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**Preparing for Your New Website**

Congratulations on your decision to own your own website! I am very happy to be your partner in this project, and I look forward to helping you achieve your goals with its creation.

Expect your site to be “live” within about two weeks of submitting everything I need. (It may only be one week, and in special circumstances it may take longer than two weeks.)

To get us going, the following items should be gathered (or established) and sent to me as soon as possible (try to send everything within two weeks). For your convenience, I’ve listed the first priorities first. This sheet is printable and you may use the boxes to check off each item as you complete it. If you have any questions about anything on this list, please call for an easy-to-grasp, clarifying discussion.

**First priorities (Try to get these done within a week; I need them to begin building your site):**

* **Register your domain name** (for instance: www.stepbysteppresentations.com). If you’re registering a new domain, **please call me to advise you** and guide you through this. There are things to consider when choosing a domain and its extension (.com, .org, .net, .co, etc.) and there’s only one registrar that I recommend.

If you already have a domain registered**, please have the registrar’s name/website and your log-in information** to access it.

* **Tell me about your style:** What overall feeling or image do you want your site to convey? What’s the overall look you prefer? You may circle and convey your preferences below if it helps you organize your thoughts:
  + *Overall “feel” of your site (circle all that apply)*: soft, light, “zen”-like, bold, vibrant/dynamic, rugged, industrial, antique/aged, feminine, masculine, kid-like, creative, technology-oriented, artsy, musical, educational, religious, sophisticated, grunge, **other**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + *Colors:* Typically, I base color selection on the colors used in images throughout your site. These usually include logos, photos, book covers, artwork, industry type, etc. **Please tell me if you have any specific preferences and/or dislikes:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Google or Gmail account** log-in information: We will need to dedicate an existing Google/Gmail account or establish a new one for use with your site. I can help you establish one if you’d like. It’s easy and it’s free. This Google/Gmail account will enable me to set up free and important Google tools for use with your site.
* **Your logo,** if you have one
* **A title for your website,** which may or may not be the same as your business name or domain name. For instance, if you’re an author you may, followed by the word “author.”
* **List of pages you want on your site:** Examples: Home, About, Products/Services, Videos, Photo Gallery/ies, News and Events, Press Room, Contact Us, Helpful Resources, Client Testimonials, etc. Include any that you may want hidden from the main menu for special purposes, such as a reservation form for a special event or other information accessible only by links from your written content.
* **Create or collect all the images and other *non*-written content** (video, audio, etc.) to be used on your site. **Consider including a photo of you**, for the “About” page and maybe elsewhere. Be sure that you’re using your own, original content or content that is free to use and that will not constitute a copyright infringement if you use it. For the free tier of your website’s hosing platform (no annual/monthly fees), maximum file size is 10MB per image or document. The number of files, however, is unlimited. The free tier enables you to embed video from YouTube. To embed YouTube videos on your site, please provide me with the links to those videos. (The “Pro” tier of your website’s host/platform offers HD video and audio players right from your site, removing the need for third-party platforms or downloadable audio files. The price is very competitive, at $6.63 to $9.83 a month, depending on how long you commit—six months, one year or two years.)

When saving the images to your computer as files, give them titles (names) that are briefly descriptive and use keywords. Then assign each of your images a “public” title that also contains descriptive and key words. (The public names/titles can be the *same as* or *different from* the names you use to save them to your computer.) These names/titles can then be used on-site in numerous ways, as appropriate, including as actual page titles (for instance, when art/photos or photographed items are for sale), as alt text, as text disbursed through the written content, and within site and page titles and descriptions.

* **Create/collect your written content** for all main pages. (These are best provided in the form of a Word document, or even in the body of e-mail to me. PDFs are not the best format to provide, as they’re not as “searchable” by search bots because they are actually images.)

Typically, the main pages include: Home, About, Contact and Products/Services pages. The Home and About pages should contain about 300 words (or more), with descriptions/explanations that appropriately pertain to those pages. Other pages may be lighter on content, but all content should appropriately pertain to its related page. For instance:

* The Home page is usually a “Welcome”-type page; the first place that most people land when arriving at your site. Think of it as your storefront window, your lobby, etc. Your message should pertain to who you are (briefly) and what people will find at your site.
* The “About” page goes deeper into the people behind the business/site/product, etc. This might be a brief bio about an author, artist, musician, etc., and what inspires him/her. Or it could be the academic history and accreditations of a doctor or other professional, along with the mission statement of the practice. “About” page stories can be as personal as the owner deems appropriate.
* Any products and services listed on the site should have their own “names” and descriptions.
* The Contact page doesn’t require any content other than phone number, e-mail address and physical location and mailing address (if you want those known). You may, however, create a paragraph or other content for this page if you’d like.

**By end of subsequent week (The sooner I receive everything, the sooner your site will be live!):**

* **For each item offered for sale**, provide me with details like price, size and any other information that visitors to your site will want/expect to find. If these items must be purchased elsewhere, other than through you or your website, have links (or other information) to where people can make the purchase.
* **Public contact information:** Please provide me with the public phone number and/or e-mail address you’d like listed on your site. Keep in mind that many people don’t want to do business with someone they can’t call or whose e-mail address is hidden from view.
* **The e-mail address to which you want your website’s contact forms forwarded**. This may or may not be the same as your publicly listed e-mail address.
* **Links to social media profiles** (optional): You may link your site to social media profiles where people can engage with or follow you on those platforms. To do this, copy the URLs that other people (not you from your admin side) use to find you online. For instance, people can find my **Thanking of You** Twitter account, and follow my Tweets, at: <https://twitter.com/ThankingOfYou> Gather the URLs for any of your profiles, which may include:
  + Facebook (I recommend listing only your business profile, not personal one)
  + Twitter
  + LinkedIn
  + YouTube
  + Pinterest
  + HomeTalk.com
  + Angie’s List
  + Others: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Links to trade/professional organizations/associations (if applicable):** It’s a good idea to list the organizations/associations to which you are a member or by which you are certified and/or endorsed. If this applies to you, please provide me with the official names of those organizations and, if possible, links to where they can be found online. If you have a specific Web page or profile on the websites of any of them, provide me with those links.
* **Links to articles, interviews, etc.** where you’ve been featured (if applicable)
* **Articles and/or any other documents** you’d like embedded on-site for visitors to access (if applicable)
* **Client/customer testimonials** about your work (if applicable)
* **Do you plan to blog?** If you already have a blog elsewhere I can link it to your new site and you may continue blogging on that platform. If you want to establish a new one, we’ll need to talk more about it to determine the best (free) platform for you to use, etc.
* **Your notes on anything else you think you should provide:**
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