

Website Developer

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The internet has changed the way we do business, communicate and advertise. At the heart of every company's online marketing strategy is a brilliant website. Website development brings together facets of design, marketing and programming into a single package. This market might be saturated but there is always room for one more talented and hard working developer on the net.

Before The Start-Up - Let's Not Get Ahead Of Ourselves

Web development is not a job you can start over night, if you've never built a website before here's how we recommend starting. Buy two books, one for a graphic design program like Adobe Photoshop and another on XHTML (the language of the internet) and CSS. Once you have a basic understanding of Photoshop, XHTML and CSS, build yourself a website, it could be anything from a personal blog to an affiliate marketing site selling memory foam. (Don't waste your time with MySpace, it's great fun but isn't going to teach you what you need to know)

The Start-Up

Without much previous experience, starting out is a slow process so be patient. Start out building websites for a nominal fee to slowly build up your portfolio. Once you have a few solid sites under your belt you can start to charge more competitive prices. Your online portfolio will form the centre of your marketing campaign, create an appealing site with your target market in mind. If you're aiming at the small business community an overly arty site isn't going to get you more work.

Making It Work

Develop a standard questionnaire that you can send to clients before beginning work, this will ensure you have all the information you need to properly design their site. Also include a contract in the package; it should lay out the exact relationship between yourself and the company, including prices, future rates and deadlines.

Sticking to deadlines can be the hardest aspect of this job. Unexpected problems often arise that require hours of unexpected work so leave yourself breathing room when setting a deadline with your client.

Marketing

Most of your work will come from word of mouth. Always carry business cards with you and don't be afraid to encourage people to have a look at your portfolio. If you are struggling to find new work consider approaching companies with forgotten old websites and making them an offer. A pay per click campaign is an option to increase traffic to your website, but be careful to actively monitor your campaign to prevent unnecessary loses.

Don't Forget

Quoting the correct amount for a job can be extremely difficult. Develop a standard pricing system and stick to it. Most firms have an hourly rate for design and development and another slightly lower rate for updating content. Also calculate a standard time frame for designing a website and converting it into code. Finally keep in mind that most projects take longer than you initially

anticipate.