Your New Web Site Startup Checklist

aka

Scott Fox's 12 Step Program for New Web Site Startup Success

By Scott Fox

Founder and Host of ClickMillionaires.com
Author, *e-Riches 2.0* and *Internet Riches*

Starting a new web site business is exciting. But if you don't have a specific action plan, you can end up wasting a lot of time and only generate weak results. Here are **twelve important steps** to remember when creating a new web site. These are the same 12 steps I follow personally every time I launch a new web site or blog online. These steps will help you save time, and therefore money, too. They will also help put your site on the right road toward successful Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Starting a New Web Site – "The Rest of the Story"

I originally had to write this Checklist **for myself** because I could not find a resource that details the many *minor* but *technical* steps you need to set up a new web site **correctly**.

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By "*correctly*" I mean putting the correct settings in place so that your new site:

- *appears online accurately,*

- *shows up in search engine results quickly,*

- *attracts traffic, and*

- *starts to generate a potentially money-making audience for you as quickly as possible.*

The problem is that web professionals think that these startup steps are *"obvious"*, so they have rarely been spelled out for newbies and non-techies like me and you.

(In fact, a lot of these tactics are *deliberately hidden* or *over-complicated* by technology "consultants" because they want you to hire them!)

My Personal 12 Step Web Site Startup Checklist for You

To help you accelerate your new web site business toward profitability, here's my **personal checklist** of the *many* small semi-technical tweaks that I think are important to correctly configure a new web site to make money online.

> **WARNING: *Don't skip any steps!***
>
> I have learned the importance of each of these steps personally, *the hard way*. I am sharing them with **you** in hopes of making your life easier and more profitable. The steps may each look simple or small but each one is designed to help you build web sites quicker and more profitably.
> *I promise that if you skip these steps you will often end up returning to this list to fix your omissions later!*

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STEP 1.   Brainstorm Your Best New Business Domain Name (*Before You Spend Any Money*)

Most website startup advice is from vendors who are anxious to help you *spend* your hard-earned money on their services. I would rather see you *save money* by figuring out your strategy and branding first. This can save you a LOT of time and money later.

For example, a common "first step" recommendation is to buy a domain name. But do you know how to buy a **good one**?

Don't make the mistake of branding your new website business with a "cute" domain name. In the 20th century, "cute" business names were a good idea because they were easy to remember and most competition was only local.

But today, while you still need to make your website brand name easy for customers to remember, you also need to use your domain name to differentiate your business from online competitors worldwide and to tell the search engines what your site is about.

Old School Branding Example:

"FriendlyFred.com"

What's the problem here? It's easy to remember and spell Fred's business but you have no idea what kind of services he offers.

Modern Online Branding Example:

"BestGardenerinChicago.com"

Much better. This domain name is easy to spell and remember for your human audience, and it also is full of keywords that customers and search engines can use to locate the business online even if they have never heard of it before.

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STEP 2.   Buy the Best Domain Name You Can Afford

Once you have thoroughly considered your branding and decided on a domain name, go ahead and buy it.

.com domain names are still preferable to any other domain extension (.net, .biz, .info, etc.). (See Chapter 10 of my first book, *Internet Riches,* for my recommended methods for finding/creating a good domain name.)

To get **the "perfect" domain name** you may even need to buy it from a previous owner or broker. This can escalate the price from $10/year to hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Such purchases can be worth it in helping to attract customers online over the long term, though.

As soon as you have your new domain name, activate any hosting accounts that come with it to initiate the site's presence on the web *as soon as possible*. The sooner that your site appears on the web, the sooner your site is likely to get included in search engine listings to attract free visitor traffic.

My recommended domain name registrar is my own service. It's called **InternetMillionaireDomains.com**. I started this registrar to help my readers find reliable and affordable domain name registration and web site hosting services deals.

(InternetMillionaireDomains.com also offers a very helpful "bulk" domain name research tool. It can help you research the availability of up to 500 domain names at a time. Visit InternetMillionaireDomains.com and click on "bulk registration" to use this helpful tool for free.)

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STEP 3.   Buy Domain Name Variations and Forward Them

You should also buy the important variations of your domain name. These include .net and .org domains, and maybe .tv, too. Also buy plurals and common misspellings that might attract traffic. Buy wwwyourdomain.com, too (Dropping the first period is a common mistyping mistake that may make that URL valuable, too.). Then *forward* those variations to your primary URL to capture any errant user traffic and prevent domain name "squatters" from making money from your new brand.

