What You Should Know Before You Start a Website

It is important that you know the answers to the following questions before you go into developing a site. It will help make your site a much better one. Some of these items may be repeated elsewhere, you need only answer them once.

a. Why do you want the web site? What is its purpose?

b. What are your goals? "The web site will be a success if _____ happens." Answering this helps you to focus the site. Be specific, preferably with something measurable.

c. Who is your audience? This also helps focus your direction as well, because knowing more about your audience helps you find the things that will attract them to delve deeper into your site.

d. Match the goals to the audience – what information can be added to the site that will help "hook" your audience? Hooks are important, they keep people coming back to your site.

e. What content do you expect? After answering the above it should be pretty clear what is needed. Now you want to think about what may have been left out that should be included.

f. How do you propose to build a relationship with the web surfer? How about a half dozen or so phrases that will sum up the impression you want to give? The mission statement ("Our Aim") is a good start... what else do you want to repeat? The more you repeat something, the more likely people are going to remember it, and you.

g. What "look" do you expect in your site? If you've got any more thoughts on what you want to include or not to include, these should be listed out.

h. What action do you want people to take after finding your site? Do you want them to return to the site, email you, add themselves to a mailing list, come into your "store"?