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What You Can Plan to Spend on Launching a Profitable Web Site

By C S Wurzberger and Pam Foster

The Web development community seems to shy away from revealing their prices unless they're dirt cheap. We're not sure why. But we're here to tell you the truth up front with no surprises or hidden agendas.

Many Web design companies will try to offer you a low-budget site that seems very appealing. Keep in mind that these are "template" sites that generally don't allow for customization related to your specific business goals, audience and needs.

The truth is, no one can develop a \$300-\$500 site for you that's custom-built around your business brand, your specific sales goals and competitive position, and the people you need to attract for online success. These "one size fits all" template sites certainly serve a purpose for tiny businesses that can't afford more than the most basic formula, but these sites can come back to bite you if you need anything customized for your business. Beware: if it sounds too good to be true, it definitely is.

A great business site, depending on its complexity, should cost between \$6,000 and \$15,000 on the lower end, and \$20,000 to \$30,000 or more on the higher end.

These prices are for the Web site development and launch. Ongoing maintenance and marketing are budgeted separately.

For \$6,000-\$15,000, you can expect to launch a professional, branded brochure site or customized lead-generation site that includes several pages about the benefits of your services or products, your team's background and expertise, the credentials of your firm (including a list of clients and testimonials), examples of your work and successes, a contact page, helpful resources or PDFs, an e-newsletter invitation page (if you choose to include one), customized content throughout, and of course, initial keyword research and placement.

Sites that include e-commerce and/or databases become more costly to create because they require more technology. Therefore, they can cost \$15,000 and up. If your business offers several product lines, you'll need a separate page (or pages) for each one. If you're adding extensive links, forms or other documents, discussion forums and more, that can add up too. Again, the cost increases are also proportionate to the sales activity you expect online.

The bottom line is—every site has a unique budget because every site is a customized product and process. A professional Web company will provide a custom budget proposal once they've met with you and determined the scope of your unique site.

Remember, an initial investment in a custom-built, high-quality, marketing-focused site will more than pay for itself in the long run. A lot of work will go into your site to make sure it sells. You're paying for your Web team's skills and experience in making sure your site is a moneymaking winner! How much of a winner?

In 2006, "small Web merchants grew their combined revenue to \$18.5 billion, or 45.7% over 2005."¹ Also, "A 2006 study of 174 retailers found that online retail sales rose over the previous year by 25%."²

Your business could be among those who are seeing major revenue increases.

These are just some of the ways you can boost your success on the Internet. To learn more, you'll want to attend the three-part Web development seminars that Score offers.

You will also want to get your hands on the new Internet Jungle Guide book, *9 Easy Steps to Planning a Profitable Web Site: Your complete guide to navigating the Web development jungle and launching a site that sells!* This mini-course and workbook will help you launch a site that truly attracts prospects and customers who are ready to make purchases!

You can order this book online at www.internetjungleguide.com. *The Internet Jungle Guide is a division of Premiere Visions, LLC.*

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1. Source: <http://www.internetretailer.com/>
2. Source: <http://www.businessweek.com>

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C S is an accomplished Internet strategist, usability expert, seminar and workshop leader, and Search Engine Optimization specialist. She has extensive experience in all aspects of Web site development for small-to-mid-size businesses, with a specialized focus on retail and wholesale companies. She also plays a leadership role in several business development organizations, and frequently presents seminars and workshops throughout the U. S.

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Pam is a senior copywriter and sales catalyst who specializes in writing marketing copy for the Web and traditional media. Using her diverse 25-year background, she's uniquely strategic and results-driven, helping clients reach their target audiences and achieve their sales and lead-generation goals. She has extensive experience in writing Web content, online marketing campaigns and e-newsletters.

The national SCORE Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to entrepreneur education and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. SCORE Portland is one of 389 chapters throughout the United States, with over 11,000 volunteers nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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