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Loudoun News

Education

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Attend a **special Chamber forum** on changing health insurance premiums at 8 a.m. Nov. 12—www.loudounchamber.org.

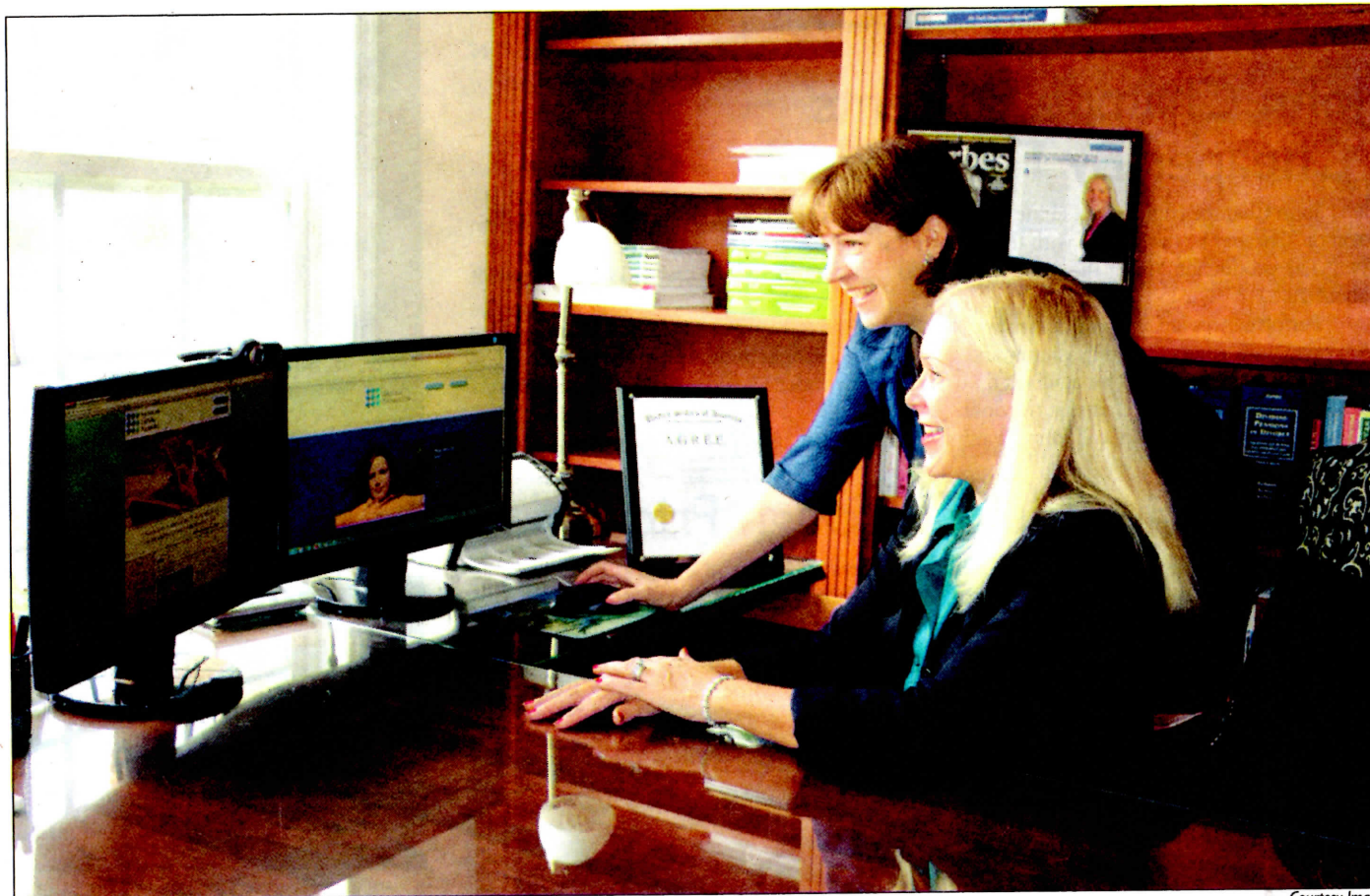# Gallop Web Services: Helping Business Grow Online

Gallop Web Services is not your average web design company. Its philosophy is different—a belief that quality is more important than volume. Customer satisfaction and education are paramount to successfully running their business.

"We strive to wow our clients with our customer service and give them the tools they need to be self-sufficient when it comes to maintaining their websites and gauging results," co-owner Kathi Watts said. "If our clients are happy, they'll tell others about their positive experience and we'll get more business. The majority of our clients have been referrals, even some in other states and countries."

It is common practice for businesses to bill for a new website or redesign and continue to charge for updates and editing, without any personal interaction with the web provider. "We don't believe this is the way to manage client relationships," Watts said. "We believe in being true marketing partners with them from the beginning of the relationship."

It was these principles that helped earn Gallop Web Services the 2012 Technology Business of the Year award from the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce.