The "Domain Manager" tool at my InternetMillionaireDomains.com (or most other registrars) will help you establish URL forwarding easily and for free.

For some helpful videos on domain name selection and testing strategies, visit the "Domains" category on my blog at http://www.ScottFox.com to find videos like these:

- http://www.scottfox.com/2010/04/how-to-create-the-best-domain-name-.html

- http://www.scottfox.com/2010/07/how-to-test-domain-names-to-find-the-best-one-video.html

- http://www.scottfox.com/2010/06/the-easiest-online-marketing-tip-ever-url-domain-capitalization-video.html

For helpful discussions of domain name strategy, visit my private Click Millionaires coaching forum here:
http://www.clickmillionaires.org/forum/categories/domain-names/listForCategory

(And see the end of this ebook for a special Free Trial Offer to join us, too!)

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STEP 4. "Host" and "Map" Your Domain Name to Your Hosting Service

Once you have locked down your domain name, you'll need a place to build your new site. Many domain registrars include free basic web site hosting as part of their domain name registration packages. But if you are running a web site critical to your business, you'll want to evaluate these "deals" carefully to see if they actually meet the needs of your new business.

There are thousands of companies competing in the web hosting market. Some of the more popular ones that I have used and recommend include:

- Wordpress.com

- TrySiteBuildIt.com

- Typepad.com

To find a hosting company that best suits your needs, I recommend visiting the "**Vendor Recommendations**" **section** on www.ScottFox.com (at http://www.scottfox.com/vendor_recommendations) to find the latest recommendations, service reviews, and deals.

Once you have picked your hosting company, you'll want to "**map**" your domain to the pages of your web site hosted on that company's servers. (To "map" your domain simply means to apply the domain name to the hosting account so that your web site pages show up using your domain name correctly.)

> *Note: You do **not** have to buy your domain name from the same company that hosts your site. Although hosting companies often offer domains at a discount (or even free), I often prefer to host my sites **separately** from where I register my domains so that I can easily redirect the domain to another server if that hosting company's services become unreliable.*

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STEP 5. Create a Site Plan Before You Start Building

Once you have a domain name and a hosting provider, it's tempting to start building. But to use your time most efficiently, I recommend developing a **site plan** first.

A site plan doesn't have to be fancy or techie. It just needs to outline the basic structure of your web site, including the pages you plan on building and how they link together.

Common pages to include in a basic web site plan are a home page, an "About Us" page, your primary content or product pages, a blog, and so forth. This list is also likely to mirror the entries you will want to have in your new web site's navigation menu.
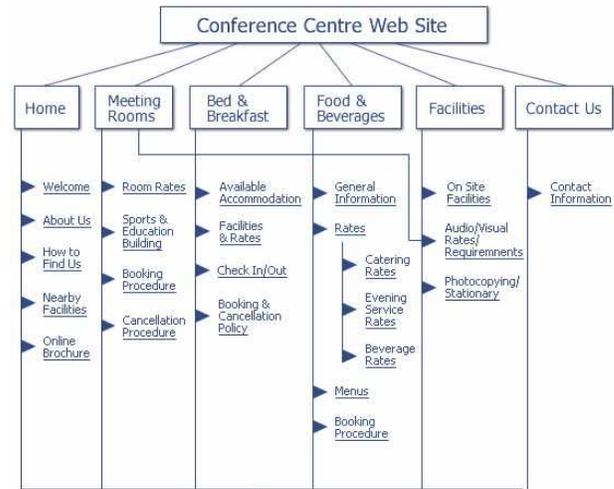
If you have this list developed before you start building, you will work faster and more efficiently to build your new web site.

STEP 6. Add Your Content or Products

This will get your new web site up and running. I know it's not always obvious what content will make you the most money but there are lots of resources that talk about this part of the process. In fact, I wrote a whole book about it! If you would like some help finding a profitable target market and developing your product approach, please read my book, *Internet Riches*. It is full of strategies like my I.C.I.C.L.E. product development formula which may be helpful to you.

For help with **online marketing strategies** that can help you attract more customers cost-effectively, please read my second book, *e-Riches 2.0*. I wrote both books

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specifically to help you develop a profitable "**Internet Action Plan**" of your own.

