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Web Design Manual

This manual was designed to aid you in the development of your new website.



Print it and keep it as a reference guide as we go through the design process.

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How the Design Process Works

Step One: Define Objectives

This is one of the most critical steps in the development process because every other step hinges upon it. What is the mission for your site? What specific tasks do you want to accomplish through your web presence? These are just some of the questions that you need to answer before moving ahead with the project.

Step Two: Information Architecture

As technology evolves, our patience dissolves. Customers or potential customers that can't find what they're looking for on your site, or have to blindly navigate through unnecessary information, will not stick around for long. In the Information Architecture process, I work with you to design a clear, logical information structure that will determine the navigational "map" of your site.

Step Three: User Interface Design

In this step, we design a prototype for the overall look and feel of your site. While developing this Graphical User Interface (GUI), my goal is to create a distinctive look that properly reflects your corporate identity.

Step Four: Content Development

Content--the substance of your site. Customers and potential customers won't come to your site to see all the bells and whistles; they want information, they want to get things done. In this step, you put together all of the content elements that I'll need from you--your copy, images, downloadable documents and any other files that will be included in the site.

Step Five: Production

Now it's time to bring it all together. After you've signed off on the look and feel of the Graphical User Interface, I pull in all the content and construct the individual web pages. At the end of this stage, you'll see a fully-functional rough draft of your site that you can review through my web server.

Step Six: Quality Assurance & Testing

This is where I begin thorough testing of all links and navigation menus, and closely proof every page of your site.

Step Seven: Launching Your Site

After the site has successfully passed my testing phase and you're completely satisfied with the results, it's time to publish your site to the live web server. This is your official launch, but it's not the end of my work. I offer full post-launch support including search engine placement, ongoing content updates, and many other services to keep your site running smoothly.

Overall Website Layout

Here are some things to consider when deciding how you want your website to look:

1. If you have a "corporate Identity" (logo, business cards, brochures), you probably want your website to compliment the overall look, color and style of these.
2. Your logo should be the focal point at the top of your web pages.
3. Your website should reflect the professionalism of your business.

In order for me to come up with a design that you will be happy with, take a few moments to search the Internet for websites of other businesses that may or may not be related to yours. Find a few websites that you like and send me the website addresses for them. Also, tell me what you like about each one (i.e. color scheme, overall look, graphics, menu structure, etc.). This will give me an idea of what you are looking for in a website. I will never copy someone else's website. Your website will be unique and customized to suit your business.

Deciding how many pages will you will need

Print out and use the form below to assist you with determining how many pages you will need. Keep in mind that the content can be changed at any time, so you can start small (to get your website up and running quickly) and add more pages any time in the future. There are a few extra lines for pages that may be unique to your business.

No. of Pages	Description
_____	Home Page (brief introduction)
_____	About Us (company history, mission statement)
_____	Products (can have more than one per page)
_____	Services (can have more than one per page)
_____	Photo Gallery (photo portfolio)
_____	FAQ (frequently asked questions)
_____	Employment Opportunities
_____	Links (i.e. industry links, vender links)
_____	Info Request form (catalog, brochure, estimate)
_____	News (industry, company, newsletter)
_____	Events (upcoming shows, seminars)
_____	Projects (portfolio of work)
_____	Customer Testimonials
_____	Specials (sales, discounted items)
_____	Message Board
_____	Awards & Special Achievements
_____	Documents (manuals, brochures in PDF format)
_____	Contact Us (phone, address, map, contact list email)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	Total Pages

Creating the Content

Writing the content (written text) for your website will require your participation. I don't know your business or the selling features of it, so I would have no idea what to say. I can assist you with determining what content will be useful to your website visitors and the best way to organize it. Don't worry if you are not good with spelling and grammar, I can edit your text. Search engines look at the content of your pages to help determine your ranking. This means that you should use your company name, geographical location (if you serve a particular area), product or service name (i.e. cabinets) and any other pertinent words people may type into Google or Yahoo as many times as possible without being redundant.

Remember the basics of Grammar School English:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

By keeping these questions in mind, it is easy to write good content. Apply the following example to each page of content to give your website visitors the information they are looking for. Remember to focus on your company's best features.

Who? - XYZ Services

What? - Repairs Widgets

When? – Two day turnaround

Where? – At your facility in Northern CA

Why? – 10 years experience – affordable prices – excellent customer service

The Home page introduction could be written as:

XYZ Services is the leader in the Widget repair industry. We have 10 years experience in repairing Widgets of all sizes and colors. A few of the models we specialize in include ABC widgets and DEF widgets. XYZ Widgets offers the most affordable widget repair service available anywhere. We take pride in our fast turnaround time and friendly customer service. We will come to your Northern California facility and repair your widget within two days or your service call is free! We also offer a mail in service for those outside our service area. Call XYZ Widgets today for a free estimate!

Apply this format to each area you are writing about to make sure you come up with all of the useful information your website visitors will be looking for.

