IA GRAPHIC DESIGN
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GRAPHIC & WEB DESIGN | PHOTOGRAPHY

BRIEF SPECIFIC TO THE DESIGN OF A WEBSITE
(using either Wordpress or Opencart Platforms)

What is WordPress?

WordPress is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog.
The core software is built by hundreds of community volunteers, and when you're ready for more there are thousands of plugins and themes available to transform your site into almost anything you can imagine. Over 60 million people have chosen WordPress to power the place on the web they call "home". www.wordpress.org

What is Opencart?

OpenCart is free open source ecommerce platform for online merchants. OpenCart provides a professional and reliable foundation from which to build a successful online store. This foundation appeals to a wide variety of users; ranging from seasoned web developers looking for a user-friendly interface to use, to shop owners just launching their business online for the first time. OpenCart has an extensive amount of features that gives you a strong hold over the customization of your store. With OpenCart's tools, you can help your online shop live up to its fullest potential. www.opencart.com

ALL ABOUT YOU NOW

The more a designer knows about the clients, the better the outcome.

A few words about your company including its name, address;
The products you sell or services you provide;
The size of the company;
Are you an international company? If so, which countries?
How long have you been established?
Describe the company using five or ten words (e.g. young, vibrant, technology based etc.).

The old web site

If you have an existing web site, firstly let IA Graphic Design know the URL (the web address).
Then answer the following questions:

What is good about the web site?
What don't you like about the old web site? (i.e. old colour schemes, out-dated design)
How long ago was it built? and who built it?
What levels of traffic is it currently receiving?
What proportion of traffic is from a mobile device?
Which countries are featuring prominently in the user stats?

What are the top 5 web browsers and platforms (Mac/PC/Android/iOS) visiting your web site?
How often do you get a genuine sales lead through the web site?
Who is responsible for updating the site?

In order to meet your requirements, any design agency would need to know why the old site is no longer suitable, so detail anything else that could be relevant.

The new web site

You must now examine what you need from the new web site. A good starting point would be to consider the following:

Outline the aims of the web site (e.g. to increase traffic, increase product awareness, generate more sales, offer e-commerce, advertise a new product or service).

Who is the target audience? Has this changed from the old site? What are the demographics (e.g. children, adults, social class, income levels, location, etc.)

Is the new web site part of a re-brand, or a new product launch?

Is there other advertising taking place that the new web site should tie in with?

What are the unique selling points for your company, your products or your services?

What industry are you aiming the web site at?

Is the market already saturated with competitors? List a few competitors' web sites.

For e-commerce web sites, please detail who you bank with - this will be important for deciding on which payment gateway(s) you should use.

Budget

What is the budget for design and development of the web site?

Is there a budget for ongoing support and maintenance?

What is the online marketing budget for the next 6 months?

The look and feel of the new web site

The web site should be an extension of any offline media, advertising or branding that you have. It is always helpful to be provided with a brochure, some marketing literature or the annual report to help get a feel for the company, so include them with the brief.

Please list a few examples of web sites that you like the look & feel of. Please include a note about what you like about them.

The content of your new web site

Start thinking about how you want to populate your new site.

Resist the urge to duplicate your existing content in your new site - if your existing site is letting you down in some way, the chances are that the content is no longer up to scratch. Having thought about your target audience, take the opportunity to review whether your content still meets their needs.

Don't put this off until the end of the project - start thinking now about how you're going to produce the copy text. Do you have the resources or skills to create and supply the text to go on the web site? If the answer to these questions is no, you will need a copywriter as well.

Who will be responsible for generating content?

Do you have any corporate images, photography or videos?

Can you provide your logo & corporate identity pack? Ideally in a vector format such as .ia, .eps or .psd?

Technical requirements

You should outline any special technical requirements that your company might have:

Do you already own the domain?

Will you require hosting? If you already have a webhost, please give it's URL. The designer will also need both the ID and password to the server (cPanel) to be able to install Wordpress or Opencart.

