



Web Site Development Part 3 - Developing the Project

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Developing a company web site is an important business decision.

In this third part of a four-part Fact Sheet, our E-Business Advisers discuss how to make your web site work for your business:

1. Ready to Begin.....

Now you have defined your Web site project, written up your plan and selected a suitable Web design company – you are ready to begin!

The development phase of a web site is the core of the project itself.

Planning and creating a web site that is primed for success will require your overall involvement throughout this phase.

You're probably passionate about your business, have a sincere desire for your new web site to succeed - but it still requires good management to keep things on track.

Anyone can develop a web site, but not every one will be successful: it needs commitment from yourself, your web designer and all the key stakeholders involved in the project.

Too many web sites begin life almost half-heartedly, with little effort, perhaps created by one key person working in isolation.

Often, the goals within the context of the overall business are not clearly defined.

The results of poorly planned and hastily developed web sites are all too often seen, starved of resources and attention, and failing to achieve anything for the business itself.

2. Unique Challenges

Every web site project (large or small) poses unique challenges, but the overall success of developing your new site will generally depend upon several key elements:

Overall Project Management –

This role is vital to ensuring your project goes to plan, within timescales, within budget and includes everything you have planned for your web site.

- This role could be performed by you or a key member of staff.
- They need to be someone who clearly understands the project and can dedicate their time to working closely with your Web designers, other key stakeholders and colleagues within your business to keep the development phase on track from start to finish.

Project Schedule/Timeframe –

From the outset of the project, a clear and achievable timeframe should be agreed with all key stakeholders.



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- As the project develops the schedule should include each key stage of web site development – such as:
 - collation and preparation of content,
 - web site structure and design,
 - draft layouts,
 - programming stages,
 - development of functionality,
 - web site testing and acceptance phases,
 - through to the initial launch and
 - associated marketing activities, etc.

Regular Reviews/Monitoring -

Continually monitor each stage against your plans, checking for quality and risks associated with cost, timescales and other external factors.

Otherwise, this may jeopardize meeting your overall project timescales.

Communication –

One of the key success factors will be to ensure everyone involved agrees to a clear and effective method of communication throughout the lifetime of the project.

Agree the key areas of responsibility and mechanisms before the project begins.

The method of communication could include full project meetings, progress reports or brief email updates.

- The frequency of communication could be set at key stages, regular weekly intervals, or even daily updates if required during complex development stages.

3. As the development moves forward towards completion....

As the project moves forward, and your web site pages are constructed and filled with content, you will begin to see your overall vision materialising.

Each carefully planned stage will ensure you have a strong platform with well-designed content and components; a polished page design and specification to ensure you meet all your outline objectives.

Of course, you will learn new things about your overall web site as the prototype develops and matures into the real thing. Be prepared to refine your designs as you navigate through the growing web site and discover both weak spots and opportunities to improve navigation or content.

4. Testing....one, two, three!

Once your web site is constructed, with all pages completed and (where appropriate), all database and programming components linked, it then becomes ready for testing.

Testing can be more effective if conducted by users outside the development process.

Encourage them to supply informed criticism and report functionality problems, typographic errors, and critique the overall design and effectiveness of the site.

Fresh users will inevitably notice things that you have overlooked.

