WEB DESIGN TIPS & TRICKS

Summary of training from Facebook Live video - February 15, 2018
For more information, rewatch the live video on the Julie's Success Circle page

WHERE TO START
Three big-picture starting points you need to think about:

1. **Purchase your domain name**
   Your domain is your address on the internet, just as your street address is your physical location. This is not a one-time purchase. You must renew your domain annually.

   > ***TIPS:*** Make it easy-to-spell
   > Choose a domain as close as possible to your business name
   > Be sure to purchase through a reputable domain registrar. GoDaddy.com, Domain.com and NameCheap.com are examples.

2. **Secure web host**
   A web host is a big computer in the cloud or a data center that stores all the text, images, and data for your website. Your host tells a browser what to display to the person coming to your website.

   > ***TIPS:*** When choosing a host, look for the following:
   > How many domains you can host
   > How much traffic (visitors) per month your host can support
   > How many emails your host can send per hour
   > The reputation of their customer service department.
   > Start off with the host's baby package and scale up if you need more features.
   > Siteground.com, Hostgator, and BluHost are a few examples of reputable hosts.

3. **You're ready to build your site! You have two choices:**
   Self-contained Site Builder **OR** Content Management System

   ### 1. Site Builder
   All-in-one website building platform. Examples = Wix, Weebly, Squarespace.
   Pros = Easier to create sites without web experience. Typically contain many templates and video resources you can use to start building your suite quickly.
   Cons = Less flexibility and functionality. Monthly costs range from $8-$30/month.

   > **TIP:** If you choose this route, **SKIP STEP #2**. Site builders include web hosting!

   ### 2. Content Management System
   A software that facilitates creating, editing, organizing, and publishing content on the web. Examples = Wordpress, Drupal, Joomla.
   Pros = Much more flexibility in site design. More powerful functionality and customization available. FREE to install on your domain. Only on-going costs are your hosting services and domain name.
   Cons = A little harder to navigate at the beginning.

   > **TIP:** Many hosts will install your CRM on your web domain. Ask for help through the host's customer service hotline or chat service.

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WEBSITE MUST-HAVES
Every good website should include:

1. **A clear navigation menu with (at least) the following pages:**

Home - Dynamic home page that tells who you or your business are at a glance.

About – Where you include information about your business, yourself, or both. This is where you tell your story to instill confidence in the person visiting your site that they want to buy from you or work with you.

Shop or Services – The page where people can buy items or services from you. Include store listings or a gallery of images and links where people can purchase the items. Consider having testimonials on this page if your testimonials are product-based.

Contact Us - Page that includes all pertinent contact information. Be sure to include a contact form that forwards to your email address. Be wary of including your actual email address anywhere or you open yourself up to spam bots emailing you endlessly. If you have a physical store front, be sure to include your address and how to find you. Include details that may be important to finding you - where to park, directions, etc. Consider obtaining a FREE Google Voice phone number if you don't want to give out your cell number.

Testimonials - You can also put testimonials on their own page, included in the navigation menu. Buyers need to know other people have taken a chance with you. Start building up testimonials from day one. Ask customers to give you a testimonial and they will usually be happy to help!

Blog (optional) - If you create blogs about your products, services, or industry, consider including them on your blog page.

2. **Include clear calls to action and put them in multiple places**
Be as clear as possible what you want customers to do once they visit your site. If you want them to purchase a product, be sure links to your SHOP page are front and center. If you want customers to contact you, include a clear contact form in multiple places, etc.

3. **Email opt-in form(s)**
This is a way to collect email addresses from customers who visit your site and opt-in to your email marketing. Opt-in forms can be pop-ups, appear as a customer scrolls, or always be located in the header or footer of your site. If you are collecting personal information, you need to have clear privacy policy on your website. More info next page.

4. **Easy-to-find search box**
Helps customers find exactly what they are looking for. Consider putting search box in header or footer.

5. **Social media links**
Another way for customers to connect with you. You will typically find them as social media icons that link to your channel(s). Consider putting in the header, footer, and on the Contact Us page so they are easy to find. Only include links to your social media that you keep current.

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STEER CLEAR!
What should NOT be on your website:

1. **Videos or music that auto-play when your site loads**
   Nothing will make a customer close your site faster than media blaring at them.

2. **Flash animation**
   Flash is not searchable through search engines. It also dates your site as outdated technology, and many browsers no longer support flash animated sites.

3. **Un-optimized photos**
   You will want your photos to be optimized for web viewing. This typically means photos that are set to 72 pixels per inch and have a file size under 1 MB (the smaller the better, without compromising quality). Huge file photos cause your site to load very slowly, causing customers to navigate away from your site.

HELPFUL KEYWORDS

Themes – "Outfit" for your website that you can customize to your own liking. When looking for a theme, make sure it has: regular updates from the developer, good reviews (4-5 stars), and a Drag and Drop builder (BeaverBuilder, Visual Composer, or the Divi Builder).

Widget - Widgets allow you to add static and dynamic content to widget-ready areas of your theme such as your sidebar, header, and footer. To display a widget on your website, activate the plugin, drag the widget to the appropriate widget zone, and then configure the widget. Depending on which theme you use, it may include widgets in addition to the widgets that come default with Wordpress.

Plug-in - Extension of your site that adds additional functionality. If your theme doesn't include a function that you need on your site, there's a common saying for Wordpress that claims, "There's a plug-in for that!"

SSL Certificate - Encrypts users' personal information and keeps your site secure. A must-have if you are selling anything through your site. Contact your web host or site builder interface to set up your SSL.

Search Engine Optimization - Steps you take to help customers find your website. Use the Google Search Console or an SEO plug-in such as Yoast SEO as a starting point.

RESOURCES
Pricing – Pricing for your website design can range from as low as $500 for a 5-page basic site to upwards of $15,000. This price is for your design only, not the graphic design of your logo or domain name cost. Consider outsourcing your web design because it will cost you in time to build your site. Additionally, you will have someone to go to if a problem arises.

Privacy Policy - If you are collecting user personal information on your site, you must have a privacy policy located on your site. For example, if you collect email addresses, names, and birthdays during the user signup process, you need to tell users what happens with their information. Privacy policies are legal documents informing users what you do with their data. Generate a FREE privacy policy at https://www.iubenda.com/en.