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IT'S ALL ABOUT FINDING THE RIGHT CLIENTS

One Day Labs: Affordable website design... in one day

September 12, 2016 3 Comments

(https://www.godaddy.com/garage/webpro/design/one-day-labs-affordable-website-design-in-one-day/#disqus_thread)

Too many times these days, finding affordable website design has become a race to the bottom (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/web-development-freelance-race-bottom-paul-dejager>). The new paradigm sees potential clients scrambling to find their cheapest available option (often sourced overseas), and then crossing their fingers in hopes it'll yield an online presence they can live with. Direction, communication and feedback are pretty much out the window.

One Day Labs (<https://onedaylabs.com/>) shrugs off this model.

(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/one-day-labs-office.jpg>)

The Santa Rosa, Calif.-based web design agency interacts extensively with clients — yet their starting price point falls in the surprisingly low sub-\$2,000 range. At the heart of One Day Labs' process (<https://onedaylabs.com/the-process/>) is an 8- to 10-hour collaborative build session where a client works closely with their assigned project manager and design engineer to tailor a site to their individual needs.

One Day Labs CEO Melissa Geissinger says the key to their success is working with the right clients (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/webpro/clients/teach-clients-job/>), people who jive with a process that requires active participation and follow-up. Melissa explains:



“Our market is the self-starters. The bootstrappers. The folks who have attempted to do as much as possible themselves but get to a point where they know they need help. They are pumped to dive in and anxious to get it done. They want to be involved in the process and walk out the other end confident and proud.”

Melissa says One Day Labs finds clients who are the right fit through “having open dialogues.”

It works. At the end of the day, the site goes live and everyone goes home happy. Forget about the exhausting, frustrating back-and-forth.



(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/one-day-labs-owner-melissa-geissinger.jpg>)
 One Day Labs (<https://onedaylabs.com/>) Owner Melissa Geissinger keeps her skills sharp by remaining active in the Web & Interactive Media Professionals community (<http://beawimp.org>) and Beaver Builder developer community (<https://www.wpbeaverbuilder.com/knowledge-base/>).

Making affordable website design better

(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/one-day-labs-motto.jpg>)

Before starting any build, One Day Labs screens clients. It lets them ensure the scope of projects are appropriate and that clients are prepared to supply content ahead of collaborative build sessions.

Why those lynchpins? Any web designer will tell you about the sinking feeling that comes when lorem ipsum doesn't match final text (<https://www.raycreationsindia.com/2013/06/getting-web-design-content-from-client-how-difficult-is-it/>), or when a client fails to mention super-snazzy functionality until a site is ready to be published.



These pitfalls are avoided through a carefully structured process that's elegant in its simplicity.



Don't be a perfectionist.
Use what you know.
Creativity under control.
Engage with your client.
Save your experimentation.

 ONEDAYLABS

Timelapse of One Day Labs Website Build



Via a basic contact form, clients first sketch out the scope of their builds. If no red flags arise, One Day Labs pairs clients with a project manager and design engineer, and then schedules the collaborative build session. Clients also receive instructions for sending in content and get other supporting material.

On the day of the build, the whole team communicates in real time to make sure the site comes together correctly, adhering to a pre-determined timeline. At the end of the day, boom, the site goes live.

Melissa explains that expectation-setting (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/webpro/clients/7-rules-of-client-relations-for-web-developers/>), content-gathering, and team dynamics are all key in the process.

“Getting content before design and development begins is key. It's not an option for us, it's a necessity. Establishing this understanding early on not only makes our job possible, but makes the client relationship that much better by establishing clear boundaries.”



(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/one-day-labs-year-website.png>)
 One Day Labs built the mobile-responsive Year of the Entrepreneur Sonoma County (<http://www.yote2016.com/>) website

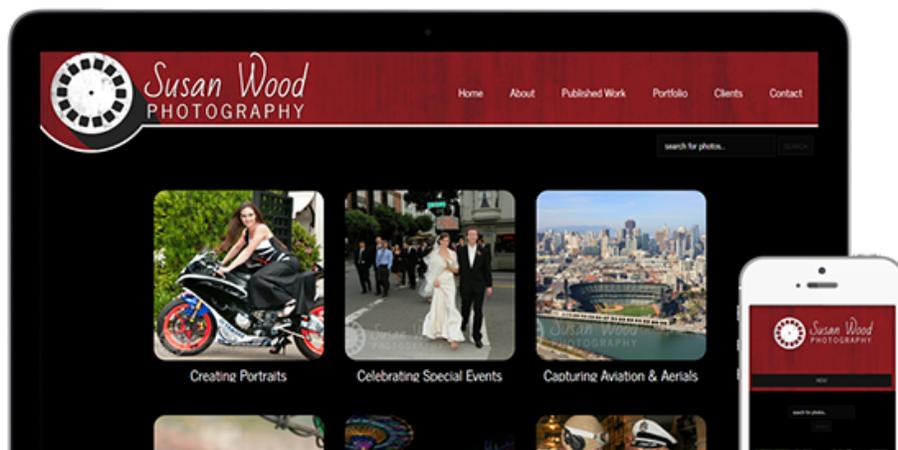
One Day Labs builds websites for different industries on a variety of different platforms, Melissa adds, so it's critical to pair clients with design engineers who are a good fit.

