

Questions To Ask When Building a New Website

The first step in designing a great website is appropriate planning so we are giving you the right tools to get started.

Congratulations!!!

You've started your own business and are thinking about how to get the word out. You've realized that a website is a must have marketing tool. The creative juices are flowing and you are itching at the bone to get started.

Well, you've come to the right place.

Nothing can be more disheartening than investing in something that does not achieve your goals. So, in order to create a website that increases your exposure and functions the way you need it to, you must create a plan.

Putting the work into planning by answering a few questions will help avoid deadends, unnecessary redesigns and production delays while creating a great website that will help get the results needed for building successful marketing campaigns.

With that being said, those of us at Paladin Media care about your success and have published this worksheet to help you create a plan best suited for your business.

So let's get started.

What's your business about?

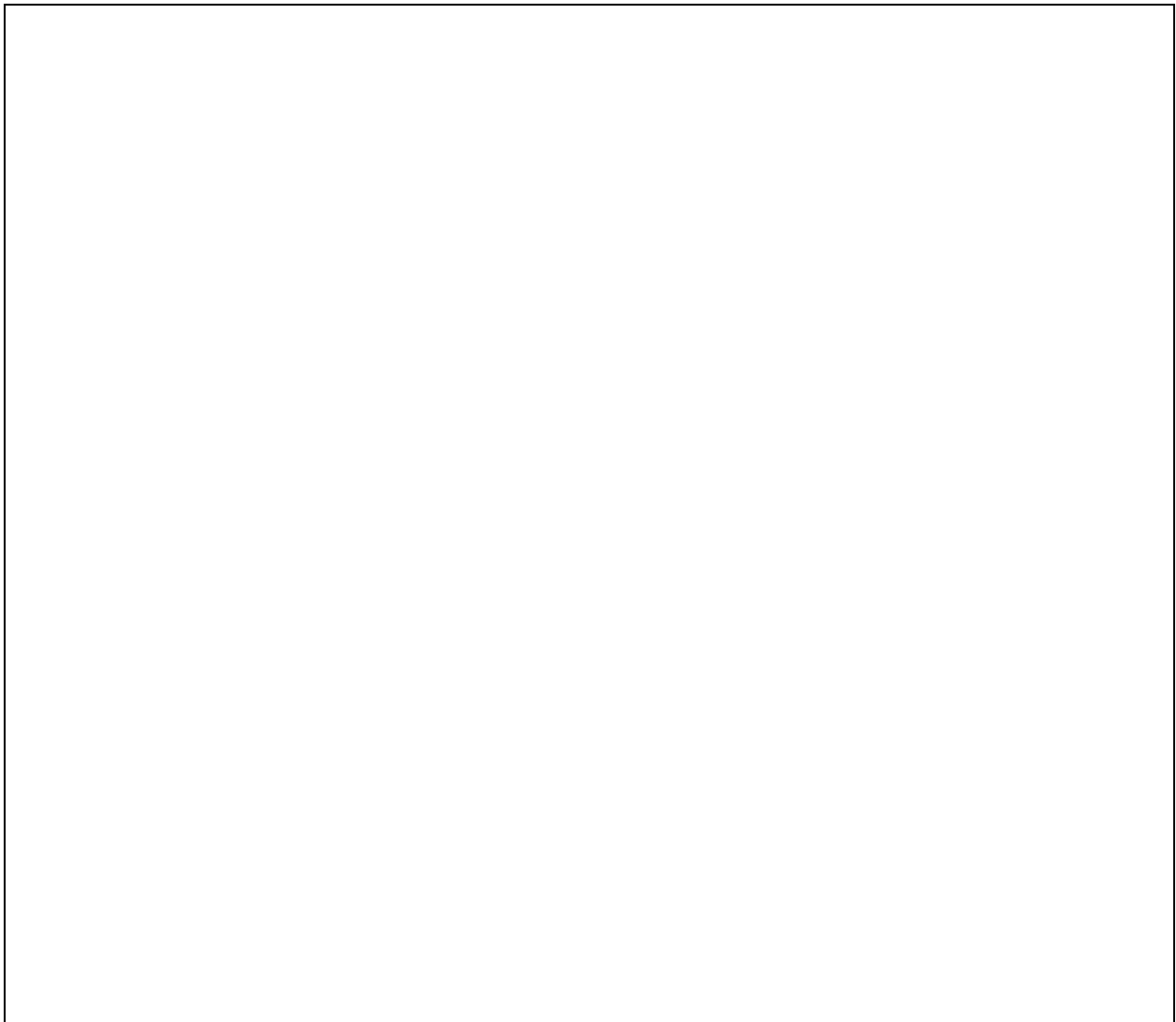
Every business is unique, therefore, your website needs to be unique to your products and services. Designers need to have an in-depth idea of what you do, how long you've been in the market and what your values are. This will help take out the guesswork out of planning and the decision-making process.

