



Last Updated: March 8, 2018

## #1 DOMAIN NAME

A domain name is often the first thing you need when starting a website. It is your digital address that people will use to get connected to your website (for example, [www.melissabeckwith.com](http://www.melissabeckwith.com)).

A popular domain name provider is GoDaddy and you can easily check if the name you want is available and how much it will cost, which is usually around \$10 – \$20 per year.

## #2 BUSINESS EMAIL ADDRESS

This can be setup in GoDaddy when you purchase the domain name. Consider a personal email and a generic "Info@xxxxx.com or hello@xxxx.com" in addition to an email with your name.

## #3 WEBSITE BUILDING SOFTWARE & HOSTING

I use SquareSpace to build websites, which includes hosting for your site. Average pricing for a basic website will be \$99 per year. More advanced or complex sites have higher annual pricing.

## #4 WEBSITE TEMPLATE DESIGN

There are dozens of beautiful template designs to start with in SquareSpace. Visit [HERE](#) to view.

## #5 LOGO FILES/BRAND DESIGN STYLE

The site should convey a similar look-and-feel as any other branding styles your business uses including the logo, color scheme and style guide.

## #6 HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES

Good photos for the site will really set the theme/feel of your website. SquareSpace offers many beautiful template that rely heavily on good photos. Determining which SS template you want to use will help determine the orientation of photos you need. Istock.com is my favorite stock site but other

popular stock image sites are Shutterstock, Fotolia, Getty Images... Professional head-shots or business photos are also welcome.

## #8 – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Researching other websites in your business field is the best way to get a sense of what might work for your specific services. A generic start would include the following main navigation: **Home, About, Services, Contact.** Start an outline in a Word Doc with your main page headings and copy to fit each page/section. Include any sidebars, quotations, newsletter request, videos, social media feeds or other media outlets you want included in the site.

## #9 – COPY CONTENT

This is a VERY important step in the checklist and worthy of your time and efforts (hire a copy editor if you need help). This ties into the organizational outline and should have dynamic, expressive copy that relates to your business and help motivates future viewers to trust your work and engage in your business services.

## #10 – GOOGLE ANALYTICS

There are some basic search terms and key words we can add to the SquareSpace settings as a final step. You will want to register your new domain name when the website design is complete. This allows Google to know your website exists and their algorithms can go to work on your new site and help work its way into the search engine ranking. This does take some time and an added service would be to invest in paid SEO (Search Engine Optimization) or Google Ad Words to help drive internet traffic to your new site.