

10-Step Website Planning Guide

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Introduction

Once you've planned your site using our 10-Step Website Planning Guide, you can use this checklist to help you gather your content and focus your design ideas.



1 Start brainstorming

Gather your best brainstormers and/or those who will be making decisions on the design, look and content of the web site and get their input. (It's best to have their input now instead of at your site launch party!)

To get the juices flowing, check out competitor or similar sites and identify what you like and don't like about them with respect to design, graphics, content and navigation.

2 Define the mood of your site

- Think about what you want the "mood" of your site to be
 - o fun
 - o classy
 - o suit and tie
 - o simple and clean
 - o flashy
- Consider your current print materials.
- How will your site continue to reflect your desired company image?

3 Think about your target audience

- Consider your web site from the perspective of your audience, not your business or organisation.

4 Think about layout & navigation

- How will visitors want to explore your site?
 - o Will they want to see a list of services or a catalogue of products, see examples of your work or get a quote?
- How do you want your customers to contact you?
 - o email
 - o contact form
 - o telephone

5 Grab them on the home page

- What are the top 5 questions people ask you about your products or services?
 - o The answers should be on your site and easily accessible on or from your home page.

- Write a "Unique Value Proposition" that makes buying or using your products or services a must.
 - Will your motto work well on the site?

6 Consider colours and graphics

- Simple colour schemes and fewer graphical elements are easier to read.
- We can repeat your printed material's look throughout your site or come up with a colour scheme for you.
- We can use your existing logo or create one for you.
- Keep in mind that more graphics and photos increase load time.

7 Define work process and schedule

- What is the best way for us to keep in contact?
- How should we collect site materials?

8 What is your target date for completion?

9 Additional considerations for ecommerce sites

- How many products do you want to sell online?
 - Can the products be grouped into logical categories?
 - Do you have product descriptions and photos?
- What kind of order method (s) do you need?
 - Browse catalogue to order
 - Type in product ID numbers to order
 - Select multiple items from one page to order
- Will there be quantity pricing or bulk items?
- Will you be selling to both retail and wholesale customers?
- What will your shipping charges or special order considerations be?

10 Additional considerations for content managed sites:

- Define what type and how much content you want to manage.
 - Will it be lists, newsletters, articles, or a calendar?
- If you update a piece of content, e.g. an event calendar, at least once a month, it's a good candidate for inclusion.
- Consider your content marketing plan, who will be managing the content, and whether you need to outsource the work with a [care plan](#).

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