

The Total Cost of a Website

What does a website cost per year? How much should it cost to build a brand new website for your business? How about a redesign -- what will that cost?

It's difficult for business owners to get a good estimate for the cost of a website, especially considering how few web design agencies publish their pricing online. Fortunately, we've put together this document to help you better understand not only what a website will cost to design and build, but also maintain.

Keep reading for some basic estimates for the cost of a few different types of websites, as well as some prices for common services like website hosting, SEO, redesigns, and more.

The Total Cost of a New Website

For those of you looking for a quick breakdown, here are the **up-front costs for a new website**, based on what you're looking to have done:

Basic or Small Business Website

A small website with minimal design required, fewer than 20 pages, a few custom graphics or stock photos, and no special functionality

Up front cost: \$2,000 to \$8,000

Corporate or Medium-Sized Business Website

A site with up to 75 pages, high quality design work, the usage of a content management system (CMS), and some special or custom functionality enabled by developers

Up front cost: \$10,000 to \$25,000

Large Business Website

A site with several hundred pages, high quality design work, a CMS, custom functionality, and additional features like blog integration, custom development, multimedia design, etc.

Up front cost: \$25,000 to \$40,000

Ecommerce Website

A website that allows customers to browse products, add items to a shopping cart, and make a purchase; requires payment gateway integration, some copywriting, images, a CMS, and extensive testing

Up front cost: \$5,000 to \$40,000 (dependent on complexity/number of products)

Now that you've learned a little bit about what it costs to create one of these websites, let's explore some of the ongoing website costs that you may run into on a monthly or yearly basis.

Necessary Expenses

Some of the costs associated with a new website are unavoidable. Here are a few of the necessary expenses you'll encounter when creating a new site (or working with an agency to create one for you).

Domain Name

- **Why you need one:** The domain name, or URL, is the online address associated with your website. Without a domain name, the only way customers would be able to access your website would be with a string of numbers and periods known as an IP address.
- **How much you'll pay:** Typically between \$5 and \$20. Some extensions (like .org, .net, or newer ones like .restaurant) may cost a few hundred dollars.
- **How often you'll pay for it:** Typically yearly.

Website Hosting

- **Why you need hosting:** Buying a domain name is a bit like buying a piece of land: you get an address, but there's nothing there. Hosting is what allows you to build "house" -- or in this case, your website.
- **How much you'll pay:** Many providers offer hosting plans starting at \$5 per month. However, as your website traffic grows -- or you add new features -- you'll need to upgrade your hosting to plans that may run you upwards of \$100 (or more).
- **How often you'll pay:** Most hosts offer monthly payments, but will give you a discount for paying a full year at a time.

Content Management System

- **Why you need one:** A content management system, or CMS, is what allows you to input the information that displays on your website, like text, images, or even your design elements. You don't have to have a CMS, but it makes running your site much easier.
- **How much you'll pay:** Some CMS options, like Magento and WordPress, are free. Others may require a license that costs as much as \$15,000.
- **How often you'll pay for it:** If you do pay, it's usually for a yearly license.

Design Expenses

You want your website to look good, right? In that case, here are the expenses you should know about, and how much you should expect to pay for things like redesigns and refreshes.

New Design or Full Redesign

- **When you'll need this:** If you're starting a new site, or want to give your current one a fresh coat of paint, you'll need to pay for the design to be developed, tested, and implemented.
- **How much you'll pay:** Redesigns may range from \$1,000 to \$20,000 depending on the type of site, your CMS, and how much functionality or custom work you require.
- **How often you should get one:** For best results, you should expect to invest in a redesign -- or at least a "refresh" -- once every three to four years.

Theme Design

- **Who needs a theme design:** Some CMS (particularly WordPress) allow you to easily swap in and out designs in the form of "themes" (or "skins"). While this reduces your design cost, it does put you at risk of looking just like hundreds of other sites using the same theme!
- **How much you'll pay:** Themes may cost nothing if you can find a free one. Paid themes may range from \$10 for pre-created to \$1,000 for custom development.
- **How often you'll pay:** For best results, try to "refresh" your theme every three to four years. Of course, you can just switch to a different one for free!

