THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CREATING A WEBSITE

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE SETTING UP YOUR WEBSITE IN 2021

B BaseOne Digital

CONTENT PAGE

ALEX LEVER

WEBSITE DESIGNER
DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERT

https://baseonedigital.co.uk/
Email: info@baseonedigital.co.uk
Number: 07850126063
Location: Stapleford, Nottingham

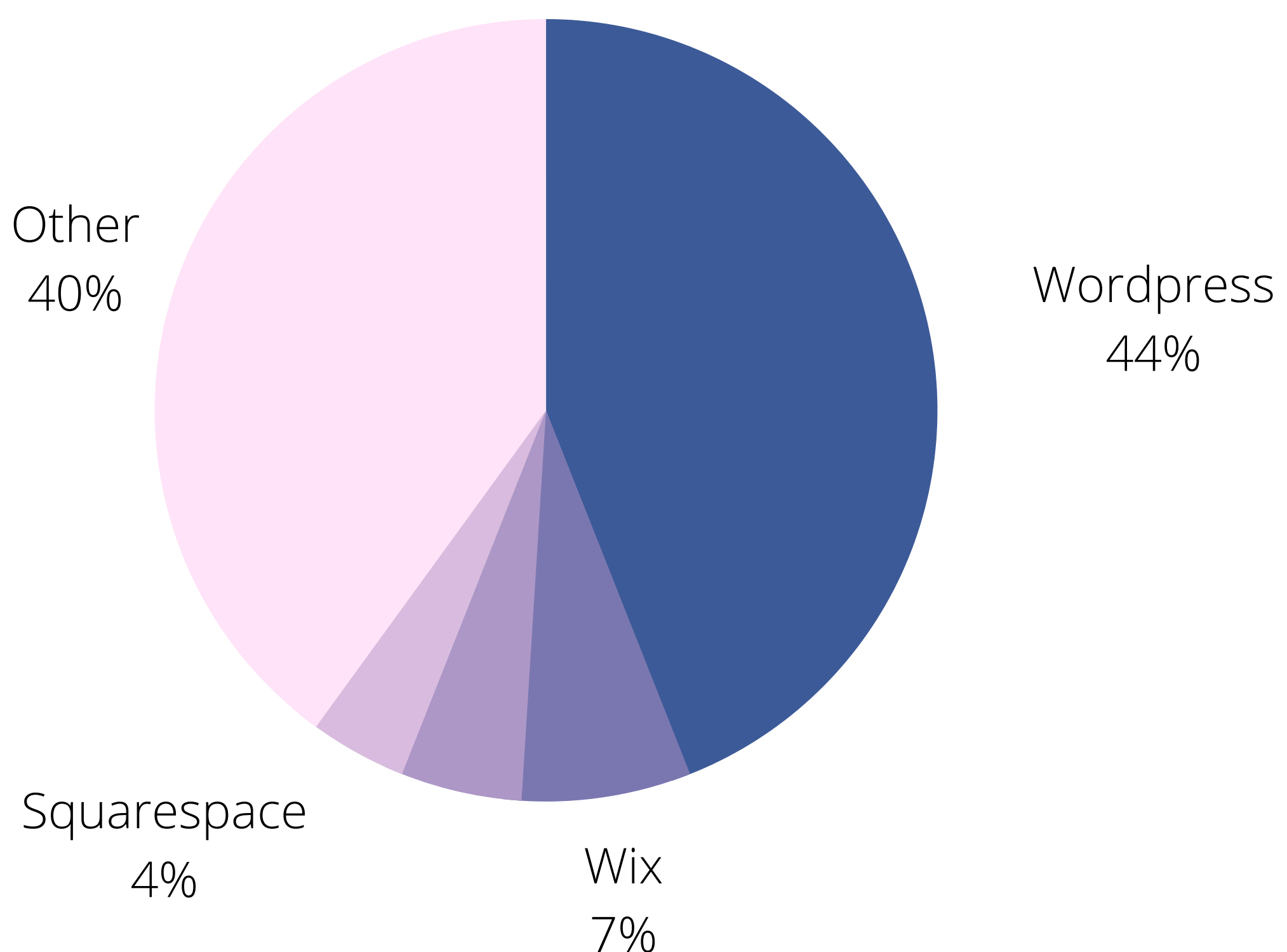# STEP 1 - CHOOSE A WEBSITE PLATFORM

The first step in building a website is to choose which platform you're going to build your website with. The days of hard-coding a website from scratch are long gone, and we are now living in the era of 'website platforms', otherwise known as content management systems (CMS).

You might be familiar with some of these platforms, such as WordPress, Wix, Squarespace, Drupal or Joomlal. These platforms make building websites easy for most people to get started without much website development experience.

However, the downside of using a simplistic website builder is that your level of control over the flexibility of the design is restricted, which means that you won't easily be able to make it bespoke to your specific needs. For example, if you wanted a certain element to be in one particular portion of the screen, you wouldn't be able to easily move it.

Therefore, despite how intuitive some of the attractive builders might look, it often results in users left feeling frustrated over the lack of flexibility in the website's design.

WHICH WEBSITE PLATFORM IS THE MOST POPULAR?

Other
40%

Wordpress
44%

Squarespace
4%

Wix
7%

Source: https://trends.builtwith.com/cms/traffic/Entire-Internet

KEY FACTORS FOR YOUR CHOICE OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

Current Web Development Experience

Some builders can be tricky to use for a beginner, which is why platforms such as Wix lend themselves well to newbies looking for a simple solution. Whereas WordPress is often used by more experienced developers.

Required Level Of Bespoke Design

Whilst simple builders are good for a quick solution, they restrict users from editing the website in an exact way want it to look. With these platforms, once a template is chosen you can't do much else beyond changing the images or colours.

Your Budget For The Project

Simple website builders can cost roughly around £200 per year, depending on the package. Whereas, WordPress is a free platform builder, where you would only have to pay for the website's hosting, which is around £60 per year (depending on the host).

