

Web Design Worksheet Guide-
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Working with Your Boone Web Designer

Mind-Reading is Expensive!

If you are creating a site from scratch, the options and organization can seem overwhelming. The easiest way to start formulating your ideas/needs (and to explain what it is you want to achieve), is to start gathering a list of websites that you like.

Maybe you like the colors from one site, but the navigation on another site. Maybe you want to list a site that you really can't stand as an example of what you don't want. The more examples that you can come up with, the easier it will be to communicate what you are looking for, and the faster a Web designer will be able to give you a quote.

Making simple notes like these will cut down your consultation time- and get you both on the same page fast.

Site address: _____

What do you like about it: _____

You may want to list 3 to 5 sites with a description of each to get started.

Virtual Vision!

Answer this simple question: why do you want a website? What is it you want to say?

- To educate your customers after they buy the product or service?
- To explain your product or service to potential clients?
- To promote your product or service to clients that may be doing business with your competitors?

Most every business gains by having a presence on the Web. Most people's motivation for having a site is simply because everyone else has one! Unfortunately, that isn't enough. You need to have the site actually work for you. Here you are paying for it- put it to work! Give it a job and make sure it is designed to do that job! If you were hiring a web site like any other employee, it would have a job description and a list of skills needed to do that job. Define the tasks that you'd like it to perform.

Try this exercise:

Now hiring for the position: Company Web Site!

Web site must be able to _____, _____, and _____ without _____.

Communication skills are a must! Must be able to work a 24/7 work week without breaks, salary or benefits. Inquire within!

Your answers will come in very handy in the next section.

Pages in Stages!

Once the style and budget is made clear to both parties, the planning begins based on your content -also called assets- and what it is you want to get across to your visitors. Start thinking about how many pages you will need and the titles you want to give those pages. For example:

"About Us", " History", "Company", "Our Company", "Our Family" are all relatively common titles given to the section of the website that describes your company, how long you have been in business, your mission statement- whatever it is that defines you and your business.

"Contact Us" and "Contact" are usually the titles given to a page of the web site that is devoted to the company phone and fax, physical address, directions, email addresses, etc.

Start to think about your product or service you are advertising online- do you need a page listing and comparing the products or services? Do you need a page explaining how to use the products or services? Maybe a page on the site where you list customer reviews?

As if you were writing a book, you will start to see your ideas become paragraphs, and your paragraphs become chapters. These "chapters" will ultimately become your Web pages. This organization may take time, and will probably need to be bounced back and forth between yourself and the designer to make the most visually of your "chapters", making sure one part of the site isn't trying to say too much or too little to be effective.

Once you have been able to group your information into pages, pick a title that sums up that page into just a word or two.

Meat and Potatoes! (Text and Images)

Once the site's pages are defined, it is your responsibility to provide the final version of the text to the web designer. There will be room for a few changes (things always look different once they are online) but major revisions / page removal or addition will eat into your budget and slow production.

Also understand that you are expected to produce images for the site exactly they way you want them to be viewed online. Any photo "clean up" like removing a background, cropping, or color adjustment will be added to the final cost of the project. You may want to show the pictures ahead of time to the web designer to get their take on the quality or size. This way, any additional image work can be estimated before the product begins- giving you the opportunity to take or dig up different photos if necessary, without hanging up the half-finished site waiting on viable images.

Intermission

Once the content is turned in, your web designer will most likely give you an estimate for how much time the job will take to show you the demo or prototype version. After all your hard work- you can take a break and watch the magical forces of creativity mold your ideas and content into your dream web site.

Season to Taste

Provided the prototype was what you thought it would be, review your web site's job description- does this site fill that position? Will it give you exactly what you want in a "virtual employee"? Now is the time to go over that with the designer. Coming back to the designer in a month with concerns about the site's direction will most likely land you with some re-design time charges.

Check to make sure that:

- It reads like you yourself would explain things to a client in person.
- Your company's identity is well represented (colors, logo, images). A site should be an extension of the business itself. If you went to your shop or office, it should be almost instantly recognizable from the online presence.
- In the first 20 seconds of landing at that site you can get the general feel of your business.
- Spelling and names are correct.
- Links and pages work as they are supposed to.
- Contact information is correct and easy to find.

Home Stretch

When the "tweaking" is finished, the designer will put up your finished site in all its digital glory. This is the time to tell people it is there! Depending on the business, you may want to advertise online and with search engines, or create a mailing for your existing clients...up to you! As a multimedia communications company, we can provide you with the marketing tools necessary to get the highest visibility for your new web site. Just ask!