



Selling websites 101

The beginners' guide to selling
your web business



Flippa 101

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Selling Websites: Pre-sale Preparation

To get the best price for your website it is a good idea to do some preparation before you list it for sale. A few minutes of time, or a few dollars of expense could make a big difference in the performance of your auction.

The Website Itself

Like homes, websites sell best when they are clean and tidy! Here are some tips for quick website renovations:

- Does the home page look nice? Consider...
 - Adding, replacing or updating the logo
 - Consider current design trends, and update your website to reflect them
 - Swapping out or adding a key image
 - Filling in large white spaces or de-cluttering if it looks too busy
- Fix ads or images that overlap or bump up against text
- Make sidebar content similar in length to the main article content
- If the content is old, add something new

Like cars, websites should be in working condition to get top dollar:

- Test all the menu options
- Test tools and widgets
- Test links and make sure you fix or delete “links to nowhere”
- If you have a shopping cart, make sure it works
- Remove products that are no longer available for sale
- How does it look on mobile
- Develop a social media presence

Prepping the Business and Yourself

Buyers are not simply only interested in the content of a website or its function, they want to be assured that it is a working business. Among other things, businesses:

- Track their finances
- Have customer flow
- Have order flow
- Have a developed business model and process

So before you sell, you need to collect detailed information about your website that demonstrates to buyers that the business is real and has a working business model that delivers results.

Two critical items:

1) **Analytics.** Experienced buyers want to see statistics about the traffic visiting your website. Google Analytics has the best reputation from a buyer perspective because the reports are verified by Google, and buyers are acquainted with the format. If you haven't had it installed, do it now. Even a few days of data are better than nothing. Other analytics tools can substitute for Google Analytics (but they can't be verified), but make sure you have something besides just server.

2) **Financials.** The most important factor in the value of a website is its financial performance. Buyers want to know revenue and net income by month. If you don't already have it, you need to compile a P&L (Profit and Loss statement) that shows the revenues and where they came from, the main expenses and the net income by month. Remember, revenue minus expenses equals net income.

Other Materials to Include

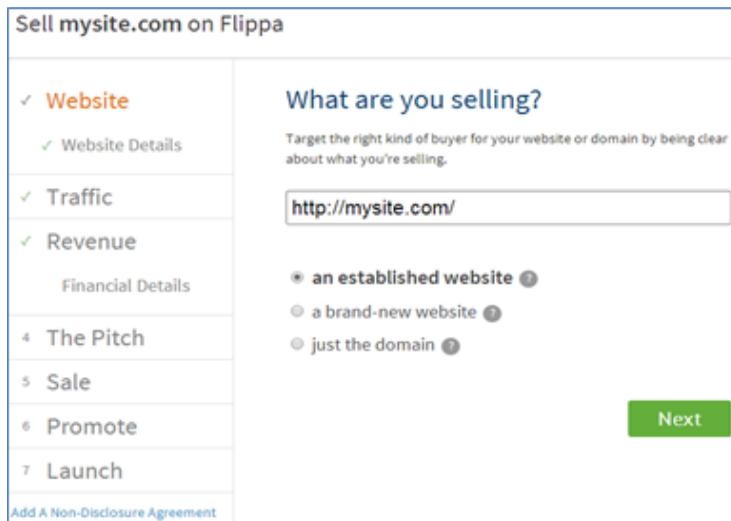
- Screen shots of your backend systems like admin panels, order processing or anything important that isn't visible on the website
- Awards, certificates, references, articles, news citations about your business
- Detailed sales information by month. The more detail you provide, the more trustworthy you will appear to buyers.
- Business metrics like conversion rates, click through rates, number of products, number of articles, etc.

TIP: Because screen shots can be faked, buyers often request proof of sales and traffic. One way to provide this proof is to create a screen capture video. Using a tool like Camtasia, log into your revenue and analytics accounts and record pertinent screens to prove that your website is performing as you claim. Save the recording as a video that can be provided to interested buyers.

Another way to provide proof is to grant read-only access to your analytics and revenue accounts to interested buyers. To learn more about what you should be looking for on Google Analytics, check out at Flippa's Support Knowledge Base.