Responsive Design

- **Why you need responsive design:** In April of 2015, Google changed its ranking algorithms to consider whether or not a website was mobile-friendly. Mobile-friendly sites using responsive design are given higher priority in rankings. Additionally, responsiveness delivers a better experience for your visitors, regardless of their device.
- **How much you'll pay:** Responsive design can add up to \$2,000 to your current web design quote. However, many sites are now built responsive by default, so you won't pay anything extra for them.
- **How often you'll pay:** Once your site is responsive, you won't pay anything else.

Online Marketing

Now that we've covered some of the more basic website expenses, let's look at a few of the more advanced things you'll run into. These marketing options will help you increase your traffic, convert more visitors into customers, and increase your authority online.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

- **Why you need it:** SEO has become a must-have for every website. It's a collection of processes designed to improve your site's ranking in searches for the words and phrases most relevant to your business.
- **How much you'll pay:** Pricing depends on the services required. There's usually an up-front cost between \$2,000 and \$10,000. After that, a basic plan may run \$200 per month, while SEO for a large website or competitive industry may cost more than \$2,000.
- **How often you'll pay:** After the up-front cost, which is usually paid for the first two to three months, you'll pay monthly for maintenance and ongoing optimization.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

- **Why you should use it:** Pay-per-click (PPC) ads are shown on Google along with organic results. PPC can help you capture clicks on a wide variety of keywords, including those you're not yet ranking for naturally with SEO.
- **How much you'll pay:** PPC requires you to only pay per click (not impression); clicks can cost anywhere from a few cents to \$5 (or more) depending on your industry. Monthly PPC management may range from \$250 to \$2,500 depending on your budget/ad spend.
- **How often you'll pay:** You'll pay Google monthly for your clicks, and typically pay your agency of choice monthly for their management services.

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)

- **Why you should try it:** Conversion rate optimization, or CRO, allows you to boost conversions on your website by testing elements like buttons, calls to action, and so on. With CRO, you can unlock hidden earning potential in your website, and all simply by running A/B tests on common elements and options.
- **How much you'll pay:** A single CRO test usually costs about \$200 to \$500 to set up, monitor, report on, and implement the winning version (ex. a new button color).

- **How often you'll pay:** You may either pay per test, or opt for an ongoing CRO package that gives you a test per quarter, month, or even week for between \$250 and \$3,000.

Copywriting

- **Why you need it:** Copywriting is the process by which written content for your product pages, homepage, or other important site pages is produced. Strong copywriting can help compel visitors to take action or learn more about your company.
- **How much you'll pay:** If you outsource this process, copywriting starts at about \$50 per page from most agencies or freelancers. Monthly copywriting plans may start at about \$200 to \$300.
- **How often you'll pay:** Either per article or per month with a plan from a freelancer or agency.

Content Marketing

- **Why you should create content:** Potential customers are now seeking out memorable experiences to decide which companies and brands to trust online. You can deliver these experiences, and earn customer trust, through the use of content like blog posts, guides, whitepapers, infographics, videos, podcasts, and so on.
- **How much you'll pay:** The cost of content marketing varies based on the types of content you have produced, and how often. You may pay \$500 for an individual infographic, or \$50 per blog post. A monthly content marketing plan may start at around \$1,500 and go up from there.
- **How often you'll pay:** Either by project, or with a monthly plan from an agency.

Social Media

- **Why you need it:** Social media lets you interact with your customers, fans, and followers, and stay informed of any potential issues or chatter about your company.
- **How much you'll pay:** Managing one social media page may cost about \$500 to \$1,000 per month. A full program with multiple pages and promotions may cost upwards of \$3,000.
- **How often you'll pay:** Usually monthly, or by project for contests and special promotions or social media events.

Additional Resources

Need more help understanding the cost of a website? Looking for resources that will allow you to plan out your marketing budget? Try these useful tools and articles – we think they'll make your planning a little easier!

Online Marketing Calculator – This calculator will allow you to build a custom marketing strategy based on the customers you want to reach, your budget, and your time frame.

How Internet Marketing Can Help Grow Your Business – Learn how the marketing strategies detailed here can give you the power to improve the number of new customers and leads you acquire online with your website.

101 Free Ways to Drive Traffic to Your Website – This free guide offers more than 100 proven ways to drive traffic to your website.

How to Scale Your Website Traffic – Take your traffic to the next level with these advanced strategies designed to attract more leads and customers.

The Complete Guide to Redesigning Your Website – In need of a fresh coat of paint? This detailed guide walks you through the process from start to finish.