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**FULL SERVICE FOOD, FARM, LODGING,  
AGRITOURISM & SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING**

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# **BEFORE CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR WEBSITE: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE**

**Presented by Pam Knights  
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Hannah Grimes Center  
Keene, NH**

# WEBSITE OVERVIEW & GOALS

## WHY DO YOU WANT OR NEED A WEBSITE?

- How will a website help you achieve your business goals?
- Are you trying to sell products online, direct people to retail outlets and/or build brand visibility?
- Do you want to build customer loyalty?
- Are you hoping to rank towards the top of a search for your products or services?
- Are you looking for a basic site that describes your farm, products and services, so people can find out more about you?
- All of the above?



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## WHAT DO YOU WANT VISITORS TO YOUR WEBSITE TO DO?

- Join your email list?
- See what's new or coming up at your farm?
- Find out the picking conditions for the day or what's fresh or on special in the farmstand?
- Get ideas about how to use your products, such as recipes?
- Sign up for CSA shares?
- Register for an event?
- Make farm stay lodging reservations?
- Purchase and pay for products online?
- Read your blog?
- Leave comments?
- Follow you on Facebook and/or Twitter?
- Take a virtual tour of your property via videos on YouTube?
- Engage with you through calls to action that encourage them to visit your farm, purchase products, follow you on Facebook, or return to your site?



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## WHO ARE YOUR AUDIENCE(S)?

- **What type of people would you like to visit your site? Current customers, prospective customers, prospective retailers?**
- **What is the demographic of your typical and ideal customer- age ranges, sex, education level, income level?**
- **Where are they typically coming from? What areas do you typically draw customers from?**
- **Does your customer base typically spend time on social media?**
- **Do they live on their smart phones?**
- **Why do they need or want your product(s)?**
- **What are they going to be looking for when they visit your site?**



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## WHAT WEBSITES DO YOU LIKE?

- Visit and compare websites for farms in and out of your area that offer similar products and experiences.
- Identify 3 or more that appeal to you. List what you like about each one (and note what you don't like)
- What can visitors do on the sites that you like? What do you find engaging about them?
- How are they organized, how is the navigation set up, what makes them easy to use?
- What functionality do they offer?
- What similar features would you like to see on your website?
- What kind of experience do you want to create on your site?



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## BASIC BRANDING & MESSAGING

Before creation of the website or any other marketing materials, it's important to develop a logo, define your unique selling points, and formulate your messaging.



*Supplying Great Chefs Across  
America Since 1988*

### Brand Development

- Logo
- Color palette
- Font
- Taglines
- Messaging

Consistency across  
all platforms



*A Vermont Farm Stay Destination  
for All Seasons*

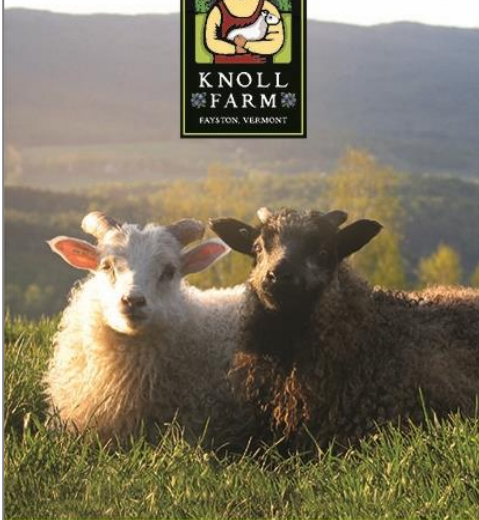
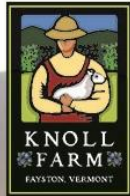


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# KNOLL FARM



PICK-YOUR-OWN ORGANIC BLUEBERRIES  
PUREBRED ICELANDIC BREEDING STOCK  
GRASS-FED LAMB  
SEASONAL FARMSTAND  
SHEEPSKINS, YARN & BLANKETS  
FARM WORKSHOPS

Helen Whybrow & Peter Forbes  
Fayston, Vermont  
802.496.5685 KnollFarm.org

## MESSAGING

-Identify key attributes/Unique Selling Points specific to your farm.