Most of all, my **Click Millionaires private coaching community** may be helpful to you.

ClickMillionaires.com has members from all over the world who meet 24/7 in the ClickMillionaires.com private discussion forums to help each other develop new and better ways of making money online.

Plus, I'm there myself *personally* working with members like you to upgrade their web site products and marketing to find online success. Come join us to discuss the personal skills, history, and passions you bring to the world wide web for a business of your own. *(See the end of this ebook for a special Free Trial offer!)*

STEP 7.   Optimize Your New Site to Attract Free Search Engine Traffic

Make your site attractive to search engines to help it attract free traffic from search engine users (which is everybody these days!). This process is called "**search engine optimization**" or "**SEO**", for short.

SEO is much easier to do correctly from the start than to change later, so please pay extra attention to this section!

Determine the key topics your site addresses to choose the search engine "**key words**" for which you want good search engine ranking. Then be sure your page titles, content headlines, intro text, meta tag descriptions, meta tag keywords, and the visible web page content all prominently feature these keywords. "Reading" these fields and content is

> Repeated display of your site's key terms is the heart of any SEO effort (and easy to do yourself *without* paying SEO consultants thousands of dollars!).

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one of the major ways that search engines decide what your site is about, how it's ranked, and where it's displayed.

(Don't overdo your keyword placement, though, because "keyword stuffing" can hurt how the search engines rank your site and make it hard for your customers to read, too.)

STEP 8. Use Descriptive ALT and Title Tags for Images to Improve SEO

Don't miss the chance to sell both your products and your site better by "humanizing" the tags for your site's images.

For example, if you upload a graphic called laktbl0617.jpg to display on your home page, that title won't help you because neither people nor search engines will know what it means.

Instead, you should get in the habit of replacing such unfriendly file names with descriptive copy containing your **keywords**, especially for the ALT and TITLE tags. (These are the tags that determine what displays to users who are viewing your site with images turned off or when you hover your mouse cursor over an image.)

For these fields, try replacing "laktbl0617.jpg" with "Lawnmower part #0617 – Blue" if your site sells lawnmower parts, or "Belinda – Lawn Party – June 17" if you're showcasing a photo from news item or family event.

Using your keywords like this consistently will help web site visitors who are relying on your ALT tags (like the visually impaired) and also give the search engine spiders that much more relevant data on your site to use in calculating their rankings.

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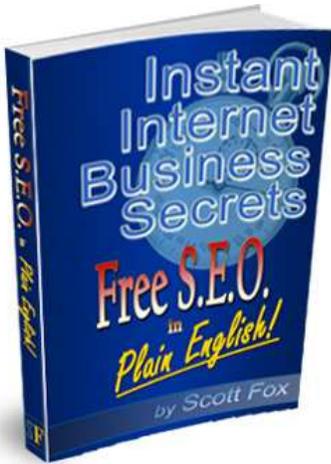
The best guide to more easy tips on SEO that you can implement cheaply yourself, is my Special Report "**Free SEO in Plain English**".

This 74 page report explains in "plain English" how anyone can optimize their web site using basic *non-technical* steps that will greatly improve your web site's search engine rankings.

This report is available for instant download any time in the Scott Fox Shop at www.ScottFoxShop.com. *I wrote it especially for people interested in **saving money on SEO consultants.***

STEP 9. **Start Building Link Relationships and Authority for SEO ASAP**

As discussed in Chapter 20 of **Internet Riches**, exchanging links with other web sites is a good strategy to start early in your site's development. Having other sites link to your new site can help attract traffic in two ways:

   a) Visitors click on the links directly

   b) The search engines count links to your site to determine both how important your site is and what topics it covers. This helps them generate an authority ranking for your site that is key in determining how highly ranked it will be in search results, too.

To start acquiring links I recommend submitting your new web site to the top search engines and directories, including DMOZ.org, Google, Yahoo, and Bing. The effectiveness of this tactic is disputed but since it is **free** I always figure it can't hurt to make certain that the "big boys" know that your new site is online!

Submitting your new site to these top directories should help prompt them to index it. This can help you begin attracting search engine traffic from each of them directly and

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also help ensure your site's content gets spidered by the other search engines which reference them, too.

