Date: October 23, 2019

To: Diane Thompson, Owner, Festive Florist, Inc.

From: Lois Kilberg

Subject: recommending GoDaddy for your web hosting

Dear Ms. Thompson,

At your request, we evaluated several low-cost web hosting alternatives for your company website. We considered your requirements to keep certain features and for the website to be easily maintained. We recommend moving your web hosting to GoDaddy. You will save about $110 monthly. More detail follows below.

We can handle the website conversion for you and quickly train your staff to maintain it. I will contact you with a proposal. Let me know if you have any questions. It has been a pleasure working with you!

Sincerely,

Lois Kilberg, Consultant

Background

Currently, your outside marketing firm hosts your company website. Your projected cash flow now puts their pricing out of range. You want to transfer web hosting to your control. Your staff has knowledge to maintain the website and make minor updates. You have indicated that you can cancel your current web hosting without penalty, with a 30-day notice. You asked us to examine lower-cost alternatives that keep your website's existing look and feel.

Summary

We recommend GoDaddy from the three low-cost web hosting alternatives that we researched. We looked at GoDaddy, GitHub Pages, and Read the Docs using ReStructured Text (RST). We did not consider Earthlink's personal pages, which was mentioned earlier, because Earthlink recently discontinued this capability. We also ruled out staying with your current web host, because switching will save you significant money. Your current web host charges $125 monthly, which does not include any modifications or an SSL certificate. The maximum cost of the three low-cost alternatives that we examined is about $15 monthly.

While all of the alternatives provide the ability to make minor changes and to add an SSL certificate, only GoDaddy can handle all of your website needs. If you decide to dramatically change the website in the future, you could find a professional web developer to change the design.

Comparison

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the web hosting features that we compared.

Web Hosting Features of GoDaddy, GitHub Pages, and Read the Docs using ReStructured Text (RST)

Feature	GoDaddy	GitHub Pages	Read the Docs using ReStructured Text (RST)
Monthly cost, including SSL	$23.97 quarterly, plus $80 yearly for SSL, which equals about $15/month	Free	Free, plus an extra charge to stop ads from appearing
Ability to secure site with SSL	Available	Available	Available
Whether ads will appear	No ads	No ads	Ads may appear; you can pay to remove them.
Ability to include metadata for search engine optimization (SEO)	Yes, in HTML like this: `<html><head><meta name="keywords" content="florist, gifts">`	Yes, in HTML like this: `<html><head><meta name="keywords" content="florist, gifts">`	Yes, in Sphinx and RST using a directive like this: `.. meta:: :keywords: florist, gifts`
Whether the design is responsive to small devices	Yes, the current HTML code handles this.	Yes, the current HTML code handles this.	Yes, this is automatically built into the Sphinx themes.
Support for domain path forwarding	Yes	This may require advanced knowledge to implement.	This may require advanced knowledge to implement.
Ease of maintenance	You will need basic HTML and CSS skills.	You will need basic HTML and CSS skills.	You will need basic RST and Sphinx skills.
Support for form fields on **Contact Page** and **Subscribe** button for newsletter	Yes	No, because GitHub only supports "static pages" and no "PHP". To work around, the website could instruct viewers to send an email.	Available, with extra knowledge
Whether the website can keep the current look and feel	Yes. Minor changes should be easy.	Yes. Minor changes should be easy.	No. You must select a Sphinx theme. Advanced knowledge is required to modify the theme.

Table 1: Comparing Low-Cost Web Hosting Alternatives for Festive Florist, Inc.

Conclusion

All of the researched web host alternatives are significantly lower in cost, support an SSL certificate, and have the ability to restrict ads from appearing. You will be able to easily add terms for search engine optimization (SEO) for any of the alternatives. All of the alternatives have responsive designs to make your website look good on small mobile devices. All of the alternatives are easily maintainable with basic web development knowledge; however; Read the Docs will require knowledge of ReStructured Text (RST) and Sphinx, in addition to HTML.

There are major differences between the alternatives for three features:

- **Support for domain path forwarding**. GoDaddy supports full domain path forwarding, whereas it may require advanced knowledge to implement this in GitHub Pages and Read the Docs. For example, viewers clicking your **About Page** would expect the website address at the top of the window to change. If the website address stays the same, it could confuse viewers.
- **Support for form fields on Contact Page and Subscribe button for newsletter**. GoDaddy supports these interactive elements, whereas the GitHub Pages alternative does not. Implementing this in Read the Docs may require advanced knowledge.
- **Whether the website can keep the current look and feel**. Both GoDaddy and GitHub Pages will keep your website's current appearance, generally speaking. Read the Docs will require a totally new look.

Recommendations

We recommend that you move your web hosting to GoDaddy. While GoDaddy has a small cost (about $15/month), it provides important features that the other alternatives lack. For example:

- GoDaddy supports the form fields on your **Contact Page** and the **Subscribe** button for your newsletter. GitHub does not allow these features, because it only supports "static pages" and no "PHP". It may require advanced knowledge to implement these features in Read the Docs, using RST and Sphinx. To work around this issue, you could modify the website to instruct viewers to send an email. However, that would encourage viewers to leave your site.
- GoDaddy supports your current website appearance. GitHub does this for the most part, except that the website address will not automatically show the subdirectory when the domain is forwarded. In Read the Docs, you must select a theme implemented in Sphinx. Your staff would need advanced knowledge to modify the website layout and appearance.

GoDaddy maintains your look and feel at a fraction of your current cost. Your staff will be able to easily maintain the website on GoDaddy and make minor updates, using basic web development skills.

To convert your company website to the new web host, we suggest these steps:

1. Perform a test to make sure that the new web hosting will work well for you. To do this:
   a. Go to your current website and save all the files.
   b. Open an account with GoDaddy (www.godaddy.com).
   c. Upload the files to GoDaddy.
   d. View the files using GoDaddy's URL for your account. The links may break, but you will be able to test the basic appearance and your ability to move files into GoDaddy.
2. Obtain all of your website files from your current web host.
3. Upload these files to GoDaddy and update any links and subdirectories.
4. Set up domain forwarding to use GoDaddy rather than your current web host.
5. Test everything using GoDaddy, including all form fields and buttons.
6. When you are satisfied with the transition, cancel your old web host.
7. Train your staff to take over maintenance. You may find it helpful to store the files in GitHub for safekeeping, testing, and history, though GitHub is not required for your new web hosting on GoDaddy.