

Website Redesign Project Guide

Courtesy of E-Platform Marketing, LLC

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If you are in business for very long your business will have a need to redesign the company website. Whether it is a modernized look or enhanced functionality you need the website redesign process to go as smoothly as possible. We have created this website redesign project guide as a tool to help business owners and project managers better prepare for their website redesign endeavor.

Don't give up . . . it's a lot of work but well worth it!

When you make a realistic assessment of the lost business opportunities due to flawed presentations made by your outdated website it becomes obvious that the cost of a website redesign project is well worth every penny . . . if it is done properly. Think beyond only aesthetics and taking every bit of company information and “sticking it on the website”. Certainly consider aesthetics but also general usability, cross browser compatibility, mobile users, the strategic delivery of information. A well designed website is much more than a random collection of text and images - make it about the user's experience.

Our website redesign guide can help you to make better decisions and achieve greater success in the redesign and development of your website. Don't forget to gather and organize all of your electronic or printed assets including logo files, photos, PDF documents, text content and notes.

When you have worked through our site redesign guide we would appreciate an opportunity to provide a free quote. Call us at 877-499-8736 or [Contact Us Online](#).

Here's our Website Redesign Project Guide:

VENDOR SELECTION

Choosing a Qualified Design & Development Firm is critical! A well-qualified firm can protect you from making costly errors and serve as an expert guide. Opting for a low-budget firm, relative, friend, or freelancer will almost always prove to cause great frustration, deliver dismal results, and take far more time than necessary. Hire a professional company that can comfortably provide the other services that you will need at some point. Check for . . .

Business Stability - in business at least 5 years, with a Business License, and at least 30 live sites.

Business Experience – real world business knowledge and experience (not a group of techy kids).

Technical Proficiency – SEO success examples (local, regional, national, global), W3C site validation, custom design capabilities (no reliance on templates), active use of CSS, J-Query and JavaScript.

Marketing Support – in-house copy writing, graphics design, and sources for licensed stock photos.

Technical Support - domain registration, web hosting, search engine submissions & verifications, etc.

Internet Marketing Services - Local Search, Search Engine Marketing, PPC Management, Social Media, Viral Marketing, Blogging, Internet Press Releases, Online Reputation Management, Link Building, etc.

CONCEPT PLANNING

Assign a Project Manager that can understand the project well enough to manage it. Do not hand off this important project to a low level employee . . . or relative.

Define your objectives. What do you want the end result to be, to do, or look like?

What is motivating the redesign? What do you like and dislike about your current website.

Define your timeline and budget. Are they realistic in relation to your wants and objectives?

If your budget is too low, what parts could be done as a later "Phase II project"?

What has changed in your business since your last website was created? (i.e., target markets, product or services offered, competitive landscape, distribution channels, etc.)

What content do you have now, and what do you need? Is all content accurate and up to date. Who is to obtain anything needed, and what are their deadlines?

Site Information Architecture. Rough out a list of pages that you think you need with notes summarizing the content to be on the page. Include special requirement such as video content, etc.

TECHNICAL PLANNING

REQUIRED SERVICES

Your Domain Name (URL): Do not change the domain name which you have been using to host your website. You may want to [buy a domain name](#) (other than your company name) for marketing purposes. The new domain name can be "pointed" to your website. It is often a good idea to purchase variations of your URL (.com, .net, .us, etc.) in order to prevent unscrupulous competitors from leveraging your company's name and reputation.

Your Agency may need access to your existing domain name. If so, your Agency will need to know the following:

Registrar Name: _____ Account # _____
Login Name: _____ Login Password: _____

Your Web Hosting: Your Agency will need access to your existing web hosting or you can [get new web hosting](#). It is advisable to keep a copy of all existing website files. If you change your web hosting service it will probably mean only minor downtime for your e-mail addresses. You will need to change to settings in your Outlook, iPhones, etc. If you choose to keep your existing hosting your Agency will need to know the following:

Hosting Provider: _____ Account # _____
Login Name: _____ Login Password: _____

Miscellaneous: If your site is an e-commerce website there will be additional information needs such as SSL certificate, payment gateway, merchant account, etc.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

COLOR SCHEME

Color selections are very critical. Colors should be appropriate for the target audience. In most every case you should avoid wild color schemes and stay within a “normal” color palette. Your Agency can assist you with exact color selections if you have only a general idea. Websites require a color format known as a Hex Color. Your website designer can cross reference CMYK, RGB and PMS color numbers to maintain an existing color scheme. A great place to [get color scheme ideas](#) is at the Adobe Kuler website. Make notes on the color information you desire:

MAIN NAVIGATION

Your main navigation bar should contain links to the primary pages or sections of your website. A site with a large number of pages will probably require a menu with a drop-down functionality. We recommend J-Query menus for their polished look and cross browser friendliness. We do not recommend Flash menus as they do not work in all browsers or mobile devices. The number of pages on your website will determine the best option for your situation. Your logo should be a clickable link to your Home page, and preferably placed in the upper left corner of the page.