Time Available For Learning A Program

As a small business owner, your time is inevitability going to be stretched. That's why it's worth considering how much time you'll be able to realistically dedicate to building this project, as even the simple builders require a substantial amount of time to be invested.

THE ADVANTAGES OF WORDPRESS

Free: WordPress is free to use. The only cost required would be to the web hosting provider in order to keep the website live. It is also open-source, which means that it is free for anyone to easily edit the original code without needing to spend anymore money.

Customisable: WordPress comes with a simple text editor and page creation tool. However, these foundations can be easily built upon using plugins. For example, you'll be able to add premade custom contact forms, image galleries, e-commerce stores and many more with a single click of a button.

Powerful Builders: WordPress is a foundational source code that allows other builders to be installed over the top. This means that you can build web pages within WordPress whilst using builders such as Divi, Elementor, Envato etc. So if you don't like one of them, you can easily switch to another one.

Helpful Community: With so many people using WordPress, it easy to find help for technical issues using the free community support forum at WordPress.org. Here, you'll be able to have your questions answered by top WordPress professional developers and other community members.

STEP 2 - FIND A DOMAIN AND HOST

Once you know which website platform you'd like to choose, there are two things that you need to get your website online. These are a domain name (a web address like yoursitename.com) and website hosting (a service that connects your site to the internet).

As mentioned, the WordPress platform itself is free, but hosting and name domain name are not. However, domains usually cost around £10/year, and standard website hosting is roughly £5/month.

As a guideline, it's important that your website loads in under 2 seconds otherwise you'll risk losing website traffic. Therefore, it's essential that you find a good quality website host with servers located near to your end consumers to minimise load times.

Good quality hosts that I've personally used are 1&1 Ionos (based all around the UK), and 34SP (based in Manchester). Both of these companies have excellent load speeds and customer support.

