Want a Successful Team Web Site?

- Here's How!

by Kim Burge, former President, DTDA

Having a website for your team can be beneficial but it can also be a nuisance. First, it is important to define what the objective of your web site will be as well as other factors:

- ✤ Communication? Sell a Product? Collect Information?
- ✤ Investment... Are you on a limited budget?
- ✤ Time and energy spent on the development of the website.

To begin, break down the web site creation into four stages:

    1. Planning
        2. Creation
            3. Promotion
                4. Maintenance.

Each stage is as equally important as the next.

1. **PLAN**. The planning stage should be written out on paper. Begin by researching other sites on the Internet and review formats and designs that you particularly like.

- ◆ Value. There are well over three billion Web pages on the Internet What value will your team web site provide? Most likely it will be especially valuable to your team members who rely on it for updated information.
- ◆ The Domain Name. It is very important to select a good domain name, one that can be easily spoken and remembered. This also is very important when listing the site with search engines.
- ◆ Hosting. Where will your team website be hosted? You may have multiple options which may include the following:
  - ❖ School District Server
  - ❖ Free Host Server
    - ~Server Paid for by a single sponsor. Spam and ad free.
  - ❖ Server that includes spam and ads.
  - ❖ Fee Paid Host Server

An excellent article to review on this topic can be located at
    www.hostselect.info/whattolookfor.php

2. **CREATE**. Available today are multiple software programs and Web-creation tools which means that just about anyone can create a web site but it still takes skill and determination to create one that will be effective.

- ◆ Design. Avoid too many fonts, excessive animation and graphics.
- ◆ Colors. Be careful with color selections. Some colors go well together and some do not. There are multiple color schemer tools available on the Internet that will help you develop a "clean" look.
- ◆ Background. Be cautious of using a background that makes it difficult to read the test. If a background image or color is used, place the text in tables with a white background.
- ◆ Images. Select images that are of web quality (72 dpi) and not disoriented. Do not let the HTML tags alter the size of your image and make sure your images are not too large. It's always a good idea to visit your site on a dial-up connection to see how long it takes your page to load. Remember…the more images, the longer the loading time.
- ◆ Printable. Are your team members going to want to print out the contents of your web pages? If so, make sure each page prints well. You may consider converting pages into .pdf files for easier printing.
- ◆ Links. Avoid links to other web sites other than your own as your visitors can easily get lost in another site and never return. If you do link to external sites, consider programming your web page to open the link in a new window.
- ◆ Content. Consider your team's web site as a form of marketing your program. Remember that your team members may not be the only visitors to your site so you will always want to put your best foot forward. Write your con tent like you would write a sales presentation. Try answering the six most important questions: *Who, What, Why, How, Where and When?*

Areas of content to include may be:
- ❖ Home Page Link
- ❖ Announcements – Keep the latest and greatest posted.
- ❖ Calendar
- ❖ Staff
- ❖ Driving Directions to Games
- ❖ History of the Team

- ❖ An outside link to your school site
- ❖ An outside link to your district site
- ❖ News and Press Releases
- ❖ Photo Gallery
- ❖ Policies/Constitution
- ❖ Schedule
- ❖ Roster with Pictures
  1. Team
  2. Officers
  3. Managers

- ❖ Disclaimer:

Copyright©2006 All Right Reserved. Any logos, pictures and trademarks of the team name are copyrighted by "team name". Individuals should refer to the organization for clarification and confirmation. Information provided directly from the "team name" will take precedence over any information provided on this site.

Areas of content that you should be cautious about including may be:
- ♣ Discussion boards
- ♣ Chat Rooms

It is important to check with your district Internet policies concerning the posting of pictures, as well as the use of names. It is also important to acquire a publicity release form for each member's picture or name that will appear on the web site.

- ◆ New Information. Updating your information will keep users coming back for more.
- ◆ Interactivity. Consider including file downloads, rosters, calendars, an FAQ section and more!
- ◆ Navigation. Menus should be as clear and descriptive as possible. Make it easy for visitors to find what they are looking for. Keeping navigation tools in the same place on every page will assist your users with seamless navigation.

3. PROMOTE! Once you have created your site and it is tested, get the word out that it is available. Publicize the site to your team members and on any publicity material that may be distributed publicly.

4. MAINTAIN. It is important to make occasional changes in the content to keep the web site up to date. Consider these questions:
- ❖ Who will be responsible for maintaining the web site? Parent, director, student?
- ❖ Who will approve the information placed on the web site?
- ❖ How often will the web site be updated?
- ❖ Who will have access to the passwords for uploading necessary changes?
- ❖ Will there be a dedicated e-mail address for communication with the webmaster?
- ❖ Who will the domain name be registered under?

Plan, create, promote and maintain. Each step is vital to the success of a web site. It is important to take pride in maintaining and sharing your web site with the world. Remember, it is a reflection of you, your team and your school.

Resources:

- ● Calendar:
  www.localendar.com

- ● Development:
  http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/World_Wide_Web/Site_Development/

- ● Free Web Hosting
  http://personalweb.about.com/od/hostingdomainnames/

  http://personalweb.about.com/cs/hostingnohtml/a/aa040903a.htm

- ● Google Page Creator
  http://personalweb.about.com/b/a/256442.htm