



Your Website Coach



Website Owners Basic Checklist – 2/16/06

Several weeks ago I spoke with a business owner, Dave, who is rather unhappy with his current website situation. He feels his web developer isn't honoring the terms of their agreement and although he'd be taking a loss by changing developers, he is willing to pick up and move anyway. He wanted some direction from me, so in order to build my framework of understanding; I asked to see a copy of his contract. Sadly enough, he didn't have one. This makes for the perfect opportunity to discuss the Business Website Owner's Basic Checklist.

Put everything in writing. Yes, everything. It is hard to believe that your best friend's neighbor's uncle would do you wrong, but a paper trail is very valuable in the web world. At the very least, if you choose to go elsewhere, you can compare their pricing based on the same set of specifications.

Understand your basic costs. This means you need to know how much you pay per month (or year) for web hosting, and how much you pay annually for your domain name. You can't make sound decisions if you don't know your current costs and what service/functionality is included.

Get the user id and password to everything. If you have someone else set up your domain name and web hosting, please make sure you have a copy of every document sent by the registrar and web host providers. As the owner of your site, you need to know who has what and how you access them. This information will also include important phone numbers, URLs (web addresses) and account information. **Important** – When having someone else register your domain name for you, please ensure that *you* are the registrant and administrative contact. If you don't and you want to change web hosts, that "someone else" must okay it before you can proceed. That final decision should be yours, not theirs. **Also Important** – If you are using a template-based hosting service where you have predefined pages and settings, some of that information may be very hard to get or not available at all.

Determine the intellectual property rights. If you have hired a photographer, graphic artist or writer, know what you *own* and what you *don't own*. Don't assume that because you paid for it, you own it outright. Although that may be the case, you want to have a written contract that describes what you are getting and how it can be used. Remember, these individuals are providing a piece of material for you that was brought forth from their creative perception and that is where ambiguity can lie.

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