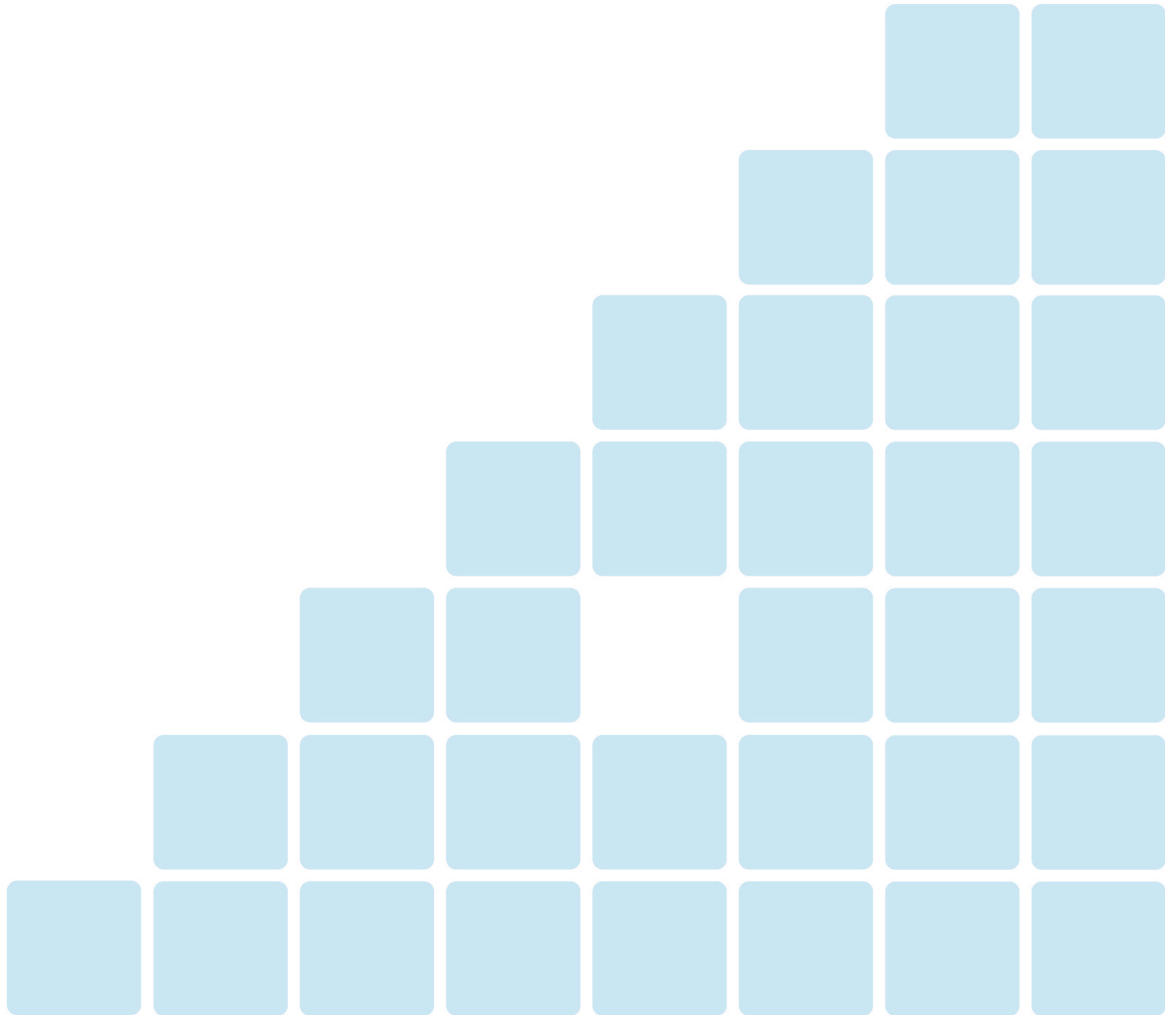


White Paper

## Web Site Development Planning

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## **Web Site Planning**

There are many different types of Web sites in the world, of widely varying degrees of quality and usefulness. But the thing that most distinguishes the successful sites from the unsuccessful ones can be expressed in a single word: planning.

The importance of taking this critical first step—before writing a single line of code or sketching out an initial design idea—cannot be overemphasized. Yet, you would be astonished at the number of times that projects of this magnitude are started without it. The result, invariably, is what we call a “misbegotten site”—work which may (or may not) indeed have a certain visual appeal or possess some compelling piece of functionality, but which at the end of the day, can best be characterized, as a whole, as fatally inept. Such a site simply does not do what the client expected or what users would want it to do. Repairing such poorly planned, misbegotten sites is often a more expensive proposition than tearing it all down and starting from scratch.

### **Strategic Planning**

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By contrast, a site that is well planned—down to the most exquisite detail, however seemingly trivial—ultimately results in work that is more than attractive, very easy to use, and utilitarian in the extreme. Best of all, such sites tend to be highly flexible, with a modular framework that allows for future expansion and content development without limiting the vision of the site owner or necessitating a great deal of costly reprogramming and redesign. In short, a properly planned site gives the client an outstanding product at what amounts to a bargain-basement price.

A typical Web site implementation plan should lay a solid foundation for development of the new site and the project should include the following phases:

### **Brainstorming**

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In this phase, the Website owner should meet with the team or designer who will be implementing the site to hammer out precise details governing the site’s true business goals, functionality, appearance, and options for future development. Brainstorming or planning sessions are key to keeping the project on-task and heading the right direction.

### **Research**

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Extensive online research should be performed with a formal feature-set survey of comparable Web sites within your industry, to determine the ways in which your “competitors” have succeeded and/or failed in certain aspects of their own online presence (the purpose being to aspire to achieving the best of the best and to avoid horrible mistakes).

### **Strategic Brief**

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You should development a formal, written “Strategic Brief” laying out in substantial detail the manner in which the project should and will unfold in terms of project management, deliverables, timetable of start & finish dates, functionality, design considerations, possible future needs and expansion options, etc.

## **Site Map**

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Here, you will need to create a detailed, written “Site Map” document which gives a bird’s eye view of your site’s planned structure, navigation schema, and the inter-relation of content.

## **Content Gathering**

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‘Content is King’ when it comes to your site’s effectiveness and ability to convert customer while also being recognized by search engines. During this phase, you’ll need to gather, refine/reassess & author content where necessary. If your Website implementation team does not have an SEO Writer on staff, it may make sense to outsource one. Most SEO copywriters are accomplished with all forms of direct marketing writing, and writing for search engines is an advanced skill set. An experienced search marketing copywriter will view your product or service’s benefits from the customer’s perspective and communicate that excitement to your prospects - while still gaining the positions you require.

Additionally, SEO copywriters seamlessly weave crucial keyphrases into new marketing text without sacrificing a conversion flow - plus strategize how new pages should be structured for maximum keyphrase saturation. Knowing another person brings that expertise to the table (especially for time-challenged marketing departments or sole entrepreneurs) can help immediately increase your site’s return on investment and your rankings.

## **Flow the Content**

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Now that your content has been authored and refined, you’ll need to populate the new site with the all-important content and your site is ready to be launched!

## **For More Information**

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