

How to Create a 5-Page Professional Website for your Small Business

A simple path using Bluehost and WordPress

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Congratulations on starting your small business! You may already have your LinkedIn profile and your social media presence, and now you are ready to launch your website: *your digital business card* for the 21st century. You're in control of your business -- and it makes sense that you want to be in control of your website, too.

With this manual, you can create your website, adapt it, edit and change it as needed, without relying on (and paying) someone else. **You can do it!** I've been through the process, and created this manual based on my experiences. We will walk through the process together. Let's get started.

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Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!

There are dozens of decisions involved in creating your website, from design and content to technical considerations – but don't worry about making any mistakes. I have made some recommended decisions for you regarding website hosting and website software, so we can follow a "Simple Path" for your first website. You can always make changes as your business evolves, because you will understand the nuts and bolts of your website.

I have done my best to clearly explain steps in this technical manual. Websites are subject to change, however. If anything in this manual is unclear, email rroffo@comcast.net and I will help guide you.

-- Roberta Roffo

Part I: Important Considerations for Your Website

A great small business website looks professional, is client-focused, and is persuasive in selling your services.

1. Your Website Needs to Look Professional

You're a professional service provider, and clients are looking for you. A good first impression of your website is important. In that first moment when a potential client finds you, you want your image to convey that you're the serious professional they need, and that potential client should continue reading your website. Research has documented that if you do not convey a professional impression within the first 8 seconds, the potential client is likely to leave your website and look elsewhere.

Research professional websites, and take note of the following key components:

- A clean, not cluttered, look
- Easy to read, not overly busy with complicated backgrounds
- Clear message, with clarity of what the business can do for clients
- Contact information is easy to find
- Navigation is easy; there are no broken links
- A call-to-action is found on every page
- Pages are error-free
- In sum, the website looks **professional** – a potential client feels confident they are dealing with a professional in their field, and they are in the right place.

Start to gather ideas for the design of your own business website, and what information you would like to include.

2. Your Website Needs to be Client-focused

Your website content should speak directly to your ideal client, addressing their perceived concerns and stating **the solutions you can provide** to reduce their stress. Think about who those clients will be, and exactly how you can help them.

What do you bring to the table that will help potential clients achieve the goals that they have for their businesses? Create a list of the attributes of your business that would be beneficial for prospective clients. On the home page, plan to highlight the products or services that will help your potential clients achieve their goals.

Fundamentals of Persuasion

As you draft your content, keep in mind the fundamentals of persuasion that include three simple rules when you write sales copy. After all, you are selling yourself with your website.

1. **The first Rule of Selling is that your job is to help the prospect solve a problem.** Be understanding and make them feel comfortable; do not make them feel like they are being sold to.
2. **The second Rule of Selling and secret of persuasion is that people buy with their emotions, not logic.** Emotions that make people buy include saving time, fear, greed, vanity, lust, pride, envy and laziness.
3. **The third Rule of Selling is to include rational reasons for the buying decision.** Once your prospect is emotionally sold, he needs to justify his buying decision with rational reasons. Appeal to your prospect's logic with facts, statistics, and stories that help the prospect feel good about their emotional buying decision. You are helping the prospect justify their purchase.

3. Your Website Needs to Move Potential Clients Forward with Contact Information and Persuasive, Benefit-focused Calls-to-Action, showing Clients the clear Next Steps

Potential clients take action to connect with you when your message is persuasive and inspires them to take action to reach out.

You want to ensure that potential clients take action: contacting you by phone or email, filling out a form, or downloading a document – so you can easily follow up with them.

You want to know that potential clients were at your website, and you want the opportunity to be able to follow up with them, to discuss the scope of their project and potentially start a relationship. Calls-to-action will help you know who visited your site.

One of the most common calls-to-action is simply to ask website visitors to contact you. Your phone number and/or email are at the top of your website home page, or at the bottom of every single page, or you have a Contact form.

Another call-to action is that you could offer something of value in exchange for email addresses to collect leads to begin your own email prospect list. Your gift could be a free report or e-book, or some training or another helpful product.

On every page, there should always be a call-to-action, a forward step, a way for you to know someone was there and a way to connect with them. Whether that is to contact you, to access your free offering or something else, you don't want someone to get to the end of the page and realize there's nothing else there for them – a dead end; no way to connect with you. They would just leave your website without contacting you; and move on to your competitor.

Part II: Website Content Considerations

Consider Your Business Website Domain Name

A domain name (often just called a *domain*) is an easy-to-remember name that is associated with a physical 10-number Internet Protocol (IP) address on the Internet. Using a domain name to identify a location on the Internet, rather than the numeric Internet Protocol (IP) address, makes it much easier to remember and type web addresses.

The domain name appears after the *www.* in web addresses; and after the @ sign in email addresses.

As an example, the domain name *technicalwriter.com* might translate to the physical address *198.102.434.8*.

Other examples of domain names are *google.com*, *wikipedia.org*, *ssa.gov*, *Harvard.edu* and *musictheory.net*.

Anyone can purchase a domain name. You just go to a domain host or registrar, find a name no one else is using, and pay a small annual fee to own it.

