

Website 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.

## PURPOSE

### What is the purpose of the website?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

Create a statement that encapsulates the purpose of the website.

**[ EXAMPLE ]**

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?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

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.

**[ EXAMPLE ]**

For the Community Comms Collective website the key audiences are:

**Communications people interested in volunteering**

Looking for information on what help is needed, what’s involved, and how to sign up.

**Community organisations that need a comms boost**

Looking for information on what help is provided and how to request it.

**Potential supporters**

Looking for information on who we are, what we do and how well we do it.

## KEY TASKS

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

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

Define your key audience’s key tasks (3-5) by stepping into their shoes and thinking about what they want to do on the website.

Ask representatives from your key audiences and those in your organisation that engage with them.

**[ EXAMPLE ]**

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?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

Picture people from your key audience 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.  
  
How will the design of your website reflect your brand – what elements are mandatory? are there brand guidelines?   
  
How will page elements be defined and placed? How will key information be highlighted?

## NAVIGATION

### How will the website be organised?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

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.

**[ EXAMPLE ]**

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?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

Define how your content will be developedby 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!

**[ RESOURCE ]**

Information onwriting 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?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

Define the functionality you have and may need in the future.

Some examples of website functionality are listed below.

* Search
* Forms
* E-commerce
* Event registration
* Calendar
* Social media integration
* Member database integration

New functionality adds complexity so ensure the benefits outweigh the costs (eg, administration and financial) before adding.

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

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

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

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.

**[ RESOURCE ]**

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?

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

List and detail the resources you have and/or need to geteg:

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

**[ RESOURCE ]**  
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/).

## PROMOTION AND MEASUREMENT

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

**[ GUIDANCE ]**

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 the metrics below.

* Website statistics (eg, Google Analytics)
* Donations
* Membership sign ups
* Newsletter sign ups
* Event registrations
* 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 and maintenance 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)**.**