

Preparing for your Website

Under normal circumstances you must supply us with the actual content of your website prior to our working on the design and layout. This is because the amount of text and the number of images will usually have an effect on the layout, which in turn will have some effect on the design.

This document has been created to help you prepare the materials that we require to begin work on your site. If after reading this document you would like further help or advice, or you still have questions that are unanswered, please do not hesitate to contact us either by calling +44 (0) 1665 712 381 or by email to enquiries@northterminal.com and we will provide you with every possible assistance.

Looking for Ideas

If you are unsure of where to start with your content or you wish to take every opportunity to ensure that your site provides, at the very least, the same level of richness to your visitors as the competition, then it never hurts to spend a few hours on the Internet checking out sites that offer similar services to your own.

You should give serious thought to the following when contemplating the content of the site:

- ▶ Who are you trying to attract to your site? Who are your customers? These are questions we will ask of you, as good design should reflect the users of the site. For instance, a design that will appeal to a technical audience (engineers, technicians, etc.) will differ quite considerably to a design that appeals to artisans, enthusiasts, or the purchasing public. The content copy that is developed for the site should equally consider the answers to these questions, in terms of the language used and the depth of detail that you supply.
- ▶ What does your site aim to achieve? Are you trying to sell a product? If so, why buy from you? Are you trying to encourage customers to contact you? You may wish to offer some incentive to encourage your prospective customers to submit their contact information.

Content

The first task you must undertake prior to our beginning the site design is to prepare the textual content of the pages. This copy need not necessarily be specified down to the actual web pages on which you would like it to appear, as we will help you with the layout, though if you have already developed ideas of the layout the copy should be presented under headings that reflect this.

When writing your copy, you may wish to consider:

- ▶ The home page is the normal point of arrival for guests on your site. A few well chosen paragraphs that define who you are and what you can offer your customers, along with a brief summary of the services provided by the site. This will compel visitors to further browse your pages.
- ▶ A useful links page is a good method of improving the attractiveness of your site to the indexing systems of various search engines, as well as providing a helpful service to visitors to the site, your prospective customers. Useful links may be a list of websites on maintaining gardens if you are a gardening centre, or a list of your suppliers may also show that your stock is quality merchandise. If the latter applies to you, be careful that your suppliers website does not sell directly to the public!
- ▶ Do you wish to capture information from visitors to the site? Do you want to provide the facility for customers to supply you with information necessary to open a credit account via your website? Provide us with the details you require from your customers and we will design a form that will be submitted to the email address.



Graphics & Imagery

Some thought should be given to the images that you would like to place on the site. Ideally, these should be submitted to us at the same time as the textual content though if this is not possible, an indication of the pictures/images you intend to use along with the areas of text to which they relate will suffice.

Do you already have a logo? Your site will want to reflect this in its design, especially in terms of colour scheme. If you do not have anything to send us, maybe you would like us to create a logo for you or some additional artwork? Or, If you have a considerable marketing budget for this, you may wish to speak with a specialist graphic design company to create a brand for your business. If you wish, we can help you get in touch with the right people.

Website Linking Agreements

If either your suppliers or some of your customers are on the web it may be possible for you to arrange an agreement that they feature a link to your site from their own. This may be in the form of a mutual agreement where you feature a link to them in return, or a one-way agreement where the supplier/customer provides a link to you in return for some form of incentive.

Arranging for other sites to link to you is a particularly good method of increasing your ranking in search engine indices. And note that the higher a page that links to you is ranked, the more it will affect your own ranking in the index.

Please also note that it is normally acceptable to link to a site without explicit permission from the sites operator, permission must be sought to feature any branding material with the link, unless it is placed on the site stating it is there for you to use to this end.

And don't forget, if you have any further questions we will happily answer them if you get in touch by phone or email.