

Making Your Mark Online

Brainstorming Web Site Ideas

What does your company do?

Who do you do it for?

What is your unique value proposition?

How do your services and products benefit your target audience? Please specify a clear list of bullet items of benefits. What can your business offer your visitors, what's in it for them, how can you help them? What problems do your prospects have that your business solves?

Are you a local, regional, national or international business? What geographic areas do you want to specifically target?

Define the criteria you will use to determine the website's success (i.e. Internet orders of a certain volume, X amount of leads, X hours of time saved). There should be a trackable method to determine success. How will you measure the criteria you choose?

What is your budget for marketing the website and how do you intend to market both on and off the Internet? You should plan for at least half of your web site budget to be for marketing. Simply putting up a web site is not enough.

How can you encourage repeat visitors and referrals? Every measure should be taken to encourage visitors to voluntarily submit their email address. Free offers, contests, referral forms, surveys and requests for information forms can be useful tools to encourage email signups. What can you offer that can be digitally delivered on site (free information guides, product samples, coupons)?

How can you encourage your customers to participate on your web site? Can you have a user-generated gallery? ("here's me using your product!") A blog where visitors can comment? A forum for user's to share information? An opinion survey?

Your home page should have a clear call to action. What do you hope a visitor will do when they visit your web site? Do you want the visitor to call you, purchase something,

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provide an email address, contact you with a question? Be sure to incorporate a bold call to action in the design of the home page and other pages.

Will there be password protected areas for dealers, members and/or downloads? What will be available to password holders that is not available to other visitors?

How often during the year do you anticipate updates to the website? What types of information will be updated? Employment opportunities, product specials, contests, new products, updated news all should be updated periodically. Who will update the web site?

Assess your skills. Do you know how to transfer photos to your computer? Do you use email and the internet regularly? You can have an effective web site no matter what your skill level, but you need to think realistically about expectations for the site and process flow. For example, if you do not have access to a skilled email user, you may need to have web site orders sent to a fax machine. Or if using your camera is an exercise in frustration for you, you will either want to find someone who can do that for you, or skip features on your web site that require photo uploads.

Gather any existing materials and information (including but not limited to):

Photos (prints, slides, negatives)	True and believable testimonials (clients, industry figures, pros) ask for them with quantifiable results ("I made \$10,000" instead of "I loved how great it worked")
Text	Endorsements from known sources
Brochures	Credits
Business cards	Bios
Flyers	History
Product shots	Education
Product samples	Certifications
Press releases	Awards
Price and part lists	Case studies
Frequently Asked Questions	Photos of yourself, staff and location
Shipping and handling charges and constraints	Transcripts of interviews
Warranty policy	Industry recognition
Privacy policy	
Return policy	
Guarantees	

If you plan to have advanced features like a forum, estimator, or blog, is there a 3rd-Party solution you can integrate or simply use? For example linking to a popular forum in your subject area rather than trying to attract a large enough audience to your own forum?

Stay focused on content and features that will benefit both YOU and your customers.

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Review the list of possible content areas below and think about how they might apply to your business. Highlight those that appeal to you. Write down new ideas that come to you.

Products and/or Services

- Catalog
- Descriptions
- Photos
- Product features & benefits
- Product Options (size, color)
- Prices
 - Quantity Breaks
 - Add-On Options
 - Sale Prices
- Purchasing/Shopping Cart
- Downloadable products
- Print-friendly Product Spec Sheets
- Upsells/Cross Sells
- Inventory Control
- Reviews
- Warranty & Return Policy
- Licensing
- Customer Service
 - FAQ (frequently asked questions)
 - Downloadable intake forms
 - Hours and location
 - Service Requests
 - Scheduling
 - Samples / Tear sheets
 - Quote Request/Estimator
 - Assembly Instructions
- Training
- Contracting & Consulting
- Stock List
- Capabilities
- Portfolio
- Dealer Locator
- Resume
- Bookstore
- Competitive Matrix

Contact Us

Jobs

- Overview
- Job Postings
- Recruiting

Resume submissions

- Benefits
- Customer Login
- Database searching
- Information
 - About Us
 - Links
 - Reviews
 - Credits
 - Copyrights
 - Privacy Policy
 - Our Team
 - Case Studies
 - Awards
 - News and Events
 - Newsletter
 - Press Releases
 - Media Coverage
 - Alliance Partners
 - Legal Notices
 - About our Industry
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Regional Information
 - Tech Notes
 - Tips and tricks
 - Interesting Facts
 - Articles
- Site Map
- Help
- Site Quick Guide
- Galleries
- Intranet
 - Human resources
 - Document storage
 - Internal news
 - Finance
 - Project Tracking
 - Website reports
- Free Stuff
- Forum
- Blog