Three Choices for your Business Website Domain Name

You typically have three options for choosing your business website domain name:

1. Your personal name: *JohnDoe.com*.
2. Your company name: *Gulfcoastapliancerepair.com*.
3. Your niche plus your service. Ex: *technicalwriting.com*, *petcopywriter.com*, *industrialwriter.com*, *dentalwriter.com*, *realestatewriter.com*.

Choosing a good domain name is important because that's going to be the name of your site, and what someone types in an address bar to reach your site. Choose a domain name that is easy to promote. Think of how it will look in print, or on a business card. Does the name explain or implicate the products or services you offer?

Criteria for Choosing a Domain Name

Choose a Name that is:

- **Easy to remember.** You may want to give someone your domain name, but they may not be able to write it down at that moment. Ideally you want a memorable domain name.
- **Easy to spell** or key into a phone; so short is better than long.
- **the .com** of that domain. One of the main reasons is because everybody assumes “.com” if they don't really know what the extension is; .com is the most common domain extension. If you have the “.net” extension, you may lose out on some traffic to whoever's got the “.com.”

- **Clear over clever.** For example, paws4u.com is clever, but you're going to forever be explaining that it's the number four, not the letters F O R; and the letter U instead of Y O U.
- **Reflective of the services you offer.** Example: Roffoprofessionalwriting.com
- **Inclusive of keywords in the domain name** to help with SEO keyword searches. Example: learnelectronicsonline.com
- **Still workable as your business grows.** If your business evolves to offer more services, it is preferable not to need to develop a new business website and domain name.

Determine if a Domain Name is Available

Research what domain names are already in use in your field. There are two sites to find out if a domain name is available: GoDaddy.com and instantdomainsearch.com.

If the domain name you want is taken, choose the next best name that fits most of the criteria above.

If a domain name is available, but it's one letter off another already popular domain, steer clear of that to avoid confusion.

Deciding between using Your Personal Name, a Business Name or a Niche Name

First, decide if you're going to market yourself as a solo professional, or as a company.

You may choose your own name -- but realize that will not help someone find you in a Search Engine/SEO keyword search, **unless they already know** to type **your name** into Google.

If you are marketing yourself as a company, then you'll likely want your domain name to be your company name.

And think about how specialized your niche is, and about the future of your business. Putting your niche into your domain name or your business name can give you instant recognition and help people find you on Google when they are keyword-searching. *However, you are then tied to that niche, so if you decide to do something different later, that domain may not continue to be very useful.*

To Brainstorm Additional Potential Domain Names

If the name you want is taken and you're trying to come up with different alternatives, you can go to Bustaname.com. Type one or two words and bustaname.com will come up with different patterns for you to try, and hopefully you'll come up with something perfect.

Be thinking of possible domain names; and have some alternative domain names in mind, in case your ideas are already taken. (Domains will be discussed in more detail in Part III, Technical Decisions.)

Now, Draft the **Content** for your Three to Five Website Pages

You will want to create plenty of interesting, magnetic content for your web pages. It does not need to be perfect at the start – just get your ideas down and they will evolve!

These three pages are recommended as the core pages of your website:

- Home page
- About page
- Contact page

Two more pages of your choice are recommended. Five website pages should suffice to explain most small businesses.

Pages on your Website: Home, About, Contact-- and choose two more

Your First Page – The Home Page

Your Home page is the potential client's first impression of you as a professional service provider, so begin with "Identifying Your Ideal Client."

Identify on your Home page who your ideal client is

Write to that exact person to make sure you're attracting them to your website. And once they get to your website, your content needs to make them feel good about you and your value, so they will take action to hire you.

Make all the copy on your Home page benefit-oriented towards the potential client. **It's not just about you, it's about the potential client and what you can do for them.** Put yourself in your potential client's shoes and mindset.

When the potential client comes to your website, your job on this Home page is:

- to get their attention
- to convince them that they're in the right place
- to prove to them that they have found a professional who can complete their project; solve their problem.

You only have a few seconds

A key to remember about the Home page is that you only have a few seconds to tell the prospective client what you offer and how you will benefit them. You must be as specific as possible, to stand out from everyone else. So, make that first impression and communicate to the potential client that they are in the right place.

Know the basic principles of copywriting: what's in it for me (WIIFM): me being the prospective client. When the prospective clients come to your website, within just a few sentences, what do you have for them on your website? Why should they stay on your website and continue seeing if there is a fit?

Continue with How You Can Solve Potential Clients' Problems: Next, consider what problems your ideal clients are looking to solve when they come to your website. Keep this in mind when you write the copy for your website. This will ensure that, when your ideal clients find your website, the copy and content you have written is relevant to them.

What would you say on your home page about your ideal client and how you can solve their problems with your skills? What can you do for them? What benefits do you offer?

Now that the client is on the homepage, what do you want them to do next? Remember those persuasive benefit-focused Call-to-Actions.

Be specific with your Call-to-Actions. As examples, you can:

- Provide navigation buttons to click through to link potential clients forward to your other pages, such as your About page, your Services or your Process pages;
- Ask clients to contact you: clearly provide your contact information and/or ask them to fill out a form to submit to you;
- Offer a report, e-book or other valuable information: something to collect “leads (email addresses).”

The key is give prospects multiple opportunities to say YES:

1. yes to click through
2. yes to contact you
3. yes to fill out the form
4. yes to download the e-book.

