Your Guide To Web Development

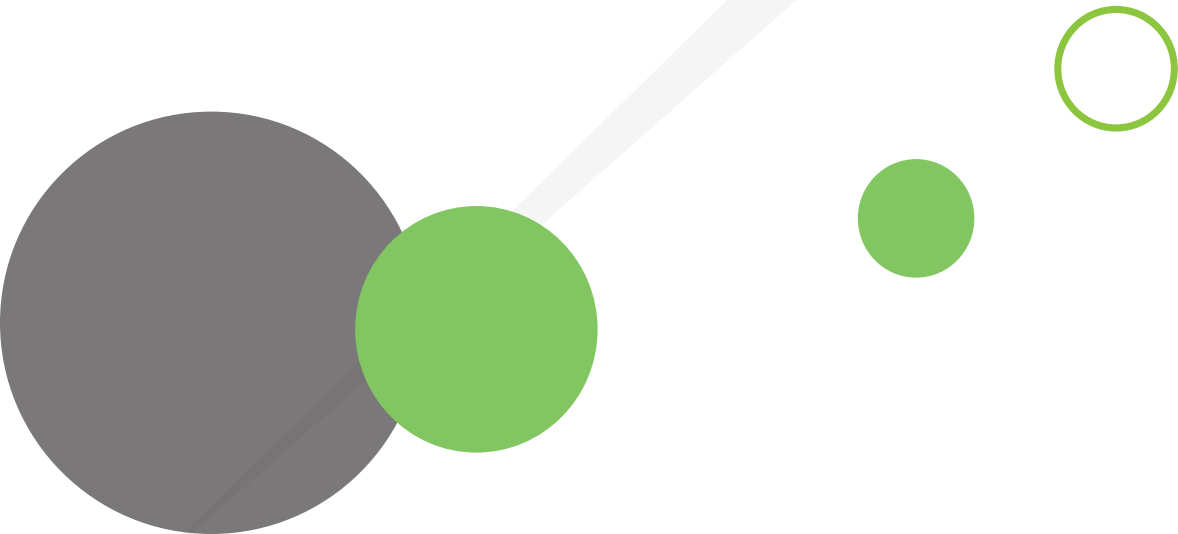**88%**

of local businesses searches on a mobile device either call or visit the business within **24** hours.

TAP LOCAL

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Introduction

The ABCs of Effective Web Design

The days of relying solely on word of mouth or somebody stumbling across your place of business are over. Nowadays, if you do not have a website, or a "digital storefront" as we like to call it, you are behind the curve. Not only do consumers want to see your business' listing on directories, such as Yelp and TripAdvisor, they also want to visit your website, which proves to them that your business is viable.

While a website can be used as a method of informing, scheduling, or facilitating purchases, the main goal of your website should be to build credibility with a user and entice them into a purchasing decision.

With web design, there are no shortcuts or one size fits all solutions. In order to be successful, you must follow industry best practices and add a creative touch personal to your business. Whether you are building a website for a new venture or taking your business to the web for the first time, the rest of this eBook seeks to provide you with a step-by-step guide to web development and design.

Getting Registered
First and foremost, you need to secure a domain name and create a business email account. Hopefully, your domain name is still available

Building and Hosting
With a domain name secured, you then start building your website's structure and choose a site to host your website. Oftentimes, building softwares offer hosting as well

Design
Start designing your web pages with your brand in mind. Finding the right mix of aesthetic and usability is key

Measuring and Reporting
You have your website designed. That's great. Now, start measuring and reporting your website's activity so that you can optimize it

Ongoing Maintenance
Between updates and unforeseen issues, your website will require ongoing maintenance in order function properly

Getting Registered

Tedious? Yes. Necessary? Definitely.

Secure a Domain Name

The first step to web design is securing a domain name. Not only should your domain name be relevant to your product offering or service, it should also be creative, unique, and relevant to your brand.

A Word On Creative Domain Names

Domain names should be creative. However, creativity can sometimes go too far. Since your potential customers will be visiting your website for information on your business, your domain name will have a part to play in how your website's visitors view your brand. As a result, you need to make sure that your domain name is in good taste. There are instances where creativity has gone too far. Make sure that you understand your customer base and how they will perceive your domain name.

Set Up a Business Email Account

The second step is setting up a business email account. A dedicated business email account is important for three reasons.

For one, you can link your website to your business email.

Secondly, you can post your business email on your website so that customers can reach you if they have questions.

Lastly, having a business email account gives your business credibility.

Think about it. What would you think about a business who cannot spend less than $10 on a business email account? It may seem like a small detail, but it shows that you care about your business.

http://

Building and Hosting

Every structure needs a strong foundation

Website Building Software

In order to build and update pages for your website, you'll need to find a website building software. You'll want to find one that offers you flexibility and functionality.

