1. Identifying Business Goals: Stakeholders
   1. Stakeholders carry the most responsibility and risk for the website’s success; they are the first source for defining what success truly means.
   2. Start every project by identifying who the key stakeholders are.
      1. Who Influences what it is and what it does?
      2. Who Finances design, development and marketing?
      3. Who creates its content, Form and function?
      4. Who Delivers the finished product to customers?
      5. Who sells/promotes the finished product?
      6. Who supports customers using the product?
      7. Who uses/acts on data stored, collected and reported on?
      8. Who manages and monitors the product’s use?
   3. What is success?
      1. You’re looking for measurable goals and desired outcomes:
         1. What needs to happen once we launch this and people use it?
         2. How does each stakeholder answer that question?
         3. How will each stake holder measure that success?
   4. Why are we doing this?
      1. Will the blog help increase awareness of my expertise, work or services?
      2. Will monetizing the site with adds offset production cost and provide income?
      3. Will the new features and functions convince people to purchase?
      4. Will a better website prevent customers from switching to a competitor?
   5. Questions to ask
      1. Who are your customers or users?
      2. Why will people visit/use/buy from you?
      3. What should the website accomplish?
      4. How will you measure success?
      5. How does this website fit into your overall business strategy?
      6. What technology is in place or what decisions have already been made?
   6. Analyzing the industry
      1. Every industry comes with a set of regulations, perceptions and expectations
         1. Common or best practices
         2. Competitive requirements
         3. Industry regulations
         4. Not knowing these practices or regulations before starting design can delay launch or cost a great deal to fix post-launch
      2. Every industry comes with a host of topics, areas, and issues that must be considered
         1. Specific terminology or language
         2. Tone of voice and design
            1. Formal or non-formal
         3. Business or service processes
         4. Brand positioning considerations
         5. Ratio of “show” (images, animation) to “tell” (data, facts, figures)
   7. Analyzing the competition
      1. Every website has competition, every client has competition of two kinds:
         1. Direct competitors
            1. Who offer the exact same set of products and services your client does.
         2. Indirect competitors
            1. Who offer some of what your client or company offers but there may be other offerings they have that you don’t or vice versa
      2. The most important question to ask:
         1. Who are your top 5 competitors?
         2. Primary differences between your business model and theirs?
         3. Why do people visit a competitor’s site, or use their product/service instead of yours?
         4. How will you position and differentiate yourself from the competition?