

Website development

Step 1: Create a Timeline

See below and template documents for examples.

Action	Date	Weeks Before (-) or After (+) Event Date
Take over hosting of current website	8/22/2011	-7
Draft Trainer Sitemap	8/25/2011	-6.5
Designer Sitemap Delivered and Revised	8/26/2011	-6.4
Preliminary Images selection	8/26/2011	-6.4
Logo	8/29/2011	-6
Determine SEO keywords	9/5/2011	-5
Homepage content drafted based on SEO, review with Virident, incorporate edits	9/5/2011	-4.9
Homepage content Revisions and Approval	9/9/2011	-4.3
Homepage design concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review with Virident	9/12/2011	-4
Design Revisions and Approval (homepage)	9/15/2011	-3.5
Design concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review with Virident (interior)	9/19/2011	-3
Content drafted based on SEO, Editor time, review with Virident, incorporate edits (interior)	9/26/2011	-2
Content Revisions and Approval (interior)	9/28/2011	-1.7
Site approved, Virident internal review process	10/3/2011	-1
SEO to designer	10/4/2011	-0.8
Page and Graphics naming based on SEO, send to designer	10/5/2011	-0.7
Complete final product, including technical advisory on hosting- launch site	10/9/2011	-0.09
Training on site and blog	10/17/2011	1

Step 2: Review current websites

Start by visiting the main pages on the website that web visitors would be interested in and note what assets are currently available. Do they have any animation on their homepage? How complicated and interactive is it? Are their social media live updates on the homepage? Compare your client's website to competitors both large and small to get a feel for how the industry presents itself on the web. Do you see any assets that work well for others that could be adopted for the client? Make note of all possible assets and features that could be added to the site so pricing on each feature can be requested when you submit your FTP to the designer.

You want to get an idea of the current page count of the website so you can inform your designer of the minimum number of pages you expect. I have never seen a site shrink in the number of pages, though some do stay the same. To find page count type "site:" in the Google search engine and then the URL; EX: site: www.adshollywood.com. Then count the number of search items that show up, this equals the number of pages.

Step 3: Meet with the Client during a Kickoff Meeting

This is typically done in a meeting designated to brainstorm ideas and determining the scope and direction of the new website. Start by reviewing competitor websites with the client and get a feel for their needs, focusing on their number one competitor. The goal of the site is always to make them appear larger and more powerful than life so you want to pay close attention to competitors, being sure to outperform them and do what they do, only better and in the client's unique way.

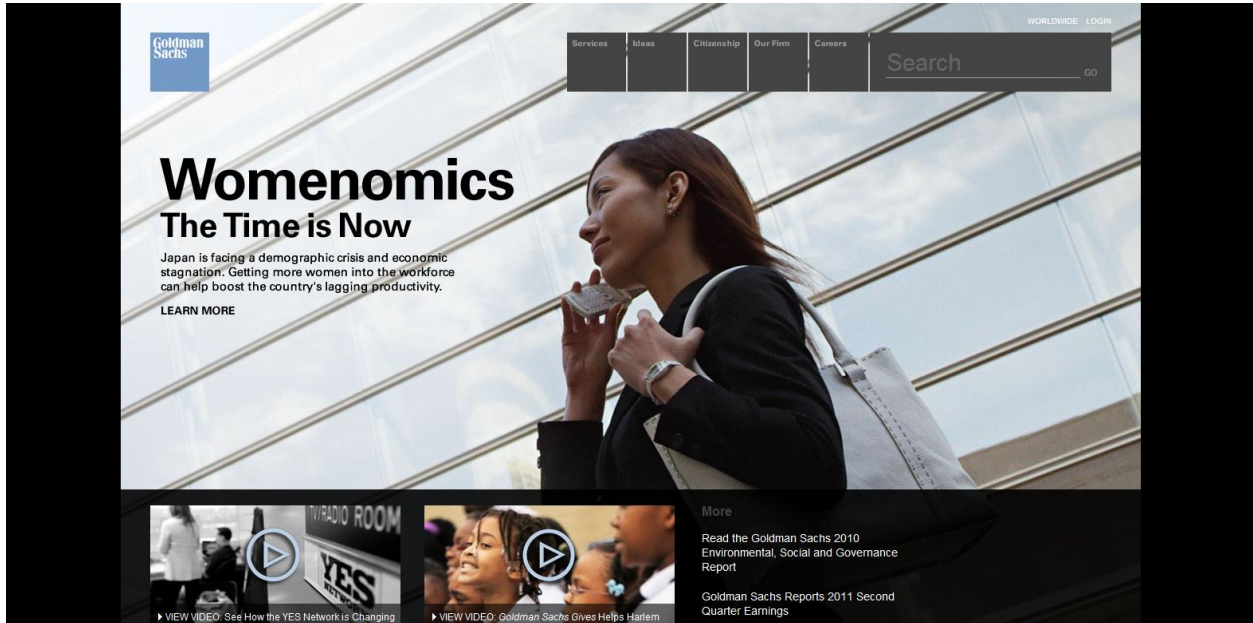
Pay attention to the design colors the other competitors use on their website. You want your client to stand out and have unique colors, avoiding confusion in the industry. You will find some industries all use blue, some all use green; try and stay away from these trends as that's considered a herd mentality.

