DESIGN WORKS

CONSIDERATIONS FOR A WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT

In an increasingly digital world, your website is the first impression of your business. It's essential that this digital property effectively communicates your brand, products, and services in a way that resonates with your target audience. Below are typical reasons to consider redesigning your website:

Outdated Design: Web design trends evolve over time. If your website looks outdated, it may give the impression that your business is not keeping up with modern trends or standards.

User Experience (UX): If your website is difficult to navigate or isn't user-friendly, it may be time for a redesign. Good UX design can significantly impact your website's effectiveness, user engagement, and conversion rates.

Business Growth or Rebranding: As your business evolves, your website should reflect this growth. Whether you're expanding your services, targeting a new market, or undergoing a rebrand, a website redesign can help align your online presence with your current business strategy.

Performance Issues: If your website is slow, crashes often, or has other performance issues, a redesign can address and resolve these problems.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): An outdated website may not be optimized for search engines, leading to lower rankings. A redesign can improve your website's SEO, making it easier for potential customers to find you.

Mobile Responsiveness: If your website isn't mobile-friendly, you're likely missing out on a significant portion of potential traffic. A redesign can ensure your website is responsive and looks good on all devices.

ADA Compliance: Your website should be accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. If your website is not currently ADA-compliant, redesigning it to meet accessibility standards can improve its usability and help protect your business from potential legal complications.

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DEVELOPING A SCOPE OF WORK

Planning a website redevelopment project involves several steps to provide a detailed scope of work. A well-defined scope helps both you and the web development team have a clear understanding of the project's goals, deliverables, timeline, and resources. Here are the steps to follow:

Analysis of Current Website: Start with a comprehensive review of your existing website, noting its strengths and weaknesses. Use Google Analytics or similar tools to understand user behavior, site performance, popular pages, and areas that need improvement.

Define Goals and Objectives: Clearly define the goals and objectives of the website redevelopment. What are you aiming to achieve with this project? This could be anything from outdated design, improving user experience, increasing site speed, improving the mobile experience, enhancing SEO, or increasing conversions.

Competitor/ Aspirational Websites: Provide a handful of competitors and provide a list of websites that you consider excellent.

Identify Target Audience(s): Specify your target audience. Knowing who your users are will inform many aspects of the redesign, from the site architecture to its visual design.

Define Required Features and Functionality: List out the features and functionalities that your new site needs to have. This could include things like a blog section, social media integration, contact forms, e-commerce capabilities, multimedia support, etc.

Site Map: Create a sitemap that outlines the pages and sections you'll need on your new website. This helps in creating the site's navigation and understanding the scale of the project. This can be a bullet list.

Content Strategy: Define what type of content you will have on your site. This includes text, images, videos, and any other type of content. Consider whether you'll need to create new content, repurpose existing content, or both.

SEO Considerations: Identify the SEO strategies that will need to be incorporated into your new site, such as keyword targeting, meta tags, etc.

Timeline: Provide a projected timeline for the project. Include major milestones such as initial design mockups, site development, testing, and the expected launch date.

Budget: Provide anticipated budget range. This should cover design and development, content creation, and any additional services such as SEO or digital marketing.

Maintenance and Support: Specify your requirements for ongoing site maintenance and support after the launch.

WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT – A STEP BY STEP PROCESS

Once the scope of work is complete, you can then move into the actual development process. Here are the steps typically involved:

Site Outline: The project outline should come from the Scope of work (previous page).

Wireframing: Wireframes are simple layout diagrams that show the structure of your web pages, including header placement, navigation, content areas, etc. They act as a guide for the visual design of the website, outlining where each element will go.

Visual and Graphic Design: In this phase, the website's visual theme and graphic elements are designed based on the wireframes and the brand guidelines. This includes elements like color scheme, fonts, button styles, images, etc.

Pre-programming: Once design is approved, files are prepped for the web programmer with detailed instrucation, navigation, etc.

Website Development (Programming): The website development begins with the creation of templates for the website based on the approved designs. Then, functionalities outlined in the wireframe are developed and integrated into the site.

Content Integration: Here, the content that has been prepared – text, images, videos, etc. – is added to the website. It should be optimized for search engines with the appropriate use of keywords, meta tags, alt text for images, etc.

Testing: Testing is conducted to make sure all parts of the website are functioning as expected. This includes checking the site on different devices and browsers, validating links and forms, checking SEO elements, and ensuring the website is fully ADA compliant and mobile-responsive.

Launch: Once everything is tested and approved, the website is ready to go live. This involves moving the site from a staging environment to live servers. After launch, you'll want to revisit Google Analytics to set up any necessary goal tracking based on your initial project objectives.

Training: After the website has been launched, training sessions should be held for your team to manage the new site effectively. This could include how to update content, add new pages or blog posts, manage SEO settings, interpret site analytics, and troubleshoot common issues.

Post-Launch Support and Maintenance: Once the website is live, it's important to keep an eye on its performance and make necessary updates and improvements based on user feedback and analytics data. Regularly updating content, making necessary design and functional changes, and resolving any issues that arise are part of the ongoing maintenance process.

