



TIPS FOR A SMALL BUSINESS: How to Choose a WebHost

By Jan M. Owens

Everyone knows that the infrastructure of a webservice company is vitally important. But have you ever looked at your webservice from the viewpoint of customer care? What distinguishes an ordinary webservice from an extraordinary one?

One webservice concentrates on selling, and the other has a good foundation to care for its customers. Notice whether the company focuses only on getting new business without concern for what happens after the sale? It doesn't matter how much distance separates the webservice and the customer, because the most distant client is just as valuable as the nearest.

If you've never stopped to think about your webservice, you've been doing yourself a disservice. Look at it this way. You have entrusted your website to the care of your webservice. You are willing to give them your hard-earned cash, but if they want to keep you from running to a competitor at the first offer, they need to make sure they are giving incomparable customer care at every level.

Let's face it—competition is stiff in webservices. So, demand the kind of service you deserve.

A webservice that takes customer care seriously is the one you need to put your trust in. There's no reason your webservice should make you feel less than cared for, respected, and valuable.

So how can you be sure you have the right webservice from the viewpoint of customer care? First, notice how the company communicates with you. Now, that doesn't mean being best

buddies. It just means that you should be able to recognize whether they have a rock-solid policy of excellent service. So, starting right now, decide whether you're getting what you deserve.

It's an old cliché, but very true. Most people do business with someone they know and trust. It may be that you have simply come to trust your webservice because they have already been providing the value you seek.

If this webservice is providing the kind of care that you would recommend to your friends and associates, then you need look no further... that is, if you're satisfied with the technology they are providing.

So, has your webservice built confidence with you? Here are a few ideas that your hosting company could be doing to build your trust and create a great relationship.

Giving Quick Responses

How long do you have to wait before you get help from your webservice? Quick response time is probably the single biggest complaint with webservice customers. Submitting a ticket and waiting a day or more for a reply can mean absolute frustration for you.

Does your webservice allow you to contact them for support by direct phone call rather than requiring you to go online and submit a support ticket? Then you have to wait an unspecified period of time for them to respond.

Don't you find that waiting for help is one of your biggest frustrations? If you are stuck and need quick advice, being able to get your webservice on the phone to explain the problem can do a lot to keep your confidence. It doesn't mean that they would have to fix the problem right then, but their prompt personal contact will go a long way to keeping you satisfied.

Maintaining Steady Prices

Another frequent complaint from webservice customers is the continual jump in price. If you are seeing rising prices with no increase in the level of care provided, this is reason enough to jump ship.

When you are looking for a webservice, ask them about how often they issue price increases and when was their last increase. If a price increase has been necessary, they must be able to justify the increase. If they are unable to offer a satisfactory explanation for the price jump, be prepared to keep looking.

Staying Connected

It is important that your webservice stays in touch with you to keep the lines of communication open. Here are few suggestions as to how they might do this, but depending on the nature of your business, some of these might not be fitting:

- By sending personal greetings to acknowledge you on the anniversary of the date you first started doing business with them. This says that you are important to them. If they communicate through a preprinted card by regular mail, and if it also

includes a personal note or is signed personally, that's all the better.

- By providing you with articles about items of particular interest to your specific business or industry.
- By keeping you updated on recent technology and what's happening in their business. They might do this by personal email or even an eNewsletter.
- By offering an informal workshop or webinar to keep you informed on what's happening in the industry, training on the use of their control panel, or other instruction that may be helpful to you.
- By notifying you of any news items that may affect your business.
- By offering discounted prices at least once a year on specific products. These efforts can help to build a personal relationship between you and the webservice, which would only strengthen your trust and confidence in them.

Seeking Your Input

Your webservice should seek your input, asking how they can improve service to you. If they do, then give them your candid responses. You might want to suggest other products or services they could offer as a convenience to you, mention issues that need attention such as service quality, response time, available hours, online convenience, or any other issues that may concern you. Watch for their quick reply and see if they address each issue mentioned.

Knowing You Personally

Your webservice should try to develop a personal relationship with you. Yes, it's a little more difficult to do when most things are handled electronically, but with the right intent, it can be done. This would only serve to demonstrate a true caring attitude. It would mean that:

- They take your needs seriously and respond quickly.
- They return your calls as soon as practical and never leave a call unanswered.
- They keep all promises without excuse or delay.
- They deal with your concerns immediately, listen carefully, and are prepared to offer a resolution.
- They notify you of every opportunity to save money, such as upgrades on services, special promotions, new products that become available, and others.

Showing Appreciation

Look for a simple "thank you," either by phone or by email, or even by regular mail. But don't be surprised if, as a local or nearby customer, you may even be invited for lunch or to attend an event with them. Or they might even ask you to accompany them to a business meeting.

Expectations

You have the right to expect reasonable care, and if your webservice pays careful attention to your needs, you'll be a happy camper. You may not care about the thousands of dollars the webservice has invested in its business and technology infrastructure, but what you should care about is how they treat you and your employees.

Fast, Affordable Webservice

If you are a startup, a sole proprietor, or a mom-and-pop enterprise, we understand every dollar is important to you. If you don't have time to keep your website updated, or if you are tired of waiting hours for someone else to do it, let us help.

We will get your updates done right away so you don't have to wait an unreasonable period of time, and you can get back to focusing on business. For a webservice you can trust with fast, reliable service designed for the small business, get started today. **Call WordPro, 352-360-5550.**