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WordPress Site Initial Checklist

Hosting and Domain

☐ Choose reliable host (you often get what you pay for) [It is a good idea to keep your domain registrar and site host separate].

☐ Choose a domain name (easy to remember and accurately reflects your brand identity

☐ Set up SSL/ TLS for your domain (consider purchasing certificate if a business)

☐ Identify how/ who you contact if your server goes down

☐ Identify how you will update your site (plugins, themes, etc.). Do you need a test or QA?

☐ Determine frequency of backups (daily/ weekly/ monthly)

☐ Identify where you will store site archives

☐ Restore your backup to confirm that all has been backed up properly

WordPress Initial

☐ Install WordPress (5 minute setup) [Do not use admin as the administrator username]

☐ Use a passphrase as a password for administrators [www.correcthorsebatterystaple.net is an example of a passphrase generator]

☐ Check your time zone (**Settings -> General**)

☐ Set your date and time format and starting day of week (**Settings -> General**)

☐ Confirm your admin email address is correct (**Settings -> General**)

☐ Enable comment moderation (**Settings -> Discussion**)

☐ Turn off comment notification (**Settings -> Discussion**)

☐ Turn off "anyone can register" (**Settings -> General**)

☐ Uncheck "discourage search engines from indexing your site" (**Settings -> Reading**)

☐ Confirm default post category is not "Uncategorized" (**Settings -> Writing**)

WordPress Design

☐ Choose and install your theme (confirm it supports your brand identity)

☐ Customize your theme (child-theme if needed). Logo, tag line and related

☐ Set up the menu structure [may depend on theme you are using]

☐ Preview your theme in all major browsers

☐ Preview your theme on phones and tablets

☐ Create a test post (add images, lists, links, text, headings, block quotes) to insure format and style

☐ Add your favicon

☐ Add **title**, **tag line**, and **description** to your site, posts, pages

☐ Update permalink structure (post name) (**Settings -> Permalinks**)

☐ Add your site to Google Search Console

☐ Add site to MS Clarity (https://clarity.microsoft.com/) to better understand site usage

☐ Install Google Analytics (or Matamo)

☐ Generate XML Sitemap (see plugins below)

☐ Submit sitemap to Google Search Console

☐ If you need help with spelling, consider Grammarly (https://www.grammarly.com/)

☐ You may wish to consider a CDN (Content Distribution Network) for site components (perhaps relying on AWS or similar)

WordPress Plugins

☐ Coming soon page (if needed) (SeedProd)

☐ Contact form (WPForms)

☐ SMTP to send email (WP Mail SMTP)

☐ Secure your site (WordFence)

☐ Track analytics (WP Statistics)

☐ Backups (and test a restore to confirm they work) (UpDraftPlus)

☐ SEO (Yoast)

☐ Performance (WP Rocket)

☐ Add honeypot for comment spam (WP Armour – Honeypot Anti Spam). Alternatives include Cleantalk (https://cleantalk.org/) [This one costs] or Gravity Forms Anti Spam (https://www.gravityforms.com/) [This also costs]

☐ XML Sitemap Generator for Google

Pre-Launch Functionality

☐ Proofread all content on your site (including phone numbers)

☐ Confirm contact information is accurate

☐ Test all forms on the site and confirm form can be submitted and you receive info

☐ Confirm images display in proper size with all browsers and mobile devices

☐ Confirm site passes current minimum WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)

☐ Verify any call to action (buttons, links) work properly

- [ ] Configure 2FA for all site administrators (Google or Microsoft Authenticator)

- [ ] Check all links for 404 errors

Launching your site [or moving your site]

- [ ] Spread the word on appropriate social media (there are many, choose wisely)

- [ ] Announce your site (perhaps guest posts – you know your industry, you decide)

- [ ] Check Google Analytics periodically

- [ ] Grow your site (add meaningful content)

- [ ] Use a tool like Uptime Robot to confirm your site remains available

- [ ] Consider how to deal with 301 redirects (from your previous site)

- [ ] Set up 404 page not found process (Redirection is one such plugin)

- [ ] If migrating, consider using a plugin like All-in-One WP Migration

- [ ] Review site performance periodically using tools like Lighthouse (Chrome Developer tools).