

## Methodology for defining a website design

On the whole, designing a website has little in common with any other creative process. In an attempt to help simplify and clarify the process we have produced the following guidelines on what you need to look at when considering a design for your business website.

1. Make a list of your business / organization goals: Business websites should NOT be classified as advertising, marketing or information sites unless that is their intended purpose. Business websites should, in fact, be extensions of your business. Your business website should be focused on positively affecting your business goals.
2. Using your business goals as a basis, make a list of the goals for your website: To design an effective and successful website requires that you consider what you want the website to accomplish. These website goals should align with your business goals. For instance, if your business goal is to increase sales one of your site goals may be to increase the number of people requesting information or the number of people who email you. If your business goal is to reduce the cost of customer support a site goal may be to increase the number of people using your online, automated self-support site.
3. Your website goals will lead you to a list of the main sections of your website. Your site goals should also help you define the features and functionality of each section. Remember alignment...you want your site sections to align with your site goals...and your site goals to align with your business goals. You also need to define the preferred action you want the site visitor to take in each primary page (or section) of the site. The default action for every site visitor is clicking the back button. If you want them to do otherwise you need to provide adequate incentive for them to do so. For example, if your site goal is to increase the number of people using your online, automated self-support site that site section needs to provide the necessary information, navigation and search functions to allow visitors to easily find the information they need.
4. Create a list of keywords that visitors may use to find your website. Search engine optimization MUST be planned from site inception. You do not want to even begin to create website content with out taking into account how search engines are going to find, index and rank your site. If you have not conducted your own in-depth keyword research you need to have the research completed before you begin to create ANY content.

In some cases you may not have enough information to do all of this yourself. If so, feel free to contact us for help.

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