

*Goals are dreams we convert to plans and take action to fulfill.*  
*Zig Ziglar*

How do we remove the anxiety and confusion often associated with trying to get a web site launched? How do we create powerful, nice looking and functional web sites consistently each time? It helps to have a process. Our simple methodology is tried and proven. And, it leads to great web sites and even greater testimonials by our clients.

- 1 Education** It is important to understand the basic technology behind the process of launching a web site. There are accounts to set up in your name for registering **domain names**, **hosting** the web site and setting up your **E-Mail**.

Then there is the process involved with creating your web site **html code** and how it is then transferred to your hosting location.

Decisions should be made up front regarding how much involvement you wish to have in the technical aspects of building the site and then in making on-going changes and updates.

**Benefits** The benefit of having this basic understanding is that you are in better control and will know what information is critical to obtain from your developers such as key usernames and passwords. You will also know which areas that you will be dependant on others for technical support.

- 2 Objectives** Your web site is a key marketing tool and additional **channel to market**. It should fit in and complement the other aspects of your marketing program.

For example, do you want a “flashy” brand-enhancing site, customer service focus, information “gathering” platform, or an information “giving” site?

Thinking through **specific, clear and measurable** objectives up front helps guide content creation, helps set priorities and gives us something to measure against upon completion.

**Benefits** The benefit of a strategy is a web site that is optimized to best fit into your business.

- 3 Plan** A web site development plan lists your objectives, includes a budget and **schedule**, and documents who does what.

There are many tasks with different costs and durations and none should come as a surprise half way through the project. You may wish to consider breaking the project into manageable **phases**.

Expectations for communications and **progress reporting** need to be set with those on the team.

**Benefits** The benefit of a well documented plan is an increase in probability that you will keep on schedule and to your budget and obtain an end result that meets your objectives.

- 4 Design** Create your site content linked to the objectives that were set. Existing marketing material must often be re-written to suit the web. Pages must have a purpose and your **target audience** in mind.

Different styles that complement your brand and image need to be reviewed and once selected, a framework or **web map** needs to be designed. Users should be able to easily navigate your web site and link to different information and site areas.

This forms the web site design and provides guidelines for implementation. The web site implementer should be a part of this process.

**Benefits** The benefit of having thought this out prior to implementation is a smoother development process and powerful and effective content that captures your audience and motivates them to take action.

**5 Build** This involves the **coding** of your web site and this is done with special web development software such as Adobe Dreamweaver or MS FrontPage.

Plan for this to be an **iterative process**. This approach is proven in the software development industry.

**Benefits** The benefit of an iterative approach are that you get to see the development as it is progressing, enabling you to better measure progress and manage the construction process. It minimizes re-work, schedule delays and misinterpretations by the implementer.

**6 Optimize** Be sure to program the web site such that it is optimized for **search engines**. You start this from the beginning and it involves both the content and the programming.

**Benefits** The benefit of optimization is that those actively seeking your services find you first.

**7 Market** Your web site cannot stand alone – there are many ways to **market the presence** of your new site, which need to be implemented.

**Benefits** The benefit of marketing your presence are that customers are quickly drawn to your new channel to market, you expand your reach to more customers, and your web site appears consistent and integral to the rest of your marketing program in the eyes of your clients.

**8 Maintain** Static web sites soon die from a lack of interest. The **web statistics package** included with your hosting plan should be utilized to measure customer visits.

Then your web site needs to be fine tuned and revised as your business evolves. You want to keep optimizing your site and refreshing it for the returning visitor's experience.

Have a **maintenance contract** if you are not maintaining your web site yourself. This should be someone who can provide timely, quick turn-around updates and technical support.

Remember, if your web site is not updated regularly, visitors will not bother to return. You will want to keep the site updated, promoting your company in a dynamic, professional and interactive fashion.

**Benefits** The benefit of an ongoing update plan is that customers will return knowing that you are actively involved and that new content will be there.

The benefit of a maintenance contract is that you are in touch and in control of this important channel to market and your customers will return.

**9 Document** As the owner, you will need a **backup copy** of your web site and the details on how it is uploaded to your host. You should have key registration information, access codes, usernames and passwords for hosting accounts, domain name accounts and E-mail accounts.

You should have a copy of all images used in both their original format and the formats created for use on your web site.

You should have copies of any **licence agreements** for stock photos used and web site templates purchased on your behalf.

**Benefits** The benefit of good documentation is that you are not totally dependent on your service providers and that you will always be able to recover from a disaster, including the unavailability of your web designer.