

HOW TO SELL WORDPRESS



TO CLIENTS



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Introduction

The purpose of this ebook is to help your business sell WordPress to clients. As we know, WordPress is a highly flexible CMS that is really easy to use, but as we will explain further on it is unlikely that your client has ever heard of WordPress!

We will start by describing WordPress in a page. The idea behind this is that every good pitch should include at least an explanation of what is WordPress and what are the benefits of using using it. This will give you a starting point.

We will then go on to expand upon these points so that if you are giving a presentation you can formulate your ideas more clearly.

We have included an interview with Tammy Hart, who recently gave a talk about WordPress & Working with Clients at a WordCamp in Atlanta. Tammy shares her experiences in selling WordPress to clients, and we also link to her presentation which we think will give you inspiration for your own presentations.

Finally we talk about how best to handle questions from clients, and how including the WordPress User Manual as part of your sales pitch, can give you the edge over your competitors by providing professional and comprehensive training for your clients.

We would like to thank [Tammy Hart](#), and [40 Digits](#), for helping us put this ebook together.

Why We Use WordPress

WordPress powers over 8.5% of the web, is used on over 26 million sites, and WordPress.com is seen by over 250 million people every month.

WordPress Is Open Source (Free!)

Instead of having 6 developers supporting your website, you have got over 10,000 developers who are part of a community working to constantly improve the product. You are not going to be stuck with a CMS that only one company can use.

WordPress Is Flexible and Extendable

Flexibility allows us to build sites faster, meaning more of your budget is focused on design and user experience rather than programming and debugging. The community has made it extendable, meaning that everything you can think of has already been built, which speeds up development.

WordPress Is Easy To Use

As a CMS WordPress is super-simple, intuitive and elegant to use, but is also robust. We provide professional video tutorials which will allow you update the site yourself in hours.

WordPress Is Here To Stay

Microsoft recently decided to stop development on its own blogging platform and move its 30 million users over to using WordPress.

How To Sell WordPress To Clients

Most of your potential clients will never have heard of WordPress.

This does not matter though because they will probably never have heard of the CMS's that your competitors are using either.

What matters is how you position your favored CMS in comparison to the rest out there. We don't mean by having comparison charts etc, we mean by how you can reassure the potential client that the CMS you are recommending will meet their requirements now and in the future.

Let's start with the easy one!

Price

It is **FREE!** This point cannot be stressed enough. Whether you choose to charge your clients for upgrades is up to you (we don't), but WordPress is free and it always will be. It can also be hosted cheaply as well.

Any Developer Can Work On The Site Because It Is

Open Source

Your clients biggest fear is that they will choose a company to build them a website, and be held to ransom in the future for updates and changes they make to the site. We have lost count of the number of horror stories we have heard along these lines. If you tell your client upfront that any developer can take over the project at any time it has a twofold effect:

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How To Sell WordPress To Clients

- a. The client is reassured that if your web development company disappears, charges them exorbitant prices, or you simply do not agree on the direction, they can break with your company.
- b. Because you have told the client this, you have shown yourself to be confident that you will deliver what the client wants, which again reassures them.

The competing companies are not the ones using Joomla or Drupal, they are the ones who are using a proprietary CMS and want to lock the client into a contract, which both sides know that once the site has been built, it has to stay in that CMS. This is an important point to emphasize.

Leverage The Huge Community

This feeds on from the last point. WordPress has a massive community of developers and users. This means that virtually everything you can think of has already been built for WordPress. It is very rare to have things be developed from scratch, which keeps the costs down. There are literally thousands of plugins out there. Clients will be reassured by this.

WordPress Is Here To Stay

There are over 25 million WordPress publishers out there, and it is used by The New York Times, Ford and even the UK Prime Minister (choose examples from your own country, to resonate better). This is not a bleeding edge technology that will have disappeared in 6 months time. The large community means it is here to stay and will constantly be improved.

It Is Really Simple To Use

If you have followed the steps outlined in the ebook to simplify the dashboard, you know that this is true. Also this is the point where you promote the comprehensive video manuals which will guide them through every aspect, so if needed, the whole company can learn to update the site themselves.

Use The Best Tools For The Job

The biggest obstacle we found is that in some cases clients need more things than WordPress can offer, like a shopping cart or email marketing etc. We have found the best way is to be upfront with the client and tell them we will use the technology which best fits their requirements.

