tbh creative

WHAT SETS THE BEST WEBSITES APART?

How to plan a successful website redesign project

A comprehensive guide from TBH Creative

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You want to get the most from your website, and our experts are here to offer their best tips for evaluating your options and defining a plan. This guide includes what you need to know to start planning your project, develop its budget, and choose a partner—as well as other things to consider when redesigning a website.

It's time for a website redesign if …

Your site isn't working

Your website doesn't deliver results, and you can't quite put a finger on why.

You're unhappy with your current web design company

Things aren't running smoothly, and you want to start working with a new partner.

You need more than a template website

You need a new customized website solution to meet your business goals.

Your site is out of date

Your website has grown more complex and managing content is difficult.

Your website no longer represents your company accurately

From product launches and mergers to rebranding and marketing goal shifts, your website needs to reflect major changes in your business.

Your target audience isn't visiting your website

Your website doesn't rank in Google, and you want to improve search engine optimization.

Strategic planning

Advance planning before starting a website redesign project pays significant dividends.

Where are you today?

All successful website projects start with evaluation and planning. While redesigning and development are critical, the real work begins long before layouts are reworked and code is rewritten.

Conduct a Site Audit

Evaluate your current site to figure out what works and what doesn't. Think about your big picture goals and how a new website can help you reach those goals. Some questions to ask include:

- Is your website a sales marketing tool or client-nurturing engine?

- Was your website developed with your audience's needs in mind? Does your website efficiently communicate the right message to your ideal audience?

- Where are the gaps between what your current website does and what you'd like your ideal website to do? (E.g., Are you looking to gain more leads? Better reach ideal customers? Shorten sales funnels?)

- Is your audience getting the most up-to-date marketing message?

- Does your website provide a consistent experience for users across different devices?

- Is your site aesthetically design modern? Does its content sync with current brand identity guidelines?

- Does your website's design and functionality meet audience expectations? If you have custom functionality, does it work?

- Are clear and compelling calls to action included on every page?

- How is content organized? Can users easily find what they need?

What does success look like?

Use what you've learned so far to build a strategy for your website redesign project. Look at your findings and set aside some time to create a master plan. Your strategy should answer questions, such as:

- What part does your site play in your organization's overall marketing plan?

- Once your new site launches, what results will you need to measure to determine success (or have an ROI)?

- What other factors could influence the relative success of your website?

- Are your website redesign goals realistic? In what timeframe? How often will you track and report on different success measures?

- What is the business value of meeting these goals?

Justify your website redesign investment by measuring ROI
tbhcreative.com/website-redesign-investment-ROI

Transform your website into a top salesperson
tbhcreative.com/website-salesperson

Learn how to translate your business goals into digital marketing objectives
tbhcreative.com/business-goals-and-digital-marketing

Are your vendor relationships still working?

Another important step during your planning process should include assessing your current vendor partnerships and technology tools. Once you have a strategy for creating an improved website, coupled with an analysis of your current website's performance, you'll be in a better place to consider how you want to build and maintain your new website.

Auditing your current website objectively can be tricky. You'll need to think through your content, visuals, functionality, and determine how customers find and use your site. If you have a marketing staff, bring them in to help you analyze your website. Your sales reps might also be able to provide insights into site performance.

Get a general overview of how to audit your website
tbhcreative.com/audit-overview

Discover how SEO and strategic calls to action figure in to your website audit
tbhcreative.com/audit-SEO-CTAs

Find out if your website needs a full update
tbhcreative.com/audit-full-update

Where are you today?

Understanding your top customers—who they are, what they need, and how to best communicate to them—should drive decision making. This analysis is called a website personas report. You'll use these insights about priority users to develop a conversion strategy, optimize content, and create strong calls to action. Personas will also help you make design decisions to ensure site's layouts create the best user experience for customers in your target audiences.

Develop Website Personas

Understand how website personas can transform your business
tbhcreative.com/transformative-personas

Learn how knowing your audience helps you achieve your website redesign goals
tbhcreative.com/audience-and-goals

What do the numbers say?

After preparing personas, time to turn to the hard numbers. Analytics track actual statistics and website metrics. This data can help you answer vital questions, including:

- Who is using your website? What do you know about them? Is SEO driving traffic?

- What are you measuring currently through analytics? Anything surprising?

- Do visitors action at the right places? When do they leave your site?

- How many conversions are you getting now (per day/week/month)?

- Do you rank for keywords? Is most traffic coming from users in your target audience?

Your existing website probably tracks some data, but your metrics or conversions may not be as high as you'd like. That's okay. Note your starting point, and make a list of other types of information you'd like to capture going forward so you're equipped to close any gaps.