Please tell us what you do and how you do it.

Why do you need a website?

Many people already have visualized their future website. But let's be honest. Many times they can't answer the simple question – "what do you need it for?" People might want a new site to keep up with marketing trends or at the very least, avoid falling behind the trends. But a website can't be an end in itself. All websites must serve to make money whether that's through sales or lead capture.

What are the primary and secondary goals to be accomplished via a website? It can be anything from boosting brand awareness to driving customer engagement, and sales. Asking "why" will help you get a better understanding of your client's real motivations and suggest solutions that will work best for you and your clients.



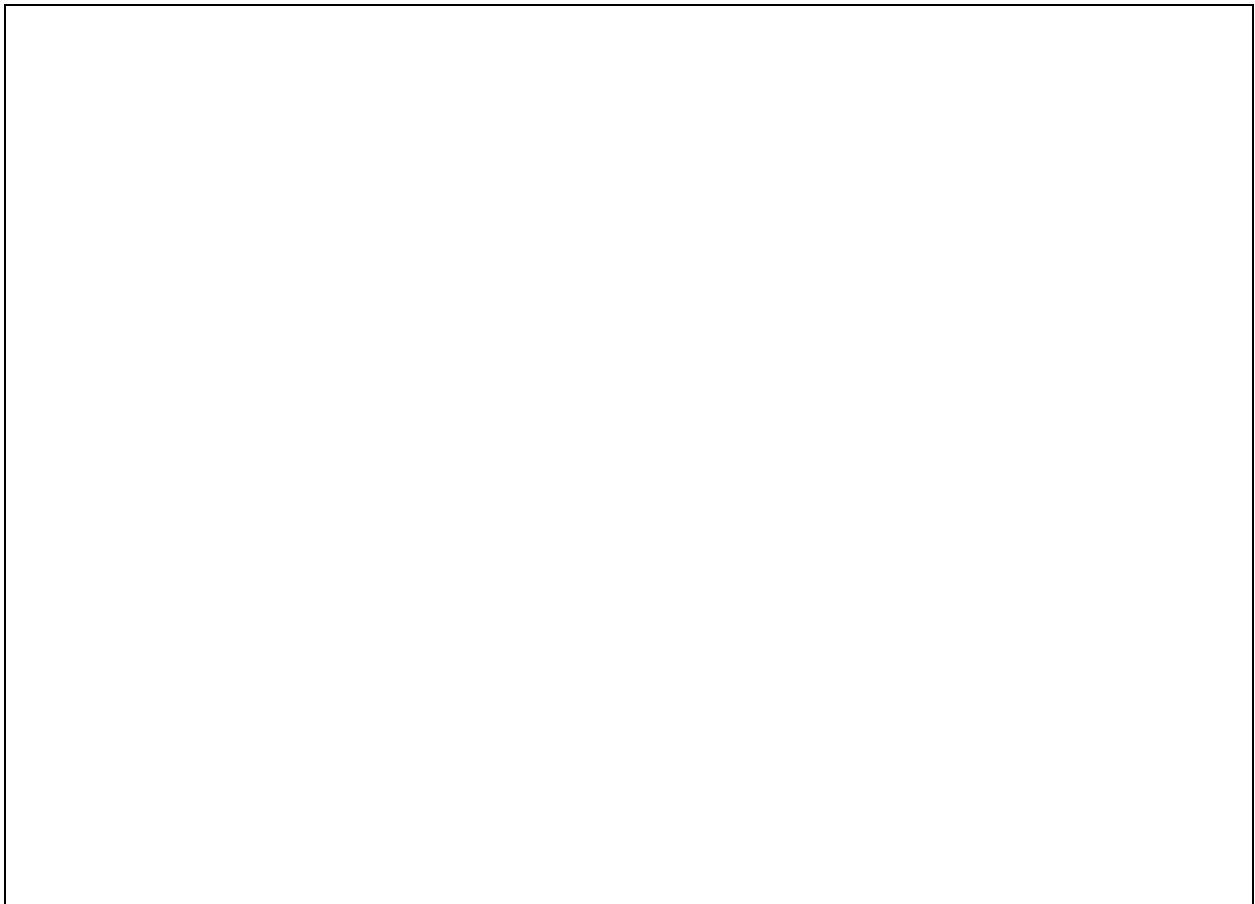
Who's your target audience?

