Action Steps for Setting Up a Successful Home Web Design Business

In this document you'll find all of the action steps included in this course.

As you are completing these action steps, **please do not hesitate to come back and post a new discussion if you get stuck, are struggling with an internal debate or would just like to get or give advice.** I am active in the discussion area and am here to help you. Remember, we can all learn from each other and help each other succeed as well!

Section 1: Getting Started	
_____	**Download and Become Familiar With the Tools** Using the tools lecture in this section, download and become familiar with any of the tools you will be using to provide web design services if you do not already have what is needed
_____	**Learn How to Build Websites** Decide which content management system you would like to specialize in as you're just starting out (WordPress or Joomla, for example). If you are new to web design completely, take a weekend to learn how to build websites on the platform you've chosen (free coupon available in the last section of this course). If you already know how to build websites, move on to #4.
_____	**Practice Your New Skills** If you're new to web design, use your new found knowledge to build a website, start practicing your skills and getting familiar with the selected platform.

Section 2: Establishing Your Expertise	
_____	**Decide on Your Niche** Now you know just how important it is to decide on a niche. So take

	however much time you need to make this decision but don't spend so long that it stops you from getting started. Once you have your niche, come back and share it with us or if you're on the fence, start a discussion and get some feedback from the rest of us.
_____	**Create a Portfolio** I don't think I need to tell you why you'll need a portfolio! But if you don't already have one, now is the time to start creating one. Use some of the tips found earlier in this section for how to set-up your portfolio quickly if you don't already have one. Remember, you can't do this step until you have determined your niche or you won't know what type of websites to focus on and create. Once you have your portfolio up, please come back and share it with us.

Section 3: Setting Yourself Up For Success

_____	**Determine Your Prices** Obviously every potential customer is going to want to know just how much you charge. Before you start marketing your services and speaking with customers, you'll want to set your prices. Think about your hourly rate (for website maintenance and / or by-the-hour web design services) and your package prices (if you will be offering packages.
_____	**Create a List of New Customer Questions** In the sample business documents section of this course, you'll find a client questionnaire you download, tweak and use that includes several questions to ask potential customers when they first contact you to better understand what they are looking for. As you now know, this will help dramatically reduce and miscommunication later in the project and help you finish projects faster.
_____	**Download & Tweak The Sample Proposal** In the sample business documents section of this course, you'll find a

	sample proposal. Download this template now and tweak it to include your business information so it is ready when customers get in contact with you. That way you'll just need to do some minor adjustments which are specific to the customer and send it off when it's time. Believe me, this will make your life much easier!
_____	. **Download & Tweak The Sample Final Contract** In the sample business documents section of this course, you'll find a sample final contract. Just as you just did with the proposal, download and tweak this document for your business so it is also ready to go when the time comes.

Section 4: Easy Customer Communication

_____	**Download & Tweak The Project Task List** In the sample documents section of this course, you'll find a sample Project Task List. Download this document and tweak it to represent your own process for building websites and staying in contact with your customers. Save this somewhere you can easily access as you should be using this everyday to keep track of your work.

Section 5: Completing the Project

_____	**Decide How You Will Handle New Customer Requests** This is a good opportunity to think about how you will handle customer requests that fall outside of the contract. When this happens to you, especially at first, it's easy to get caught off guard. Be prepared by thinking about your wording. You may even want to write it down and practice it. Draft out a sample email you can use in response to a customer who sends you an email so it's ready to go and you can just tweak it when necessary.
_____	**Draft an Email For Requesting Client Feedback** Consider drafting an email of what you'll ask the customer to review

	when you request their final feedback for a website you've just completed. You would just need to tweak it slightly for each customer and you'll already have it ready to go so you don't have to draft the same email time and time again. Work smart, not hard!
_____	**Get Prepared to Train Your Customers** Write down some bullet points for what you'd like to cover when you train customers how to manage their website so you'll be ready as soon as the website is launched.

Section 6: Keep Customers Happy

_____	**Decide What You Will Do To Keep Customers Happy** Your customers are the ones who are going to pay you, so take a few minutes to think about why they should choose you (and stay with you) over someone else. List out the top 3 things you will focus on to keep your customers happy so you will continue to get repeat customers. Share with everyone what you have decided to do.

Section 7: Finding Customers

_____	**Set-Up Your Website** Take 1-2 days to build your own web design business website where you will be able to tell potential customers more about you, share your knowledge and show off your portfolio. Once you have your website up, please come back and share it with everyone in the discussion area. We'd love to see what you've built and learn more about your business!
_____	**Write Your Initial Marketing Plan** Write down the top 2-3 ways you will use to find customers initially. As you've seen there are lots of ways to find new customers but trying them all at once will make your life harder than it needs to be. Focus on just a couple ways and do it well! Once you've got the hang of it, you can always add in another method.

As you are completing the action steps, don't hesitate to post a new discussion to ask a question, get clarification or just share your thoughts. That's what this course is for!