

E-commerce Flash Points

by Casey O'Quinn

A certain prerequisite for an e-commerce site is, of course, your own Web site. What are some of the basic steps in creating a viable web site?

- Research and explore current Web sites for perspective.
 - Review the purpose of your ministry.
 - Define the purpose(s) of your Web site: is it to share information, sell product, build a database for mailings or a combination?
 - List short- and long-term goals of the site with measurable results, such as number of visitors, quantity of names added to the database, dollars generated, etc.
 - Determine your audience demographics.
 - List information you would like to obtain from visitors to your site.
 - Establish the budget for building, maintaining and marketing your site.
 - Decide whether you will design the site in-house or outsource the work.
 - Register a domain name — perhaps www.yourcompanyname.com. Keep it simple.
 - Determine how to be listed on the various national search engines.
 - A key factor in the success of your site is traffic. Once the visitors come, make certain the site's design, ease of use and practical content are attractive and updated frequently enough to keep them coming back.
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