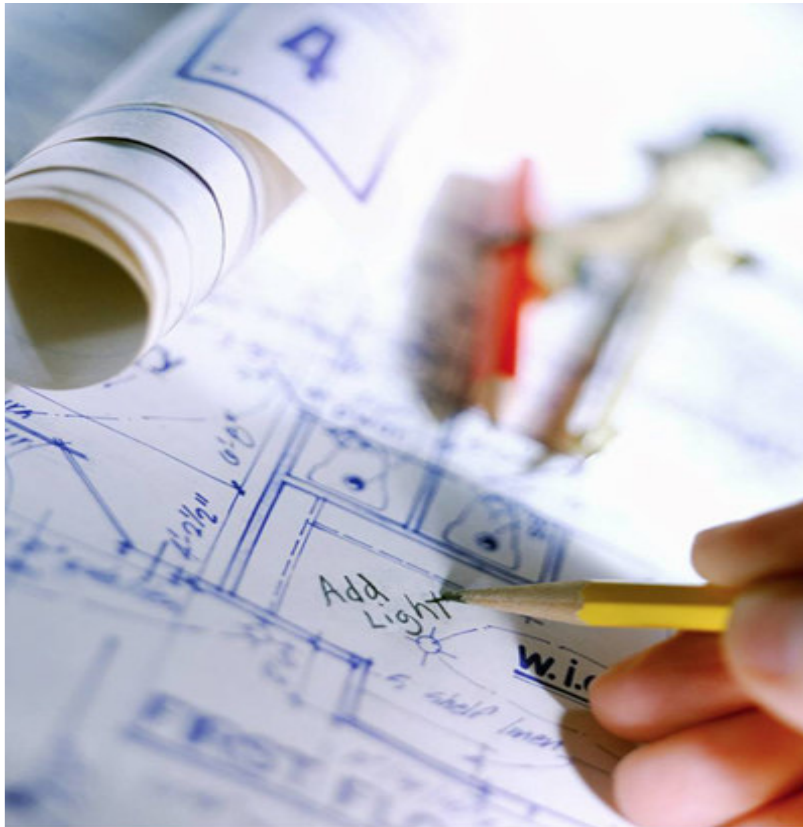# The Web Site Planning Handbook

Your Guide to Getting Started

CREATIVE OUTBURST STUDIOS

PHOTOGRAPHY \ MUSIC \ WEB DESIGN

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Congratulations on beginning the process of creating your own website!

Creating a website for the first time can seem like a daunting task. By preparing a solid plan for the purpose of you site, you can save delays and project costs.

To reduce unnecessary costs and simplify the process, Creative Outburst has created this helpful handbook. It will take you step by step through the planning and preparation process to begin developing a site that will be an awesome tool for you, your business, and clients. For you convenience, there is a Website Planning Worksheet included with this handbook to help you progress from step to step.

When you think you are ready to begin the actual development of your website, or if you get stuck during the preparation process, we would love to hear from you. Our contact information can be found at the back of this handbook.

1. Choose a Domain Name.

To see if your desired Domain Name is available, give me a call or email: 715-338-5409 or scott@creativeoutburst.com

Glossary
Domain Name: A domain name is the unique name that identifies your site (e.g. www.yourname.com)

Tip! Most people find a .com name the easiest to remember. If you are going to choose a different extension (like .ca, .biz, .org, .info, etc.) you may need to draw some attention to the extension in your advertising so that your clients don't end up at a competitor's website! Having said that, .com's are not always easy to acquire. You may have to use a little creativity to find an appropriate name. For example, Nissan Motor Company registered nissanmotors.com because nissan.com was already taken. Be careful that in your creativity you do not choose a name that is obscure or complicated. Something like kwik.com might seem catchy, but clients may end up at quick.com if they only hear the website name or are not paying close attention.