-Narrow them down to 4-6 bullet points, succinctly describing what you offer, that align with what your target audiences need and want.

-Use these key points in developing your messaging across all of your marketing communications platforms.

-Develop boiler plate descriptions (of varying lengths) for use on the homepage, Facebook online directories, and print materials.

-Display website or FB address on everything!



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## TEMPLATE DESIGN & ORGANIZATION

The look and feel of your website should be reflective of who you/owners are and their style; and at a glance what your business is about/offers. Based on your budget, the amount of time you have to maintain your site, and the goals you've established for it, you'll want to determine the various components to include in your templates.

**Header** (logo, tag, location, phone, email)

**Navigation** (main categories & drop downs)

**Email list sign-up** (Mailchimp, Constant Contact)

**Directions** (link to Google Maps)

**Social media icons** (with links)

**Read our blog/subscribe**

**Farm news box**

**Events calendar**

**Farm description** (succinct, keyword phrases)

**Photos, slide shows**

**Videos** (on site and on YouTube)

**Twitter Feed**

**Social Share icons**

**Footer** (full address, phone, full email address, membership logos, ©2014, credits)

**Search field**

**Favicon**

**For Farm Stays**

**Availability Online** (Check availability, book rooms, accept credit cards online)

**Trip Advisor link** (Traveler Rating, Read reviews, Write reviews)



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## TIPS TO IMPROVE READABILITY

- Choose a web safe font, large enough for older eyes to read
- Content is still king, keep it relevant and informative  
Go into more depth on your blog!
- Incorporate keywords and keyword phrases relevant to the page, particularly in the first paragraph
- Break up and segment copy with bold, succinct headlines
- Use colored headlines, within color palette, same on all pages
- Emphasize key points with bulleted and numbered lists
- Use tinted boxes or bands to highlight calls to action & offers
- Use good quality static photos and slideshows to illustrate content



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# WEBSITE EXAMPLES

## **Clay Hill Farm**

Vermont raised Black Angus beef & pork

<http://www.ClayHillFarmBeef.com>

## **Maple Wind Farm**

Pasture-based beef, pork, and poultry for direct and wholesale markets in VT and greater N.E.

<http://www.MapleWindFarm.com>

## **Smith Family Farm**

Pasture raised beef, pork, chicken and eggs

<http://www.SmithFamilyMeats.com>

## **Common Man Restaurant**

Contemporary American Cuisine- Uncommonly good dining

<http://www.CommonManRestaurant.com>

## **Three Penny Taproom**

Craft food for craft beer

<http://www.ThreePennyTaproom.com>



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## FACILITATING THE PROCESS WITH YOUR WEB DEVELOPER

*To be done after taking into consideration suggestions and guidelines in earlier slides.*

### For Purposes of a Realistic Quote

- Determine the number of pages desired and all of the elements you would like included in your site.
- Specify who is responsible for writing and editing copy, selecting and resizing photos.

### Create an Agreed Upon Timeline & Task List

- Provide links to up to 3 websites you like the look of.
- Determine navigation.
- Sketch out a layout of the homepage template.
- Have the template designed as a pdf first.
- Provide page by page content as text files and photos.
- Upload large photo file to developers ftp site.
- Highlight internal and external links (e.l.s) provide absolute web addresses for e.l.s, request all e.l.s open in a new window
- Review and tweak. Test all navigation and links. Do it again!



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## NUTS & BOLTS- TOUCH POINTS

### **Domain or URL Registration**

Register for 3-5 years, business owner should be registrant, admin and tech name. Do not put up an under construction site!

### **Content Management System**

Importance of choosing an open source platform that will enable the user to update the website, such as WordPress, Joomla, Drupal etc. Ask that a coaching session on how to use the CMS is part of your web development package.

### **Responsive Web Design**

Optimizes a website to detect and adapt to the size of the device it is being viewed on by adjusting the resolution, image size and scripting abilities. On smart phones a menu will appear opposed to a mini version of the site. A must for new sites with the rapidly rising increase in mobile web usage.