Getting Ideas from other websites

It is okay to look at other websites for ideas that you may want to incorporate into the content of your website. Please do not take photos or text from other websites for me to copy into yours. This is copyright infringement and I will not knowingly do this. If you would like to use photos or other content from sites such as your vendors you need to get permission from them to do so. You probably would not like to see another website with your photos and exact content in it! If you need photos for your website, I have close to a million stock photos & clipart and subscriptions to several on-line stock photo services. There is no extra charge for the use of these in your website. Just let me know what you need and I probably have it!

Content Format

All text content should be supplied to me in a digital format. There will be an extra charge for re-typing information from a brochure or other printed media. Text can be emailed to me in several formats:

1. Typed into the body of an email
2. Attached to an email as a Word Document or a text file typed in WordPad or Notepad

Please send me your final text. Do not type the text in all caps unless this is how you want it to appear in your website. You will be billed an additional fee if I need to make a substantial amount of changes to the text you provide me with. This does not mean you can't make changes to your content. I expect to make minor changes to the text as part of the design process.

All photos sent to me should be the size they will appear in your website or larger. I can make photos smaller, but if I try to stretch them larger, they will lose their resolution and look fuzzy. If you have non digital (printed) photos that you'd like to use in your website, I can scan them for you.

About Search Engines

I will add descriptive "meta tags" to your web pages. Meta tags are not visible on your website, but are in the html code. This is one thing the search engines look for when their "spiders" find and index websites. The meta tags include a title, description and keyword phrases. If you are targeting a specific area, it is important to include this in your keywords. (i.e. Sacramento web design, web designer northern CA, Sacramento website designer). It is also important to use your keywords in the content of your website. I can submit your site to Google, Yahoo & Bing search engines and this will help to get you listed. I can also create a Google sitemap, which is submitted directly to Google. It usually takes several months to start showing up in the search engines, so be patient! One of the most effective ways to get your website high rankings in the search engines is to get your website linked to as many other websites and related directories as possible. This can be a time consuming process, but is well worth the effort! Social media is another way help get your website ranked higher. If you have a Facebook, Myspace, Twitter or other social media page, be sure to put your link (including the http://www) on your profile page.

Domain Name and Hosting

In order to have a website, you will need a domain name and hosting service. I offer domain name registration and hosting as part of my services, but you can register your domain name anywhere.

How to choose a Domain name:

It's better to use keywords for a domain name than the company name. Sacramentowidgetrepair.com will come up much higher in the search engines than acmecompany.com. You can also buy your company name to use on business cards, etc. and I can re-direct the business name to the important keyword name so when someone types it in their browser they will be re-directed to your actual website.

My Hosting package includes the following:

- Excellent and reliable technical support
- Hosting package is very affordable If you don't already have a Domain name, you may purchase one from my home page.
- If you have a Domain name (i.e. yourname.com) I can point it to my hosting server for you.
- Unlimited E-mail accounts
- Special features include a Message Board, form mail, web based (access email from your website) as well as Outlook email
- A Control Panel you can access to set up or delete email accounts
- A username and password to access the Control Panel

Keep your user ID and password information in a safe place!

Client Checklist

Domain Name Registration & Hosting - If you will be registering your domain name or hosting your website through me, I will need the following information before I can purchase the domain name: Your name, mailing address (with city, state & zip), email address & phone number.
Site Description - This can be the opening paragraph of your home page, but should include as many of your Keywords as possible. See example site description below.
Keywords - If you service specific geographical areas, use these in your keywords as much as possible. See sample keyword list below.
Domain Name Access - If you have already purchased a domain name I will need the username and password to access the account to change the DNS setting (if I am hosting your website).
Hosting Access - If you already have a hosting account and would like to keep your website there, I will need the Hosting company name, your username and password and a URL for the Web Control Panel if applicable.
PayPal - If you will be selling products or services in your website through PayPal you will need to open a PayPal account. If you already have a PayPal account it must be a Business or Premier account. If it is a Personal PayPal account, it is free to upgrade to a Business account. I do not need to access your account to set up a shopping cart or Buy Now buttons. See PayPal instructions below.

Example Keyword List:

sacramento website design
elk grove california website design
web design sacramento
sacramento web designer
web designer sacramento
sacramento website hosting
flash animation
graphic design
domain name registration
sacramento website hosting
elk grove california website hosting
sacramento webmaster
web pages sacramento
small business web design sacramento
web sites sacramento
small business websites
website design by kolleen powers
web design by kolleen powers
logo design sacramento
sacramento print graphics

Example Site Description:

Web design by Kolleen Powers in Sacramento CA offers affordable website design for small businesses and non profit organizations, custom websites, Flash animations, domain registration, website hosting, web graphics, logos and print graphics for business cards, letterhead & brochures.

Opening a PayPal Account:

Go to <http://www.paypal.com> and have your checking account number and bank routing number handy. They will step you through where to find the bank routing number on your check. PayPal will make two deposits to your checking account (usually under 20 cents each). Once the deposits show up in your account, you will verify the amounts with PayPal, and your account will be set up.

To upgrade your current Personal Account to a PayPal Business Account, please follow these steps:

1. Go to your PayPal account and log in.
2. Go to the profile tab
3. Click 'Business Information' link under the 'Account Information' column
3. Click 'Upgrade'
4. Enter your business information and click 'Save'