Your competitors will be selling solutions where everything is integrated, but 9 times out of 10, that means that the client will have to sacrifice some of their requirements in order to be pigeon holed into a single solution.

We know from experience that it is very important that you plant this seed in the potential clients mind. In the past we experienced this problem, and actually lost out on the pitch because we did not provide an integrated solution which the client rightly or wrongly assumed would involve less training. However, later we heard from the client, and they had realised that the all in one solution, did not satisfy their needs in certain areas, and so now wanted to use the “best tools for the job” solution that we offered.

They Can Also Have A Blog As Well!

We primarily sell WordPress to clients as a CMS. It is only later that we mention that it can also be used as a blog in the future as well with very little

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customization. Again, this comes down to reassuring clients that the solution you are recommending is scalable in the future. After a website, blogs are usually the next thing on the clients mind.

Interview With Tammy Hart

[Tammy Hart](#) is an Automatic consultant who recently gave talk a WordCamp Atlanta about “WordPress & Working with Clients”. She had such a positive response to her talk that it prompted her to set up <http://www.wpmethod.com>. A blog for freelancers that work with WordPress. We highly recommend you check it out.

She is also working on a new eBook about “How To Sell WordPress” which we are eagerly anticipating. She kindly took some time out to speak to us.

The following is only part of the interview. You can read the [whole interview here](#):



Normally when we come and pitch clients, we find that we're not really pitching against WordPress vs. Joomla or other open source platforms. We're actually pitching against other web design companies who have their own proprietary CMS. What's the best way you know making the client aware of the differences between them and the positives of using an open source CMS like WordPress?



I am going to borrow this from a colleague of mine; he actually uses this when he talks about Drupal. He says “instead of having 6 programmers on your team, you're actually going to have 10,000”. And that's what you get with WordPress. You'll get a community because it's open-source. If you want a special functionality, it's not a matter of paying a programmer 6 hours to develop it. It's a matter of searching for 10 minutes and finding a plugin that does it or finding an answer on one of the forums.

The community behind WordPress is I think what really drives its success because I like to say that WordPress can do anything but it's not necessarily because a core vanilla install of WordPress can do it. It's but somebody out there knows how and they blogged about it or the answers are out there somewhere. So that's one of the biggest things I usually like to say when somebody asks, "What about WordPress?"... When you have something open-source where there's hundreds, and thousands of people that are touching it on a daily basis there's just, there's no limits to the possibilities.



What we found out when we go in and pitch to the clients is that they are more reassured when you emphasise the fact that because a site is built in WordPress, anybody can take it over in the future

because it is a popular open-source CMS system. If you're not happy with the work I'm doing, you can get somebody else then. Do you emphasise that fact at all?



That is not something I have said but I did have a similar experience recently. I just recently took a full time position actually and also freelancing as well. One of the things that we're doing right now is

we're transitioning everything from proprietary content management system to Drupal and then WordPress. I came with practically with no programming experience in this proprietary CMS at all and what I have to do is maintenance and I have to go in and figure out how to change this link, where is this content put and it's such a mish-mash because I didn't build this system, I've never worked on a system before and so time-consuming to figure things out. So that's definitely a good point to make that anybody who knows WordPress (and there are a lot of them) can figure out where to go, how things are working, can

read the code and knows exactly what it's saying and can take it and run with it quickly.



On a few occasions once we understood what the clients were looking for they eventually told us that they have had a horrible experience in the past with their developers and they have been locked-in with a certain CMS where only one developer could look after it and their main worry is going through that same situation again.



From a marketing and sales point of view, that's a really good place to have a client but as a part of the community and I'm more behind the open-source type of thinking.



When you're actually pitching to clients, do have you any tips on how to make a good impression with the client and how to make your pitch stand out compared to everybody else?



Well I'll just be honest and say this, sales is what I am born to do, and I am sure a lot of developers are in a similar situation. I'm more of a problem solver, so I just go in and say I'm your friend, you have a problem I can solve that problem, let's figure this out together. So that's my angle and I love it because, and this is something I usually say in my talks when, presenting on freelancing with WordPress is that, WordPress has a lot of amazing things and a lot of times it'll save you time so just take the credit.

