

5 easy but essential steps

1. Define your website project
2. Find a web designer or web design company
3. Build for your target audience
4. Keep up to date
5. Things to consider

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1. Define your website project

When thinking about a website for your business, it can seem over whelming, especially when you don't know where to start or what you need to do. The key is to remember that the way you start your web project will have an enormous effect on how the project will end. Preparing correctly will save you time and money and you may end up with a site that does more than you expected! Many potential web owners don't have any idea on where to start with their website, by going through the following questions, you may have a better idea on how to prepare for your website.

- What is the main purpose of the website?
- Who is my Target audience?
- What must I include in my site? What do I want, but don't need? What do I definitely NOT want on my site?
- What content should I have? How many pages do I need? What should I put where?
- What images would I like to have on the site? What colours should I use? Do I have a well designed logo?
- What will make me feel that my site has been successful or unsuccessful after a year? (don't say lots of money!)
- What is a realistic budget, one that I can afford? How much can I spend in ongoing updates or additions to my site?

Spend sometime working through these questions, if you cant find a definite answer on all of them, at least you will have an idea on what you need to do, what questions you need to ask and how to proceed to finding a Web Designer or Web Design Company.

2. a) Find a Web Designer or Web Design Company

When looking for a designer, ensure that you can see their previous work. A reputable designer will have an online portfolio, with all or most of their previous work, they will have links to sites that they have created.

If you are looking for a more advanced website, take note of the designers profile to see if they have created dynamic websites, if they have, then generally they may be able to design the type of site you are looking for, if not, they may be able to point you in the right direction.

Ask your Web Designer or Web Design Company if they can offer you Graphic design services, they may be able to offer you a package to include all your design requirements, such as Logo, business stationery, business card and flyer or brochure design... This means that you can deal with one person or company to deal with all your design issues. ***The same rule applies here – look at their portfolio.***

2. b) What's your Budget?

You will need to have some money to build a website, even a simple site will cost something. Have a think about what you want on your website as this will have an effect on the cost. There are a number of different types of websites, ie: static, dynamic, ecommerce and each of these can then have additions to them, such as flash animation, graphics, newsletter systems etc... which will increase the cost.

Have an idea of what your budget is and as you start looking for designers, you will soon see if it is a realistic or unrealistic budget, you can then see if you can adjust your budget accordingly, You may even adjust what you **want** and focus more on what you **need** to have.

Shop around, search on the internet, make a few phone calls. You will see a big difference in cost between companies, most importantly you will also be able to see websites which have been designed. Look to find the best deal to suit your budget and requirements.

Weigh up the following options verse a professional web designer:

A computer geek who says he can design a website in his spare time?

A friend or relative who says they will do it, when they do, its not what you want, not professional enough or takes them ages to do it?

Designing a site yourself – what you will need to learn and how much of your time it will take up – time that you could be using to promote your business?

Someone who got tired with their job and on the spur of the moment started designing websites?

Other Services Offered by W3 Web Designs Ltd

*Affordable Web Design
From £149
Website hosting
From £50 / year*

*Logo & Business
Stationery Design*

Brochure & Flyer Design

Printing of all designs

SPECIAL OFFER:

**5000 A5 or DL Flyers
Only £99
FREE print on 2nd side**

3. Build for your Target Audience

One thing I would say before you go on with this section is to remember that you can not please every one! You need to see what people say and analyze the comments before you actually go ahead and implement them. Some points may be more than valid and you can change them straight away, but always see what the comments are before you rush in to try and please every one.

It is easy to think that you are designing for your target audience, when in fact, you are not looking outside the box. Remember to try look at your website from a users point of view, ask your self these questions:

- Is the website easy to navigate?
- Do the colours compliment each other and the companies corporate image?
- Does the user know what to do next?
- Are you using terms that are familiar to you and your business, but not necessarily familiar to the user?
- Will the user be able to find answers to their questions easily?

If you design your content and website with your target audience in mind, the chances are that you will have a more successful site than someone who has designed it from their own view.

4. a) Keep up to Date

A website should be an ongoing project, this means that you should look at updating your website with latest news, special offers etc... on a regular basis. Remove old or out of date content when it is out of date, not when a user reminds you to remove it.

4. b) Why should you do this?

Users will visit your website over and over again, just to see your special offers, latest news and new products or services. Ask yourself:

"What can I add to my site?"

Search engines take note of active sites, especially if they add relevant content. Don't add irrelevant content as users will find it annoying and the search engines will not take note of it.

Here are a few ways to help keep your website content up to date and relevant:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Menus (if you are a restaurant or hotel)
- Relevant Articles
- Newsletters
- New products and services
- Special Offers
- Latest news
- Help Pages
- Focus on local places (if a B & B, Hotel, Restaurant etc...)
- Blogs

4. c) What are the cost implications?

There is always a cost, most web design companies will have a Content Management System (CMS) that they can incorporate into your website for you. The cost will depend on the size and dynamics of your website. Always think of your website as an investment, you need to continue to grow and develop your website and by doing this, the site will be more successful.

5. Things to consider

Before starting with your website, consider the following:

- Do you have a suitable Company Name
- Do you have a Company Logo (Corporate Identity – even small businesses need this)
- Do you need business stationery design, business card design and flyer or brochure design?
- What are your company colours?
- Do you have images that you want to use on the website? Are these legal images, you cant just copy an image off someone else's website.
- How will you promote your website?