Explore how knowing your audience can help you meet your website redesign goals
tbhcreative.com/know-your-audience

Get free analytics tools to assess your web and marketing data
tbhcreative.com/free-analytics-tools

Learn how to create website data reports with the most important metrics
tbhcreative.com/engaging-data-reports

Download the *Website Redesign Getting Started Checklist*
tbhcreative.com/web-redesign-checklist

Determine which tools, software, resources, and partners are best suited to help you reach your goals by answering these questions:

- What third party tools and software are currently being used to power your website?
    - Do you still need to use all of them?
    - Are these still the best tools available to meet your needs? Who manages or owns these tools? (e.g., are they hosted, set up by a third party, or managed by your team?)
    - What are the current contracts terms for each?
- How satisfied are you by the work done by your current web design company and digital marketing agency?
    - Do you like working with them?
- Have you grown to the point where you need to bring in new partners?
    - Do you need to engage an outside web design company for the first time? Is it time to replace an existing partnership you've outgrown?
- Are you working with many different partners to cover your marketing needs?
    - Would it be more efficient and cost-effective to work with one firm that offers a wide range of services and can manage multiple marketing projects at one time?

As with any project, going into a website redesign with a strategy in place helps to shorten timelines, improve results, and keep costs within your budget. The real work in a website redesign project begins long before you hire a web design company to write new code.

Planning from the start helps extend the life of your new site by making it an ongoing part of your marketing program.

Website budgeting

Building a realistic budget for site redesign that gets results.

How much should my new website cost?

How do you take your website from boring to brilliant without breaking the bank? Many companies do part of the work in-house and then are surprised to find that expenses are higher once they factor in the cost of employee time. Believe it or not, in the long run it's usually cheaper to outsource your redesign project.

Create a Redesign Budget

When budgeting, consider the value and return on investment potential your new website will bring. It's easier to get a handle on what your project's cost might be so that you allocate funds appropriately. Use these questions to reframe your perspective:

- How much does your business spend decorating its lobby? For many companies, decoration and upkeep of a lobby is considered a worthwhile investment because it provides an initial impression. Think of your website the same way. Your site may be your first chance to capture customers' attention. For the most part, they won't see your "interior design" if your site and key landing pages don't get their attention.

- Your website should function as a member of your sales team. Would you make a long-term employee's salary and benefits a line item for one year only, or amortize the cost across the years the employee works for your company? Include the redesign cost into your marketing budget over time, generally three to four years.

- Consider a web design project budget in light of your overall marketing plan. Good redesigns also incorporate marketing, writing, SEO, coding, and analytical ability.

- Taking an iterative approach extends the lifespan of your new site. Keeping updates and enhancements to functionality, SEO, and content in mind helps to spread the cost of redesign, and lengthens the life of your website.

Why does having a good website matter?

Ideally, your website should serve as a critical component of your business plan—working as a fully-integrated tool or functioning as a digital sales rep. Think of your website as a 24/7 engine helping you reach business goals.

- **88%** will research product info before they make a purchase online or in the store.

- **48%** cited a website's design as the #1 factor in deciding a business' credibility.

- **38%** stop engaging with a site if the content is unclear or its layout is unattractive.

What drives differences in redesign bids?

When it comes to website redesign costs, you have options. For your project, you can choose to handle it all internally, use a template, opt for partial customization, or ask for a total solution. What makes the most sense will depend on project size, goals, and timeline, as well as in-house staff expertise.

Compare Website Estimates

You may also be surprised to see very large pricing differences between estimates you receive. Some web design companies will offer packages A, B and C. Others might propose a price for one customized solution. Cost differences are much like the differences you might find when buying a house because of the many factors involved, such as size/square footage, builder options, and the level of features of your new home.

When it comes to website estimates, variations in quotes might be due to the number of pages, application development functions, and details such as design quality, interactivity, and SEO. As you analyze your quotes, don't forget to check and see if strategy work is covered by their price. Just as you might hire an architect to design your home, to get your website just right you may need professional help organizing your site's content or creating a strategy for SEO to ensure your new pages rank.

Remember to make sure your estimates specify what different price ranges include and what components your team will be responsible managing or creating.