A lot of times all of the clients would say "Oh I know this sounds really difficult but I need this to this, or that" and I'm reply "Sure! There's a plugin for that, or I did it before, here's an example!" The client loves you because you are providing a quick, simple, cheap solution to their problems!



It's a very good point. As small business owners we think it's a very wise thing to take the credits for the solutions, just by offering the solutions that the WordPress development community has already provided.

We noticed on your WP message site you had an [excellent post](#) on client estimates and we particularly liked the bit about not being tempted to drop your price with fear of losing the project. What other tips can you give to small business owners that are just starting out in web design in order to you know to make themselves appear more professional to clients?



The more confidence you have in yourself then the more confidence they're going to have in you. Recently I was going to hire somebody to do some outsourcing and she wrote back saying "here's my price and I can do this and that". She made a lot of promises and I looked at her work and it looked good. I was impressed by it but then I wrote back to her saying "Thank you for your time but I have chosen somebody else."

And then she wrote back, "I can cut my price in half and I can do it for \$50 an hour instead of \$75". This did not reflect well on her. So I wrote back "I appreciate what you are trying to do and I understand that you probably need the money in the work, but this the biggest mistake you could've possibly made because not only are you saying your time is not as valuable as you originally said, but you sound like you're desperate". The positive initial impression has now gone.

Stand your ground and if a client says that you are a \$1000 more expensive than they can afford right now, you know you say, okay let's look at your projects and see what we can remove from your project that is not essential

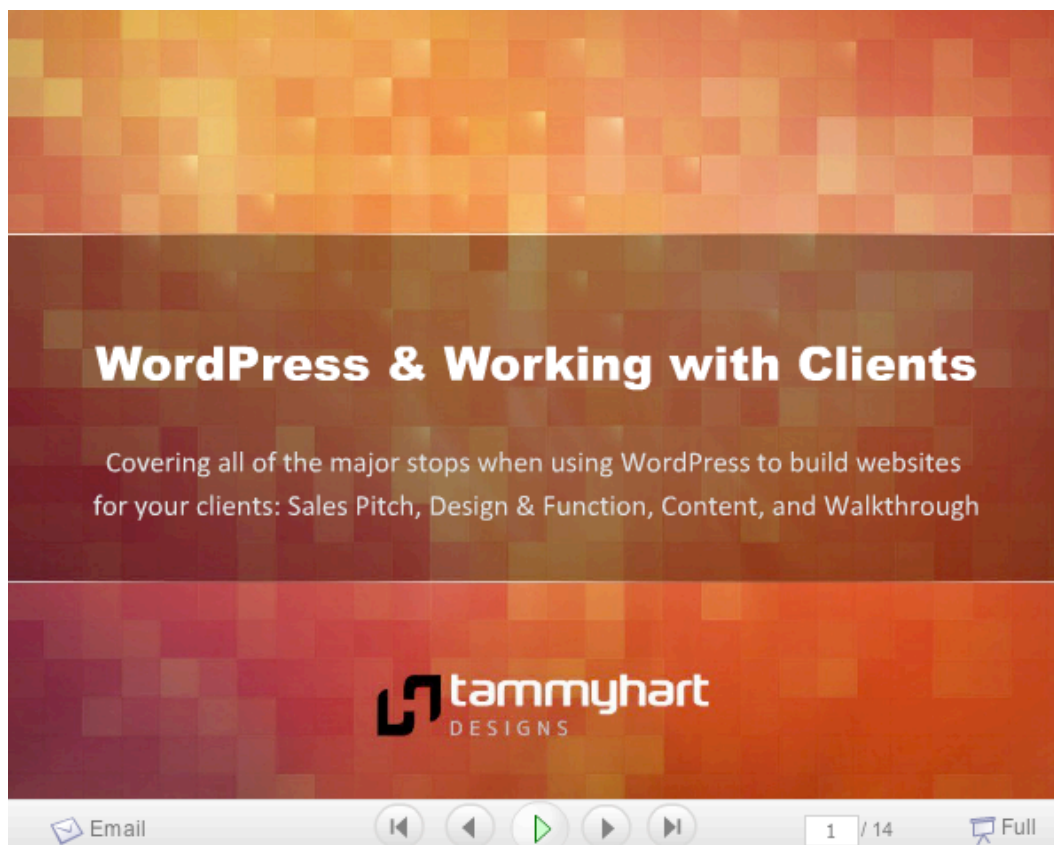
right now. The client will look at this; either they won't agree with you or they will and maybe realise that every part of their project is essential and find the extra money for the project.