2. Establish a Budget for Your Website.
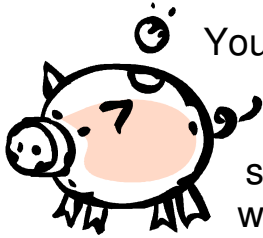
You may choose to share this budget with us or not. The choice is entirely up to you. Regardless, creating a budget is a valuable exercise to help determine the scope of your project. It may influence whether your website will be created all at once or in phases, beginning small and growing it over time. While it is important to save costs wherever possible, keep in mind that as a general rule, the larger your investment, the greater your return.

Remember!

1. Maintenance and Updating costs.
2. Annual fees like **Hosting** and **Domain Name** renewal fees.
3. Advertising and Promotion costs.

3. Define your Website's Primary Purpose.

Without a clearly defined purpose for your website, you may find yourself investing valuable resources into a site that does not satisfy your needs. By clearly outlining your goals ahead of time, you will be better prepared to build a website that accomplishes what you desire.

Your website should be one element of your overall marketing plan, consistent with your current business image and **brand** strategy.

Glossary
Brand: A consistently applied strategy that incorporates symbols, imagery, and words to distinguish a product or company form its competitors.

Ask yourself: "Why do I need a website?" "Does it support the mission and vision of my company?" Develop a succinct mission statement for your website that incorporates the answers to these questions. Then, throughout the project, you can keep comparing the progress against the mission statement to ensure they line up.
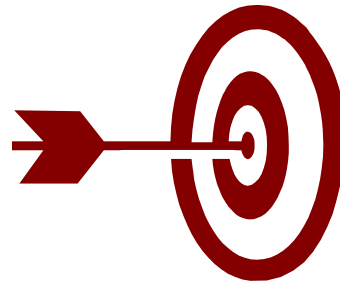
It may be helpful to answer the following questions about your website:

Who is it for?

What will it look like?

What will it do?

What will it say?

You may find that the answers to these questions will contradict your primary purpose. You might even come back and make modifications to your primary purpose. It is better to do this in the planning stage than half-way through your website project.

Let's look at each of these questions in greater detail:

4. Who is it for? Discovering Your Audience.

It is crucial that you know whom you are targeting in order for your website to be profitable for you. By understanding who your clients are, what their needs are, and what motivates them, you are much better prepared to tailor make your website to accommodate them.

Example! One client shared with Creative Outburst that their clients were primarily in the 55+ age bracket. Based on previous experience, we understood that a common complaint from this age demographic was the small text size of most websites. To remove this barrier, we designed the entire site around a larger text size.

You may choose to conduct demographic surveys of your existing clients. Or, you may wish to go after a new client type altogether. Regardless, it is vital to get a clear picture of you client. Once you have solidified this picture, put it into a client profile.

One client prepared this client profile:

> **General Client Base:**
>
> 75% Men
> Ages 25-55
> Middle to Mid-High Income
> Possessing an interest in investments
> General knowledge of investing principles
> Wary of stock market
> Available capital from $1,000 to $500,000
>
> **Specific Target Group:**
>
> 85% Men
> Ages vary, but mostly between 30-55
> Somewhat knowledgeable about investment principles
> Many have invested and have lost money in investments.
> Many are somewhat disillusioned with their own investing
> ability: looking for and answer to their desire for profits, but
> inability to achieve them personally.

Some questions to ask yourself:

What does my Client look like?
Who is my ideal Client?
How do I want them to respond to my web site?
What classification of person will my web site cater to?
(e.g. current clients, new clients, suppliers, retailers,
distributors, media, researchers, etc.)

5. What will it look like?
Choosing your Web Site Image.

While you may not be a graphic designer, or possess artistic abilities,
you know what you like when you see it. When it comes to deciding
on some elements you would like in your website design, it may

simply come down to listing a few of you favorite websites and what you like about them.

Tip! If you are not an avid surfer of the Internet, you may want to check out a website award site like www.coolhomepages.com for samples of hundreds of sites, grouped by categories. You are sure to find many sites that you like and don't like within a matter of a few minutes.

