**W**ebsite development plan template

### Guide to this template

*A website development plan can help* ***guide your work on developing a new website*** *(or redeveloping a current one) and* ***provide a shared focus*** *for everyone involved.*

*This template has suggested* ***headings, comments, and examples*** *to help you prepare a website development plan.*

*It’s helpful to work through this plan with someone who is* ***experienced or interested in*** *website development.*

*An* ***example plan*** *is also provided in the Resources section of our website –* [*communitycomms.org.nz/resources/web-usability/*](http://communitycomms.org.nz/resources/web-usability/)*.*

## PURPOSE

### What is the purpose of the website?

**Create a statement** that encapsulates the **purpose** of the website.

Examples of purpose statements are:

* To engage new members of the project, increase our following and provide a store so we can sell our fundraising products.
* To promote the choir and our concerts and provide a platform for funders, donors and supporters to get a sense of who we are.
* To provide information and resources, create brand awareness, share with people what we do, and collect donations.

## KEY AUDIENCES

### Who will visit the website?

**Define specific groups** of people you want to reach, to support your organisation’s goals, then prioritise them — the top 2-3 groups are the **key audiences** for your website.

It’s difficult to create a site that appeals to everyone so grouping and prioritising your audiences will help you create a site that suits those who will be most receptive to your messages.

Picture people from the groups and describe their motivations as well as age range, gender and interests — this will help you to tailor the content and design to them.

## KEY TASKS

### Why do people come to the website? What are they coming to do?

**Define your key audience’s** **key tasks** (7 ± 2) by stepping into their shoes and thinking about what they want to do on the website.

If possible, ask representatives from your key audiences and/or those in your organisation that engage with them.   
  
Examples of key tasks are:

* find information on who you are and what you do
* find contact and location details
* find resources
* join/get involved
* register for an event
* log in
* donate.

## DESIGN

### How will the website ‘look and feel’?

**Define and detail how your website will look and feel** by considering the questions below.

How will the design of your website:

* reflect your brand – what elements are mandatory? are there brand guidelines?
* appeal to your key audiences.

How will page elements be defined and placed? How will key information be highlighted?

## NAVIGATION

### How will the website be organised?

**Define the sections and sub sections** of your website based on the key topics and tasks your key audiences are interested in, or wanting to complete.

These sections can then be listed in the **main, sub-section and utility** (useful admin links separated from the main menu and often placed in the top right corner of each page) **menus**.

Examples of navigation menus are in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Main and sub-section navigation | Utility navigation |
| Home  Who we are   * Team * Board * Background   What we do   * Programmes and services   Resources   * Guidelines, toolkits, research, fact sheets…   News and events   * Latest news * Register for an event   Get involved   * Become a member * Volunteer with us | Contact  Search  Log in  Donate |

## CONTENT

### Who will develop and maintain the content?

**Define how your content will be developed** by answering the questions below.

* Who will develop your content?
* What written content could you repurpose from existing material and what needs to be written from scratch?
* What images and audio/video content do you have or need to create?
* Who will maintain the content and keep it fresh and relevant (once the website is live)?

User-friendly written content is:

* **easy to scan** – relevant and descriptive headings and links, summaries at the top of each page, bulleted lists, short sentences and paragraphs that include key words
* **in plain English** – clear, to the point and easy to understand
* **kept to a minimum** – less is more!

More information on **writing for the web** can be found on the Usability.gov website – [Writing for the web (usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/writing-for-the-web.html)](https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/writing-for-the-web.html).

## FUNCTIONALITY

### What functionality does the website need?

**Define the functionality** you need.

Some examples of website functionality are listed below.

* Search
* Online form
* Database
* E-commerce
* Calendar
* Social media integration
* Email marketing integration

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

### What are the technical details and issues to be aware of?

**Define what domain name** (unique website address), **host** (where the site will be stored) **and system** (to build and maintain the website) you’ll use.

A good option for charities and community groups is to **choose one service that provides all three**. Some services (eg, Wix.com and Squarespace.com) can provide:

* a domain name
* an online content management system
* hosting.

Some also enable you to **build a website for free first** (eg, Wix.com) and then have different plans you can upgrade to that can enhance your site for a reasonably low monthly or annual fee.

Links to **reviews comparing different website builders** can be found in the Resources section of our website – [Web usability resources (communitycomms.org/resources/web-usability/)](http://communitycomms.org.nz/resources/web-usability/).

## RESOURCES

### What resources are needed?

**List and detail the resources you have and/or need to get** eg:

* web development skills
* content writers and maintainers
* image and video content
* budget for web development and annual costs (domain name and hosting).

In our experience, the cost to build a website for charities and community groups can range from **free to $10,000+**!

You can save money by finding someone in, or linked to, your organisation who has web development skills (or is IT savvy enough to give it a go!) and is willing to **build your website for free**.

If you need to employ a web developer, make a plan (like this one ☺) and prepare as much as you can beforehand to **avoid cost blowouts**.

Domain name and site hosting fees are annual costs. You could pay approximately **$200-300 per year.**

You may have to **commission images or purchase from stock photo sites** but try to source from your own collections, networks and free stock photo sites first.

Links to **free stock images** sites can be found on our website – [Visual storytelling resources (communitycomms.org/resources/visual-storytelling/)](http://communitycomms.org.nz/resources/visual-storytelling/).

It’s a good idea to **develop and maintain the content ‘in house’** if possible.

## PROMOTION AND MEASUREMENT

### How will you promote your website? How will you measure its effectiveness?

**List and detail how you will promote and monitor the effectiveness of your website** eg:

* Promote the site and its content:
  + in social media posts
  + at events
  + in email signatures
  + in brochures and posters
  + in media releases
  + in funding applications.
* Gain insights by analysing **website statistics** (eg, Google analytics) **and** **other metrics** like:
  + donations
  + newsletter sign ups
  + event attendance
  + membership
  + referrals from social media, search engines and other websites.

## A quick check…

*A good website plan can help define the steps to take when developing/redeveloping a website. For example:*

*□* Have you defined your **key audiences** and their most popular **key tasks**?

*□* Are the key tasks highlighted in the website’s **navigation** and **design**?

*□* Have you defined what **content** and **functionality** you need and how it will be developed and maintained?

*□* Have you covered the **technical issues** to ensure the website is easy to manage?

*□* Have you allocated enough **resource** to the development ANDmaintenance of the website?

*□* Have you **integrated** the use of the website with the rest of your communications activity (eg, connecting with social media and email marketing campaigns) and ensured you are able to **measure** its value?

**For more information and resources, visit** [**www.communitycomms.org.nz**](http://www.communitycomms.org.nz)**.**

### How we can help

*If you need a website boost (eg, help with writing a plan, understanding website builder systems and website statistics, or a website usability assessment), email us at* [*webusability@communitycomms.org.nz*](mailto:webusability@communitycomms.org.nz)*.*

### Help us to help you

*How helpful is this template? What parts were really useful, is anything missing, what areas would you like more guidance in? Email us at* [*webusability@communitycomms.org.nz*](mailto:webusability@communitycomms.org.nz)*. Thanks!*