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Best Fit:

CPA firms that want a unique design or features that other template-based providers do not offer. CPAsites.com takes pride in being 100% CPA-owned and managed, which gives them the ability to relate to the online needs of CPA firms.

Strengths

- CPAsites does not use pre-designed templates, so all websites are unique.
- Custom programming and graphic design services are included.
- Tax acts and breaking tax and financial news are fed into sites quickly, within hours or days.
- Financial calculators are on-site and branded with the firm's name and logo.
- Firms that subscribe to the website service can reprint articles in a local newsletter and can use them in any way they wish.

Potential Limitations

- Since CPAsites.com does so much up-front design work, firms are required to make a one-year commitment. However, after that time, a firm owns its website (except copyrighted content) if it decides to drop the service.
- Except for initial design modifications and customers on the Platinum plan, CPAsites.com charges \$50 per hour to make changes to a website (the \$25 minimum applies to most changes).

Founded in 1997, CPAsites.com was one of the pioneers in the accounting firm website market. CPAsites.com follows a business model of creating custom-designed websites based on CPA firms' requests rather than canned templates.

Firms that request access to their website may use CPAsites.com's Website Manager

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statcounter.com, thecounter.com and Google Analytics.

Domains

All domains are unique and owned by the firm. The firm owns and maintains the DNS records for the domain, and custom DNS records are available. Firms that stop using CPAsites.com's services are not charged a fee for exporting or otherwise extracting data.

Hosting

CPAsites.com leases a server from Hosting.com with RAID 1 dual hard drives, T1 connections, 99.9% uptime and N+1 redundancy. Although CPAsites.com does not use mirrored hosting, data is backed up continuously to an offsite server. All administration is done over secure SSL connections and Hosting.com's data centers are SAS certified.

The higher-end plans include a secure client portal allowing a firm to exchange files with clients in a 128-bit format that complies with all regulatory privacy requirements. The portal has a 5 GB limit on storage and currently has no limits on transmission.

Email

E-mail hosting is available. However, it is not a required service and firms can use their own exchange or other server. CPAsites.com does not include built-in tools for e-mail marketing, however, firms can use third-party applications such as Constant Contact.

Newsletter Marketing & Content

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the sites are custom-built, a third-party blogging software can be used for firms that want to blog.

Other Features

CPAsites.com assists its customers in adding social media links (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) and even helps some firms create Facebook pages. However, it cautions firms to think carefully before implementing a Facebook page, because one that is rarely updated may be worse than having none at all.

Summary & Pricing

CPAsites.com offers four price levels: a Bronze plan at \$300 per year (\$25 per month), a Silver plan at \$50 per month, a Gold plan at \$85 per month, and a Platinum plan at \$150 per month. A detailed list of features for each plan is available at <http://www.cpasites.com>. There is no setup cost for firms that make a 12 month commitment to the service. Modifications to a website are generally free at the outset, and then CPAsites.com charges \$50 per hour (\$25 minimum) to make changes to a firm's website except for customers with a Platinum plan which includes one hour each month for edits and updates.

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