



Preparing for the [re]design of your Website – Part 2

Now how on earth do we do it? Let us suppose that the overall objective agreed for the new site is: “To establish our website as a useful and used alternative to face-to-face and telephone contact for the core services that we provide to citizens.”

Once the overall objective is agreed then a strategy to achieve that objective can be established. The strategy, once finished, will outline the who, what, and why of the website.

The following may be a suitable example strategy to meet the above objective: to convince... customers of our organisation:

- to use... the website
- instead... of the one stop shop or call centre
- because... it is available 24/7, can be easily accessed from home or work and gives a full picture of the citizens relationship with the organisation

The top two lines could be replaced easily with other phrases depending on the nature of your project, but the last two are essential as they identify “competition” and the rationale for choosing – in this case – one method of contact over another.

And then? Once this core strategy is buttoned down it should be the yardstick against which each new idea for the site is measured to see how it fits. How does the site navigation support the services on offer? How does the design fit in with the target audience? How does the new whiz-bang web chat module on offer from our CRM vendor help us achieve our strategy?

Anything else to bear in mind? A word about stakeholders: Identifying and engaging key stakeholders is essential in a successful web project. The delicate hierarchies and political nature of Local Authorities highlight the importance of offering key players an opportunity to contribute to the development of a websites objectives and strategy.

Meet stakeholders as a group, prompting them to carry out their own discussions and resolve any disputes but capture the final outcome and play that back to the group as the agreed position.

Establish the signal vs. noise ratio for each individual stakeholder, i.e. who talks a lot and says nothing, who has a real interest in particular facets of the project

A single point of ownership for the website is essential, this person should be of a suitable seniority to resolve conflicts between stakeholders and see the overall direction of the project to completion.



Manage expectations – establish which elements of the project people can expect to influence. Developing a website so often falls into a discussion about fonts, colours, layout and photography. These are personal opinions: we all drive different types and colours of car and live in differently decorated houses. If you ask 10 people for feedback on visual design you will likely get 10 different answers. You can't implement all 10 so you will be disappointing a significant number of your stakeholders.

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