

4 Things to Know



Before You Start a Website for Your Business.

Recently a client shared how thinking about a web project was “a daunting task if you don’t know much about websites.” It can seem overwhelming – and you can’t stop operating your business to develop a website! Here, I will identify a few simple things you can do to help the process run smoothly.

1. Know What Your Visitors Need to Find.

Research and experience tell us that web users hit the “back button” quickly and for specific reasons. So, what makes a visitor stay at your site? The top two things that make a site effective are clear navigation & useful information. Simply put, offer information your customers need or want and make it easy to find.

The web is the new directory: more people under the age of 40 search the web than pick up a phone book, so make sure they find you. They want to “check out” a business online first. Make a great first impression... show credibility & professionalism.

The design of your site should be appropriate for its content and its target audience. A good design will help attract and keep visitors and increase sales.

Once you’ve gained consumer confidence, offer a non-invasive point of contact – simple and non-committal.

Finally, remember to address issues of legality and accessibility. Many sites are constructed without simple measures that allow the handicapped to access information.

Recap: Your Visitors Need:

- Clear Navigation
- Useful Information
- Branding
- Credibility/Professionalism
- Point of Contact
- Accessibility

2. Know the Goals Up-Front.

When planning with a designer, it is helpful to start with clear goals. They may change as your project develops or your company grows, but coming to the table with ideas already in place will help. It’s as simple as answering: Why am I creating this site? What do I want it to accomplish for my business?

Some general site goals/purposes may include:

- Present a favorable company image.
- Strengthen branding
- Increase prospective sales.
- Encourage customer contact.
- Sell products online.
- Publish product information to distributors or consumers.
- Provide valuable content.
- Engage in business with government agencies.

3. Know You Need a Plan to Integrate Your Off-Line Business and Web Site.

Having a well-built site doesn’t guarantee financial gains. Like any business venture, you should have a marketing plan. Start by listing your web address on business cards, in phone book ads, on flyers, on signs... put it everywhere you would put your phone number.

Make the most of search engines organically. Clean code, good metadata and useful information are three important aspects to obtaining favorable results.

Sometimes on-line advertising is needed. Consult with your designer about on-line options that suit your advertising budget and will effectively increase exposure.

4. Know What to Expect in the Development Process.

It is a process. There are many variables that affect how quickly a project can be completed. If you want quality work, plan a launch date that is reasonable for both you and your designer.

The process will vary by developer and project, but here’s a general outline:

- Direct meeting or phone conferencing re: goals/plans
- Written Estimate
- Contract and initial deposit
- Domain, hosting, access secured
- Logos, content, and images provided by client
- Drafts of design concept
- Revisions/Approval
- Site preview
- Revisions/Edits
- Site published
- Final payment
- Maintenance as needed

Preparing for a web development project doesn’t have to be overwhelming. It can be easier with the right information.

For more helpful information, download a free **web planning guide** or free **website questionnaire** at this address: www.byhisdesign.biz/resources.htm.