

A close-up photograph of a silver and black pen with a gold-colored tip, pointing towards a checklist on a white grid background. The checklist consists of several red-outlined squares, some of which are partially filled with red ink. The pen is positioned diagonally across the frame.

THE 51 POINT

WEBSITE CHECKLIST



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Website Design Checklist (for WordPress-Based Sites)

This checklist will walk you through everything you need to do in order to launch your website. This checklist is particularly helpful should you choose to build your own website.

Pre-Website Setup

Let me first say that in order to understand how to build your website, you need to spend some time first deciding the “why”, “what” and “who” behind your site.

- ☐ Why are you creating a website?
- ☐ What are you hoping to accomplish with the site?
- ☐ Who will be coming to this site on a regular basis?

Once you answer these questions, you’ll begin to gain clarity around the type of site you need to build.

Pre-Website Creation – The Process Flow

Let's imagine for a moment that you have the idea for your website and you have an idea of what you want to include. I now want you to think about the process and the flow for your target audience. To help you with this, I've created a super simple system that you can follow:

1. What do I want my customer to see first and foremost before anything else?
2. Once they see that, what do I want them to do next?
3. Once they do that, what do I want them to do next?
4. And then?

A good process flow, for a service provider, might be:

1. I want my customer to see that we offer free consultations where they can get to know us and vice versa.
2. I want them to sign up for a free consultation.
3. I want them to then be offered our free download so that they also get on our list.
4. I want them to be pointed in the direction of our top blog posts so that they can be fed relevant information in the moment.

Once you begin to think through the steps, you will naturally see what your website needs to highlight and showcase and how your funnel or path needs to be set up to convert people from visitor to prospect to potential client to customer.

Phase One – Set Up & Installation

- ☐ Configure / set up hosting account
- ☐ Configure / set up domain name

Phase Two – Design & Customization

- ☐ Gather the logo and other branding elements
- ☐ Determine what color palette you'd like to use
- ☐ Choose an appropriate theme
- ☐ Install the theme on the server
- ☐ Update all general settings that are native to WordPress
- ☐ Update theme settings (if theme contains them)
- ☐ Customize the blog design including sidebar, footer & home page

Phase Three – Plugins & Content

- ☐ Install all relevant and applicable plugins
- ☐ Configure Google Analytics
- ☐ Configure all plugins that were installed
- ☐ Determine the required site map / navigation
- ☐ Add pages and page content
- ☐ Add relevant stock photography to pages to enhance look

- ☐ Add blog post(s)
- ☐ Install a spam filter plugin such as Akismet
- ☐ Configure a commenting system such as Disqus or Intense Debate
- ☐ Test all plugins

Phase Four – Final Stage

- ☐ Final round of edits is done

Pre-Launch Phase

The Content

Run your website past this checklist before launching it to ensure your content is ready to go.

- ☐ Are title tags present?
- ☐ Is the written content presented clearly?
- ☐ Are the content details separated by importance?
- ☐ Is the navigation clear and labeled?
- ☐ Is it easy for your web visitor to contact you?

The General Layout

The layout of your site includes all of the visual elements and how they are laid out in proportion to each other. It's everything you see when you land on the home page of your site. Some questions to ask yourself about the layout:

- ☐ Is there a clear distinction between areas?
- ☐ Is there an appropriate use of columns to separate key content?
- ☐ Is the spacing and padding adequate to leave ample white space?
- ☐ Is the web visitor quickly guided visually around the site or does the visitor panic and not know where to look first?

The Sidebar

Sidebar are used to highlight key content on the site. Whether this is a sale / sale item, an upcoming event, a free download, etc., it's generally timely and considered the most important content. To ensure that your sidebar is passing the clutter-free test, you'll want to ask yourself:

- ☐ Is there a call to action in my sidebar?
- ☐ Is it free from irrelevant advertising?
- ☐ Is it clutter-free?
- ☐ Did I use social media icons appropriately?

- ☐ Are there appropriate archive links?
- ☐ Is there a feature of the top recommended posts?
- ☐ Is RSS set up and working properly?

The sidebar can fill up quickly with all sorts of inappropriate and unneeded information so be diligent in keeping this space clutter-free.

Color

Color helps you to create a visual, emotional connection to your website visitor. Color helps to also guide web visitors to the key points on your website so it is used often to enhance the website visitor process flow we talked about earlier. For color, ask yourself:

- ☐ Is the contrast appropriate?
- ☐ Is the color palette restrained / used carefully?
- ☐ Is the color work appropriate for the brand?
- ☐ Are links distinguishable as links?

If you want more in-depth information on color, I will point you in the direction of Steve Krug's book, "Don't Make Me Think." Available on Amazon.com here:

<http://amzn.to/yvjpGR>.

Fonts

Fonts are more important than most people think because they allow your visitors to understand the hierarchy between various sections on your website. For example, your page titles and blog post titles may be in one font – usually larger – to draw the eye to it whereas the font underneath the blog post that contains the post information may be smaller to show visitors that it is less important. For your fonts, ask yourself:

- ☐ Do I have a hierarchy present on my site as it relates to type size and weight?
- ☐ Is there enough contrast in the font size?
- ☐ Is there enough spacing in the main content – again, to avoid clutter?
- ☐ Is there consistency throughout the site with fonts and spacing?

One of the other things you want to consider, as it relates to fonts, is to make sure that there is ample white space around the copy. There is nothing worse than copy that is smashed together causing it to become difficult to tell the difference between certain sections of the site.

Navigation

Navigation is how your website visitors will move through the options that are available on your site. It is also how search engines index your site's pages. You want to make sure that your navigation is clear, uncluttered and laid out

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appropriately so that your visitors can access what they want to access, quickly and effectively. For your navigation, consider:

- ☐ Is the navigation area clear, obvious and easy to use?
- ☐ Is it short and concise?
- ☐ Are you using appropriate titles for home, about, contact, etc.?
- ☐ Is the navigation consistent across your entire site?

If you find that your navigation doesn't meet these standards, this would be the first area that I would recommend putting your attention to. This will ensure that your visitors get to where they want to go efficiently.

All Done! Now, Launch It!