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Facts for a Fiver



Many of us have friends and family members who are battling cancer or who have survived it.

This Fact Sheet has been produced as part of the [One Good Turn Deserves Another Initiative](#) which is raising money for Macmillan by helping small businesses.

All monies raised go towards building the new Garden Room at Macmillan Woodlands Centre at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon.

Thank you for your support

How to Get a Free WordPress Website



This Fact Sheet is designed to help you to set up, build and run a forever free website using WordPress.

You don't require any web design skills and you can easily get your business online and get it found quickly thanks to power of WordPress.

In this Fact Sheet you will learn:

- Why over half of UK small businesses still don't have a website
- Why WordPress is the smart choice for your first website
- WordPress.org versus WordPress.com
- How to build a professional forever free website with WordPress.com
- How to drive traffic to your site and grow your business
- A case study of how a small business benefited from its free website

If you are a small business or even an individual who needs a website for brand recognition or to drive business, it really is time to get online. It is easier than you may think.

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Why You Don't Already Have a Website?

According to internet hosting company supplier Go Daddy, 60% of UK businesses with five employees or less don't have a website.

Interestingly, the three quarters of small businesses with a website reported that they believed that they had a competitive advantage over businesses without one. Crucially, over half of these businesses reported increased sales since launching their websites.

So, why are so many small businesses still without websites? There are 3 key reasons:

- Business owners say their business is too small to warrant a website
- Business owners don't have the time or expertise to build a website
- Business owners believe that websites are too costly

In 2017, a business without an online presence is a business without a future.

The good news is that you don't have to have any digital expertise to create a website. What's more, setting up a website is no longer a time-consuming activity thanks to easy to use templates. And best of all, you can get online for free.

Why Choose a WordPress Website?

When you decide to build a website (or have it built for you), you must choose a Content Management System (CMS).

Your CMS is used for you to add content and governs how your information is displayed on your website.

You want a Content Management System that is easy to use and produces stunning websites.

You will see many free website builders such as Wix and Weebly.

You could go for this as your starter option but if you do this, please bear in mind that you will end up with a template website that looks like every other small business in your industry.

You will have limited ability to customise, upgrade or expand your site.

WordPress is a far better option.

WordPress is very easy to use, it is free and comes with an enormous number of premium quality free themes.

WordPress is easy to customise and to update.

WordPress has a built-in blog.

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WordPress has excellent search engine optimisation. This will help to get your new website found online more quickly.

Some facts on WordPress.

Did you know?

- WordPress powers 27% of the world's websites
- Some of the world's most popular websites including Spotify, and CNN run on WordPress
- There over 16 million WordPress websites
- 50,000 WordPress.com websites are being launched daily
- Over 400 million people view over 20 billion web pages every month on WordPress.com
- 17 posts are published every second on WordPress sites around the world

By choosing WordPress, you will be in good company.

WordPress.org vs. WordPress.com

Having chosen WordPress, you are instantly confronted with the choice of WordPress.org vs. WordPress.com.

What is the difference?

WordPress.org allows you to download your own copy of the WordPress blogging/Content Management System (CMS) software for free.

You then must:

- 1. Find your own hosting company to house your WordPress site along with your own domain name to point visitors to it.**
- 2. Choose a theme and build your site or have it built for you.**
- 3. Customise your site and manage all updates.**
- 4. Add additional functionality through the thousands of WordPress plug-ins available for free or at a cost.**

If you opt for WordPress.org you will have ultimate flexibility. If you intend to use your website for commercial transactions, then this will be the best option for you.

If, on the other hand, you are looking for a simple plug and play website with powerful features already built-in and on-going automatic upgrades, then you should consider WordPress.com as your default option.

This is because **WordPress.com hosts your own website for free.**



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You simply sign up and choose your website name. Please bear in mind that your website name using the free package will always be name@wordpress.com

You then choose a theme and design your site within the limitations of the theme.

