

# THE PROCESS BEHIND BUILDING A WEBSITE

1 DEFINE

2 PLAN

3 SKETCH

4 DESIGN AND BUILD

5 TEST AND OPTIMIZE

6 LAUNCH

7 MAINTAIN AND UPDATE

## 1 DEFINE THE PROJECT

- 👉 Define **WHO the website is for**. Is it for yourself? For a client of your agency or your freelancing business?
- 👉 Define **WHAT the website is for**. In other words, define **business and user goals** of your website project (👉 See lecture on UX)

**Business goal example:** *Selling premium dog food*

**User goal example:** *Finding high-quality dog food for good price*

- 👉 Define a **target audience**. Be really specific if possible and if it makes sense for your website (this can come from your client)

**Example:** *"Women, 20 to 40 years old, living in Europe, earning over 2000€/month, with a passion for dogs"*

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## 2 PLAN THE PROJECT

- 👉 Plan and gather **website content**: copy (text), images, videos etc.
- 👉 Content is usually **provided by the client**, but you also can help them produce and find some content (simply finding free images is easiest, but if they want copy, charge them extra)
- 👉 For bigger sites, plan out the **sitemap**: what pages the site needs, and how they are related to one another (content hierarchy)
- 👉 Based on the content, plan what **sections** each page needs in order to convey the content's message, and in which order
- 👉 Define the **website personality** (👋 See web design section)

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## SKETCH LAYOUT AND COMPONENT IDEAS

- 👉 Think about what **components** you need, and how you can use them in **layout patterns** (👉 *Get inspiration in web design section*)
- 👉 **Get ideas out of your head:** sketch them with **pen and paper** or with some design software (e.g. Figma 🎨)
- 👉 This is an **iterative process**: experiment with different components and layouts, until you arrive at a first good solution
- 👉 You don't need to sketch everything, and **don't make it perfect**. At some point, you're ready to jump into HTML and CSS

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## DESIGN AND BUILD WEBSITE

- 👉 Use decisions, content and sketches from Steps 1, 2 and 3 to **design and build the website with HTML and CSS** (“designing in the browser”)
- 👉 You already have the **layout** and **components** that you selected in Step 3. In this step, you need to design the actual **visual styles**
- 👉 Create the design based on selected **website personality**, the **design guidelines** I showed you, and **inspiration** (👉 See *web design section*)
- 👉 Use the **client’s branding** (it if exists already) for design decisions whenever possible: **colors, typography, icons**, etc.

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## 5 TEST AND OPTIMIZE

- 👉 Make sure website works well in **all major browsers** (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge, maybe even old IE 🤖)
- 👉 Test the website on **actual mobile devices**, not just in DevTools
- 👉 Optimize all **images**, in terms of dimensions and file size (👉 See *lecture on images*)
- 👉 Fix simple **accessibility** problems (e.g. color contrast issues)
- 👉 Run the **Lighthouse** performance test in Chrome DevTools and try to fix reported issues
- 👉 Think about **Search Engine Optimization** (SEO)



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## LAUNCH THE MASTERPIECE 🚀

- 👉 Once all work is done, everything is perfect, and you got approval from your client (or yourself 😊), it's time to **share your masterpiece with the world!**
- 👉 Upload your website files to a **hosting platform**. There are countless platform, we will use one with a free plan (Netlify )
- 👉 Choose and buy a great **domain name**, one that represents the brand well, is memorable and easy to write

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## MAINTAIN AND KEEP UPDATING WEBSITE

👉 Launching is not the end...

👉 Keep the website content **updated over time**. If you're working with a client, you can create a monthly maintenance contract (recurring revenue 🤖)

👉 Install **analytics software** (e.g. Google Analytics or Fathom) to get statistics about website users. This may **inform future changes** in the site structure and content.

👉 A **blog** that is updated regularly is a good way to keep users coming back, and is also good for SEO.