YOUR DOMAIN CHECKLIST

✓ **Use Brand Name:** Whether you're setting up a website for your personal blog or your business, it's worth using your brand name in order to maintain consistency and look professional.

✓ **Make It Memorable:** Don't use long and overly complicated names for your domain, always keep it short, punchy and clear. Not only will this help people with remembering it, but it also helps prevent mistypes when people search for it.

✓ **Describe What You Do:** Always ensure that your business gives the website user an idea of what you do, or at least doesn't mislead them. For example, don't use 'toilets4u.com' if you offer a welding service.

✓ **Check Uniqueness:** If you're just setting up a new business and don't have a brand name yet, it's worth Googling your domain name to ensure that your domain isn't similar to an already established competitor.
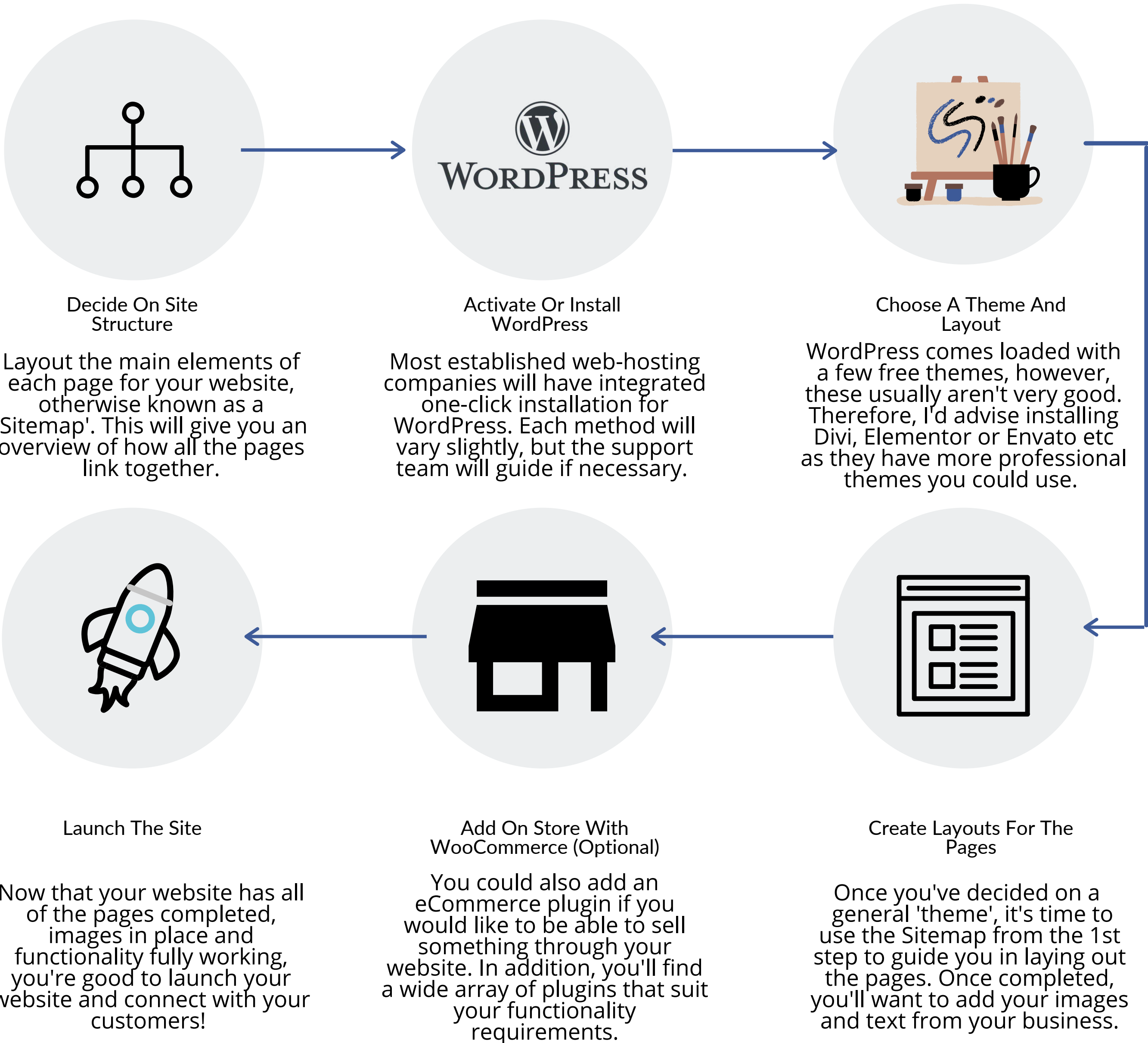
STEP 3 - CHOOSE A THEME AND START DESIGNING

