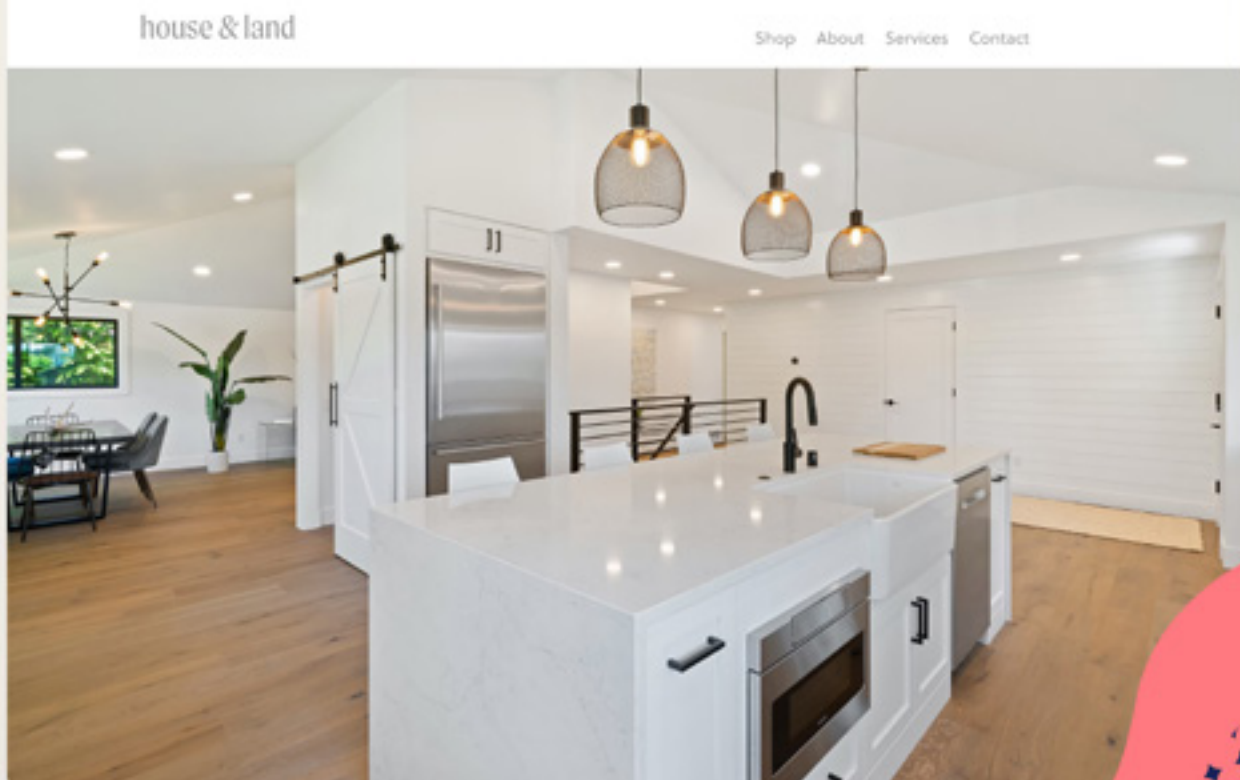


An exact guide

The 5 technical elements you need to know to design effective websites for clients

What they are, what you'll need to do, and questions to ask your clients along the way.



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Here's all the tech you should never have to think about

Here at Rocketspark for example, we take care of:

- NZ-based high quality website hosting (for reliability and faster load-speed for visitors).
- SSL certificate included (avoiding penalties from Google, distrust with visitors and loss of any already indexed URLs).
- Automatic system upgrades to keep up with browser, CSS, HTML and search engine changes.
- Carefully constructed infrastructure for maximum security.
- Unlimited band-width, meaning the website can receive as much traffic as you can muster.
- Automatic access to new Rocketspark features and updates.
- Zero plug-ins, just connections with a careful selection of all the third-party platforms your client should need (see integrations below).
- 24/7 monitoring every 60 seconds so down-time can be addressed urgently.
- Unlimited storage, no limit on text, imagery or pages.
- Mobile design controls, pictures, font and content can be adjusted and reorganised (avoiding negative customer experiences on mobile).



1. Domains

This is your client's address on the internet (rocketpark.com is ours)

- Your client pays a company (like us) around \$35 per year to host it, renewing their (annual) lease of the domain in the process.
- Your main job here will be to make sure that when their domain name is searched or clicked on, it directs to the website you've built for them.
- This can be done anytime during the website build but must be done before the website can go live.
- It is ideal to discuss this with your client before getting started with the build.

Questions to ask your client:

Do they already own a domain name(s) and if so what is it?

If they have a website, yes they do. If they don't have a website, they may have pre-purchased a domain name.

If they don't, ask:

Do they know what they want it to be?

(Your client can only purchase a domain name that isn't already owned. Please see here tips [for choosing a domain name](#)).

