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## **Evaluating Your Web Site Needs** Or...What do you need in a web site?

It is important that in evaluating the needs for your web site and related technology to consider not just what you wish for. Below are what should be considered – We can't necessarily cover all items you may need for your specific area of interest or business; however these are some key areas that will assist you in thinking through your needs fully.

### **Purpose and Goals**

Evaluating the purpose will go along way to determining how to properly consider the other areas of need and desires for your web site. Your goals should be listed in priority. It's not possible to have all goals at the same priority level. For example - just the simple fact of the way we read from left to right, top to bottom creates challenges for prioritizing the display of information.

By identifying the goals and priorities, this will give you a clear direction for your discussion with those involved and procurement of services needed to develop your web site, as well as giving designers and developers a clear focus for proper emphasis of the web site.

- What are the goals - list in priority, examples;
  - Dispersing Information
  - Marketing
  - Education
  - Membership services
  - Fun
  - Product Distribution
  - Product or service sales
  - Display events/schedules etc.
    - Changes a lot - needs to be automatic
    - Every so often – manually is fine
  - Etc....
- What do you want visitors to do at your web site – list in priority, examples;
  - Sign up for events, meetings etc.
  - Schedule events
  - Contact us through the web site
  - Download information
  - Read information
  - Submit information
  - Listen to audio
  - Interact
    - Forums or blogs
    - Chat
  - Etc....
- What is the desired life time of the site?
  - Change it completely once a year, twice a year, never...?

### **Budget**

How much can you budget for all the areas of the web site?

- Design and development (getting it up and going)
- Maintenance
  - Technology issues
  - Supplying and changing the web sites content and graphics, or multi-media
  - Etc...
- What can you support – How and who will do it? Does it require maintenance and how much – List areas that will require support
  - Creating and managing web site pages or content
  - Creating and managing graphics
  - Creating and managing multi-media elements
  - How often do you want to change the design or structure of the web site if at all?
  - Etc...

## Contents

How much content is needed - It may be nice to have a web site with a lot of content, but ask yourself;

- Is the content dated
- Does the content need to be dynamic (change often)
- Who will supply the content
- Who will change the content
- Will the content require images and how many
  - Do they need to be changed often
  - Who will supply the graphics
  - Who will change them
- The need to manage and access (get to, or link to) files and documents
- Etc...

## Technology

Do you want or need database storage of important or dynamic data, tracking or information systems. Technology is wonderful however some technologies require experts to maintain and or trouble shoot from time to time, as well as future development and make changes. Some needs may be achieved with simple solutions that do not require expert IT or IS personnel.

Outline the needs – examples;

- Online membership information
- Record management and or data distribution (to and for web site viewing)
  - Memberships
  - Contacts Records
  - Financial information (invoices, statements, etc.)
- Record management and or data integration with offline systems
  - Client, membership or other records databases
- Self subscribing membership – this might be signing up for news letter.
- Account or other critical data needs to be available online
- Minor list of items is all that is needed
- Automatic functions
  - Mail lists
  - Client or user scheduled notifications
- Marketing and Sales
  - Marketing materials distribution
  - Email; news letters advertisements, etc.
- Etc...