I recommend having a call-to-action at the end of every single web page to allow the client to contact you and stay involved with your website “every step of the way.” Whatever your Call-to-Action is, make it as easy as possible and give potential clients plenty of opportunities to *stay on your website and continue engaging with you and your content.*

Get some thoughts on paper – you can always edit your thoughts, and your website, later, because **you** are in charge.

Your Second Page – The About Page:

Your About page has the same intention as the Home page, which is to sell you and your services, but your About page goes into more specifics about who you are and what you do.

By visiting your About page, your potential client is saying, “Please tell me more.” They want to know more about you. On this page, focus on your experience: your knowledge of your industry; any licenses or certifications you have. Include anything that ties you to the niche that you’re servicing. Potential clients are looking for a deeper dive into who you are, and what you can provide for them.

You might talk about your understanding of or empathy with the potential client and the issue they are searching for help with. This is your opportunity to really connect with your client and the industry that they serve.

Your Third Page – The Contact Page:

When someone wants to reach out to you to hire you for their project, they need to be able to contact you. You definitely want a Contact page on your website.

Make your Contact page as easy and clean as possible. Show multiple ways that clients can reach you: phone number, email and/or fill out this form. Adding a little bit of fun and personality, maybe a picture, into your contact page is okay as well.

Your Contact page is another place to let your prospects know you want to hear from them and you're ready to learn more about their project needs and goals. Your Contact page should include social media icons and links to your profiles. Be sure to have a strong, clear call-to-action.

Questions and Answers: Do I have to have a phone number? Do I have to give my mailing address? No, you do not. You could just use a form, especially if you want to pre-qualify people before giving them your personal contact details. You'll see what works for you and what you're most comfortable with.

Two Additional Pages: Consider including any two of these ten page ideas:

- a Services page, especially if you offer more than one service, or bundles of services;
- a Products page if you sell products;
- a Process page about your steps and methods;
- a FAQ or Q & A page;
- a Testimonials page;
- a Samples page;
- a Clients page;
- a Blog;
- a Lead Generation page where you give away a product in exchange for receiving a potential client's email address;
- perhaps even a History of the Company page, if that would be interesting and relevant.

If these page ideas don't excite you, think of your own creative ideas for web pages – whatever information *you* think a potential client would want to know about your business services or products.

Decision: Which Two Additional Pages to Include?

Which additional pages to include in your website? The ones that make you look best! Choose the pages that show the most relevancy, provide the most value, do the best job of selling you to potential clients and persuading them to hire you. Is there enough information for them to decide to contact you as the very best professional to discuss their project?

Points to Remember:

- look at your website through the eyes of the client;
- choose the pages that do the best job at selling you and your services;
- you can always add/change pages later;

The key is just to **get your website up and going**, so you can start marketing and start attracting clients.

TASK To Do before Proceeding to Part III:

- Check to see if your preferred domain name is available by checking godaddy.com.
- If it is not available, follow the advice given above to choose an available domain name.
- Do not buy your domain name yet from godaddy.com. Using our Simple Path to creating your first website, we recommend you acquire your domain name from your recommended host company. More on that in Part III.

Part III: Technical Considerations on the Simple Path for Website Hosting, Software & Platform, and Theme

In Part II you chose your domain name and drafted three to five pages for your website. The remainder of this manual will cover the technical considerations of hosting, software & platform and your website theme in Part III; and then actually building and launching your website in Part IV.

There are many technical decisions to make, and to get your website up as quickly as possible on the Simple Path, follow these recommendations:

1. Use [Bluehost.com](https://www.bluehost.com) as your website hosting site; this is also where you will input your requested business website domain name
2. Use [WordPress.org](https://www.wordpress.org) as your website software and platform, where you will use the tools such as Drag and Drop to build your website
3. Use Generate Press as your theme for building your website and determining how it will appear.

Your hosting site is where your website will physically live, on a server computer far, far away!

- Your hosting company provides a home for your website, and allows your website to be found on the web
- It allows you to have a custom domain name associated with that website, like [RoffoProfessionalWriting.com](https://www.roffoprofessionalwriting.com)
- As soon as you type your domain: [RoffoProfessionalWriting.com](https://www.roffoprofessionalwriting.com), you will be physically linked to the computer where all the files that make up your website are stored.
- The host will allow you an email address on your domain: for example, Roberta@RoffoProfessionalWriting.com
- An email on your own domain looks more credible and professional than a Hotmail or Yahoo or Gmail address.
-
- The hosting company maintains all those computers for an annual or monthly subscription fee
- There are other options, but on the Simple Path recommended here, you will be setting up your website, and your business email, within your Bluehost hosting account.

1. Learn About the [Bluehost.com](https://www.bluehost.com) website hosting site and purchase your Bluehost account

At the end of Part II, it was recommended that you not buy your domain name from [godaddy.com](https://www.godaddy.com) – and the reason is because you can just acquire and input your domain name from [bluehost.com](https://www.bluehost.com) when you purchase your Bluehost website hosting account. It is much

simpler in the beginning stages to do all the required tasks at the same time and on the same site, rather than to have to link your domain name from godaddy.com to bluehost.com.