Owners Kathi and Steve Watts, have been married for 30 years and residents of Loudoun County for more than 26. Like many couples in the technology industry, they met on the job. Kathi formed Gallop Web Services in 2010. Shortly thereafter, Steve left the corporate IT world to work alongside her and take the company to the next level. Over the past three years, they have added to their services a search engine optimization package and local business listing offerings. They have

Courtesy Image

Gallop Web Services co-owner Kathi Watts smiles as she works with Bonnie Sewell, seated.

Making Your Site Work For You

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In the almost four years since they have been in the web design business, they have seen a wide range of local and regional clients with whom they've established an ongoing and satisfying business relationship. It is their belief that every client deserves excellent service no matter the size of their online business. The ability for a client to understand and participate in web technology for their business helps to alleviate the feeling of "being held hostage" by an industry where fees and billings are confusing and often not necessary. "Many of our clients think of us as their partners, which we are," Steve Watts said. "We greatly enjoy working closely with them as their expectations evolve and online interactivity emerges as an integral component for businesses everywhere."

According to the Chamber of Commerce, 80 percent of businesses in Loudoun are classified as small businesses. Gallop has enjoyed a great relationship with many of them. In May 2012, the company worked with Loudoun Medical Group to relaunch its website LMGDoctors.com while also providing hosting and web support services. "Our new site now features an interactive 'Find a Doctor' tool, convenient online bill pay for patients, a unique mapping tool that allows our customers to quickly see the over 80 physician practice locations, and many other features built in for our staff who access information through a password protected portal," CEO Mary Beth Tamasy said.

"Their online traffic has seen an overall increase of 41 percent compared to this time last year and the site has seen a 146 percent increase in views of the physician's biographies," Kathi Watts said.

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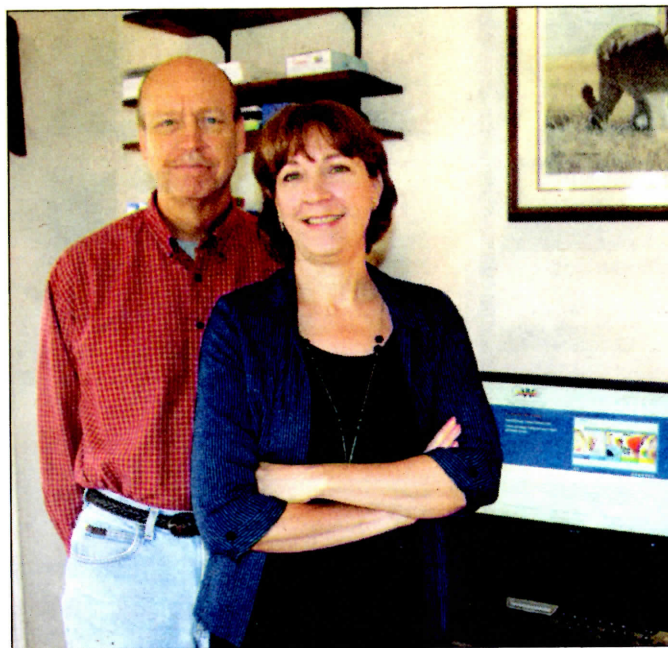
Gallop Web Services owners Steve and Kathi Watts.

Gallop also has worked closely with Bonnie Sewell, principal of American Capital Planning, a Loudoun-based financial planning business, on the redesign of her website. Last year, Sewell started a new business entity, Wedlock-Divorce.com, and wrote a book to educate and financially guide couples who are already in the divorce process. "Kathi and Steve did designs for both of my sites and I was thrilled with the results," Sewell said. One of Sewell's requests was for Gallop Web Services to create an online calculator that helps individuals get a better picture of their financial situation as they consider divorce. The tool gives couples a reality check on how their money might be divided based on their family's financial picture.

Learn more at www.gallopwebservices.com. ■

Making Your Site Work For You

According to the website Pingdom, there were 2.4 billion Internet users at the end of 2012 and a staggering 634 million websites. It is imperative that businesses—no matter how small or large—put their best foot forward to capture even a small percentage of this potential. According to Kathi and Steve Watts, there are several things that business owners should be doing to improve their online business marketing.

1) **Mobile Responsive Web Design.** If you view your website on an iPad, Smart Phone or other device, does your site respond as well (or better) than it does on a desktop computer? If your site does not readjust to accommodate the current devices used by many on a regular basis, then you may risk the loss of potential customers.

2) **Online Visibility.** Can your customers find you on Google? Type your company's business name into the search bar on Google. Where does your business land on the list of results? How many relevant sites is your business listed on? By optimizing the search potential for keywords relating to your business, you can increase the marketing potential of your website and social media.

3) **Integrate.** Link your company website with all your social media interfaces. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are popular examples, but there are many more that may be suited to your type of business. Be sure your social media and website convey the same brand identity. Use a free service, such as Hoot Suite, to combine your social media so you can quickly post and communicate socially through a user-friendly dashboard.

4) **Blog.** Blogging gives you a great medium to share your expertise and keeps your website fresh. A blog also serves as a great partner to all other social media, and adds relevancy with the search engines.

5) **Keep it Fresh.** When was the last time you refreshed the photography on your website? What about the content? Do you know how to go about editing the various areas of your website? Simple user-friendly tools available to businesses today make it possible to easily keep your website fresh and current.