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The Web Build Process Guide

A Step-by-Step Guide &
Questions to Ask Before You
Build or Rebuild Your Website



If you are planning a new website or thinking about rebuilding your current one, you are about to make an important business decision.

A website is not just a design project. It affects how customers find you, how they trust you, and whether they take the next step or leave.



Many small businesses run into trouble not because they chose the wrong colors or fonts, but because the process was unclear from the start.

Ownership questions go unanswered.
Costs surface late.

The site launches with no real plan for performance or growth.

This guide was created to give you clarity before you commit time, money, or energy.

It is designed for Montana small businesses who want a website that works, not just one that looks good.

What You Walk Away With



By the end of this guide, you will:

- Understand the full web build process from start to finish
- Know what should happen at each stage and why it matters
- Have the right questions to ask any agency or developer
- Feel confident spotting red flags before they become expensive problems

This is not a sales pitch. It is a practical roadmap.



Step 1: Clarify the Purpose of Your Website

Before anyone talks about design, platforms, or features, one question must be answered:

What is this website supposed to do for your business?

A website can support many goals, but it should prioritize one.

When this is unclear, websites tend to look good but underperform. Traffic comes in, but action does not follow.

Common primary goals include:

- Generating qualified leads
- Booking consultations or appointments
- Driving in-store visits
- Supporting sales conversations
- Establishing credibility and trust

Questions to Ask

- What action do we want visitors to take most?
- How will we measure success six months after launch?
- What problems should this website solve for customers?

If this step is skipped or rushed, everything that follows becomes harder.

Step 2: Discovery & Planning

This is the most important phase of the entire build.

Discovery is where strategy happens. It is where your business, customers, and goals are translated into a clear plan.



Discovery determines whether your website is built intentionally or assembled reactively.

A strong discovery phase includes:

- Understanding your audience
- Reviewing your current website and data
- Identifying gaps and opportunities
- Defining structure and priorities

Questions to Ask

- What information do you need from us before design starts?
- How do you learn about our customers and market?
- Will you review our existing site and analytics?
- What decisions are made during discovery?

If an agency skips discovery or minimizes it, that is a red flag.

Step 3: Site Structure and User Experience

Before pages are designed, they should be planned.

This step focuses on how information is organized and how users move through the site.



Good structure makes your site easier to use, easier to navigate, and easier to convert.

This includes:

- Page hierarchy
- Navigation
- Calls to action
- Content flow

Questions to Ask

- How do you decide what pages we need?
- How do you guide users toward action?
- How do you balance simplicity with depth?

A clear structure reduces confusion and improves results.

Step 4: Content Strategy

Design should support content, not replace it.

Your words matter. They explain what you do, who you help, and why someone should choose you.



Content strategy includes:

- Core messaging
- Page-level goals
- Calls to action
- SEO considerations

Questions to Ask

- Will you help write or refine our content?
- How do you ensure messaging is clear and customer-focused?
- How is SEO considered during content creation?

Websites fail when content is treated as an afterthought.

Step 5: Design and Visual Direction

Design brings the plan to life.

This is where your brand, message, and structure become visual. The goal is clarity and confidence, not decoration.



Good design:

- Supports readability
- Builds trust
- Guides attention
- Works across devices

Questions to Ask

- How do you approach visual design?
- How many revisions are included?
- How do you ensure the design supports conversion?

Design should feel intentional, not subjective.

Step 6: Development and Build

This is where the website is constructed behind the scenes.



Development affects:

- Site speed
- Security
- Stability
- Scalability

It is not visible, but it matters every day after launch.

Questions to Ask

- What platform will the site be built on and why?
- Who owns the website once it is complete?
- How are security and performance handled?
- What happens if something breaks?

Ownership and responsibility should be clear.

Step 7: Testing and Quality Control

Before launch, the site should be tested.



Testing ensures:

- Links work
- Forms submit correctly
- Pages load properly
- Mobile experience is smooth

Questions to Ask

- What testing is included before launch?
- Do we review the site before it goes live?
- How are issues handled if found?

A rushed launch often creates long-term headaches.

Step 8: Launch and Post-Launch Support

Launch is not the finish line. It is the starting point.



After launch, a website needs:

- Monitoring
- Updates
- Security maintenance
- Ongoing improvements

Questions to Ask

- What happens after the site goes live?
- Do you offer maintenance and support?
- How are updates handled?
- What does ongoing success look like?

A website should improve over time, not decay.

Common Red Flags to Watch Out For



- No discovery process
- Vague answers to ownership questions
- No discussion of maintenance or security
- Focus on design without strategy
- No clear success metrics

If something feels unclear, ask more questions.



A Quick Reality Check

As you worked through this guide, you may have noticed that some of these questions were easy to answer and others were not.

If several of them felt unclear, that is not a failure. It is a sign that your website project may be carrying more risk than you realized.

Clarity now prevents frustration later.

Where To Go From Here

Building a website should not feel overwhelming.

When the process is clear, decisions are easier, outcomes are better, and your investment works harder for your business.

Ready for Clarity?

If you want help reviewing your current website or planning your next build, we are happy to walk through it with you.

During a free website clarity review, we will:

- Review your current site or plans
- Identify gaps, risks, and opportunities
- Help you prioritize next steps

You will walk away knowing where you stand and what to focus on next.

Built for Montana small businesses who want confidence, not confusion.



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