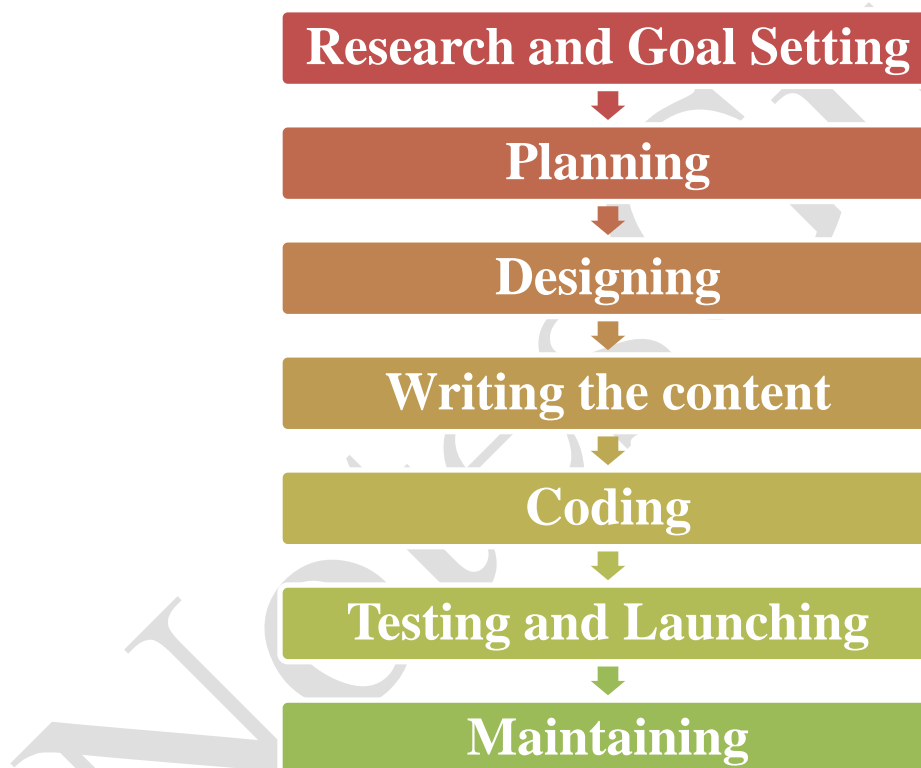


Website Planning Process

Before launching a website, the planning process is vital to ensuring everything goes smoothly down the road. In this day and age, there are so many sites out there on the internet. It is almost impossible for a business to do well without having a website that works well for both the company and its clients. Interestingly enough, there is a lot to be done before the coding of a website takes place. There are many steps which need to be followed for it to be properly developed. The purpose of development planning is to make sure nothing is forgotten.

There are numerous steps involved in a website planning process starting from goal setting to the designing and creation of website, and finally to maintenance to keep your website up to date and current.



1. Research and Goal Setting

As with any project, it is important to do proper research and set goals before beginning. By setting goals, it will help the website to have a direction and will also help your business to achieve specific accomplishments. The planning and goal setting process could take about 1-2 weeks to complete. It is a very important first step to creating a website that sells. There are a few questions you should ask yourself during this phase:

- What do I hope for my website to accomplish?

- Who is the audience I would like to target?
- What are the main goals of the website?

By setting goals for your website, you will be helping the site to have a clear direction and purpose. This is important to the rest of the steps. When setting your goals, you should think about outlining what you would like the rest of the steps to look like. Step 1 will guide you through the rest of the process smoothly.

2. Planning

Planning the website involves creating a wireframe and sitemap. This is an important step because it is kind of like the skeleton of your site. This process can take about 2-6 weeks to complete. The sitemap allows the developer to get an outline of what the site will look like, what pages there will be and how they will interact with each other. This not only helps with planning but is also beneficial to the user experience.

A user should be able to easily navigate a site, and this begins with the development of the sitemap. Before you begin to plan content, a sitemap lets you design what the structure will look like. Once the sitemap is completed, the other part of this step is to create a wireframe or mock-up. These are just visual representations of what the site will look like. This does not include the layout details. That comes next.

3. Designing

The details of the layout are what will give your website character. This is the step where you get to be creative with pictures, videos and what kinds of things the customer will notice when they come to your site. This process can take about 4-12 weeks from start to finish. The timing depends on experience, time spent on the project and how thorough the developer is. During this step, it is especially important to keep referring back to the target audience you wish to focus on.

Consider colors, logos, and anything that will encourage your audience to interact with the site. By considering how you will create the layout of the website, you are attempting to bring the website to life. It should help the audience to get a feel for your business or product.

4. Writing the content

This step may be going on simultaneously with the other development planning steps. The written content of a website is so important to its success. It is the step which is crucial and deserves a lot of expertise. It could take from 5 to 15 weeks. The written content on a website is going to help a visitor determine their next steps. It is vital to drawing customers in and keeping them. There is a lot to consider when working on the content of the website.

When determining what words to use, it is important that they are not too hard to understand. A general rule is that you have to assume not everyone is going to want to read words that are higher vocabulary. A website should have a vocabulary that the average person can understand.

Again, considering the target audience is extremely important, especially when it comes to the text being used to give customers information. This can determine what kinds of words and voice will be used in the writing, which can create the mood for the content, whether it is good or bad. It also involves creating catchy titles and headlines to draw people in.

Additionally, it is also a good idea to be well-versed in writing a call-to-action. This is what you want the user to do after reading the content on the site. The content should get customers excited about buying a product or service. A website that has well-written content is going to be much more successful than ones that do not.

5. Coding The Website

Now that all aspects of your website have been created, you are ready to actually begin creating the website itself. The coding typically begins with the homepage and gradually branches out to the other pages included in the site. This would be where the sitemap is followed to ensure everything is coded correctly. The coding step could take from 6 to 15 weeks; depending on how much content and how complicated you would like your website to be. It is also important to set up frameworks and CMS to make sure that everything will fit onto the server during the installation process. You wouldn't want to do all that work only to find out it doesn't fit.

During coding, don't forget to consider factors such as SEO, CMS plug-in, and any additional tools you might be using for analyzing and testing the website in the future. If you consider these things now, you will save yourself time and energy later. By keeping SEO in mind, you will get better results, and more people will be exposed to your page. Anything worth doing is worth doing right.

6. Testing and Launching

Before the website is launched, it is crucial that it is tested out by real users. All the links and content should be tested to see if it works. Not only is it important to test out all the buttons and everything on the site, but it is also important to test out what users think of it. There is user testing that can be completed to make sure the website is giving users what they need to be successful on the test.

Again, there are tools that can be used to determine if anything needs to be changed. Make sure to check all written content, including spelling and grammar. If your website has forms, ensure that they are working correctly as well. These might be important ways the users can get in touch

with you or sign up for alerts and messages. Without these working properly, it can be very difficult for the user and also will be difficult for you to have a successful website.

Don't just check the website once, but check it over multiple times. When you are confident that everything is in working order, you can go ahead and launch your website live. When it comes to launching, you are finally ready and can do this by uploading it to the server. You will need FTP (File Transfer Protocol) for this process. It is also important to make sure everything is running smoothly immediately after launching. Testing and launching may take 2-4 weeks to complete.

7. Maintaining

You might think your job is done once the website is launched, but this is not the case. Since technology and products are changing more rapidly than ever before, it is important to stay up-to-date with what is happening on the internet. Maintaining a website is hard work, but the more effort put into its maintenance, the better. There are a few different pieces to website upkeep.

- For one, it should constantly be checked out for errors. When a user encounters an error, this may be frustrating and may cause them to find what they are looking for somewhere else. Errors can also completely block them from the information they need to make a decision on purchasing a product or service.
- User-experience should be tested often, and it should be ongoing. This will ensure that if something comes up, it can be fixed right away. A website that has constant broken links or outdated content will not make its users happy.
- By having regular maintenance on a website, bugs can be fixed as soon as they are detected. A problem cannot be fixed if it is not known. An unhappy user means that you are losing current or potential customers.
- Another important aspect of maintaining a website is to ensure that all content is up-to-date. This means that the correct information is on the website such as contact information, pricing, and customer reviews. By giving bad or outdated information, a customer will not be able to get in touch with the business owner, complete a purchase, and it can be frustrating.
- While maintaining a website can be important, it might seem like hard work. It is important to know that there are many tools out there that can be downloaded right onto the website. Reports can be sent daily or in other time increments to give you data and information about how the site is performing.