

CHECKLISTS *for* EFFECTIVE WEB DESIGN

In addition to web skills and design talent, a significant knowledge base is needed to create effective web sites. As a designer you need to spend a substantial amount of time planning and researching before you even begin to design. For example, you will need to understand the nature of your client's business, the purpose of the web site, and the target audience. This background information helps you develop a solid plan for a site and then follow it! To keep track of the inordinate number of details you generate during the site planning phase, it is helpful to create checklists for both your client and yourself.

Always keep these key goals in mind:

Create accurate, interesting content
Meet client's needs: adhering to purpose of site
Appeal to the target audience
Design with visual interest and clarity
Make sure that everything is in proper working order (navigation, interface, links)

Key questions
logo
company photos
company graphics
info in print

Questions to ask a Client

What is the company name and logo?
What is the nature of the company?
What is the company objective: mission statement?
What do they offer: products, services, etc?
Audience: who is the target audience, who is the site for?
Purpose: what purpose will the web site serve (sales, entertainment, info. etc.)?
Contact: contact information on web site, email addresses, URL, domain name

Budget: web site development, maintenance, updating

Timeframe

ISP: Internet Service Provider, phone #, email/web address

Content: is it existing? what format (print/web)? What software format?

Photos: Digital format -- tiffs, jpegs. Print -- need to scan

Images: logos, art, etc. (digital or in print)

Products

Price list

Background

Bios (company staff)

Site structure: sketch estimated layout of site (flowchart/storyboard)

Links: related businesses, related info, resources to offer audience, ways to reach secondary audience and/or people who influence target audience.

Security: will any security features be necessary?

Special features: shopping carts, order forms, search feature, guestbook, etc.

Give client opportunity to ask designer some questions.

Phrasing questions for “feeling” responses

Do you have a specific goal or need?

What do you wish to communicate?

What material is already in print?

Is that material a good starting point?

Does the web design have to match the current print material?

What do you like about the current print material?

What sites do you like and why?

Have you seen any sites similar in size or content?

What do you think of your competitors’ sites (if there are any)

What do you want the web site to “feel” like? Overall essence?

Do you have any color preferences?

Do you have any navigational preferences?

Checklist for Designers

Building a web site involves handling a lot of details. Develop checklists to keep yourself on track and help you remember everything you’ve contracted to do! You’ll need a general checklist to start a site, then one specific to each particular area of the site.

Here are some ideas for starting your designer checklist

Client name

Contact person

Existing web materials, urls, email addresses

Budget

Time Estimate

Design structure and organization

Horizontal or vertical layout (size in pixels)

Home page/splash page

Site map: rough ideas of overview of site

System for naming image and HTML files

Inspiration: always be on the lookout for inspiration!

Typography

assemble copy

collect photos

collect images

register site name (if necessary)

get ISP (if necessary)