



7-POINT CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING A MULTIFAMILY WEBSITE

INCLUDES

**THE EXACT RESOURCES WE USE TO BUILD
WEBSITES, PLUS TIPS FROM OVER
TWO DECADES OF EXPERIENCE**

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A note from Todd Heitner, CEO of [Apartment Investor Pro](https://ApartmentInvestorPro.com):

Building a website for your multifamily investment business can be stressful and time-consuming. But it's even worse if mistakes along the way cost you extra time and money. I want to help you avoid some of those mistakes.

I've been building websites since 1997 and have focused on building websites for real estate investors since 2004. In the past two decades I've learned a lot about building websites, much of it the hard way. I've tried many different web hosting companies. I've hired more designers and developers than I can count. I've spent countless thousands of dollars on different tools and services.



As you can imagine, the results have ranged from knock-your-socks-off excellent to unbelievably horrible, and everything in between. You can avoid pitfalls I've encountered and I'm here to help. This checklist will point you in the right direction and reduce the amount of hair you'll pull out trying to get your website up and running.

Of course, I would prefer that you just skip all the headaches and let us handle your website. If you haven't checked out that option yet, our website is ApartmentInvestorPro.com. I've tried to make it as painless as possible to get your multifamily website up and running. In fact, you can have it up as soon as today.

But if you prefer to do it on your own, this checklist will give you a great head start!

To your success,

Todd Heitner

The Checklist:

(See the Resource Guide in the next section for more details)

- ✓ **The right domain name:** Go with .com (not .net, .org, etc.). It should match your business name. You can get a domain from sites like [GoDaddy](#) or [NameCheap](#). Stick to a company you've heard of. Make sure the domain name is available before deciding on a business name. If it is, register it right away. This is part of your brand.
- ✓ **High quality web hosting:** You get what you pay for with this. While you probably don't need an expensive dedicated server, you also don't want a low-end shared server because your site could go down often or may be slow. If you're using WordPress for your site, we've been happy with [WP Engine](#). It's fast and they have good support. We include hosting with our website service at [Apartment Investor Pro](#) and we use WP Engine.
- ✓ **Flexible content management platform:** WordPress is a good choice. It allows you to manage your site, update content, and there are lots of plugins available for it. Most hosting companies make it fairly easy to install WordPress. The WordPress software itself is free, but some of the themes and plugins you'll need have to be purchased.
- ✓ **High quality design & branding:** It's usually better not to use the generic build-your-own-website services. Find a good designer. They should have examples of their work so you can choose a good one. You can find one on sites like [Fiverr](#) or [Upwork](#). You can have a logo designed on these sites too if you don't have one.

Or, one of my favorite sites for logos is [99Designs](#). For your website design, generally you'll want to go with sort of a "corporate" look for your site if you're attracting passive investors. If you're using stock photos, go with ones that aren't overused and overly generic-looking.

- ✓ **Professional content:** If you're good at writing you could try it yourself, but this can eat up a lot of time. You can find writers on [Fiverr](#) or [Upwork](#). Be sure that English is the person's first language.
- ✓ **The right elements:** Have contact forms, including an investor profile form if you're a syndicator. Draw attention to the right spots on your site, where you want people to focus attention using colors that stand out.
- ✓ **Automation:** Connect your web forms to third-party services to automate your work flow. You can have leads automatically added to your CRM service (Customer Relationship Management) or email marketing service (like [ActiveCampaign](#), [ConvertKit](#) etc.) or just have people added to a spreadsheet, etc. Whatever your workflow is, find ways to automate it to free up time and keep things from falling through the cracks.

That's the quick overview. Now we'll get into more specific details and tips, and I'll share the exact resources we use when building websites.

Bonus: Resource Guide with the Exact Tools We Use

Domain Names: Mainly, we use [GoDaddy](#). One warning, though: **they will upsell you like crazy**. When you order they try to get you to add on all these additional products and services. Some of them might be useful, but they're not required. If you're not sure if you need something, just decline it. You can always add it on later. I've also used [NameCheap](#). One thing I like about them is that they don't try to get you to add on a bunch of stuff you don't need. But either service will give you access to the settings you need to point your domain name to your website. Just some quick notes about some of the things you might be upsold on and what they are.

Private Registration: When you register a domain name, anyone can look up who owns it and it will show the name, address, and email for the owner of the domain. If you don't want people to know this for some reason, or if you only have a home address, you might want to select this. I usually don't bother with this because everything is under my business information.

Email Addresses: It's a good idea to set up a business email address, but you don't have to get them from the same place you get your domain name. I use a [Google service](#) for my business email. I prefer that over the ones that domain registrars offer. It works just like Gmail, but will be at your domain name.

Web Hosting: This is a separate point below, but it's one of the things you may be upsold on when ordering a domain so I'm mentioning it here. I haven't had very good success using web hosting offered by domain registrars like GoDaddy. I generally

recommend getting hosting elsewhere. Or if you're using our [Apartment Investor Pro](#) service, we include hosting so you don't need to worry about it.

SSL (Security Certificate): A security certificate is what allows you have the little padlock icon in your browser window that shows your website is secure. I'd recommend getting this one way or another. If you want to get it where you register your domain name you can, or you can check with your web hosting company. Your web hosting company will have to install it for you, so I'd check with them first and see what they charge and sometimes it's easier to just get it there. But I have ordered them through domain registrars and that has worked fine too. With our [Apartment Investor Pro](#) service, we include this at no extra charge.

Web Hosting: For sites built with WordPress, I recommend [WP Engine](#). They're not cheap, but the quality is good and they have good support. We use them for our sites. They have things in place to help your website load faster, like caching and a CDN (Content Delivery Network). You don't have to understand what those things are to benefit from them, though.

If you get your domain name from [GoDaddy](#), you might be tempted to use their hosting too since it's convenient to have them in the same place. I have not had good success with [GoDaddy](#)'s web hosting and would not recommend it. Besides issues with the hosting itself, I've had issues with the support for hosting too.

Another popular hosting service is [HostGator](#). I've used them, but I've had some issues with them too. Because most of their hosting plans are on shared servers where they seem to pack in a lot of customers, I had issues with sites running slowly, or my emails getting blocked because someone else on the same server was sending out spam and got my site blocked too. This can really hurt because if it happens you won't get notifications when

someone fills out a form on your website. If I was going to use them, I'd use their service that's specifically designed for WordPress sites. But personally I'd go with [WP Engine](#) instead. As I mentioned, we include hosting with our [Apartment Investor Pro](#) service, so if you go with us, you don't need to worry about web hosting.

Content Management System: I use WordPress exclusively now. There are some other systems out there, but WordPress is the most popular, which means there are lots of resources available for it. WordPress uses "themes" for the design and basic functionality of your site. Some themes are free and others must be purchased.

The main theme I use now is called [Divi](#). I like it because it's so flexible. You have a lot of freedom with it and can usually find a way to do what you want. Some other themes are a lot more rigid, where you're very limited in what you can change. Others may claim to be flexible but you have to be a programmer to change things. I like [Divi](#) because it's more user friendly and if you really dig into it, you can change just about anything you want.

It also has a nice visual editor that makes it easier to see exactly what you're changing and get a good idea of what your changes will look like as you make them. You don't really have to worry about installing WordPress, buying a theme, or buying plugins if you're using our service at [Apartment Investor Pro](#) because we include a high-quality theme and some premium plugins to add powerful features to your site.

Design and Branding: I've found some good designers on [Fiverr](#). But you have to be selective. While it might be tempting to go with some of the cheap options, in the long run it's usually not worth it. You'll find some cheap offers, but they're generally people in third-world countries who don't speak English fluently.

While I have nothing against them, it can be frustrating when you can't communicate effectively. There can be misunderstandings and lots of

wasted time because you explain what you want and they work on it for days or weeks but then you get something completely different, so you have to wait for revisions.

If you're considering someone, I would suggest sending them a message where you ask some questions and see how the response is. I've found that in some cases the person's profile is written in perfect English, but when you correspond with them, their English is terrible and you can hardly communicate. I think sometimes these freelancers will get a friend who speaks better English to help them with their profile. But the person you're actually dealing with may really struggle with the language.

When you're looking for a designer, they may have samples of their work you can look at to see if they've ever designed a site similar to what you want, or you can ask them for samples. It can help if you have several examples of sites you like that you can send them so they can get a clearer picture of what you want.

If you're planning to use a specific WordPress theme, it's a good idea to find someone who has experience with that theme. For example, if I'm using Divi, I look for people who work specifically with the [Divi](#) theme.

You can also find someone to design a logo for you on [Fiverr](#). Again, look at samples of their work. Another site I like a lot for logos is [99Designs](#). The way it works is you post your project and many different designers will compete to get your business. Multiple people will design a logo for you and you get to pick which one you like best. If you have business partners or advisors, you can get them to give their vote for which is best. Once you decide on which person to use, then you can go back and forth with them and get them to tweak it to make it just how you want.

If you have a tighter budget, you can probably get something for a little less on [Fiverr](#), but you're just dealing with one person so be sure to check out their work first.

If you need stock photos for your site, there are a number of good sites out there. I often use [Adobe](#). With our website service at [Apartment Investor Pro](#), we include several pre-made designs you can choose from for your site, which is the quickest way to go, or we have options for custom designs. With our pre-made designs, we've already spent weeks or months working on the design, tweaking things to get it just right, and we understand multifamily investing, so you can skip all the headache of trying to explain what you need because we've already done it!

Content: By content, I primarily mean the wording. You probably realize you can't copy someone else's text word-for-word from their website. That breaks copyright laws and can get you into trouble. So you need to either write your own content or hire a writer.

Again, you can find writers on [Fiverr](#). It can be helpful to send examples of pages you like. This is definitely a time to use someone who speaks English as their native language (assuming your site will be in English... if it's going to be in another language, the same applies, make sure it's the person's native language).

Don't go cheap on this. If you do, what that may get you is someone who is copying and pasting from other people's websites. You should find someone with a good track record as a writer. The wording on your site can turn people off if you're not careful, or can build their confidence in your business if you do it right. If you prefer to write your own content, be careful not to copy any other site too closely. You can borrow ideas but not exact words.

It would be good to have multiple people proofread it when you're finished. Even if you're a good writer and even a good proofreader, there's something about reading things you wrote yourself. You read it as you intended to write it, not necessarily what's on the page. At least that has been my experience. I can catch other people's errors easily, but when I

read things I wrote, I often overlook my own mistakes. So get someone to read through what you wrote to check for mistakes.

We include pre-written content with our paid service at [Apartment Investor Pro](#). We hired professional writers to write the content in a way that should work for most syndicators as-is. But even if you want to tweak it, this will give you a huge head start.

Website Elements: Think about the big picture. What do you want people to do when they come to your website? If it's to contact you, then you need to draw attention to that somehow. Usually having a contact button that's a different color will get people's attention.

There are lots of things to look at on a website, so you need to direct your website visitors' eyes where you want them to look. You'll need to have at least one contact form on your site, but likely more than one. For example, you might want one general contact form, but then another form that's an investor profile form for people interested in investing with your business.

For creating forms, I recommend a WordPress plugin called [Gravity Forms](#). It's fairly easy to use and has some really nice features. You have to pay for Gravity Forms, but it's worth it. There are some free plugins but they lack features you'll likely need.

I like Gravity Forms because, not only does it send you an email when someone fills out a form on your site, but it also stores the message on your site so you can log in and see them all. This is good because email is never 100% reliable. There are multiple places where it can fail. It may not send properly or your email account may think it's spam and delete it or send it to a folder where you'll never see it. But if you can log in to your site and check for any new form submissions, you can be sure nothing is getting missed. [Gravity Forms](#) also has add-ons for connecting your forms to third party services (more on this in the next point).

Automation: If you're using a good contact form, like [Gravity Forms](#), you can connect it to third-party services like a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) like [ActiveCampaign](#) or email marketing service (like [MailChimp](#), [Convert Kit](#), [Aweber](#), etc.) or other services. Think about how it would work in an ideal world. What would you want to happen when someone fills out a form? Chances are, there's a way to make it happen.

For example, you could get a text message when someone fills out a form, or you could have them automatically added to a spreadsheet. Or you can plug them into your email system and they'll automatically get an email right away, then a series of emails over the coming days.

Automation is great because it not only saves you time, but makes sure things get done consistently and no one slips through the cracks. For the contact form, I recommend [Gravity Forms](#). For third party services it depends on what you want to accomplish. For email marketing, my favorites are [ActiveCampaign](#) and [ConvertKit](#).

They all have slightly different features and ways of doing things. I recommend going with [ActiveCampaign](#) because it will grow with your business. You can start out with a basic plan and upgrade as you need more features. With some services, you'll quickly outgrow them and then you have to try moving everything to a new service, which is a huge pain (trust me, I've had to do it a couple times). [ActiveCampaign](#) does all the same things email services like MailChimp can do, but it has powerful automation features built in, as well as CRM functionality and many other useful tools.

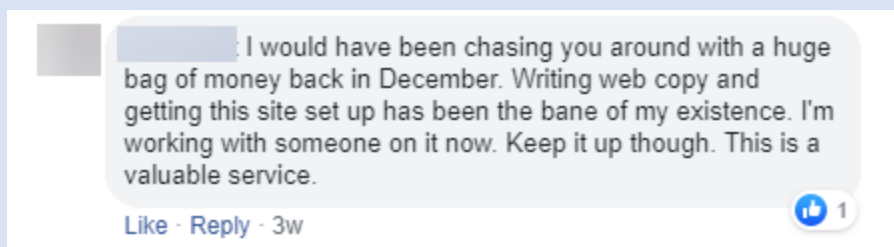
Final Thoughts

That's our list. You'll have a few decisions to make as far as exactly which companies to go with, but we've narrowed it down for you greatly. The ones we've listed above are all ones we've used.

For full disclosure, some of the links above are affiliate links, meaning, at no additional cost to you, we will earn a small commission if you click through and make a purchase. However, we recommend these services because we use them and have had good success with them so far. You don't have to use our links, but this helps us offset our costs, so we appreciate it.

If you haven't already done so, I would suggest you consider [Apartment Investor Pro](#) for your website needs. We've tried to make it as easy as possible to get your website up and running quickly. I realize it's not for everyone, but it really can take a lot of the pain out of the process.

In fact, someone recently sent me a message on Facebook, saying he wished he knew about our service when he was trying to set up his website. Here's what he said:



If you've started setting up a website, you can probably relate to what he said. Many people find that it's a bigger pain than they expected, costing more and taking longer than they thought. That's why we developed [Apartment Investor Pro](#), to give syndicators another option for setting up their website.

In contrast, here's what one of our recent customers said:

*"Todd and his team **really delivered an excellent product** and **we could not be happier** with it. Our new website looks amazing and is fully customizable. From initial registration through to our website being live, the Apartment Investor Pro **customer support and communication was excellent**.*

*We **highly recommend** Todd and his team and will be pointing other people in our network in their direction."*

Chris, Beachwood Properties & Investments

If you have any questions, you can send us a message through our website (ApartmentInvestorPro.com), or you can email us directly at support@ApartmentInvestorPro.com.

In fact, I'd also like to hear from you if you have any concerns or feel like our service won't work for you for some reason. We may have options available that you hadn't thought of, or we might be able to come up with a new solution. Either way, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thanks for your time. I hope you've found this helpful.

To your success,

Todd Heitner

[Apartment Investor Pro](https://ApartmentInvestorPro.com)

To see a demo of a syndicator's website click below:

[See Demo Site](#)