

Preparing for a Website Redesign or Refresh

So, your website is a little outdated and you want to do a refresh. It can't be that hard, right? I mean, you already have a website, it just needs to be tweaked a little here and a little there to make it updated. What's the big deal?

When it comes to a website refresh or redesign, some minor updating often turns into much more. And, rightfully so, as with the speed of technology and advancements in web design and web infrastructure, a lot can change in the course of a year or less.

By the time businesses are ready to do a website redesign – get their budgets in order to do so, get approvals from higher-ups if needed, etc. – the website is often more outdated that they think.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you approach a website redesign.

Design is Not One-Size-Fits-All

You may look at a clean, modern, sleek design and say to yourself, there's not much to that, it can't take that much time to create. It's important to keep in mind that the simplest, most user-friendly web design can actually require quite a bit of planning and design work. While this is not always true, it's best not to assume it's a simple change and to discuss your expectations with your design firm and let them outline the complexities and the amount of time a design will take.

Changes in Technology Can Make a Big Impact

One of the bigger impacts on websites over the past few years is the [rapid increase in the use of smart phones and devices](#) other than a traditional desktop or laptop computers, for internet use. Websites developed even just a year or two ago may be difficult to navigate in these various devices making for a bad user experience.

To combat this usability issue, a common method is to create a separate version of the website with pared down content for mobile devices. The downside of doing a custom mobile site is that it requires the creation of a separate website for these devices and therefore also requires separate maintenance and updating, ultimately increasing costs for businesses.

Another, option is [responsive web design](#) which renders website content differently depending on the size of the screen, as an alternative to having a separate website for mobile devices. This type of design has been widely adopted as a cost-effective way to achieve good usability on multiple screen sizes. Good



responsive design does require some additional design work upfront, but will be virtually maintenance free ongoing.

This is just one example of how dramatically technology can impact the usability of a website. We are in the midst of a global technological revolution presents us with new innovations and challenges almost daily.

Know Your Goals

When going through a website re-design it's important to know what your goals are for the website, especially if direction in your business has shifted and your website is not aligned accordingly. [Business objectives can greatly influence how a website is designed](#), especially in terms of usability and navigation. Be sure you've thought about this prior to starting a redesign and discuss with your web design team as they may have useful insights into the best way to move forward.

Be Armed with Content

In addition to your goals, start gathering together [updated or new content](#) early on in the process. Starting this review of content at the beginning of a re-design will allow you to assess what is current, what needs to be updated and how much more you need to get you there, especially if your redesigned website will be featuring sections that are not on the current site. It will also help you to determine whether you have time to develop new content or whether you need help by way of someone else in the organization besides yourself, or an outsourced copywriter. It's no fun when you have a great new look for your website, but no updated or new copy to fill it with. And, a website redesign is the perfect opportunity to refresh your [website optimization](#) to be sure you are maximizing your website's potential.

Be Present

Once you begin your website redesign, don't disappear. As the company representative, it's important to remain an active participant of the redesign process. Schedule delays are often due to a lack of timely feedback and input from you is essential for ensuring details are correct and that it aligns with the company's vision. And, if you feel like an aspect of the process is not going as you imagined, be sure to speak up and have a candid discussion with the manager on the project. It is no good to anyone to wait until the end to express dissatisfaction.

Are you looking to freshen up your web design? [We would be happy to talk with you](#) about your ideas, goals and ultimate vision for your website.

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