If they do, ask:

Do they work with an I.T company to manage their domain(s)?

If this is the case, easy. Just ask them what, if anything, they need from you and let them lead this part.

If they don't work with an IT company (quite common), ask:

Which provider is their domain(s) hosted with?

It's common that your clients won't remember, help them find out with these [simple tips](#).

Do they want to switch the domain to be hosted by the website builder you're building their new website on?

Here's a few of pointers we share to help our clients decide:

- We actually recommend businesses keep their domain hosted where it is, especially if they already have a business email using that domain (e.g partners@rocketspark.com).
- The only advantage of transferring an existing domain to us is having everything hosted in one place long-term (requires more admin in the short-term to set up, however).
- Transferring to Rocketspark can take from 10 min to 10 working days.
- There's no surcharge for using a domain name hosted elsewhere.
- Note: some domain names are locked by the host and cannot be transferred for 60 - 90 days after purchase so you should ask your clients when they purchased their domain name(s).

What you'll need to do:

- For buying a new domain name, simply purchase one from the website builder.
- For transferring hosting of the domain to the new website builder, you'll need to copy the 'UDAI code' — sometimes called AUTH code — from the old domain host and paste them into the new website builder. (Tip: get a screenshot of the DNS records at their current domain host before transferring, for a back-up record).
- For keeping hosting where it is, you'll need to copy the 'A Record' and add 'CNAME' of the website builder you're building the new site on into the settings of the existing domain host.
- With all three options, you'll also need to ensure your client's website has an SSL cert (in Rocketspark the certificate is free and auto set up).

You don't have to go it alone. If you partner with us here at Rocketspark, you'll have a team of techies ready and waiting to help. Not just on the tech-stuff, but on all things running a website service (free of charge!)

NZ | 0800 762 538

AU | 1800 491 672

UK | 020 3773 8327

Email | partners@rocketspark.com



2. Emails

Your client may have, or may want to have, a business email

(for example, partners@rocketspark.com NOT partners@gmail.com)

- You'll notice a business email includes a domain name, that's because they're linked, it's also why it's involved in the web design process.
- Like domains, your client pays a company (like us) \$5-\$15 p/m to host it.
- Emails and domains do not have to be hosted with the same company (but it can be easier to only have to deal with one).
- Your main job here will be to set one up for your client if they want one, or transfer hosting of it to the website builder (OPTIONAL).
- It is good to discuss this at the same time as discussing domains (see above), ideally before the website build begins.

Questions to ask your client:

Do they already have a business email?

They can only have a business email if they have a domain name.

If they don't, ask:

Do they want one set up?

You should recommend that your client gets one as they are important for building trust and credibility with potential customers.

If they do, ask:

Do they want to switch the domain to be hosted by the website builder you're building their new website on?

Here's a few of pointers we share to help our clients decide:

- The only advantage of transferring email hosting to us is having everything hosted in one place long-term (requires more admin in the short-term to set up, however).

- In almost all cases, we actually recommend that they do not transfer, especially if they have emails with Office 365 or Google apps.
- If transferring, your client can either migrate all their existing emails across or start with a fresh inbox (with none of their email history, contacts, etc).
- There is a fee to migrate emails across. The migration is a technical job which can be done by the existing provider or the new host. (We recommend first seeing if there is a way to manually download their current mail before deciding on a migration to avoid downtime and costs).

What you'll need to do:

- For setting up a new business account, simply purchase one from the website builder.
- For transferring hosting of the email, it is recommended you get in touch directly with the new host to organise, as there are many variables.
- For keeping the email account(s) where it is, and the domain(s) are also not being transferred, you don't need to do anything extra.
- For keeping the email account(s) where it is and the domain(s) is being transferred, contact the new host to set up the DNS/MX records for the domain to point to the email servers.



3. Integrations

We're talking about all the third-party platforms that your client needs to link to their website to make their business work:

Booking systems, email marketing, payment gateways, etc.

- A typical website client will need between 0 - 2 of these.
- Your client might tell you which ones they need or they may ask for your recommendations, but shouldn't expect you to have all of the answers. (Make sure that if you're recommending a platform, you make the client aware of the additional cost that platform will charge).
- Your main job here is to integrate these platforms with the website you're building for them.
- This can be done anytime during the website build or even after the website has gone live.
- However, it is ideal to know what your client's requirements are here before getting started.

What you'll need to do:

The exact method will differ from platform to platform. But the short story is this: copy a code provided from the third-party platform, and paste it into the website. TIP: Practice the integration on a test page first (all you've got to do is create an extra page).

Your website builder should give you the step-by-step instructions which should remove any need for previous knowledge on your part. For example, [here's a help-guide](#) to link a Rocketspark website with Mailchimp.

(Note: For linking your client's Social Media to their website via the SM icons: these should be built into the website builder and all you should have to do is copy and paste their Social Media URL into the website builder settings).

