Geode
WEB DESIGN

BUSINESS PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Geode Web Design is a new web development company that will deliver consistent, high quality services to small businesses, start-up businesses, and non-profit organizations. These services will include conceptual design, web development, and content generation. This combination presents a unique selling advantage, as potential competition generally focus on design and development, but not on content. It is in this aspect that *Geode* will stand out.

Many small and non-profit organizations have no staff, time, or qualifications to accomplish all the tasks necessary to develop and maintain a quality website. Because of the established need, sales and profits will steadily increase. The unique capabilities and product options found at *Geode Web Design*, give the company an advantage over competitors. While costs may increase as *Geode* generates more sales, the profits will more than pay for these. In order to fulfill *Geode*'s mission and attract customers, the company requires an office with necessary equipment. This equipment will include mainly computers with the design, word, and web development programs required for beginning and maintaining websites. With this equipment, *Geode* will also maintain its own website to advertise to small and non-profit organizations.

Through funds received from investors, *Geode* will rise from the foundation of quality work, efficient production, and substantive realization of client business content to provide a new level of business development. As *Geode* progresses and surpasses break-even points, investors will receive direct returns on investments and will receive additional benefits as *Geode* stock and reputation increase. *Geode* projects that within five years of launch, *Geode* will have taken the forefront in its niche of the market, meeting or exceeding expected profit margins. However, the results of company efforts will not be merely manifest in numbers and statistics. At *Geode*, company managers strive to further the cause of small businesses and non-profit organizations by assisting in a change of their respective industries for the better. The quest for progress and innovation is *Geode*'s drive, and *Geode Web Design* will never cease to find opportunities to shine.

GENERAL BUSINESS SECTION

BUSINESS PROFILE

Geode Web Design will serve private companies and individuals who would like an effective online presence. From content development to creating and maintaining an entire website, *Geode* works with clients to produce and maintain individualized, effective and valuable web presences.

Because the market is showing an increase in web activity, the need for effective web design and content is essential for both large and small businesses.

Geode will first work with the client to set expectations and hopes for the web page. After expectations are established, *Geode* will research the company and write content outlines. This process of client-to-*Geode*-to-client communication continues throughout the writing to create acceptable and accurate website creation and development.

Geode's success depends on the needs of the client and the client's overall satisfaction with the initial (or edited) website content and design. A pleased client will appreciate continual web presence support and perhaps maintenance. In such cases, *Geode* has successfully established a long-term business relationship. It is in *Geode*'s best interest to ensure content and design effectively and admirably represent clients through a personal and memorable online presence.

Because *Geode* works over the Internet, physical interview is not essential. The client may choose to participate in phone or Internet conferencing. *Geode* requires the most recent in web development, content, and design software. *Geode* is dependent on fully functioning software and hardware, so backup machinery and equipment is required.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND PLANNED RESPONSES

Geode foresees several possible challenges as a company, including the realization of competition, vulnerability, and staffing. As a new web design organization, *Geode* will

compete against better-grounded companies. *Geode* is a small company, but its narrow audience will actually become a strength through word-of-mouth advertisement. *Geode* will create intimate relationships with its clients to allow better service. *Geode* hopes to network and meet other customers through intimate relations with clients. *Geode* is vulnerable to the needs of its clients: *Geode*'s success is based entirely off whether or not small non-profits are created and are willing to risk the money to enlist our assistance. *Geode* depends on the investment of small businesses and non-profits. In the beginning, when *Geode* has no reputation, gaining client trust may be especially difficult. *Geode* will rectify this by having sales and initiating safety-latches for consumers, such as "money-back guarantees." Another possible challenge is initiating a potentially large company with only five staff members. *Geode* depends on accepting all assignments; rejecting an assignment because of low staff could be detrimental to reputation. Therefore, *Geode* will create a waiting list and allow give a specified period before work on the client's website will begin and end. *Geode* will remain in control by limiting the number of clients accepted per month. *Geode* has strict assignment distribution among management.

CURRENT SITUATION

At present, *Geode* is in the beginning stages of development and implementation. The business plan is nearly developed, and work has already begun on establishing foundational fundamentals. *Geode* is anxious for the future and the opportunity available to help fledgling business and non-profits get off the ground and on to the fast track of progress. It is purported that approximately one million businesses are established annually in the United States, with only 20% lasting beyond the five-year mark. It is *Geode*'s mission to champion the causes of new businesses and to help business begin, expand, and prosper in their respective goals.

