

How to get Ready for a Website...

Plan: What do you want the website for? How will it help your business? What can it do to save you time or money? This information is critical to the success of your website.

Gather: A common misconception is that websites can be made from nothing, this is not the case. A website is a container for, or in some cases, a medium to transfer, information. However, that information needs to come from somewhere. Here are a few things any web designer needs to get started.

1. **Logo** - preferably in a *vector* format (adobe illustrator, eps, or macromedia freehand format). If you don't have one, get one designed, it is usually the starting point for your websites design.
2. **Photography** - an all text website is pretty boring, have photos ready or arrange for them to be taken.
3. **Information** - Contrary to popular opinion your web designer does not know the details of your business, the history of the company, or what information you want on that contact form.
4. **A Needs List** - What do you want the website to do? What information will it gather... or present? What aspect of your business can benefit most from the website?

Define Your Terms: How much are you spending each month? Has everything you need the website to do been spelled out? Is there anything you'd like to add? What's the quote amount? Are you working on a quote or hourly basis? How long till the site is finished once everything is supplied?

Get your information to the designer ASAP to help get your site done ASAP: Stick to some kind of structured time schedule with the developer. All pictures need to be turned in by this day, text information needs to be turned in by this day. The site will be completed in *x* amount of time once all information has been collected, etc. The sooner the site is finished the sooner it can begin working for you.

1. Check in with your web designer on a weekly or bi-weekly basis for changes or progress reports.

Get Involved: Check in on your website while it's being built, voice what you like and don't like. Ask about changes as soon as possible. Is this changeable? What if I want to add this? Will it cost more? Etc. A good web designer will keep you informed about changes or modifications they need to make to make the website function better from a technical or aesthetic standpoint. If you don't like something, ask about it. Maybe it was done for a reason, maybe it is just a difference of opinion.

Build your Website in Stages: If you are not sure what you want but know you want to bring your business online - start small. A small basic website should cost you no more than \$500 - \$800. Start with this, wait a few months and see what you (or your customers) are requiring of the website. If you have already determined exactly what you need the website to do, make sure you relay all of this information to the developer.

* Taking care of these basic things will insure a better overall experience for both you and the web designer. It will help insure that your website can be working for you as soon as possible and doing what you want it to do.