Types of website solutions

	In-house work	Template	Partial customization	Comprehensive solution
How much time will your website redesign project take?	When redesigning your website in-house, expect to devote considerable staff time.	If optimization and personalization aren't essential for meeting your marketing goals, you can get up and running in less time using a templated website solution.	To add your own spin to a template, you'll need to invest additional time to prepare your site to go live.	When you hire a professional team, your internal team will have to do less work overall, but you should still plan to allot time for providing assets, sharing feedback, and getting approvals.
What sort of functionality will your redesigned website need?	Time, resources, and expertise may limit your ability to add custom functionality if you handle the redesign in-house.	Templates don't typically support custom functionality. Hosted solutions offer out-of-the-box options which you can use as-is.	There may be limits depending on the software solution or vendor expertise if you are trying to do a partial custom site.	Custom development work can be done strategically as needed. Depending on your target users and their goals, you might add data sorting, custom page structure, filtering, or other interactive tools.
Will your redesigned website need to stand out from the competition?	Time, resources, and expertise may limit your ability to create add custom design elements and details if you handle the redesign in-house.	Templates don't support extensive custom designing, which means you will not be the only organization using the template you choose.	Templates support limited customization, so you may change a few colors or rearrange some modules within pages, but you won't be able to get the same uniqueness you'd expect from complete custom design.	Comprehensive customization allows maximum flexibility to include unique elements and features that make your site stand out and truly communicate your brand.
Will your redesigned website need custom interaction?	Time, resources, and expertise may limit your ability to add custom interactive design elements, if you handle the redesign in-house.	Templates don't support custom interactive design elements.	If your team is highly talented, you may be able to build out interactive features, but depending on their level of expertise, the results may not be as refined as a professional solution and cause issues with load time or interfere with user experience.	If interactive design helps meet your goals, custom development makes it happen. With comprehensive customization, you have full control of the look, interactive element functionality. It also ensures clean code that won't slow your site down.

	In-house work	**Template**	**Partial customization**	**Comprehensive solution**
What type of business does this option work best for?	A business with a large, experienced internal marketing and IT departments that are currently underutilized may help you save money and achieve decent results.	A small business with a limited budget may consider a template to establish their web presence until revenue justifies investing in a more strategic, custom solution.	A small- to medium-sized business with a limited marketing budget may choose to invest a little more in a partially customized template website to gain more traction online.	A business using its website as a sales, marketing, and client cultivation tool should consider comprehensive solution because the ROI for this option is unquestionably higher.
What does this option cost?	In-house redesign projects often cost more than expected, due to employee time costs and the need for external review.	Templates are available in a range of prices, from free to expensive.	Partial customization adds to the cost of a template website, and price is variable based on time needed for implementation and integrating changes.	Pricing for comprehensive solutions depends on client needs and strategy. In many cases, custom solutions wind up being the cheaper option overall.
What is the ROI for the website redesign project?	In-house redesign may deliver great results—or not. It always depends on available time and team expertise.	Coding and SEO make it difficult for template sites to rank as high as competitors who invest in a custom website. However, depending on your industry and goals, a template website can be a good starting point.	Coding and SEO make it difficult for template sites to rank as high as competitors who invest in a custom website. However, depending on your industry and goals, a template website can be a good starting point.	Custom websites with strategic planning have the potential to deliver substantial increases in lead generation due to SEO capture, high impact user experience, and optimized functionality and performance.

When is it beneficial to not do it all at once?

It's easy to make a wishlist for your new site and get frustrated (or surprised) when the timeline or budget makes your dream project seem impossible. That's why we always recommend prioritizing the work included in your feature list.

Tagging or grouping features as "must-have," "should-have," "nice-to-have," and "future ideas" makes it easier to budget for what you need by launch and what you can tackle during future phases of your project.

Consider a Phased Approach

The items in your "must-have" group should correlate directly back to features that will help you achieve your goals. When you're starting a complex project, this exercise is extremely helpful, especially if you need to get buy-in from a large group with differing opinions on what should be a priority and it can also help you focus to get the max out of your budget.

Taking a phased approach also helps make website redesign costs more digestible, allowing you to iterate other marketing atop your website redesign project so that you can start showing ROI sooner.

Learn when it's okay to launch a site that's not perfect (& how to do it the right way)
tbhcreative.com/go-ahead-and-launch

Find out how phased website development leads to success
tbhcreative.com/phased-development

Why optimize for multiple screens?

If it's been more than a few years since your last website design, you may be surprised at how quickly things have changed. The biggest difference over the past five years has been the explosion of mobile browsing.

Did you know that more web searches are now performed on mobile devices than from desktop computers? In this mobile-first environment, having a website with an easy-to-use responsive design isn't optional. It's critical. With more than 200 potential screen sizes in use today, coding a website that's functional and effective regardless of how it's accessed is a bigger job than ever.

What this means for any web development company is that we have to build code in a to "respond" appropriately and consistently to different devices and sizes. What we used to do once as "pixel perfect" now has to be fluid and flexible. At a minimum, we have to set up templates with standardized shifting for the primary device sizes.

Customize viewport designs for specific sizes. Use analytics to determine if you should do more than basic shifting for mobile users. Though this is extra work, it always pay off:

- **62%** with websites designed for mobile users see increased sales.

- **40%** will choose a different search result if the first website isn't mobile friendly.

- **48%** say that if a site doesn't working well on their mobile device that it's an indication the business doesn't care.

What are others paying for their websites?