After developing some general ideas for how your client wants to be perceived on the web in the future and how they can stand out among competitors, start thinking about the company culture. Do the leaders of the company or the company brand express a particular visual message? Ask yourself what other companies you would compare this sentiment to? Is it classy and elegant like the Chanel brand? Is the company all about safety like Volvo?

Important questions to ask at this time could include:

- Have you received any feedback from customers or prospects on your site? Is there anything they or you feel is missing?
- Does your website reflect your current messaging?
- What do you think about your messaging? Does your messaging work? Do you think your customers know brand and key differentiators from your top competition?
- What are your top keywords?
- Tell us more about the leading color element to company? What's the significance of particular imagery?
- What brand would you say you most want to be like?
- When you think of your company's look or feel -- are you ultra cool and edgy? The cheerleader? The jock? The geek? The rock star?
- How does your logo support your brand image?
- Do you have analytics on your current site? Can you share those with us so that we can determine which pages are most frequently visited and which pages have the longest visits.

At the end of the meeting, you want to have some sites that you can use as “sites inspired” (see this website for some sites inspired according to the web design industry: <http://siteinspire.com/>) and share with your designers so they can get a feel for the design, look and technicality that is required in the type of look you want to create for your client. For example, the current Trainer Communications website was modeled after the Goldman Sachs website, it was our site inspired:



Step 4: Contact 2-3 designers for RFP's

Call all designers by phone and give them an idea of the assets you are interested in getting a quote on (number of estimated pages, CMS (content management system), homepage animation, blog, any pages besides the homepage and interior page that require a unique design, any technical portals that will be incorporated, any lead gen forms that the client has requested, etc.) as well as the site(s) inspired so they understand they will not be responsible for the creative design portion entirely, but that we have taken lead on this step and will continue to do so along with (or without) image selection; some web

design companies will do this for us saving us time, but we don't want to have them bill us for the service as we can easily find the images ourselves.

If they request a budget, tell them we are determining that as we speak but don't let them know; let them know it is a competitive project, and we are requesting proposals from many other firms to get the best rate. Also ask them if the entire team will be available for the duration of the project as we don't want someone taking PTO for a month during the middle of the project.

After getting back your RFP's (this should only take a day or two if they want the job, if it takes longer you may not want to work with them if the project is going to be kicked off right away), compare your prices and the designer's past work and make a decision who will provide the best quality work given your budget, then award the contract and let them know Trainer's terms where they can invoice us 50% of the project after completion of half of the deliverables (and we pay net 30 terms), and the final 50% balance after the completed site goes live. Consult with a Trainer VP or Trainer's CFO if you get push back.

Trainer's top web contractors as of December 2011:

www.analogue.ca

<http://www.webheadsinc.com/>

<http://michaelynch.com/>

The sites inspired site is also a good place to find well qualified web designers. Also, ask your other clients (who you are not doing web work for) who they use.