Listing Your Site on Flippa – Step by Step

If you have followed the site preparation guidance in the previous chapter, then listing your website for sale on Flippa will be a breeze.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Sell mysite.com on Flippa". On the left is a vertical navigation menu with steps: 1. Website (checked), 2. Traffic (checked), 3. Revenue (checked), 4. The Pitch, 5. Sale, 6. Promote, 7. Launch. Below the menu is a link for "Add A Non-Disclosure Agreement". The main content area is titled "What are you selling?" and includes a sub-header "Target the right kind of buyer for your website or domain by being clear about what you're selling." Below this is a text input field containing "http://mysite.com/". There are three radio button options: "an established website" (selected), "a brand-new website", and "just the domain". A green "Next" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

The Sales Listing Process on Flippa

1. On the homepage, click on the Sell” button to enter the listing creation process.
2. Enter your domain name!
3. Select “an established website” if your website has age, traffic or revenue.
4. Select “a brand new website” if the site has content but is new and doesn’t have traffic or revenue.
5. On the Website Details form, simply choose a website type from the list.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Sell mysite.com on Flippa". On the left is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: "Website" (checked), "Website Details" (checked and highlighted in orange), "Traffic" (checked), "Revenue" (checked), "The Pitch" (4), "Sale" (5), "Promote" (6), and "Launch" (7). Below the menu is a link for "Add A Non-Disclosure Agreement". The main content area is titled "Website Details" and contains the following text: "Get in front of buyers looking for websites like yours by categorising it accurately, and letting them know how long the website has been live." Below this is the question "What kind of website is it?" with radio button options: "Blog" (selected), "Review", "Content", "Directory", "Other", "Forum", "Ecommerce", "Services", and "App". The next question is "When did the website go live?" with dropdown menus for "October" and "2013". A green "Next" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Select the kind of website you're selling and the date your website went live

6. Enter the go-live date of the website but keep in mind that if you enter a date that is earlier than the registration date of the domain, this will be noted on the listing page and may raise questions from buyers.

7. As we explained in the due diligence chapter, traffic is one of the most important characteristics of your website.

If you use Google Analytics on your website it is a very good idea to verify your traffic by clicking "Add now". This action will increase buyer confidence in your listing by stating that traffic has been verified by an independent third party.

If you don't use Google Analytics you may enter average traffic numbers in the form or enter traffic manually.

Sell mysite.com on Flippa

- ✓ Website
 - ✓ Website Details
- ✓ **Traffic**
- ✓ Revenue
 - Financial Details
- 4 The Pitch
- 5 Sale
- 6 Promote
- 7 Launch
- [Add A Non-Disclosure Agreement](#)

Traffic

Traffic is an important factor in a buyer's assessment of your site. Connect to Google Analytics to verify your traffic immediately, or enter your stats manually and back it up with evidence once your listing is live.

Verify your traffic with Google Analytics (recommended)

★ Sites with verified Analytics results show higher in search results, as well as earning a "Verified" badge which inspires confidence in buyers. [Add now](#)

OR enter traffic manually: ⓘ

Average uniques per month:

Average pageviews per month:

[Next](#)

Verify traffic with Google Analytics or enter traffic details yourself

It is always better to enter exact numbers manually because buyers will have more confidence in actual numbers from your analytics system than rounded estimates you have typed into the average boxes.

Include Revenue information

8. Revenue and financial details are also going to be evaluated very carefully by prospective buyers. On this form first indicate whether your business is generating any sales (revenue).

Then select the source(s) of that revenue.

If your site earns revenue from Google AdSense, click the “Add now” button to allow Flippa to verify that revenue. Buyers are much more likely to trust verified figures than simple screen shots. In fact, many buyers only search for websites with verified data.

Enter the specific amounts of revenue earned each month. Exact figures inspire more confidence than estimates. Buyers will ask to see proof of any numbers you enter.

Revenue – Cost = Net Profit. Net Profit will be calculated and displayed for buyers.

Keep this in mind as you are entering your average or detailed cost figures.

Sell **mysite.com** on Flippa

- ✓ Website
 - ✓ Website Details
- ✓ Traffic
- ✓ Revenue
 - Financial Details**
- 4 The Pitch
- 5 Sale
- 6 Promote
- 7 Launch

[Add A Non-Disclosure Agreement](#)

Financial details

Representing your Financials accurately is important to buyers. To give them confidence, you should back up your claims with proof once your listing is live. All figures are in USD.

Verify your Google AdSense revenue (recommended)

★ Sites with verified AdSense show higher in search results, as well as earning a "Verified" badge which inspires confidence in buyers. [Add now](#)

Revenue earned in the last 12 months:

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Jul 2013 | \$ <input type="text"/> | Jan 2014 | \$ <input type="text" value="150"/> |
| Aug 2013 | \$ <input type="text"/> | Feb 2014 | \$ <input type="text" value="150"/> |
| Sep 2013 | \$ <input type="text"/> | Mar 2014 | \$ <input type="text"/> |
| Oct 2013 | \$ <input type="text" value="120"/> | Apr 2014 | \$ <input type="text"/> |
| Nov 2013 | \$ <input type="text" value="130"/> | May 2014 | \$ <input type="text"/> |
| Dec 2013 | \$ <input type="text" value="140"/> | Jun 2014 | \$ <input type="text"/> |

Enter average revenue instead

Average monthly running costs: ⓘ

\$

Enter month by month costs instead

[Next](#)

Verify Adsense revenue (if you have it!)

Tip: For both revenue and cost numbers make sure you are counting everything. Don't leave out a revenue source and don't forget any expense categories.

The Pitch

The pitch is where you put your salesmanship to work. The Tagline is the title of your listing and it is very important. Thousands of potential buyers will see your Tagline and what it says will determine whether they click to take a closer look or move on to the next listing.

The Pitch

Attract attention to your listing by detailing all the great things about your site. Include any impressive facts and figures and use words that you think your buyers would search for when looking for listings like yours.

Tagline ⓘ

Outdoor Enthusiast Blog Earning \$1,000 per month

32 characters remaining

Summary ⓘ

250 characters remaining

Description ⓘ

B *I* U **B** **I** **L** **A** **S** **E** **T**

★ Buyers like listings which include:

- Brief history of the site
- Monetization methods used and their effectiveness
- Technology used
- Inclusions (such as domains, apps or social accounts)
- Your plan for transaction and handover and Reason for selling

Need inspiration?
[See recent sales C](#)

Enter your pitch here!

Tip: The Tagline should give the buyer an idea of the type of website and a benefit or highlight. For example “Outdoor Enthusiast Blog Earning \$1,000 per month”. Next enter a very short Summary of your website that will convince buyers to continue reading the detailed Description.

The Description field is the core of your sales pitch. In this area you may put as much text as necessary to explain the details of your website and why a buyer should be interested. Build a vision for the buyer, the kind of life, or business they’ll be able to achieve with this asset.

TIPS:

1. Be clear about what your website does and how it does it. Buyers who can’t easily understand how a website works or how it makes its money are unlikely to buy.
2. Be accurate and factual in your description. This will make you appear knowledgeable and competent.
3. Be honest about the characteristics of the website and be open about your

own identity. Remember, buyers do business with people they trust. Lying or exaggerating destroys confidence and may be illegal in your local jurisdiction.

Sale

The screenshot shows the 'Sell mysite.com on Flippa' interface. On the left is a navigation menu with items: Website, Website Details, Traffic, Revenue, Financial Details, The Pitch, Sale (highlighted), Promote, Launch, and Add A Non-Disclosure Agreement. The main content area is titled 'Sale' and includes a descriptive paragraph about auction length. Below this are fields for 'Sale type and length' (set to 'Auction' and '7 days'), 'Starting bid' (set to '\$ 1'), and 'Reserve' (set to '\$ 1,200'). There is an 'Advanced' section for 'Payment methods you'll accept', with options for 'Escrow.com' (selected) and 'Paypal™'. The 'Escrow.com' option is further divided into 'Sales over \$5000' and 'Sales under \$5000'. A text input field contains the email 'JeffHunt@mysite.com'. A 'Next' button is at the bottom right.

Choose your starting bid, reserve and preferred payment options

Choose “Auction” for a competitive sale where bidders can see the amounts and numbers of bids. Choose “Private” if you want to accept blind offers from bidders.

Enter a sale length that is long enough to allow plenty of exposure to your listing and short enough so that buyers won't forget about it. Between 10 and 15 days is often effective. You want to give buyers time to complete their due diligence.

Starting bid is the lowest initial bid that can be made. The starting bid may be below the reserve price. Flippa recommends using a low starting bid to encourage active bidding and activity early in the auction run.

