

## Website Development Overview

These are important things to consider as you launch a website project:

### Design (look and feel)

Any logos needed? Color combinations? Other branding elements?

Flash is popular on websites and can be visually engaging. To be effective, flash needs to utilize impressive photos or video clips. Do you want flash on your site? Can you provide great photos?

### Navigation

The site's navigation has a profound affect on usability and also on search engine rankings. It should be simple and straightforward, so people can easily find all important pages in just one click (two clicks max on large sites).

Flash should not be used to present the site's main navigation. Java script or funky programming should not be used for the main navigation

### Content

Content management systems can be very valuable, if you intent to add new content or update existing pages on an ongoing basis. If you do not intent to make regular updates, such systems can make your site overly complex and cumbersome.

A static, "brochure-type" site can be appropriate for situations where information does not change frequently and when you have a small budget. Such sites should offer good info, organized in a way that allows people to find it easily. These sites are fast and easy to build, and are inexpensive.

Interactive sites offer many benefits, but are more complicated and expensive. They allow site owners to easily add and update content (including photos and videos). Visitors can be allowed to contribute content and/or leave comments. These sites often rank better in search engines and develop larger audiences.

### Search engine optimization

Website design, page structure, main navigation and page content all influence a site's search engine rankings. If the site is built "search engine friendly" from the ground up, it will rank better.

However, website optimization needs to be an ongoing process if you want to achieve top rankings, That said, many aggressive website optimization companies over change and under deliver. Many promise incredible results, but deliver very little documentable benefit.

Three things are very important if you want good search engine results:

1. Search engine friendly structure, including navigation and page coding
2. Good, comprehensive, focused content
3. Links from other websites

How do you measure success? That is easy. You should be able to access stats from your website that show how much traffic is going to key pages, the source of that traffic, and what search phrases bring people to your site. Monitor your stats over time and make any needed tweaks to ensure you get:

1. Increasing traffic to key pages
2. Increasing traffic from your targeted search phrases
3. Increasing traffic from specific search engines

It takes time to get good search rankings. If traffic goes up over time, your campaign is working.