Now that you have your domain and host provider sorted, it's time to start actually designing your website. As suggested so far, I recommend using WordPress to build your website as it gives you a lot more flexibility, functionality and scope for expansion as your business grows.

This is the fun part, but it's but also one of the most critical steps.

To give you an overview of the design process, I've laid out a 6-step process flow chart for what I usually do when creating a new website. The important takeaway from this is to take the time to draw out some rough designs, write down your brand colours and decide on the main function of each page. The more effort you can put into the planning stage, the easier it will be when it comes to making it.

HOW TO CREATE THE WEBSITE - STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Decide On Site Structure

Layout the main elements of each page for your website, otherwise known as a 'Sitemap'. This will give you an overview of how all the pages link together.

Activate Or Install WordPress

Most established web-hosting companies will have integrated one-click installation for WordPress. Each method will vary slightly, but the support team will guide if necessary.

Choose A Theme And Layout

WordPress comes loaded with a few free themes, however, these usually aren't very good. Therefore, I'd advise installing Divi, Elementor or Envato etc as they have more professional themes you could use.

Launch The Site

Now that your website has all of the pages completed, images in place and functionality fully working, you're good to launch your website and connect with your customers!

Add On Store With WooCommerce (Optional)

You could also add an eCommerce plugin if you would like to be able to sell something through your website. In addition, you'll find a wide array of plugins that suit your functionality requirements.

Create Layouts For The Pages

Once you've decided on a general 'theme', it's time to use the Sitemap from the 1st step to guide you in laying out the pages. Once completed, you'll want to add your images and text from your business.

STEP 4 - DEVELOP A SEO STRATEGY

Even though your website is now live, you'll still need to add your website to Google so that it will appear in the search page results. If you don't do this step, Google won't be able to find your website.

When Google receives a search query from a user (such as 'treats for dogs'), Google's algorithm will instantly evaluate the most appropriate websites to show the user based on the factors below.

> *Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is the process of improving the quality and quantity of traffic to a particular website or webpage from a search engine.*

SEO OPTIMISATION - FAQ

Is SEO Free?

Optimising your website for SEO is free to do, but it can take a long time (6-9 months) to see any real improvements and make it onto the first page for a search term (first 10 links).

Is SEO Better Than Using Social Media Advertising?

Due to the long lead time to see SEO improvements, a lot of website owners will turn to paid adverts as a way to drive quick results, however, you are required to set aside to budget in order to use social media ads. Therefore, this becomes a trade-off between time willing to invest and the budget available.

How Many SEO Ranking Factors Are There?

Some reports show evidence of over 200 ranking factors in determining search positions, however, they're not all weighted equally. That's why as a start, on the page I've listed the most important factors for you to focus on. By improving these important ones first, you'll be off to a good start.

HOW TO OPTIMSE FOR IMPORTANT RANKNING FACTORS

Backlinks

A backlink is created when one website links to another. When a website receives multiple backlinks from 'high authority websites', Google sees this as a vote of confidence in the site's ability and will rank it higher for certain terms.

