

BONUS WORKSHEET: Creating Your Internet Presence with a Website/ Blog

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The internet is evolving as we write, and one of the most powerful trends that you can use for building your practice is interactivity. You can now create a combination website and blog in hours or a couple of days without knowing any html (internet programming language).

If you are just getting started, this is definitely the way to go and you can take advantage of this platform to create a website even if you don't want to have a blog. However, blogging is great for building your practice.

Why? It adds interactivity (web 2.0) to an otherwise static website (web 1.0). New information on your site attracts more visitors and blogs are picked up much better by the search engines. They are easier to format. They offer fresher, current information for your customers. It's also much easier to edit a blog than a website. As your practice evolves, you can even completely change the look of your blog without losing the content. Other advantages are listed below.

Getting Started

There are many ways to get started. Here we are only going to provide one way. Based on extensive research and having created a number of sites ourselves, this is what we're doing, because it is the proven leader. It also allows you to create a site quickly with very little cost, under \$30, plus the monthly hosting fee, which is \$9.95. You can't begin to get advertising anywhere for this price.

_____ **1. Create Your Domain.** This is essential to look professional and receive priority with the search engines. It is also a simple process. Go to godaddy.com, where you can find out if the URL you want is available and purchase it. Tips for selecting a domain name:

- Include key words you want the search engines to pick up. Consider words that help to identify your niche and draw interest, like the URI for our association, heartandsoulofsuccess.org. Also consider something that would be memorable and/or intriguing.
- For a local practice, include your city name in the URL. We know a hypnotherapist who has built his entire practice and is turning away clients by using the word hypnosis and his city. This is great for a local practice, because people often search by city name. The URL then could be something like santabarbarahypnosis.com.
- Use a .com, or if you are a non-profit, use a .org. These are the most professional and widely accepted

- _____ 2. **Get Your Web Host.** We use hostgator.com, which we suggest here for its low cost (now \$9.95/month), features and 24-hour live phone support. Your web host provides a place to store your files and broadcast them over the internet. As a note, you can host multiple sites, as we do, from this single account.
- _____ 3. **Get a wordpress.org template.** Wordpress is the leader in the industry and you can get a template for free, choosing from dozens of pre-created styles, which you can later customize, if desired, for a small investment. It also has many free tools called widgets or plugins, which you can explore as you progress.
- A nice upgrade** for controlling the look of your wordpress.org website is the Thesis Theme at <http://diythemes.com/thesis/>. This is the one we use with our customized design at heartandsoulofsuccess.org. This is like a cadillac template. For under a \$100 this theme gives you more control, and options to easily manage your blog and the look of your site. You can instantly change the font, background color, perform search engine optimization, and much, much more with a few clicks of the mouse.
- Note that there is also wordpress.com, which you don't want, because it is hosted on their server. Then you are renting their space and your information is not as fully in your control or reproducible if you decide to go elsewhere.
- _____ 4. **Install your blog from your hosted domain, which is easy and quick to do.** Here's a short how-to video on how to do it: <http://bit.ly/yqkIA>. Hostgator <http://bit.ly/1H7xOy>, our service provider, will even walk you through it if you prefer, with their 24/7 phone support.
- _____ 5. **Add content.** You can find out more about how to write a blog in Checklist #10 and you have tools for adding your marketing message in Checklist #8.

Enhancements

- _____ 6. **Add your picture.** People want to get to know you. Your picture also creates recognition which you can extend over multiple venues, like social media (Facebook, Twitter, and so on). Some considerations:
- It should look professional, inviting, and well lit, showing your eyes. The most important feature according to surveys is a warm smile.
 - Especially for small pictures, use a close-up with your face dominating most of the picture. Look through Twitter and note inviting pictures (they are rare).
 - Use your same picture in different sites so people easily recognize you.
 - Connect your look and attire (your image) with your business.
- _____ 7. **Write a newsletter to build your list and create a signup box** featuring a freebie in a prominent place on each page. List building was covered in Checklist 7 and Checklist 10 provides tips on writing newsletters. Placing your signup box is easy with wordpress: you

can locate the box in the right or left column and it will automatically appear on each page. You will need a service to capture the email names.

- _____ **8. If you want to customize the look of your blog**, go to elance.com or rentacoder.com and hire a freelancer at a reasonable rate.
- _____ **9. Set up RSS Feeds to your blog**, which allow people to subscribe to your blog, so they will be automatically notified of each new post by email. This should be easy to do.
- _____ **10. Explore the back-end of the site (the wordpress.org control panel)**. It is very user friendly with many great features. Features include: publishing and editing posts, categories, search within the site, change your website look and many more.
- _____ **11. Learn more about widgets**. They are easy to install, and you'll be impressed how much they can enhance your blog. These plugins will personalize your blog without you needing to know HTML language. A word of caution: they are created by third parties and can sometimes create problems. Always back up your files before you add them. Hostgator can help you to do this.
- _____ **12. Be strategic by adding targeted content to your blog** that your audience will want to read. Focus on ways that they can make positive changes.
- _____ **13. Consider adding audio and video**. You can also post videos on youtube and link them to yoursite to create more recognition and interest in what you are doing.
- _____ **14. Explore these two great tools that will turbocharge your results:** 1) use <http://pingomatic.com/> to "ping" or notify many services and directories of your current blog. 2) And <http://www.onlywire.com/> will automatically notify dozens of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter of your current blog post. Both these services are free, easy to use, and take only a few minutes to notify dozens of sites and directories. Thus your message and rankings are tremendously boosted with each post you make. Especially compared with the slow rankings that result from making the more time-consuming changes on a traditional website.
- _____ **15. Create a Google Profile**. This is separate from your website, but the search engines will pick it up, so it is another way people can find out about you. You will also show up on a google map when people are searching for practitioners in your areas, which can be great for generating local clients.

Action Plan

Website creation is generally done over time. Depending on where you are in the process, determine your next steps for your website/blog, select the ones that will produce the greatest results with the least amount of effort, and take one step at a time. As the weeks pass, you'll be amazed how much you've accomplished.