



Understanding Your Value and How to Market it - Your Website and Blog

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Sole professionals can greatly enhance their private practice by developing a website or blog. Of course, the first advantage to doing this is that you must be very clear about who you are, what you offer and how you are going to present that to the internet world. Although both are designed to present you in the best possible manner, there are several differences between a website and blog as follows:

Your Website - Most professionals either don't have the skills or the time to design and develop a website so you will likely need to hire a web designer to do this. That means that that you will probably be paying for the work by the hour or on a contracted rate based on the number of pages in your website. The more thought and planning you have done before meeting with the designer, will therefore likely lower the cost of the work.

Do your research. Begin by looking at some of the websites of professionals in your field. Notice the colours, font, pictures and information that is displayed and note what you like and don't like about them. Write down the addresses so that you will be able to show them to the designer in order to easily explain your point of view.

Search for a web designer that will meet your needs. The least expensive is not always the best match for you. Ask to see examples of their work and ensure that you have a firm quotation before starting so you are not surprised by the costs. Ask for references from others who have worked with the designer. You can also ask for a meeting to assess whether you feel that the designer is suitable - but you will likely need to pay for the time involved with this. Websites can be developed for a few hundred dollars or a few thousand dollars - depending on what you want, and the hours required to accomplish this.

Begin making your plan for what you want the website to look like and promote. If you don't have an idea of what you want, it will be hard to obtain an accurate quote. Briefly sketch out a list of the topics that you would like to cover on the website, the number of pictures and approximate number of pages required.

It is important to note that a website will need to be updated by your web designer. You therefore will want to consider the "life" of the site as information or pictures that are outdated will result in added costs. You do not have much control of the website after it is prepared without paying more to change it.

Your Blog - If you are interested in having more control over the information that you will be putting on the internet, you might consider buying a domain, setting up hosting and then designing a blog.

Many professionals are choosing a blog over a website because they cannot only set it up themselves with very little training, but you can also update it on a regular basis. In fact, blogs allow you the opportunity to post messages or articles several times a day if you wish. I like using my blog for posting articles which I have written for newspaper columns. It allows me to sort them into categories and allows the viewer to type a specific word into the search box to find relevant information. Also, there is a statistical function which tells you the number of views you have had each day as well as the most viewed posts. This allows

you an opportunity to understand the needs of the market. A blog can be set up for less than one hundred dollars and your time investment.

I have two websites and two blogs. One of my websites is designed to serve my contracts and clients. The second is for my speaking and writing business.

Besides these, I have a blog which offers a great deal of information that is helpful for clients and public alike. I am also developing a new blog which will chronicle my trips and adventures.

The internet offers several opportunities for you to promote your services but the hub for any business is either a website, blog or both. Just another part of the adventure that you will experience in your business.