SEO: SEO is an ongoing process. Regular audits should be conducted to ensure that the website is performing well in search engine rankings. Additionally, the website should be part of your ongoing marketing efforts, including social media promotion, email marketing, etc.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WEBSITE DESIGN PARTNER

Choosing the right website design firm is a crucial step in your website redevelopment project. Here are some things to consider:

Specialization: Some firms specialize in certain types of websites or industries. If you have specific needs or belong to a specific industry, a firm that specializes in your area could be a good fit.

Portfolio: A firm's portfolio can tell you a lot about their design style, creativity, and technical capabilities. Look for a portfolio that includes websites with similar goals or features to yours.

How long have they been in Business: Experience is an important consideration. A firm that has a proven track record is important.

Reviews, References and Referrals: Look for client reviews to get an understanding of the firm's reputation. See if the design firm can provide a couple of client references.

Technical and Creative Capability: Ensure the firm has the necessary skills for your project. If you need a site built with a specific technology or platform, or need complex features, ensure the firm has experience in these areas.

Services Offered: Some firms offer 'full-service' including design, development, SEO, content creation, and digital marketing. If you need these services, consider a firm that offers a comprehensive package.

Communication: Good communication is key to a successful project. Ensure the firm is responsive, clear in their communication, and willing to take the time to understand your goals.

Budget: The cost of website design services can vary greatly. Make sure you have a clear understanding of your budget and that the firm can provide a solution within it.

Maintenance and Support: Website redevelopment isn't just about the launch; it's about the ongoing maintenance and support too. Make sure the firm you choose offers reliable post-launch support.

By considering all these factors, you can ensure your website serves the widest audience possible and represents your business effectively. Take your time to evaluate your options and choose a firm that you feel confident can deliver a website that meets your needs, now and in the future.

TYPES OF WEBSITE FIRMS

There are typically three types of providers for consideration: freelancers, small agencies, and large agencies. Here are some things to consider when deciding among these options:

FREELANCERS

Freelancers are individuals who offer their web design and development services. They can be a cost-effective choice and may provide a high level of personal attention. Freelancers often have the lowest rates, ranging widely based on their location and expertise. They typically charge by the hour or project.

Pros: They can provide a high level of personal attention and flexibility. They can be a cost-effective option if your project is relatively straightforward or if you need assistance with a specific aspect of your project.

Cons: Freelancers usually work alone, which means they might not have the breadth of skills that a full team would. Their availability might also be limited, especially if they are juggling multiple clients.

SMALL AGENCIES

Small agencies typically consist of a team of specialists, which can provide a wider range of expertise than a single freelancer. They can often handle larger or more complex projects, but they may be more expensive than freelancers. Small agencies tend to be more expensive than freelancers but less expensive than large agencies. Costs vary widely depending on the agency's reputation, location, and breadth of services.

Pros: Small agencies often offer a wider range of services than freelancers and can handle more complex projects. They might also provide a more personalized service than a large agency, while still offering a team of specialists.

Cons: Small agencies might still lack some of the resources and specialized expertise that larger agencies offer. Costs might be higher than hiring a freelancer, particularly if the agency is managing all aspects of your project.

LARGE AGENCIES

Large agencies often have extensive resources and a diverse team of specialists. They can handle complex projects and provide a wide range of services. However, their rates are usually higher. Large agencies usually have the highest rates, reflecting their wide range of services, extensive resources, and often, their established reputation.

Pros: Large agencies typically have diverse teams of specialists and can handle complex projects across various sectors. They often provide a dedicated project manager, which can streamline communication.

Cons: Large agencies may not provide the same level of personal attention as a freelancer or small agency. Your project might not be a top priority if they're handling numerous, possibly larger-scale projects concurrently. Also, the higher cost could be a downside if you have a limited budget.

ABOUT CS DESIGNWORKS

Founded in 1996, CS Designworks is a proven and trusted design and integrated marketing firm that delivers high-impact design solutions to clients of all sizes, from start-ups to long-established corporations.

Our passion is applying inspired cross-channel marketing and design solutions to help our clients grow and reach new levels of success. We help our clients influence markets, tell stories, inform and reinforce their brands. We love problem solving and we strategize, we explore, we go beyond the expected.

A PROVEN WEB DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CS Designworks has prouduced hundreds of websites since the advent of the internet.

Your website is the most important point of contact for your clients, new and old, and the springboard for your unique value proposition and refreshed thought leadership content.

A well-strategized, designed, and easily found website is essential to your success. From startups to large companies, CSD masterminds the development of highly effective sites of all sizes and complexity levels that reposition brands in a fresh and powerful way – and drive business results.

We are expert listeners, strategic thinkers, and our execution and due diligence processes are second to none. On every step of the development journey we engage and involve our clients to ensure there are no surprises are completely pleased with the process and final results. And, we go to extra lengths to assemble the right team for each job by drawing from our talented in-house staff members and a network of strategic partners.