

# WEB SITES: *Effective Marketing Online*



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**A powerful online presence is the cornerstone of an effective marketing program. And it all begins with your input.**

Please answer these questions in as much detail as possible. Your responses to these questions will guide the design process and help LBD provide you with a website that achieves your business goals and exceeds your expectations. After the questions, a brief outline of the development process will follow.

## Goals & Strategy

What is the purpose of the web site?

What is the most important thing that it should accomplish for your business or organization?

What will your visitors do at your site? What kind of experience are they expecting?

## Target Market

Who is your primary audience or market?

What are they seeking when they come to your site? What is their motivation for visiting?

## Site Marketing

What are your key messages?

Who is your competition?

What is your strategy for driving traffic to your web site?

What would you like visitors to do after they have visited your site?

## Site Characteristics

What kind of site do you want? Informational? Customer service? Sales? A combination?

What features and/or functions do you want it to have?

Do you have a hosting service and a domain name?

## Content

Who will provide the content (copywriting, graphics and images) for the site?

How often will your content be updated? Will you handle this in-house?

## Visual Design

Does your company have established branding that will tie the site to your other marketing and communications?

Do you have a logo or other graphic elements that needs to be incorporated into the visual design of the site?

How often will your content be updated? Do you want to handle this in-house?

## PROCESS

The process of creating a web site is similar to creating other branding collateral and begins with establishing a direction that will guide the stages of design development. At the beginning, I'll ask you to do a "homework" assignment:

1. Gather examples of web sites from entities similar to yours. It is important to understand the competitive context in which your web site will function. Your web site should stand out in terms of quality, not in terms of strangeness.
2. Look at these examples of graphic design and observe which sites you like, and which you don't. Record the details of your reactions to such aspects as visual styles, functionalities, content, or anything else that stands out to you for better or for worse. Be specific as to why you did or did not like a site.

The phases of web design are as follows:

1. **Research** – In addition to the above information, a meeting with you begins the process by thoroughly discussing the mission and purpose of your organization, its goals, its audience, any obstacles to the execution of its mission, how the audience should be engaged, how to position the organization, and any other relevant questions that may have a bearing on site design. This information will form the basis for developing page concepts.
2. **Page Concepts** – After the research phase is complete, a draft site map of all pages to be included in the site will be developed, along with rough layouts of content to be included on each page, and the navigation system. This portion of the process can be likened to creating a blueprint before building a house.
3. **Concept Review** -The draft site layout will be reviewed and discussed, and alterations/additions requested.
4. **Visual Design** – After the site structure and pages have been finalized and approved, your preferences as to visual style will be reviewed. Then a draft visual design for the home page and one sub-page will be created.
5. **Design Review** - The draft design will be reviewed; at this point, you will either approve the design or ask for alterations. If the latter, the alterations will be executed and a second draft submitted for review. (Two rounds of approvals is the norm.)
6. **Final Design Approval** – When the final page design is approved, all the pages are laid out and submitted for approval. When the final pages have been signed off, files for build-out will be produced and sent to the site developer.
8. **Final Site Development** – The web developer will create a beta site according to the page files, and submit it for review. Alterations and adjustments will be requested and executed. A finished site will be submitted for final approval.
9. **Site Publishing**– When the completed site has been approved in beta form, the developer will upload the site and it will go live.

When the client is a group or a board, it is recommended that the group designate a smaller sub-committee that is authorized to develop the project, go to meetings, evaluate the design, and report back to the larger group.