

## *Web Site*

In today's competitive market, a web site is an essential advertising tool, even if you are a one-person business. The first step is to design a simple, attractive site. There are many computer programs available to guide you step-by-step through the process. Or, if you would prefer, hire someone to create a web site for you—it is well worth the investment.

### Content

Your web site should include your business name and logo, the services you offer, and a few words about your training philosophy. It should also give a clear idea of why owners should call *you* instead of the other training companies whose sites they have browsed. Examples of how you might stand out are: “Local resident, recommended by local business owners;” or “Force-free methods!” You should also include your qualifications and experience, any media attention you have received (such as copies of newspaper articles) and brief testimonials from satisfied customers. My own web site includes testimonials from clients, local veterinarians, groomers and other pet-related businesses. List your contact information, including your email address, so people can reach you immediately with inquiries.

If you teach group classes, include your class schedule and location. This will save you the time of providing that information by phone. To simplify things even further, you could include your prices and a downloadable registration form, along with an online payment method. This setup has the advantage of making on-the-spot sales while prospective students are feeling motivated. If you teach private lessons, whether to list your prices is a personal decision. I choose not to list my rates. I would rather establish rapport with a prospective client on the phone, and get a better idea of the dog's issues, before quoting fees. The advantages of including your rates would be that it would screen out people who could not afford them, and would encourage those who could to contact you.

Other things to include on your web site are articles you have written about training or other dog-related topics, information about local pet-related events, and links to other helpful sites. As you will see in the

following section, all of those things can be useful in helping people to find your site.

### Domain Name

A domain name—for example, dogtraining.com—secures your internet identity. (The URL, or address, would be www.dogtraining.com.) However, in order for you to be allowed to purchase the desired domain, it must not already be registered to someone else. Common names tend to get snapped up quickly. There are many sites through which you can do a search to see whether the domain you want is available, and, assuming it is, to register it so no one else can use it. Paying an annual renewal fee ensures that you remain king or queen of your domain.

### Making Your Presence Known

Once you have created your web site, the trick is to help prospective clients find it. Here are a few ways to accomplish that goal:

1. **Page Title:** Be sure the title of your main page includes words that people will use in search engines. For example, if your business is called “Your Best Friend,” it would be better to make the title of the main page “Your Best Friend Dog Training.” That way, when people search for “dog training,” the title will help the search engines to find your page. Better yet, include your location in the title page as well. In HTML code, the title is inserted between the two title tags. So if you lived in Kansas City, your HTML could read `<title> Your Best Friend Dog Training Kansas City </title>`.

2. **META tags** are HTML code that allows you to insert key words and other important information. No one will actually see the information, but it will help the search engines to find your site. The most important tag is “keywords.” Think about which words and phrases people might use to search for your services. These might include: dog training; dog behavior; puppy; group classes; training classes; (your city name); and any other specialties you offer, such as “dog aggression.” Separate each key word or phrase with a comma, and use different combinations to help people find you. Here is an example of how this might look in your