

## Top 10 Things Every Business Should Know About Websites

### 1. It's Not Just the Kids - Adults are Using the Internet Too!

- **63% of ADULTS** in the US (128 Million) use the Internet regularly
- **63% of Americans** expect that a business will have a Web site that gives them information about a product they are considering buying.

### 2. Your Website is a First Impression.

- **90% of buyers eliminate suppliers BASED SOLELY ON THE WEBSITE.** This figure is high and likely does not hold true in all industries.
- Phone calls are decreasing. In the B2B world, 70% of the phone traffic in 1993 were requests for additional information. In 2002, only 4% was!
- If you have a brick and mortar business, would you hire a non-professional to design your store, and paint a sign?

### 3. Not All Websites are Equal

- E-commerce websites are businesses that require work, effort, and promotion. There are different levels of e-commerce sites as well. From selling one or two items through PayPal to large catalog sites selling hundreds or thousands of products.
- Informational sites should be kept up-to-date, but do not require the same amount of work. These sites are often used to promote an offline business. You do not need to sell online to have a successful website.
- When someone asks, "How much does it cost?" we need to have a conversation to learn what sort of site they need and want.

### 4. "If You Build It, They Will Come" Works in the Movies, But Not on the Internet.

- There is a lot of competition online! Estimates in August indicate there are almost 94 Million sites online now, with 4.4 Million new sites added just in July 2006.
- It takes time, effort, and money to successfully promote a website.

### 5. Your Website Should be the Hub of Your Advertising Wheel

- Your website is the central source of information for everything about your company. To promote it, begin, think of your website as the hub of a wheel. All of the spokes on your wheel point toward its all important center, where the information is. The spokes (places where your website needs to be mentioned) are:
  - Any advertisement you run in any other media, including: Yellow Pages ads, radio and TV, newspaper and magazine ads, coupons, flyers and brochures.
  - List your web address on your business card.
  - List your web address on all corporate paperwork, including: letterhead, purchase orders, invoices, packing slips
  - Include your web address as part of the *Signature* in your emails.
  - List your web address in any signage, including: building signage, roadway signage, vehicle signage.
  - List your website on promotional items, including: pens, mugs, magnets, etc.

## 6. Your Domain Name is VERY Important!

- When you “buy” a domain name you are essentially renting it for the number of years you specify. You have no ownership of that name once that time period expires.
- Domain names are unique. No one else in the world can have the exact same domain name. Keep in mind, however, that there are many extensions. I own [www.InWestmoreland.com](http://www.InWestmoreland.com), but someone else could purchase [www.InWestmoreland.uk](http://www.InWestmoreland.uk) or [www.InWestmoreland.info](http://www.InWestmoreland.info). COM is the most common extension, but there are many more. Every country in the world has a unique extension. There are also commonly used extensions like .edu, .gov, .net, .org, info, .biz, and less common ones like .us, .tv, .name, .museum.
- A long-term domain name adds value to your business. Printed materials and ad specialties that contain your email address and website address can be in potential customer’s hands for years.
- **Keep Your Information Current:** The single most important bit of information to the registrar is the “address of record”. This is the email address that they send all correspondence to. When it’s time to renew your name, they send an email to that address. Make sure it’s correct!

## 7. You Should Have an Email Address at Your Own Domain.

- It looks more professional.
- Your domain name helps promote your website. Each time users see your email address, they will be reminded of your website.
- An email address at your own domain will never change. You can have an email address and a domain name WITHOUT a website.

## 8. Meta Tags Won’t Help Your Site

- Most people seem to think that ranking well in the search engines just requires a few words in the meta tags on a website. Way back in 1994, these invisible tags, did help SEs to catalog sites. To rank well, you must actually use the words on the page that people are typing in. There’s an art to writing for search engines. You need to focus on specific phrases on the page while using natural language. Using the same words too many times or repeating them over and over is called keyword stuffing.

## 9. Why isn’t my website found in the search engines?

- With 94+ million websites out there, the competition is fierce.
- You have to use the words on the page that someone is actually typing in.
- Search engines do not “read” pictures.
- Search engines do not like duplicate content. You can be banned from the search engine if you try to cheat or trick them into increasing your rankings.

## 10. Not All Web Designers Are Equal

- You could have 5 different people with Master’s Degrees in music, but that doesn’t mean they could all play Mozart and Jimmi Hendrix equally well. Individual talents, abilities, tastes, and preferences all have an effect.
- There are no certifications or degrees needed to become a web designer. Some designers have an art background, some have a technical/programming background, some come from marketing. Each individual or company has different strengths and skills.
- Many non-professionals and part-timers create websites. This creates a very inexpensive alternative that is ideal for many non-profit organizations and small businesses. However, if you want a professional appearance for a professional business...hire a professional.
- Look for a web designer that you want to build a relationship with. Websites are never really “finished”. They aren’t like a printed brochure that is done and sent to the printer. Websites must be maintained, updated, and improved regularly. Find someone you are comfortable working with.