

What Every Company Should Know About Their Website

*An executive overview and worksheet for accumulating important website information
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Recently several of my clients have been caught by personnel changes, by developers going out of business or simply disappearing, by rip-off schemes which unwittingly change name registrations, by failure to make payments on time, simply because they did not know that a payment was due, and by other avoidable issues. These issues may have limited their ability to use their website, or even shut it down temporarily. They all require annoying amounts of time and paperwork to resolve. To solve all these problems permanently, every company should have the following information recorded centrally, and kept up-to-date. Every company should also have a “Web Administrator” whose duty it is to maintain this information. The Web Administrator does not have to be technically savvy, just meticulous. Corporate executives must know that when a Web Administrator leaves, or changes jobs, a new one must be appointed. This is common sense, equivalent to giving the keys to the office supply closet to a new office administrator. The information you will need to keep is explained in non-technical terms below.

Domain Names Domain names are website names, such as www.mycompany.com. How many different names does your company own? Do you own the names of subsidiaries? Or names similar in spelling to your own?

Each domain name is claimed by using a Name Registrar. Do you know which of your names are at which Registrar? They could be at different ones. If you don't know, you may find yourself paying the wrong Registrar for a name renewal, or failing to pay the right one, and having your website go down.

If you think your Registrar is the same company as the one who originally developed your website, you are probably wrong. They may have done the registration for you as a courtesy, but they were almost always a reseller for a third party registrar. If the web developer disappears, you need to know who the registrar is. You can find this information by using a “whois” service like:

<http://www.domaintools.com/> or
<https://www.networksolutions.com/whois/index.jsp>

Each Registrar has a website where you manage your names. Do you know how to log into your Registrar's website? Too often the person who registered the name is long gone and the email address they used is no longer in service.

Write down your Name Registrar(s) here along with their associated login information:

	Registrar 1	Registrar 2	Registrar 3
Domain:	_____	_____	_____
User Name:	_____	_____	_____
Password:	_____	_____	_____

All Registrars communicate by email. They notify you by email when a payment is due, or if you want

to reset a password. If your email address is not valid, it means a mess of paperwork in order to make changes.

I recommend you use the same email contact for all your Registrars. It can be a generic email address such as webadmin@mycompany.com, so that it does not need to be changed when personnel change. But remember this must be a real email address, and someone must check it regularly.

Write down the email address your registrars use to contact you here:

Our Email: _____

Name Servers Name servers are places on the internet that translate your domain names into IP addresses. Each website has a set of name servers. Name servers are technical, but what you need to know as an executive is who manages the name servers. It is usually either the Domain Name Registrar (above) or the Web Host (below). In some cases companies have their own mail server, separate from their website, or may have one contractor managing email and a different one managing the website; you need to know which company is managing your name servers. When changes need to be made to either email or the web host, these companies will need to co-ordinate. The “whois” service above will list your name servers (usually of the form ns1.somewhere.com, ns2.somewhere.com etc.). If you don't recognize where the “somewhere.com” is, you need to find out. If you have more than one website, you may have more than one set of name servers.

List the contact information for the company/person in charge of your first website's name servers here: Name, phone, email, etc.:

List the contact information for the company/person in charge of your second website's name servers (if different) here: Name, phone, email, etc.:

Web Host(s) A web host is a company that keeps your website online on the internet. They require payment monthly, quarterly or annually, to keep your website online. Each of your websites may be “hosted” by a different company. You need to know who they are.

List the contact information for your first web hosting company: Name, phone, email, etc.:

List the contact information for your second web hosting company: Name, phone, email, etc.:

Control Panel A good web host will give you a control panel which you should use to see your website statistics, make backups of your site, and possibly do much more. Your Web Administrator should know how to use each website's control panel. All the executive needs to know is simply how to access the control panel when needed:

	Website 1	Website 2	Website 3
Control Panel location:	_____	_____	_____
User Name:	_____	_____	_____
Password:	_____	_____	_____

FTP Information One method of changing your website is to upload new files using the File Transfer Protocol (FTP). You don't need to know how to do this, but you do need to record your FTP information. (Note: if you have a control panel, FTP will usually have the same user name and password). Record your FTP login(s) here, for each website:

	Website 1	Website 2	Website 3
Server:	_____	_____	_____
User Name:	_____	_____	_____
Password:	_____	_____	_____

Content Management Systems / Blogs In addition to the control panel and FTP, your website may use a Content Management System or may be a blog, or have some other administrator login, which allows the administrator to make changes to the website. Not all websites have this, but if yours does, it is important to have your login information so you can make changes:

	Website 1	Website 2	Website 3
User Name:	_____	_____	_____
Password:	_____	_____	_____

E-commerce and Shopping Carts If your site sells merchandise online, then you will have other

information to record. If you host your own shopping cart you will have a Secure Site Certificate.

Enter the contact information for renewing this Certificate.

Name, Phone, email, etc.:

Use this space to record the user name and password to get into your Payments Gateway, where you process credit card payments (Authorize.net, PayPal, etc):

User Name: _____

Password: _____

Now that you have recorded all the above information, make a copy of this document. Keep one in the custody of a corporate executive, and the other in the custody of your Web Administrator. Make sure this information is kept in a safe place as unauthorized use can cause serious liabilities. It is the responsibility of your Web Administrator to update this when there are changes, and make sure the executive gets a new copy. Enter the contact information for your Web Administrator here:

Name, Phone, email, etc.:

Date this information was recorded:
