

NEXT STEPS

After-Class Website Launch Checklist

A practical decision guide for choosing what to do after the starter website is built: keep it simple, add a web address, improve visibility, or get help launching.

1. Before spending money

The homepage says what the business does and who it helps.

The contact button works from a phone.

The site uses real photos, examples, reviews, or local details.

The services or products are specific enough to understand.

The site is readable on mobile.

The owner knows what still needs to be finished.

Simple rule: do not upgrade because a tool says to upgrade. Upgrade when the website has a clear job and the upgrade helps that job happen.

2. Choose the next path

Path	Best when	Watch out for	First next step
Keep the free starter site	The idea is new, the owner needs practice, or the site is mostly for early sharing.	A free address may look less professional on cards, ads, and Google listings.	Finish wording, photos, and contact details before upgrading.
Add a custom web address	The business is ready to share the site on flyers, social media, email signatures, or Google Business Profile.	Domain settings can be confusing. Keep login details safe.	Choose a simple domain that matches the business name or service.
Upgrade WordPress.com	The starter site works, and the owner wants a cleaner address or basic paid features without managing hosting.	Some advanced plugins and custom features may still be limited.	Compare plan features before paying.
Move to hosted WordPress	The site needs e-commerce, booking, memberships, custom plugins, deeper SEO tools, or more control.	Hosting requires updates, backups, SSL, security, and maintenance.	Pick hosting only after the site plan and business goal are clear.

3. Search and Google visibility

For local businesses

- Claim or update Google Business Profile.
- Use accurate hours, phone, location, and service area.
- Add real photos.
- Ask happy customers for reviews.

For the website

- Use clear page titles.
- Write service pages in plain language.
- Add the town or service area where it makes sense.
- Connect Search Console when the site is ready.

4. Maintenance basics

Task	How often	Why it matters
Read the homepage and contact page	Monthly	Old wording, wrong hours, or broken forms cost trust.
Check forms, buttons, and phone links	Monthly	Customers cannot contact a business if the path is broken.
Review photos and examples	Every season	Fresh proof makes the business look active.
Update plugins, backups, and security	Monthly for hosted WordPress	Neglected websites are more likely to break or get hacked.
Review Google Business Profile	Monthly	Hours, services, photos, and reviews affect local visibility.

5. Useful next ideas

Add a flyer or one-sheet that matches the website.

Create a short email signup form.

Add a simple booking or request form.

Set up Google Search Console.

Improve the Google Business Profile.

Create a first month of social posts.

Add a page for each major service.

Review whether paid ads make sense yet.

6. Cohort benefit options from CodeForce

Participants can use the cohort as a lower-risk starting point. If they want more help after class, these discounted support options can be offered individually or through a partner package.

Cohort rate from \$150/hour

Business consulting hour

One focused hour for website direction, offer clarity, pricing, Google visibility, content ideas, or next-step planning.

Cohort rate from \$225

Business print starter pack

Flyer, business card direction, and brochure or one-sheet copy that matches the new website message.

Cohort rate from \$350

Advertising starter package

Ad copy, audience notes, landing-page guidance, and a first campaign checklist before spending real ad budget.

Planning support

Grant-funded training path

Eligible employers may be able to connect follow-up training to workforce development programs.