Keep in mind that when critiquing a site, it is important to try to identify the specific reason(s) why you like or don't like what you see.

HTML COLOR CODE CHART		
Blue	#0000FF	
Black	#000000	
Red	#FF0000	
White	#FFFFFF	
Green	#008000	
Purple	#800080	
Yellow	#FFFF00	
Orange	#FFA500	
Violet	#EE82EE	
Silver	#C0C0C0	
Gold	#FFD700	
Gray	#808080	
Pink	#FFC0CB	
Fuscia	#FF00FF	
Light Blue	#ADD8E6	
Sky Blue	#87CEEB	
Aqua	#00FFFF	
Khaki	#F0E68C	

Once you have determined the appearance you are after, assemble the images and graphics required for you site. Do you have a quality company logo? What are your company's colors? Will you be including pictures of yourself, your facility or staff? What other pictures would you like to use?

If you find yourself short on image content, don't worry. Creative Outburst has access to thousands of images, and can create your specific images with photography, graphic design.

If your company requires a logo or corporate branding package, please visit our website and contact us. www.creativeoutburst.com

6. What will it do?
Determining your Web Sites Functionality.

What your website will do depends on your primary purpose. You may use your website to attract new clients to your business, provide online tools for existing clients, reinforce branding/identity, sell

products/services, advertise your business, and/or provide resources and information.

 Example! Here are some of the elements a website may include:

- Downloadable Resources (reports, articles, printable forms, etc.)

- Online Forms (registration forms, order forms, request forms, etc.)

- Online Shopping Area.

- Audio Files (music, speaking, courses, etc.)

- Video Clips (if you are using video clips, remember that many Internet users are

still using dial-up connection and may lose internet in waiting).

- Guest Book (for visitors to post or send you their comments in an email).

- Animated Elements (website introduction, moving navigation buttons, etc.).

-Search Capability (to find specific articles, products, etc. in your site).

-Chat Rooms

Ask yourself: "Why would people visit my website a second time?" You may be able to get someone to your site initially, but making them return is what you are ultimately after. What will people be able to do at my website that will make them want to return?

You may wish to group your site into sections depending on whom you will cater to in each section. Perhaps you will want your homepage to attract new clients with an online form of a contest. Another part of your site may have downloadable resources such as instructions manuals or spec sheets, that cater to existing clients.

7. What will it say?
Assembling your Web Site Content

Compiling the written copy for your website is, without a doubt, the most intensive part of your preparation and may take more work than

you initially imagined. Now having content prepared is the most frequent cause of a website project delay. It may be good to organize your website into sections and pass off some sections to others for content gathering.

Most websites have the following pages in some sort of fashion. It may be easiest to produce the content for these sections first:

Home: What do you want to say to people when they arrive? Your homepage may give a welcome message, a special promotion, or a new product advertisement. Perhaps you will choose to use images instead of verbiage to deliver the message.

About Us: Many people want to find out more about your company and its directors. You may want to give a company history, or mission statement, purpose, and values.

Contact Us: Is there a message you would like to convey about your availability? Some want to communicate that "Our 24-hour customer service representatives would be please to assist you."

Policies: Many Internet users are interested in knowing your Privacy Policies in regard to how you share the information collected about them to others. You may wish to include a Site Use policy that governs the use of content on the site. Feel free to ask us for a sample Privacy and Site Use policy.

Remember!

You website's message should be consistent with your primary purpose.

You will also want to gather content for the pages specific to your company. Try to think of as many places as possible that will require written content. Review the functionality of you website from the previous point covered in this handbook to ensure you remember the little details.

8. Timelines

Finally, you will want to communicate any specific timelines to your developer.

 Remember!

Ensure that when you are planning your timelines, you leave enough time for you to review the site, submit feedback, and for the developers to make changes.

9. Discovery Session

Creative Outburst would be happy to have a complementary initial meeting with you to review the information you have collected in this process. Please bring along your Website Planning Worksheet for us to discuss together.

Contact Us

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