

Javen Ackerman | Creative Services

Writing & Web Design

Your Website Planner

Available online @ <http://www.javenackerman.com>

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Return completed form to:
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Section 1: You

A Brief Introduction

Thanks for taking the time to read through this document and consider **Javen Ackerman | Creative Services** as a partner in the creation or revision of your website.

I'm dedicated to helping you build a site that will communicate your vision and sell your products, services or ideas.

I designed this guide to accomplish two goals:

- 1) To help you figure out just what goes into planning a successful and effective website.
- 2) To help me learn about you and your business. The answers that you provide help me learn about your goals, your target audience, your competitors, and more.

This guide is simply a data gathering tool. There's no obligation or commitment. I make it available, free of charge, to whomever can use it.

Just fill it out and send it back to me, and I'll provide a proposal and cost estimate. The more detailed the information in your answers, the more accurate I can make the estimate.

Please fill out the contact information on this page, and complete the questions on the following pages.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me @ (612) 216-1063 or javen@javenackerman.com

Thanks again!

--Javen

Contact Information

1) Your Name:

2) Your Organization:

3) Your Phone Number:

4) Your Email Address:

Section 2: Your Goals

What's your objective?

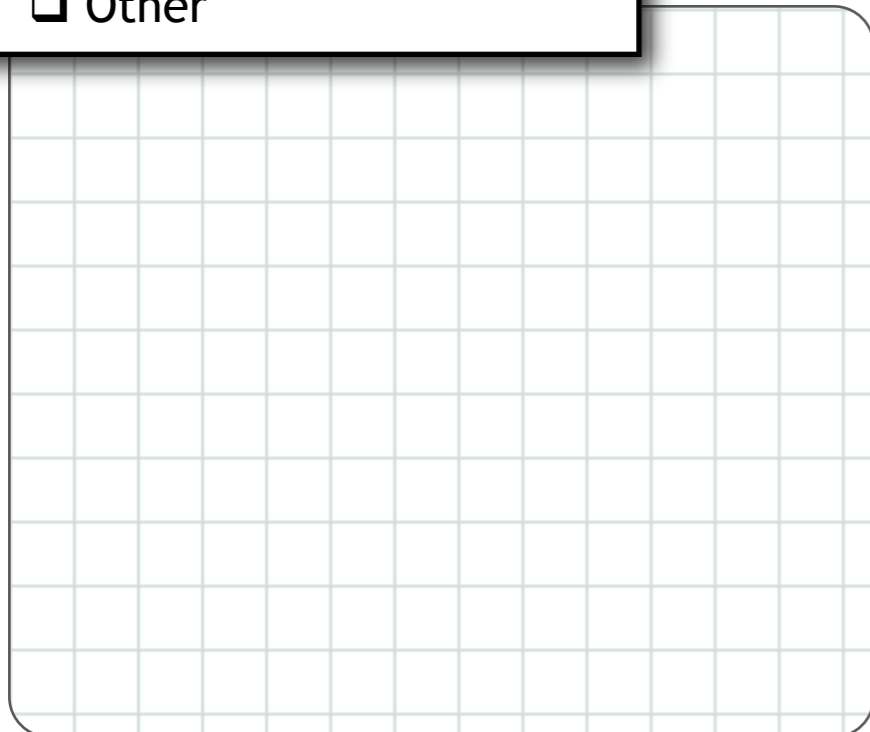
The first step in successful project planning is envisioning the outcome. In order to make intelligent decisions about what you're doing, you need to know where you're going.

So, first things first, we need to establish your goal. What is the overall purpose of this website going to be?

Take some time to think about this, but don't sweat the details just yet. This is an attempt to see the big picture. This is tougher than you think.

To the right, I've listed some common answers to this question. Please check the appropriate boxes to tell us what your main site goals are. And if you can think of something that's not listed, then write it down below.

Other



Marketing and attracting new customers

Bringing more visitors to your website and generating more business.

Providing services and features to existing customers

Banks improve customer service by providing online financial services 24 hours a day; you can extend customer service online, too.

Improving company-to-customer communication

Newsletters, email blasts, and press releases can keep your company, products, or services in the mind of your customer.

Improving internal communication

Internal websites, or "intranets," collect relevant company information in one easy-to-use location, improving efficiency and consistency.

Reducing fixed costs

Communication and printing costs can be reduced by thousands of dollars using standard Internet technologies.

Direct sales and e-commerce

The obvious: selling stuff online. Books, CDs, chowder, computers, flowers... you name it and there's an online market for your wares.

Section 3: Your Audience

Who is your audience?

