



advertisement



FEATURE ARTICLES

[Home](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[Current Issue](#)
[Articles](#)
[Press & News](#)
[Directory](#)
[Resources](#)
[Online Stores](#)
[Forums](#)
[Advertise](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Add Your Site](#)
[Contact Us](#)

[Home](#) » [Articles Home](#) » [Webmaster Survival in a Down Economy](#)

Webmaster Survival in a Down Economy

by Dyanna S. Culp Temos

Successful self taught webmasters helped give birth to the Internet. Some of us are making a damn good living, but the independent freelance market is saturated and extremely competitive.



Wetfeet.com (which provides average salary levels for various occupations) shows full time webmasters earning on average between \$40,000 and \$100,000 annually.

If the bottom drops out from under you and you crave security, consider school. There is a staggering market for certified Web designers as full time corporate employees. There are currently more permanent positions available than there are certified designers. For some of us this is not an option, we're too independent and love our freedom. We free spirits need a strong disposition and an arsenal of business weapons.

Become invaluable to your clients. BE FLEXIBLE, think chameleon.

What is a webmaster? Many webmasters seek only the thrill of the design process. After one job is done they're off to searching for the next challenge.

Webmasters do design Web sites, but the job title can encompass so much more. Typical webmaster duties might include: Web design, keeping files and directory structures loaded and running properly, and perhaps some engine submissions.

"We free spirits need a strong disposition and an arsenal of business weapons..."

Expand Your Job Definition, Become an Internet Business Consultant

- Develop a niche- a webmaster/writer, webmaster/SEO expert, or become known as an expert for certain industries.
- Keep up with the latest research and trends on usability and design.
- Offer to incorporate a Web design "look" into traditional print graphics such as letterheads, brochures and business cards.
- Run stats programs and compile reports on top traffic referrers, top search keywords, primary entry and exit pages, average user time spent on pages, etc.-all of which offer feedback for a company's Marketing division on how to improve site design/content and visitor satisfaction.

- Internet Marketing is the Holy Grail and consistent money maker. An SEO (search engine optimization) expert makes a new site attractive to engines, but Internet marketing encompasses much more than just SEO. Internet marketing provides regular work and high pay since the rules of the engine game constantly change. Enter this arena only if you truly have expertise. Billing for poor results will result in permanently lost clients.

Become a partner in client business decisions, not just the IT robot. Who is the site's audience? What information does the site need to gather from visitors? How will that information be used to help the company business? As the webmaster you must explain how the site design helps achieve the company goals. Less than 50 percent of Web site visitors come back a second time. Offer design/content suggestions to develop compelling reasons for visitors to come back again and again. Wiggle your way into the Marketing team. When you begin to engage clients in critical decisions for Web design, they see you as a business partner, not just the webmaster.

While the cash flow is streaming steady:

- Update all computer equipment, hardware and software. Take care of all those business expenses you keep putting off, they're tax deductible.
- Pay critical expenses such as rent/house payment, car, phone and DSL 3-6 months in advance.
- Stash cash to cover a minimum of TWO month's worth of expenses, preferably a year's worth.
- No matter how busy you get, keep in touch with important business contacts.
- Count your blessings.

You don't want to find yourself in dire need while you're poor and job hunting. Being prepared in advance saves your sanity and makes you appear less "needy" while hunting down jobs.

You're out of work...

Resumes, References and Portfolios

Resumes -- Resumes (you need multiple versions) are your first line of attack in the battle for jobs. If you fail here, you're stopped cold in your tracks. Resumes showcase experience and accomplishments, but different employers are looking for different skills. One resume will not fit all possible employers. Keep resumes brief and concise, if possible on one page, two pages if you have extensive relevant work experience.

I personally keep FOUR major types of resumes on file, each in a Word document and an html e-mail format:

1. An Internet Consultant resume covering every job experience, from Web design to professional writing and marketing work
2. A Web Designer resume
3. An Internet Marketing/SEO expert resume
4. A professional writer resume

If you're applying for a position and unsure of the job criteria- emphasize your specific skills and achievements. For example:

- Coordinated efforts with marketing department to design a Web site that provides fast, easy access to product information and sales questions.
- Collaborated with marketing department to redesign corporate site for promoting new logo and corporate branding.
- Interfaced with Marketing Department to establish online advertising campaigns

References -- While you don't need them, collect references full of praise from the highest position possible. Letters from company presidents and VPs look particularly good. Don't just ask for a reference. In an e-mail or written letter, request a reference and state what you would like them to discuss - for example: design skills, marketing roles...

Portfolios -- Portfolios are critical for webmasters seeking work. A Web site portfolio should include URL links to sites for which you've written content, designed, and/or done Internet Marketing. An online portfolio is the best way to showcase your experience. Make it easy for potential employers to view your work. Urls of previous work should also be included on your written resume.

