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PROPOSED WEBSITE SPECIFICATION

FOR _____

The Website Process

When you visit a website, the wow factor of colors, design and interface is only the 20% façade that you see. The other 80% is the back end; the endless lines of code that make everything appear so simple and put together on the outside. Good planning translates to easy execution and an efficient back end, which is the work you're paying the web designer/producer to do. More planning on your part means less work (and re-work and re-work) on the designer's part. More importantly, it means you will end up with a website that truly reflects what you're about and what you want to say. These pages will walk you through a thought process and help you articulate to me your vision of your website.

I. Domain Name

It's never too early to start thinking about a domain name, and a few alternatives in case your preferred name is already registered. Examples:

www.cyberrentals.com, and www.infocusdesign.net

II. Goals

What are the goals - measurable if possible - for your website? Examples:

Generate 3 leads or requests for information from website each month.

A vehicle for press releases, client testimonials, and links to other websites.

Information downloads and 24 hour access to frequently asked questions.

A vehicle for the viewer to register for events, or order products online.

Present a slideshow gallery of images.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

III. Target Audience

Describe the characteristics of your visitors and the tasks they would want to accomplish at your site. Be honest - what your (potential) clients want may not necessarily be what you want. You might want to visit with a few potential users of your site to hear their input.

Will your visitors need any special media other than what is on the screen?

For example, will they want to print your pages? Download publications?

Take a quiz or survey and submit the results to you?

Watch a slideshow of pictures or watch a video?

See thumbnail-size pictures as well as a large scale version?

Will they want to hear background sound?

Will the site need to be accessible for vision impaired viewers?

IV. Site Type

Each site type will likely have a different target audience and relevant goals.

Determine which type best fits your vision and goals.

_____ Informational. Site will offer information to the general public, or special interest groups about the organization and relevant topics and offer links to other sites. The information on these sites stays fairly static.

_____ Business. Serves as an online brochure for a business or commercial entity, but don't yet offer functionality, such as online ordering or product downloads.

_____ Gallery. These sites display and showcase art, such as photographs or paintings. The site should be a place where the artist can express themselves and their inspirations.

_____ Ecommerce. This can be as simple as a non-profit's ability to accept donations, to complex as a full on-line store. These sites require a dedicated effort to keep up to date.

V. Key Search Words

If you were to do a Google search to find your website, what search words would you use? List as many as you can think of, such as topics, products, location, affiliations, type of business.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

VI. Content Requirements

This will start you thinking about images and other items in the website. Do they exist now, or do they need to be created? Three examples are provided.

Name	Description	Type	Format	Exist now?
Logo	Company logo used in all media	Image	GIF	No
Press release	Write up in newspaper	Text	PDF	Yes
Product picture	Picture of xyz product	Image	JPG	Yes

Individual Page Content

This helps you think about how many pages you might need, and how to organize your content. You might need both a primary navigation and a secondary navigation. A viewer should never need to click more than 3 times to arrive at the information they were seeking.

Home _____

About / Bios _____

Business Philosophy _____

Products / Portfolio _____

Clients / Testimonials _____

Galleries _____

Press / In the News _____

Calendar / Events / Registration _____

Directions to store _____

Careers _____

Contact _____

VII. Features and Prioritizing

You should list everything you would like to see on your website, such as ability to order products on-line, or a downloadable demo, then prioritize the list. Budget or technical limitations may push some features off into the future, yet allow us to focus on providing a highly attractive and functional website ready for action now.

Must have: mandatory requirements that cannot be eliminated.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Should have: the site can be functional and effective without these features, but might not be as competitive or compelling. These can deliver distinct value added to the site.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Could have: these are unique feature that would add the ultimate **wow** factor, but may not be feasible today, or may be too costly. Still, they should be identified and revisited as the site progresses.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

VIII. Color & Shapes

Color can convey so much in mood and tone. It can be completely compatible with the purpose of your site and enhance it, or it can be distracting and undermine what you wish to convey. First, write down the colors you think you would like to see on the site. Then check off the adjectives that would describe the look and feel of your site.

Preferred Colors:

Facets: Hot Cool Pale Bright
Cold Warm Bold Dark

Color moods and overall style:

<input type="checkbox"/> Powerful	<input type="checkbox"/> Rich	<input type="checkbox"/> Romantic	<input type="checkbox"/> Vital
<input type="checkbox"/> Earthy	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Soft	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving	<input type="checkbox"/> Elegant	<input type="checkbox"/> Fresh	<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional
<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshing	<input type="checkbox"/> Tropical	<input type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input type="checkbox"/> Dependable
<input type="checkbox"/> Calm	<input type="checkbox"/> Regal	<input type="checkbox"/> Magical	<input type="checkbox"/> Energetic
<input type="checkbox"/> Subdued	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Shapes:

Shapes can also be powerful, especially if they relate to your business, or your organization's name, or are a natural extension of your logo. Note below if there are relevant shapes you like and wish to incorporate into the site.

IX. Other Websites

Often it's easier to convey your vision with pictures rather than words. List below any websites you want me to look at, especially competitors. Along with the URL, note what you like (or don't like) about the site and why.

X. The Road ahead

These are the steps I'll use to develop your website.

- Plan** Includes the submission of this specification and following discussion.
- Design** Design mockups display the layout for each page and identify the content that should appear in each segment of the layout. If the site requires both a primary and secondary navigation, I will provide a site map, detailing the flow of each page.
- Production** This is the point where I actually start coding. It's worth noting that coding the homepage is 80% of the work. Once the homepage is complete, and you're satisfied with the look, the colors, the navigation and so forth, coding the subsequent pages moves pretty quickly.
- Test** When you, me, your friends and anyone else attempts to break it. We'll review and interact with the site under as many different environments as possible, including PCs vs. MACs, desktops, laptops, different browsers, etc. I will also validate the code for WC3 compliance.
- Launch** Happy Day. It's live!
- Email Blast** You may want to send out an email blast to an unlimited number of emails addresses, announcing your site and driving traffic to it. Email blasts can also be used as an effective ongoing marketing effort to announce new products or events.
- Maintain** This is often the part that is most neglected. At a minimum, review your site every 3-6 months. Keep it fresh.

XI. How do you define success?

It's important that you can articulate, define, and if possible, have a measure for your website's success. It may not be readily apparent now, but it should be by the time we get to the production phase. It might be as simple as, "the site exists and is live for the whole world to see" to "I have three new clients because they visited the site and learned about my services". The definition of success should keep us solidly on track to our goals.
