



SO, YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT A WEB SITE...

Due to increasing demand for a powerful internet presence, every business owner understands the need to not only have a web site, but to be ever vigilant to keep their style and messaging fresh and relevant to their market.

Following are a few items to consider as you begin your journey:

- 1 WHO IS THE SITE FOR?** When beginning your website project, start with what's most important - your clients and prospects. Many times companies become so entangled in shouting about how great they are on their site that they lose track of what their site visitor might need to hear. While some of this may be important to convey, it's crucial that you speak their language, communicating what's in it for them. If you gear everything from the visitor's perspective, your site will succeed.
- 2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SITE?** If the goal is to position your company as experts in your field, then it will be different than if it is to generate sales. If you plan to use e-mail marketing in tandem with your site, consider how everything will work together. The more information you can give your web designer, the closer your site will be to your vision.
- 3 WHAT IMAGE DO YOU WANT THE SITE TO CONVEY?** A close relative of #2, websites are all about image. And that image must be consistent. Pick a theme and pictures that reflect your firm honestly and stick with it. Branding works by repetition. Your collateral material should also reflect the same image.
- 4 WHAT DO YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE ABOUT YOUR COMPETITORS' OR CLIENTS' WEBSITES?** Spend some time looking around at what else is out there. It will become crystal clear what constitutes good or bad design. Try navigating 4 or 5 sites as if you were a prospective client considering using that company. If the website leaves you cold, makes you want to escape quickly, or continually repeats the same overused platitudes, you can guard against making the same mistakes on your site.
- 5 COPYWRITING.** One thing most often overlooked in launching a new website is the text. Before you set foot into the design piece, you should determine who will be writing the copy – as well as what kind of tone it will have. Your copy can work for you in two ways: First, it can jumpstart the process of building trust and credibility, allowing your reader to find the information they need to know to help them make a decision to take action or contact you. They will only read as far as they want to, but for those who want more information, the web is the least expensive way to build your case. Secondly, it's not only what you say, but how you say it that can boost your ability to rank higher in search engines.
- 6 WHO WILL MANAGE AND MAINTAIN THE SITE, AND HOW?** If you want to have a site you can maintain once the initial style and function has been set up for you, consider a content management platform (CMS) like Wordpress. Content management is very user-friendly with a variety of low-cost options. If you are familiar with editing and writing in programs such as Microsoft Word, you will love the freedom content management lends to your site.



- 7 SCALABILITY.** This is especially important for sites on a budget. Make sure your site is built with growth in mind. The design and structure should allow for additional pages as needed.
- 8 DATA COLLECTION.** If a purpose of your site is to collect information, it may be important to have a database-driven website. In laymen's terms, a "static" website is one that has no database. If you plan to publish a lot of articles, allow clients to register for seminars, or post a lot of dynamic content on your site, a database may be necessary. This is another argument for using a CMS platform.
- 9 PLANNING.** This is perhaps the most overlooked and undervalued piece of a website. By scheduling content and maintenance, you will ensure your website is always fresh and interesting. This is especially crucial for launching an e-mail marketing campaign. Without a calendar and accountability, site updates will fall to the bottom of your very long to-do list. *Trust me, I know this one first hand!*
- 10 SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION.** A great place to *start* with SEO is to simply keep your site updated. The more updates you do, and the more valuable the information your site has on it, the higher your site will rise in search rankings. Additionally, encouraging your clients or community partners to link to your site will help increase your rank. As your site and company grows, ranking will organically improve. This is just one of several steps to take, however. SEO is a necessary but separate service that can be discussed upon request.

Source (with modifications): <http://www.rightangleconsulting.com/Top10ThingstoConsiderWhenDesigningAWebsite.html>

It is my hope that the checklist on the following pages helps you in navigating and executing the steps on the path to web site success! Please contact me with any questions that arise.

Sincerely,

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WEB SITE STRUCTURE AND STYLE CHECKLIST

About Your Business

Company information (full name, address, phone, and email): _____

How long have you been in business, or how many years of experience in your field? _____

The primary purpose of your business (product/service): _____

List 3 groups of people that might benefit from your product or service: _____

Your branding slogan: _____

A description of your business in 25 words or less: _____

Do you have branding styles in place (if so, please list colors, fonts, etc.)?

What existing marketing materials have you been using (logo, flyer, brochure, business card, etc)?



What are your business goals (up to 3) that I may help you with? _____

What are the greatest challenges you are experiencing in your business at this time? _____

Have you had success or struggles with previous attempts to overcome these challenges? If yes, please describe.

Do you have a budget allocated to business development and marketing?

a. under \$1000

b. \$1001-\$2500

c. \$2501-\$5000

d. over \$5000



Planning Your Web Site Strategy

Describe your potential customers' demographic profile: (age, gender, income, community, etc): _____

Are they internet savvy or technically challenged? _____

What do you want your web site to do? (brochure site to generate leads, sales vehicle for a product, interactive blog, etc.):

What do you see as the message you want your site to communicate? _____

Who is your competition? (Include web site URLs if available): _____

List at least 3 web sites you like (include URLs) and what you like about them: _____

List at least 3 web sites you dislike (include URLs) and what you dislike about them: _____



Your Web Site Preflight Checklist

Do you have a domain name and a hosting account in place? _____

Primary Domain: _____

Provider: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____

Secondary Domain: _____

Provider: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____

Hosting: _____

AMP/Cpanel: _____

Email Login: _____

Password: _____

Last 4 of CC: _____

FTP Account:

IP Address: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____

Database (if applicable): _____

Username: _____

Password: _____



Wordpress Information (if applicable):

URL: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____

Theme: _____

Support (URL, Username, password): _____

Emails (existing or required):

Email: _____ PW: _____

Google Account:

Email Login: _____

Password: _____

Birth date: _____

Alt Email: _____

Any other login related information: _____



Developing Your Web Site

List all desired navigation labels (menu pages), along with any sub-level navigation your site requires

(Note: pages closer to the root of a site are deemed more valuable than those deep in the site architecture):

Main Nav Label:					
Sub Nav Label:					
Sub Nav Label:					
Sub Nav Label:					

Main Nav Label:					
Sub Nav Label:					
Sub Nav Label:					
Sub Nav Label:					

What should be included in the footer of every page of the site: _____

Will you supply a logo, or should the designer quote a price for logo creation? _____

Will you supply photos, or should the designer include stock photos in the quote? _____

Will you supply content, or should the designer include copy writing in the quote? _____

Will the web site require an online shopping cart? _____

If yes, do you have an internet-capable merchant account in place? _____

Will you want an online newsletter sign-up form on the web site? _____

If yes, do you have an email marketing account in place? (Please provide email client and all login information that applies.) _____



Basic SEO Information

Have you investigated competitive keywords and key search queries in your industry? _____

List 1-5 keywords or key phrases that apply: _____

List any authoritative external web sites on which you can place links to your web site: _____

Do you have Google Analytics running on your website? _____

Do you require monthly Analytics reports? _____

List any other details about your web site you'd like to note: _____