COMPANY OBJECTIVES

GUIDING VISION:

Geode will construct, maintain, and fill with content websites for small business and non-profit organizations to increase these organizations' advertisement success—by virtue of effective web presences—and consequently, revenue.

YEAR ONE

Construct a demonstration website that will showcase *Geode*'s capabilities as website developers, designers, and content writers and editors. Contact many businesses and organizations that may become clients and show how they could benefit from *Geode*'s services. Secure contracts with a few clients and construct websites for them.

YEAR TWO

Geode will continue to seek more clients, but also focus on maintaining and adding quality content to the websites already constructed. Long term survival as a company depends on ability to establish a good reputation of long term website support in content, design, and technical aspects.

YEAR THREE

Using the most successful clients, *Geode* will showcase the difference it has made. This will further its effort of becoming a leading company in the field of website creation. *Geode* will perform in-depth analyses of the benefits provided for clients and continually seek to increase their revenues, thus ensuring *Geode*'s stability and opportunities for growth.

MARKETING AND OPERATIONS SECTION

TARGET MARKET

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, there are 38,203 small employers (businesses with less than 500 employees) in Idaho. Included in this figure are many small businesses, start-up companies, and non-profit organizations that are in need of a web presence.

In a study conducted by Frank Thinking, 44% of small businesses do not have a website. Of Idaho's 38,203 small businesses, only 9% said they were satisfied with their online efforts. This is a shocking number considering that 82% of consumers use online search engines to find local businesses. This stark contrast represents a pressing need for companies to establish a web presence.

These figures hold true locally. According to multiple sources, there are three principal reasons a small business may resist having a website:

1. Most small and start-up businesses operate on strapped budgets.

2. Small businesses owners do not have the time to manage a website.

3. Small business owners lack the abilities to create a website for themselves.

Because of the unique services potentially offered by *Geode*, the company will focus on businesses that fall into these categories. These businesses will be targeted locally at first, as college graduates represent a large portion of start-up businesses in the area. This younger demographic is generally forward-thinking and already understands the potential value in an online presence. This will allow for easier collaboration with our clients, as the most common issues will be those of technical ability and time.

The main product offered to customers is the complete creation of a website including maintenance. To meet the needs of a broad scope of customers *Geode* has expressly broken down this service to accommodate both organizations that already have a website and those who want to maintain it without *Geode*.

The following chart shows *Geode Web Design*'s basic product options:

Website Construction	$200 one-time fee
Geode will build and deliver a fully functional website from scratch that is ready for content. After discussing the needs of the organization and what the client envisions, the function and design of the website begin. *Geode* will construct several design concepts and present them to the client. Finally *Geode* will fully develop the chosen design with any requested changes.	
Content Development	$50 per article per month
Many websites fail because information becomes outdated and there is no evidence that the website is being maintained. *Geode* will develop articles for clients' websites (based on needs) on a regular schedule that keeps websites fresh and interesting. All articles will be submitted to the website prior to posting so clients will have the opportunity to review content.	
Website Management	$50 per month
If an organization does not have the expertise, or does not want to take time to manage website hosting and maintenance-type changes, such as repairing or removing broken links and maintaining an archive, *Geode* will do this for them for a low monthly fee.	
Full Website	Starting at $100 per month
This is *Geode*'s main product offer. It combines the first three into a single package. *Geode* will create, maintain, and provide content for an organization's website. As an incentive for clients to choose this package, *Geode* constructs a website for no charge if the client signs a contract for a year's worth of content development and website management.	

OPERATIONS STRATEGY

In operating the business, *Geode* expects to meet a few types of challenges. To control quality and ensure customers receive the best products possible, *Geode* will have a draft written by one staff member, edited by a second, and then proofread by a third before placing it on a client's website. To ensure the client is completely satisfied with the quality of work, *Geode* will advise clients to access the website before it is published.

Geode will set a base of six articles per month per employee. When the needs of the clients surpass this limit, *Geode* will hire more employees to help ensure the effective quality of development, content, and design. With anticipated expansion, *Geode* will form divisions of the company that will be headed by the management team. The first new employee hired will train and manage hiring.

Geode's main goal is to achieve the best customer service. *Geode* wants customers to benefit from services and to be pleased with the quality of website design and content. To help realize this goal, *Geode* will allow customers access to the website created before publishing the site. *Geode* will give clients one week to look over development, content, and design and approve or offer suggestions before publishing.

