

## ***Business On The Internet Begins With Choosing The Right Hosting Service***

Now that you've decided to take the plunge and set up your own business website, make sure you choose a website hosting service that provides all the services to make your website a moneymaker. Website hosting services are not the same. Some emphasize serving individual customers. Others offer an array of business services. Choosing the right one may be the most important step you take when creating a business presence on the Internet. Here are a few tips to help you make the right choice and ultimately help your bottom line.

### **Make sure you and your hosting service speak the same language.**

Your goal is to do business on the web, not spend valuable time learning the nitty-gritty of HTML, SQL, Java, and telecommunications. Choose a hosting service that allows you to discuss technical details in plain English.

After all, the more time you spend trying to communicate with your hosting service, the less time you're up and running and doing business.

### **Make sure your hosting service understands Internet commerce.**

You want to make it as easy as possible for customers to do business with you, so choose a host that understands how to run a commercial website. Ask for multiple mailboxes, if you need them. Also get email autoresponders and email forwarding options that enable your customers to get fast, accurate information about your products and services.

**Pick a host that lets you know who views your site.** Knowing who your customers are and what they

want is just as important on the Internet as it is at the office or in the store. When choosing a hosting service, pick one that lets you know who is viewing the information you put online and which of the pages are being read most often. Weekly website activity reports will help you discern how interesting your website is to your readers, and whether you're reaching your target market.

**Don't even think about using a hosting on a shared website!** Your website should be hosted as a virtual domain, i.e. [www.yourcompany.com](http://www.yourcompany.com). With a shared website, your web address will be long and cumbersome, and could cause customers to look for business elsewhere. You don't want your customers searching for an address that reads: [www.websitehost.net/~yourcompany](http://www.websitehost.net/~yourcompany). You want a domain address that is short, catchy, memorable. Like [www.dgl.com](http://www.dgl.com) for instance.

**Make sure your host allows CGI (Common Gateway Interface) scripts.** CGI scripts make it easier for your customers to get information and order products and services online. Your host should have prepared CGI scripts that convert online forms and questionnaires into email for you. As your site grows, consider installing a keyword search script that helps your customers find the information they want quickly. Make sure your host can create a search script for you.

**More Info in Future Editions of The PC Expert...** There's more to creating a business website and choosing the proper hosting service than we've covered here. We'll have more tips in upcoming newsletters.

**If you'd like to discuss creating an Internet website for your business,** or if you'd like to learn more about DGL's website hosting services, visit our *Hostmaster* site at [www.dgl.com/host](http://www.dgl.com/host) or call Dave Murphy at 410.290.7000.

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