

Do you really need a website?



Kerry A. Thompson

Hi, I'm Kerry. Designer and writer. Living my dream.

In my late 50s, through good luck, great friends, and a hunger to try something new, I became a website designer. The assorted skills and interests developed over a lifetime turned out to be just the right fit for a website design career that fulfilled my longing to be creative and help people.

Now I'm doing what I love as a Squarespace website designer

I spend my days learning about the businesses my clients run and the stories behind why they love what they do. Now I'm part of their stories, helping them express both themselves and their brands through an amazing Squarespace website that wows their ideal clients.

You could say I'm demystifying technology to serve the greater good

My clients are generally life coaches, consultants, wellness practitioners, artists, and writers. Their passion is giving back and uplifting others through their compassion and creativity. Up until now, if they've done anything with their websites, they've done it out of desperation, not inspiration. That's where I come in.

My passion is encouraging and supporting women who are running their own businesses and giving back to the world in their unique way. My high-tech background, coupled with my love of design and writing, serves me well in demystifying technology and leveraging it so my clients can shine online, without being overwhelmed or disheartened getting there.

"If you are looking for a web designer who invests in learning about your business and carefully crafts a website to match your mission and values, hire Kerry! Starting with the first phone call and continuing throughout the process, she is dedicated to meeting your needs and producing quality results."

- Jill Bella, BellaMattinaConsulting.com

Why I created this guide

This guide is for you if you're still on the fence about needing a website at all.

In my years as a web designer, I've specialized in helping people highlight their talents and what they love to do. I tend to appeal to people who are somewhat intimidated by the whole website-technology concept and want someone who can guide them through the process.

I offer a free phone consultation for people who think they need a website and don't know where to start. Usually the consultation ends in them knowing much more about my process and the components of a working website.

Very occasionally, I will advise the caller to hold off on creating a website (thereby talking myself out of a potential client!). This guide highlights some of the factors that go into a decision to create a website and some possible alternatives if you decide to wait.

Everyone will tell you that you must have a website

As a website designer, I know there are many compelling reasons to create a professional online presence through a custom website with its own unique domain name. For most people I talk to, I recommend they create a website to promote their work or business as soon as they can.

Paying for an online web hosting platform means you own your website and its content as long as you pay renewal fees and abide by the platform's Terms of Use. You can also take that content with you if you decide to move to another web hosting platform.

They'll explain the dangers of using someone else's platform

On the other hand, if you use someone else's platform to promote your business (such as Facebook or Instagram), your account and content are always vulnerable to a shutdown. You don't have control over who sees your content because the platform company decides how, when, and to whom it will show your newest posts. And if you lose your account, your online presence is gone too.

Reasons to postpone creating a website

Despite the dangers of using someone else's platform, I've spoken with some people about considering alternatives to a website in certain circumstances. In this guide, I'll explain some of the reasons why a website investment is unwise, either temporarily or permanently.

#1. You don't have the time or funds to create and launch a website

If you hire an outside brand consultant, graphic designer, copywriter, or website designer to create the materials for a new website, you will pay them for their expert services. The project will be something added on to your schedule and you'll need to make yourself available for providing information and giving feedback.

If you create your online presence yourself, you may buy a course to teach you what to do and take the time to learn what you need to know. Or you'll pay with a great deal of personal time to learn on your own with free resources you find.

And whether you do it yourself or have experts help you, there will be ongoing costs for a website hosting platform and domain.

#2. Your projected income won't give you a return on your website investment

Most businesses take a few years to get off the ground and start making a profit. Do you have another source of income or enough of a nest egg for the initial and ongoing costs of a website for the first few years? Your business probably won't be able to pay for the cost of a website right away.

#3. There's another way to reach your ideal audience online

A website allows anyone on the internet to find you, but will they? If you are assured of an audience already gathered on someone else's social media, selling, or writing platform, you can leverage that built-in audience and the search tools of that platform.

#4. You want to show your work but don't need a website to organize it

If the reason you want to create a website is to have a place to share your personal or professional visual or written work, you can use a visual or writing platform owned by someone else and leverage the audience and search tools of that platform.

Finding an alternative to a website

Everyone you talk to, including your family, your neighbor, and the SCORE volunteer helping you with your business plan, will recommend a website for your business. And it's true that having a website is the most professional, customizable, and self-directed way to promote your business and be found through online searches.

Services businesses

For businesses that provide services, I recommend creating a website as soon as you're able to so you can be found in Google searches. A website also gives you more space to tell the story of who you are and how your services differ from other similar service providers. But, in a pinch, there are a few alternatives.

Artists, writers, entertainers

For most creators and entertainers, I recommend creating a website. You want to have a central place to organize your work and be found online if you are trying to promote your work to studios, publishers, and potential customers. However, if you would just like a place to share your work, without needing to grow your following or income, you can get by without a website.

Other ways to promote your business online and in person

Social media	Directory listings	Online or in person
Facebook business page	Professional listings	Business cards
Local Facebook groups	Membership listings	Workshops
Online specialty groups	Local business listings	Webinars
LinkedIn business page	Google Business Profile	Information sessions
YouTube multimedia	Online sales	Shows and local events
Instagram visuals	Etsy or eBay	Medium or Substack writing platforms
	Social media	

Diversify and experiment

In most cases, if you can afford it, I recommend investing in a website to promote your business. But a website is only one marketing tool. The more ways you market your business, as long as they make sense for your business and your clientele, the better chance you have of attracting your ideal clients and customers.

A website is just part of a comprehensive marketing plan

Launching a website doesn't guarantee your business will thrive, but having one gives you more of an opportunity to tell your story fully so you can appeal to your ideal clients and customers. But you'll still have to promote your business in other ways to keep it on people's minds and find new business.

If some promotional avenues dry up or don't work, let them go. If your website or your social media posts don't have a lot of traffic, experiment with different content to see what your audience likes. You can also try posting on other social media channels.

Then when your ideal clients and customers find you, it's in your talented hands and helping heart to give them a great experience.

What's next?

If you decide you need a custom website for your business and want a full-service writing-and-design package, take a look at my [Services](#) page on my website at kerryathompson.com. If I sound like the expert you're looking for, reach out for a free 30-minute consultation. I can tell you more about what I do so you can decide if having me as a creative partner is of value to you and your business.

SERVICES

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SIGN UP FOR MY MAILING LIST

Wishing you big ideas and much success,



P.S. If you have comments or suggestions for this guide, I'd love to hear them. You can reach me at hello@kerryathompson.com.