

# What Every Business Should Know About IT Before Launching

Web Hosting and Beyond



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# Lunarpages

## Web Hosting and *Beyond*

Lunarpages is at the forefront of innovative IT Solutions and global Web Hosting Solutions that are both progressive and affordable for established industry leaders, small businesses and individuals alike. We provide world-class service and a set of well-integrated hosting tools that successfully support webmasters in building, designing, marketing and optimizing their projects effortlessly and effectively. Businesses also benefit from 24/7 US-based web host support teams and industry-leading website/server uptime.

### What We Do

Lunarpages Internet Solutions is a leader in IT infrastructure & web hosting solutions and business process outsourcing. We offer web hosting configurations from basic web hosting to more advanced solutions such as scalable, public and private cloud hosting, fully or partially managed IT infrastructure, and disaster recovery and business continuity solutions, all designed to help businesses reduce risk, increase ROI and streamline IT services.

Lunarpages can help you with:

- Fully Managed Enterprise Web Hosting or Managed Shared Hosting
- Business Web Hosting
- WordPress Hosting
- Starter Web Hosting
- Microsoft Exchange Email Solutions
- Web Design Packages
- SEO/SEM Online Marketing

### Contact Us Today

We are waiting to hear from you!

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## What Every Business Should Know About IT Before Launching

Studies show that more than 400,000 new businesses were launched in the U.S. in 2015, but that most of these start-ups will not grow to their full potential, despite visionary ideas and the best laid business plans. Many new business owners feel overwhelmed with new technologies and struggle with minimal resources and little assistance when navigating options, evaluating and selecting the necessary technology for the greatest value and impact on their businesses.

### Unleash the Power of IT for Your New Business

From the initial great idea all the way through growing your fledgling business, start-ups and companies of all sizes have to plan and source IT solutions to help make everyday tasks easier, faster and cheaper. Driving down costs is essential to compete effectively and to deliver real value for your customers, and IT can also provide innovation that helps you deliver increased revenue and profits.

If there is no existing technology in place for your new business, one option is to build an IT system that matches your exact needs. If there is some standard hardware and software available or appropriate to your business, a less expensive option is to build on what you have. IT requirements will vary depending on the needs of your business, and can scale over time from more manual to more automated. At minimum, you will be selecting from IT systems that enable you to do bookkeeping, communicate with customers/suppliers, and use the email and internet to connect with the outside world. More sophisticated IT structures and systems can be used to manage customer databases, execute online marketing, design products and provide inventory control.

Additionally, new businesses have to brand themselves by establishing an online presence, starting a blog and marketing through social media platforms. This will require investing in the services of a web-hosting company, as maintaining your own web server can get expensive and time consuming even if you are an IT pro. For start-ups to utilize IT technology fully in growing their company and improving their bottom line, there has to be adequate preparation and awareness of the basic IT tasks they will need to tackle right from the beginning. This report will inform you of those tasks, and advise you on how to get them done right.

## Start-up Checklist for Primary IT Tasks

### Think About Your Business Needs and Budget Before Buying

The technology choices you make today should last for a long time. Choose and manage your new infrastructure wisely. Servers, network, email, desktops/laptops, web design, document management, network support, and backup/restoration services ensure your infrastructure will provide a solid foundation to meet your needs today and for future expansion requirements.

You will need a variety of solutions, from a fast, reliable business Internet connection for sending email to dedicated services for managing your website. Don't waste time and money on infrastructure you don't need or buy second hand/refurbished equipment with limited capability. The money you spend on hardware and software can also be offset against your tax bill. If you can't budget extra for software, start-ups can opt for cloud software by accessing it on the Internet.

You'll also likely need to make some trade-offs. For instance, hosted services may be better and more cost effective for new businesses to use in some cases. While basic support is included with IT equipment and software, you are likely to need comprehensive technical support, too, especially if you're running a network. Additionally, it may be cost-efficient for small businesses to arrange IT support from an external provider.

### Find Good Suppliers and Service Providers

Start-ups have to save every penny they can, so having an in-house IT department may be unnecessary or out of reach. Instead, it may be wise to seek expert advice from external suppliers, and even consider paying for an IT consultant, when making choices for new IT products and utilizing new technology such as cloud computing. But the ultimate selection, buying and installation should be based on your specific working IT requirements. Line up a few good, reliable service providers so you can consolidate your purchasing power and leave the details to the experts.

### Secure Your IT

Whether your business has adopted cloud computing or you have a website and are just using email, cyber security should be a top priority to protect your sensitive data from theft, accidental damage or loss. Every business that uses the Internet needs to foster a culture of security to enhance their reputation and instill consumer confidence. All businesses have sensitive data on computers such as customer details, financial records, staff information and more. It is highly recommended that you [back up your data](#) regularly to multiple physical external hard drives or other storage devices and also to virtual servers using an online back-up service. Physically secure all hardware and servers in a safe environment using locks and metal cable. Install security software and firewalls to protect your business from viruses, malware, hackers and other cyber threats.

