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**POINT  
PLANNING  
GUIDE**



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# 5 STEPS TO PLANNING YOUR WEBSITE.

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During the time that we've been designing and building websites, we've come across many businesses that know that they need a new website. Few of the, have really known what they need, what they should expect it to do or what will be expected of them as part of the process.

The purpose of this short guide is to help any business to prepare for the inevitable questions that they will be asked when they start to ask for quotations for their new website

## 1

### **Set your goals**

So, you know that you need a new website. Think for a minute about why you've come to this conclusion. Maybe your old website isn't delivering what you expected, or you have a website that needs updating visually, or maybe you're a new business and it will be your first website.

No matter what the reason, you still need to think about the purpose of the website:

- **Should it generate new business leads?**
- **Increase product sales?**
- **Increase newsletter sign ups?**
- **Or something else?**

Whatever your goals may be, you need to think about how you will measure whether it has been successful.

## 2

### **Think about budgets**

We never fail to be surprised by the number of businesses that overlook this critical step. Your budget should ideally include:

- **The cost of having your new website designed and built.**
- **Copywriting, unless you have someone in house who can do this for you.**
- **Photography, by far the best approach is to use photography that is bespoke to your business, however stock photographs can offer a cost effective alternative.**
- **The cost of ongoing maintenance and updates – yes, websites do need maintaining, especially if they're built using a Content Management System (CMS).**
- **The cost of marketing your website, yes you will need to do this too – you wouldn't buy a box of leaflets and then leave them under your desk would you? A website is just the same, you need to ensure people looking for what you offer can find you.**

The best advice we can give on budgets is to be realistic, generally you need a team of experts to produce an outstanding website, it's very rare indeed that you find one individual that's up to the job. Your budget should reflect this.

# 3

## **Do your research.**

This really divides into 2 neat parts, your competition and your audience.

It may sound obvious but check out your competition online, especially the ones who appear on the first page of any Google search for your key products or services. Have a look at what your competition is doing online. Also have a good look at what your local competitors are doing.

Think about your ideal customers, who are they? Why would they choose to work with you rather than the competition? It may help to create a customer avatar.

A customer avatar brings together the facts you've gathered from thinking about or watching, and listening to, your customers.

You need to really take the time to get into their heads and develop a clear understanding of their:

- **Key phrases used by them**
- **Experience and expertise**
- **Emotions**
- **Values**
- **Technology**
- **Social and cultural environments**
- **Demographics – age, sex, marital status etc**
- **Hair, eye colour, you name it – yes, it does seem odd but it really does help.**

Having given these things some thought before you talk to a web designer it will save time and money because you are able to provide a much clearer brief as to what your site should do and who it should appeal to. It's also worth noting that you can have more than 1 customer avatar.

## 4

### **Think about your content**

Whether you're using a copywriter or doing it yourself at some point you're going to need to think about what you want to say on your website and how you're going to say it.

You'll need to think about the personality of your business, do you want to sound serious, friendly, fun? Do you want to portray yourselves as experts, knowledgeable, trustworthy?

What are the benefits of working with you and the benefits of your products as services. At some point answers to these questions will need to be written down to provide a brief for your copywriter.

It's also worth thinking about other types of content, would using video be appropriate, if so have you budgeted for it. It's also time to think a little more about photography, do you want to introduce yourself and your team on the website, if so you'll need good quality photographs of everyone. If you sell physical products do you already have photographs of them, or you will need to have them professionally photographed.

You'll also need to think about the ongoing need for new content, it's well known that search engines like new content and that it can help your website be found, however, this requires a long term commitment to ensure that content such as blogs don't become dated and stale.

# 5

## Write an outline specification

If you're going to be asking companies to quote for producing your new website then you are going to need to produce an outline specification. This will ensure that both you and the companies quoting have a good understanding of what is required, it also means that if you are getting more than one quote, that everyone who will be pitching for the work will be quoting for the same thing.

This doesn't have to be a huge document, generally a couple of sides of A4 will be sufficient if it is succinctly written. It should, however, cover the following as a minimum:

A brief introduction to your company and its products and/or services

Estimated number of pages / sections required

Whether a content management system (CMS) is needed – so that you can add or edit content yourself

- **The number of forms that are required – contact, newsletter sign up or other**
- **If you need to sell products from the site and number of products**
- **How all the product information will be handed over – spreadsheet, database**
- **Any other functions that are required – i.e. document management, image gallery, blog, client login section with details of what the clients will see.**
- **If copywriting should be included in the quotation.**

- If photography should be included in the quotation.
- If SEO or any ongoing marketing should be included
- Whether web hosting is required
- Details of your top 3 online competitors
- Details of top your 3 local competitors
- Links to 3 websites that you like and 3 websites that you don't like
- A brief description of what you expect the website to do for you.

Armed with your new websites goals, your budget and your outline specification you're now ready to start looking for a company to built you new website.



# WEBSITE PLANNING GUIDE

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## YOUR BUSINESS

Tell us a little about your business, how long have you been in business? How many staff do you have? What sets you part from your competition?



## GOALS

What are the goals of your new website?

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How will success be measured?

.....

## BUDGETS

Design & Build	Content & Photography	Marketing	Updates & Maintenance
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## COMPETITION

Top 3 online competitors

Name:

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website:

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Name:

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website:

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Name:

---

website:

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Top 3 local competitors

Name:

---

website:

---

Name:

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website:

---

Name:

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website:

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## CUSTOMER AVATARS

Customer 1



### CONTENT - DO YOU REQUIRE:

Copy writing

Photography

## KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Products

.....

Services

.....

Is there anything else you do that is important to your customers?

.....

## **OTHER WEBSITES THAT YOU LIKE**

Top 3 online competitors

Website 1:

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Reason you like it:

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Website 2:

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Reason you like it:

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Website 3:

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Reason you like it:

## **OTHER WEBSITES THAT YOU DON'T LIKE**

Top 3 online competitors

Website 1:

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Reason you don't like it:

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Website 2:

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Reason you don't like it:

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Website 3:

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Reason you don't like it:

## **TECHNICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE SITE:**

Tell us a little about any special features the site should have? Should it have E commerce, document management, membership subscription, image galleries etc.