The New Version of Networking

Every friend, acquaintance, family member, and chance meeting can provide a possible new client. Always carry business cards, everywhere you go. A webmaster business card should include the URL of your online portfolio, email, main phone number and a cell phone number. Come up with a business slogan that makes you memorable, mine is "Warrior in the Battle against Mediocrity."

***"Every friend,
acquaintance, family
member, and chance
meeting can provide a
possible new client..."***

Invest in top quality well designed cards. Flimsy cards printed on your home computer do not leave a professional impression. Online forums, chat rooms etc. are also valuable networking resources. Remember anyone and everyone you have contact with, whether face-to-face or online, are potential sources of new jobs.

Cold Calls by e-mail, phone, and door-to-door

If your business is down, it's essential for survival to make those emotionally draining cold calls. Cold calls to potential clients should consist of e-mails customized to fit each contact, phone calls, and the old fashioned door-to-door tactic.

Dialing the numbers and walking the pavement -- Design a colorful informational flyer on the benefits of a company having a Web site and what you have to offer as a webmaster. Then pull out your local yellow pages and start looking for companies that could benefit from a Web site either for sales, collecting information, or serving as a company's online brochure. Make two lists: top choices and secondary choices. Search online to see if your top choices have an existing site.

Get in the car (dressed to kill, carrying fliers and business cards) and show up at the door of those either without sites or with old ugly Web sites. Leave fliers and cards everywhere you go. If you can't see someone in charge, be friendly with the receptionist and leave your materials at the front desk. Schedule a maximum four hours of door to door, then go home for a drink and a nap. The indifference and rejections are withering to the soul. Remember that traditional high ticket item sales, either by phone or door to door, consider one success out of a hundred cold calls to be a high return on time invested. After you've recovered from the morning, spend an hour or two calling those on your secondary list. Be your best at every meeting and call, one success can lead to multiple future referrals.

Job Markets Online

Some job sites specialize in the tech fields. Peruse the job offerings and sign yourself up as a job seeker. When signing up, use an "alternate" e-mail

address such as hotmail. These sites are notorious for selling e-mail address lists. Where to get started:

- Smarterwork www.smarterwork.com -- designers bid on freelance Web design. They require you to pass a "test" to qualify for a Web designer listing.
- Creative Moonlighter (formerly Guru) www.creativemoonlighter.com -- No bidding, just apply for posted jobs.
- Creative Freelancers www.freelancers.com -- No bidding, just posted jobs.
- Media Bistro www.mediabistro.com -- No bidding, just posted jobs.

Responding to job offerings by e-mail

DO NOT send a generic cover letter that will be immediately deleted. Think up some short intriguing subject lines. Visit the company's current Web site, do some searching, include something in your e-mail that specifically addresses their needs. Show you're paying attention, if one is provided anywhere (even in a listed e-mail as in connie@aol.com) use a real name in the salutory- not just a dear sir or miss. Signing up at job sites, monitoring listings and applying are all time consuming endeavors. Save this strategy for a last resort while you're waiting for other efforts to pay off.

Tax deductible job hunting

Keep track of every penny and save every receipt. You must use an itemized tax return to claim these deductions and the expenses must exceed 2% of your adjusted gross income to be deductible. You can only claim these deductions if you're hunting for jobs in your current line of work. If you're a former steel worker you can't deduct the costs of looking for work as a webmaster. If you have a home office you can deduct a portion of home utility bills and any home repairs. For instance if your office space is 20% of your home, you can deduct 20% of all utilities and home repairs such as roofing or plumbing jobs. You can also deduct percentages of maintenance costs for lawn care or housekeeping. A good tax accountant will save you money far beyond the cost of their fees.

Tax Deductible Expenses:

- Subscriptions to professional magazines and newsletters, online job sites, local newspapers with job ads.
- Resume and business card preparation and distribution, including: paper, stamps, printing and faxing costs.
- Long distance phone calls to prospective employers.
- Travel expenses, including gas, airfare and lodging.
- If your new job requires moving to a new city, you can deduct the cost of relocating if the distance between your new job and old home is at least 50 miles more than the distance between your old job and home.

Volunteering Your Services

If you have the spare time, volunteer to design or update a site for some poor public entity or non-profit group. Environmental organizations, wildlife refuges, public schools, charity groups- all could benefit from the expertise of a formal webmaster. Designing them a free site will make you feel needed, boost your morale, help out a worthy cause, and spread the word that you're a webmaster with a heart.

Webmasters must continually evolve to survive in today's changing global economy. The more skills and experience you have to offer, the more invaluable you become. The chameleon knows how to change colors to fit in with its surroundings. We must be able to do the same, to become as needed: a web designer, a programmer, a content writer, an online marketing campaign consultant, or an SEO expert.

 [Printer Friendly Version](#) 

[Home](#) | [News & PR](#) | [Articles](#) | [Links Directory](#) : [Affiliate Program Directory](#) : [Resources](#) | [Online Stores](#) | ,

Copyright © 2004-2005 Clicks Magazine. All rights reserved.
Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.

[Subscribe Free](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Advertising Information](#)