



Ross Mahler headed PMG's first effort into web design and production way back in 1995. A hundred websites later, he's still our go-to guy. Here are some webby words of wisdom from Ross that you may find helpful. -Jamie

## 4 Most Important Steps in Website Building



**Observations by Ross Mahler,  
Director of Web Services at PMG**

As technologies advance, they are inevitably accompanied by a slew of new terms, acronyms, and a jumble of jargon. Consider the following:

**"FYI - We need a system written in PHP and MySQL that dynamically changes the HTML and CSS of our website. ASAP!"**

**Don't Get Lost in a Web of Confusion.** Unless you're a professional web developer, that might as well be written in Klingon. One of the things that makes Internet terminology so confusing is that creating even a simple website is actually a combination of several different tasks. Let's break it down:

### Step 1. Choose a domain name (such as xyzcompany.com)

A nickname for domain name is an *Internet Address*, and all it means is that you're registering that name with a **registrar**. Years ago, Network Solutions was the only significant player, but now there are thousands of companies that will register a domain name for you, including: **GoDaddy, DirectNic, 1and1, and Register.com.**



Registering your domain name is just the first step. All that does is give you the **right** to use that domain name. You still don't have a site.

### Step 2. Designing your site

**For best results, have a professional marketing company design your site. Depending on your needs this may involve several different technologies, including:**

- **HTML** (HyperText Markup Language) – a language used to specify the **content** of your site.
- **CSS** (Cascading Style Sheets) – a language used to specify the **visual presentation** of your site.
- **Javascript** – a language that can add further **functionality** to your site such as



dropdown menus, calculations, or simple animation.

- **Flash** – a program that uses a language called ActionScript to add more complex **animations and interactivity** to your site.
- **PHP/ASP/ColdFusion** – three separate languages that, like Javascript, can add further **functionality** to your site such as searching your site, or pulling dynamic information from a database.
- **Databases** – such as MySQL where you might **store data** that is likely to be updated or changed on a regular basis, such as News, Events, or Products For Sale.
- **eCommerce** – a method of accepting **transactions** through your website.

### Step 3. Hosting your site

Hosting is often confused with or assumed to be included with domain name registration. It's not. Hosting means that you are renting space on a computer somewhere that will house all the files associated with your website.

When someone wants to visit your site and goes to your site location, the hosting company sends the necessary files to display your site. One of the reasons that this can be so confusing is that many companies offer registration **and** hosting together in a single package; but from a technological standpoint they are two entirely separate services.



### Step 4. Marketing your site

This is also confusing for many site owners because they assume that the mere presence of their site in cyberspace means that it will automatically appear on the first page of a Google search. Nothing could be further from the truth. Think of your website as a brick-and-mortar storefront on an abandoned road. Unless the word gets out, no one is going to drive down that abandoned road unless they know your store is there. And you, or a marketing agency, have to tell them that it exists and why they should come in and browse. That's where search engines and a whole new dictionary of jargon come into play.

Here are just a few of the more useful terms:

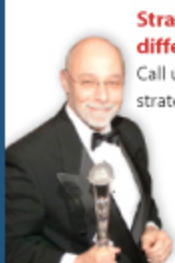
- **SEO (Search Engine Optimization)** – a series of techniques that help your site climb higher in search engine ranking pages (SERPs). There are literally hundreds of different techniques that can help your site achieve better SEO. Some involve how the code is written and what *keywords* are used...while others involve efforts such as submitting your site to various search engines and directories. Search engines are continually updating the algorithms they use to determine who gets the highest rankings, so the methods you or



your marketing agency use need to continually evolve as well. Unlike website design, SEO is more like marketing – a continual effort to make your presence known.

- **SEM (Search Engine Marketing)** – SEO and SEM are often used interchangeably, but lately SEM has become an umbrella term that means any method of getting recognized through Internet searches.
- **PPC (Pay-Per-Click)** – a way of advertising your site by bidding on search terms. If you sell red balloons and you want to bid on the term *red balloons*, you bid and agree to pay a maximum price to have an ad appear in search listings when someone types the phrase *red balloons*. The good news is that you *only pay if someone clicks* on the ad and visits your site. The bad news is that you pay for the click *whether they become a customer or not*.
- **Geotargeting** – a way of targeting geographical areas. Returning to our red balloon example, many times we are only interested in specific customers. A company selling customized Long Island red balloons isn't really interested in attracting prospects in Los Angeles or London or Liberia looking for red balloons. So why pay for the click if they aren't likely to become a customer? That's where geotargeting comes in. You can specify a geographic area for your PPC advertising that you are willing to pay for. Outside that area, your ad won't appear.

If your company needs a [strategic solution](#) to tackle a website design or redesign, give us a call or take a look at the wide array of [websites in our PMG gallery](#).



**Strategic marketing can make a difference in your business.**  
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▲ **Jamie Stanco**, President and Founder of Progressive Marketing Group, Inc., is a recognized authority on strategic marketing and branding.

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