Even experienced website designers don't know everything.. and their clients don't expect them to! Still, joining a community of like-minded designers (like the one we have here at Rocketspark) will give you access to wide-ranging knowledge and experience. It's fun too!



4. SEO

Search engine optimisation

Simply: this means optimising your client's website to give it the best chance of being found by their ideal customer when they're searching for a product or service like theirs in a search engine.

- You will need to talk to your clients about what type of searches they want their website to list for before you start on their website so that you can design with them in mind.
- It is most common that you'll be the only professional working on the website, but while you need to have an understanding of the basics, you do not need to be an SEO expert (most web designers aren't).

First, what you are not responsible for:

Getting your client's website to #1 in Google search results, for every single search they can think of. Even (good) SEO specialists cannot guarantee these results—or really any specific results for that matter.

SEO is a continuous exercise and there are many factors involved in 'succeeding', many of which are not in your control (Google's complex algorithm, your client's industry and what their competitors are doing to name a few). It will make for a better relationship with your client if you set this expectation right from the start.

If your client has high ambitions for their website SEO, and is willing to make the extra investment, you could recommend they hire either of the below:

- SEO specialist - in which case you can let them take the lead on all things SEO.
- SEO copywriter - in which case they can create all the content and you do not have to worry about Step 1 (see below).

What you are responsible for:

Setting up a good foundation by getting the basics right. Simple as that.

1. Write keyword rich content

- Keywords: Refer to the words people type into Google to search for a product/service.
- Google decides which pages of which website and in which order, they should display in the results based on how relevant they are.
- One of the ways Google judges the relevance of web pages is by scanning them for the keywords or keyword terms, do they exist on the page, how often, etc.
- Keywords can be written on the actual page or behind the scenes in image descriptions, page titles, tags, and so on.

Here's where you can lean on tech to do the heavy lifting for you.

For example, Flint is a uniquely easy-to-use suite of SEO tools built into the Rocketspark website builder — free of charge. It enables you to write keyword rich content by prompting you through each essential step. It can suggest keywords based on your client's industry, business and location, write content for you, and give you an instant feedback page score so you know if you've nailed the basics. Check out [Flint for Partners](#) for confidence in your ability to deliver these basics for your client.

2. Submit a site-map

This task is not necessary to do for a client which has an existing website with the same domain name. It will, however, set up a client with a new website and a new domain name for success right from launch.

A sitemap is a special file that tells Google about every page. It's likely the website will eventually be found by Google without submitting a sitemap but it's possible that submitting a sitemap may help it show up in search results faster.

[Here's exactly step-by-step how you do that \(3 min read\).](#)

3. Setup Google My Business

[Google My Business](#) allows you to set up your business on Google Maps, allowing you to take advantage of local search traffic, Google Map reviews, and of course has SEO benefits.

[Here are the exact instructions.](#)

BONUS! 3 tips if you're redesigning a website that previously had good search rankings.

Though not guaranteed, it is possible that your client's search rankings may change, positively or negatively, when they have a new website built on (any) new platform. Give it the best chance and follow these 3 tips.

- 1. Don't change a domain name at the same time as getting a new website (if your client is re-branding for example, wait a few months).**
- 2. Be sure to retain (re-create) keyword rich headings, content, and high ranking pages in the new website.**
- 3. Set up URL redirects:**

Your client's website URLs might change when changing website platforms.

If the old pages are already ranking in search results these will stay in search results for a time. You will want to set up redirects of each page of your client's website that was ranking highly for your client's desired search terms to:

- Avoid a customer being directed to a 404 page (error: page not found).
- Direct customers to the correct equivalent page on the new website.

To give you an idea of what this might involve, check out [how it's done with Rocketspark](#).



5. Google Analytics

You should set up Google Analytics:

A free tool that will tell your clients how visitors are interacting with their website (how many visitors, which device they visited from, where in the country etc).

- Your main job here is to link Google Analytics to your client's website.
- The basics are easy, your client doesn't need you to be an expert.
- If you're offering a website build only (and not an ongoing marketing service), your client should not expect you to check in on the analytics after you've linked it.
- This is done after the website is built and has gone live.

Here's what you'll need to do:

1. Your client will need a Google Analytics account.
2. Give Google the website URL and it will give you a tracking ID.
3. You'll then paste the ID into the website settings (your website builder should have their specific step-by-step guide handy to do this).



Get a second opinion (not a hard-sell) from our ever-helpful Head of Partnerships, Jason Tiller, by [booking a call here](#).

Rocketspark is an online website builder, purpose-built for Graphic designers, Marketers and VAs. (If you can use Canva, you can use Rocketspark. If you can design it in InDesign, you can design it in Rocketspark).

We have a super loyal community of designers who choose to partner with Rocketspark to deliver their website service - [click here to see why](#).