

Website Design for Start-ups- DIY or find a professional?

INTRODUCTION

It's the age-old problem that never strays far from the minds of entrepreneurs. An issue that'll come back, twice as persistent, if you play it down as insignificant.

As an entrepreneur who's been through his fair share of start-ups, I know that online presence is huge. If you're not online in the 21st century- where everyone is in this digital era, your business isn't anywhere.

No, you don't have to frantically try, in vain, to grow into an Amazon-level e-commerce platform, but a single, well-made website can do wonders for your small business, SaaS start-up, or anything, for that matter. As a business owner, that shouldn't come as news.

You *should* already have a cleanly designed website working its magic and pushing your start-up to another level.

Unless you're stuck in this one dilemma, like so many others...

Where do you get this website- from a top-notch pro, or do you DIY and start from scratch? And even before all this- why get a website at all?

What's the point of a website?

This one's self-explanatory.

It's 2022- and the world has gone virtual- even more so than before. The result? A glaring, immediate need for online presence.

That coveted, "online real-estate" is an essential facet of any business and is often seen as the centrepiece of an e-commerce platform. This is old news for the online folks who are waist-deep in SEO, domains, and such, but it's a completely different story for many.

Is expanding your company online the way to go, even if you're enjoying success otherwise? Or is it just a risky waste of resources?

Pros

1- Modern Look

What's more up-to-date than a sleek website design? Customers get an immediate impression from a business storefront. A clean, modernized online counterpart is no different.

2- Up-to-date, easy access

That's the beauty of an online presence. Got news? Let the world know in a couple of clicks. Changing it up is no longer a hassle.

3- Marketing, Advertising, Publicity

A website is the cornerstone of any online business, but even that pales in comparison to the power and reach of social media. Combined? Well, you've got yourself a winner.

4- Wider reach

Anyone can reach your website online, without issue (except for Wi-Fi). Apart from that, however, you can grow and expand your platform with ease, attracting customers from all over the world.

Cons

1- Targeting Issues

Sure, the vast audiences seem like a luxury, but none of it's any good if you can't pick out the demographics you need. It'll be a challenge to filter them out *and* rank for the ensuing keywords.

2- Technical Issues

If you don't do it right, websites crashing could be detrimental to your credibility and your audience. Make sure it's accessible on both mobile and desktop- this bugs a lot of customers.

3- Online security

On the web, security is a biggie. Even with fraudsters and hackers lurking, it's easy to forget that online information is usually half-heartedly protected by businesses.

Should I pay a top-notch professional?

A website is nothing like a one-and-done freelancing gig.

You can't cut corners and expect to churn them out whenever you need one. It is, without a doubt, an immense part of your business, and making/maintaining it requires immense work in turn.

But can you do it yourself? If you don't like the sound of a huge project, that'll eat up time and your resources, that's where a web developer might slide in.

A web developer, unlike you, has the added benefit of doing this their whole lives. It's pretty safe to assume they'll give you a fantastic website (if you have the money, of course).

Pros

1- Save time

Let's face it- most of us probably can't make a beautiful website from scratch. Hiring a developer eliminates the countless hours scrolling through confusing YouTube tutorials, and gets the job done without hassle.

2- Higher Quality

With a pro, you know what you're getting. From reliability to functionality, your website is bound to have the markings of high-quality work. It's easy to distinguish the look and feel of a well-made website from a shoddy project, even for consumers.

3- Ease of use/ Flexibility

User-friendly aspects tailored to the customer are main goals of any website, and a developer will certainly have this in mind. You'll enjoy both mobile/desktop formats that are super-easy to navigate.

Need something changed? Just ask your flexible professional- it's really that simple.

Cons

1- Through-the-roof costs

As heavenly as this sounds, it won't come cheap. At all. Web developers put in a lot of time and effort and expect to be paid accordingly. It's an amazing investment- although you might get caught up in the dollar signs at first.

This is the main drawback that discourages a lot of businesses from seeking a budget-straining web developer.

2- Communication and Satisfaction

Most of the time, it's a smooth experience working with a developer, but bumps in the road are certainly possible. You might be envisioning one thing, only to see it turn out totally different due to some miscommunications.

After all, they can't tailor it to your every tiny request, until they get it "just right".

Or should I just go for it myself?

In a perfect world, we would have a bottomless budget to throw at developers without worry for flawless websites.

Alas, many businesses simply cannot afford to spend thousands, but still believe in the idea that a core website can light up a start-up.

That leaves only one option- to do it themselves.
Maximum cost efficiency, but at the price of quality.

Pros

1- Saving money

Getting a pro to whisk up a website might set you back a couple grand.
Diving into the world of web developing and doing it yourself probably won't be anywhere near that. Just watch some videos, purchase a domain... and you're set.

2- Creative control

Sometimes, it's hard to convey your ideas to a web developer. If you decide to go this route instead, you'll have full control over both the business and creative aspects of the website (learning curve aside).

Cons

1- Time-consuming

You won't become a website whiz overnight. Just learning the basics and getting the hang of any website builder will take up hours and hours of your time.
That's not even including the actual construction of the website.

2- Amateur Quality

It doesn't take a master detective to distinguish the free templates and laggy sites with the distinct air of a cleanly designed website. Even if you put in hours of work on a drag-and-drop website builder, it just wouldn't pass for that professional look.

So what should I choose?

It all comes down to your situation, business, needs, and requirements.

Obviously, a site designed by a web developer would look miles better than your DIY project.

On the flip side, that custom-built dream you've envisioned won't come cheap, and just might not be a feasible choice given your budget.

In the end, it's not a life-and-death choice. This isn't the last website you'll ever have.

You might set up your own, knowing that you'll find a developer once you have the funds. Or start off with a professional, only to decide it just doesn't fit your tastes later down the road.

Just choose one, instead of twiddling your thumbs. The quicker you make a decision- the better.