setting will let you set specific parameters for image sizes in your media library. When you click on the Permalinks setting, you get to choose how the URL is displayed to your visitors.

You may want to use the Post Name option, because instead of showcasing a date, it lets the visitor see the entire name of the post, which is helpful in allowing them to view it as relevant to their needs.

Once you go through your settings, you'll want to click on Appearance and select a Theme for your blog. You can use a free one that you can activate or upload one (free or paid) that you have on your computer.

You'll be able to customize the appearance of your blog with a header that you create (or have done for you), site colours, menus and more. With the Widgets section of this tab, you can customize your sidebar with things like a search box, opt in form, and archive links to previous posts, recent comments, etc.

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If there are any plugins you want to use in your blog, you can upload those in your dashboard and activate them. This is where you might add a spam filter like Akismet, a contact form, social sharing buttons and so on.

Once your blog is all set up to operate as your home on the World Wide Web, you'll be able to log in and post to your site whenever you have something to share. You can use a mixture of text, images, as well as embedded audio and video.

Whenever you create a post, you can add it to a particular category on your site and assign tags to it so that when a visitor searches for a topic on your blog, that particular post comes up as a relevant option.

The great thing about using a blog as your home on the 'net is that it works on your schedule. If you want to blog daily, but you only get to work Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, you can write the posts ahead of time and schedule them to publish on the dates and times you choose. You can even mark some of your posts private and only give access to a select audience if you want.

Setting up your blog to do business on the Internet is an easy and inexpensive way to get started online. You can use it to build your brand, engage your audience, sell products, and promote things as an affiliate on a schedule determined by you.