



■ **Effective Web site design, development, and graphics since 1996** ■

## Planning Your Web Site

Considering a new site, improving your existing site, or ready for a redesign? The following provides tips and information about planning, getting started, and maintaining your Web site. This is also a guideline to a typical Web site building process with SKDesigns.

We'd love to [hear from you](#) about your Web site needs.

**Important:** Since estimates are tailored to your needs and budget, please complete as much information as you can from the FAQ below. You will need to refer to this when we discuss your site needs.

Feel free to download the [Planning Your Web Site FAQ](#) (PDF) to use offline or for printing.

- [Phase I: Planning](#)
- [Phase II: Building](#)
- [Phase III: Making Your Presence Known](#)
- [Phase IV: Web Site Maintenance and Updating](#)

## Phase I: Planning

There are several things that SKDesigns will discuss with you during your initial consultation.

### Things To Do:

Please be prepared with your information prior to your consultation with SKDesigns (see [Things To Consider](#) below).

- Write notes while you brainstorm, including questions you may have
- Make an outline of your needs, followed by writing all the details
- Organize folders in which you add and keep information and materials for your Web site:
  - a physical folder with photos, brochures, company logo, written materials
  - a directory folder on your computer with text for your Web site, digitized photos, images, logos, and other pertinent information
- Look at as many Web sites as you can that are related to yours in some way. This will not only help you see what your competition has going and an overall perspective of Web sites in general, it will also help you brainstorm for your own site. Make note of the following:
  - Web sites that you like and why
  - Web sites that you don't like and why not
  - Any Web sites that have elements that you like, such as colors, navigation, overall layout, the type of content and how it's presented



## Things to Consider:

- Purpose of Web site
- Target audience
- Web site content:
  - Text, and who will write or provide the text if not already available.

Some very basic contents might be:

- who you are
- what you do
- how to contact you
- list of services or products
- Photographs or other images (to enhance or illustrate the text)
- Logo
- Updating of text and other content to keep site fresh and content current
- If you haven't already done so, write or gather your content and other materials as needed for your Web site. Your Web site design is based on its content, not vice versa.
- Ways to bring in new visitors, repeat visitors
- Budget
- Other costs:
  - Internet Service Provider
  - Domain name and registration
  - Database information to make available online (know existing database format, online password access only or available to public)
  - If you wish to sell products or services online:

- Secure server for processing transactions
- Merchant account through your bank (or alternatives)
- Online purchases by credit card, alternative purchases by fax, postal mail
- Shopping cart software, if needed (usually recommended for over 10-20 products or so)
- Set up a system that integrates easily with new or existing accounting software
- Search engine registration, optimization. (Your Web site with SKDesigns is designed to be search engine friendly, but content optimization is critical, and it's also important to register your site and follow up with search engines and directories.)

## Phase II: Building

- Contract Agreement and deposit:

After we've received your deposit, signed contract agreement and required materials (content, logo, photos, other items as noted above), the design and development begins on the date agreed to in our contract.

- A private test site will be available for review at each step of the design creation and development process, with regular communications throughout (usually by email, but sometimes by phone).
- When the site is completed, we get your final OK, final payment, and we then upload your new site to your server (or send you the site by zip file or disc, if needed).



### Phase III: Making Your Presence Known

- Web site registration with several major search engines
- Other means of bringing in visitors.
- Add Web site and email address to all correspondence, all advertising
- Consider sending announcements or commencing other advertising of your new, redesigned, or improved Web site

### Phase IV: Web Site Maintenance and Updating

- Keep your Web site content fresh and alive
- Provide reasons for new visitors and for them to return to your site
- Add new information as appropriate and update existing information regularly
- Check search engine rankings and tweak pages and/or meta tags if needed
- Continue to promote your Web site regularly

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