

An Approach to Planning A Successful B2B Web Site

As your company considers planning a new web site, the task can seem abstract at best and at times daunting. The questions and ideas outlined here provide a framework for an approach that will enable you to make quick progress, confident in the knowledge that you're asking meaningful questions aimed at achieving the most effective and appropriate results.

GOALS

Begin by collaborating with your web design/development team to set realistic goals for the site.

Branding – How will the site tie into our existing branding and marketing materials?
How can the new site help us grow our brand?

Communications – How can we leverage the web site to communicate our messaging, documents, support information, etc.?

Metrics and Usage – How will we measure site traffic and analyze usage?

Return on Investment – How can we measure our return on investment (e-commerce, traffic, contact conversions, awareness)?

Scalability – How can the site grow to accommodate our future needs?

Search – How will the site be optimized for search engines?
How important is SEO (search engine optimization) for our business?

Functionality – What do we need the site to do (inform, contact forms, site search, calendar, etc.)?

METHODOLOGY & DOCUMENTATION

Working with your chosen partner, develop a sensible approach with the appropriate design documentation.

Competitive Analysis – Understand your competitors' online presence to better position yourself.

Content Inventory – What existing content do you have that could be used on the site?

METHODOLOGY & DOCUMENTATION (CONT.)

Writing for the Web – Ensure all newly produced content will be well suited for the Web: concise and key word rich; avoid reusing existing marketing content verbatim.

Information Architecture – Determine the optimal structure of your prospective site, then refine preliminary choices to eliminate unnecessary content and pages.

Design documents – Sitemaps, wireframes, and personas – along with other design documents – can all help ensure a successful approach and strategy.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Study your target audience; the knowledge you gain will enable you to create a site that is useful, informative, and even persuasive.

Target Audience – Identify your target audience(s) and their needs and wants relative to your site.

User Groups – Define key user groups (customers, vendors, employees, etc.) within your target audience to help prioritize goals.

SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES AND NETWORKS

Consider the use of emerging social technologies carefully, and employ only those that will be advantageous – either when added to your site, or when used in conjunction with it.

Your Customers Online – Are our customers already using any social technologies that can be leveraged through the new site?

Blogging – Should we have a blog or utilize any other social technologies on our new site?

Social Replacements – Can social technologies replace the more traditional aspects of the site?

INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Developing a thorough understanding of the resources available to you within your business is the key to setting realistic expectations for the project – and for arriving at smarter decisions.

Internal Responsibilities – What are our responsibilities in the creation of the site?

Internal Roles – Designate who is responsible for handling internal project management, content gathering, and other key roles.

INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES (CONT.)

Internal Limitations – How do our own internal resources and availability of key personnel affect the scope or time line of the prospective site?

BUDGET

Ensure a solid approach for creating a fiscally viable project.

Budgeting – What is an appropriate budget for the scope and features of your prospective site? Plan a proposed budget and determine your constraints.

Outside Costs – Consider how outside costs will factor into your budget (web hosting, photo shoots/licensing, etc.).

Fiscal 'Fit' – Ensure the potential firm(s) you are evaluating are an appropriate 'fit' for your project from a fiscal perspective.

POST-LAUNCH CONSIDERATIONS

A web site is an organic and evolving entity that provides an ongoing marketing platform. One of the most important components of planning a successful web site is having a plan in place for its post-launch operations and oversight.

Marketing Approach – How do we turn our site into an ongoing marketing platform? Consider how future marketing projects will enable your new site to reach both existing and new customers (HTML e-mails, Google AdWords and campaign landing pages, etc.)

Future Growth – Consider how you will keep your site up-to-date. Identify the areas you'll want to update in-house (news, contacts, documents, etc.).

Monitoring – Create a solution for monitoring site traffic and usage analysis.

Publicity – Create a plan to announce the launch of the site to your clientele.

About Liquid Comma

Print Design

Web Design

Motion Graphics

Branding

Advertising

At Liquid Comma Design, we create award-winning visual communications that capture the imagination and resonate in the mind.

We take pride in the repeated success of our projects, which earns impressive results for our clients. By exceeding their expectations time after time by combining contemporary communication design with a thorough understanding of brand strategy, technology, and our clients' business environment. We're more than just vendors to our clients – we're their creative advantage.

We have many success stories to share because we take the time to understand our clients and their communication objectives. Our clients work directly with our designers, as we firmly believe in creating personalized solutions for each and every client.

We take a holistic approach to design, with no house design styles or preconceived notions. We have a simple ideology: **create beautiful answers.**