# OUR WEBSITE DESIGN PROCESS

INTRODUCTORY MEETING

At this meeting, we get to know each other to see if we're a fit – the best work comes through collaboration, clearly defined goals, and aligned expectations. You tell us what you're looking for: a site refresh, a custom website, or a site that uses a platform like WordPress. We discuss what's possible, and talk about the team you'll need. Bring along some samples of websites you like.
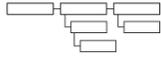
WEBSITE ARCHITECTURE

This high-level planning tool organizes your content into a framework that provides the best possible user experience (UX), while meeting your goals. We work back and forth on the site map with the development team to ensure that we arrive at the best possible online solutions for your needs and budget. The initial website architecture is not always the final version – sometimes pages get added with client consent as needs evolve – but it's the one we base our quote and project scope on.

Key Steps

We audit your existing website, if you have one.

Using our insights from the Discovery phase, we create a site map that shows menus, how pages connect, and any important outbound links.

If the site is complex, we create wireframes of the pages. Think of these as a skeleton, they show where content will live on the page, but don't include any design elements.

> **Deliverable:** Site map with rationale. Wireframes, if necessary. On delivery, we'll request payment for this phase of our work.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

This stage will be ongoing for some time. If you use our copywriting services, our writer will begin to work closely with you to develop the first draft of your content, and our design team will begin to design the look of the site. As we get closer to final drafts and approved visuals, we'll work with our developer, so that they can begin to build the functionality to support all of the content.

Visual Design: Our design team will create a mood board that presents choices around colour palettes, typography, photography or illustration styles. These elements will tie into (or evolve) your brand's existing visual identity, and your choices will determine the style of design elements on your website.

Once we receive a solid draft of content for key website pages, we'll present a mock-up of a page for your approval. When the mock-up is approved, we will begin to build out the remaining pages.

During this period, we'll also be collecting all of your visual elements and formatting them for the web, creating any illustrations and/or arranging for photography.

Copywriting: Our copywriter works closely with you to create clear, compelling text in your brand voice. The first draft they submit to you will focus on the storytelling elements: are the facts accurate, is the narrative complete, are the voice and tone right for your brand? In subsequent drafts, they will refine the marketing messages, and incorporate keywords to improve your Search Engine Results (SEO). The copywriter will work with you through successive drafts of copy until you sign off and the content is delivered to the design team and developer.

> **Deliverables:** Successive drafts of website copy.

> **Deliverables:** Mood board, mock-ups.

SITE TESTING

The test site is hosted on a password-protected site for an internal audience. The creative team and client review the site, test links, load speeds, and functionality across browsers and devices. At this stage, copy and visuals should only require minor edits.

> **Deliverable:** Full test website populated with final content

FOLLOW-UP

Six weeks after your launch, we check in with you to see how your new website is working for you. We review your analytics to see how it's performing, and talk about creating new content like blogs, product images or portfolio content to keep your site fresh and relevant in Google's (and your clients') eyes.

DISCOVERY

The Discovery phase is one of the most important parts of the process – it's where we do a deep dive to get to know you, your business, and your goals. We use a combination of meetings and research to gain a solid understanding of your business, your market, your competitive landscape, and your brand. We look for strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. We talk about the brand you have, and the brand you want. We learn what your business goals are now, and 5 years from now. The information we gather informs all of our next steps.

Questions To Consider:

What is your primary goal for your website? To sell product, raise your profile, or showcase your work? Your goals will determine the content, features and functionality.

Where does your website fit in your overall digital and marketing strategies?

What content do you have and what needs to be added? Will you need a copywriter, illustrator or photographer?

Which features do you need: e-commerce, live chat, email, newsletter subscriptions, social media integration, website analytics?

Which features are "must-have" and which are "nice-to-have"? We will work with your budget to target your most important goals.

> **Deliverable:** Project brief with a summary of our findings, website strategy and recommendations to support your brand. On delivery, we'll request payment for this phase of our work.

Did You Know?
Some clients hire us just to do a Discovery process for their business and brand - it helps them plan.

PROJECT SCOPE

Once we agree on a basic site map, the desired features, and the overall direction indicated by the project brief, we prepare a project scope that provides an estimated cost and timeline for the remainder of the project. We'll assess your content requirements and whether you need resources such as copywriting, photography or illustration. If we're using any outside suppliers, we'll ask them to submit their costs at the same time, so that you have a total project cost.

Important Note re Timelines

The success of our timeline depends, in large part, on our client's commitment to collecting, submitting, and reviewing written and visual content in a timely fashion. Clients may need to provide project or portfolio samples, client testimonials, a list of products for e-commerce, video or photography. If the client delays, the timeline shifts for all remaining stages of the project. In some cases, if the delay is significant, the team may need to attend to other waiting projects and reschedule the website development for a time when both the team and client are ready again, with an accompanying restart fee.

> **Deliverable:** Project scope with project activities, deliverables, timeline and cost estimate.

From here on, we bill you monthly until the project is complete.

CONTENT LOADING

All final copy and visuals are delivered to the development team and the pages are populated with content.

SITE LAUNCH

Launch day! We cheer you on and stand by in case of surprises. Account details are transferred to you, along with an optional training session in site management.

> **Deliverables:** Final website and PDF with site management instructions and tips. File containing all site assets such as photos and icons

Good to Know:
To create and maintain your website, you'll also need to budget for items like purchasing and renewing a domain name, a web hosting plan, and if you're using a platform like WordPress, purchasing or subscribing to a theme.