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## An Outline of Our Website Process

### Consultation

The initial consultation is a brief meeting to talk about your needs in order to properly develop a proposal for the project. The object of this stage is to learn about your brand, set project goals, brainstorm solutions, and come to a clear understanding of the site's intended use, and it's target market.

After this, we will take some time to briefly research costs, solutions, and estimated time needed. We then create a proposal to go with our standard web contract at \$120/hour. The proposal (exhibit A) is a detailed, creative description of the project overview, goals, scope, client requirements, estimated time, and estimated cost based on hours worked. It breaks down a complicated creative process into an outline of what needs to be accomplished to complete the site. The proposal also is a reference to what is in the scope of the project, and an 'estimated' cost to complete it.

The proposal & contract is then sent to the client. Once the paperwork is taken care of, the deposit is made, and the 'client requirements' section of the proposal is met, the project gets underway.

### Pre Production

The first step of any project is market research. This includes research of competitors, target markets, solutions, keywords, and design elements. Every site requires the proper research in order to be successful. The goal is to ensure we're headed in the right direction before proceeding to the more intensive design work.

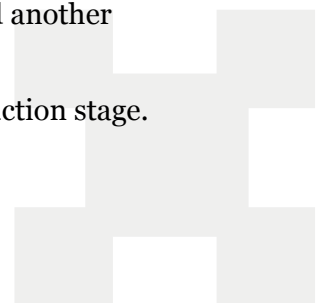
In our experience there is a direct correlation between proper research and a site's success. When a visitor comes to your site, the design surely leaves an impression. However, no matter the initial impression, the most important aspect to any new visitor of your site is the ease of use to find the information they are seeking.

With out a clean, simple way to access that desired information or product, the visitor will most likely move on to another site in search of what they are looking for.

The market research we do helps us map out this experience in basic wireframes, which is vital to accomplishing this friendly, user experience, or in another words, a successful site.

Market research is intensive and sometimes it can reveal unforeseen obstacles, or even spark new ideas. Either way, our hourly rate benefits our clients by giving the project the option to grow in scope, without any hassle. If there is no room for growth, we simply find another solution to fit your budget.

Once the basic wireframes are done and presented, we now move into the production stage.



# Production

**1. Homepage Design:** Armed with approved wireframes, and a detailed plan, our design team will do what they do best. The first step of production is to design a 'comp' of the homepage, or landing page of the site. This is the first 'layout' designed, and the most important. Once completed, we will send over a 'jpeg' of this design for feedback.

At this time, the feedback we are looking for is based on the overall feel of the design. We are not concerned with specific content. The design should be judged by the impression it makes, and the overall user experience it provides. We try to educate our clients that a design is not just a blank canvas. Each decision in the design is trying to balance being impressive, simple, and functional all at the same time. It may not be as simple as, 'this looks prettier.' Each design element that is changed must be carefully evaluated on how it effects the overall user experience.

Based on the feedback, we will do as many revisions possible within a client's budget to meet their goals. On an average site, this usually requires about 1-2 rounds of revisions. On the larger scoped projects, more rounds may be required.

After a design of the homepage is approved, we move on to the 'internal pages'.

**2. Internal Page Design:** The internal pages of a site are all the pages that are 'not' the home page. This includes your blog, contact, gallery, about us, etc. Smaller scope sites usually have 1-2 layouts that make up the internal pages.

A 'layout' is the positioning of the various elements that make up a website page. For example, a typical internal page will feature the same navigation bar as the home page, with a different sidebar, content area, and header. In another words, the about page for a site might have the same 'layout' as the contact page, with just different information in the content area.

Each site requires a different number of internal pages which is determined in the client's wire frames during the pre-production process. After the homepage design is approved, the internal pages will each be designed off of this look and sent over for approval.

**PLEASE BE ADVISED:** This is the turning point in the process. After design approval is made, there is no going back and making any changes to the layout without increasing the cost significantly. This would be like a contractor trying to swap a bathroom around with a bedroom after a house is built. Sure, it's possible, but not cost effective, or smart. This design is like your blueprint. Once development begins, no changes to the blueprint can be made. That is why it is important to make sure everything is as it should be before the development process begins.

**3. Development:** Development is a three step process in itself.

- Step 1 is the process of working with the developer so they can fully understand every element of the design and it's intended functionality.
- Step 2 is for the developer to cut up and code the design.
- Step 3 is the testing process to make sure everything works correctly.

Development takes place on a test server in order to fully flesh out the entire site on a live server, without effecting a client's current site. Once our initial testing is complete, we will send a link to the test server for feedback.

# Feedback

Finally, after this long process, a client finally gets to see their vision come to life. The fully functional site is ready and waiting to be tested.

The goal of the testing stage is to make sure all the functionality is working as it is intended in the design, both on the front and back end of the site. Depending on the scope of the project, a client may bring in their own 'testing team' to help get a better idea of the overall user experience. The object is to test the site to make sure it works as it is intended to.

During this process, it is natural for clients (and us) to develop some iteration ideas for the future. As we mentioned, a website is an iterative process, so there is always room for growth. It is recommended to set an iteration schedule in advance, or at least jot these ideas down for future use.

# Voila

Once the development process is approved, the test server allows us to make a 'quick switch' to the client's hosting account without any hiccups whenever they wish to launch.

After a successful launch, the final step in the process is training the client &/or their staff on how to use the site's content management system (CMS). Training can be as intensive as the client's budget allows. We can give anything from a simple run through, to an in depth analysis over a few training sessions, all the way up to monthly sessions on how to specifically use the site to grow their web presence.

Technology, markets, people, and solutions are always changing on the web, which is why it is an iterative process. Keeping the site fresh and up to date is part of the maintenance required.

We can always help with maintenance, web promotion, iterations, and more such as....

- Minor seasonal site design changes (such as emphasizing a special promotion/holiday)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) through link building and intensive keyword research
- Quarterly user experience upgrades (based on feedback from site users)
- Brand cohesive promotional content videos &/or print materials to help gain exposure.
- Blog / Press Release writing that is social media and search engine friendly.