Rounding up to the right tools

Getting to this point, Melissa remembers, required a more tempered approach than she was used to, as well as rounding up the right tools for her business. Where she would usually work tirelessly to push through to a goal, Melissa found it was necessary to sit back once in a while and let things percolate

(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/smallbusiness/manage/improve-your-health-increase-your-income-and-avoid-burnout/>).

“I think the hardest lesson that I’ve learned thus far has been that there’s a huge difference between operating a one-person business and trying to build something larger than yourself. Ambition is a bit of a blessing and a curse. What had worked for me in business in the past hasn’t continued to work as I scale. There are a lot of moving parts when you have huge aspirations.”





(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/affordable-website-design-example.png>)
The Susan Wood Photography (<http://www.susanwoodphotography.com/>) website, an example of One Day Labs' high-quality yet affordable website design work

One Day Labs also has proved adept at rounding up applications to support the company's endeavors.

For starters, GoDaddy Pro Connect (<https://www.godaddy.com/pro-connect?isc=cardigan>) helps her find the right design professionals to match with particular clients. And when a build gets started, One Day Labs also looks to GoDaddy for domain registration (<https://www.godaddy.com/domains/domain-name-search?isc=cardigan>) and hosting (<https://www.godaddy.com/hosting/wordpress-hosting?isc=cardigan>).

The applications she's chosen for design include some pretty awesome stuff, too.

Builds typically utilize WordPress, SmugMug or Shopify. WordPress sites use the uber-flexible Bootstrap themes (<https://wordpress.org/themes/search/bootstrap/>). The Beaver Builder plugin (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/beaver-builder-lite-version/>) makes building pages an easy-to-visualize, drag-and-drop exercise.

Personal boundaries and Star Trek

As if redefining affordable website design wasn't enough, Melissa is also an aspiring novelist. When she's not helming One Day Labs, you'll often find her working on a historical-fiction novel for young adults (<https://www.facebook.com/melissageissinger/?fref=ts>) about the 1906 earthquake and fires in San Francisco.

She's also a binge-watcher of Star Trek on Netflix and, as a resident of idyllic Sonoma County, always looking for a chance to take her dog for a walk or wander around hunting down new coffee shops (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/smallbusiness/market/local-coffee-shops-can-compete-with-starbucks-through-brand-marketing/>). Carving out time for herself, Melissa says, is critical to her continued success.

“I make it a point to plan out my personal time the same as I would plan a business meeting. Or at least, make it a point not to schedule anything work-related between certain times. I also try to do as much work as possible from my office so I can let go of it when I go home. You know, like a ‘real job.’ Boundaries are so important.”





(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/one-day-labs-relax.jpg>)

What's your take?

For you freelance web developers out there: what do you think about Melissa's operation and business model? What about her choice of applications? We all know client management is a subtle art, so it'd also be great to hear about your own techniques. If you have something you'd like to add to the discussion, don't hesitate for a nanosecond to leave a comment.

Also published on Medium (<https://medium.com/@artjmar/329de2ef048b>).



Art Martori (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/author/art-martori/>)

Art Martori (<http://artmartori.com/>) thinks words are like chess pieces. While checkers might be more appropriate for the analogy, he's aided by years of professional writing experience via mediums including content strategy, journalism and fiction. When he's not typing on a keyboard, find Art strumming the 12-bar blues, restoring vintage road bicycles or training for a new powerlifting personal record.

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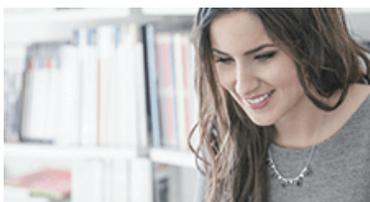
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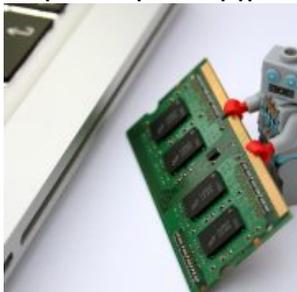
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Ron Crain • 5 hours ago

One day and Bam! we have a new website! The bonus which is hard to comprehend is the familiarity I have with the website and how to maintain it as well as having the tools to expand it and add pages myself.

Thank you Melissa!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Kaiya Kramer • 7 hours ago

