interlink
Web Design and Marketing Masterminds

WEBSITE
PLANNING
GUIDE

DEFINE YOUR EDGE

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STEP 1 | DEFINE YOUR BRAND

Before you start any business project, laying the groundwork is essential. You need to have a clear idea of who you are, what you offer, and why people should give you money. Not only will it help you throughout the design process, it will also guide you when making any business decision.

What is your story?

➤ What do you do and why do you do it? What is your purpose?

What are your Goals?

➤ What are the reasons for creating the website? What do you want to get out of it? What does success look like for your business? (For example: Sell products, grow an email marketing List, showcase your portfolio, educate your audience, etc.)

What are your values?

➤ List 3-5 words you would want people to associate with your brand.

➤ **Based on the points below, write 2-3 sentences to describe your ideal client.**

◆ What are their demographics? Age, gender, education level, occupation, etc.

◆ Now look at the psychographics: their passions, behaviors, interests, attitudes, lifestyles, opinions, etc.

◆ Where do they hang out online - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest? What kind of content do they share?

◆ What do they do on a sunday? On a Monday? Why?

➤ **What is their pain and how do you solve it?**

➤ **Why does your ideal client need this website?**

What is your service or product?

➤ Is it digital and downloadable, or is it a physical item?

How is your service/product offered?

➤ How can your audience buy your products or services? Will they only be offered on your website?

STEP 2 | RESEARCH THE COMPETITION, DEFINE AN EDGE

Researching similar websites is a great way to gain some clarity and inspiration on what you would like to achieve with your own site. Think about the businesses you know which are doing the same thing you are thinking, or offer similar products/services. If you don't know any off the top of your head, google the keywords you think people would use to find you -- then look at who pops up in the search results.

Who is the competition?

➤ List 2-3 websites which offer similar products or services.

➤ What about these sites stood out (content, features, design)? What did you like about them?

What makes you stand out from the competition?

➤ What do you bring to the table which gives you a competitive angle?

➤ Why should people buy from you?

STEP 1 | DETERMINE FUNCTIONALITY

Which features will your website need in order to fulfill your core goals, make it easy for your users to do business with you, and reflect your brand's image? Consider your web site from the perspective of your audience, and how they would want to explore your site. Will they want to see a list of services or prices, a portfolio with examples of your work, a way to book your services online?

Desired Features:

Videos	Homepage Slider
Image Gallery	Portfolio
Blog	Map
Testimonials	Search Box
Event Calendar	Online Payments
Downloads	Store & Shopping Cart
Uploads	Forum
Social Media Buttons	Featured Ads
Social Media Feeds	Forms
Email Marketing Integration	Scheduling
Other:	

STEP 1 | PLAN YOUR PAGES

This is the part where you determine which pages your website will contain.

Home Page - This is the general overview of your site, with a snapshot of what you do. Examples of what to include on this page: introduction to your services, samples of your work, testimonials, picture of you, etc.

Work Page - This page is usually a digital portfolio, your space for case studies, samples, previous projects, etc.

About Page - This is where you let your audience know who you are and why you do what you do. This is also a great page to list some client testimonials.

Services Page - This is where you list what you offer, possibly including pricing.

Contact - This is where you let viewers know how to contact you. If you decide to include a form, don't forget to customize your success message when the form is submitted.

Other pages to consider: Blog, FAQs, Testimonials, Resources, etc.