Mobile devices are also a part of the work landscape now. These devices can create significant security and management challenges, especially when it comes to securing confidential data or preventing access to the corporate network through them. Be sure to



have a mobile device management plan in place to monitor and secure all devices being used for business work.

### **Register Your Domain Name**

In today's business environment, every company needs a website to be competitive and to promote its services or products to a wider audience. A domain name is what is typed into the address bar to locate your site, such as [www.lunarpages.com](http://www.lunarpages.com). The domain name has to be suitably professional to reflect your business and - since you will have your online domain name for a long time - be wise in your choice. This will be a key part of building up a reputation and branding to help users find you online. Switching domains later could be tricky. It is best to keep your domain name short and simple, and depending on the availability, to make use of the .com, .net or .org versions, because those extensions are perceived to be more credible and trustworthy to most people. Many business owners select domain names that reflect their business names. However, you can be creative and select a broad domain name that anticipates future expansion or one that reflects what you do now. Keyword-based domains can provide search engine optimization value based on current search engine algorithms.

### **Get Email Solutions**

Once you buy a domain name, you will need to set it up to work with your website and email program, even if they are managed by another provider. Communication is the key to success for any business. Often start-ups use unreliable free online email services, which may not work across all platforms and are likely to attract viruses & spam.

Get customized email solutions with a built-in range of services that can be scaled up or down according to your needs, including spam and virus filtering, business-level hosting, groupware tools, archiving, web and mobile access, and fax-to-email solutions.

### **Design Your Website**

The identity of your brand must be carried over to your company website and social media profiles, which will be foundational to your online promotions.

Even a business with great products or invaluable services may not amount to much, if people don't know about it. Relying on word-of-mouth advertising and awareness among your social circles about your new business is not enough. To reach your target market you need to build your brand and get a following of people for your business through different digital marketing strategies.

Central to all your marketing and promotion efforts will be a website that works for you 24/7, requires little maintenance, and that reaches a global audience. A properly designed, responsive website that follows best practice conversion tactics, including valuable content, can help you win and retain customers to generate much-needed revenue, for all businesses, but especially for those dependent on online sales or lead generation.

Your website should be designed with your business goals in mind. The most basic website could simply be the digital face of your business. At the other end of the spectrum, a more

robust website may function as an ecommerce site, allowing for your target audience to make purchases or complete other transactions. In all cases, to maximize your impact and effectiveness, your website requires special attention when it comes to design and responsiveness (how it resizes) on different devices and platforms.

Not having a website or having one that is not aesthetically pleasing can leave a bad impression on your target market and destroy your credibility. You may choose to build your own website to save a little money, but the DIY option of creating your own website may cost your business dearly in the end, especially if the end result looks less professional. In this case, it is not “a penny saved is a penny earned,” but instead, “penny-wise and pound-foolish.”

If you do not have web design and development knowledge, select a digital agency to develop a highly-professional site that is uniquely designed for your business. Get it up and running quickly, with the proper website content management system, network support and web maintenance programs that support your new site.

If your site allows for online payments, your website will include a shopping cart function for customers to securely enter their payment information or other private details. If you process orders on your website, you will need a payment gateway that allows for encrypted information to be transferred to your merchant account provider. Your bank can help you set these payment options up, or services such as PayPal or Google Checkout let businesses of any size immediately accept credit card orders for small monthly fees and service charges for each transaction.

### **Promote Your Business**

Do not presume that building a website is enough to grow your business. There are many online marketing programs that can be implemented to help promote your products or services. From organic to paid tactics, here are a few things you can put in place to help promote your business.

First, consider an ongoing program for search engine optimization (SEO), which helps new customers find your website via search engines such as Google or Bing. For maximum effectiveness, you will need a comprehensive marketing strategy to improve the keyword rankings of your website on search engines and drive a greater amount of organic search traffic. SEO tactics might include improving and updating the content of your site regularly, using backlinks and other off-page and off-site tactics to drive traffic to pages on your site, using target keyword theme on your site and other SEO strategies.

Second, with paid advertising services such as Google Adwords, you can use relevant search terms to create ads that will resonate with your target market. Paid advertising strategies are a great way to promote your business and to be in front of the right market at the right time, just when they are ready to buy.

Additionally, you will want to set up social media profiles on all digital platforms including Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to name a few. Use social media to spread the word about your business and to show how your business provides a solution to your target markets needs. You can even use it as a promotional tool to offer coupons and discounts to

followers once you launch. Be sure to keep these digital assets up-to-date with relevant, interesting content about your business and industry as well.

Believe it or not email isn't dead. In fact, it is still a great tool to use to help promote your business. To be successful at email marketing you may also need an email auto-responder service--which may also be associated with your website forms-- that will enable automatic scheduling and delivery of email with sales messages, announcements, promotions or payment reminders to prospects or customers.

A successful search engine optimization program, social media campaign and email marketing all rely on successful content. Every business with an online presence should develop, plan and execute a content strategy, as it is fundamental to how your company will achieve its business goals and how your company will bring value to your customers. So really put some time into building a strong content strategy for your business.

