

# MOVING YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

## SBDC TAP CHECKLIST

### GENERAL

- Name Your Business: Consider the name of your business from these perspectives:
  - Legal perspective (are you legally entitled to it?),
  - Branding perspective (will it help attract the kind of customers and clients you want to attract?), and
  - Search engine perspective (is it unique, simple, memorable?).
- Primary Service: Define your primary service (or product) in 1-2 sentences.
- Secondary Services: Define any secondary services in 3-5 bullet points.
- Tagline: Your tagline should be a single phrase that encapsulates your business, motivates and inspires new customers, and creates loyalty in existing customers.
- Voice: Whose “voice” is speaking on your website? Is it Formal? Informal? The owner? The team? First person singular (“I”)? First personal plural (“We”)? Third person (“They”)?
- Elevator Pitch: How would you succinctly describe your business to a stranger in an elevator in 30-45 seconds?
- USP - Unique Selling Proposition: Why should potential customers/clients select your business over your competition’s?

### REGISTER ACCOUNTS

- Domain name registration: Eg: YOUR-DOMAIN.com. Generally, this can have an annual cost of \$8-12/year. If the domain name you want is available, register it right away. Ideally, your domain name should be your business name. Best to keep it short, simple, and memorable.
- Domain hosting: This is where your website will be hosted. Costs can range from \$4-15/month, depending on storages, features, length of contract.
- Email hosting: This is where your email accounts will be hosted. Frequently, this is included in the domain hosting so start with domain hosting.
- Email marketing: Do you want to send out any newsletters or any email marketing? If so, three popular options for small businesses include:
  - Constant Contact: [www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com)
  - Vertical Response: [www.verticalresponse.com](http://www.verticalresponse.com)
  - Mail Chimp: [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)
- eCommerce: Decide if you will be selling anything from your website. If you’re working with a web developer, they will likely have recommendations for this. The simplest way for you to do this yourself is with PayPal: [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)
- Social Media: Decide if you will be using Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or any other social media, and set up your pages or accounts.

# MOVING YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE CONT.

## BRANDING/DESIGN/GRAPHICS

- Logo for print and website: Do you already have a logo, plan to create your own, or plan to hire a designer?
- Banner: This is the top graphic banner in most website, and is can be used on your business letterhead, as well. Do you plan to create your own, or hire a designer?
- Graphics: This typically includes icons, illustrations, and any artwork. What graphics do you already have and what will you need to produce?
- Photographs: What do you already have and what will you need? Stock photos can be purchased very inexpensively from online sources such as [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)
- Video: What do you already have and what will you need?
- Business Goals: What are your goals for the website? Promote your service? Sell a product? Provide information? Define your top three goals.

## WEBSITE CONSIDERATIONS & PLANNING

- Target customer: What demographic of the population are you trying to attract? Young? Old? Men? Women? Students? Elderly? Etc.
- Designer/developer: Do you have the skills to create the website yourself or will you need to hire a web designer/developer?
- Budget: If you are going to hire a web developer, consider your budget before you start interviewing potential candidates.
- Schedule: How quickly do you need the website to “go live”? If you’re hiring a web developer, this should be part of the initial discussion, before you hire them.

- Custom Design or Template: In general, a custom web design will cost more than one created from a template. There are many professional looking templates to consider. A WordPress solution will allow for many free and low-cost templates.
- CMS: Will your web developer update content for you or will you be doing this yourself? If yourself, then a CMS (Content Management System) will allow a “less technical” person – yourself or your staff – to make simple updates to your website. **If in doubt, go with a CMS.** WordPress is the most popular CMS these days for small business websites and blogs. Others CMS include Drupal and Joomla.
- Search Engine Optimization SEO - keyword research: What are your most important keywords? What words do you think your typical new custom will put into a search engine such as Google in order to find you? There are a variety of keyword research tools to help you define yours.
- Information Architecture IA: How do you want to organize the information in your website? For example, if you’re a school, you might want to have separate sections for students, teachers, and parents. If you sell clothing, you might want to have separate sections for men’s and women’s clothing.
- Wireframing: What pages do you want to have in your new website? It’s helpful to layout the structure of the website, to determine how the pages relate to one another, before starting on design.
- List 3-5 websites that you like and be specific as to why (eg design, graphics, whitespace, specific functionality, humor, etc.)
- List 3-5 website URLs that you consider to be your competition, review them, and describe strengths & weaknesses of each.

