

## Do You Need a Website?

These days a website is just as important as having a telephone listing or mailbox. Chances are customers will search for your business using a search engine like Google, Yahoo or MSN before they do anything else.

### Why do you need a website?

Customers expect you to have a website. For many businesses, a website is a source of information for customers, an interactive site with blogs and customer feedback options, or an online store.

A website can be very valuable for a small business. But it will only be valuable if it is professional looking, provides the information customers are looking for and, most importantly, is easy to find.



### So you have decided to go ahead and get a website. Should you hire someone or do it yourself?

A professional and easy to navigate website is perhaps the best way to promote your business. Whether the content is for information purposes only or an online store, a website works for you even when you are not working.

When deciding on the look and feel of your website, keep in mind that your site needs to look professional. Customers will judge the quality of your product or service on the appearance and content of your website.

### Benefits of having a website.

- You are never closed. Your customers can visit your website 24 hours a day.
- Customers can check your site to see if you have any special promotions or announcements, saving you advertising dollars.
- Customers receive online support when you provide information on products and services, how-to instructions, or troubleshooting articles. This will cut back on the number of phone calls you receive.
- You stay ahead of the competition. Customers often research products and services online before making purchases. Be sure they know about you first.
- Customers like to deal with businesses they know. A website allows you to tell them about your business and your involvement in the community.

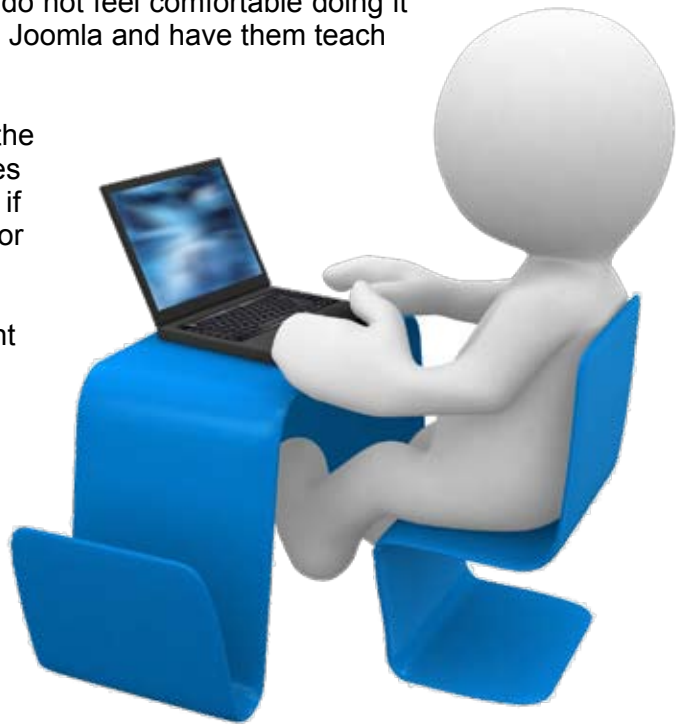
## Should you do it yourself or hire someone?

You can create a great website yourself even if you have no clue where to begin. Many Internet Service Providers offer programs that let you create your own web page online in minutes. Programs such as SohoLaunch, CM4all, and Joomla are often included free of charge with your hosting service. If you would like to be online, but do not have the technical skills to create web pages using coding, then using one of these programs may be the answer for you. If you still do not feel comfortable doing it yourself, you can have a developer set up a program like Joomla and have them teach you how to use it so you can make your own updates.

Creating and maintaining your own website gives you the freedom to make changes when required. It also saves you money. An update may only take a few minutes, but if you have to pay a developer then you may be charged for a minimum of one hour.

You may need to consider hiring a professional if you want a custom designed website with tailored features. This option is more costly, but you will receive a website that is complete and professional looking.

Before you hire a professional you should do your research. Contact a number of developers, review other sites they have built and talk to their clients. You want to make sure you get what you pay for. It is a good idea to sign a website design contract, which outlines the work required and the time frame for your site to be completed.