The advantages of **WordPress.com** for a first-time website are as follows:

- 1. It costs nothing to set up or host your site.**
- 2. All site maintenance, updates, backups and search engine optimisation are automatic.**
- 3. You get high quality site security and anti-spam protection.**
- 4. All WordPress.com sites are fully responsive (i.e. they resize to display correctly on any device) and are mobile-friendly for ease of use with Smartphones.**
- 5. If you use the built-in blog you can generate extra traffic by using WordPress tags.**
- 6. You can upgrade from your free beginner plan at anytime.**
- 7. If you choose to move to WordPress.org and a self-hosted solution you can easily move your existing WordPress.com content over to your new site.**

Please be aware that by choosing the WordPress.com free plan you may find that your website occasionally has ads displayed on it (you can move to a paid plan to remove these).

Also, you will not be able to run your own adverts or sell products through the site.

Building Your WordPress.Com Website

One of the great things about WordPress.com is that setting up your website is extremely easy.

Originally, designed for bloggers who wanted to get online and get sharing, WordPress.com has an intuitive interface that makes customising themes and adding your own unique features very straightforward.

You do not need a web designer. You can create a professional website in a few hours.

Setting up your Website Site

Here the 11 key steps:

- 1. Go to <https://wordpress.com/start/> and choose the way that your home page should be set out. For a website choose option 2 which is "a welcome page for my site".**



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2. **Choose any theme and go to find a domain.** At this stage, don't worry about your theme as you can easily change it later. It is more important to find a domain for your business. Hopefully, you will find that your brand or company name has not been taken. If so, enter it now and your website address will be name@wordpress.com If you don't see, your brand name you may need to upgrade to a paid version of WordPress. Alternatively, you might need to become a little more creative with your name.
3. **Change your theme.** To do this, click on "My sites" in the navigation bar and go to customise themes. Search themes with the free themes filter activated and you will find approx. 170 themes available for you to choose. Narrow your search to "Business" and you will find approx. 35 themes. Have a good look around and choose the one that best meets your needs.
4. **Customise your theme.** Depending on the theme you can change background effects, colours on headers, add custom images and a variety of widgets.
5. **Give your website its identity.** You do this in the customizer by entering a title, a tagline and a logo. Please note that this information will appear in search results.
6. **Create a static front page.** WordPress.com sites default to "blog mode" with your latest blog appearing on the first page of the site. To convert to "website mode", click on "My sites" in the navigation bar and create a static front page and label this home.
7. **Create a custom menu.** You do this by clicking on "My sites" in the navigation bar and going to "menus". Creating a custom menu allows you to control the way that pages appear on your site and how they are physically linked including the option to create subpages accessible through a "drop-down list" below the main page.
8. **Add links within your site and to other sites.** Jump links are easy to insert into your pages and these - along with your custom menu - help visitors to easily navigate through your site. Be sure to add links to your social media pages as well.
9. **Set-up a blog page.** One of the great things about WordPress is that it includes a built-in blogging platform. To activate your blog, go to the customizer and set your post page to be your blog page.
10. **Upload images to your pages.** To do this upload images as Jpegs or PNGs from your computer into your website's media library. From here you can insert images into your pages or set them as feature images which appear at the top of your page or in the banner depending on your theme type.
11. **Drop in sharing buttons.** You do this by clicking on "My sites" in the navigation bar and going to "sharing". Simply select the social sharing buttons you want and voila your visitors can share your page or your blog on all the main social media platforms.



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If all of this seems a little daunting, please don't worry it really is simple even for a novice.

If you'd like a step by step online guide with screen shots, please click this [website](#) link.

If you'd like to follow a step by step video guide, please click this [YouTube](#) link.

The best part of WordPress.com is that every aspect of building and customising your site is now shown in step by step [video guides](#) so you really cannot go wrong.

Further help and advice is also available on the dedicated [WordPress support website](#)

Driving Business Via Your Website

So now that you have set up your forever free WordPress.com website, how do you use it to drive business?

There are 3 key areas to concentrate on. These are:

- 1. Website Content**
- 2. Website Updates**
- 3. Website Promotion**

Let's look at these in turn.

Website Content

Ask yourself the following questions:

- "What is my website for?"
- "What value should it give to my visitors?"
- "What do I expect them to do after visiting my website?"

Answering these questions, enables you to build the type of content that will appeal to your potential customers giving them a reason to stay on your site and to interact with you and your company offline.

Your content must be high quality.

Make sure that written content is free from typographical and grammatical errors. Make your information easy to read.

A picture speaks a thousand words so do ensure that your website is highly visual and the images you use are unique. Avoid at all costs those ubiquitous stock shots and wherever possible have images of you, your premises and your products.