The reserve price is the lowest amount you are willing to sell your website for. A bid from an accepted bidder at or above the reserve price obligates you to sell for that amount. Some sellers set the reserve price very low to attract more bidders.

“No reserve” auctions do indeed increase bidding activity but keep in mind that you will be obligated to sell to the accepted bidder with the highest bid even if that bid is lower than your expectations.

Payment Methods

To protect buyers and sellers, Flippa requires high priced websites to be sold through an escrow service. Flippa recommends Escrow.com. For lower priced websites you may choose PayPal or Escrow. While PayPal may get the job done, using Escrow provides a higher level of protection for both buyer and seller.

Promoting Your Listing

Sell **mysite.com** on Flippa

- ✓ Website
- ✓ Website Details
- ✓ Traffic
- ✓ Revenue
- Financial Details
- 4 The Pitch
- 6 Sale
- 8 Promote**
- 7 Launch
- Add A Non-Disclosure Agreement

Promote your listing to reach more buyers

The price to list your website on Flippa is \$19. You can choose a promotion package to make your listing stand out from the 17,179 open listings, or select our standard option.

★ You have been selected for this limited offer

Ultra Premium

Get up to **40x more views** for your listing and **5x the Bids**

- Always on top of normal listings Emailed to 150,000 subscribers
\$200 value \$549 value
- Dedicated premium support Flippa home page feature
\$155 value \$49 value
- Screenshot with double the size Tweeted to 9,000+ buyers
\$120 value \$79 value
- Highlighted listing in search pages Bold listing title
\$19 value \$9 value

\$349

Save \$450!

Value of the package: \$799 (includes standard listing fee)

See an example of an Ultra Premium listing

Premium

Get up to **11x more views** for your listing and **3x the bids**

- Always on top of normal listings Flippa home page feature
\$200 value \$49 value
- Dedicated premium support Tweeted to 9,000+ buyers
\$155 value \$79 value
- Screenshot with double the size
\$120 value

\$249

Save \$373!

Value of the package: \$622 (includes standard listing fee)

View example

Get more buyers by upgrading your listing

Listings that are seen by more potential buyers will sell for higher average prices. Flippa offers a variety of ways to increase visibility to your listing.

- Email newsletter
- Home page display
- Home page spotlight
- Twitter blast
- Listed above normal listings

And to make it more noticeable:

- Enlarged screenshot
- Bold listing title
- Highlighted listing row

Premium and Ultra Premium packages also include dedicated support from Flippa's Customer Support team. .

Another useful option is the addition of a Non-Disclosure Agreement. Choose this option if you would like to require bidders to sign an NDA document before receiving access to the domain name and listing attachments. You may supply your own NDA or use a generic document provided by Flippa.

The Launch

After paying listing and optional promotion fees you are ready to launch. It is a good idea to enhance your listing by uploading proof documents (called listing attachments), as discussed in the prior chapter. There are also a few additional questions like whether your website content and design are unique and the platform of your website, you will want to answer to make your listing complete.

Managing the Auction

Conducting an auction properly gives you the opportunity to improve the final auction price and set up a smooth transition of the business to the buyer.

Communications

Buyers are more likely to bid and bid higher if they trust the seller.

Communication tips:

- Be honest and transparent. Provide clear, factual answers to questions.
- Monitor messages and comments closely so that you can answer as quickly as possible. If you provide fast responses during the auction buyers will trust you to be timely and helpful after the auction.
- Be completely professional. Always respond graciously even when questions are repeated, uninformed or rude.
- Responding to private messages is an opportunity to build relationship with potential buyers. This personal messaging can increase a buyer's desire to do business with you.
- Keep all communication on Flippa. While users may ask to talk on email or services like Skype, this means Flippa's Support team won't be able to monitor communication or check back if something happens during the auction or the transfer of ownership.

Accepting Bidders

The first time a person makes a bid, you will have an opportunity to approve the bidder. It is a good idea to look at the profile of each bidder before you accept or reject them. Their profile reveals their history on Flippa.

Note, you will not be able to see the amount of a new bidder's bid until you've accepted them. After you accept them, they can make future bids on the auction without any action on your part.

You may send a private message to anyone who has bid on your auction. It is good practice to send an initial message thanking them for the bid and offering to answer any specific questions they may have.