## You want to do it yourself. What do you do first?

### Select Your Domain Name

You need a domain name that people will associate with your business. If Bob Smith needs a domain name for his plumbing company, [www.bobsmith.com](http://www.bobsmith.com) is not going to help customers find a plumber. If he used [www.bobthep plumber.com](http://www.bobthep plumber.com) then he would be fixing your sink in no time. Coming up with a domain name that has not been registered can be a challenge. Be sure to choose a domain name that is easy to remember and spell. Consider adding your company name to your location (for example, [www.nwtp plumber.com](http://www.nwtp plumber.com)) if you are having difficulties finding an available domain name.

### Register Your Domain Name

When you register a domain name it means that you have leased the domain for a year. Shop around before you register a domain as prices vary from \$10 and up. Many hosting services provide free domain registration with certain hosting packages. You can renew your domain name at any time.

### Choose a Website Hosting Package

Think of a hosting package as your home and your domain as your address. You need a hosting package to store all the information on your website. Review all the services that are included in your package against other providers to make sure you are getting the best bang for your buck. Hosting packages can start as low as \$5 a month. You will find free hosting packages, but be aware that your website will have advertisements that may or may not be suitable and customers may find it annoying.



## Design Your Website

If you are going to use an online website builder then you will be done in a matter of minutes, but if you are going to start from scratch then you will need website design software. This option is only suggested if you are familiar with website design.

## Submit Your Website to Search Engines

Once your website is launched you should submit your information to search engines like Google and Yahoo. You will be asked to describe the site and provide keywords that you think customers will use when they search for your site. Be sure to use words that are in the content of your website. Customers do not like to get search results that have nothing to do with what they are looking for.



## Financing: The Small Business Challenge

Running your own business can be rewarding and challenging at the same time. Financing is often the biggest challenge that small businesses face.

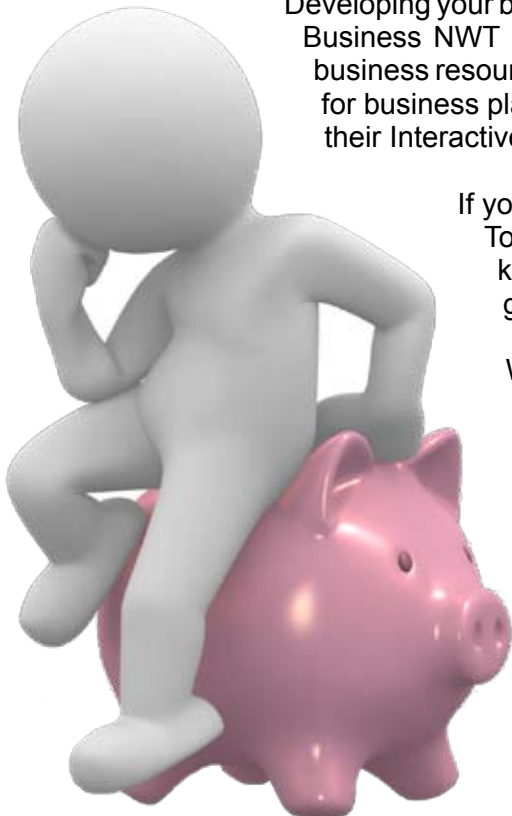
To obtain funding you need to show the potential for success of your business. To do this, you need to research and gather information for your business plan. Your business plan will include financial information such as income statements and cash-flow forecasts. It seems like a lot of work, and it is, but it is a must to secure financing.

Developing your business plan can be a costly and time consuming task, but Canada Business NWT is there to guide you along the way. They have a library full of business resource materials and Internet access. Contact Canada Business NWT for business plan guides and templates. If you are comfortable with the Internet, their Interactive Business Planner is a great tool ([www.canadabusiness.ca/ibp](http://www.canadabusiness.ca/ibp)).