Step 5: Take over hosting, FTP and CMS

If we are doing a new website for a company that has a prior marketing or PR firm managing their website, then we need to take over the hosting and back up the existing assets before beginning the new site so they can easily let go of their old firm. Contact your client regarding the company they currently use for hosting their website. Find out from the hosting company if the server can support the language we will be coding in (typically either ColdFusion or PHP w/ a MYSQL Database, but it is best to contact the web designer for confirmation.)

Also collect the FTP details, including the Server IP, Username and Password. **File Transfer Protocol (FTP)** is a standard [network protocol](#) used to transfer files from one host to another over a [TCP](#)-based network, such as the [Internet](#). Inquire if the site is running a CMS (Content Management System.) Access to that CMS might be necessary to make the changes (if they are using it). If there's no CMS, then FTP should be fine.

Step 6: Draft the Sitemap

See templates for examples of the two ways we create these at Trainer. In some cases your designer may want to do this for them, in which case draw something out on a piece of paper and scan it over to them so they can do the design work and make it pretty for the client. **See templates for examples.**

Step 7: Approval of Sitemap

After you draft the sitemap, then submit it to the client and explain how they should read it. Note: you need to start this explanation with the homepage, then the main tabs, then the sub-pages that fall under the tabs. Tell them the goal is for prospects to be able to find the most important information they need to know the easiest. Then discuss with the client how your sitemap could be improved and clarify any questions you had when designing it. This open discussion usually solidifies the sitemap

design. This conversation is easiest done in person with a printed copy of the sitemap in front of you so you can mark it up and make edits as you go. Also ask the client about the types of images they have in mind for the site, and ask about what they like and don't like about their competitors' imagery. This will help you select the right material for the next step.

Step 8: Preliminary Image Selection

Now that you have an idea of the look and feel of the website design you are trying to create as well as the types of images the client is looking for, you can start shopping around.

Here are some great places to look for images:

www.Stockphoto.com

<http://www.youworkforthem.com/>

www.Thinkstock.com is the only image solution to offer images from Getty Images, iStockphoto, Jupiter images and more, but I think it is subscription based.

<http://www.shutterstock.com/>

Start a Powerpoint to capture the preliminary image selections. Don't purchase any of them, but do save them in a light box for the client if possible. Also, very important -- don't forget to also copy the link that the image is displayed on and save this for your record. You want a link to go with every image screenshot; otherwise you may never find the photo again.

After creating a Powerpoint presentation with a few image options for every page, then run your selections by the client and see what they think. Delete the ones they hate from the deck and save the ones they like, but are not crazy about (they may change their mind later); and put the ones they like at the beginning of the deck.

Step 9: Design your Logo

See Logo Chapter for all the details. Note: you may want to move this up in the process depending on what ideas you have for the design. It can help to do it sooner than later as it could drive the design of the site. You can't really do it before you have your kickoff meeting, but it can come very soon in the project.

Step 10: Determine SEO Keywords

See SEO Chapter for all the details and resources on Trainer Connect SEO and Social Media. You can research what keywords competitors have on their backend of every page by selecting "Control + U" -- keywords will be listed in a block of text, with each word separated by a comma.

Step 11: Homepage Content Draft

The homepage of a website can be considered the one page overview of the company. Modern homepages are designed like advertisements for the company, focusing on hot topics and the most important messages for potential customers.

Homepage content is drafted based on the client's main messages and other current marketing endeavors, for example: aspirational markets that they have yet to penetrate, upcoming events, new white papers, promotions etc.

Other main messages on the homepage can include the company mantra and taglines, key product description overviews and media assets like CEO testimonials or interviews that communicate the key product or services of the company.

To get the best idea of what belongs on your new homepage, consider the content of top competitors, especially those who are industry leaders. You may want to offer similar content as competitors to speak to the preexisting concerns in the industry. You will also want to see what concerns are not being addressed and take a first mover advantage by focusing an animation slide or a particular section to that topic. It is important to make sure your homepage content is packed with as many keywords as possible so your homepage ranks well on Google and other search engines. Lead your text with keywords and then follow up with the details in the interior pages.

Step 12: Homepage content Revisions and Approval

Send client homepage content and ask for their edits. This step can be done before or after the homepage designs are done, depending on the status of the messaging for the homepage, as often you need the messaging done before you can write the homepage content. If you do not have the messaging done, skip this step and come back to it when writing the other content.

