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Before You Build a Website — Checklist

Use this checklist step-by-step to plan your website before you build. Copy into Microsoft Word and use Word styles or checkbox controls to make it interactive.

1. Define the Purpose

☐ **Why do I want a website?**
(Write a short purpose statement — e.g., attract local customers, sell products online, showcase a portfolio.)

☐ **What do I want people to do when they visit?**

- Schedule a meeting
- Buy a product
- See a menu
- Get contact information
- Other: _____

☐ **Will this site truly benefit my business, or is a Google listing / social media enough for now?**
Notes: _____

2. Explore Look & Feel

☐ **Research other websites I like** (list URLs and what you like about them):

☐ **Note layouts I prefer** (banner/hero image, side menu, full-width, card layout, lots of white space, etc.)

☐ **Identify styles I dislike** (colors, fonts, busy layouts, tiny text) — avoid these.

☐ **Gather inspiration images or screenshots** and save them in a folder for the designer.

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3. Map Out Content

☐ **Homepage** — photo or banner + mission statement / clear intro

☐ **Primary call to action** (e.g., Book Now, Shop, Contact) — decide placement

☐ **Services / Products** — list pages or categories

☐ **About / Business story** — short bio, team, hours

☐ **Contact information** — address, phone, email, map, hours

☐ **Lead magnet / Capture** — newsletter signup, download, coupon, special offer

☐ **Extras** (optional): menu, online ordering, FAQ, gallery, testimonials, blog/news

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4. Budget & Long-Term Value

Estimated costs (typical):

Item	Typical cost
Domain name	$10–20 / year
Hosting	$100–300 / year
Security / SSL	Sometimes included; otherwise small annual fee
Design / Development	Varies (one-time project cost)

☐ **Will the site pay for itself?** (sales, increased credibility, visibility). Notes: _____

☐ **Do I have a plan to maintain / update it?** (Who will edit content, add pages, keep plugins updated?)

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5. Growth Potential

☐ **Can I start small and expand later?**
☐ **Can I add these later if needed:** Online booking, Merchandise (e-commerce), Blog / News, Additional services or pages

☐ **Will the chosen platform grow with me without major rebuild costs?** (Consider scalable platforms and migration options.)

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6. Technical Decisions

☐ **Platform chosen** (WordPress, Shopify, Squarespace, Wix, etc.): _____

☐ **Domain name registered?** ☐ Yes ☐ No
Domain: _____

☐ **Hosting provider selected?** ☐ Yes ☐ No
Provider: _____

☐ **Security plan (SSL, backups, malware protection) in place?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ **Maintenance plan** — who will update content, plugins, backups? _____

Final Tip

Tip: Print this checklist and work through it step by step. By the time you're done you'll have a clear roadmap for building a website that supports your business and grows with it.

Need it turned into a downloadable Word (.docx) or a one-page printable PDF? Want the checklist tailored for a restaurant, salon, or online store? Tell me which and I'll prepare it.