

When building a successful web presence, it's important to have well-defined goals. At eMphasys, we start out with a series of questions to help get everyone on the same page.

It's not important that you address each and every issue... merely use this survey as a guideline.

1 Background and Goals

Company

Please provide corporate and industry descriptions, including competitors, along with a brief critique of their sites. Include contact information and a description of the group who will be working on the project. Who are the decisionmakers? Who else would be contracting? Who's responsible for what? What human resources do you have for various stages of the process?

Projects

- What is the mission statement or summary of your project?
- What are the basic goals of this project? (e.g., branding/identity reinforcement, improved access to information, direct sales, corporate communication, etc.)
- What outcome will make this project successful? How will you measure success?
- What are your schedule requirements?
- What is the budget for this project? Is there an acceptable budget range, depending on the level and comprehensiveness of services provided? Please explain.
- Describe any work that has been done toward designing/redesigning a new web site.
- Will the web site reinforce an existing branding or marketing strategy? How?
- Discuss any identity/branding assets (logos, other artwork, and fonts) or issues.

Rank the following (in order of importance), or identify areas that are most important and why:

- A web strategy that fits with our corporate strategy
- A web strategy that fits with our marketing strategy
- Repurposing existing content
- Creating a community of dedicated visitors
- Quality execution (graphics, writing, navigation, etc.)
- Time to market
- Ease of maintenance
- Doing better than our competition on the Web
- People bookmark the site because they get so much out of it regularly
- Staying within the budget
- Sending the message that we know the Web and use it appropriately

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② Audience, Content, and Functionality

Audience

- What types of visitors do you want to attract?
- What are your goals for each type of visitor?
- What are the products/services involved?
- What are your goals for these products/services?

Content

- Where will content come from?
- Will it be new, repurposed, or both?
- How often will you add new content?
- Who will update the content?

Functionality

- What functional requirements do you believe to be necessary? (e.g., download areas, database-driven webpages, commerce, catalog, online applications, etc.)
- Who will update these functionalities?
- Are there extraordinary security issues?
- Have you budgeted for hosting and maintenance of the site?
- If so, what is your budget?
- Who will maintain the site contents?
- What types of legacy systems or databases are in place?
- What is your long-term plan for the site?

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3 Out on the Net

Audience

This part of the profile is very important. The more work you put into it, the more your project will benefit. Find several quality sites (more is better) on the Web that relate to your project in one or more of the following categories:

- Branding in a similar situation to yours (new company, new brand, established brand, etc.)
- Appeal to same target group of customers
- Whether or not you would build the site if you were in a different industry
- Colors, look-and-feel, user interface, layout
- Size of site
- Size of project
- Publishing model (frequency, novelty of content, etc.)
- Attracting new people to the site (newsworthiness, giveaways, impact, etc.)
- Your competitors' sites
- Quality of content
- Quality of graphics
- Functionality (things sites do for people)
- Community, special features, responsiveness, other categories important to your project
- Overall favorite sites (for whatever reasons)

In addition, it's sometimes helpful to look at websites that you do NOT like, and explore the reasons why that site does not get the job done.

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