Are you curious how much other companies like you are spending on digital marketing and building websites? Here are statistics that may surprise you:

Check Industry Norms

- According to the *Wall Street Journal*, spending varies by industry. Ranging anywhere from 4–24%, most companies spend 11% of their total budget on digital marketing projects, like website redesigns.

- Small businesses, which *Forbes* defines as those with under $5 million in annual revenue, typically spend 7–8% of their total revenue on marketing.

- The Small Business Administration recommends that organizations operating with at least a 10–12% margin consider spending 7–12% of total revenue on marketing.

- *Entrepreneur* suggests young companies spend 12–20% of their gross revenue on marketing. For those with more brand equity, 6–12% may be enough.

Discover how much of your marketing budget should you to spend on your website
tbhcreative.com/plan-your-website-budget

Figure out how to evaluate the ROI based on your website redesign cost
tbhcreative.com/redesign-cost-and-ROI

Vendor selection

Choosing the right partner can be challenging because there are so many factors to consider.

How do you evaluate quality of work?

One way to figure out what you want is to look at as many other websites as possible—reviewing the competition and others in your industry. As you you review, take screenshots of notable pages or features and make notes detailing what you like and why. (Also consider what you don't like and think about why).

Review Vendor Portfolios

While evaluating your options, take time to review the portfolios of perspective website companies. Good potential partners will include have robust portfolios on their websites showing samplesyou can use to assess technical skills and visual design talents. Here are questions to think when evaluating an agency's work:

- Does their portfolio include examples of work done for others in my industry and projects similar in size and scale to my project?

- Do I really like their work?

- Are goals and results included as part of their project write-ups?

- Have they included a client testimonial with each project description?

Follow these 3 tips to keep your website ahead of the design curve
tbhcreative.com/future-proof-your-website-design

Learn what makes a good website design
tbhcreative.com/good-website-design

What do their clients have to say?

One of the most valuable steps you can take when evaluating website companies is to check out feedback from their past clients.

Google each vendor's name with the word review or rating ("[Company name] reviews") and look at sites such as Facebook, Google, Yelp!, and Clutch Pay attention to the star rating number, the quantity of reviews, when the reviews were posted, and what the customers say in their comments. What others say (or don't say) about a company publicly should be one of the strongest indicators on your checklist.

Check Reviews & Ratings

Do you need a request for proposals?

When selecting a company to partner with on your website redesign project, you might have heard you need a send out an request for proposals. Although some companies are required to locate vendors using a RFP process, many organizations find that this method of vendor selection cuts them off from opportunities to receive strategic input.

Rethink Sending Out a RFP

If you're looking for a significant website upgrade, you'll get better results choosing a web design company with expertise that fits your team's culture and personality, and then asking that firm for recommendations.

In many cases, outside experts will present you with a choice of options that will make your project better, faster, and more efficient.

Learn how to write a website design RFP that saves time and gets results
tbhcreative.com/web-design-RFP-tips

Discover strategies for evaluating website redesign portfolios
tbhcreative.com/evaluate-web-redesign-portfolios

Who offers the best solution?
Who asks good questions?

Once you've narrowed down the list of best vendors to consider for your website redesign project, it's time talk. Set up interviews with each web design company to learn how they might approach your project.

Talk to Potential Vendors

As you have these conversations, one or two companies should rise to the top. This might be based on personality or process styles, their portfolio may be a standout, or a combination of factors.

Another thing to look out for is ideas. Who has the best solution for your project? Who asks good questions that challenges your thinking (in a good way)? Who will be a good partner to make sure you reach your goals?

A long-term website partner will be good at bringing your ideas to life and adding to them. Website companies build websites all day, everyday. Why would you expect or accept anything less? Who rises to the top?

Download the *Website Vendor Comparison Tool*
tbhcreative.com/compare-web-vendors

Summary

A redesign project shouldn't be a second-tier priority or quick decision. Going into this work with a strategy in place, and this planning will help you shorten timelines, improve results, and keep costs down.

By following the advice in this guide and selecting the right website partner, you'll be in a strong position for success. Good luck!

tbh creative is a full-service agency specializing in **web design**, **marketing**, **branding**, and **advertising** solutions.

Are you connecting with right people, with the right message, at the right time, via the right channel? "Gut feelings" and generic work aren't enough to drive results. Real success requires curiosity and a customized plan of action.

That's why, since 2004, our team has started each new project by listening, asking questions, and doing our homework. We transform all of that research into insights then blend those findings with business objectives, fresh ideas, and the latest technologies to create results-driven solutions our clients and their customers love.

The competition is too fierce to settle for investments without payoffs. It's time to expect more from your partner. How can TBH Creative help you get ahead?

Schedule a Call

Think we're a good fit?

Let's talk.

(317) 572-8050

tbhcreative.com/start