

HOW TO CREATE AN

EFFECTIVE WEBSITE BRIEF



A clear, written understanding of requirements is an essential starting point for getting a website that fits with your business model, aesthetic appeal & budget.

This is a guide to help you articulate and organise your grand vision into something that a Web Agency can use to provide an accurate quote for your unique requirements.

Before you go crazy ticking everything on the list like you have just found yourself without your kids & pockets full of cash in K-Mart just pause for thought;

If you know your budget is tight ‘Focus on the critical few, not the trivial many.’

With most website builders you can add on additional functions as you go. Make sure you have the end goal in mind as it is being built to accommodate any major changes down the track.

I’ve been a full time business owner for 15 years and I can tell you this one self governing rule that has kept me from throwing it in during the tough times & going back to work for someone else’s dream.

Just start with what you need, you don’t need to know all the steps in front of you.

There has never been a better time to start a website. They are more user friendly & accessible to make than ever. The problem however with so many options is that it can be overwhelming. There are endless bright, shiny functions & features, new ones almost everyday that can distract you from getting your project off the ground.

As you go through the lists to build your brief, use a single tick for what you need now & a double tick for what you will add later.

YOUR NAME: _____

COMPANY NAME: _____

COMPANY DESCRIPTION:

PURPOSE:

What is the purpose of your website

- Book sales appointments/ discovery calls
 - Sell Products
 - Sell Services
 - Sell Advertising
 - Information/ Education
 - Other
-
-

FUNCTIONS:

Tick each function that you require - add any that are not listed here

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> E Commerce Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blog | <input type="checkbox"/> Analytics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> Comment System |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Forms | <input type="checkbox"/> Testimonials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opt In Forms - Email Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Live Chat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Members only content area | <input type="checkbox"/> Backup Manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booking Calendar | <input type="checkbox"/> Image Gallery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Maps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket Sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEO | <input type="checkbox"/> Video / Podcasting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

DESIGN:

List 3 websites that could inspire your new design. They do not have to be in the same industry at all. It could be a mix of elements from several websites that you like the look of.

1.

2.

3.

IMAGES:

In order to create a beautiful website, you are going to need beautiful images. My clients generally use a mix of images & branding created by a graphic designer, stock images both free and purchased from sites like 123rf, shutterstock & pexels and lastly images they create themselves using photoshop or Canva & PicMonkey which are great drag and drop online resources.

Some Web Developers also have graphic design services. Tell them where you are at with it so they can offer help or refer you to reliable services.

- I can provide all the graphics required my website OR
- I need help acquiring images for my website

COPYWRITING:

Writing text or 'copy' for your website is incredibly important for relaying exactly what you are offering in a way that your ideal clients understand, relate to and want to buy from you.

If you have written copy, test it on people who know nothing about your product or service. Get honest feedback about what they understood or perhaps didn't understand about your offers & what your site is about. It should read something like this;

You have 'x' problems. I have 'x' solutions. This is how we work together 'offer'.

- I have written all my copy
- I need a sounding board to assist me with my copy
- I want a copywriter to write my copy

TARGET AUDIENCE:

“If you try to be all things to all people, you won’t be anything to anybody.”

The point here is that if you try and market to everyone, you will end up selling to no one. You might choose to focus on a particular age group for example ; “35 - 55 year old women living in western countries who want luxurious bath products.” This doesn’t mean that you can’t or wont sell to 25 year old women or even men. It does mean however that you will save a hell of a lot of time, money and mental bandwidth trying to figure out what could trigger the minorities to buy from you.

Target Audience Description

AGE? _____
SEX? _____
LOCATION? _____
HAS KIDS? _____
EMPLOYED/SELF EMPLOYED? _____
HOBBIES? _____
WHERE DO THEY SPEND MOST OF THEIR SPARE TIME, PLAY TIME, WORK TIME? _____
BIGGEST PROBLEMS? _____
YOUR SOLUTIONS? _____

PROMOTION:

If you build it, AND PROMOTE THE HELL OUT OF IT, TEST IT, MEASURE IT & TWEAK IT!, they will come.

Creating a profitable website is not a simple matter of setting it up & waiting for the dollars to roll in. If it were that easy, everyone in business would be a web developer or web developers would just keep creating their own websites instead of selling them!

Just like a bricks & mortar business, it has to be maintained, restocked & promoted. You need to show people through, talk about it and encourage window shoppers to come inside.

It is important to consider how you will promote your website when building it because the layout, functions & text can have an impact on how effective the promotions are on different advertising mediums such as;

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Directory Listings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Sharing | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Shows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEO Optimization | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Worth Of Mouth |

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

MANAGING YOUR WEBSITE

Do you want a Web developer who will empower you to manage & master your website or do you want to outsource it completely?

In either scenario you always want to have complete control over your website & it's content.

As a general rule your web developer would not hand over administration rights to the site until they are fully paid. It should however be understood (in writing) that you will be given those details at handover. You want the ability to collaborate with other professionals during your websites lifespan, whether it is just yourself adding content, your business partner, VA, employees, marketing assistants or even if you wanted to go to another web developer.

If you have a good relationship with your web developer they may give you editing rights so that you can start loading blog posts, projects, products etc before handover. I do this with my own clients and it gives me the opportunity to coach them on how to navigate their website backend while we are still creating the pages.

DOMAIN NAME & HOSTING

Be careful where you purchase your domain name i.e 'www.yourdomainname.com'.

Some services provide an all in one package, where your domain name, website hosting & website builder are all bundled together.

Make sure that your domain name & hosting can be transferred to any provider. You do not want find out that you chose the wrong provider only to have your domain name held hostage!

I would recommend domain registrars such as Go Daddy, Crazy Domains or Net Registry. This is not an exhaustive list, but several companies I work with who don't hold domain names hostage in my experience.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have my domain name | <input type="checkbox"/> I need a domain name |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have website hosting | <input type="checkbox"/> I need website hosting |

WEBSITE BUILDER

Wordpress

- 60% of all websites are built on wordpress.
- It is open source which means there are hundreds of thousands of third party developers creating additional functions & themes everyday.
- Just like finding a mechanic & spare parts to fix a Ford is the easiest & cheapest way to stay on the road, most developers, marketers & VA's know their way around wordpress.
- Google loves Wordpress and there are advanced features and tools to improve search engine ranking.
- There are infinite support resources online if you want to learn how to manage your wordpress website..
- It's free! You will need to pay for hosting but the builder is always free.
- Woocommerce is a robust Ecommerce addon ideal for shopping websites that also need the diversity of wordpress functions.

Shopify

- 1.5% market share
- Shopify could be a good choice for ECommerce stores as long as you don't need certain functions only available in wordpress/woocommerce either initially or later down the track.
- Shopify is pretty SEO friendly with the necessary tools to rank on most popular search engines.

Squarespace/ Weebly/Wix

- These builders focus on allowing the user to create aesthetically pleasing websites that are easy to build, but not on generating traffic & sales.
- They do not allow third party plugins or they have a very limited bank of proprietary plugins.
- Their SEO capability is limited & extremely uncompetitive.
- Use these builders only if you are building a temporary site, where all your traffic comes from an existing client base who need to use it for information purposes like a one time event.

Choose your preferred website builder

Wordpress Shopify Squarespace Weebly Wix

RELATIONSHIP

Choose a web agency or developer who you can relate to. A good developer will give you direction, proven resources to overcome obstacles and necessary boundaries to keep your feet on the ground.

Want more support? Join my 'Socially Profitable Posse' Free Facebook group to collaborate & learn how to get a website you love without spending a million hours online. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/988169207985419>