## Choose a Professional Web Hosting Provider

Once your company website is designed and created, you will have to decide on web hosting, in order to take the site live and to share with the entire world. Only when your website is published can an Internet user can type in `www.yourcompanywebsitename.com` and see what you've published.

You will need to partner with a website hosting provider to host your website on their servers for a fee. It is absolutely vital to select a secure, scalable and reliable web host partner that has a history of minimal to no downtime, so that your website is safe and accessible at all times. The web host you decide on is essential to the performance of your website. It can affect the speed at which your website loads (a key determinant in visitor satisfaction), its ability to handle large numbers of visitors, its accessibility, its safety and security for your visitors, and even your ability to scale with your site traffic as your business grows.

### Web Hosting Options

When you buy web hosting, you are basically purchasing a place to upload your website files to secure servers that are permanently connected to the Internet. There are web host options that range from basic web hosting configurations to more advanced hosting solutions such as private cloud hosting.

The different options among web hosting include:

- **Shared web hosting**- limited amount of space on a server that you share with other websites, sufficient for websites that are not central for revenue or costs control.
- **Virtual private servers**- space on a server you share with other websites, but it offers more flexibility to customize server settings.



- **Dedicated web hosting**- exclusive access to a server, just for your website, offering the most privacy, security and control.
- **Cloud web hosting**- flexible and can be scaled up or down to satisfy your website hosting needs if traffic to your site fluctuates or grows over time.

### **Selecting the Right Web Hosting Solution for You**

The web hosting option you choose will depend on the unique needs of your business. A good web hosting partner should have a proven track record with tailored products for any web hosting needs. For small sites or blogs, shared hosting offers a cheaper solution but for corporate websites or large e-commerce sites it is preferable to go for a business hosting package or dedicated web hosting.

If necessary, a company can begin with minimal bandwidth and disk space, and then expand on resources as the business grows, although this may not be the best option if your website is key to generating company revenue or in controlling costs. Additionally, the sophistication of your website will play a determining factor in the type of hosting plan you choose. Websites that are more sophisticated require special server settings in many cases, which would tend to point you toward a VPS (virtual private server) or a dedicated server.

Additionally, if you have a professional website that exudes credibility, a shared server may not be an option for you, as the actions of your co-hosted tenants affect the 'reputation' of the server, which in turn, affects your reputation with the search engines. So if SEO is important, or you must have a blemish-free reputation at all times with the search engines, you'd also tend toward a VPS or dedicated server choice.

The accessibility and security of cloud server hosting improves production, cuts back on costs and it also enables flexibility of using any device connected to the net for managing site or projects. As your business grows, your website tends to generate more traffic. The ability to scale will be increasingly important. Your web hosting provider should be able upgrade and scale to accommodate the growth of your traffic. While cost and budget is an obvious concern, it should not be the driving factor in selecting a website hosting partner; after all, you get what you pay for.

### **Deciding How Much Help You Need To Manage Your Website**

Managed hosting refers to the degree with which your web hosting provider helps you manage your website and the server upon which it resides.

Many business owners need assistance from a number of experts, simply because they do not have the time to attend to all important details for their businesses. IF your website is important for driving new business, reducing costs, or maintaining a reputation, you may want to evaluate managed service options.

When you choose to have managed services you are asking your provider to take care of the day-to-day management of hardware, operating systems and standardized applications.

Dedicated server hosting providers may provide the following types of server managed support:

- Fully managed – Could include monitoring, software updates, reboots, security patches and operating system upgrades. Customers are usually completely hands-off.
- Managed – Usually includes medium level of management, monitoring, updates, and a limited amount of support. Customers may perform specific tasks.
- Self-managed – Typically clients are offered regular monitoring and some maintenance. Customers provide most operations and tasks on dedicated server.
- Unmanaged – Little to no involvement from service provider. Customers provide all maintenance, upgrades, patches, and security.

Choosing the right option is an important choice, and can free you from worry and concern.

## Conclusion

Any business can improve productivity and profitability with the proper IT technologies for data management and improved security, and this will also really set them apart from the competition. Sustainable growth can be supported and even accelerated by incorporating technology solutions like smartphones, tablets, and cloud computing that enable a flexible and better ways connecting with customers.

Additionally, these options may also free employees from being tied to one location. Employees today have the ability to be productive from anywhere. Adopting new technologies allows employees to communicate, collaborate and access data and tools to do their job from anywhere and on whatever device they choose.

With hosted solutions, new businesses can also save operating expenditures on purchasing, maintaining and upgrading hardware and software, which can instead be allocated to other important company initiatives.

IT solutions worth implementing in your business should deliver on these fronts:

- Improve efficiency to save money.
- Increase productivity or help get more done with fewer resources.
- Upgrade responsiveness and accessibility to your customers.
- Foster collaboration both internally and externally.
- Support flexibility in matching business needs to processes.

With a trusted IT and hosting partner, your business can focus on growth and bottom-line results to move forward instead of constantly being distracted by IT issues and maintenance problems. Good IT decisions and empowered IT partners help you grow faster and to be prepared for that growth.