Remember, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Knowing who your clients are helps provide design direction. Some things are better suited for business to business clients while others are better suited for the consumer who may be shopping for a dress.

Here are some details you can research about the prospective customer:

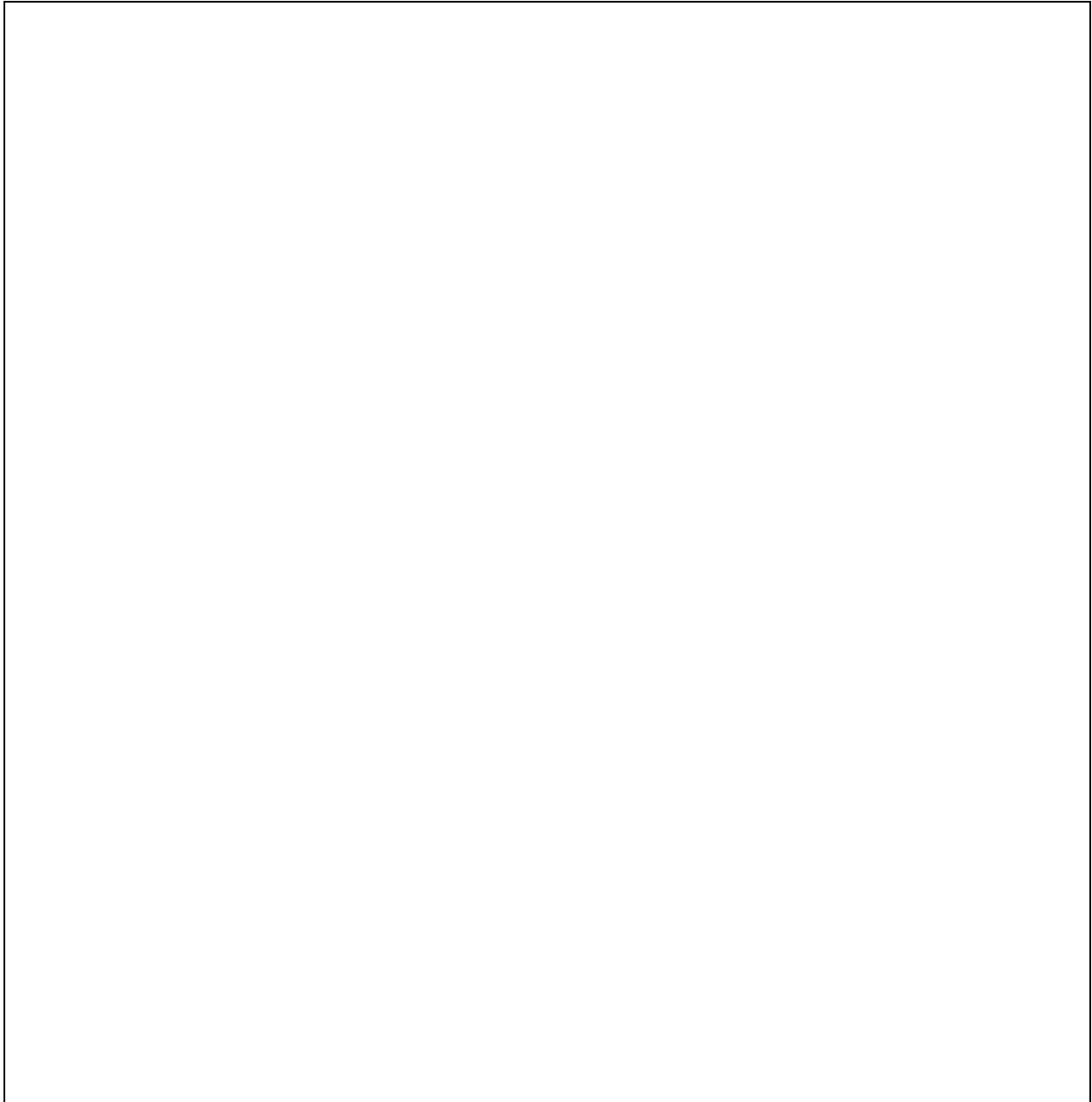
- Demographics
Customers' age, gender, schooling, occupation, income, marital status, etc.
- Psychographics
Customers' values, hobbies and interests, lifestyle and online behavior