Keeping Buyers Engaged

Sellers that stay active during the auction attract more bidders and come away with a higher price.

Tips for engaging in the auction:

- Add attachments showing updated sales and traffic information.
- Comment on the auction providing additional information or clarification.
- Via private message, ask the more serious buyers what they are concerned about and what they like about the website you are selling. Respond to their concerns and address the potential objections in public comments if appropriate.
- Purchase a promotion like a homepage listing or twitter blast to attract more bidders.
- Contact bidders who have not been actively communicating.

Sales Contracts

You or the buyer may want to use a sales contract to make sure all of the conditions of the transaction are clearly communicated and enforceable. Flippa provides a sample contract of sale or you may use your own. If you use Flippa's document, make sure and read it first, and add any specific items that are included in your website. This may be inventory, post-sale assistance, documentation, or anything else you have agreed to provide to the buyer or the buyer has agreed to provide to you.

The Transfer

In the “Finalizing the Sale” chapter we looked at some of the key activities that happen after the buyer and seller have agreed on a price from the buyer’s perspective. Here we will focus on the seller’s responsibilities.

Flippa provides a Sales Completion Area for the seller and winning bidder to facilitate the transfer of the website. Key activities for the seller are collecting payment, transferring the domain, content and other assets of the business to the buyer, providing post-sale support to the buyer and leaving feedback on Flippa about the transaction.

Payment

If you have chosen to use Flippa Escrow provider, click the “Create Escrow Transaction” button. If you have an existing account with Escrow.com under the email address you use for Flippa, you’ll be connected to Escrow.com to create the escrow transaction. You will be prompted to specify the length of the inspection period, select who will pay the escrow fees and choose how you want to receive payment from Escrow.com. After the transaction has been created it will be the buyer’s responsibility to agree to the terms of the transaction and submit payment to Escrow.com.

If you are using PayPal as the payment mechanism, Flippa will prompt the buyer to make payment using the PayPal payment button.

It is a good idea to communicate with the buyer using the private message system about key items like payment so that there is a record of the conversation that is visible to Flippa in the event of any problems during the closing of the transaction.

Asset Transfer

After you have received payment directly from the buyer or Escrow.com has received payment, it is time to deliver all the goods.

Domain transfer. Get the buyer to establish an account with the registrar of the domain and provide you with their account information. Initiate a “push” transaction with the registrar to transfer the domain into the buyer’s account.

Site content and other assets. At the most basic level you will need to back up all the files and databases of the website and provide the backup files to the buyer. Often sellers migrate and install websites on the buyer’s webhost on their behalf. Any other promised content needs to be delivered and verified by the buyer at this point in the process. If you are using escrow, update the status of the transaction to show that all the content has been delivered to the buyer.

Inspection Period

The escrow inspection period begins after all the assets have been transferred. It is important that you remain in close communication with the buyer as he checks out everything he has just purchased. As long as the business is operating as you said it would, the buyer will have no credible reason to back out of the transaction. After the inspection period has ended or the buyer has indicated that they are satisfied with what they have received, Escrow will finalize the transaction and release funds to the seller.

Feedback

Following every Flippa transaction, it is helpful to everyone to leave honest and useful feedback about the other party to help keep buyers and sellers accountable for their conduct and service all the rest of the Flippa community. Accumulating positive feedback is very beneficial during future transactions.

Post-sales Support

Once you’ve been paid and you’ve transferred ownership of the website and any related assets you’ve agreed upon, the transaction is complete. It’s always a good idea to keep a buyer happy after the sale by offering to provide support for a specified time after the sale.

Buyers are invited to provide feedback three months after a sale, and satisfied buyers will be more than happy to recommend you to other buyers.

This is just the beginning...

Congratulations! You now know everything you need to get started buying great websites on Flippa.

Liked this book? Get the latest guides and useful tips on buying websites, domains, or apps on the Flippa Blog, Twitter, and Facebook.

There are thousands of amazing websites for sale right now on Flippa, I encourage you to just take the first step and start finding websites on Flippa. Opportunity awaits for those who take action.

Jeff Hunt has purchased more than 300 websites. He is the author of soon to be released: *The Website Investor: The Guide to Buying an Online Website Business for Passive Income* – *Morgan James Publishing*

**Thanks for reading! If you want to read our other guides,
head over to [Flippa.com/Guides](https://flippa.com/guides)**