Whereas flexibility allows you to customize your website so that it reflects the vision you have for it, functionalities allow you to add features, such as scheduling and dynamic backgrounds, to your website.

Above all else, a good website building software is user-friendly. Even some of the most experienced developers use website building softwares because they simplify their development processes immensely.

Hosting

A host is the storage unit where your website content 'lives' on. The type of hosting you choose depends on how many visitors you have coming to your website. The cost of website hosting will increase when more people visit your site.

The four main types of website hosting are shared hosting, VPS hosting, dedicated hosting, and free hosting. With shared and VPS hosting, you share a server with other sites. However, you get more capacity with VPS hosting. With dedicated hosting, you get a server for your site and your site only. Free hosting is hosting that is included in most website building softwares.
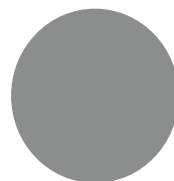
Design

Think of your website as your online storefront

48% of people cited that a website's design is the No. 1 factor in determining the credibility of a business

As explained in the introduction, a website should reflect your brand. The first thing visitors will notice about your website is how it looks. As a result, you need to portray your brand through the graphics placed on your website. While the structure and user interface of your website is extremely important, design is equally important because it grasps a visitor's attention.

Website Template Design

A website template is a pre-made structure that allows you to easily place your content in designated spaces. The benefit of a template is that they are very easy to use.

Logo Design

Your brand should have a logo, which displays a color palette that is used throughout all of your collateral, communications, and merchandise. Your logo presents another opportunity for you to be creative. However, do not sacrifice good taste for creativity. Once again, try to understand how your logo will be received by those who see it. Nevertheless, your logo help your existing and potential customers recognize your brand, it will also differentiate you from your competitors.

High-Quality Images for Website

Since your website is an indicator of your business' credibility, you need to use professional photos on your pages. If you do not possess a camera capable of taking professional quality images (no...you're phone won't cut it), you can use a paid online service, such as Shutterstock or GettyImages, to access millions of stock photos for your business' needs.

Image Editors

When designing your own website, you will need to edit images. This will be the case even if you use premade website templates. Fortunately, there are free online tools, such as PicMonkey, that allow you to edit images.

Design & Your Website's Performance

Sometimes, your site's graphics and functionalities might affect performance. As a result, you need to continually test your website during the design process. Without the help of trained professional, you may need to sacrifice design attributes for better performance. Having a trained professional optimize your site on the backend is one of the benefits you will receive by hiring an individual or company to develop your site.

Measuring and Reporting

How's your website doing after all?z

No matter what goals you have for your site, you need to measure and report your website's performance. By doing so, you will be able to optimize your site in order to improve the experience of users. In addition, you can improve your site's structure so that it better accomplishes the end goals you have for your site.

The end goal you have for your website may be to inform visitors of your business. In such a case, you may consider placing links to other informative resources on your site.

If the end goal you have for your website is for for visitors to schedule appointments, you should place calls-to-action for appointment scheduling on the pages of your site.

As you can see, your end goal influences how you define success and how you define success should influence what you measure.

With your end goal established and your site structure in place, you will need to measure how well your site is accomplishing the goals you define. You can do so by creating a Google Analytics account and linking your domain to that account. By doing so, you will be able to track your website's activity on the Google Analytics dashboard and optimize your site accordingly.

Metrics to monitor include:

- website traffic
- traffic sources
- bounce rate
- top pages
- conversion rate
- conversion by traffic source
- customer's lifetime value

Nevertheless, Google's analytics dashboard simplifies the tracking of these metrics.

Ongoing Maintenance

Prepare for the worstz

Your site will require ongoing maintenance as you update your site's structure and associated copy. Accept the fact now that your site will have growing pains and things will break. As a result, be prepared for the worst.

You might think that it would be better to never update your site. However, you need to ensure that your website is on par with industry's ever-changing design standards. After all, your site should never look outdated. On the contrary, a good website shows the visitor that you care about your business, which is evidence of the quality you value in your product and service offerings.

In addition, if you ever undergo a rebrand, you should update your website to reflect the new brand image you are attempting to emulate.

With that being said, one of the benefits of hiring a professional to develop and manage your website is that you will not have to worry about updates or fixing your site when problems arise.

47%
of people expect a web page to load in 2 seconds or less

Thanks For Reading!

Don't worry. We've got you covered.

With TAPLocal Web Development, you get a dedicated team of web developers and graphic designers with a proven track record of creating beautiful websites at your disposal. The best part is that they will use your vision as a guide to build a website that reflects your brand and accomplishes the end goals you have for it.

We focus on the how so you can focus on the now!

Open Your Digital Store Front Today!