Speed

A slow-loading website can result in a lower quality experience for the user. As Google doesn't want this, it might hinder the ranking performance. To improve this, optimise your images and use a high quality hosting company.

Mobile Responisiveness

A responsive website is one that adapts to smaller screen sizes on mobile. These days, most themes available automatically have responsiveness built into them, but it's always important to ensure your site has the ability to change its appearance based on the screen it's being viewed on.

Keywords

A keyword is a word (or phrase) that a user would enter as a search query into Google. You will need to take the terms that you want your website to rank for and place them throughout your webpage. However, don't be overly excessive as you'll risk a penalty.
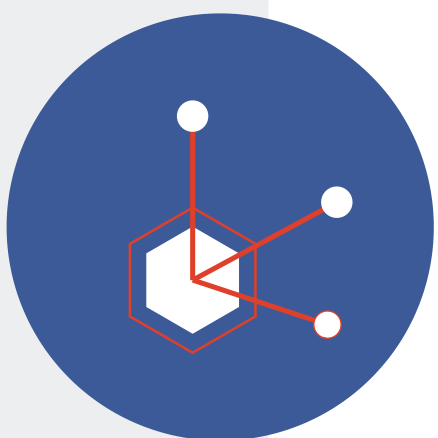
Website Structure

The structure of your website refers to how the different pages interlink throughout the site. A healthy structure will feature multiple links which are relevant to the user whilst making navigation easy. Plus, it helps search engines to understand your website better.

STEP 5 - BUILD AND PROMOTE YOUR BRAND

Building a website is more than just a few pages and images strung together, it's about representing the identity of your brand and core values that you're looking to portray to your customers. Establishing an emotional connection with your customers is the best way to retain them build loyalty over a long period of time.

In order to do this, it's important to expand your brand from just on your website, and out onto physical items such as business cards, staff uniform, vehicle decals and sales brochures (both print and eBook).

By doing this, you'll be able to bring your brand to life and form consistency on both the digital and physical front.

This is more important if you own a business with a physical storefront (such as a local flower shop), as customers will expect to see the use of the same brand themes used throughout the company leaflets and on other promotional material throughout the store.

However, digital sales brochures (in pdf. format) are a must-have regardless of whether your business is online only or not.

CREATING A SALES FUNNEL

Awareness

Interest

Decision

Action

A sales funnel is the path that your prospects take from first finding out about your business to eventually making a purchase. Understanding this can help you to find holes where prospects drop out and don't convert or make the sale.

1

Awareness

Following the diagram below, awareness is the moment at which you first catch your consumer's attention. This could be via Facebook post, Google search or word of mouth etc.

2

Interest

If the prospect likes your brand offering, they'll move onto the next stage and show interest by actively researching your products and comparing them to alternatives. Here, it's worth exchanging something of value (discount code or eBook) so you can contact them later.

3

Decision

Eventually, prospects will reach the decision stage where they're ready to make a purchase. This is the best time to reach out to them (via email marketing or Facebook Ads) with a discount code or coupon.

4

Action

At the final stage of the funnel is where the prospect will take action and make a purchase. However, you will need to reach out for feedback and offer support in order to retain them for further purchases.

UTILISING SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

One of the best cost-effective tools for reaching your customers is social media. Long gone are the days of spending loads of money on expensive television adverts in the hope it might reach some of your target customers. Instead, social media platforms allow you to put your brand in front of your exact target audience for only a fraction of the cost of other methods.

These platforms will show your adverts to prospects based on location, demographic and interests etc. with fantastic returns on investment.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS - AN OVERVIEW

Why?: Over the past decade, Facebook and Instagram have become immensely popular. It's difficult to find anyone that isn't on either of these platforms so it's more than likely that your target market will be on there too. However, LinkedIn is the place to conduct businesses to business advertising.

What?: You can create a wide variety of ad formats including photos, carousels, videos and many more. To launch an advert on these platforms, you'll need to connect your Facebook and Instagram company page to Facebook Business Manager. LinkedIn advertising works in the same way, however, you would need to use the Campaign Manager from inside LinkedIn.