One of the basic tenants of marketing is that it's all about your customers. We aren't planning a site for you. This website is for your customers. And in order to make it a successful site, we need to be **absolutely clear** about 3 things:

- 1) **Who is your target customer?**
- 2) **What are they looking for on your site?**
- 3) **What will make them act ? (e.g., buy, subscribe, respond)**

For example, think of a wedding photographer. Who might use her site? Most likely their target audience consists of brides and the mothers of brides. This group wants to find out some specific information before they hand over their money, such as how much she charges, when she's available, and what her work is like (her portfolio). Would they want to read some testimonials from happy customers? I would. And most importantly, they'd want the photographer's contact information.

Take some time to think about who's going to be using your website, and write that down in the space available to the right. Who's your audience? What are they hoping to find? How can you convince them that you can best meet their needs?

Group #1:

info and feature needs:

Group #2:

info and feature needs:

Group #3:

info and feature needs:

Section 4: The Competition

What's the other guy got?

The competition for the attention of your customers is fierce. And it's your job to figure out what's going to turn your *visitors* into your *customers*.

In order to stay competitive, you need to know what you're up against. So take a look at what's out there. Fire up your browser, and let's look at what your competitors are doing.

Google your competition. Navigate through their sites with an objective eye. Ask yourself 'What are they doing that works? What are they doing that doesn't work?'

And this exercise isn't limited to your direct competitors. What sites out there do you visit often? What do you like about them and why? What don't you like?

List 3 websites that belong to your competition (or even sites that you visit often) in the space provided along with a brief list of what you like or don't like about their sites. I'll do a comprehensive review of the design, navigation and content, and we'll work together to develop a strategy to make your site the best of the bunch.

Competitor #1:

Address:

likes and dislikes:

Competitor #2:

Address:

likes and dislikes:

Competitor #3:

Address:

likes and dislikes:

Section 5: Self-Analysis

A hard look in the mirror

(If you don't currently have a website, then skip this section.)

In this part, we take a serious, objective view at your existing site.

Your website should be geared toward the overall goal of making a great first impression that turns into a lasting relationship.

You do that by making your site reflect these three characteristics:

- 1) **Visually pleasing**
- 2) **Useful content**
- 3) **Easy to navigate and use**

Take a few minutes to load your site and ask yourself the hard questions. What's it doing well? What areas do you want to improve? And what kinds of feedback have you gotten from your visitors and clients?

Write out some specific examples in the space provided.

What Works?



What Doesn't Work?



User Feedback:



Section 6: The Content

The reason for your site's existence: *Your message!*

They say that content is king, and they're right. A great looking website is crucial for making a first impression, but really, what it comes down to is whether or not you're giving your customers what they want, and whether the content on your site sells what you have to offer.

And those are the two things that your content should accomplish:

- 1) Provide your visitors the information they're looking for.**
- 2) Convert visitors into your customers. In other words...SELL.**

But creating good content is deceptively difficult, so it often gets less attention than it requires and is left until the end of the process. Hence the large number of bad websites out there.

We've already determined who your target audience is, so let's take it to the next step and now start thinking about what they are going to expect to find on your site, and what it's going to take for you to sell to them.
our site, and what it's going to take for you to sell to them.

List the types of information your visitors are looking for:

e.g., business hours, contact information, product description, etc.

List ideas for content that's going to convince visitor to buy:

e.g., testimonials, downloads, headline ideas, marketing strategy that's worked in the past.

Section 7: Your Budget

The uncomfortable matter of the bill.

This is typically an uncomfortable area for all parties involved. Who shows their cards first? This question is meant to get the matter of the fee settled as quickly and easily as possible.

I ask about your budget because I want to make this part of the process very simple. By telling me how much you've got budgeted for the project, you'll save both of us time, and you'll help me put together an accurate bid that will give you the most bang for your buck.

We can make something happen on any kind of budget, but the end product will be affected by how much you've set aside for your website.

I typically bill on a per project basis, and at the time of this writing, I base the fee on a rate of \$50/hr. (*This rate may change in the future.*) I also have some package deals advertised on my website at <http://www.javenackerman.com/packages>.

I ask for 1/3 of the fee upfront as a deposit if one of these conditions are met:

- 1) **This is our first time working together**
- 2) **The total project fee is more than \$1500.**

There are no hidden costs, but there are some details that are often overlooked. I've included a couple of questions about details you'll want to keep in mind as you're planning your website.

What is the budget you've designated for this project?

Do your images need editing?

Do you need a logo?

Will you be including any downloadable materials?

Section 6: The Wrap-up

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What's the next step?

Thanks for taking the time to fill out your website planner. With this document, I should have all the info I need to get a good start.

The next step is to mail a copy of this planner back to me.

I'll follow up if I need to clarify anything, and in 5 business days, I'll send you a detailed proposal including a cost estimate and timeline.

I'll then follow up a week after sending out the proposal to discuss it with you, and we'll decide then how best to get things rolling.

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Questions?

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