

Is Your Web Hosting Company a Good Business Partner?

Is Your Green Web Hosting Company A Good Business Partner?

Ethics in Web Hosting

It Sure Better Be!

Why?

Because your web host is your partner in on-line success. Look, there are lots of options available when you start shopping around for web hosting services. You can go with a free hosting site. Only problem is those freebie hosting services make their money by placing their ads on YOUR website. And you have no control over what ads appear on your site.

Not good. Especially when quality hosting services are available for as little as Ksh 700 a month. You lose more than that in the couch! So, hosting is NOT a place you want to cut corners, even if you're taking your first plunge into the world wide web. Especially if this is your first digital endeavor.

Now, there are low-cost hosts but these companies have to cut corners somewhere. So, tech support is 12 time zones away from the server where your web site resides - or used to until you got the dreaded 404 error message when you logged on to your own web site. Site not found! What?

Or, these companies scrimp on things like security, leaving your web site more vulnerable to hacker attacks from the server side - from your low-cost web host. However, you don't have to spend a bucket of cash to find a hosting company that maintains multiple layers of security, protecting your site from malware injections from the server side of your business.

In any on-line endeavor, whether your selling products, services, or just getting out a message to the world, your web host IS your on-line partner so it pays to choose wisely.

What should you look for in a good W3 partner? What should you expect from the web hosting company you choose? A lot and plenty of it.

1. A client-centric corporate culture.

This includes everything from humans who answer the telephone when you call with a question to fair pricing to a tool box full of free goodies.

You want a hosting company with a long lineage of web hosting experience. Anyone can buy disk space and resell it. Anybody can buy a server and cram 2,500 web sites onto that server. Are these the kind of digital partners you want for your new launch? No.

You want reliability (a 99.9% uptime), longevity in the web hosting space (experience), and a business that recognizes that YOUR business success is essential to the hosting company's long-term success.

This is a mind-set that starts at the top and infuses virtually all aspects of delivery of hosting services - from delivering more for less to fixing problems within minutes. This client-centric approach to web hosting should be a critical part of your research and your decision to partner with a hosting company.

You want to partner who's as engaged in the success of your web site as you are.

2. Security like you wouldn't believe.

Quality hosting companies are current on the latest viruses, the fastest hacker tactics and the latest black-hat scam to come down the Information Superhighway.

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So, to fend off attacks from hackers, crackers, script-kiddies and other bad guys, your web-host-web-partner maintains a hard-wired firewall, firewall software that's updated regularly, anti-virus software that protects your business assets and anti-spyware software that keeps key-loggers at bay, protecting your on-line business.

You can protect your business network at your end. You should protect against everything from analog theft (someone walks off with a laptop) to subversive viral attacks in unchecked emails (scan it first), but if your web host doesn't deliver server side security, you're much more susceptible to attack - a headache you just don't need.

3. A complete web site tool box - FREE!

Starting a web business shouldn't cost an arm and a leg. It should be available to anyone with the imagination to envision success on the web - and that's millions of us all around the globe.

A good, on-line partner, your web host, should provide virtually all of the tools you need to launch a web site and build it to profitability or some other measure of success.

Look for web site templates to eliminate the cost of a pricey designer - and not just a few cookie-cutter templates. Your web host should offer hundreds of options, and the really good ones offer thousands of template options that you can customize so they don't look like a template site.

How about a free shopping cart and secure checkout. That's a "must-have" for any commercial site and you want it free. Same with a database, client management software, expandability, customization and integrated solutions to routine, on-line activity. Free.

Before you sign on with any host, check to see what the toolbox looks like. You should find everything you need to build a site, launch a site, promote a site and manage daily operations - and all in modular form so each piece of the on-line business puzzle slides right into place.

4. Partnership Benefits

A good business partner brings something to the table - something you can use to your advantage right from the start.

Low-cost and high levels of client care are certainly benefits but what else does your web host bring to the table? How about specialized features you can use - like "green hosting" - a web host with a commitment to the environment and employs green technology to generate the juice, cool the servers and run the office. By going green, you make a statement about your own corporate culture and company values - an important part of building an on-line brand.

How about U.S.-based client support and make that 24/7, please. You know that some web hosts only equip clients to contact home base through email? Is that your best choice for an on-line partner? When your site is down? And you don't know why?

You want to talk to a techie who can walk down the hallway, provide the security data required to enter the locked-down server room, and fix the glitch that took your site off line. When your site is off line, you're invisible to both site visitors and bots and if either is unable to access your site, you're in a heap of trouble.

Look for cost savings opportunities. For example, does your host save you some start-up cash if you pay a year in advance? Take advantage of the savings because, with any start-up, cash is king. Can you buy more server space as your business grows without having to move up to a more expensive tier? A

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good host will let you grow a gigabyte at a time without gouging you with increased monthly fees that eat away at your margins.

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