After you have the top search engines covered, the most valuable links to get are those that are from authoritative sites that are related to your site's topics or products. While emailing other webmasters to ask for those links can work, it's also tedious and time-consuming.

A practical in-between approach is to submit your site to directories like local Chambers of Commerce web sites, Yellow Pages style directories, and especially directories specific to your industry niche. Links back from these trusted sites can help improve your site's search engine results and help to attract free visitors, too. Ideally these links also use your most important SEO keywords, too.

> *Note: Don't wait until your new web site is "perfect" - register with the search engines and directories as soon as it's roughly presentable to begin the registration and spidering process. It may take weeks or even months for the search engines to accurately index your full site, so as soon as your site has enough content for them to crawl go ahead and submit it.*

Free Bonus for My Readers

Here's an easy way to help get your new web site listed in the search engines even faster: A link from my popular ScottFox.com web site can help the search engine crawlers find your site more quickly.

If your web site is a qualifying small business, I offer FREE link exchanges

in the E-Business Links Directory at ScottFox.com.

Visit http://www.scottfox.com/free-link-exchanges.html for details!

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STEP 10.   Start Collecting Email Addresses Right Away

Right from the start your new web site should include prominent "calls to action" for web site visitors to give you their email addresses. Email is a tremendously cost effective way to keep in touch with potential customers, so you should start building your list ASAP simply by asking for email addresses *on every page* of your site.

Neglecting to collect email addresses on a new web site is
the #1 mistake that I see new online marketers make!

I recommend that you start collecting emails **today** even if you are far from ready to start sending emails out.

But don't try to collect emails and manage your email lists yourself. It's far too much work and less effective than outsourcing those tasks to email service providers. Most of these companies offer free trials to start and their services start at less than $20/month or less.

There are many email management companies to choose from. If you are looking for a full-featured newsletter publishing service I like Constant Contact.

If you are running a blog, too, then I recommend **Aweber** or **Feedblitz** as excellent ways to automatically convert your blog's RSS feed into professional-looking email newsletters. You can find my more detailed discussions of these 2 services on my ScottFox.com blog here:

http://www.FeedblitzReview.com

http://www.AweberEmailReview.com

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STEP 11. Install Ads

Next, sign up with Google AdSense or other online advertising marketplaces. You can install their code on your new web site for FREE. Their systems will then automatically display advertisements on your site that are related to the keywords and topics your site covers. *This free service will help you make money every time a visitor clicks on one of the ads.*

You can sign up for Google's AdSense here: http://www.google.com/adsense/

Installing Adsense advertisements on your website right from the start is a good idea. It can generate a trickle of income for you whenever your site visitors click on the ads, and it also helps you establish your site's layout to include ads right from the start. (It can be difficult to add advertisements later after your website is designed and your visitors have gotten used to an ad-free environment.)

> ***Note***: *Installing advertisements is more important for blogs and content-driven sites than for product-based e-commerce ventures. For e-commerce sites there's a fine line between making some extra money from ads and losing sales by distracting your shoppers with ads for other sites.*
>
> *If you can make more money promoting your own products, don't be afraid to skip the ads!*

AdSense ads are a great way to begin monetizing your new site's content.

When you're ready for more advanced strategies, I recommend investigating affiliate links from CJ.com, text link ads, context ads from Kontera, product ads from Chitika, and similar services.

If you'd like guidance and support exploring these monetization options, try joining Click Millionaires. The best ways to make money with online ads are under discussion 24/7 in our members Forum. (See the end of this ebook for a special ClickMillionaires.com Free Trial offer!)

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STEP 12. **Use Link Outs to Keep Your Customers on Your Site**

If you've gone to the trouble of setting up a web site to attract visitors, don't send all those folks *away* from you with every outbound link you place on your site.

Instead, insert this small bit of code at the end of each link: `target="_blank".` This will cause any link clicked upon to open in a **new window**.

So, instead of the HTML code for a link to Yahoo looking like this:

`<a href="http://www.yahoo.com">Yahoo</a>`

It should look like this:

`<a href="http://www.yahoo.com" target="_blank">Yahoo</a>`

Using this easy technique will deliver your site's users over to Yahoo when they click on it but *also still keep a browser window open to your web site* (hopefully enticing them to spend more time on your site).

