



Guide to Planning Your Website

Are you planning a new website or changing your existing website? Perhaps you are not fully clear **what is involved** and how you can **compare prices** quoted by different web providers? Maybe your last website was “OK” but you were never really **sure what you are paying for!** This short guide aims to give you the “**key questions to ask your web provider**”

The Main Types of Websites

Q What Type of website do I want? It will help both you and your web developer, if you can think of your website as being one of the following 3 types:

- ✓ **eBrochure** website – which summarises your business: effectively a brochure for your business on the internet!
- ✓ **eBusiness** website – does what a brochure website does but also aims to complete certain “offline” business tasks on your website, such as: answering “Frequently Asked Questions”, providing information on products, services and pricing like a product catalogue – saving you and your customer time and convenience.
- ✓ **eCommerce** website – does all of the above and also allows you to sell your products and services through your website using functions such as a shopping cart and payment provision through either credit card or a 3rd party such as PayPal.

Website Functions

Q What “functions” will I have on my website? Here are some examples of functions that are often included in each of these 3 standard website designs:

A Brochure Website Should

- ✓ Describe your products and services
- ✓ Describe you and Business: customers like to see who is behind the business. Include some information about you and your team and if you are brave a photo or two! This will build trust with your prospective customer
- ✓ Provide your Contact Details: Include all relevant contact details for your business. Linking your online business (your website) with your offline business (your shop or premises) is very important and also builds trust and credibility.

An eBusiness Website Should

- ✓ Allow your customers to do things – interact with your website as if it is a “virtual employee” of your business
- ✓ Read, download or print information, and guides relating to your products and services
- ✓ Perhaps you want a password protected page where customers can read and store information only for them.
- ✓ Watch videos providing details of your services, projects or customer feedback
- ✓ Ask you questions through a discussion forum, chat function or interactive “frequently asked questions” database
- ✓ Search for products in your product catalogue

An eCommerce Website

- ✓ An eCommerce website involves additional responsibility on you to demonstrate to your customers your website is safe and secure place to buy things! There are a number of ways to transact online – ask your web developer to explain the payment process they can setup for you:

Q Will the payment be processed within your site or on a 3rd party website?

Q Where will customer information be stored? i.e. your site or on a 3rd party website?

Q Do you have standard terms and conditions for items sold via the website?

Q What security features will provide assurance to your customers that their transaction will be processed securely?

Q What will be the processing costs of the transactions?

Search Engine Optimisation

Q Will my website be optimised to work well with search engines like Google?

- ✓ Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) techniques improve the performance of your website in “Organic” search engine rankings. It is free but takes time to do well. There are numerous techniques for improving or optimising your web pages to rank better on search engines.



Content Management

Q Can I make updates to the website myself – using a Content Management System (or CMS) ?

Q If yes, what are the limitations – are there things you cannot change?

- ✓ If you plan to make regular updates to your site, ask your web provider about a Content Management System so you can make changes to the information displayed on your site.
- ✓ A good CMS will also provide you with all the information and statistics you need about how your site is being used by visitors. It can also allow you to optimise your website to rank better against your target “keywords”

Website Standards

Q Will the website be developed to “W3C” standards?

- ✓ W3C stands for World Wide Web Consortium and they provide international best practice guidelines on coding websites.

Legal Information, Data Protection

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Ongoing Support and Updates to your Website

Q Will I receive any ad-hoc support and maintenance after the site is live?

- ✓ Over time you may experience issues or errors which can arise, for example, due to updates to internet browsers like Microsoft Internet Explorer or you simply want to update your website. Find out up front if you will need to pay your web developer for support each time, if it is included in the upfront cost or if you should pay an ongoing fee to cover support.

Hosting

Q Who will host your website – will your developer arrange this or will you need to organise it with a hosting company?

- ✓ Your website needs to be stored on a server, somewhere! Usually, either a specialised provider or your web company can do this for you. Expect to pay €50 - €300 per year for this, depending on size of your site and the level of service you can expect from your hosting company.

Domain registration

Q Who needs to register the domain name and confirm if it has/will be registered in your name?

- ✓ You need to “own” or more accurately “rent” the rights to your website name – www.websitename.ie.
- ✓ Expect to pay between €5 - €75 per year for your domain name depending on its popularity, the domain type (.ie domains tend to be more expensive than .com) and the length of time you wish to register it.
- ✓ To see if your preferred domain name is available check a website such as www.register.ie
- ✓ If your developer registers the domain on your behalf, ensure that it is registered in your name.

Costs

Q What will each website function cost?

- ✓ Often the most difficult part of buying a website is understanding what you are getting for your money!
- ✓ Without a detailed specification or description of your website, it can be difficult to compare prices between providers. So ask your web developer to write down on paper exactly what is included in their price. You can use the headings on this flyer as a guide – then you can more easily compare quotes.
- ✓ For an approximate cost guide, use our “rule of 1000s” ...
- ✓ A good quality brochure website costs anything upto €1000
- ✓ A good quality ebusiness website costs €1000 - €2000
- ✓ A good quality eCommerce website costs €2000 - €3000
- ✓ Of course, you can also build your own website “for free” using any of the numerous template websites on the market. Just be watchful of any limitations that come with your “free” website!

We hope this guide helps you. Please contact us at info@see360results.ie with any questions. Best of luck!

