**Your Checklist for a Successful Website - December 9th, 2020 - 12:00pm**
**WEBINAR NOTES – Digital Force**

**TO CREATE YOUR TARGET CUSTOMER PERSONA, YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Who would your service or product benefit? | |
| What is your target gender? | |
| What does your persona do for an occupation? | |
| How much income does your persona have? | |
| Location? | |
| Education? | |
| Where does your persona like to do? | |
| Where does your persona like to eat? | |
| Single, Married? | |
| Family? | |
| Personality? | |
| Culture? | |
| Describe the lifestyle. | |
| Groups or networking they are associated with | |
| Any other preferences? | |

**HOW TO CREATE OR OPTIMIZE YOUR WEBSITE:**
Now that you have an idea of what you want your target audience to look like and where they are likely to go you can now start creating quality content to attract the right traffic. By doing this, you can attract the right audience, and transform them into customers. Starting off with a website is your best bet! Whether you have a website or are starting from scratch, the following are some tips so you can create a website with confidence or optimize your current website.

### 6 TIPS FOR STARTING A WEBSITE

1. **BUDGET!**
   Decide on a budget before you do anything else. A lot of Content Management Systems (CMS) offer the bare minimum for free; you don't want any surprises when you start building.

**How to BUDGET:**

Figure out the purpose of your website in terms of business objective:

Instead of saying, I want a blog, and a scheduling app, think rather like I need my website to attract more potential customer and answer their questions so I am not bombarded with emails, and phone calls.

Decide if you want a custom or theme-based website. I know everyone wants a custom job, but know that you are going to pay for it and if is in your budget that's great. You can lower your costs by going with a theme and making it custom by using your own photos and branding.

Make a list of NEEDS and WANTS: This can make a difference of where you want to spend your money, and where you feel you can sacrifice. Your website will grow and evolve with your business, so maybe next year when you reassess your budget, you can put those WANTS in the NEED section.

With that being said, you need to be a little flexible with your budget as it changes or grows, so may your budget. Not all website creators cost the same. Are you going to professional help or do it all on your own?

2. **DECIDE! YOU OR A DESIGNER**
   This ties in with number 1. If you have the budget, do some research on hiring a designer vs. building yourself. Hiring a designer can save you a lot of time and effort, but, as a designer, in most cases it's best to do it yourself. If you do hire a designer, ask them to use a CMS and learn it! That way, when it comes to updating your site, you know how and you don't have to pay for every little change.

3. **RESEARCH!**
   I can't stress this enough. Do you research on web builders/creators. Some are great for e-commerce for example, others integrate all your digital platforms easily.

### TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR RESEARCH, WE HAVE CREATED DIGITAL FORCE
### DEMO SITES SO YOU CAN EXPLORE:

| | |
|---|---|
| ***WordPress***<br><br>*Digital For Service (wordpress.com)*<br>Digital Force Creative (wordpress.com) | Paid version is decent. You have your choice of 100s of themes and plugins. Plugins are necessary to run your site if you're not a coder. You can create a pretty good site with the free version but it's pretty bare minimum. |
| ***WIX***<br><br>*Home | DigitalForceStore (wixsite.com)*<br>Home | DigitalForceCreative (wixsite.com)<br>Home | DigitalForceService (wixsite.com) | Wix has recently done some updating and their free plan is by far the best of the top 3. Its user friendly, in terms of both web and graphic design, and you get a large library of plugins. You will need a paid version to sell your products through your website and create bookings.  A lot of great interactive elements are available for free. |
| ***Square Space***<br><br>*Digital Force Service (squarespace.com)* | E-Commerce. Definitely a leader in exchanges products and services for payment online. It safe, secure and easy for you to set up. Again, only offered through the paid version, but worth it if you have a large catalog of products. Aesthetics are pretty bare minimum and I would put square space last for usability. |

4. **LAYOUT!**
 Once you've decided on your web builder, layout your site ahead of time. Decide on what pages you'll need, gather graphics and decide on a general aesthetic for the site. This will make building so much easier.

5. **INTEGRATIONS!**

   Start with your Social Media and explore! It's surprising how many free options are available for businesses on Facebook and Instagram. Having said that, consider signing up for a CANVA account. It's a great tool for organizing your social media posts and you can create a cute website. Prices are sneaky though. So read the fine print first.

6. **DON'T BE AFRAID!**
 Website creators make building your own site quite easy. Don't be afraid to play around with it. In MOST cases, you can access an autosave or simply undo your work. Have fun with it.

**DIGITAL FORCE TIP:** If you are looking to sell products online, consider setting up a Shopify store as well. Shopify can be your website – or you can integrate paid versions of the above website builders with your account. In any case, decide what you need and go from there.

**Why does your business need to have a good website?**

Remember, your website may be the first point of contact for your audience. It is important to make a good first impression.

*Here are some statistics on what your prospective clients do:*

- *87 percent check out your website before meeting with you*
- *96 percent admit the website highly affects whether or not they choose your service*
- *100 percent admit, "I have left a website because it was poorly designed or difficult to use."*

**HOW TO ADD A GOOGLE CALENDAR TO YOUR WEBSITE**

You can add an interactive version of your calendar to your website, and add buttons for your website visitors to save your calendar events.

On a computer, open Google Calendar. You can only get the code to embed in your website from a computer, not the Google Calendar app.

- In the top right, click Settings ⚙ › Settings.
- On the left side of the screen, click the name of the calendar you want to embed.
- In the "Integrate calendar" section, copy the iframe code displayed.
- Under the embed code, click Customize.
- Choose your options, then copy the HTML code displayed.

Your embedded calendar will only be visible to people you've shared it with. To allow all visitors to see your calendar, you'll need to make it public.

**Let site visitors save a calendar event**
You can add a Google Calendar button to your website so visitors can quickly save your event on their own Google Calendars. To let anyone save your calendar event, you'll need to make your calendar public.

- On a computer, open Google Calendar. You can only make changes to your calendar visibility from a computer, not the mobile app.
- On a public calendar, create or edit an event.
- Click More actions › Publish event

- In the "Publish event" window, copy the HTML code displayed.
- Open your website editor, then paste this code where you want the event button to display.

## HOW TO ADD A MAP OR DIRECTIONS TO YOUR WEBSITE

Note: Traffic and other Maps info is sometimes not available in the embedded map.- Open Google Maps.

- Go to the directions, map, or Street View image you'd like to embed.
- In the top left, click Menu ≡.
- Click Share or embed map.
- Click Embed map.
- To the left of the text box, pick the size you want by clicking the Down arrow ▼ .
- Copy the text in the box. Paste it into the HTML of your website or blog.

**HOMEWORK:**

- Decide which website creator fits best to your description, following the 6 Tips.
- Research and give it a try. Most web creators do not require any money for a trial.
- Think of the pages you would like to have on your website (For example, Contact, About, Shop)
- Think of colour schemes that you would use that match the brand to your business

**CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE.**
**THE FOLLOWING IS A CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU ASSESS THE SUCCESS OF YOUR WEBSITE:**

**Your website may be appealing to look at, however does it:**

- ✓ Generate new customers?
- ✓ Clearly tell people about your product or service?
- ✓ Have original content that represents your company well?
- ✓ Structure that is easy to navigate?
- ✓ Does it look good on mobile too?
- ✓ Use branding that reflects your business?
- ✓ Use keywords that reflect your business and can be found in a google search? (More on this later)

**References:**

*https://www.mojomedialabs.com/blog/how-to-set-a-website-budget*

*https://articles.bplans.com/how-to-create-a-branded-website/*

*https://support.google.com/calendar/answer/41207?hl=en*