6 STEPS TO A
WINNING WEBSITE PROJECT

Creating a successful web design project is not as simple as 1,2,3.

In order for the designer to put together a beautiful web design, he needs you to communicate effectively on a regular basis. Hence, this is a collaboration between you and the designer.

You may already have an experience creating one which was unsuccessful but don't worry, it is normal. It usually happens when one or both parties was not able to deliver what was expected from them.

With this, we have put together 6 steps to a successful web design. Note that if your partner works in tandem with you, you could expect a positive result that your customers will surely love.

Remember, a website is not just a mere brochure, it should be able to communicate clearly your message, your brand and your products and services to your target audience. It should be built to sell or it won't bring success to your business.

1. REQUIREMENTS

To start your web project, you should focus around specific features that you want your website to have, for example, how customers can purchase your products online. How about a Live Chat option? You could as well consider that for your customers to get quick answers with regards to their concerns.

The most important requirement is clarity. It would help everyone to be on the same page. You need to be clear with your requirements for you to discuss with your designer.

As you go along, there will be ideas that can't be feasible. Your designer will suggest alternatives. Maintain an open discussion as you continue working with them.

TIP: Make a list of at least 5 key features you want your web design to have. You can look at what your competitors are doing, after all, you need to do way better than them.

Your website is not for you, it is for your customers. So, consider as well their needs. It might be hard to get yourself into the mindset of your audience

TIP: Describe how your audience would feel/think/act with your ideal website in one sentence.

2. TARGET AUDIENCE

Great marketing begins and ends with the audience. Focus your content to your identified audience to filter out unnecessary traffic and entice high leads.

Your target audiences are the predetermined recipients of all your efforts. They are the intended group you want to reach out.

TIP: Try to filter out information about your target audience. For example: What are their demography (Age, Education, Profession, Location)?

Reaching to your audience is necessary to succeed in your business. It will never be an option but a demand you should answer.

Connecting to your audience through optimizing your web could increase engagement and conversation between the parties.

3. INVESTMENT

Budget is always present in all project. However, in a website project, it shouldn't be a "budget" or a "price" but rather an investment. Think of how your investment would bring success to your business rather than thinking how much would each element would cost. It's a mindset shift not a marketing talk. Changing the ways you look at your investment would open more doors for critical thinking.

TIP: Thinking about the investment in your website, what does success mean to you? E.g. "Double your sales in a year" or "100 new customers in 6 months".

It is the role of the designer to create a great website for your business and for your customers as they listen to all your requirements and the investment level available at your end.

There will be times that your budget will not suffice the requirements that you've asked for, hence, you need to increase your investment a little or set aside less important requirements.

You need to focus on key tasks and requirements. As your business is growing, you can plan the next phase of development tasks with your web designer.

TIP: Make a list of your priorities on requirements. Which of these could be pushed to a second phase of design work?

4. GOALS

Goals are very important as you measure the success of your project. Being delivered on-time, agreed level of investment and with all agreed requirements in place would typically be the measurement for your website project.

Having clear goals with corresponding schedules would allow easy communication throughout the project. As you discuss the new project, both of you and the designer would be aware of any goals for the new web.

SMART goals should always be used:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Relevant
- Time Bound
- Achievable

Bringing level of structure and making sure that you easily attain your objectives, SMART goals are trackable goals with definitive results.

Here are few quick examples of SMART goals:

- 20% increase in sales through our website in the next 6 months.
- Reduce administration costs in managing our website by 15% over the next 4 months.
- 25% increase in membership for my online course website this year.

Each of these goals has specific targets which is measurable, achievable, relevant and timescale bound.

TIP: Write at least 3 SMART goals you like to achieve for your business.

5. CONTENT

Another important feature on your website is the content. It draws people into your site and repel them back to the search engines.

Investing and working with a copywriter would ensure great copy on your website. It will pay itself many times over.

Getting the tone right is hard unless you have the experience of being a copy writer. The better option is to work alongside a copywriter, sending them some notes while helping them understand your target market in which they will create a great copy for your website.

A great copywriter is skilled at turning features into benefits.

Turning these features into benefits is helping your audience relate to what you're offering. The audience simply care about themselves. Hence, they don't really care about new features you put into your web.

Putting yourself as the audience, try to answer this question "what's in it for me?" This would control almost all pages of your web.

TIP: Re-frame your listed features as benefits. Think about how you currently promote your products.

6. COMMUNICATION

Great communication between you and your designer would help get the most out of your website. This will help the website project to be on track and avoid time delays. There will be a section on your project's timeframe which is drawn out with the typical expectation that both parties are able to communicate on a timely basis.

Ensure that there is one clear point of contact in your business. Choose to delegate work to an appropriate staff member. Working with a design agency, they might also delegate a single point of contact. The advantages of these two single points is that both get to understand all details of the projects.

TIP: On deciding who will the main point of contact, make sure that the person is well briefed on your requirements and other necessary details.

Make sure to send back clear and concise feedback to your designer. If you have multiple people inside your company, do this together and make a list of key points that you want to feed back to the designer. Then, your main contact can feed these back as part of the process.

However, having multiple people in the company may also become a worst case scenario. Sending their ideas independently to the designer may lead to confusions and delays on the project.

TIP: If you have multiple people in your business, schedule a time to sit down with them and discuss with them your project goals and requirements so you can give them the most valuable feedback possible.