And don't forget to include video. This applies particularly to businesses that need to show a product in action or those that need testimonials from real life customers to encourage others to take the plunge.



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Finally, make sure that your website has clear calls to action on every page and don't bury your contact information on a single page on your site.

Provide multiple ways for your customers to contact you and links to take them to other useful pieces of information.

Website Updates

Typically, websites for small businesses are little more than a static business overview or an outdated brochure on line.

Your business doesn't stand still and neither should your website. Every week you should be adding new content to your site with the aim of generating new and repeat visitors.

Search engines like Google value new content highly.

So, what sort of content can you add?

Here are some ideas:

- New photos and videos
- New customer testimonials
- Employee profiles
- Information on upcoming events such as product launches and exhibitions
- New blog posts
- Links to other websites
- Hints and tips
- FAQs
- Awards

Website Promotion

Your website is there to promote your business. For it to do this job effectively, you must first promote your website.

Attracting traffic to a new website can be challenging. However, there are a number of tried and tested techniques that you can use for free.

Here are 5 steps to get visitors to your site.

- 1. Directory listings** - There are numerous business directories that will list your business and its website for free. Individuals and businesses searching these directories online simply click a link to come straight through to your website. You simply must list on Google My Business, Bing Places, Yahoo Local and Yell.



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- 2. Social Media links** – Make sure that there are reciprocal links between your website and your social media pages such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Google Plus and Twitter. Importantly, do ensure that you host information on your website that calls to action on your social media pages can point to.
- 3. Commenting on blogs and forums** – If you use forums like Quora or participate in LinkedIn groups or Facebook communities you can include the link to your website in your comment or in your signature. Do make sure your comments are not spammy or overly-promotional though.
- 4. Your Email Signature** - Every email you send should have a standard footer that describes you. It usually has a name, title and contact details. It should also have your website spelled out with http so it looks like <http://www.yourlink.com> This will be visible in text-based web mail browsers and gives you a live hyperlink in most email programs. Emails get forwarded, copied, and otherwise shared. You don't know who is reading and clicking.
- 5. Emailing your customers and prospects** – Assuming you already have an email contact list, you should send a brief email inviting them to visit your site. This works best if you have a website only offer or if there is something that you can give away for free as a download from your site.

Case Study of a WordPress.com Site

Feet First Reflexology is a micro business which offers complementary health treatments. It runs an entirely free website powered by WordPress.com.

It needed a website to raise awareness of the benefits of reflexology, to showcase its studio and its relaxing environment and to demonstrate using video how reflexology works and what prospective customers could expect from a treatment.

It selected the site address feetfirstreflexology.wordpress.com and the free theme Twenty Ten.

It used customer menus to enable quick and easy navigation of the site.

It added images, videos and SlideShares to give visitors a clear impression of the treatments on offer and the unique experience and expertise of the owner. This was backed up with links to Facebook containing customer reviews as well a comprehensive listing on Google My Business.

It has a news page where upcoming events and current promotions are posted.

It includes an online contact page for enquiries and built-in Google maps so that potential customers can get driving directions to the business location.

This site has over hundred unique visitors every month and generates several new enquires every single week.



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In Summary

I hope that you have found this guide to forever free websites using WordPress.com informative and interesting.

If you have questions or need further help with WordPress.com, please note that as part of the fundraising campaign to build the Garden Room at the Macmillan Woodlands Centre I am offering advice by phone, email, web chat or Skype.

To access this advice please donate £10 through [Just Giving](#) and give me a call.

Thank you for supporting Macmillan Cancer Support



About the Author

Chris Dunn is a sales and marketing professional who believes in the power of service to create brand value, customer loyalty and competitive advantage.

His career stretches back over 30 years during which time he has developed fast growing, profitable businesses serving B2B and B2C markets in the UK and internationally.

Since founding Chris Dunn Consulting in 2014, Chris has worked with small and large companies to help them to increase their revenues profitably and sustainably through sales, marketing and service innovation.

He has been accredited by the Business Growth Service as an Expert Business Coach.

He also mentors MBA candidates at the Judge Business School, Cambridge University, as part of the Cambridge Venture Project.

Chris Dunn Consulting offers the following professional services:

1. Business coaching
2. Marketing consultancy
3. Sales strategy advice



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