

Website Planning Guide

The 4 stages of creating a professional web presence?



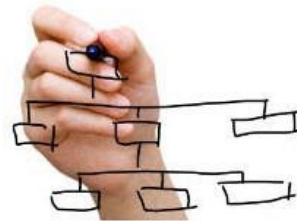
Preliminary Discovery session

Stage 1 - Preliminary discussion or Discovery – discuss in detail your goals, what you want to achieve on the web with this new website. The web design agency Project Manager defines the proposed brief together with you, the Client, the pages and content required, suggested page layout etc. You know your business better than the web design agency.

Who is the website for? And what do you want to achieve? If the Project Manager can really understand your business well and what you want to do online, they can better deliver the results you want. Do you need to do it in stages? How will your budget dictate these stages? What functionality is required now or in the future? Forum, Blog, ChatBot, eCommerce Shop or online payment portal, Wholesale login, RSS Feed, Social Media integration. Agree investment or costs and payments structure up front.

The Project Manager will study and research what your competitors are doing online and how to get you ahead of them in search engine results for key phrases and in subsequent conversions. Discuss logical goal setting and a Digital Marketing Plan or Digital Strategy. What are you going to offer online? Does anybody want what you are offering? Have you asked your existing clients what they want, why they deal with you and how a web presence could help them trade better with you. Get your existing clients to tell you what to build rather than just guess what they might want to see. From this should come a comprehensive written **Brief**, a handbook for everyone involved from Marketing to Design to Development to Sales team.

Stage 2 - Layout & Mockup – The web design agency will put together your proposed page layout structure or wireframe for your approval Information architecture showing user flow - Much like an architects initial drawing. Then they create a Graphic Design Mockup or offer a design theme option for your approval, then you can agree the technical requirements, agree the website platform to be used, WordPress, Drupal, Joomla? Is there to be any other functionality.



**"We're here to help you
plan your Web strategy!"**

Stage 3 – Content – The web design agency will discuss and collect any required original content from you the client or content creator for every page, including text, prepared sized good quality images, video, etc for every single page. **Take note, this is your responsibility.** Finalise design, create a final draft for approval and then make the site live for testing and tweaking. The content part can take a lot of time, probably more than **you** might have envisaged.

Think about the prospective visitors and create something that is worth viewing, something interesting, of value, useful or entertaining.

The website frame is 1170 wide allowing for a full width image 980 wide or in a Gallery images are typically 600 wide each whilst article images are maybe 300 wide.

All images should be small files, ideally under 100kb each and have a logical naming convention, such as web-design-team-talking-with-client.jpg

Stage 4 – Measuring - Go live and apply measurement metrics such as Google Analytics and call to action recording. Call to Action buttons can record visitor actions, such as downloading a pdf or completing an enquiry form, as you may have done to get this guide. The web design agency can apply standard SEO search engine optimisation and if required, monitor same on an ongoing basis. Review your website and overall web presence performance regularly. The website is not a business, it is just a marketing tool. So who will look after your Online or Digital Marketing? The job is not done when the site goes live, it is just starting and you need to continually work on your website, to increase traffic, and then try to increase conversion, to get a good return on your investment. And maintain it. It is much like having a real shop or practice window.

CHOOSING A WEBSITE DESIGNER



Communications during and after creating the website need to be clear & regular. The time and money invested means that the website needs to be maintained and built upon continuously. Having forged a relationship, the Client and the Developers need to manage it, to produce the Return on Investment envisaged. It is an ongoing process Partnership. Set some realistic targets and review them on a regular basis. Treat it like any business venture.

Time: How long does it take to build a website? The time required to create a business website is usually about 6 to 8 weeks. Once this web presence is created, then it is time to make it work for you, which takes more time on an ongoing basis. Getting it populated, found, ranked and then making it do something useful and keep tweaking it all the time. Like any tool there is no point in buying it to leave it idle. A business would not buy a Company van and then leave it parked doing nothing. It is there to deliver for you.

Ready for more?

What are the ingredients of good website design?

Important ingredients for a good website include sharp design, great images, smart navigation including bottom navigation or footer links, good relevant original content, usability, tracking & analytics. And sometimes social media integration,

UX or UI – What are they?

User Experience and User Interface are two terms used in website design that refer to two distinctly different parts of the overall design.

UX User experience or user design also referred to as UXD or UED which is all about usability in a website, about the whole process of helping visitors find what they want with ease, navigate easily and follow a simple flow, to help convert a visitor to someone who engages by asking a question or buying a product etc. *"This is an engineering aspect of the website design."*

UI User interface design is the designed 'look' or feel of a website, designed to thrill, to delight visitors, to have them like or want to stay on the website.

"This part of the design is the aesthetic, the style, the colour" or the bit that makes a visitor smile.

Both are important and both are needed in good website design, so make sure that your digital marketer and web developer confer with your graphic designer to get it all right.

Reminder

60% of searches lead to browsers clicking on a Page 1 result, over 40% click on the very top one, and 20% on the second, with less than 20% going on to view Page 2 at all. Digital engagement is everything you do online, website, social, Google ads, forums etc. Digital Marketing is a science, that can be studied or you can use a proven Professional.



Developers are like Chefs, they want to show you how to do it and impress you with what you can do with the 'solution'. So make sure that you get a website that lets you do as much or as little as you like, which allows you outsource as much as you want, rather than getting something brilliant, but complicated and time consuming. Most websites do not get utilised after development