Website Planning Worksheet

# First, Answer Questions

## What am I going to do with this site?

What is the general purpose of your site? For example, consider how you’d complete this sentence: “I am going to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with this website.”

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## Who will read this site?

*List as many types of potential site visitors you can. For example, students, peers, staff, tourists, etc. List as many as you can.*

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## Out of the site visitors you just identified, which are the top (primary) groups of visitors?

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## Let’s say your website had a personality. Using single words or short phrases, how would you describe it?

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## What do you want readers to learn, find or discover from this website?

What are the key messages or “take-a-ways”? Limit it to your top three or four. Consider this: if your site visitors don’t read your site content (and most of them won’t!) and only stay on the site for a few seconds, what are the top three or four things you want your site to convey to them instantly before they leave?

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## What kinds of information will you be including on the site?

Be specific: web pages, graphics, audio, video, news, summaries, links, steps to take, forms to fill out, calendars, word documents?

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## Why are you doing this?

Is the website intended to help communicate information to your audiences? Reduce phone calls in your office / workplace / after hours? Automate tasks or processes? Advertise something? Did the project just get assigned to you by your manager?

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## Who are you doing this for, *really*?

Be honest. Sometimes we are just doing a website because we have to or because it was assigned to us. It’s worth understanding that. But you need to think about who you are *really* doing something for. Are you building this website because it will help your members? Will it meet an administrative requirement? Everyone else is doing it? Just want to do it for your own entertainment? Who are you really doing it for?

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## What things will you be putting on your site that will be changing most frequently?

Be specific. Your site will need updating twice a year? On a weekly basis? Monthly? Whenever new information comes up? Rarely? Daily?

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## Who will be responsible for updating the website?

Responsibility for content, in many cases, falls to someone who does not update the site pages.

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# Second, Put it All Together

Now that you’ve had some time to think about the “who, what and why” questions, it’s useful to put everything you’ve just outlined into a simple but concise goal statement. Why is it important?

A well written goal statement allows you to measure success of your site, it guides you in decision-making and allows you to pass it around to others involved in your site creation process and make certain everyone agrees on the goals.

## Example

Here are some samples of how you might phrase statements in your goal statement. You don’t have to use all of these—this is just provided to get you started.

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| *This website will be dedicated to* |
| *The site will provide* |
| *Resources or content on the site will cover the topics of* |
| *Site visitors will be able to* |
| *The top features or actions each visitor will do when they visit the site are* |
| *The top things site visitors will learn/find/discover on this web site are* |
| *I will be adding information every about* |
| *I am doing this because* |
| *Visitors will return for* |
| *Features and services* |
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Tip  
Another way to approach the task of writing a goal statement is to ask someone else to write a first draft of it for you. Give them the answers you’ve already provided in Part 1 and let them pull out the important goals based on what you’ve listed. This allows you to see through someone else’s eyes if your site goals and purpose are clear to them.

Does your vision match theirs? If it doesn’t, this may be a good signal to you that you may have missed listing a few critical pieces in Part 1.