



media**317**

WEBSITE 101: WHAT'S THE COST?

**The Minimum Cost for a
Quality Website that Works**

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A website is a very effective tool for building and growing your business. Whether you have a brick-and-mortar store or are trying to build a business around a blog, your website should play a pivotal role in growing your business.

The reality is that not everyone has a quality website that is generating leads, sales or traffic. A website that is not working for you, is a business liability and needs to be seriously evaluated.

At Media317, we design and develop websites for clients that are effective and help build their business. We build sites using [WordPress](#), an open-sourced platform with a very active community. We use the Genesis Framework to make sure your website is fast, reliable and SEO friendly. We provide tools and training to make sure you are able to run your website independent of us.

We aim to empower web users by making the web simple with WordPress, Genesis and good SEO.

So you know you need a website, but you don't know how much they cost. Well, they cost about as much as a car. The price of a website is as varied as the price of a vehicle. So the purpose of this ebook is to walk you through the various cost factors so you can better understand what the cost are and where the value can be found.

Site Design

Depending on where you are with your business or blog, you may need to invest in a site design. A website design needs to reflect your business, matching your logo and company brand. Your company needs to project the same look in print and online and having a quality design will help make that happen.

[If “Content is King”, then web design is the Queen](#). According to a recent study, the probability of a visitor leaving your site is reduced to less than 2% if you can keep them on the page for 15 seconds. That is a quick, snap judgement that is often times made by the look of the design.

Design Cost

I tend to break design into three categories: *template*, *semi-custom*, *custom*

The Template

A template is a pre built design that you can use for your site. It is often professionally designed and offered for sale on template or theme sites. These templates can be very professional in look and meet your needs. This is the lowest cost option. Themes can range from \$10 and up.

We recommend the [StudioPress](#) themes because they are well designed and come with several quality features that are good for your site. The

SEO features that are built in will help you improve in search and the support from the StudioPress community is excellent.

The Semi-Custom

A semi-custom site begins with a template or theme and is modified to match your business branding.

There are changes to the theme, a color palette is altered, a logo or graphic may be added, and some very simple and basic layout changes may be available.

The semi custom site is one that allows affords you the value of a theme and the look of your brand. It is a good middle ground for many small business owners.

This is an intermediate option and can cost between \$200 and \$500.

The Custom

A custom site is designed completely for your business. A designer will take the time to develop a completely new and unique look for your site. There will be custom images and graphics developed to match your company look and brand.

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This is the most powerful way to build your online brand. By customizing your site design, you ensure the uniqueness of your brand. You maximize the value of your site by building something that is completely unique to your business.

Cost will begin at about \$1,000.00 and will go up depending on the designer, complexity, and time frame.

Site Development

Once you have a site design, whether from a template or custom work, you will need to turn that into a working website. Web development is the process of turning your design into a website for the Internet or an intranet. Web development cost will vary depending on the platform you choose to use.

Vanilla or Chocolate?

There are two classes of web platforms, open-source and proprietary.

Open-sourced platforms are free from patent and copyright liability and are free to use and modify. Open-sourced platforms reduce the cost of entry and provide access to any and all users. Some open-source development platforms are WordPress, Drupal and Joomla.

Proprietary platforms are “closed” systems. Software companies design and develop software and then protect that software from users by keeping

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the source code hidden. To use the software requires the user to purchase a license from the manufacture.

Converting a design into a working website is going to be connected to the platform your developer uses, their level of experience and expertise, and the complexity of your site.

A simple site consisting of static content, a blog and some simple content management will begin at \$1,000.00 and go up. As you add features like shopping cart, membership services, forums, social network, etc, the price will grow proportionate to the complexity.

Site development is where your functionality is implemented into the site. The more features you need, the greater the cost.

One of the reasons we use WordPress is because of the wide range of quality plugins that exist in the marketplace. These plugins are pieces of code that can extend the function of your site without the need of custom coding. They can increase the functionality of your site at a fraction of custom coding.

Hosting and Registration

Once you have a site designed and developed you will need a place to store and serve the site. This is done from a computer called a server attached to the Internet. A hosting company will provide you with storage for your site and the appropriate bandwidth.

Hosting

There are three flavors of web hosting: *Shared, VPS, and Dedicated*

Share Nicely

A shared hosting environment occurs when several websites are sharing the same resources from a single server. Many web hosting companies will host 100's of sites on a single server. Each site has access to the servers processors and memory and will share those resources. Shared hosting will cost between \$3.95 and \$9.95 per month. Most will offer you unlimited storage and unlimited bandwidth. Read the fine print and be aware of what your host is providing before you sign any agreements.

Shared hosting is generally satisfactory for small sites with less than 1000 unique visitors per day. This is going to vary with hosting providers, however.

Going Virtual

The Virtual Private Server is a server where you have dedicated resources of processor and memory. You are still sharing a server with other sites, but you have a dedicated amount of the server resources available only to you. This increases your sites performance and limits residual impact from a shared environment. The VPS is a good option for sites that are growing and need more resources for their site.

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The VPS hosting begins around \$14.95 per month.

It's All Mine!

The Dedicated Server is for larger sites with large amounts of traffic. A site on a Dedicated server has all the resources of the server dedicated to their website. All the processor and RAM is dedicated to your site. Dedicated hosting is ideal for sites that are growing and have several thousand unique visitors per day.

The Dedicated hosting plans begin around \$150 per month and will go up from there. There is not a ceiling on hosting cost. As you need more storage or bandwidth, you can add more servers to your network.

Domain Registration

Before your site can be found online, you need a domain. The domain is the name of your website. A registrar is a company that registers your domain with ICANN. This will cost about \$10 per year. It is an annual cost and many hosting companies will register your domain for free as long as you maintain hosting.

The Final Cost

How much does a website cost?

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It depends on what you want. It can cost as little as a few hundred dollars or as much as several thousand dollars. The only way to know for sure is to discuss your needs and get a quote for your project.

I always recommend bringing your budget when you meet to discuss your website. Most of the time, a professional designer or developer will be able to help prioritize your needs so you can get all you can and stay in budget. The budget is critical.

Are You Ready To Build Your Website?

We have put together a series of helpful resources to help you work through the process of having your website built. We will guide you through discovery to help you identify your goals and objectives for your site.

If you would like to connect for additional resources and information . . .

[Click Here to Get More Resources](#)