Step 13: Homepage design concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review

After describing the design and colors and site inspirations to the designer and delivering a sitemap, they can create a homepage mockup. It helps to give them images so they can use these in the design.

After getting a few mockups from the designer, review internally and see if you can make any obvious improvements that you know the client would want done based on your knowledge of their taste or vision for the site. Make those revisions and then make sure it looks close to done with no errors the client would balk at before showing the first mockups. When you deliver them, remind the client that the photos, fonts and the colors are easy to change so don't dwell on those. Get them to focus on the design of the site structure and the architectural elements as those will be locked down during this phase and are very hard to change at a later time.

Step 14: Design Revisions and Approval (homepage)

Get their feedback and make sure it is specific (and recap in writing so there are no miscommunications), and then work with the designer to make the updates and send back the new mockups to the client. Remind the client how many rounds of revisions they have left so they make sure they get all feedback to you at once (vs. piecemeal as new executives weigh in with their opinions).

Step 15: Design concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review (interior)

At this point it is good to meet with the client and discuss the project and the interior page designs as well as any other edits to the homepage. The homepage is the hardest part, so if you get that right remind them that they are through the hardest part of the project.

Get the designer going on the interior page(s) and be sure to specify any pages that will require a unique design as they will likely make one template for the interior unless you tell them you need a few

different types of templates and tell them the function of each page. Some pages like a Media Hub or product landing pages require unique designs to meet the requirements of the content.

Step 16: Content drafted based on SEO, Editor time, review with client, incorporate edits (interior)

Draft the interior content for each interior page based on the sitemap. Lead with SEO keywords as much as possible. It can be easiest to create a master content document and just write each page in one long word document with the page divisions like new chapters in the document. This makes it easier for delivering to the designer; also list any directions for that page in the beginning of each chapter including the page header, sub header, lead tagline, photos used and other key elements so you have an idea of all the things that go on that page. You can also include the Page and Graphics names based on SEO from Step 18 in this listing about the pages so it is all included in one document.

You can get other team members to review the document while you are writing it and then just tell them to edit only up to a certain section or page. The editing process is time consuming so best to start editing early.

Step 17: Content Revisions and Approval (interior)

Send the master content document to the client and get them to track changes on the document. It is best to walk them through how the document is organized so they are not confused. You may want to deliver the master document in sections so they too can start editing it sooner than later.

Step 18: Site approved, client internal review process

After the interior pages are reviewed with the client and the content for the entire site is approved, tell the designer to flow in the content based on your master content document. He will build out each page one at a time; and then either put them on a privately hosted portal so you can review the JPG's or send you a working site that is hosted by the designer so you can see how the site functions. Review these pages as they are delivered and get feedback from the client only after they are client ready.

Step 19: SEO to designer

Send list of keywords to designer to put on backend.

Send analytics code to put on backend

Send TrackMyIP code to put on backend.


Step 20: Page and Graphics naming based on SEO, send to designer

Direct the designer to name each of the main pages with keywords describing the page. If you go to Google and hover over the tab at that top of the browser you can see the type of content you are

creating. Hover here:  This tagline description is important for SEO purposes.

Also make sure the designer labels all graphics with SEO keywords. You can include all this info in the master content document but you need to make sure and check that the designer does this.

Also request that the designer creates a "Favicon" (short for favorites icon), also known as a shortcut icon, Web site icon, URL icon, or bookmark icon -- they will know what you are talking about.

The Trainer favicon looks like this: 

Step 21: Complete final product, including technical advisory on hosting- launch site

Do a final review on the hosted site as the site should now be all linked up and hosted on a private site that the designer manages. After making sure everything functions correctly and there are not spelling or other errors of that sort, send to the client for their final review.

Set a launch date and tell the designer we are ready to launch it; typically this happens very early in the morning the day of the launch. Be alert as sometimes there are technical issues with changing over the hosting or domains depending on the unique technical requirements for the client (based on their old website and how it was hosted). The web designer typically works through all of this in advance, but just be aware that you may have some last-minute questions that need to be fielded with the client.