While designers often hate this "link out" technique, I insist upon it because I don't want to lose the customer. My strategy gives the customer the new site they wanted but keeps my site open in its original window, too.

BONUS TIP: **Get a Professionally-Designed Logo – Cheap!**

The easiest way to upgrade the appearance of your new website is with a professionally designed logo. Historically custom design services have been very expensive. But today online competition has driven the prices for custom graphics down dramatically.

My favorite vendor for inexpensive but professional looking logo design is Logonerds.
Visit **http://www.CheapLogoInfo.com** and use the promotional code *b10off* to get a new logo for your new website for $30 or less!

I use these guys myself all the time and highly recommend them. They even created

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this logo for Click Millionaires for only $17. *Not bad, right?*

Conclusion

Following this *New Web Site Startup Checklist* for each new site you build can help professionalize your approach to web site construction and attract more customers, too.

The combination of the many small steps detailed in this Web Site Startup Checklist can really make a difference in your site's development, its recognition by the search engines, and its ability to attract paying customers.

Of course, these steps are only part of a winning online business game plan.

For help identifying a good target market, developing profitable, problem-solving products, and preparing cost-effective customer attraction strategies, I invite you to check out my free blog at www.ScottFox.com, and read my books, *Internet Riches* (for cheap getting-started strategies) and *e-Riches 2.0* (to learn online marketing).

And, of course, I'd enjoy meeting you **personally** at ClickMillionaires.com. Take advantage of the **free trial offer** at the end of this ebook and we could be working together by tomorrow!

I hope that this "Web Site Startup Checklist" is helpful to you. Let me know how I can help you succeed online!

Sincerely yours,

Scott Fox

Author of *Internet Riches* and *e-Riches 2.0: Next Generation Online Marketing Strategies*
Founder and Host of ClickMillionaires.com

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My Books

This practical and detailed list of web site startup tips is the type of info you'll find in my books, *e-Riches 2.0* and *Internet Riches*. Both are the first books of their kind because they explain advanced e-business and online marketing techniques in *Plain English* so that anyone (including YOU) can learn to succeed online.

e-Riches 2.0 is the best guide available to modern online marketing. I wrote it to help demystify all the hype around Web 2.0 and social media marketing tools like Facebook, Twitter, pod casting, blogs, and more.

If you want to attract more customers online, read *e-Riches 2.0* -
I guarantee that you will learn valuable new techniques that can help you make more money online.
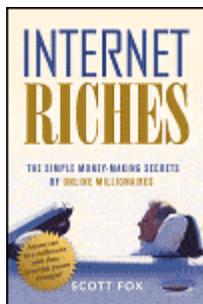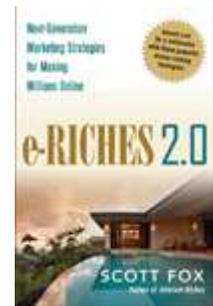
My first book, *Internet Riches* became a worldwide best-seller because it goes into the details of how to find your niche on the Internet and how you can turn it into a web-based business.

While many of these steps may be obvious if you're an experienced "web master", what about the rest of us? *Internet Riches* answers the many questions you have about how to get your share of the e-business revolution, too.

Most importantly, I invite you to try **ClickMillionaires.com**. Since you're obviously the kind of person who wants to work smarter online, my ClickMillionaires.com is for you.

My private social network is designed specifically for online entrepreneurs and Internet marketers looking to profit from the Internet revolution but who may have a more questions than can be answered by my books.

Personal attention and coaching is the mission of ClickMillionaires.com. I have worked hard for years to build **the friendliest business community on the Internet**.

Come join us to learn more about online marketing and get the practical details, answers, and support you need to accelerate your business success online and upgrade your life!

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- Winning strategies for social network marketing
- Blogging for fun and profit
- Viral online video promotions
- E-mail marketing and customer engagement techniques
- Profitable pay-per-click keyword advertising
- Web site design for improved sales conversion
- And much, much more. . .

PLUS, I'm there personally in the Click Millionaires Forum every day! I'd be happy to meet and coach YOU to greater success online.

Pick the topics most important to your online business and come join the discussion.

You don't have build your business alone—join my ClickMillionaires.com online coaching community to find friends and mentors who can help you!

Come join us to
"Get Your Share of the E-Business Revolution" now!

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http://www.CMspecialoffer.com

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