# MOVING YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE CONT.

## WEBSITE CONTENT, FEATURES, FUNCTIONALITY

*If you're just getting started, and aren't sure yet of your content, consider starting with these basic pages and features:*

- Home Page
- Services Page
- About Us Page
- Contact Us Page
- Resources / Links Page
- E-commerce
- Social Media
- Blog
- Newsletter
- Testimonials
- Other

## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

*Consider starting with these popular social media platforms:*

- Facebook: [facebook.com/pages](https://facebook.com/pages)
- LinkedIn: [linkedin.com](https://linkedin.com)
- Twitter: [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)
- YouTube: [youtube.com](https://youtube.com)
- Others...

## LOCAL SEARCH

*If your business has a local physical presence with a local address, it's important to claim your place in local listings, many of them free:*

- Google Places (start with this one): [www.google.com/places](https://www.google.com/places)
- Yahoo Local: [listings.local.yahoo.com](https://listings.local.yahoo.com)
- Bing Local: [www.bing.com/local](https://www.bing.com/local)
- Yelp: [biz.yelp.com](https://biz.yelp.com)
- YellowPages.com: [www.yellowpages.com](https://www.yellowpages.com)
- Thumbtack: [www.thumbtack.com](https://www.thumbtack.com)
- Others...

# RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION & HELP

## GENERAL

5 Tips To Get Your Small Business Online:  
[blog.crowdspring.com/2011/08/tips-to-get-your-small-business-online](http://blog.crowdspring.com/2011/08/tips-to-get-your-small-business-online)

## BRANDING

CrowdSpring – an online marketplace for logos and graphic design:  
[www.crowdspring.com/how-it-works](http://www.crowdspring.com/how-it-works)

## WEB DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT

Top 5 Web Design Mistakes Small Businesses Make:  
[mashable.com/2011/04/10/5-web-design-mistakes](http://mashable.com/2011/04/10/5-web-design-mistakes)

Successful Small Business Websites:  
[samirbalwani.com/small-business-website](http://samirbalwani.com/small-business-website)

## SOCIAL MEDIA (GENERAL)

Mashable's 10 of the Best Social Media Tools for Entrepreneurs:  
[mashable.com/2009/10/26/social-media-entrepreneurs](http://mashable.com/2009/10/26/social-media-entrepreneurs)

Mashable's Social Media News:  
[mashable.com/social-media](http://mashable.com/social-media)

Social Media in Plain English (video):  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpIOClX1jPE&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpIOClX1jPE&feature=player_embedded)

Hotdesign's Getting Started with Social Media:  
[blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-social-media](http://blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-social-media)

Hotdesign's 5 Reasons for Social Media Marketing:  
[blog.hotdesign.com/2009/03/5-reasons-for-social-media-marketing](http://blog.hotdesign.com/2009/03/5-reasons-for-social-media-marketing)

## LINKEDIN

LinkedIn's website: [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com)

What is LinkedIn:  
[learn.linkedin.com/what-is-linkedin](http://learn.linkedin.com/what-is-linkedin)

What is LinkedIn (video):

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVlUwwgOfKw&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVlUwwgOfKw&feature=player_embedded)

LinkedIn Learning Center:  
[learn.linkedin.com](http://learn.linkedin.com)

LinkedIn Webinars:  
[learn.linkedin.com/training](http://learn.linkedin.com/training)

LinkedIn Help:  
[linkedin.custhelp.com](http://linkedin.custhelp.com)

Mashable's HOW TO:  
Build Your Personal Brand on LinkedIn:  
[mashable.com/2009/07/27/linkedin-personal-brand](http://mashable.com/2009/07/27/linkedin-personal-brand)

Hotdesign's Getting Started with LinkedIn:  
[blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-linkedin](http://blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-linkedin)

LinkedIn for Dummies (video):  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tV\\_7yAPnkFw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tV_7yAPnkFw)

## FACEBOOK

Facebook's website:  
[facebook.com](http://facebook.com)

Facebook Pages (with step by step instructions):  
[www.facebook.com/advertising/?pages](http://www.facebook.com/advertising/?pages)

Facebook Pages Product Guide:  
[www.facebook.com/advertising/FacebookPagesProductGuide.pdf](http://www.facebook.com/advertising/FacebookPagesProductGuide.pdf)

