# Idea Worksheet

**Damalak Associates Web Design** Est. 1997

Your website has all sorts of possibilities.  The following information and lists will help in getting started in planning your new site.

**Ok so where do you start?**
In today's business climate companies are rapidly turning to the internet to help "grow" their business.

Of course the big question is who should build and maintain the site.  Several companies have the luxury of an "IT" department, some companies rely on web designers and more recently, the DIY cookie cutter point and click programs.  Most companies however, rely on outside companies to design, maintain and host their site.

**So let's get started….**
First and foremost you should be asking; *Do I need a web site?* About 15% of potential web site inquirers really do not need a site or if they do need a web presents it's usually just for location information and is best served by one of the DIY programs and not the services of a professional web site development company.

## Introduction to the 10 commandments of Web site development.

1. **PLAN YOUR SITE.**  While this is pretty obvious you would be surprised how many do it yourselfers and commercial web site companies fail to plan. First you must have an idea, a goal and focus.  Your first question should be why do you want a website? Sit down and draw out a story-board (road map) of possible pages and ideas you wish to include in your site. Include your site's purpose. Is it to increase sales or educate the public about your issue, whatever it may be.   If you are revamping an existing site, ask yourself if the site now represents your company and its goals.

2. **HAVE A GREAT CONTACT PAGE.**  Wow, this is one that is overlooked.  You will see all variations of contact information.  Remember…If the customer doesn't see this information or they have a hard time locating it, they can not contact you.  We have seen companies intentionally leave off the contact information.  Would you do business with a company like that?

   Use a "contact Us" button!  Provide all forms of contact.  Snail mail, fax, email address's etc.  Companies should welcome customer contact and your visitor will feel more at ease doing business with you.

3. **MAINTAIN A CURRENT SITE!**  You see it all the time.  Stale information, wrong information, broken links and much more.  First impressions are lasting ones and its no different in the internet world.

4. **NO SLOW LOADING PAGES!**  The downfall of today's hi-tech web sites.  Research your clientele.  Who will be coming to your pages.  With the advent of high-speed connection there still is approximately 50% of the surfing public that are on standard dial up connections.  The affordability of high-speed connections is still out of reach for some.  If your main page contains flash technology you may have a slow loading entry page.  Simply stated…Today web surfers are time conscious.  If you have a slow loading page they will go somewhere else to purchase!  In the traditional sales arena you have 30 -90 seconds to grab the interest of your prospect.  The same thing applies to the internet.  Watch pages loaded with hi-tech, gee-wiz technology.

5. **KEEP IT PRECISE AND SIMPLE!** Fancy fonts, multiple fonts, cute graphics just add to the confusion and visitor burn out.  At last count there were over 20,000 fonts available.  What happens when a computer can not read a special font that is on your web page?  It defaults to the standard font that the visitor's computer uses so you loose the image you were trying to portray.   The bottom line is this looks bad and unorganized.  Watch the graphics and special fonts.

6. **SIMPLE PRECISE NAVIGATION!** Ever become lost in a web site? Every page should have a way for the visitor to return to the entry (main) page. Every page should have the same layout. Your visitor will be more comfortable if they can rapidly navigate your site.

7. **WATCH THE "POP-UPS"** A pop-up is an irritating little ad that companies sometimes use. While it is your choice to use such technologies remember you won't make a sale to a disgruntled visitor.

8. **NO BROKEN LINKS!** Link pages and text links are wonderful ways of educating your visitor and introducing them to other web sites that will help them make a decision to buy. However when a visitor clicks on one of your links on to be taken to a "404" page (no longer there etc.) it represents your company in a bad light.

    Also keep in mind that your site should not contain an over abundant supply of links. You want you visitor staying with your page and not roaming off into cyberspace never to return. Use of a pop-up window may be a good alternative.

9. **CAPTURE VISITORS INFORMATION WHEN POSSIBLE.** This is the life blood of your site! If done correctly you site should provide for visitor response. You will build you database using response forms. You will build instant credibility by providing a forum for your visitor to ask questions or provide other pertinent information.

10. **KEEP THEM COMING BACK!** Using a newsletter to keep your clients and potential clients purchasing from you is one of the main goals of your site. Education value of your site places indicates that you are the expert in your field. It is the perfect sales tool and builds value. E-books, e-zines, e-courses all build a professional image. Use them!

## What kind of site?

| | |
|---|---|
| • Static site | Strictly for information, education and presentation. No visitor feedback, no client participation. This kind of site would be used for meetings and data transfer. |
| • Interactive site | These are the most common sites. All of the items found in a static site plus Visitors can take action, respond to pages etc. |
| • Commerce site | This would be your Yahoo store or shopping site. Designed for the purpose commerce. |

## Site Management

| | |
|---|---|
| In -house | Your staff maintains the day to day up dates and site maintenance (code changes and updating) Web browser submissions etc.) |
| Contracted | Sometime more economical for the company to contract the management of the site out. |

## Page Suggestions

| | Yes | No | Budget |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Guest book**<br>Your guest can add remarks or just let you know they were there | | | |
| **Interactive forms**<br>Your database builder. | | | |
| **e-newsletter**<br>Either included in your web site or part of an email program. A great way to get the word out about upcoming events or directing folks to your web site.<br>Works very well in "backend sale" and up-sale situations. | | | |
| **E-zines, E-books, E-courses**<br>Properly planned these programs can build your business and increase value to your company. | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Donation page**<br>Ideal for fundraising activities and other events. | | | |
| **Links page**<br>You link to other sites and they reciprocate. An excellent way to promote your site. | | | |
| **Picture album**<br>Share photos | | | |
| **Message forums Page**<br>An excellent way to let members and others discuss subjects relating to your site. | | | |
| **Mini polls**<br>A fun way to take the pulse of your visitors. Also an excellent way to cast an online vote for business matters. | | | |
| **Contact page**<br>Provide important information on Mailing address, maps, and contact numbers. This is a quick reference. | | | |
| **Chat room and blog page**<br>This is a "live" room. Subjects abound! | | | |
| **FAQ page**<br>This is a great page for your visitors to get the answers to their questions. | | | |
| **Commerce Page**<br>You can sell your products on this page | | | |
| **Password protected pages.**<br>Excellent for secure discussions, forms, information etc. Can only be viewed by using user and password combinations. | | | |
| **"About Us page"**<br>This page allows the visitor to learn about the company they are dealing with. Company mission statements, staff, Officers brief descriptions. Pictures can also be included. | | | |
| **Social Media tie-ins**<br>This could be facebook, twitter, linkedin and several others. | | | |
| | | | |

## Additional Pages or Ideas

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |