

PLANNING A NEW WEBSITE *'getting to know your business'*

✓ **Your Goal:**

The first thing you should do is ask yourself: **What do I want my web site to achieve?** This is the most important thing, the whole planning and designing process will rely on this answer.

Your answer should be short and clear. It should also be measurable so it can be tested, to see if your goal was achieved over time.

Here are some examples:

For a retailer:

- * to increase profit by on-line sales
- * to increase sales from interstate

For a school:

- * to increase school awareness and enrolments
- * to provide easy access to information for existing families

For an established small business:

- * to create another advertising vehicle & increase awareness (by having a web site which will appear in search engine results)
- * to reduce phone enquires by increasing accessibility to information.

Note, in these examples, two similar businesses can have two different goals, that means the approach will be different and the result will be two different websites. **Therefore the goal is very important.**

You can have more than one goal but there should always be a main goal to focus on and then secondary goals.

✓ **Your Potential Visitors:**

Understand your visitors. **Ask yourself who is my target audience?**

They can be existing customers, potential customers, businesses, etc. both content and design should appeal to them.

Things to consider: age group, what they do, where they live, do they own a computer, how much they use the web, what they do on web, etc.

You will not have all these answers but this is just a guide for you to think about your potential visitors.

Your visitors might be from the general public or businesses you work with (if you are a wholesaler for example). In any case your answers will affect the content and look of the site.

Your Competition:

Check out your competition. **Look at your competitor's websites and note both what you like about them and what you don't.**

Tip: if you have no competitors (lucky you!) or they have no website; check a similar business or a similar business overseas.

Please write a list of the websites and what you liked and disliked for me to use as a reference. I will also do my own research, but I would like to hear from you as well as this will help to create a web site that you will like!

Your Style:

Ask yourself **what message do you want your design to communicate?** Think about the impression you want your visitors to be left with when they visit your site. It can be corporate, fun, 70's, childish, smart....anything goes as long as it is consistence with your goal and target audience. Remember first impression will effect people's opinion of your site and your business!

Then, find things in books, magazines, websites etc that work for you. Look for the colors, fonts, images etc you like. This will give me an idea for how you would like things to look. If you already have a logo and business stationary or ads you are happy with it should be a main part of this exercise. With all this I will create a 'mood board' which will help us determine the design.

Your Website Content:

Think about the content you would like to have.

If you can, ask some of your customers what they would like to see in your website.

A few things that a simple website will usually have: about the business (profile), products/services, contact information and forms. This is just an indication to what you would like to have in your website. Later on we will create a complete list and 'site map' that will paint the whole picture.

This is the first step, understanding your business will help me create the website that works best for you and your customers.

The next stage will be writing and content gathering which will need to come mostly from you since you know your business best.