Facebook's Help Center:  
[www.facebook.com/help](http://www.facebook.com/help)

Facebook Pages Help:  
[www.facebook.com/help/?page=175](http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=175)

Mashable's Facebook Guide Book:  
[mashable.com/guidebook/facebook](http://mashable.com/guidebook/facebook)

Hotdesign's Getting Started with Facebook:  
[blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-facebook](http://blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-facebook)

32 Ways to use Facebook for Business:  
[webworkerdaily.com/2009/07/21/32-ways-to-use-facebook-for-business](http://webworkerdaily.com/2009/07/21/32-ways-to-use-facebook-for-business)

# RESOURCES, CONT.

## TWITTER

Twitter's website: [twitter.com](http://twitter.com)

Twitter 101 for Business – A special guide:  
[business.twitter.com/twitter101](http://business.twitter.com/twitter101)

Twitter 101 (video):  
[business.twitter.com/twitter101/starting](http://business.twitter.com/twitter101/starting)

Twitter Best Practices:  
[business.twitter.com/twitter101/best\\_practices](http://business.twitter.com/twitter101/best_practices)

Twitter's Help:  
[twitter.com/help/start/](http://twitter.com/help/start/)

Twitter Search:  
[search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com)

Mashable's Twitter Guide Book:  
[mashable.com/guidebook/twitter](http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter)

Mashable's How to Make the Most of Your Twitter  
Profile Page:  
[mashable.com/2010/05/10/organize-twitter-profile](http://mashable.com/2010/05/10/organize-twitter-profile)

What is Twitter?:  
[webtrends.about.com/od/socialnetworking/a/what-is-twitter.htm](http://webtrends.about.com/od/socialnetworking/a/what-is-twitter.htm)

TweetDeck:  
[www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)

Hotdesign's Getting Started with Twitter:  
[blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-twitter](http://blog.hotdesign.com/2008/12/getting-started-with-twitter)

## BLOGGING

WordPress: [wordpress.org](http://wordpress.org)

Blogger: [blogger.com](http://blogger.com)

Business Blogging Best Practices:  
[socialmediab2b.com/2009/06/business-blogging-best-practices](http://socialmediab2b.com/2009/06/business-blogging-best-practices)

Business Blogging Best Practices (video):  
[everything.typepad.com/blog/2009/02/typepad-business-class.html](http://everything.typepad.com/blog/2009/02/typepad-business-class.html)

Bloggng Best Practices:  
[www.echoditto.com/bloggng](http://www.echoditto.com/bloggng)

Six Reasons Every Brand Should Blog:  
[www.huffingtonpost.com/paula-berg/6-reasons-every-brand-sho\\_b\\_894004.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paula-berg/6-reasons-every-brand-sho_b_894004.html)

## SEO AND LOCAL SEARCH

This is an easy to follow video to give you the basics on  
SEO:

[www.wordtracker.com/academy/seo-your-web-page-for-google-video](http://www.wordtracker.com/academy/seo-your-web-page-for-google-video)

[seomoz.org/beginners-guide-to-seo](http://seomoz.org/beginners-guide-to-seo)

SEO Checklist for Local Small Business Websites:  
[www.sugarrae.com/seo-sphere/seo-checklist-for-local-small-business-websites](http://www.sugarrae.com/seo-sphere/seo-checklist-for-local-small-business-websites)

This article for Search Engine Land will give you some  
advanced Local Search ideas:  
[searchengineland.com/nifty-hard-core-local-seo-tactics-from-smx-advanced-81099](http://searchengineland.com/nifty-hard-core-local-seo-tactics-from-smx-advanced-81099)

Use this tool to rate your local search presence and use  
their handy links to fix what is missing:  
[getlisted.org](http://getlisted.org)

Use Yext to review the top 9 local search directories and  
any inconsistencies in how you are listed:  
[yext.com](http://yext.com)

## REFERENCE BOOKS:

Don't Make Me Think, A Common Sense Approach to  
Web Usability, By Steve Krug.

Rocket Surgery Made Easy, By Steve Krug.

Letting Go of the Words – Writing Web Content that  
Works, By Janice Ginny Reddish.

The Non-Designer's Design Book, By Robin Williams.

Net Words: Creating High-Impact Online Copy, by Nick  
Usborne

Hot Text: Web Writing That Works, by Jonathan and  
Lisa Price