A second reason we recommend Bluehost is that there is a cost savings! Bluehost (as well as most other hosting companies) will include one domain name as part of your hosting account, which means your domain name will be free. Sometimes it's free just for the first year, but sometimes your one original domain name remains included with your hosting subscription.

A third reason we recommend Bluehost for the Simple Path recommended in this manual, is that you'll want a host that has a simple one-click **WordPress website software and platform installation.** Bluehost.com does.

TASK To Do before Proceeding to Part IV:

- Obtain your website's foundation: purchase your Bluehost account, with the domain name you decided on in Part II.

Detailed Instructions, following our Simple Path:

1. Go to Bluehost.com and click the yellow "Get Started" Call-to-Action button.

Scroll down to see four choices of Plans, from Basic to Pro, with different options and annual or monthly prices, which may change with different promotions and sales.

2. Choose your Plan out of four choices.

The Basic Plan for a simple website should suffice for your small business beginning website. As of this writing, 1/6/2025, the basic plan is \$2.95/month for your first 12-month term, currently renewing at \$11.99/month.

The second plan, Choice Plus, does include storage, security and back-ups, so you may want to choose that: currently priced at \$5.45 a month for the first year, renewing at \$21.99 a month.

The other two more expensive Plans are for an online store; and a Pro plan for high traffic, advanced storage, security + backups.

3. Click the blue "Choose Plan" Call-to-Action button.

This takes you to the page shown below, where you will choose your free domain name (*free for one year, anyway!*). Here you can search for domain, choose domain later, or register a new domain.

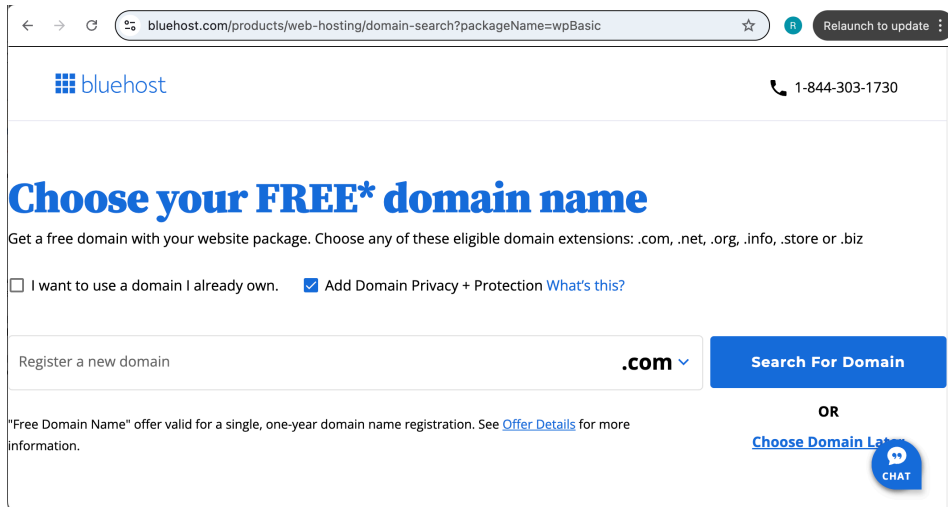


Figure 1: bluehost FREE* domain name (*for one year)

4. Register for an account and pay your first annual fee. Enter your credit card and Check out.

Congratulations! You now have your website foundation: your Bluehost account and business domain name!

2. Learn about the [Wordpress.org](https://www.wordpress.org) website software and platform, used to build your website on bluehost.com

[Wordpress.org](https://www.wordpress.org) vs. [Wordpress.com](https://www.wordpress.com)

We most often use .com websites, but in this case, we will use wordpress.org, NOT wordpress.com.

What is the difference between [wordpress.org](https://www.wordpress.org) and [wordpress.com](https://www.wordpress.com), and why are we using .org instead of .com? The reason is that [wordpress.com](https://www.wordpress.com) came first and is primarily a blogging platform, not a website platform – and [wordpress.org](https://www.wordpress.org) was designed later to function as a website platform, with many options for themes and plugins.

Website software vs. website platform (credit to “Google AI Overview” 1/6/25):

"Website software" refers to the application programs used to create and manage a website; the underlying code and tools that allow a website to function and be accessible through a web browser. The software powers a website and enables users to interact with it online.

Key points about website software:

- **Accessed through a browser:**

Unlike traditional software installed on a computer, website software is accessed through a web browser like Chrome, Firefox, or Safari.

- **Web technologies:**

It is built using web technologies such as HTML, CSS, and JavaScript to create the structure, appearance, and functionality of the website.

- **Server-side processing:**

The software often runs on a server, processing requests from users and delivering the appropriate content.

- **Examples of website software:**

- **Content Management Systems (CMS)** like WordPress allow users to easily add, edit, and manage content on a website *without complex coding*.

“Website platforms” can help streamline the website development process and make it accessible to users with varying levels of technical expertise. They can include:

- A user-friendly interface, such as a drag-and-drop system
- Tools for web design
- Content management and hosting

TASK: With our Simple Path, plan to install [Wordpress.org](https://wordpress.org) software directly from [Bluehost.com](https://bluehost.com), as detailed in Part IV.

