

# Welcome...



## Can You Afford NOT to Have a Website?

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# Before We Get Started



- **Qualifications**
  - 10+ Years Experience in Tourism Internet Marketing
  - Owner of Marketing and Web Development Agency
    - ✓ Search Engine Optimization
    - ✓ Managing Pay Per Click Campaigns
    - ✓ Web Development and Design
    - ✓ Link Building
    - ✓ Consulting
  - My Goal is to Provide Useful Information
    - ✓ Take Aways to Help Your Company Succeed

# What This Is and Is Not



- What This Is NOT
  - A “How to be #1 in Google” Discussion
  - A “How to Build Your Website” Discussion
- What This IS
  - Information to Allow You to Make a Decision
    - ✓ If you have a website, should you make it better?
    - ✓ If you don’t have a website, should you get one?
  - Information to De-Mystify Website Essentials
    - ✓ Definitions and Pitfalls
  - Some Food for Thought and Marketing Ideas

**Question is....**



**Can You Afford NOT  
to Have a Website?**

# You Decide...



- Fun With Numbers
  - Numerous Statistics and Studies Available



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# Who Uses the Internet?



## US Population and Internet Use

- 303+ Million Living in United States
- 55% of U.S. Households Have Internet Access (2003)
  - ✓ 62 Million Households (2003)

U.S. Census Bureau Report: Computer and Internet Use in the United States (2003)

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p23-208.pdf>

# Retail Sales?



43% of All Retail Sales are Expected  
to Be Influenced By, or Made  
on the Internet by 2012

Forrester Report:

“The Web’s Impact on In-Store Sales: US Cross-Channel Sales Forecast, 2006 to 2012”

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# Looking for Distributors?



83% of Businesses Use the Internet to  
**Research and Find** Potential Vendors

Enquiro: "Business to Business Survey 2007"

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# Targeting Tourists?



86% of Vacation Travelers Conduct a Portion  
of Their Travel Planning Research Online

\* TIA/American Express Travel Trends Study

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# Your Answer Is?...



- Obvious Answer...
- Not Convinced?
  - Natural to be Apprehensive:
    - ✓ Things that are new
    - ✓ Things that we don't completely understand
- How Will They Find You?
  - Why Not Make it Easier for Them?

# Getting Started



- The Basics - A Domain Name
  - A Domain Name (URL) – [www.yourname.com](http://www.yourname.com)
    - ✓ Opt for .com extension as it is most recognizable
    - ✓ Brand your company or include product/service
    - ✓ Avoid “cute” domains and play on words
    - ✓ Visit a Certified Registrar and Search for Available Names
      - Dotster.com
      - GoDaddy.com
      - NetworkSolutions.com
    - ✓ Secure it for as long as you can afford to
      - You are securing rights to use it, similar to a rental
      - Beware of bogus domain invoices

# Getting Started



- The Basics – Hosting
  - Virtual space to store your website documents
  - Look for a reputable host
    - ✓ Sub par hosts will cost you downtime and headaches
  - Important Considerations
    - ✓ Uptime
    - ✓ What is Included?
      - Email?
    - ✓ Support
      - 24 Hour Support?
  - Most design teams will handle this for you
    - ✓ If you plan to have dynamic content, consult your designer first

# Getting Started



- Find a Designer
- What Makes a Design Good?
  - Depends on Who You Ask
    - ✓ Graphic Designer - How does it Look?
    - ✓ SEO - Is it Search Engine Friendly?
    - ✓ Usability Expert – Is it User Friendly?
    - ✓ Marketer - Is it Generating Money?
    - ✓ Customer Service – Can People Find Answers?
- Can a Site Be All Things?
  - Depends on Who You Ask



# You Have a Website?



- I Have a Website – Isn't That Enough?
  - No
  - Not a “Build it and They Will Come”
- Make a Commitment to Your Website
  - No Different than Other Components of Your Business
    - ✓ Requires Maintenance
    - ✓ Requires Effort
    - ✓ Requires Investment

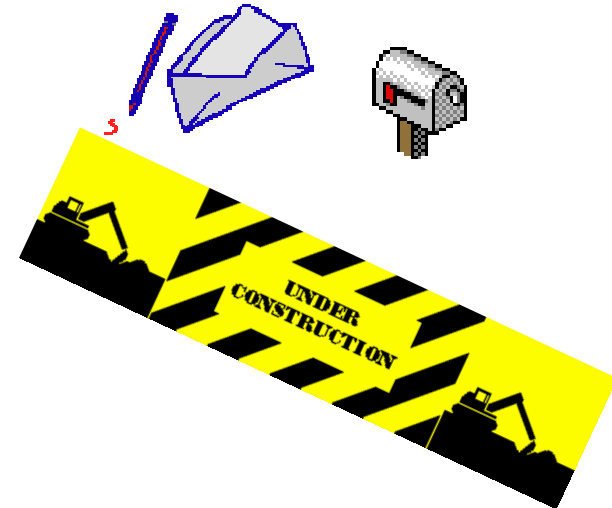
# Strive for a Quality Site



- Reflection of Company, Brand and Products
  - First impressions matter
    - ✓ Researchers found opinions formed in 1/20th of a second
      - Published in Journal "Behaviour & Information Technology"
    - ✓ Impressions carry-over to attributes of products
  - "Halo Effect"
    - ✓ Connection between emotional reaction and thought process
    - ✓ Users search for confirming evidence of initial impression
    - ✓ Ignore evidence to the contrary
      - Why?
        - **Because people hate to be wrong!**