STYLE ELEMENTS

The look and feel of your website is impacted by basic style elements including font styles, font sizes, and intangibles defined by adjectives that you provide. Browsers, and personalized computer settings, may limit or override your chosen font style. Special fonts can be used in graphics however body copy should be limited to standard fonts such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Times New Roman, etc. Your Agency can make specific recommendations. Body copy should be a minimum size of .7em and preferably dark fonts on a lighter background.

List any special font requirements here: _____

CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

Your text content should be organized into “silos” for logical presentation of services, products, etc. Your content should be clear and concise. Web surfers scan more than read. When reasonably possible use bullet points for easier reading. Minimize the use of industry jargon unless your website users are almost exclusively involved in your industry or profession. Carefully proofread all content!

Use strong and reasonably frequent Calls-To-Action (CTA) to increase conversions. Use strategic intra-site page linking for usability and to cross-merchandise your content. Remember too that your intra-site linking will impact your SEO results.

Have foreign language speaking or global customers? Consider developing duplicate pages in foreign languages and optimized for foreign search engines.

SPECIAL VISUAL/AUDIO REQUIREMENTS

Websites typically have special or unique requirements to include visual or audio elements. Here are some considerations:

Clipart/Animated icons: Don't use it – ever.

Photos: Agency provided images should be licensed images from reputable stock image providers such as iStockphoto.com and should NEVER “scraped” from other websites. Ideally the Client will go to the Agency's preferred vendor sites and select their desired images, and provide the Agency with the image numbers.

Clients providing images should make certain that the images do not violate any copyright laws, privacy issues, confidentiality agreements or security requirements. Certain photos may require a client to obtain a “model release form” to use the likeness of any persons.

Any photos provided to the Agency should be original photos in electronic form when possible, electronic files in .jpg or .gif formats, and least preferred are photos that need to be scanned. Your Agency may require an additional fee to “Photoshop” images to make them suitable for your website. Image quality is very important for achieving the optimum look!

Videos can greatly enhance a sites message and you have options to display videos. For several videos you should utilize a video player with a thumbnail scroll, for a single image you can simply embed the video on the site. When multiple videos are available it definitely makes sense to create a custom YouTube channel to promote your videos. All videos should be optimized for search engine optimization.

Flash can enhance a site's content however we recommend minimizing the amount of Flash content on your site. Presently Flash is not supported on iPhones and other mobile devices so your new site with a lot of Flash may fail to connect with many users. Additionally Flash can increase the load time of a page and thereby harm your Google quality score.

Audio content alone is usually not a good idea. This includes background music. Consider a person doing personal web surfing at work and without any warning their computer speakers blast out music or a message such as “welcome to the DUI attorney site of . . . “ – you probably won't get that customer.

FORMS

Forms are often an essential part of a website. Your choice of hosting providers will determine what can be done with submissions and the timeliness of inquiry deliveries. Forms such as online quote requests may require development of a database and development which will definitely increase your project costs.

List any required forms: _____

OTHER NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

Payment methods accepted _____

____ Google Maps Link ____ Website Analytics (recommended Google Analytics)

____ Click-to-Call ____ Live Chat ____ Site Search Bar ____ Language Translator Tool

____ Site Verification (Google, Yahoo, Bing) ____ W3C Site Validation ____ XML Site Map

____ Social Media icons/links ____ YouTube channel/link ____ Blog creation/link

A few suggestions on how to get the most from your Agency.

DO

Listen to your Agency and rely on their expertise.

Set reasonable expectations and be flexible.

Give your Agency clear and complete information in a timely manner.

Familiarize yourself with normal, common issues such as The Google Dance and Reindexing Issues.

Take a few minutes after the project to give your Agency reviews on Google, Yahoo, Kudzu, etc.

DON'T

Make your project a low priority. Stay engaged!

Continually increase your scope-of-work and expect the extra work to be free. Time is money.

Solicit comments from friends and family – they are rarely knowledgeable on web design standards.

Expect to make endless revisions. Two rounds of changes, normally text only, is reasonable.

Forget that your Agency is on your side and wants your project to be successful.

And for a little more . . .

Here is a funny video that shows an all too common Agency-Client relationship in other real-world settings featured on [YouTube](#). If you are considerate of your Agency's time and cost you will get a better job, and often get extra services. Your Agency will appreciate you and be motivated to go above-and-beyond for you. Remember that you and the Agency need to work as partners.

We hope that this FREE TOOL will help you to achieve a successful outcome with less hassles and errors. For more specific information or inquiries please feel free to give us a call at 877-499-8736.

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E-Platform Marketing, LLC
109 Anderson Street
Suite 105
Marietta, GA 30060
Phone: 678-402-6739
www.EPlatformMarketing.com
www.TigerSEOMarketing.com