ARE YOU **READY** to have a WEBSITE THAT YOU *Love?*

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Does this sound familiar to you? You're starting your own website but don't know where to begin? Maybe you have a site and it is time to update the design and your previous web person has left you high and dry? Or…

There are hundreds of scenarios and most of them are filled with frustration, lots of yelling and even some tears. It doesn't have to be this way. The first thing to do is to arm yourself with the right foundation and I hope this helps you get started in determining what the best is for your situation. Knowledge is power!

Domain Name – This is your address on the web. Basically, your home away from home. This should tie in with the brand of your business. Many people now are doing their names – like Linda-Lancaster.com or GinaSpriggs.guru – but you can do the name of your business as well. You want to try and pick something that will be easy for people to remember. Also, keep in mind this will need to fit on a business card so you don't want it to be like an entire sentence long. Telling folks to go to http://absolutebestbarginsincharlottemetroarea.com is a bit of a mouthful and it's going to look like crap in print.

 If you choose to host your own website (vs. using a service like Squarespace, Weebly, or Wix), you do not have to get your domain name with the same place you choose to host your website but it does make things more convenient.

Web Hosting – There are two basic ways to go, you can choose a service such as Weebly, Wix, or Squarespace and use their hosting along with their wizards to setup a site or you can choose regular web hosting such as Dreamhost, HostGator, or GoDaddy. With regular hosting, you (or a designer/developer) will have to set up

your own site. This gives you more flexibility but also requires more technical knowledge.

With web hosting, you get what you pay for but you also don't want to pay for what you don't need. Personally, I have been using [Dreamhost](#) for years and have never had an issue with them. They are reasonably priced and the support has always been helpful.

On the other hand, I will do everything I can to avoid working with GoDaddy. Even as a professional, I find some of their administrative tools difficult to use and maneuver around.

Budget – Creating a website can be a big undertaking. There are tons of resources for all budget types. Be sure of what you can and cannot afford from the beginning since this will make a huge difference on what is the best direction for you to go and what services will provide the biggest bang for your buck.

Do-It-Yourself or Hire a Professional – I got started in web design because I had an interest and I couldn't really afford to hire someone to create something for me. Plus, when I started it was just a personal site, not a business. Even with my interests and computer background, it made for a lot of frustrating nights while I figured out how things worked. Now, there are much easier ways to setup a website but if you are not a techie type person or just do not want to handle the details, I strongly suggest hiring a professional. It may be some of the best money you spend on your business. There is a *word of caution* when hiring someone though. As in any industry, there are those that over-promise and under-deliver. Be sure you get quotes from several people and check references.

Features & Priorities – Any specific features that you just have to have? A calendar of events, ecommerce, integration with social media, other tools such as online forms, newsletters, customer reviews and testimonials or ability for users to download files. How many pages do you need/want and what are they? Do you need an image gallery to showcase your art or products? In addition to

thinking about what you will want on the website, think about what the priority is of those features. A basic site will explain what your business is, who you are, and a way to get in touch with you. All other features and pages can be added in over time.

Content – Once you know what pages you are going to have on your fabulous new website, you need to create the content for it. Even if you hire a professional to design and build the website, they will not create the content that goes on the site… that info is provided by you (or a copywriter that you hire). So hop to it - Get to writing!

Ok… Once I have a fabulous new website, then what?

The work doesn't stop once the website is completed. There are still things to consider such as search engine optimization, maintenance and upgrades to any software that is used, any blog or other content updates on the site as things change or events are added, visitor stats, regular backups, etc.

It can be a lot of work but having a business now almost requires a presence on the internet.

I know this can be a lot to digest. I'm offering free consultations to support you with your website needs. [Click here](http://linda-lancaster.com) to fill out a quick questionnaire and let me know more about your site.

Wishing you good luck and many abundant blessings in your business!

Linda