While the wordpress.org software is available at wordpress.org, we make it very easy on the Simple Path: you can also download your WordPress software directly from the Bluehost site.

With the Simple Path, you are using the WordPress software, but you’re self-hosting on your own hosting account -- in this case Bluehost -- *rather than your website being hosted by WordPress*.

The WordPress software is a content management system (CMS), meaning it keeps track of all your contents, files and images, keeping everything well-organized.

A WordPress.org software website brings into use a lot of the things that you **used** to need a trained programmer to do. Now, with WordPress and WordPress themes, it’s much easier for nontechnical people to be able to create a website and work on it on their own.

WordPress has also made it inexpensive to host a website. The WordPress software itself is free. And there are lots of options, and you have a lot of control over what you want to do, within some limits.

As more and more people use WordPress, and more developers get involved, this increases the number of options, and it increases the support; which increases the chances that if you’re having a problem and you Google it, you’ll probably find the answer.

Part IV will provide the instructions to install the WordPress software and your theme!

Part IV: Building and Publishing Your Website!

In Part II, you designed your small business website content and chose your domain name. In Part III, you purchased your Bluehost subscription together with your domain name.

Part IV will guide you to log in to your Bluehost account and install your WordPress website software and your GeneratePress or other theme for your website page design and appearance.

Then, you will actually build the pages of your website based on that theme, create the navigation -- and publish your website!

You will learn how to add and edit your content in the future.

My goal is for you to be able to create, develop and maintain your website as much as possible from beginning to end yourself, as I did.

It will be really fun to see your website come together -- and *Go Live* on the Internet! **Let's do it!**

Instructions to Install WordPress

Log into your Bluehost account.

On the left, under the nine blue squares, is your Control Panel (c-panel). This layout sometimes changes, but there are six to seven choices here, from Home to business email, Websites, Domains, Security and Advanced. You can click into each of these areas to manage your website.

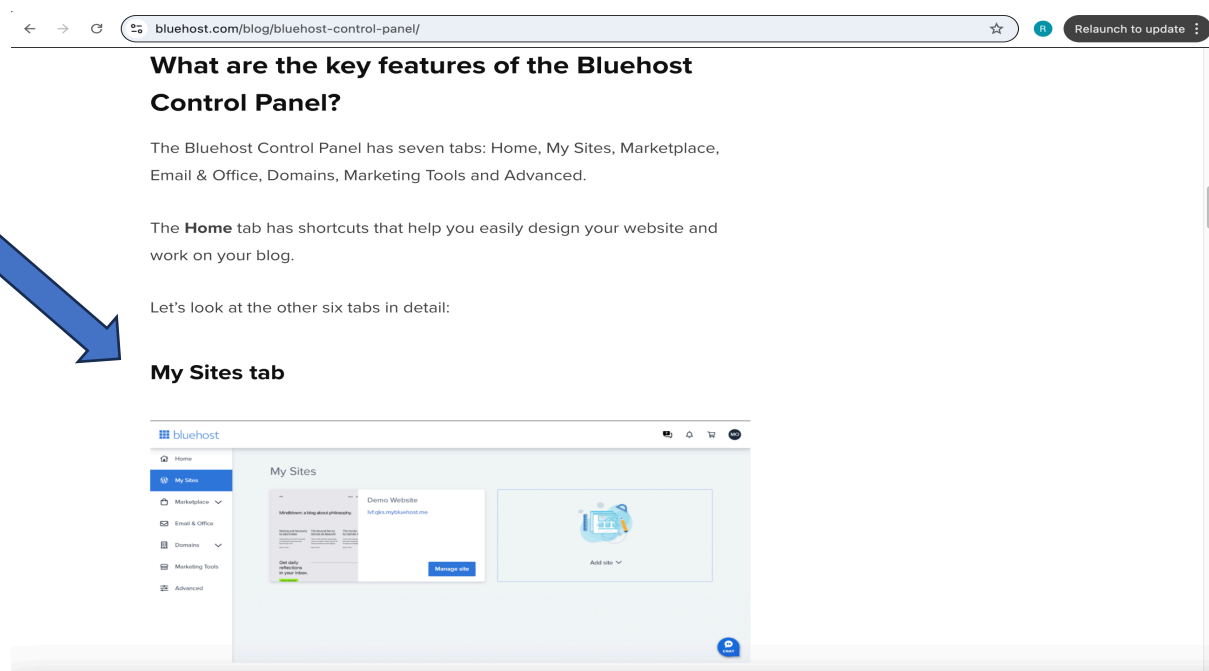


Figure 2: Bluehost Control Panel

Choose Advanced, and look for the Admin Account. The Admin Account is where you will log into your WordPress site and manage the back end when needed. Create a strong password and store it in a safe place.

Important – Items change, so search around this website to become familiar with all that it offers you. There is plenty of help!



Look for WordPress icon – a large script W; and click.

You will be prompted set up the WordPress admin account that you will use to log into your WordPress site. It's extremely important that you remember this information. Always change the default admin username, which is admin. Many know that the default admin username is often admin.

Choose the installation URL: the domain that you chose when you got your hosting. If you only have one, it will be here. If you have more than one, just use the dropdown menu to select the correct one.

Click Install, and in about 1 minute WordPress will be installed!

