

WEB DESIGN

8 PHASES OF THE DESIGN PROCESS



WEBSITE CREATION PROCESS



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1.1. Project Summary

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1. Project Definition

Organizations have a need to communicate to stakeholders their positions on issues and make audiences aware of their products and services. Many times the communication need, such as a Web site, is triggered by a change of strategic direction. Identifying the reasons of the site's existence and what it is supposed to achieve are the first step in the process. The goals and objectives that are established at the outset of the project inform all future decisions, from site structure and naming conventions used in the navigation to the visual design of the site.

Once all the information and assessments gathered from the stakeholders are completed, they should be collected in a well-formatted project brief. The brief contains the following elements:

1.1. Project Summary

Outlines the general overview of the project, organizational background, the environment the organization exists in, the people the organization serves and the unique value it provides to its audience.

1.2. Goals

What are the specific measurable goals that the site should achieve? Clear goals allow the creative team the ability to focus on what will provide the most impact and move the organization forward.

1.3. Target Audience

Whom are you communicating to? Identifies the people looking for your product. Audience profiles include demographics, psychographics, brand perceptions, audience needs, online goals and tasks routinely performed.

1.4. Message

Identifies the key messages that attract and motivate key audiences to engage with the organization. Outlines the key brand messages that help differentiate the organization from its peers. This speaks to persuasiveness.

1.5. Competition

Who are the rival organizations that provide similar offerings to your audience? Include an overview of competitive organizations' Web sites, considering visual branding, messaging, navigation, calls to action and key differentiators.

1.6. Content Strategy

Content strategy, at a fundamental level, frames a project for the web designer. The creative team requires the organization's profile to give them a clear direction on what the website will entail. This includes:

- ❖ **Organization Content:** Define a clear information structure. Get the website content into logical categories and ensure that the main page content contains information that tell visitors exactly what they are going to get at a glance.
- ❖ **Website Layout:** This includes the page flow of the website. It's the path a user follows through your website interface to complete a task (make a reservation, purchase a product, subscribe to a service). It's also called user journey. In order to maximize your conversions, you have to get the user flow right – build one that matches user's needs.
- ❖ **Color palette:** Like beauty, color is subjective. What arouses a reaction in you may evoke a very different effect on someone else. At times, this is because of personal preference, and on occasion, a result of cultural background. Understanding the colors that will influence your target audience.
- ❖ **Image selection:** Photographic images grabs the audience attention and trigger an almost instantaneous response when they encounter them. They are very effective and can quickly send the intended message to your audience. However, using the wrong photos can degrade your users' experience. The creative team will evaluate fundamental aspects of a photo, those being: quality, size, composition and exposure. Quality in terms of required resolution, size of the image and preferably its orientation for the intended usage, effective composition and cropping of the photo to draw attention, and properly exposed subjects on the photo.

2. Project Scope

Defining the scope of the project is a critical step. One of the most common frustrations with Web projects is scope creep. By creating a well-defined project scope plan that outlines specific activities and deliverables, along with specific timelines, you will be able to clearly set expectations for your clients. Below are some of the elements to keep track of in a Web design project:

- ❖ Budget of the project
- ❖ Constraints of the project
- ❖ The technical and non-technical requirements
- ❖ Identify the prototype deliverability
- ❖ When the website needs to be completed

3. Wireframe and Site Architecture

Site architecture includes the sitemap and wireframes of pages. Creating the sitemap ensures that you've considered all the key pages in the site, showing their relationship to each other and defining how the sties overall navigation should be structured. Wireframes provide a detailed view of the content that will appear on each page. Although they do not show any actual design elements, the wireframes provide a guide for defining content hierarchy on the page.

4. Visual Design

Once the blueprint for the site has been defined through the creation of the sitemap and wireframes, the next step is to create a visual style. The overall visual style will most likely be determined by the visual brand of the organization; the goal being to connect the Web with all other forms of the organization's communications. The organization's brand plays an important role in this part of the process, as designers will want to visually convey key brand perceptual ideas within the design.

5. Site Development

With designs approved, it's time to flesh out the design of the pages. Graphic elements that have been designed during the previous stages should be used to create an actual website. Usually, the home page is created first, and then all sub-pages are added. Frameworks and CMS should be implemented to make sure that server can handle the installation and set-up smoothly.

All static web page elements that were designed during the mock-up and layout creation should be created and tested. Then, special features and interactivity should be added.

6. Site Testing

Testing of the site is critical as there will inevitably be issues that need to be addressed before the site goes live. At this phase, the site will need to be reviewed based on different stages:

- ❖ **Black box testing** – Tests are based on requirements and functionality. The website developer will attempts to find errors in the following categories:
 - a. Incorrect or missing functions
 - b. Interface errors
 - c. Errors in database access
 - d. Behavior or performance errors

- ❖ **Unit testing** – Testing of individual software components or modules. Typically done by the programmer and not by testers, as it requires detailed knowledge of the internal program design and code. It may require developing test driver modules or test harnesses.
- ❖ **Integration testing** – Testing of integrated modules to verify combined functionality after integration. Modules are typically code modules, individual applications, client and server applications on a network, etc. This type of testing is especially relevant to client/server and distributed systems.
- ❖ **Functional testing** – This type of testing ignores the internal parts and focus on the output is as per requirement or not. Black-box type testing geared to functional requirements of an application.
- ❖ **System testing** – Entire system is tested as per the requirements. Black-box type testing that is based on overall requirements specifications, covers all combined parts of a system.
- ❖ **Acceptance testing** -Normally this type of testing is done to verify if system meets the customer specified requirements. User or customer do this testing to determine whether to accept application.
- ❖ **Load testing** – It's a performance testing to check system behavior under load. Testing an application under heavy loads, such as testing of a web site under a range of loads to determine at what point the system's response time degrades or fails.
- ❖ **Usability testing** – User-friendliness check. Application flow is tested, Can new user understand the application easily, Proper help documented whenever user stuck at any point. Basically system navigation is checked in this testing.
- ❖ **Security testing** – Testing if the system can be penetrated by any hacking way. Testing how well the system protects against unauthorized internal or external access. Checked if system, database is safe from external attacks.
- ❖ **Compatibility testing** – Testing how well software performs in a particular hardware/software/operating system/network environment.
- ❖ **Alpha testing** – The site will be placed on a test account where only internal audiences and anyone who you share the link with can view it.
- ❖ **Beta testing** – Testing typically done by the organization stakeholders. The site will then presented to the client to address any issue that they may have before it goes live, have it reviewed and approved.

7. Site Launch

The organization pays the remaining amount. Once the payment is complete, the site is launched on the client's account. But once the site is launched, the project isn't over — you should be prepared to address feedback from users adapting to the new site. Expect to make some immediate changes to the site, such as fixing broken links, editing copy and making adjustments. The Web is a fluid medium that changes on a daily, if not hourly basis — change is inevitable.

8. Project Warranty

Websites are living, breathing entities and need constant care and maintenance. Updating content, making changes to the backend and fixing broken links once the site is live. At this phase, the organization will receive a free website maintenance service for the first 2 months.