I strongly recommend going with a "responsive" theme whether with WordPress or Opencart as it is a great tool to be able to resize the website for tablets and mobile phones. What it means is that your website looks great on a desktop, laptop, iPad, Android, iPhone and whatever else comes in the future.

Maintenance

The ongoing maintenance of a web site is an often overlooked aspect of the web site's design.

Who will be responsible for the on-going maintenance of the web site?

Do you have the skills, resources and time to maintain the web site in-house?

What happens if that member of staff leaves the company?

Would you prefer to make an arrangement with the web site designer for her to handle web site maintenance?

Promotion

You are investing in a new web site, so you want customers to see it, right? Now detail how you will promote it. An online business is no different to a traditional business: it needs marketing.

A web site should really be supported by an off-line strategy of promotion and advertising, perhaps consider including the following:

Brochures and flyers;
PR exercises;
Sponsorship;
Vehicle wraps...

On-line promotion

The on-line promotion of a web site is often overlooked when considering the web site brief. The promotion of your web site on the internet, both in terms of getting it on the search engines and also building links with other web sites, is vitally important to the continued success of the site. In other words, the more your website URL features on other sites, the better for SEO (Search Engine Optimisation).

You should consider:

Social Media campaigns.
Getting suppliers & affiliates to link to your web site.
Search engine optimization and submission.
Google Adwords.
Email marketing.
Banner advertising on related web sites...

ONE STEP FURTHER

Answering the brief gives the designer a better understanding of the company and its needs overall. The second step is to reflect on what content you want to see on your website and answer these questions. That will give the designer a better understanding of how to quote and give you a chance to really start working on your content.

Think about your website content and try to answer these questions:

How many pages does your website require (Home, Products, Services, About Us, Contact Us, etc. for example) and the subcategories (if you sell homewares for example, you may have to think about your main categories but also subcategories. For example Linen (main menu) and subcategories are Table Linen > Bed linen > Towels).

How many images do you want on your website, including the slider. Are you the copyright owner of these images? Do the images have to be purchased?
Regarding images, I cannot stress enough the importance of having excellent and high res images, especially when building an e-commerce site. The resolution should be 300 dpi. not images taken from the web for example. Do your images require deep-etching (isolating the item from its background)? To avoid this time-consuming activity for the designer, images of products should be taken with the same background colour, generally white. Items of the same range should be positionned in the same manner and photography taken at the same angle. It is really important to get the photography right in the first place to maximise your exposure and appeal to your customers.

If it is an e-commerce website, you need to consider writing your privacy policy, delivery information, terms and conditions, etc. Check out a few e-commerce websites to familiarize yourself with the common information online clients need before making a purchase on your site.

If it is an e-commerce website, the designer needs all the information related to the product (even though unknown information can be added at any time, it is a time -and therefore money-saver to add all the information at once). You need to know the prices of your items, their code, a title, a description and many other informations too long to list here. You can visit this link to know more about Opencart http://www.opencart.com/ and the details of all the Product tabs to inform can be viewed here: http://docs.opencart.com/display/opencart/Products Important information to administer your e-commerce site must also be specified in the settings of your site.
It is your responsability to inform the designer how to set them up (this has to do with taxes, vouchers, check out settings, stock, affiliates, returns, and more. To find out more, please visit this page http://docs.opencart.com/display/opencart/Settings

How many products do you intend to display at launch of your website?

The home page or landing page is the most important page of any website and should be attractive enough to entice your potential clients. Today's trend is to start with a slider and when appropriate a "Revo" slider that allows for animation (images and text coming in and out, fading away, etc.). For an e-commerce website, what would you like to see on the home page? What is your priority? Your latest products? Your hottest sales? Featured products? News? New collection? All of the above?

Is your website going to be multi-lingual? Which languages?
(Do you require your content to be translated? I can take care of the French and German translations.)

Do you want a training to maintain your own site or do you prefer to discuss an ongoing maintenance fee with the designer?

I hope this will give you food for thought. A new website is an important decision and investment. We need to get it right from the beginning. It is important to read through this brief and get the answers to your needs.

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Hope to hear from you soon!

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