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## A Website for Your Business?

By Dr. John Drozdal

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Sooner or later every small business owner will ask, "should I have a website"? Here are some thoughts that may help with that question:

1. **Get clear on why you want a website.** There is a big difference between a website designed to share information and provide an email address, and one that enables a business to sell its products online. Once you decide on how you want to use your site, you can find a writer/web designer who has the expertise to develop what you need.
2. **Register your domain name.** Your website needs a domain name like [www.mybusiness.com](http://www.mybusiness.com) so prospective customers can find you. You need to register your domain name with an Internet registry such as [www.bulkregister.com](http://www.bulkregister.com) or [www.mydomain.com](http://www.mydomain.com) before your website can go live. You can do this yourself by going to one of these registry sites, setting up an account, and following the online instructions. The cost is about \$25 per year for each domain name you register. A word of caution: if you have a web designer register your domain name for you, be certain you are listed as the owner.

There are a few unscrupulous designers who will register your domain, name themselves as the owner, and then try to "sell" your domain name back to you when it renews!

3. **Find a web designer/business writer you like.** Most business owners do not have the time or expertise to write or design their own websites. Ask people who already have websites for recommendations on writers and/or web designers based on your needs. Interview the candidates, ask to see samples of their work, and check references. Pick one and get a written contract. Once you find one, he or she should be able to recommend the other.
4. **Find someone to "host" your website.** Once someone creates your website, you'll need to find a company to "host" it—that is, put it out on the Internet for all to see AND keep it updated and working. Some web designers also provide this service or can recommend vendors they trust. Hosting contracts can be as little as \$10 per month for "information-only" and can cost much more for sites that require continuous product updates. ■

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