EZ TIPS - New Website? … 10Things To Ask Yourself First

By: Chris Bachman | March 13, 2014

1. **Purpose: your objectives vs. visitors objectives**
   What do you want to accomplish and what does a visitor to your site want to accomplish? Get clear on this and then design your site to provide them what they need, which in turn leads to your getting what you need.

2. **Market**
   Who is your market? Are you sure? Are there other markets you may be missing? Now, determine what sort of design and feel each market wants. What are they most comfortable with? Over 50s may not want the same interface that 20-somethings do.

3. **Requirements**
   What do you really need the site to do? This is different from selecting software. It is very easy to over buy programs for your site. Get to the core functionalities and then determine if you can do those manually until you are certain what you need to spend money on. It's a lot easier, and less expensive, going forward slowly than it is to have to back up and do over.

4. **Maintenance**
   Really? This is an up sell that many developers add on and you may not need. Anyone contracting you for a set amount per month for "maintenance" is possibly not playing straight. Websites shouldn't need much upkeep if properly set up to begin with. If you are doing a few updates here and there you should be billed by actual time.

5. **Budget**
   Get written bids from several developers. Make sure you are talking apples to apples. Leaving out one small thing can have huge effects on the cost. Now look at how much you can spend. Know that until a firm cost is contracted for you should plan on a minimum of 20% more than the initial bids are.

6. **Time**
   How much time are you willing to spend on helping with the website? A good developer will want to have an open line of communication with you. Are you willing and able to write content? Can you take time to discuss design details? If not, then you should find someone on your team who is. This is important.

7. **Experience**

    No one person is going to be an expert on all areas of web development. Building a website is like building a house, if you are pretty confident about being a General Contractor you can outsource the work yourself. Otherwise, hiring a quality project director to pull it all together is your best bet.

8. **Growth**

    What are the growth phases for your business? How will this affect your website? Will the site you are contemplating be "scalable"? Would you be better off building your site in phases or all at once?

9. **Marketing it: SEO, SEM, traditional**

    All too often this is left as an afterthought. Any internet expert will tell you that you marketing plans need to be viewed as an integral part of your website and that they should be a part of the website development from the very beginning. This definitely includes SEO.

10. **Design needs**

    What level of design integration do you need? Do you have a rock solid corporate look that must be adhered to down to the smallest detail? Or, are you pretty open minded and able to consider different looks and feels? Need a cutting edge design, or a safe, cross generational look?

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