



# Planning Your Website

Who is the website speaking for? Who's voice?

Is it a personal blog to express yourself, a reference site for people with common interests, a marketing tool for a business, or what? Be descriptive.

Who are you trying to reach?

Your "Target Market". Who might find this site and benefit from its content? Think broadly. Consider using our "Persona Worksheet" to explore more thoroughly, later.

What do you want them to do, once they arrive? Number your priorities.

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Contact Me             | Buy my product                 |
| Learn about my subject | Shop for a variety of products |
| Be persuaded to act    | Hire me to provide a service   |
| Be entertained         | Hire me as an employee         |

To get people to do these things, you need to motivate them, and provide them the tools to easily get them done. Most articles, pages or posts should contain a "Call to Action" addressing these top priorities.

If you have a current site, what are its positive qualities?

If you have a current site, what are its negative qualities?

- Visual Design?
- Writing Style?
- Usefulness?
- Navigation?
- Is there an Audience?
- Can't edit easily?
- Needs more pictures?
- Needs Social Media Stuff?
- Lacks visitor statistics?
- Doesn't work on mobile?
- Other?

Do you have hit logs or analytics on your site?      Yes      No

Is the "bounce rate" way above 50%?

Have you talked to your users / readers / target audience about your site?

If "no", you should do this. Often site-owner perceptions differ wildly from user perceptions.

Yes      No

List at least 7 key words/phrases used when you talk about your subject.

List the top 4 to 7 questions that are commonly asked about your subject.

Here are common Pages your site might have (check the ones you want):

**PAGES or SECTIONS**

- About Us
- About This Site
- About Me (Bio)
- Our Team / People
- Testimonials
- Products (may be a section)
- Services (may be a section)
- Portfolio or Projects
- Order Now or Shopping Cart
- Blog (this is a section)

**UTILITY LINKS:**

- Contact Us
- Contact Me
- Location(s)
- Log In
- Terms of Service
- Rights of Use
- Feeds
- Social Links

Other:

Information “buckets” become Blog Categories:

What words come up when you talk about your product or service or interests that this site will address. Try searching with those words on Google. What sites come up?

These are question your site should address in some way. They may be openings for a sale or a conversation. They are the questions people will have when they hit your site. Will your answer satisfy your readers? Will they establish expertise, authority, common interest or initiate conversations? Maybe these are your first blog posts!

These are site sections. These pages will probably appear in your “Primary Navigation” or “Main Menu”.

Some sections, like the Blog, will require separate navigation menus.

Some pages or functions may be in menus or links clustered by utility, such as “Privacy Policy” or “Log In”.

As you write articles over time for your blog, these are the ‘natural’ categories that content on your subject-matter might be divided into.

Find the first, most important ones, and a few you might add later. Plan one article (Post) per Category for your first few posts.

Tone of your relationship to your readers / clients:

What do you need to connect with your audience which will create the best tone for your relationship? Trust, security, authority, expertise, friendliness, joy, fun, creativity?

Write your primary sales message / elevator pitch / core message:

Not a lot of room, here. Distill it down.

Competitive Environment

What are others doing?

List 5 URLs. Apply earlier questions to your competitors, think-alikes, or those with similar operational models.

What "Functions" must you have to be competitive?

Do competitors have special features (like a mortgage calculator, or live chat) that you need to match to compete effectively? What tools are they using?

What is the design standard of the competition?

Do competitors have professional polish in their site designs? Do you need to match that, or would a more 'approachable' site design make you seem more friendly, low-cost or just different?

Write a list of objectives for this site, considering your requirements and the competition's design and functional standards:

What will be achieved by this site. How many visitors, purchases, calls, referrals, Facebook Likes, Twitter followers, or any other standard, would make this site a success for you or your company?

Now you should have the parameters of what your site might be. All that remains is to get a suitable design, content and functionality... let's start:

Site Domain:

Tagline (if any):

Site Name:

Build these from keywords if at all possible. Do they describe your site's purpose?