

Website Content Development Process

Creating a website is easy. The hard part is building or rebuilding one that's going to generate lots of leads and plenty of business. Your development path is different based on the type of website you need for your business. The following section serves as a brief overview of the web development process and what content to consider to help you build your online brand and generate qualified leads.

Planning Your Website and Creating a Sitemap

- All websites start with a plan. Developers use a wireframe to outline how the pages might look and a sitemap to show the relationship your pages have to each other and the overall hierarchy of your site.
- The wireframe doesn't have to be an official document; it's simply a vision for your site that'll give both you and your developer(s) direction and a place to start. It should include the information architecture, the navigation structure and layout design ideas for some of the pages.
- A sitemap gives a developer an idea of what you're picturing and the information needed to meet your vision. You can create your sitemap on your own, or work with your website developer or digital marketing consultant.
- Sitemap's list the main navigation link names and supporting page names can be set up in Microsoft Excel or Google Docs spreadsheets.

Some questions to ask yourself when planning your new website:

- What is the primary business objective?
- What measurable analytics and goals are need to be successful?
- Who are my target audiences?
- Why would visitors want to come to my website?
- Are my products or services easy to understand?
- What helpful content should be included on each of the pages?
- What are common questions visitor might ask?
- What keyword phrases should be used to generate higher organic search results?
- What pages and categories are essential to satisfying potential client's user experience
- How can pages be organized into navigation categories?
- What will my Call to Actions (CTA) be for each page. CTA buttons or forms are used in your website and on your landing pages to guide users towards your goal conversion. Some common examples of call-to-action buttons are:
 - Add to cart
 - Free trial sign-up
 - Try Our Free Trial
 - Reserve Your Seat
 - Talk to an Expert Now
 - Get a Free Estimate
- What kinds of innovative media will help me reach my goals?

Choosing the Right Images for Your Website

Visuals are one of the strongest forms of communications. Your website images should project professionalism and a sense of your individual brand. Here are tips for selecting the photos:

- **Quality:** Grainy and poorly reproduced photographs on a small business website diminishes your credibility. Select only high-definition images that can be compressed for fast loading without jeopardizing quality.
- **Originality:** If you have a budget, invest in a professional photographer and shoot imagery uniquely suited to you, your staff and your product or service.
- **Individuality:** One way to differentiate your business from the competition is by featuring professional photographs of employees at work and taking part in an events. If you have a management team, use friendly-looking headshots of your top executives on your About Us page.
- **Consistency:** All the images on your website should tell a story. Color, cropping, style, and orientation should all be taken into consideration. Using a consistent photo style helps build brand recognition.
- **Balance:** Strive for a good balance of content and imagery. People don't want to be bombarded by photographs when they visit a site. It can be confusing, disorienting, and project a negative reaction.
- **Stock Photo Selections:** If you're building a new website or rebuilding an existing one, selecting the right images is important. Most consumers know a stock photo when they see one, so limit using them as much as possible. Make sure it relates to your business and is not used by your competitors. Finding the right one will take time, but it's always more effective when you find the right one.

Below is a list of some of the top stock photo sites:

- [Shutterstock](#)
- [iStockPhoto](#)
- [Fotolia](#)
- [BigStockPhoto](#)
- [EyeEm](#)
- [Getty Images](#)

There are plenty of free stock image options too. Here's some resources:

- [Unsplash](#)
- [Negative Space](#)
- [kaboompics](#)
- [picjumbo](#)
- [FancyCrave](#)
- [StockSnap.io](#)

Most designers and web developers use [Adobe Photoshop](#) to compress photos so they are web-ready, fast loading images. Here's free programs that can also be used:

- [JPEG Optimizer](#)
- [Optimizilla](#)
- [Kraken](#)

Whether you're adding text, images, illustrations or videos, it needs to be consistent and valuable to your visitor's experience. Remember, the cornerstone of content is quality. When you create a reputation for producing high-quality content, it will bring in new and repeat viewers who can turn into more new customers and greater success. Good Luck!