Things You DON'T Need Small Business Website

By Corey Freeman

A Bit of Random Info About Corey Freeman

- Yes, I do stand-up comedy.

- I am also secretly procrastinating on getting my own small business website going. Egads!

- I've been building websites since 2004.

- I say words like "Egads!"

- I enjoy beer.

- I am on twitter as @coreyfreeman

- If this talk sounds grumpy it's because I get spun about websites, man.

LISAQUINN

Why Your Website Isn't "Finished" Yet

- It's entirely possible that you don't have a website up yet. That's probably because of two things: **fear** or **information paralysis.**

- Procrastination stems from one of two mindsets…**"I don't know what I'm doing"** or **"I need this to be perfect."**

I Do the Whole "I Need This to Be Perfect" Thing. We'll do that one second.

"WTF Am I Doing?"

- A lot of the information newcomers find when building a website is either oddly vague or oddly specific. You're sitting here like, "yes, WordPress. Gotcha." Then you read an article about *50* essential plugins.

- Nobody needs 50 plugins.

- But writing beginner content is boring af so it's buried under courses and 1,000 different videos and a blur of the words "essential" and "must-do's."

There's Only One "Essential"

Actually Have a Website!

"I Need This to Be Perfect!"

- Samesies. You've got something up but before you can share it with the world, it needs to be perfect. You think I would own 20 different domains and 5 whiteboards if I wasn't concerned with perfectionism? I would! But also the fear of incompetence.

- A lot of visitors don't really care about "perfect." They just want **something helpful, easy to read, and easy to navigate.** That's like 3 things.

Alright Let's List Some Things You Don't Need

A "Coming Soon" Page

(a.k.a. the I can't finish anything page)

- Obviously if you have a URL and some hosting, you're making progress. But you can't just let people see the information! You have to do a photo shoot or buy the perfect theme or something. So you put up a "coming soon" page. Or an "under construction" page.

- Maybe you put in an email opt-in, because you read that somewhere. But if you're just starting, you have no idea what to do with that. Now you just have like, email addresses and no direction.

Stop. Just Put Something Helpful Up.

- **"Soon" is relative.** We can all guess what it means for a movie, or a building under construction, but not for a website. Especially if you're a photographer or something. Just show me the photos.

- "Under Construction" means I can't manage to take the first step even though I clearly need something up and *I know that.*

- A fancy "hero" image means nothing. We've all seen mountains.

Instead…

- Install WordPress. Set the "About" page as your homepage. Write something useful.

- Business hours. Location. Phone Number. A couple of photos of your business. As of this powerpoint mine is just a contact form.

Also Let's Talk About Design

(Some trendy stuff you don't need)

Trends to Ignore

- The "Hero Image." A giant picture of something relevant to your business. Unless it's a picture of your business, a recent portfolio sample, a house for sale, a dog you've been sitting, etc, you don't need it.

- All the social media. Only link to the things you're actually using.

- A chat pop-up. This might be a personal opinion but I prefer robots don't talk to me.

- A slideshow. Nobody is clicking through it.

- A hamburger menu. Nobody likes that. Label your links.

Of Course You Want Your Website
to Be Beautiful. And That's Great!
It needs to be functional first.

Let's Define
"Functional"

You Put That "Essential Plugins" Page Away Right Now, Sir.

My Definition of Functional

- As I am in charge of this talk, here is my personal opinion of the word functional…

- The website loads.

- The website contains the information I am looking for.

- The website makes it easy to contact the person in charge.

- The website does not burn my retinas.

Also Don't Spend $200 on a Logo Just Yet. **It's Okay to Use Text.**

Fancy Services Are Cool, But Build Up to Them

Here's Looking At You, Membership Plugins

I Heard This on a Podcast Once…

- On my new website, <u>fearlesspixel.com</u>, I installed a plugin called "Beaver Builder" to speed up putting something up. But that's a premium plugin, and I had to save up to afford that license.

- **It's okay to use free resources to get something launched.** You use your success to "earn" the right to buy fancier tools.

Your Two Expenses Should Be the Domain Name & Web Hosting

Notes, Though, On Web Hosting…

- 90% of web hosts are the same, so go with one recommended to you by someone you trust (or some of WordCamp's sponsors I guess).

- Don't spend $80/month on hosting if you just need a simple "brochure" website.

- Don't worry about becoming a system administrator to try and save money. Your computer probably can't host your website for you.

Or, Work with an Expert Who Provides Hosting Services (WINK)

Don't Have a Domain Yet?

- YourBusiness.com

- yourname.com

- Yourname+business.com

- Yourbusiness+area.com

- something descriptive like hashtagcorey.com where you find out about me, Corey. Or fearlesspixel.com where you idk find pixels that are braver than other pixels I guess.

Point Is, $20 should get you a white page with black text on your own domain.
You can upgrade later.

Let's Talk SEO & Marketing

Keep It Simple

No Website, No Traffic

- Your website traffic will be 0 without a website.

- Your landing page will convert 0 people if it is not yet launched.

- SEO services to a "coming soon" page is pointless.

- Don't worry about generating traffic until you have something to send traffic to!

Simple SEO is Simple

- Getting started doesn't have to mean $500 in consulting. It means **relevant content about your business.** Start there. It's free.

- You don't need a subscription service when you already know 90% of the information you need to target your audience. **Who you are, what you do, how to contact you. Boom, done.**

Here's What You DO Need

Positivity! Finally!

Actual Essentials

- A domain name and a web host.

- WordPress (obvs)

- A theme that makes it easy to read (maybe skip twenty-seventeen so people don't have to scroll).

- A page that says **what you do, and how to contact you.**

- A contact form.

- A willingness to launch.

Put it out there. Improve as you go along. Feedback is awesome.

In Summary

- You don't need 50 plugins on your website.

- You don't have to have a theme framework with a built-in carousel and pop-up and chat function and share buttons for every media in existence.

- You don't need parallax hero images.

- **You need a website. Up. Online.**

OK ASK ME STUFF