PROMOTION STRATEGY

As identified above, much of *Geode*'s target market does not realize the value of this service. That being the case, *Geode* fully expects to approach the majority of clients with a thorough explanation of the significance of investing in an effective web presence. An initial list of potential clients will be composed from existing relationships with local businesses held by the public relations manager.

As *Geode*'s target market will generally face one of three issues (identified above), its pitch to these businesses will not vary much. This is because those issues stem from one underlying problem: These businesses do not understand the potential visibility and value that accompanies a web presence. If *Geode* can help a would-be client see this is an

investment with statistically supported benefits and returns, issues of budget, time, and ability become less important.

To these businesses *Geode* offers more than any other design company. Because Geode has uniquely packaged content writing with design and development, *Geode* has few competitors. As content upkeep ultimately is the largest source of time consumption, companies similar to *Geode* often offer only services in design, creation, and development, leaving the clients to fill in the content deficiencies with the company's own resources. With Geode's emphasis on content, it has capitalized on an aspect of web design neglected by every potential competitor.

MANAGEMENT SECTION

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The *Geode Web Design* Management Team consists of Alex Wells, Tom Lund, Adam Banta, Sarah Ewell, and Debi Larson. All members of the management team are trained in content development and design. The team brings a variety of talents and capabilities that distinguish *Geode Web Design* from competing web development and design companies. Students of BYU-Idaho, the management team has a commitment to excellent customer service, ensuring satisfaction a guarantee. Individual specialties are listed in the *Responsibilities* section that follows.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Manager over website development: Alex Wells has skills and experience developing websites using modern standards for the internet. Although currently an English Major he plans to continue his education and enjoy a carrier in information technology. His main responsibilities will be overseeing the construction of websites and implementing the design plans.

Manager over content development: Tom Lund has made writing a principal focus in his life, and much of his education and work experience revolves around that. With an emphasis in professional writing, Mr. Lund found his niche working in city government. As an intern there he was highly involved in the tourism aspect of city economic development. He not only was part of a team of three who pitched a new tourism website for East Idaho, but he also wrote content for many of the featured attractions and activities.

Throughout his many projects as a government worker, Mr. Lund was also able to develop relationships with local businesses and government departments. Often these businesses were just the type who would be in need of the services provided by *Geode Web Design*.

Manager over website design: Adam Banta is an English major who also has several years of experience in various aspects of design. Mr. Banta specializes in website and logo design and produces the basic designs and layouts for *Geode Web Design*. His primary responsibility is to craft custom designs for our clients on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Banta works alongside Ms. Ewell to insure that designs are both conducive to clients' needs and potential for marketability and growth.

Manager over sales and marketing: Sarah Ewell is an English Major with an emphasis in professional writing. She plans to work in the judicial sector of the federal government after attending graduate school in 2012. In *Geode Web Design,* she oversees sales and marketing. Specific to working with the website, she also contributes to content development and editing. She has considerable experience with effective website design and works with Mr. Banta to ensure that customized designs create an effective online presence for clients.

Manager over customer service: Debi Larson has had over five years of experience working with customers. She has managed box office for Rising Star Productions, a community theatre company; taught three dance classes; and worked as a teacher's assistant for 2 teachers in directly interacting with students to ensure their satisfaction and comprehension. She is responsible for working directly with clients and ensuring that website content and design are in line with the clients' expectations.

COMPENSATION

The following compensations are annual salaries for all members of the *Geode Web Design* team and represent the rate-of-pay agreed upon and contracted by all involved parties:

Manager over	Name	Salary
Website development:	Alex Wells	$50, 400
Content development:	Tom Lund	$48,300
Website design:	Adam Banta	$38,550
Sales and marketing:	Sarah Ewell	$46,250
Customer service:	Debi Larson	$39,750

Team Member	Date	Hours
All	Tuesday May 24	15
All	Thursday, May 26	40
All	Tuesday, May 31	20
Sarah	Thursday, June 1	15
Adam	Thursday, June 1	30
TJ	Wednesday, May31	45
Alex	Wednesday, June 1	20
Debi	Wednesday, June 1	20
All	Thursday, June 2	60
TJ	Monday, June 6	60
Sarah	Monday, June 6	40
Alex	Monday, June 6	25
TJ	Wednesday, June 8	30
Adam	Wednesday, June 8	45
Debi	Wednesday, June 8	30
All	Tuesday, June 7	60
Sarah	Wednesday., June 8	75
Alex	Wednesday, June	40