

## WEBSITE PLANNING GUIDE

Websites have many purposes: To sell, to inform, to motivate, to communicate. Some are combinations of any or all of these between a company its employees, customers or clients.

When we design a site it's FUNCTION FIRST and then make it look nice. We need to know what YOU want and what YOU need to make the site worth the time, creativity and money we'll mutually invest to put it together as an efficient collaboration between yourselves and our team. Again, we don't like wasting our money or yours so efficiency is important in planning your site.

These will help us to help you. The information will be sent to various members of our team including producer, designer, multimedia, and programmers:

### **In General:**

- In a few words, what IS the purpose of your site?
- Who is your audience? Mainly employees, staff, partners, public, industry?
- Does your current site generally meet your needs and if not what is it missing?
- What would you leave out of your current site during this process?
- Have you had any comments good/bad, on your site from visitors, employees, or staff?

### **The Design:**

- What websites in your industry do you LIKE from the standpoint of color, design, navigation or other features?
- What websites in your industry do you NOT LIKE from the standpoint of color, design, navigation or other features?
- What websites NOT in your industry do you LIKE from the standpoint of color, design, navigation or other features?

- What websites NOT in your industry do you NOT LIKE from the standpoint of color, design, navigation or other features?
- Do you have corporate colors you want or need to adhere to? Any colors to avoid?
- Do you have the latest logo and other corporate collateral to use?
- What will the viewing platform most widely used for the site? Desktop, Smartphones, tablets, iPads?

### **The Function:**

- Will you have media on the site? I.e. Videos, audio, downloadable documents, etc.
- What are your private communication needs with the public? Partners and staff? Employees?
- Would an email response function (we call it our ERS, or Email Response System) help with getting information out quickly to inquiring visitors?
- Are there sections of the site and what are they that need to be secure? Protected by log ins and also TLS or SSL?
- Will you be making a lot of changes to text and/or images to certain pages of the site that would be better and easier through a backend access for you?
- Will you have the need or desire to place downloadable times on certain pages?
- What communication do you require from visitors in terms of forms to fill out, email requests, number of subjects or topics they will be inquiring about?

- Will you be receiving payments of any kind on the site requiring e-commerce functions?
- If so, do you have a merchant account or do you use PayPal or other payment system?
- What special needs do you want that you don't have? What is your current site missing that's most important to you function wise?
- Do you have important functions on your current site that need to be kept or even enhanced on your new site? (email functions, forms, surveys, access, SSL, etc.)
- Do you have a need for any pages or content on languages other than English? If so which ones? What languages?
- For any video content, do you have a YouTube or Vimeo account?
- What links need to be provided for content and social networks?  Facebook  Twitter  Pinterest  YouTube  Vimeo  LinkedIn  Google +  Tumblr (These are the main ones even there are more as seen below)



- Do some of these (i.e. Facebook, Twitter etc. accounts need to be set up?

- Do you have new email accounts that need to be set up?
- What professional groups, organizations need to be considered for links or content?
- Do you have privacy, legal issues, disclaimers etc. that need to be handled in a particular way?
- For those people gaining access through your provided user and password function, what specific information will you require from them on any sign up form?
- Could you use an easy email function to allow you to blast out notices, updates etc. to people in your database? (since you'd usually have a database for some of these functions anyway)
- At some point will you have a blog to update people and keep them engaged?
- Do you now or will you have a newsletter to send out?
- Do you want an RSS feed on your site for those wishing to follow your updates?
- Do you have other partners, sub-companies, vendors, others that can link back to you if that's important? And what pages should they link to if other than you main home page?
- Do you have other sites or just domain names that this site needs to provide links to?
- Are there any other functions or ideas that are not addressed here that would help to make your site efficient, easy to use, and a better entity for your employees, partners and the public?

## Pricing Considerations:

There are many standard elements or ones we regularly use when putting together your website.

- 1) Client meetings and review of their materials as well as team interaction.
- 2) The designer who will create or manipulate graphics, photos, text, etc., either researched or obtained from the web, or from the client.
- 3) Multimedia programmer who will create special effects. Flash is being used less and less as browsers and mobile devices move away from it, but there are other methods of obtaining the effect.
- 4) Video editor who will take client's video materials and configure them according to required size or the player to be used.
- 5) Web programmer, who may be most skilled in either HTML, WordPress or other systems based on the site's needs. They will assemble all the pieces provided by other team members.
- 6) A Producer who many times will oversee the entire process, communicate directly with the client and manage the project.

During each phase of the project, it's not unusual that 2, 3 or more of these people will be working at one time to complete a client's needs.

With added functionality of good design, communications, backend functions, form development, media usage, multi-platform considerations etc., gone are the days of one person sitting in his garage cranking out a website.

The team approach allows for more options and also requires more time and therefore budget.

People will ask "how much is a website?" well.... How much to build a house? How many rooms, on how many floors? Do you want carpeting, tile or marble on the floors? Laminate or granite countertops? A basic toilet or a Toto brand? Chrome, brass or gold fixtures?

The point is that a website is basically a time and materials sort of budgeting process that takes into account all the people and resources to produce the project. What has to be created, researched and bought vs. what's provided.

We always ask what the client's budget is. This isn't to see how much money we can charge, but what is their level of expectation? If they really only have \$900, it's not worth trying to design a desired or needed functional site that reasonably would cost \$3-5,000.

Likewise, if they have \$15,000, it might take that much if they really need a complex site or we can say "what you really want and need will only cost you \$9,000." We know of companies that will not take ANY site for less than \$10K and mobile programming groups that won't work on ANY project less than \$50K. Matching need and budget is paramount.

It can take a fair amount of time to get the final design right, the right materials manipulated, assembled, programmed and placed, tested and refined. Even a relatively simple site will take 2 people 20-40 hours to complete their tasks and produce a site.

So it's easy to see that average 30 hours each (including work, communication with client, changes, updates, etc.) for only 2 people and you get a feeling for a simple site's budget:

2 people X 30 hours X \$50\* each = \$3,000 (not including special needs, materials etc.)

\* Rates vary based on many factors and this was chosen as a minimum example only. Most hourly rates are more but sample does not include discounts or other considerations.

Of course we take many things into account including discounting, multiple services, whether or not we're hosting the final product etc. We'll always attempt to confirm a final, very tight price range before starting your project.

### Time Frame:

Time to produce a site depends on many things including the client's responsiveness to needed reviews and approvals, development of various materials and so on. We will work with you to devise a schedule which meets your needs but allows enough time for quality creativity and work on the part of the many people involved in your site.

Believe it not, a couple of sites we worked on took 2 years to complete because of the client's involvement and delays. Most could be done in a month or two depending again on the functionality, materials required, testing and revisions etc.

### Client Involvement:

We want and NEED your input. We know this is a personal project and you want the best, so have realistic ideas and expectations and realize that *changes cost money*. So have your ideas fairly established when starting.

**Think** through your site and consider its uses from recruiting to training, selling and communicating. **Think** of those areas that are exclusively for public, customer, employee or administrative use. **Think** VIDEO and Its increased use on the web. **Think** what works.

We look forward to working with you to develop your dream.

REMEMBER - EVERY PRODUCTION IS A PROCESS



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