You will see a message: Congratulations, the software was installed successfully; listing your new website, and the administrative URL where you login to the back end of your site (your domain.com plus wp-admin).

Click the link for your domain, and the message says HELLO World! Welcome WordPress. This is your first post. Edit or delete it, then start writing!

From here it is all up to you!

Spend time on WordPress and your new site, learning all about it, both on your own and with the universe of help available on and off the site.

There are many, many resources to learn more about WordPress. Example:

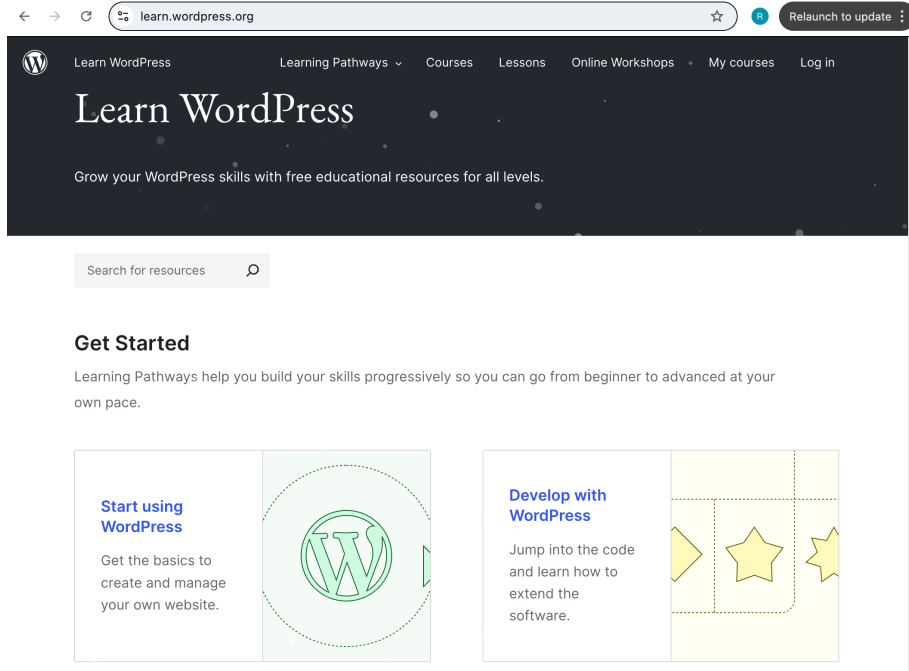


Figure 3: One of many resources to learn about WordPress

Here are some pages from my beginning website:

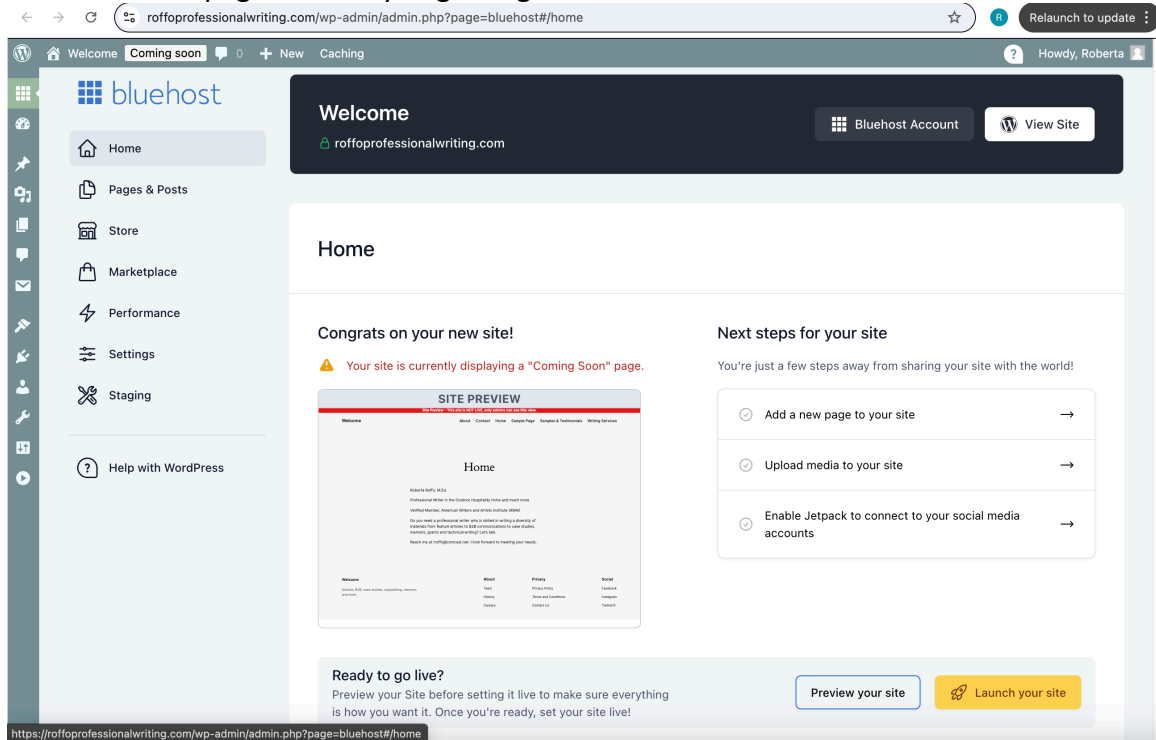


Figure 4: Welcome and Congrats message; site preview

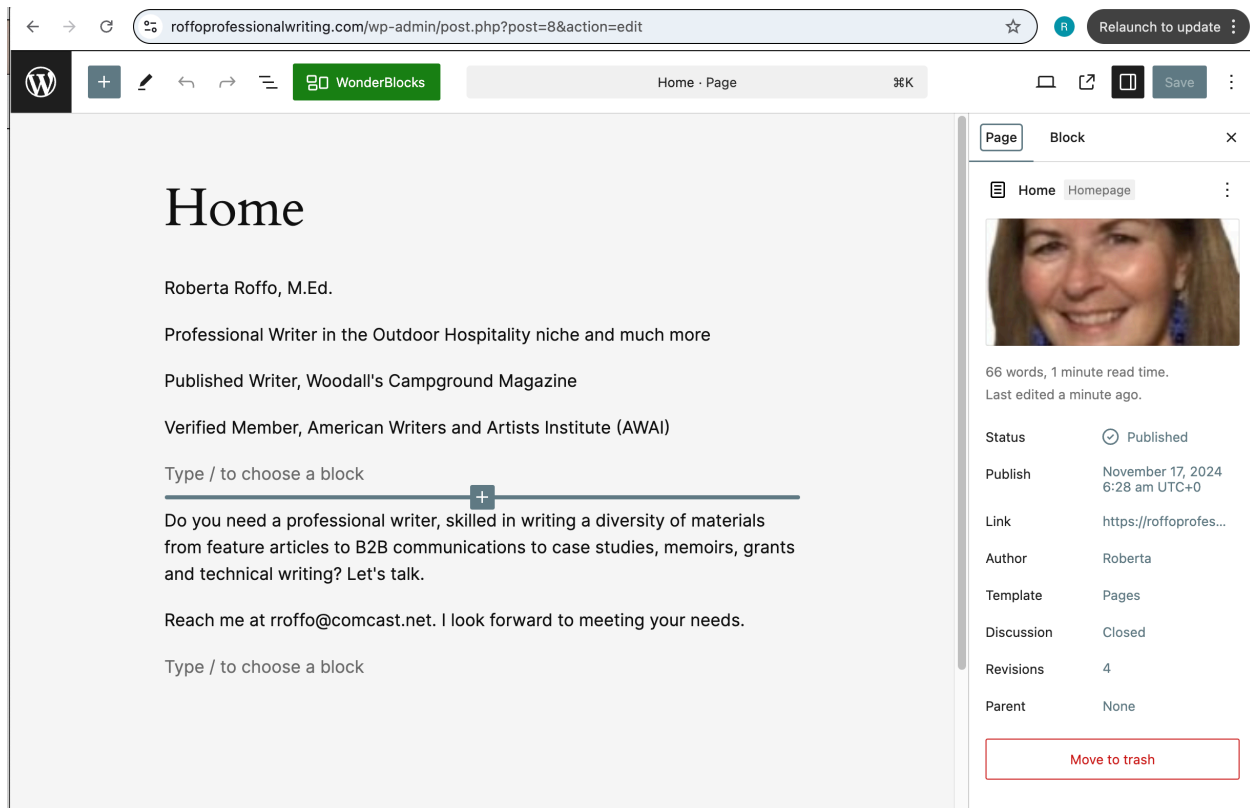


Figure 5: The beginnings of my Home page

Now, begin bringing your previously drafted content for Home, About and Contact information into your website pages.

Add your services, images, video, testimonials – whatever your like on your unique business website.