Call to Actions

Each page you include should have a clear CTA compelling your visitors to interact with your website in some way or another. This will be determined by the goal of the page. It can be as simple as having someone sign up for your newsletter list. The question becomes – what do you want your visitors to do?
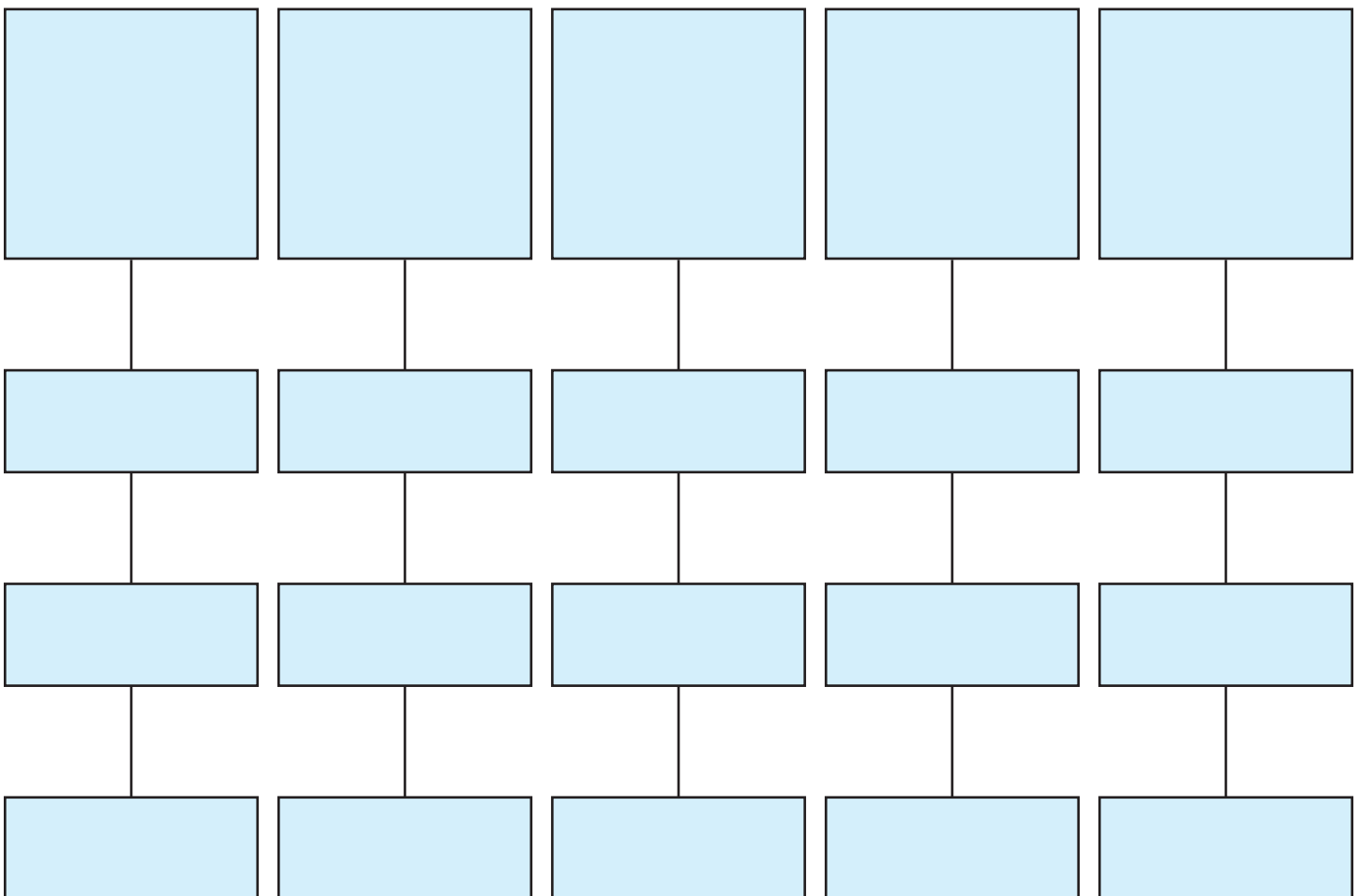
For example:

- Book an Appointment
- Sign up for a Consultation
- View my Portfolio
- Learn More
- Get a Free Guide
- Join my VIP List

What are your top level navigation pages?

What are your sub-pages (pages that branch off your top level pages)?

What are your footer links? Will there be a secondary menu in your footer?

Write out Your Sitemap:

STEP 5 | CONTENT STRATEGY

The most important component of any website, is the actual content. It is important to have all your content ready to go before you work on design. The point of a good design is to showcase this information. Content should shape your message by clearly explaining how what you do benefits your potential clients.

Consider whether you plan on hiring a copywriter or will be doing it yourself. Either way, take the time to define your voice and don't be afraid to let your personality shine through. If you are worried about scaring people away, remember that even though there are others selling the same services and products as you, they don't have your unique style.

Images & Photographs

Professional photos can really make a difference in the overall look and feel of your website. If you sell products, this step is an absolute must. Hire a photographer who will showcase your product's best features. If you sell services, at the very least include professional photos of you or a candid headshot. People want to connect with a person and see who they'll be working with.

Consider having your photographer take some pictures of you standing in front of a white background, or to one side with plenty of space to your left or right. This will give you some options to work with for your website's design.

If photography is not an option, consider looking for great stock photos. There are some good sources of free images you can use like Unsplash or Stocksnap.io. If you use free photos, check their licensing to make sure they are available for commercial and personal use. You can also purchase stock photos from sites like Shutterstock, Dreamstime, and Depositphotos.

What type of content do you plan on including?

Text	Charts or Infographics	Videos
Images or Photos	Testimonials	Webinars
Downloadable Content	Portfolio Samples	Podcasts
Other		

Page Name	Description	Type of Content	Call-to-Action
Home Page	*Introduce services and showcase case studies*	*Copy, Images, and Testimonials*	*Learn more (Button linking to services)*

Page Name	Description	Type of Content	Call-to-Action

STEP 6 | ARE YOU INCLUDING A NEWSLETTER OR BLOG?

Having a newsletter and a blog are great tools to engage with potential clients, and build trust in your brand. However, they are not necessary if you are just starting out and can always be added later.

If you want to hold off until later to include these, you can always just start collecting subscribers through a signup form on your site. Most of the time a freebie or gift is used to provide people incentive for joining a list.

If you know you want to include these features on your website from the get go, plan and write 3-4 blog posts to have ready for launch. Then make sure to consistently write content and send out a newsletter to your list. Figure out what best works for you – weekly, bi-weekly, monthly – then commit to it.

Brainstorm Topics for Blog Posts:

What freebie can you offer your visitors to get them to subscribe?

STEP 7 | BUILDING THE WEBSITE

Once you have an idea of how your website is going to be structured and what your message is going to be, here comes the fun part. **We get to design it and build it!**