

Web Design Process Checklist

1. Consulting, Research, and Planning

- Business Research:** Become familiar with the business by visiting the location, employees, and management. Have meetings to understand anything you don't. Read as much documentation as possible on the products and services and research similar businesses in that field.
- Competition research:** Becoming familiar with competitors gives us insight into what sort of long-term plans would be needed to catch up to them. Analyzing what we can do differently than the competition isn't doing will give us leverage. Most importantly pinpoint what marketing strategies work positively for their business and figure out **how to do it better** so you can crush them.
- Navigation structuring:** Navigation is one of the first things we organize because it lays down the foundation we need to develop the content and elements that will be on the pages. Optimized navigation is also important for SEO.
- SEO research:** This equips us with the technical knowledge to make the best choices for URL structure, naming conventions of images, verbiage used in website content, and overall website structure. SEO can be implemented with basic on-page optimization or it can be very complex for long-term contract SEO plans.
- Hosting and maintenance plan:** Each business has different needs for a server environment. While some basic sites can survive on cheap website hosting, most sites reliant

on a professional web presence shouldn't accept the minimum standard. eCommerce sites, for example, should always utilize the best in performance practices as we know that speed is a huge conversion determination for a website visitor and is the deciding factor on whether or not they will continue to use that website for the purchase they want to make.

- **Develop a plan of action for execution:** This is the development of the timeline of deliverables and task assignments. A Gantt chart or similar **project scheduling software** can assist you with the creation. Not every project will require such a robust project management tool and not every website will have the same execution plan. Some websites will be over 100's of pages while others are just 10 pages. Each business is unique in its services, offerings, and products. A proper execution plan should be created and adjusted for each individual business.

2. Architecture and Design

- **Wireframe construction:** Wireframes are the visual building blocks of a website so we can prepare content areas, copy and design elements to be able to move forward with the design of those pages. This might be shared with the client in order to get feedback.
- **Photoshop or live designs:** Depending on the individual process of each firm and freelancer, photoshopped examples might be developed to create a design before it's developed into live code. In some cases, a design might already by

provided by a ready-made theme or from a different graphic designer. In which a design could be developed live to save time.

- Graphics and images:** Research and implementation will be done of graphics and images that will complement the client's project.
- Content development:** professional copy will need to be provided for each page on the website. Generally, this is supplied in documents so that it can be edited by the editors and then later applied during the development stage. SEO's prefer **professionally written SEO copy** so they might control the quality of the content to stay within SEO best practices. Sometimes a client will insist on creating their own content if long-term SEO is not a concern nor within budget constraints.

3. Staging and Development

- Installment of plugins, themes, and systems like WordPress CMS
- Modifications to domain records for the purpose of development and other server-related entities such as CDN, email setup, SSL, and more.
- Development of pages, page structures, page content, products, blog pages, blog archives, design elements, and imagery.
- Internal SEO Setup of many aspects including title tags, meta tags, schemas, social sharing sards, **xml sitemaps**, HTML sitemaps, and much more.

- External SEO setups can include the scripts needed for heatmaps, Google analytics or other **SEO analytics tools**, Google search console, Google my business, Bing business, and more. Making sure all these entities are connected can be a tedious task.
- Outbound social media links and other related social business methods.
- SSL and Security installs, setups and hardening
- Setup of management and maintenance tools
- Setup of optimization, cache plugins, and CDN tools
- Spam protection setup and google captchas
- Development of websites forms and testing deliverability issues.
- Creating server rules if needed for the businesses
- Creating emails that can be used on website forms and used in contact pages.
- Creation of custom WordPress dashboards
- Check server status to ensure all minimum requirements are met for all plugins, themes, and overall website environment and health.

Production and Website Launch

- Live review process with clients to show off the website!
- Debugging can be implemented with a quality assurance team or it can be as simple as individuals like family, friends, and employees. There is also **bug tracking software** for larger projects the require constant monitoring.

- Changing database URLs to reflect the live website
- Changing domain records to point to new website server location
- Creating instructional documentation for internal and client use.
- Creating documentation of account information for clients such as administration login credentials for the website or credentials for the server and hosting environment.
- Creating tutorial videos for clients who want to manage websites themselves
- Creating custom WordPress dashboards
- Ongoing **website maintenance and management** to ensure website integrity and stability