How?: Once in, you'll have to select your objective, choose an audience and then decide on a budget. It's worth noting that these platforms give the advertising space to the highest bidder, and so you'll often be charged on a cost per click basis (CPC).

TOP TIPS AND PRACTICES

Know Your Audience: It's worth taking to time to understand what solutions your target market would want. To visual it, create a persona of your typical end consumer and outline what their objectives might be.

Test, Measure and Optimise: Remember to test a wide range of adverts with varying types of content and imagery. After this, if you see that one of your posts is converting better than others or getting higher engagement, keep running it and drop the worst performing ones.

Be Patient: Despite the fact that the use of social media adverts is the fastest way to get your brand recognised, it might take 3-4 cycles of adverts before you begin to understand what type of adverts appeal most to your target market.

STEP 6 - MAINTAIN THE WEBSITE

At this stage, you'll have a completed website, along with an SEO strategy and social media advertising campaigns set up. However, I'd suggest following these important points to ensure that your website avoids any technical issues.

- **Keep Plugins Up To Date:** With WordPress, you can enable 'auto-updates by going to Plugins > Installed Plugins and then toggling them on.

- **Test Forms and Checkouts:** Occasionally, an update in the website's code can cause functionality issues. If this happened then it would prevent customers from completing the checkout process or submitting an enquiry form, which would impact your business's bottom line.

- **Back-Up Your Website:** Install a plugin from WordPress to store a backup of your website which you can use if you accidentally break it whilst editing or making changes to it.

- **Produce Content:** Create regular blog posts to attract more website traffic.

TOOLS FOR PRODUCING FRESH CONTENT

Ubbersuggests

Looking for examples of great performing content? Ubbersuggest's content idea tool can deliver insights such as traffic and backlinks for various webpages on that topic.

Google Search Suggestions

The list that appears when you type in a search term is Google suggesting similar terms that are often searched regarding that topic, which indicates that it's a frequently asked question.

Quora/ Reddit

Forums can be a great place to see what questions people have regarding a certain topic. From this, you'll be able to interact directly with people who are asking questions about a topic related to your offerings.

Creating content can seem like an immense amount of effort, but by producing consistently high-quality content over time you'll be able to drive more traffic to your website, and eventually see more conversions.

CAN I HELP?

As a small business owner, your time is inevitably always going to be stretched. Therefore, it might not be practical for you to dedicate hundreds of hours to learning how to set up and manage a website for your business - but that's where I might be able to help.

I have over 5+ years of experience in developing websites, and I have done so successfully for a wide range of clients. All of my websites are professionally bespoke and made to my client's requirements, and provide a friendly user experience for their customers. Visit my website to see my past projects.

I operate as a freelancer, and so unlike a traditional web design or digital marketing agency, you can contact me anytime in the day for support with your website. I'm completely flexible around your schedule, and happy to have meetings at a time which works best for you.

Alongside website development, I also offer all of the digital marketing services mentioned in this eBook. This includes setting up adverts on social media, SEO, graphic design plus many more. Feel free to get in contact using my details on the final page, and I hope to hear from you soon.

WEB DESIGN PRICING

All Website Packages Include

- Domain & Yearly Hosting Included
- Search Engine Optimised Web Text
- Website Copywriting
- Image Editing & Resizing
- Post Launch Website Maintenace

- Bespoke & Responsive Website
- Brand Development & Design
- Security Protected
- Website Management Training
- 1 to 1 Flexible Support

Small Website

£35

/Month

£395 Upfront

Medium Website

£50

/Month

£595 Upfront

Large Website

£75

/Month

£895 Upfront

The E-Commerce Functionality Is An Extra £25/month.

No Locked-In Contracts & No Setup Fees.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to read my ebook. Feel free to get in touch using my contact details below if you would like an experienced website designer to manage this whole process for you. I look forward to hearing from you.

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