**Website Development Brief**

**The Project Context**

*The purpose of this section is to give an overview of the project and start your planning process. Consider why you are developing or re-developing your website. What is its function? What should it do?*

1. **What is the main objective/outcome of your project?**

*What would you like your website development project to achieve? How do you see its end results? Are there examples of websites or companies you think are good reference points?*

*Be as clear here as you can be. It will help your project be as successful as possible.*

1. **What challenge/opportunity gave rise to the project?**

*Are you facing competitive challenges, launching a new product, seeing a downturn in revenues, or measuring a potential opportunity?*

1. **What is the budget for project?**

*This is a tricky one, but it is generally better if you can give an indication of your budget from the outset. You may not be comfortable giving your budget upfront for fear the web development agency will simply ask for it all. While understandable, it’s important give some indication so they can work towards giving the best possible result they can within your budget.*

*Something to consider is to ask for their recommendations on a budget of €x, €y, and €z so you can together consider different approaches and solutions.*

1. **Are there project documentation requirements?**

*Let the provider know if you need any project documentation like a user manual, a presentation for a project update for your committee/Board/management team.*

1. **Do you have a firm deadline for project delivery? Or is there a significant deadline elsewhere that will limit your availability for this project?**
2. **Will there be revisions during the project?**

*Do you anticipate clarifications/revisions during the project? If yes, explain what and why.*

1. **Any other practicalities?**

*Is this website part of a wider marketing/branding strategy or plan? Explain how it ties into these other activities; are there any legal constraints in your market?*

*Do you have brand guidelines that must be complied with? Are you receiving support from a source that requires the use of their logo on the site? Where will the provider obtain it and any guidelines associated with its use?*

1. **Who is responsible for approval/acceptance?**

*Who in your business has the authority to sign off the work that the agency produces? How will they review, test and sign each off as work completes?*

1. **Will you need support after completion?**

*Will you need agency support for website maintenance, security upgrades, occasional changes to the site? Establish what this means and what cost you’ll incur.*

**Website Requirements**

This section defines the business needs, the problems this website will address and your desired goal for the project. The goal should be set in the context of your overall business and marketing plan, as well as what you believe will be achievable by this specific project within your proposed timeframe and budget.

This is the most important part of the project. Think clearly, ask questions and ensure you understand exactly what your requirements are and the brief is so you can avoid delays, wasted resources and understand the outcome of the project.

Every website is different but a SMART objective is usually essential for success, e.g. increase sales by a factor of ‘x’, to grow traffic by ‘y’, awareness, image, reputation, response levels, etc.

1. **What website development services do you need?**

*What website design services do you need? A brand new website, a complete re-design of an existing website, maintenance or upgrades/amendments to an existing website?*

1. **What are the goals of the website?**

*What are your specific short, medium and long-term goals for the website?*

1. **How will the website be structured?**

*What pages do you have in mind for your website, and what menu/navigation? E.g. home page, products page and individual product pages, about us, contact us. How many overall pages with how many different structures/templates?*

1. **Do you require optimization for mobile devices?**

*This is absolutely recommended. If you have an existing site, do you know what % of your traffic comes via mobile? Would you like your website to look/function differently for mobile users?*

1. **How will you measure success?**

*How will success be measured? Who will measure it? Remember that your website is only part of the marketing and communications strategy for your business. It is a step on the path of a longer journey. It cannot achieve miracles in and of itself; it merely provides progress towards your bigger and longer-term company goals and should be measured accordingly.*

**Business Overview**

A brief summary of your business:

* What’s your product or service? What are its benefits, USP?
* What are you selling? Are you selling online?
* Your distribution channels – where should your website send prospective customers?
* Your market/audience size (volume and value)?
* Customer usage data if available
* Your brand’s positioning
* Your recent brand communications, marketing activities, etc.

This section gets to more specific information to determine the best approaches and structure to meet your goals.

Remember, every website is designed to prompt a response from a particular group of people. Know your target markets, and how important each one is to you. Use demographics, lifestyle, product usage, attitudes, etc. Equally and perhaps more important are the insights that you have about these target groups. These insights can be used as a platform to build on and as a guide for the various decisions that need to be made, in a way that will create the desired reaction.

1. **What is the website’s primary audience?**

*Define your website’s target audience, in as much detail as possible. Is your website audience different from your current customer? If so, what is the difference?*

1. **How do you want people to perceive your website?**

*Write down 3-5 adjectives that describe how a user should perceive your site. For example, conservative, progressive, friendly, formal, professional.*

**Special Functionality**

Are there specific features you would like to have on your website, such as online shop, customer portal, member interaction, networking, etc.

Planning website functionally helps to see how your website can become more than just a platform for promotion and selling, and how it might help build relationships with your customers and improve your service delivery. Again, consider your wider marketing strategy here – are there other platforms you are using in your marketing that could do some of this functionality as well/instead of your website? What are the pros and cons of each?

This may impact budget and timelines, so important to consider from the outset.

1. **Do you need a feedback form?**
2. **Do you need an online store on your website?**
3. **Do you require a member’s area?**

*A member’s area or private password secured section provides members with specific tools and resources that are not available to non-members.*

1. **Does your website need a search function?**
2. **Any other tools/features? Some other widely used tools or functionalities:**

* A Content Management System (CMS) or access to back end of your site to allow you or others to quickly and easily manage, modify, edit, upload/remove/replace the information on the website
* The ability to change special offers/pricing on products
* Shopping cart functionality to allow site users to browse and add products to their cart and complete the purchase at a later date
* An interactive online quotation builder to enable site visitors to select products they want and to get a quote based on various bulk quantities/combinations
* Training/online learning functionality to show videos and to supply training materials
* Community features or a forum to enable users to interact with each other
* Other features – does your web design company have any examples they recommend?

**Graphic Design**

Essentially, this is the process of arranging your website content visually so as to enhance your visitor’s online experience, to transmit your company values and to evoke or reinforce a desired emotional response. It is used to optimize communication with your visitors, to organize information in a cohesive, pleasing layout, and to improve the efficiency of content presentation.

Website design encompasses information architecture, interaction, interface, navigation, information and visual design. It is much more than colours and fonts.

1. **What is your company logo?**

*Do you have it in digital format? Can you get the original files from whoever supplied it?*

1. **Do you have colour preferences for your website design?**
2. **Do you have icons, favicons or images to use?**

*If not, consider where you might source imagery. You could hire a photographer, or source third party imagery. Is there stock imagery, do your suppliers have images? Is there a marketing/destination group who have imagery you could use?*

1. **Are there any colour or style elements that you would like to avoid in the design?**

*Please share links to photos or websites you like/don’t link so you can build a look book for what you’re trying to achieve.*

1. **List at least 3 websites you find compelling, and include what you like about the sites.**

*It doesn’t matter if they are related to your business or not - it’s about the navigation elements, style, colours, typography and other visual concept and why you like them.*

1. **Can you provide links to your competitors’ websites (at least 3)?**

*Why do you think they have taken a particular approach? What works and doesn’t on each site e.g. their message, the site structure (pages), the navigation elements, style, colours, typography and other visual concepts of note.*

**Website Analytics**

Website Analytics (also referred to as Google Analytics) is the functionally used for measuring website traffic. It’s also useful for business research and market research, and for determining and improving upon the effectiveness of your website.

This section is used to define the requirements of the analytics functionality for your website and to decide on the most appropriate vendor for those analytics.

1. **Which website analytics tool will/do you use?**
2. **Do you have key search terms? What are your search keywords?**

What keywords might your typical customer use when searching for your products of services? List as many as you can think of in order of importance.

1. **Should comprehensive keyword research be performed?**

*Experts say that proper keywords take precedence over all other online marketing techniques. The position of your website in a search engine’s list of results will depend largely on your keyword choices. Would you like the provider to conduct comprehensive keyword research to refine your keywords and key phrases?*

1. **Do you have/want metadata for your site?**

*Search engines use this data when adding pages to their search index. Metadata will have a significant impact on the visibility of your website in search engines. Let the provider know where you are planning to source it, if you already have it, or if you want them to source it.*

**Website Administration**

This is the log in and administration information required to build/change your website – your domain name (the www address you will use) and the location where your website will be hosted (the pages, copy and images), likely Wordpress. You might also have a Google Analytics to monitor and measure site statistics. Again, login credentials are essential.

1. **Account credentials**

*Domain name log in details:*

*Website hosting log in details:*

*Google Analytics log in details:*

*Other:*

*NB – Make sure you have all the log in details for your website when the project is finished for continuity. You may need to allow others take over maintenance, work on the site yourself, or your supplier may go out of business. These are assets of your business and should be treated as such.*

**Additional Information?**

*If you have any additional documents that may be of use to the provider, please add them here as appendices. Alternatively, mention each one and put them in an online/offline folder you can share with the provider. This could include user manuals, functional specifications, designs, or even memos and e-mails.*