



## Step-By-Step Web Design Process Plan

### What you need to know when hiring a web designer

Follow the plan below before you hire a web designer to make sure you are ready and to ensure you don't end up with a pretty and useless website. Defining the objective for this step will determine whether you have a return on your investment or a waste of your money.

**Step 1:** Create a list of objectives that you want to achieve with the new website. Do you need sales, leads, members and etc. What is the purpose of the site? This needs to be clearly defined before the website building process begins.

**Step 2:** Create a list of marketing methods you have in mind for this new website. What is your realistic marketing budget? If you do not know these things and need help figuring this out, no problem. Just write down that you need help with this. It is an important step that you do not want to neglect to discuss with your web designer.

**Step 3:** How quickly do you realistically need to see results (the original objective from Step 1)? The average website build process can take from 4 to 12 weeks. After this, if the organic SEO work begins right away, you can expect to see some results within 6 months after website launch. These are average general numbers to refer to, not concrete guarantees.

**Step 4:** Look at your competitor websites. Look at industries related to yours, or parallel ones and look at their websites. If you are a plumber, look at other plumbers' as well as electricians' and other construction or home repair websites. Look at competitors in your city as well as in other major cities. Get ideas of elements you like and want to see on your website. Make notes.

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**Step 5:** Have a list of at least 3 websites that you like the style of, from all the sites you've looked at in Step 4. This will give the web designer a general direction to start with.

**Step 6:** Look around on Google for web designers that are in your local area as well as around the country. Look first at their portfolio. If you do not like the work in their portfolio, they will most likely not provide the quality you are looking for. Pick the best 3 web designers you are considering and give them a call. Talk with them about your project and feel them out. You must be comfortable working with them so this is a good time for an interview.

**Step 7:** DO NOT ASK FOR A PRICE. Do not put your web designer on the spot and ask for a price. It is impossible for a web designer to know what your project will cost, without them sitting down and actually estimating all the work. If they mess up on the price, the designer will not enjoy the work and you will not get top quality results, so let them do their job and make an appropriate estimate.

Also, you are not comparing prices, you are comparing quality and workmanship. The price is a secondary qualifier, not primary.

**Step 8:** After you settle on the web designer you want to hire, have a call or meet with them to really go over all your requirements and goals, make sure that they really understand what it is you are trying to achieve. A good web designer will try to understand your business and your objectives before diving into making a proposal and an estimate.

If you have questions, speak up. This is the time for questions and getting all the details ironed out. Once the ball starts rolling on the design process, things can fall between cracks and mess up the final results.

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**Step 9:** During the design process, let the designer do his or her work. They are a professional and you have hired them because you can see that they know what they are doing. This is the time to stay out of the way and wait to hear from the designer to answer questions and provide the necessary collateral.

**Step 10:** Be responsive and available to answer questions. If the designer gets everything they need on time, the website design process will flow smoothly. That is what we all want, smooth sailing.

**Step 11:** If changes float up during the design process, it is best to hold them until the currently agreed work is completed. This is ideal, but if there is some emergency that needs to be dealt with before the website is completed, then definitely let the designer know. A good one will work with you, because they want you to be a happy client.

**Step 12:** On-site SEO. After the site is launched, it is time to start marketing. The first step is keyword research and on-site SEO. This could have been done during the initial web design process. In some cases this is a separate project. On-site SEO is important to prepare the site for the search engines. Keyword research will tell you what keywords you need to focus on. You need to have this done even if you think you know what keywords you want to target. It is important to know the competition and demand level of each before you invest in targeting them.

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**Step 13:** Next is off-site SEO. This is basically link building and marketing. Everything from guest-posting, social marketing and all kinds of other methods are used. It is VERY IMPORTANT to make sure that your SEO specialist knows what they are doing to make sure that the work they are doing will not get your site banned from Google. It is best to have your off-site SEO done continually on monthly basis, to keep your rankings growing and targeting new keywords.

**Step 14:** Pay on time. When the payment time comes, everyone appreciates an on-time payment. Many times, this will label you an “ideal” client or someone that will be put off to be last in line for next time.

**Step 15:** Don't burn bridges. Once the site is completed and launched, keep in touch and give good reviews. Your website will need updates and changes in the future. Who is better to work on it than the original designer? You will save money on future work because the designer knows their way around it and will not need to spend a lot of time figuring out where everything is. A good designer is good to keep around for a long time.

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