



**What to Expect When You're Expecting....  
Your website that is!**

*Debunking the website design process so your project is fun  
and stress-free.*

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## Introduction

Are you getting ready to begin building your first website? Congratulations if you are. The experience can be liberating and like a proud parent watching their child take their first steps into the new world, you'll watch (and work first hand with) your website's development as it moves from concept to a living breathing site on the Internet.

You are probably wondering how anything this extensive could be easy or fun, but with a bit of knowledge on how the process works, who you'll be working with and how you'll work together, you can have a fun, easy and stress free project. Promise! Sound like something you're interested in? Good, let's take a peek at how it all works!

## Who's my Project Team?

From start to finish, many people will have worked to make your website a reality. Before we discuss the path your project will travel, it's important to know the different team members you may work with and their specific role on your project so you feel comfortable. Because each project is different and no two are alike, I've selected the five most common team players you'll work alongside.

### Project Manager

Your project manager is your main contact throughout the project and works to ensure your project is on time and on budget. As you move through the different phases of your website's design (planning, graphic design, programming, and launch) your project manager will act as liaison with other team members such as your graphics artist, copywriter, programmer and webmaster (more on those in a minute) and will be your go-to person for questions.

The project manager will assist you with completing the Website Planning Worksheet for your website. Together you will review your answers, and set both financial and visual goals for your website.

After your worksheet is completed, your project manager will complete two documents for you:

1. Scope of Work: This is the project's statement of work and quoted cost document.
2. Website Design Agreement: This is the contract for the work outlined in the Scope of Work. It details payment arrangements, copyright laws, warranty and other valuable information.

### Graphics Artist/Designer

A graphic's artist is to a website what a dress designer is to a dress. They create the pattern that the programmer will follow. The graphics artist's job is to create a visual sample of what your new website will look like, taking into account your marketing strategy and design message and your responses from the Website Planning

Worksheet. You are matched to a designer based on the combination of their individual talents to your specific needs.

The visual sample or “mockup concept” is a graphic display of your website’s homepage and in some cases interior website pages such as an About Us. The mockup is delivered in the form of a jpg or gif file or picture. The project manager will review the mockup with you, suggest revisions and help you finalize your design.

### Copywriter

The copywriter is a professional words master. A website copywriter’s job is to take the known facts about you and your business and create an interesting read throughout your website (in come cases, just on individual pages) which is designed to help attract readers further into your website and generate sales\*. You will most likely meet directly with the copywriter via phone and also email during the copywriting process. Not all projects will require a professional copywriter.

\*Individual goals will vary.

### Programmer

Just as the dressmaker sews the dress, the programmer builds the website in special programs which create readable HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language). HTML code is the language that the web browsers on the Internet read and translate into beautiful and attractive web pages.

### Webmaster

Think of your webmaster as you would your car mechanic. Typically you take your car in for oil changes and tune ups to the mechanic to keep it running smoothly and in tip top shape. Your webmaster is an important key player *after* the launch of your website. The webmaster’s primary job is to maintain the site when necessary with text or graphics changes. Additionally, you may employ a webmaster who can do keyword research, setup Pay-Per-Click campaigns and all manner of other services which keep your website fresh and interesting.

So now that you know who you may encounter on your team, let’s discuss the protocol involved during the project’s design.

## **What’s the Design Protocol?**

Not all web design firms operate within the same parameters so I’m going to explain the successful method we’ve adopted for our client’s projects.

### Step 1: Planning

Just as a dress designer must have a completed dress pattern to sew the dress from, we must have a solid understanding of what you aim to achieve with your website and an idea of *how* to meet your goals before one graphic is designed or one line of code written. Information is power, and the power that drives your project forward is a clear understanding of what is needed.

During the first two weeks, your project manager's primary goal is to work with you to complete the [Website Planning Worksheet](#). This is the time to let your imagination run free and brainstorm with an open mind! This worksheet helps you nail down (on paper) everything from financial goals for your website to the colors you would like to see used in its design. Typically the worksheet is completed in the first week and the meeting to review your responses (and make any adjustments necessary) within three to five business days after the worksheet is submitted.

