

## **What to Look For in a Website Hosting Company**

When you're building your own website, you might not think about your web hosting service too much. After all, to an outsider, it might seem that web hosting services are pretty much the same, right? Wrong. Like any other product or service, you should plan, research and assess carefully before you choose the web host for your website. After all, the reliability of the hosting service is the difference between having your business website working for you 24/7 and one that loses business in downtime.

Here are 4 things to look for when choosing a website hosting company for your business. Some of them are considerations for any business purchase, so make sure you apply the same business sense to your website as you do to the rest of your company.

### **1. Work out what you need**

Are you a small start-up company, or a big organization? Does your site have an e-commerce function? Choose a hosting provider that will accommodate your business growth and changing needs into the future. Should you be looking for a dedicated server?

### **2. Customer service**

If your website is down or there are technical issues your business will suffer, so look for a company that provides good support. Being able to chat with someone live is best, or quick email service. Don't choose a hosting service that only provides a support forum. Glitches of some kind are inevitable, so you need to be able to talk to someone to get it fixed fast!

### **3. Flexibility**

Look for a hosting provider that will allow you to make changes to your site such as creating new email accounts or changing server settings. Make sure you can access email in a number of different ways including online, so if Outlook crashes you can still check your email from other devices.

#### **4. Read the fine print**

Another business basic but do make sure you check to see exactly what you're buying and look out for 'extras' that you might expect to be part of your package. Email accounts, Email forwarding, and blogs may all be counted as extras. And if the start-up rate looks too good to be true, it probably is. Don't get stung for basic services as add-ons.

The other fine print issue is to make sure you can take your business elsewhere if you're not happy with your web hosting service, especially whether you can take your domain name with you if you leave. And as your domain name is your business' internet identity, that's pretty important!