Listing and knowing the psychology, pain points and needs of their customers will help generate design ideas.



What do you want your customers to do?

This is actually the question that will help you work your magic and create a meeting point for you and your clients. Great design is the one that's irresistible and gets the target audience to do what you want.



What makes you stand out from others?

Online shoppers have a tendency to look around, compare prices and goto another site to find something better or cheaper. Online shoppers, before they become clients, are online researchers. In order to build meaningful, or better yet, profitable and long-lasting customer relationships, businesses have to be remarkable, unique and they must stand out from the crows. So ask, what makes you stand out from their competitors:

- Exceptional service?
- Free shipping?
- A service guarantee?
- Socially sound business practices?

Who are your top competitors?

Competitors can be a great source of inspiration therefore, gathering information about them can be critical in helping you stand out and identifying things clients will be drawn to or things that discourage sales. Take a hard look at what they do well so it can be replicated and improved upon.

What would you like to have on your website?

As a designer, the last thing I want is for my clients to appear with a discouraging look, complaining they didn't get what they wanted. So, to avoid misunderstandings, I like to be direct and ask what a client wants on their website. The answer to this question should include any special features you would like implemented.

What would you rather sidestep?

Along with what you want, there may be things you do not want. This is the perfect place to address them in order to avoid things that do not support your business.

Do you have a domain?

Getting a domain name and hosting might seem like a trivial matter. Yet, designers and web developers know that this kind of issue can take longer than expected and might even cause significant delays in completing the project. You can speed up the process by suggesting an optimal solution for your web address and any web services you may already have or have considered purchasing.

When are we launching the new site?

Designers and developers love coffee as much as the next person but no one wants to get jittery while staying up for three days to complete a project. And of course, business owners don't need the stress of worrying about whether or not their website will go live on time.

So setting a realistic time frame for completion is important and if your time frame for going live is not feasible, the team can work on a plan that is reasonable and attainable.

And there you have it. The beginning of a plan, a great starting point for a new website and your dreams of becoming an online marketer are heading off in the right direction.