

WHAT YOUR DESIGNER NEEDS TO CREATE A WEBSITE

Compiled by



Planning Your Web Site Content and Design

Whether you are considering a new site, want to improve your existing site, or are ready for a redesign, careful planning at the start of your project will help ensure that your site performs the purpose you intend. No matter who you get to design your site, you are going to want to consider the following when planning your site.

Define the site's purpose

- What is the purpose or main objective of your site?

Define the most important action. What do you want your visitors to do when they come to your site? (e.g. give you email address, buy something, request more information, call or email you, introduce your company or products, manage and distribute information and documents).

Target your audience

Your knowledge of your target audience can help give direction to not only the look and feel of the site but what kind of content to include on the site. The type of content you provide will help determine what visitors will be drawn to your site.

- Who are your customers?
- Who will visit your site?
- What do you want site visitors to be able to do?
- What type of content would be of interest to your target audience? e.g. information or articles, videos, games, tutorials, shopping, downloads, blogs, newsletters etc.

Project scope

Ask yourself the following questions to get an idea of the size and requirements of your Web site project.

- What kinds of information do you want on the site?
- How big do you think your site will be?
- Will you be selling something?
- Do you want any special features (photo gallery, newsletter, videos, opinion polls, social media feeds etc.)
- Will your site require regular updates? Would you like to make changes yourself?
- When do you need the job done?
- What is your budget range?
- When do you want your site to launch?

Save the answers to these questions with your other Web site planning materials.

Get a feel for look and feel

Do you have an idea of what you want your site to look like? Consider what would appeal to your visitor and the message you want to convey. Think about the mood you want to convey, e.g., formal, business-like, hi-tech, casual, artistic, lively, serene, feminine or masculine, minimalistic, monotone or funky and colourful.

Look at several Web sites you enjoy visiting / reading. Make a note of what it is your find appealing. It could be color, ease of use, the way graphics are used, type of content, and the way items are arranged on the page, overall mood or something else. Make a list of the site URLs and the elements you like and don't like.

Content is king

Gather and organize the information and materials you want to use for your Web site:

- Use a physical folder to collect photos, brochures, hard copy written material, notes, etc.
- Make a folder on your computer to collect digital images, Word or text files, logos, etc.

Keywords are key

Try to think of words that you think people would use to look for your business in a search engine. Ask your friends what words they would use to find your business. Make a list of these words to give to your developer.

When preparing the text for your site include these keywords as much as possible to improve the chance that the customers you are looking for will find your site.

Basic Web Site content your design agency will require:

- Your company logo
- Information about you and your company: a brief history or philosophy
- Information about your product(s) or services: description, prices, pictures or photos
- Your credentials: experience in your field, accomplishments, experiences, projects
- How to contact you: phone, email, mailing address, physical location.
- Photos and/or drawings that enhance or illustrate the text
- Testimonials: a compelling way to inform future customers of your great reputation - highly recommended

Other content:

For ideas of other information you may want for your site, ask yourself, "What questions do my customers most frequently ask me?" This is the type of information that will be of interest to your visitors and should be on your Web site.

What makes you stand out? Do you offer services that are unique, different or better than your competition has to offer? If so, what are they and how will they benefit your visitor? Let your customers know what is special about your business by putting it on your Web site.

Other considerations:

- Where will your site be hosted?
- How often and what kinds of updates will your site require?
- Who will perform updates and maintenance?

You'll want to be sure that you budget for your domain name registration fee plus the cost of one year of hosting and one year of website maintenance. We can help you with all these issues.

Ready to talk to us... this is what we will need from you.

Your planning should result in some clear ideas about your Web site project. When talking to us you'll want to have ready:

- Purpose including the most important action
- Size, budget, and timeline for your project
- Your target audience - whom you wish to reach
- What you want your site to look like, just an idea, we will give you lots of ideas and direction when we meet.
- Your list of other Websites you like
- Your keyword list
- The content you will include on your website, text, photos etc. etc. We will also assist with this during consultation.

We are excited to join you on this amazing business adventure!

We want to invite you to book a consultation should you need assistance with putting this information together. The consultation fee is included in the website design charges when you commission IT Design to develop your website. A consultation fee is levied if you choose another design partner for your web design after consulting with us regarding strategy and content.

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