If you are not sure where to begin then call or visit your local Industry Tourism and Investment office to discuss your business idea. They know the business community in your area and can give you guidance in making your business into a viable venture.

When you have completed your business plan you are ready to approach lenders for business financing. If you are unable to obtain financing from commercial lenders then the BDIC may be able to help.

The BDIC has a number of financial programs available and will work with you to find a solution that will help you turn your business idea into a reality. Whether you are starting a business, expanding your business, or developing a community led project, the BDIC can help with your financing needs.



# Getting Free Publicity

Having your local newspaper feature your business is a great way to get free publicity, as long as the article is positive. Good news stories about your business result in more customers and more sales. When you think about it, free publicity makes you money!

How do you get free publicity? Your local newspaper is always looking for stories about the community. For example, have your business sponsor local events or create your own event that reporters will want to cover.

Offer a workshop or demonstration in your community. Depending on your business, you could hold an event to provide tips on such things as how to caulk a bathtub (Plumber), how to make a quilt (Craft Shop) or how to winterize your vehicle (Mechanic). This can be a great way to meet new customers and get your business featured in the newspaper. Better yet, it will get people talking about your business - word of mouth is the best publicity you can ask for.

You have to remember that reporters are busy people too. It is up to you to let them know about your good news story. Pick up the phone and call the editor or send them a press release. Remember to give them ample notice of your story so they can reserve space for an article about your business.



The BDIC is a recognized leader in the NWT's regional economic development and the growth of a dynamic small and mid-sized business sector.

We are business people working for other business people to provide one-stop access to business financing, business support services and business development assistance across all NWT communities.

We are proactive, bringing stakeholders together to enhance business capacity, sustain self-sufficiency and increase community prosperity.



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Please contact the BDIC for copies of Newslink.

# Business Success



## K & K Expediting Fort Simpson

Tim and Janice McClelland have successfully owned and operated K&K Expediting Ltd., an expediting and truck rental business serving the Dehcho, for over ten years. Their goal is to provide customers with logistical support so they can carry on business efficiently in the north.

Their mission is to provide unparalleled customer service while being honest, safe and respectful of the environment.

K&K Expediting Ltd. excels at overcoming logistical obstacles, a daily occurrence in the north. It has developed relationships with other logistics companies to make the delivery process as smooth as possible. In addition to providing expediting and rental services, the company also acts as First Air's agent in Fort Simpson, performing all administrative, ticketing, cargo handling and aircraft ground services.

As the majority of its clients are outside Fort Simpson, the company uses the Internet to promote its services. Its website, [www.kandk.ca](http://www.kandk.ca), provides clients with information about the business, contact information, a quote request form, and a map of Fort Simpson.

Corporate clients, mostly from outside the region, account for 95% of all truck rentals. To ensure customer safety and vehicle reliability, K & K Expediting Ltd. replaces vehicles every two or three years, depending on mileage and performance. With customer safety as a top priority, in 2004 Tim and Janice knew they needed to replace their aging fleet of trucks to ensure clients have a reliable vehicle when travelling the often unpredictable northern roads. Working with their local Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) regional office, K&K Expediting Ltd. received funding from the BDIC to replace their rental fleet of 13 trucks.

Tim and Janice's dedication to customer service has allowed them to expand their business to include the neighboring communities of Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte and Wrigley. With five full-time positions and four part-time positions, Tim and Janice are proud contributors to their region's growth and prosperity.

*The BDIC would like to congratulate Tim and Janice McClelland on their Success Story.*

*Thank you to Renalyn Pascua-Matte, Manager of Trade and Investment,  
Dehcho ITI regional office for her assistance.*

### Share Your BDIC Success Story...

Sharing your BDIC Success Story in BDIC Newslink offers a double benefit:

- You can gain widespread recognition by promoting your business.
- Your success story will provide inspiration to many other entrepreneurs in the NWT.

We really want to hear from you.

Contact the BDIC or your regional ITI office to submit your BDIC Success Story.