

# Website Planning Guide

[www.wwWebCrafter.com](http://www.wwWebCrafter.com)

With the World Wide Web at everyone's fingertips, we are in what is being called the Information Age.

More and more businesses and organizations are creating and relying on custom websites to be a major marketing tool allowing them to keep in touch with their customers and members.

To help ensure a website creates a positive image, considerable thought and planning have to go into the process.

This purpose of this guide is to assist in developing a thought process that will help ultimately result in a successful website. Each item below has been kept brief and to the point simply to stimulate your thoughts and help you plan for a successful website.

## Purpose

The very first items to consider are determining your target audience and what you want the website to do for your organization. Typically, organizations expect their websites to perform a number of functions for them. Some examples may be:

- **Build Brand Awareness** - Let potential customers or members know who you are and what your organization can do for them.
- **Create Professional Image** - Help make your organization look more professional. A website is often viewed as your storefront and can be a tremendous tool in painting a positive business image.
- **Online Product Catalog** - Allow customers to see your current product catalog from the comfort of their own home or office.
- **New Product/Service Notice** - Inform your customers of new products and service offerings.
- **Customer Support** - Be an information source for customers and members.
- **Etc.** – The list can go on depending on the goals set.

As you can see, there are a number of potential purposes for a website. What will be the purpose of yours?

## Appearance

How you want your website to look is very important. Small businesses typically want a look and feel that is entirely opposite from what a youth sports organization might want. For example:

- **Small Business** – typically desire a clean and simple look with limited colors that create an easy and comfortable view for their customers.
- **Youth Sports Organization** – generally prefer their often bright club colors throughout the sight.

Either way, depending on the type of organization, a wrong design appearance can turn visitors away and keep them from going deeper into your site.

The theme and layout should be consistent throughout the site to allow for comfortable customer navigation regardless of the web page they are currently viewing.

## Content

Having the proper content is one of the most important aspects of a website. This is the information your visitors will gain from visiting the site. Without the proper content, your visitors will go away wondering why they took the time to go to your site.

Customers want to learn the most amount of information in the least amount of time. Site content should always get the message across in the least amount of words possible. Some important considerations for site content are:

- **Spelling** – Proper spelling is critical to your image. Too often, we see websites with misspelled words.
- **Conciseness** – Say the most, with the least. Being too wordy bores visitors quickly.
- **Images** – Images can help paint a picture that words can never do. Having the proper balance of effective images and words will provide your visitors with a pleasant experience.
- **Updates** – Depending on the type of organization, regularly updating your site with fresh content and images will keep your customers coming back time and time again.

Provide the right content with effective images to keep your customers coming back and spreading your message to the friends and associates.

## Navigation

What do you want your customers to do after they have finished reading your home page?

Of course, we want them to go deeper into your sight and gain more interest in your organization. Site Navigation, when properly designed is the tool that can create this interest. Navigation links should be simple, informative and logical to be effective. For example, if your home page gives a brief introduction of your services and you have much more information to share regarding your services, it makes sense to have a navigation link called “Services”. If interested, your visitors will instantly recognize this and go there to learn more.

The proper navigation is like a road map for your visitors. Bad navigation is like a maze that confuses visitors and sends them away to look elsewhere.

Spend the time to create an effective navigation map.

## **Organize the Process**

The use of methodical planning is an effective approach for achieving success in business. Creating an effective website is no different. Use of a planning worksheet will help ensure you leave nothing to chance. We have included one for your review on our Resources page.

Get organized, start planning and get ready to have an effective website to help promote your business, organization or club.

Let your customers know who you are and what you can do for them ...