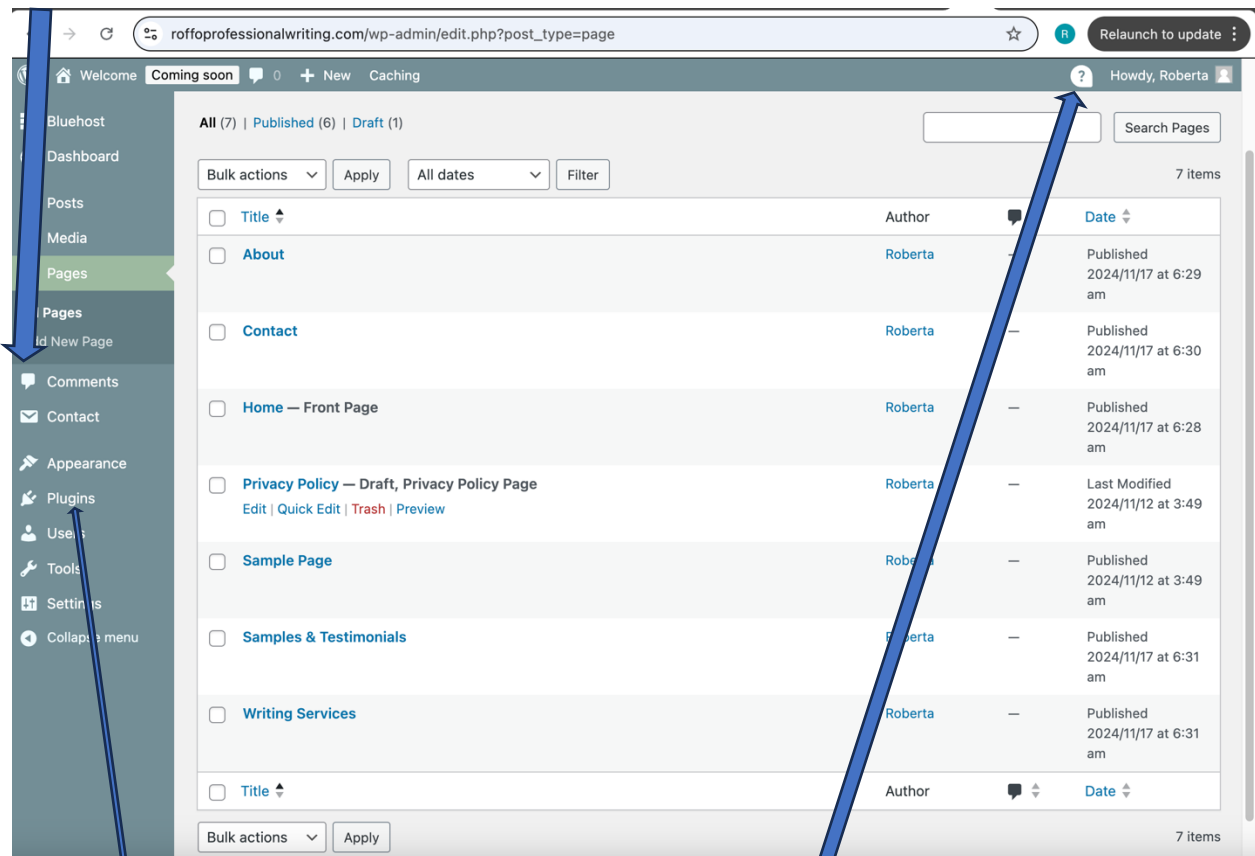


Figure 6: WordPress Dashboard of choices and Helps

On the top right you can click a question mark inside a circle. There you will find two help programs:

1. a vast knowledge base with articles, guides, how-to's, instructions, and answers to Bluehost's most frequently asked questions.
2. A phone number for a Help Line that you can call to ask questions: 1-888-401-4678.

Under Appearance, find a Theme whose layout and appearance appeal to you. We recommend GeneratePress as a good theme to begin with; this is up to you.

Below Appearances, also click to learn about Plugins, which are software such as Contact Forms that you can add to your website.

Learn to edit and to **customize** your pages with logos, images, graphics, video and more.

Tools and Settings and Navigation are also very useful sources. You can reorder your pages; add drop-down menus to the pages, add new pages and more.

You can add links to Social Media pages. You can add a blog to generate more traffic. You can learn about the importance of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) keywords in your content.

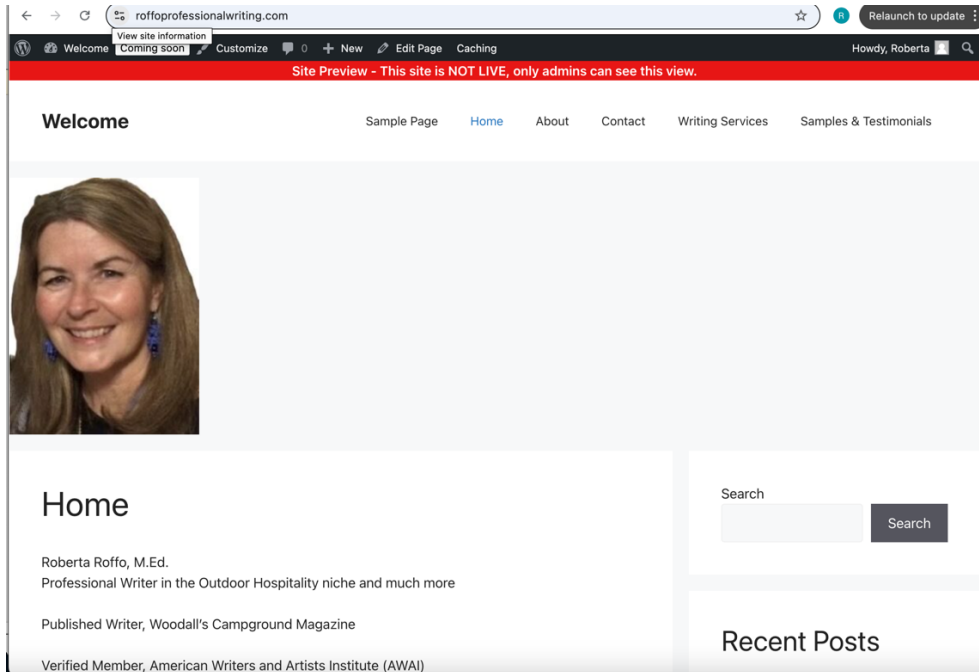


Figure 7: My beginning website with the GeneratePress theme and layout on the Home Page.

When your website is complete: Ready, Set, **Click PUBLISH! Congratulations!**

Always keep learning and tweaking and expanding your unlimited offerings on your website!

Now, you can confidently create and manage your own small business website with Bluehost.com and WordPress!