If you have not already registered a domain name, your project manager will work with you to secure a suitable domain name for your business. Domain name selection is an important part of having a healthy, thriving Internet business. Learn the [tips and tricks of selecting the best name for your business](#). We've put together the most common domain name selection do's and don'ts to save you time and money.

Some places to register your domain names are:

Superb Domain Registration – [www.superbdomainregistration.com](http://www.superbdomainregistration.com)

GoDaddy – [www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)

Register.net – [www.register.net](http://www.register.net)

If you would like your project manager to assist you with the registration process, please ask.

## Step 2: Graphics Design

Your project manager will provide the graphic's designer with your worksheet responses and ideas for the physical layout and design. The designer will then prepare physical mockup concepts modeling your new website's appearance.

This concept will include elements such as:

- header and footer graphics
- website navigation links (buttons or text)
- place holder text (to demonstrate how text would appear)
- newsletter signup (if applicable)

The time to receive the first mockup concepts is one to two weeks. Depending on your individual requests and Scope of Work, your website's total cost will include anywhere from one to three concept mockup samples.

Your project manager will review each mockup concept with you. This is the time you choose a design (or combination of various elements from each design) and construct a final list of revisions. One to two rounds of revisions are included. The list of final revisions is sent to the graphic designer who modifies the mockup. You can expect the revisions process to take between three to five business days to complete. Once completed, your project manager will contact you to discuss the final changes and to receive programming approval for the final changes. Programming typically begins within three to five business days of receipt of your finalized graphics.

It is our goal to provide you with workable concepts which can be easily and lightly revised to meet your design goals. If at any point after the initial mockups have been

delivered you wish to start with new sketches or designs, an additional charge ranging from \$300-\$700 dollars will be due.

### Step 3: Programming/Content Development

The programming team constructs the HTML for your websites pages. During this time you will be working with your project manager to develop a Content List Timeline. This is a list of all individual pages for your website and logs:

- Who will author the page
- When it is due to your project manager
- How it will be received (email, fax, mail)

This timeline will be based on your schedule but also takes into account the project's overall timeline and completion date requirements. As each piece of media is received, your project manager will track it and ensure it is delivered to the programmer for placement into the website.

### Step 4: Testing/Hosting/Launch

Once programming is complete, the project moves into the final step of testing followed by launch. Testing is completed by our programming team to ensure that:

- links within the website and links to other websites are working properly
- page titles, sizes and fonts are consistent
- all content is displaying properly
- submission forms (if any) are working properly
- shopping cart features (if applicable) are working properly

You will work hands on with the project manager to personally review and test the website on our server prior to its live launch onto the Internet. This is usually done via an Internet meeting. Depending on the size of your website, testing usually takes between one to three business days.

Once final testing is completed, we will upload your website content onto the hosting server (more on that below).

## **Where Does my Website Live?**

Just as you need a place to park your car, you also need a place to park your website on the Internet. Think of your website's home on the Internet like the garage you park your car in. Your website's "garage" is called a Web Hosting Server. On the server, each website has an account which allots it a certain amount of storage space (garage size) for the content on your website as well as a certain amount of traffic that can navigate to it on the Internet. Typically you'll also have email capability and any other number of nifty features as well with your hosting account (blogs, photo galleries etc).

Unless you have already arranged hosting, we keep things as simple as possible by either hosting your website on our in-house hosting server or providing you a recommendation for where to host your website if necessary. You don't have to wait until Step 4 to learn about how hosting works and feel comfortable with the process!

[Click here](#) to discover time and money saving tips and learn how to select the right web hosting provider.

## **What Happens after Launch?**

Did you arrange for Superb Web Design to manage your website after launch? If so, you will sit back, relax and send us your changes as you need them to be completed. Your webmaster will work closely with you to make sure your website's content stays fresh by providing timely updates of materials you send.

All of our design projects include 30 days of hassle free web updates. Once outside the thirty days, if you are maintaining your website in-house within your business, you will now be given the reins to your website along with all necessary usernames and passwords so that you can take over.

### **About The Author**

Krista Garren is a website design consultant and webmaster who specializes in assisting clients with affordable Website Design and Internet Marketing so they aren't overcharged, blown up, or obliterated when taking their business to the Internet.

For information on [Krista's articles](#), or assistance with your next website design project, visit her website at <http://www.ridethewebandwin.com> for more details.