This has happened to me before.

In some cases, the race to the bottom is not really the race you want to win. If that's the type of client.

Exactly! You can read the [full interview here](#).

We also highly recommend you check out the presentation that Tammy did on "WordPress & Working with Clients" which is available on [slideshare.net](#).



How To Handle Questions From Clients

The following is an overview on what processes we have put in place to answer our client's questions. There are lots of simple things you can do which will make a big difference in how you handle your clients, and how you are perceived.

Use Training As Part Of Your Sales Pitch

We were lucky enough to have Joakim Eriksson provide a case study for our [WordPress User Manual Plugin](#). In he describes how he uses the tutorial suite as part of his sales pitch to clients.

He provides the plugin for free to his clients, and states that clients are always pleasantly surprised that a complete tutorial suite is provided for them at no extra cost. He believes that it is a valuable part of his sales pitch in differentiating himself from other developers.

You can read [his case study here](#).

Build Client Training / Questions Into The Quote

We have a calculator on the homepage of our website which asks developers on average how much time they spend making videos and answering clients' queries. On average it is 3 hours.

You have to build this into the quote, because if you work out the cost of this over a year, it adds up to \$1000's of dollars in your time.

Make sure you add in an hourly rate for answering clients' questions and make sure they are aware that if they want you to answer all of their queries instantly, then it will cost them. Each 15 minutes really adds up.

We used to use this handy [web development project estimator](#) before we developed our own version. If you are not doing this already, you should.

Process: *never underestimate how long it will take to service clients' questions, and always build it into your quotes*

Have A Suite Of Video Tutorials

We know making comprehensive video tutorials for WordPress is a tough job due to the amount of times WordPress is updated, and the vast number of features that need to be explained. Having a comprehensive suite of video tutorials however is essential to running your business.

Not only is it a great sales tool, but it should be the first place you direct your client when you hand over their CMS (or before). If you are an experienced WordPress developer then you will know that the most common questions from clients are the ones that are easy to solve, but they will be asked over and over again, unless you educate every client.

Letting the clients educate themselves will save you time and money. It will also reduce the number of questions you have to answer from clients because they will look for the video tutorial first.

Process: *Identify common problems that clients have and start to produce videos which solve this problem. (or save yourself a lot of time and money and subscribe to our WordPress Manual Plugin, and leave it to us!)*

Generic Videos Will Save You Time

We recommend you set up a subdomain somewhere and install a version of WordPress, then fill the site with generic content. Use this for each of your video tutorials. This will allow you to produce generic videos that will be relevant to more than one client.

The biggest waste of your time will be if you login to your clients CMS, and make a video of you fixing their problem. If possible try and make the answer generic (by using your generic website), and then this video will be useful for your other clients.

A common mistake is referring to the client by their name, because as soon as you do, you can't give that video to anyone else.

Process: *Try not to produce client specific tutorials, make them generic so they can be reused in the future.*