Step 22: Training on site and blog

Training varies depending on your CMS type and the web vendor. It is recommended you set up a time with the client to learn the CMS and attend the call, but let the web designer lead the call. You can also teach them the CMS directly but be ready for questions. Blog training is done at a separate time.

Task Name	Description	How Long It	Day	Cost	Rate =	\$ 150.00
Meeting	Prep for and host kickoff meeting with client to determine objectives and requirements for RFP (assumes two people)	6	1	\$ 900.00		
Timeline	Set timeline to client specifics and requirements	2	2	\$ 300.00		
Design	Send out RFP's to designers and award most competitive bid	3	3	\$ 450.00		
Sitemap	Finalize Sitemap	1.5	2-3	\$ 225.00		
Hosting	Take over hosting of current website	2.5	1-4	\$ 375.00		
Images	Preliminary Images selection	8	2-3	\$ 1,200.00		
SEO	Determine SEO keywords	6	1-2	\$ 900.00		
Logo	Logo Approved	5	5-7	\$ 750.00	what is this step?	
Design	Homepage design concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review with client	8	2-5	\$ 1,200.00		
Write	Content for Homepage drafted based on SEO: Revisions and Approval	3	3	\$ 450.00		
Video	Video Shoot for Homepage	8	1	\$ 1,200.00		
Design	Homepage Design: Revisions and Approval	5	3-5	\$ 750.00		
Write	Content for Interior pages drafted based on SEO, Editor time, review with client, incorporate edits	25	5-10	\$ 3,750.00		
Design	Interior page concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review with client	5	5-15	\$ 750.00		
Video	Edit Video: Revisions and Approval	5	4-7	\$ 750.00		
Write	Content for Interior pages: Revisions and Approval	6	5	\$ 900.00		
Website	Design Revisions and Approval (interior)	0		\$ -		
Design	Flow in Content and video into website, client begins internal review	6	15	\$ 900.00		
SEO	Incorporate SEO Analytics links and code	1	16	\$ 150.00		
SEO	Page and Graphics naming based on SEO	8	17	\$ 1,200.00		
Hosting	Complete final product, including technical counsel on hosting - launch site	7	20	\$ 1,050.00		
Training	Training on site	3	22	\$ 450.00		
Total		92		\$ 18,600.00		

Website – Short

Task Name	Description	How Long It	Day	Cost	Rate =	\$ 150.00
Meeting	meeting with client to determine objectives and requirements for RFP (assumes two people)	6	1	\$ 900.00		
Timeline	Set timeline to client specifics and requirements	1	2	\$ 150.00		
Design	and award most competitive bid	2.5	3	\$ 375.00		
Sitemap	Finalize Sitemap	1.5	3-5	\$ 225.00		
Hosting	Take over hosting of current website	2	1-4	\$ 300.00		
Images	Preliminary Images selection	5	3-5	\$ 750.00		
SEO	Determine SEO keywords	3	1-2	\$ 450.00		
Logo	Logo Approved	3	5-7	\$ 450.00		
Design	Homepage design concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review with client	4	5-7	\$ 600.00		
Write	Content for Homepage drafted based on SEO: Revisions and Approval	2	10	\$ 300.00		
Video	Video Shoot for Homepage	3	5	\$ 450.00		
Design	Homepage Design: Revisions and Approval	3	10	\$ 450.00		
Write	Content for Interior pages drafted based on SEO, Editor time, review with client,	8	12	\$ 1,200.00		
Design	Interior page concept mock-ups, including meeting time to determine design and review with client	3	14	\$ 450.00		
Video	Edit Video: Revisions and Approval	3	12	\$ 450.00		
Write	Content for Interior pages: Revisions and Approval	4	15	\$ 600.00		
Website	Design Revisions and Approval (interior)	0		\$ -		
Design	Flow in Content and video into website, client begins internal review	3	18	\$ 450.00		
SEO	Incorporate SEO Analytics links and code	1	18	\$ 150.00		
SEO	Page and Graphics naming based on SEO	1	19	\$ 150.00		
Hosting	Complete final product, including technical counsel on hosting - launch site	5	19	\$ 750.00		
Training	Training on site	1.5	1-2	\$ 225.00		
Total		65.5		\$ 9,825.00		