Creating a new website

A guide by Coco's Agency

Setting your idea

Building a website without a plan is like constructing a building without blueprints. Things end up in the wrong place, features are overlooked, and the situation is ripe for miscommunication between website builder and client. Planning your website ahead of time will give it clear direction as well as prevent missed deadlines and backtracking.

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Know your audience & Set your goals

What is the purpose of your website? Is it to gain publicity for your business? To sell your inventory? To rally support behind a cause? It's important to identify your website's purpose, as well as your target audience. You should also define your goals. How many visitors do you expect per month? How many do you expect will sign up for your newsletter? How much in sales do you expect to make?

Set measurable, specific goals for your website that are in line with your marketing goals. An analytics tool like Google Analytics will allow you to monitor your website's performance over time and/or know more about your audience..

Tip

Remember. You need to know the people you are talking to in order to better get your message sent.

The way you talk to american men 18-25 is different from japanese women 50-65 .

First, we need to decide **who** you're designing the website for.

- **Who uses our website?**
- **What do they do while there?** (What pages do they visit? How long do they stay on each page? What path do they take to and from that page?)
- **When do they visit?** (What day and time?)
- **Where do they visit from?** (What is their physical location? What site or search engine led them to our website?)
- **Why are they visiting?** (What do they want to accomplish on our website?)
- **How do they visit?** (What device do they use—desktop, mobile, or tablet? What web browser did they use?)
- **Who do we want to visit our website who isn't already?** (How would they find us? What would they be looking for?)

Many different types of people view our website: prospective clients, current users, job seekers, students interested in internships, employees, vendors, media, competitors, and industry folks who read our blog to stay up-to-date.

Create a budget

Whether you're an established, mid-sized organization or a fledgling start-up, you should always set a budget for your website expenses. This will probably include funds for consulting, web design, programming, web hosting and marketing (though other expenses may apply).

What you save in money you may later pay for with a lackluster site and lots of headaches. It's better to choose team members based on experience.

The budget determined how many bells and whistles the website could have. So while there was room in the budget for a cool HTML 5 video on the homepage, we had to skip some extra features on the blog.

Assign roles

- **Project leader / Decision Maker**
- **Product Owner**
- Web developer
- Content writer and/or editor
- HTML/CSS professional
- Web and graphic designer

It is important to define roles and responsibilities—specifically, choosing a point person and a decision-maker.

The marketing strategist, for ex., is often assigned to be the point person. If there are any questions, she/he provides the answers. That streamlined the process and help avoid any confusion.

One of the partners is usually empowered to be the decision-maker. Responsible for getting the other partners to approve each part of the project, i.e., signing off on the sitemap, design, and final website. If there was any disagreement, she/he weighs varied opinions and made the final call.

Tip

It's easy to get too many cooks in the kitchen.

Make sure everyone on your team knows their role and what is expected of them, and that they stay abreast of deadlines and new developments.

Structure & Site Map

1. Make yout team write on post-its all the pages you need (croissants, pain au chocolat, pizza, sandwich, bonbons, contact, qui sommes nous, join us)
2. Put together all the pages belonging to the same category (croissant et pains au chocolat vont ensemble)
3. Create categories (viennoiserie, formule midi, enfants)
4. Draw your treemap

Then get your current website (if you have one) and check the following:

5. Make sure all of your current services are covered - not necessary + new ones
6. Rename some of the sections so their titles are clearer. For instance, "Downloads" became "Resources."
7. Try to make it easier to navigate

You can view an example of sitemap here.

Tip

View, review and keep an eye on the Budget!
Before you could estimate how many hours it would take to develop your website, you need to know what the website might include.

Content strategy

What kind of content will you be displaying on your website? Content is basically anything that gives your visitors information. It can include, but is not limited to:

- Blog posts
- Documents
- Video / Pictures / Slideshows
- Embedded social media feeds (such as your Twitter stream or Facebook page updates)

Your content strategy is the way that you plan to present your content over time. It can be as well a big acquisition tool.

For instance, you may want to publish two blog posts a month, and put out a free quarterly report for your subscribers to download four times a year. Since content is such a vital aspect of a website, bring in help if you need it. Hire a writer who is experienced with writing for the web, and invest in some professional looking pictures of your storefront and employees.

First Mock Up

A page mock-up, also know as a wireframe, is essentially the outline of your website (with the initial design being the first draft). Usually created in Photoshop or Fireworks, you don't have to put too much detail into your mock-up. Use placeholder text to fill pages, and don't worry about details. This is just to give everyone an idea of what the website will look like.

Example of Mock Up

Our advice before making your mock up:

1 - make a good **benckmark** and see what your competition is doing.
2 - do a list of **websites you like** : design and/or UX. No need to be from the same industry
3 - check your **budget** once again

Tip

If you don't have a design program, you can also map it out with pen and paper! When you have a general feel of what you'd like, you can send it to a designer to create or do so yourself.

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Start Production

Once your **Mock Up** is **validated**, you can **start** the **design**, the **development** and the **content production** of your website!

The importance of good web design can't be stressed enough. Good website design includes both usability and aesthetics. An ugly website will drive away visitors, as will a website that's difficult to navigate. Keep in mind some basic concepts of usability as you go:

- Make your **navigation easy** to understand and easy to find. Research shows that most users expect website navigation to be vertical and centered at the top of the page.
- Use an easy-to-read font for blocks of text. Choose a background color and text **color that contrast well** (Hint: No red text on a hot pink background).
- Make sure your site fits the screen. Use **responsive** design (or an equally effective approach) to make your website one that adapts to all screen sizes.
- Keep your website **light** so that it loads quickly.
- Keep **styles** and colors consistent across the website.
- Make copy **clear and concise**, and put important information and features (e.g., your newsletter sign-up form) above the fold.
- You should also design with the **future in mind**. For instance, your website may only have a few blog posts now, but what about when you have two hundred?

Test it out

Testing is important for getting out bugs out and catching details that you might have missed initially.

You can make a final validation from Decision Makers before launching it.

Make sure your website shows up the way you want it to in all browsers, including Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, and mobile web browsers like Safari and Opera Mini. Test it on your cell phone, your tablet, and your colleague's cell phones and tablets too. You want your site to have a consistent appearance no matter what screen it shows up on. Make sure all of the links work, that the images are properly sized, and that you've replaced all of the placeholders with actual content. See to it that all of the forms and other input fields are working.

Launch & Feed Up

It's done! Your new website is LIVE! You can communicate about it. Prepare this shoot in advance because this is a great reason to get people coming to your website ;)

What's next? **Maintaining** your site! Make sure all this work is not getting out-of-date after a few months. Keep your new baby alive by feeding it up ;)

Once your site is launched, the work isn't over. A website is an ongoing entity that continuously represents your company, so maintenance is very important. Monitor your analytics software to see how your website is performing with the public. Keep an eye on metrics like your number of unique visitors, bounce rate, and which pages are most popular on your website.

You should also have a plan for maintaining the website, such as who is responsible for posting new content or monitoring site security.

It is easier and cheaper to maintain your website than making a new one every 2 / 3 years

THANK YOU.