

## What is website DIY going to cost you?

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With the end of the year approaching at a rapid rate it seems like everybody is talking about the plans they have for the Christmas holidays. Most business owners I speak to seem to have a few days rest in mind, followed by catching up on all the things they don't get time for during the rest of the year!

One of the things that people don't seem to get much time for during the year is the planning of a decent website; one that will help the business market itself better and sell more the next year. Now that there is going to be a little time available, there's a debate around whether you should spend the time and trouble and try to do-it-yourself or whether you should just get it done professionally.

(This info first appeared in our November 2006 Elite Tip of the Month newsletter.)

I thought that sharing a rather personal story with you might help you decide which option will work best for you....

About two years ago we accepted an unusual contract that involved us seeing a number of clients in five different provinces within three days. Although it meant working to a very tight schedule, we were rather excited by the prospect that our last stop would see us 90 km from the sea – which prompted us to decide to extend our countrywide tour to include a short holiday at the coast. (As we live far inland we don't get to the sea all that often.)

The day before we were due to leave, my husband decided that our BMW needed an oil change. Now Remé is an exceptionally handy man who can build or fix just about anything, and seeing as an oil change is a relatively esy job, he decided he'd do it himself rather than take the car to the garage.

I, on the other hand, was anxious for him to finish what he had to do before we could leave, and felt that his time would be better spent taking the car to the garage and letting them fiddle with the oil while he got ready to go away. Needless to say, my opinion at this stage was met with an exasperated sigh and deaf ears.

So Remé duly climbed underneath the car and proceeded to unscrew whatever it is that you need to unscrew to drain the oil. I should have known when he got out from underneath there with a slightly worried expression on his face that this was not going to be quite so easy...

The next morning, the day we were due to leave, I finished packing our last few things while Remé “just quickly” went to pour the new oil into the now well-drained car. A few minutes later he reported that “we have a slight problem.” Obviously, this is not what I wanted to hear. What kind of slight problem? To cut a long, sad story short, he'd managed to strip the sump plug. So all the new, expensive, recommended by BMW for BMW oil, was merrily pooling itself all over the garage floor.

A call to the BMW garage (little comments like “They should've done this in the first place” were not earning me loving, supportive wife points but I just couldn't help myself), left us on hold for most of the morning. Bearing in mind that we were supposed to be 400kms away at a client by mid-afternoon and that I was pretty sure we'd have been on the road if we'd taken the car to a mechanic in the first place, you'll understand that the tension in the air was not solely caused by the problem with the car.

Eventually we were given the number of the guys who re-bore sump plug holes for BMW and told to contact them directly (by this time I was looking to bore some holes myself). At first they said they could come to our house to fix the car but then phoned back to say no, sorry, the car actually had to be completely jacked up. The time was by now 3.30 on a Friday afternoon.

Fortunately we have a very good friend, Joretha, who just happens to own Carmend panel beaters. By now I really needed a girlfriend – you know, the kind that stops you from doing all sorts of things to your husband that you'll really regret later.

“Hi, we're still here - Remé stripped the sump plug.” “How can I help?” “A car lift would be nice.” “Be here in 20 mins.”

And so Joretha sat calming me down and convincing me that my current take on “till death do us part” was not quite what the dominee had in mind, while the boys fixed the car.

We eventually left home just after 6pm. Suffice to say that the first few hours of our journey were rather quiet, the only noise being the happily purring engine of the blasted car...

I still think Remé is the greatest man ever (and I'm not just saying that because I know he's going to read this) and I

know that sump plugs don't usually strip during a routine oil change and that this was just an unfortunate mishap. I know that given enough time and patience, he probably could've fixed it himself as well.

But, I also still think that if he'd have taken the car to the garage in the first place, we would've, at the very least, spared ourselves a whole lot of stress and tension. Nevermind frantically re-scheduling clients for a day later, the lost day ultimately cost us a day of our holiday as well.

The thing is, fixing cars isn't Remé's speciality and when we need the car to be ready and reliable for something as important as a cross-country trip, the quickest, safest, most sensible course of action is to take it to the specialists who know what to do, how to do it properly (and who can fix it if they break it!) and who can do it fast because that's their job.

And it's the same with the website you need for your business. Given enough time and patience, you probably could learn all the programs, techniques, trends, design styles and other aspects needed for a properly functioning website.

The question is, what's this "free" DIY route really going to cost you? How much is your time worth? If you spend hours and hours just learning how to get a bare bones website going, that's time you can't then spend on your business. And ultimately, that means time that you can't use to serve and sell to your customers. And isn't that really what your business is about?

Remé will be taking the car to the garage in future, so that he can spend more time doing what's really important (and yes, that does include spending time with me – we eventually made up just fine ;) ).

Shouldn't you be making the most of your time by doing what you do best and focusing on your core business, while having a professional website company do what they do best and letting them build your website?

If you'd like your business website to be smoothly cruising the open highways of the internet in 2007, take a look at SnapSites . If, on the other hand, you'd honestly prefer to be squatting in a pool of website oil on the floor of cyberspace, with your better half glaring at you in annoyance and frustration, head on over to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) ...

May your silly season be filled with only good things, fun and laughter!

Kind regards

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