# Things to Avoid

- Auto-Play Sounds & Movies
  - UCLA Study Shows that 60.7% Use the Web at Work for Personal Reasons
- Triple-Top Secret Navigation
  - Steve Krug – “Don’t Make Me Think!”
- Clip Art
- Cheesy Email Icons
- Blinking Text
- “Under Construction”
- Flash “Intro” Pages
- Want Some Examples?
  - [Worstoftheweb.com](http://Worstoftheweb.com)
  - [Websitesthatsuck.com](http://Websitesthatsuck.com)



- Includes a Variety of Informational Elements
  - Videos
  - Photos
  - Maps and Download Items
  - Page Copy
- Often Overlooked Component of Design
  - Usually an After-Thought
  - Take Ownership of Gathering and Creating Content
    - ✓ Reflects upon your company
    - ✓ Are you going to leave it to your designer to pick, choose and pull?

- Why is It Important?
  - Common Denominator Among Quality Sites
  - Unquestionably Affects Rankings
- Writing for the Web
  - People Don't Read Online, They Scan
    - ✓ Use Short Paragraphs and Sentences of 10 Words or Less to Increase Comprehension and Ability to Scan
    - ✓ Use Page Headings to Break-Up Content Blocks
    - ✓ Bulleted Lists
    - ✓ Avoid Jargon and \$10 Words
      - Average American reads at the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade level
    - ✓ If You Can't Spell, Use Spell-check
    - ✓ Be Cautious of Use of "We"

# Other Terms



- **Code**
  - CSS – Cascading Style Sheets
    - ✓ Forward thinking method of designing and styling
  - XHTML – Extensible Hyper Text Markup Language
    - ✓ The “guts” behind every webpage
- **Database Driven Website**
  - Content and Information Stored in a Database
  - Programmers Write code to Pull Info from Database
- **Blog**
  - Compilation of Entries Similar to a Journal
    - ✓ Powerful, inexpensive tool when used correctly

# Now What?



- **Take an Active Role**
  - It is NOT a Sign the Contract and Wait Situation
  - Simply Having a Website is Not Enough
  - Provide Input, and Take Professional Advice
  - Take Pride in Your Content
    - ✓ Create a content plan and update often
    - ✓ Rankings will follow
  - Put Serious Consideration Towards
    - ✓ Utilizing a CSS-based layout
    - ✓ Begin incorporating accessibility features
  - View as an Investment, Not an Expense

# Things to Consider

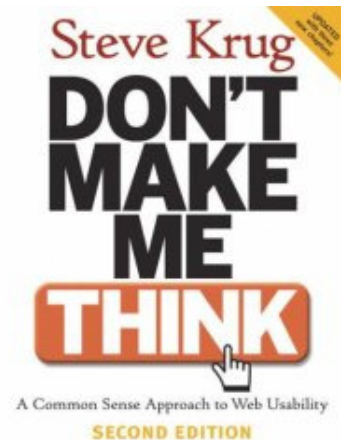


- Pitfalls to Avoid
  - Companies That Solicit You Via Spam
    - ✓ Designers and Search Engine Optimization Companies
    - ✓ Companies that Guarantee You Will Rank #1
      - If they are so good at what they do, why are they spamming?
  - Cookie Cutter Designs Sold to You as Originals
  - Companies Unwilling to Provide Multiple References
- Find Someone You Trust
  - Ask Questions!
    - ✓ No need to preface with “This is going to sound dumb...”

# Take Advantage Of...



- Free Resources on Internet Marketing
  - Numerous Blogs and Newsletters
    - ✓ [www.grokdotcom.com](http://www.grokdotcom.com)
    - ✓ [www.marketingexperimentsblog.com](http://www.marketingexperimentsblog.com)
    - ✓ [www.matterhorntips.com](http://www.matterhorntips.com)
  - If You Read One Book
    - Steve Krug – Don't Make Me Think!
  - West Virginia Division of Tourism Grants
    - ✓ Could you qualify to obtain a state grant? Find out!
    - ✓ Leveraging state funds allocated to promoting tourism!
    - ✓ Take advantage of this opportunity



# Other Considerations



- Project Professionalism
  - Use Your Email Address as a Branding Tool
    - ✓ [you@yourdomain.com](#) or [you@yahoo.com](#)
  - Make the Most of Email Replies
    - ✓ Answer Questions Thoroughly (don't tell them to visit your website!)
    - ✓ Correct Grammar and Punctuation
  - Communicate Effectively
    - ✓ How Do Your Email Replies Reflect?
      - Did you pay attention?
      - Did You Use Emoticons and "Cute" Stationary?
      - Filled with Typos?
    - ✓ Build Trust with a Quality Response
      - Address Their Questions
      - Personalize
      - Keep Sentences Short
      - Avoid Jargon

# Ideas to Implement



- Provide Information for 4H and Fair Projects
  - Create inbound links from very important websites
    - ✓ Higher Rankings
    - ✓ More Traffic
- Blog About Your Products and Procedures
  - Explain Growing Cycles, Life Cycles Etc.
    - ✓ Create a Connection with the Consumer
- Send a Monthly Newsletter
  - Keep Those Interested Informed
    - ✓ Make sure they asked to receive your emails!

# Have Questions?



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