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## NUTS & BOLTS- TOUCH POINTS Continued

### Hosting

Hosting package needs to support the platform you choose. Cloud-based vs a dedicated server. Compare services and prices, heed your developers recommendation.

### Upgrades & Maintenance

Websites built using Internet based software such as WordPress need to have the core updated regularly, as do the themes and plug-ins, with functionality updates and security patches. For sites where the content changes regularly, frequent back ups are important to avoid loss of your site if it is hacked or crashes. PKC would recommend arranging regular maintenance with your web developer.



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## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

-Upon completion of the website and prior to its launch and the risk of being indexed by search engine bots such as Google, Yahoo, Bing etc and therefore ranked, it is important to first have you site search engine optimized, ideally by a capable professional.

-The resulting page by page meta tags- titles, keywords and descriptions- will need to installed on the site by your developer. View page source to see codes.  
<http://pamknights.com>

-Along with Google Analytics for free website traffic reports.

-Internet Yellow Page listings can also be submitted. If you only do one it should be Google Local. Others include yahoo, bing, yelp, mapquest, localsearch, infousa, supermedia, citysearch, etc. Require follow through.

-When crafting strategic marketing plans PKC recommends a number of ways to continuously build incoming links to improve site ranking.

*Which segues nicely over to blogs...*



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## BLOGS & SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATION

-When blogs are a part of the website, and the post is properly optimized, each post will be indexed as a new page on the site and will help to boost search engine rankings, by growing content specific to your business.

-Blogs can be set up so you can post directly to your biz Facebook page, to Twitter, and be sent out via Mailchimp (or other email management systems).

-Blogs enable you to position yourself as an “expert” in your field by providing more in depth content to your customers and to search engines.

-Link back to a related page on your website to help tie them together and drive more traffic to your site. This can be done with a call-to-action or just a reference to details on your website.

- Post at least once a month, twice or more if you can. Great way to stay on your customer’s radar screen and offer helpful information.



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# EMAIL MARKETING

- Recommend using an Email Management System such as Mailchimp (free up to 2000 names) or Constant Contact, Vertical Response etc
- Legally people must be able to unsubscribe within the email and technically need to opt in or give permission per Email Privacy & CAN-SPAM Act
- Provide a form for people to sign up at farmers markets, at the farmstand, or at events
- Visitors can opt in through a link on your website, directly into the database on an email management system
- Send out campaigns (or communications) via a branded template
- Sync with your blog so all posts go out automatically or on a scheduled day of the week to all subscribers



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# ONLINE DIRECTORIES & RESOURCES

## **NH Dept of Agriculture Markets & Food**

<http://agriculture.nh.gov/publications/index.htm>

## **DirectoryNH.com**

<http://www.directorynh.com/NHagriculture/NHFarmStands.html>

## **Small and Beginner Farmers of NH**

[http://www.sbfnh.org/farm\\_directory](http://www.sbfnh.org/farm_directory)

## **Farmers Market Online- NH directory (free)**

<http://www.farmersmarketonline.com/fm/NewHampshire.htm>

## **New Hampshire Farms Network (free)**

<http://www.newhampshirefarms.net/guide-to-local-foods>

## **NH Fruit Growers Association**

<http://www.nhfruitgrowers.org/member-directory.htm>

## **Local Harvest (free)**

<http://www.localharvest.org/>



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# ONLINE DIRECTORIES & RESOURCES

## **NH Farmers Market Association**

<http://www.nhfma.org/>

## **Eat Wild- Pastured Products Directory**

<http://www.eatwild.com/products/newhampshire.html>

## **NOFA-NH**

<http://nofanh.org/>

## **NH.com**

<http://www.nh.com/nhguides/whattodo/nh-farms-and-pick-your-own/csa/>

## **Farm Stay U.S.**

<http://www.farmstayus.com>

**Homestay.com** <http://www.homestay.com/>

## **North American Farmer Direct Marketing and Agritourism (NAFDMA)**

<http://www.farmersinspired.com/>

## **Other Membership Directories by Product or Association**



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