

Goal	Overall improvement of web sites
Overview	Small businesses have varying needs, but several things remain consistent from site to site. This presentation/document will cover several of the common items.
Before creating or reworking the site	
Identify Site Goal	<p>There are a number of reasons for a website – clarify your goal!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new clients? • Is it for simple marketing? • Making it easier to stay in touch with existing clients? • Online sales?
Identify target market	Who will be visiting your site and who do you WANT visiting your site? This can be as simple as identifying your target market as local customers or national customers, or as complex as getting into full demographics studies on ages/sexes/etc.
Gather content	Do you have existing content? This can be either business documents or an existing site content. Assess and organize it logically.
Build/Maintain	Who will be responsible for building and maintaining the website? If it is going to be done in-house, bear in mind that a site unmaintained is a site wasted, and you should allow for weekly or at least monthly maintenance time.
Content	
Overview	Content should be based on site goals. Different content is required for different goals as identified above. If a site is geared towards local business, it is essential that you mention the local areas. If it is a sales site selling widgets nationally, no one cares that it's located in Knightdale – thus different words SHOULD be used.
Essential Pages	Home, Services/Product, About the Company, Contact, Sitemap These pages are the absolute minimum for any site. Surely more can be added, but at a minimum, these should all be present and maintained
Additional Pages	Blogs, Forums, Media, Links, etc. Remember, whatever pages are added MUST be maintained – blogs/forums can be a pain.
Textual Content	<p>This is the source of all spider/search engine rankings and absolutely the MOST IMPORTANT piece of the website puzzle. Text will be used by the search engines to determine where or even IF your site will appear in results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay on point – know your goal, support that goal and don't wander off topic • Paragraph content should align with the first sentence. • Don't ramble on – it will never get read • Think logically and progress smoothly. • Work in words associated with your site goal (keywords) • Break text down into useful paragraphs – usually shorter than standard print paragraphs • Don't be afraid to provide large amounts of text, it will help with keywords and associated word associations – just make sure you break it down. • Use natural language. The content should be similar and mirror the kind of language that your target visitors will use. If you're pushing hair treatments to tweens and teens (and ultimately Mom), don't get too far out by using big words that won't be understood or appreciated – they may hold you BACK. Alternatively, if the site targets medical professionals, you had BETTER be using the right words and terms in all their technical glory. • Bear in mind that your users will search their own way. While the Little Brown Grammar Handbook may tell you that your sentences should follow all grammatical

	(and spelling) rules, people do NOT search in perfect phrases, clauses or even with correctly spelled words. Use the language that your users will be using to find you. ASK your friends how they would find you. It will be enlightening.
Images	<p>Every site should use a decent amount of images. Images add not only visual excitement to the page, but should add something to further the content of the page by explaining or demonstrating something that maybe text can't.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images should use all appropriate tags - Alt tags at least. The extra tags and information give yet one more opportunity to add in keywords. • Images can be reused as possible to take advantage of browser caching • Provide thumbnail (smaller) views of images and allow customers to click to see larger pictures. • 72 dpi is the best resolution – print is 300 dpi, but adds considerably to the size of a web image and is overkill for web. • Images/media should ADD to content, not just be there • Resize images accordingly – Photoshop / PaintShopPro • Transparent images can add some neat effects to pages • Flash, while beyond the reach of many, can add nice effects. DO NOT USE ALL FLASH SITES AT THIS TIME. There are still MAJOR issues with spidering sites created entirely in Flash.
Optimization of Site and Content	
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site should provide concise information letting visitor know what your company is about, what products or services are offered, something about you/company background, and most important, how to contact you. • Site should be aesthetically pleasing. Use complementary colors. Certain combinations just do NOT go together well – black background with brown text is an example. Studies show that certain colors are more positive than others. Just make sure the colors you select mesh well. You will need at least 3 to provide a decent canvas from which to create the site. Black, white and blue for example. White page with blue-based graphics and black text – simple enough. You can add more if needed. Don't get carried away though. • Site should be basically the same from page to page. DO NOT have a different look for different pages. Consistency wins. The header on each page should be the same under most conditions. Customer should be able to realize that each page is part of the same site. Developers usually create templates for this reason. This keeps the site basics – headers, footers, navigation - consistent from page to page. • Pages should load quickly. Try to keep under 100K if possible. This is the combined size of the text and images associated found in "File Explorer." This isn't always possible but keep in mind that you may have dialup users still. • Use the target words with frequency and in different combinations • Do NOT "spam" your keywords or provide misleading content – you may get booted from the search engines • USE title and meta tags. Title tag can be between 10-150 chars long – do NOT use the same title for every page. Search engines look at this heavily. Meta description – 200 chars. Meta keywords – 50 to 250 chars with commas between phrases. • NAME pages and images intelligently. If your image is of a widget, name it widget.jpg. A service offered is tire repair? Service-tire-repair.html
Misc Tidbits	
Important Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreamweaver, Photoshop, PaintShopPro, FTP programs (CuteFTP, WS-FTP), Pixie, GSiteCrawler, Xenu Link Sleuth, keyword density analyzers
Search Engines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOOGLE, Bing, Yahoo, Ask - there are a ton of them out there, you will eventually get found by the most important ones, but speed up the process.
Online Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Analytics, Google Adwords – steep curve for some functionality, but take the time. This will also provide hit count information.