Avoid Sitting Down With Clients In Order Teach Them

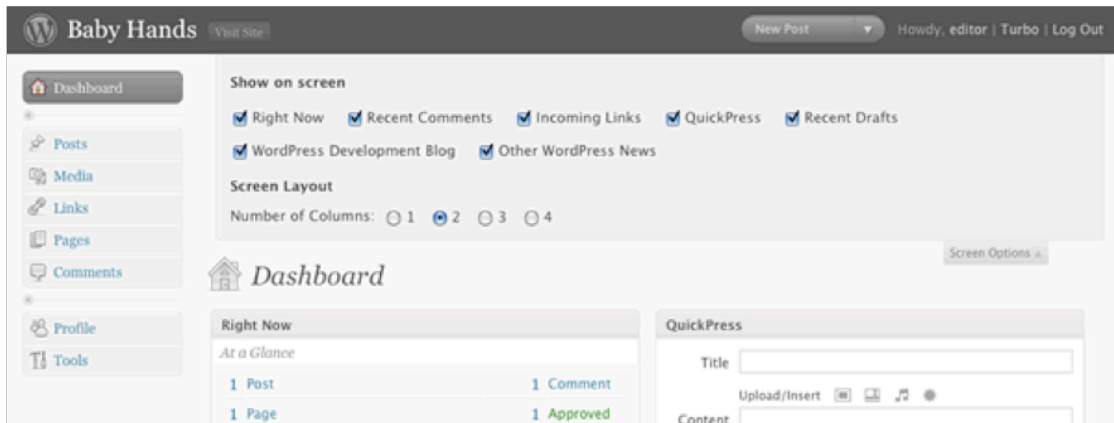
How To Use Their CMS

Let's start by making it clear we are not advocating ignoring your clients, on the contrary. You should anticipate your client's questions, and produce material, usually video tutorials and canned responses in your email that handle these issues.

From our own experience, we used to sit down with clients and take them through the CMS step by step. It did not take very long, only an hour or two, but coupled with the travel there and back invariably it took half a day.

This is the point where we started to take our video tutorials seriously, and was the first step in producing the [WordPress Manual Plugin](#).

Use Skype Screenshare



Increasingly on our more complicated projects, we are resorting to using [Skype Screensharing](#) in order to explain quickly to clients how to resolve issues.

Clients really appreciate the “instant” answer to their issues, and it is a great teaching tool.

However, we do not recommend giving out your personal Skype names to clients, as again, you leave yourself to being open to a call at any time.

Process: *We recommend you set up a company Skype account, and only give that to the clients. Only use the account when necessary and you will avoid the appearance of being on call 24/7!*

Canned Responses

Don't be afraid of setting up [canned responses](#) in your email system. Google apps have this facility and it is a great time saver. For example we have canned

responses for common queries like lost passwords, image questions, where we point them to their video tutorials.

Always Track Your Time

As mentioned above, all those 10 minute questions add up in the end, even if it's just through breaking your workflow. Make sure you have a good system in place for tracking the time you are spending with clients. A great free tool is [klok](#) that runs on macs and pcs.

Ticketing System?

This really depends on the size of your business. As you become larger you may find it becomes essential. If you are servicing a smaller number of clients, you might not feel it is necessary. We do have a ticketing system for Video User Manuals, which is [Trellis Desk](#).

However, we don't use one for answering client's questions about their CMS, as we do not feel it is necessary. We just have a support email, and luckily it does not get used much these days, because of the processes and tutorials we have put in place to anticipate clients questions.

If you are interested in a ticketing system then you should be looking for the following features:

- A knowledge base which is available before users submit their ticket.
- The ability to assign tickets to staff members.
- Canned responses.
- Email piping (so that when users directly reply to support emails, their reply remains within the system, we guarantee this will happen!).

Resources

The following are some examples of WordPress being used as a CMS to power a “normal” website, rather than just a blog.

Example WordPress Websites

A question we often get asked about when the job involves taking over an existing CMS and converting it to WordPress, is to see some examples of WordPress sites. Obviously, at this point you provide examples of your own portfolio, but it does not harm to associate WordPress with some large well known brands, to drive home the fact that WordPress is a serious CMS.

Most of blog posts out there focus on big businesses that use WordPress for blogging, but we have found these examples of business that are using WordPress for “websites”.

- <http://www.andyrodick.com/>
- <http://www.nikonfestival.com/>
- <http://www.spotify.com/>
- <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/>
- <http://www.katyperry.com/> (not a great website, but definitely current!)
- <http://www.thefordstory.com/>

Case Studies

There are some very interesting case studies that have been done which illustrate the savings that can be made to large companies by moving their websites to an open source platform like WordPress.

We recommend taking the time to read them, as though they may not be relevant to small business owners like yourself, they all contain strong arguments for moving to open source, which you might find useful while trying to sell WordPress to clients.

Migrating the Department for Transport website to WordPress

An excellent blog post by Joe Gardiner, which breaks down the savings the government made by migrating the UK governments Department for Transport site to WordPress.

<http://catn.com/2010/08/23/migrating-department-for-transport-to-wordpress-case-study/>

Citi Recruitment

We found this interesting presentation by Steve Wilson which details how he was quoted \$10,000 + for a job related website, but built it in WordPress and using SEO plugins, managed to out rank his competitors who had spent fortunes on their sites:

<http://www.slideshare.net/CraigBailey/wordpress-case-study>

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