



# AN ALTERNATIVE WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Paul Hooper mbc



Today I want to talk about how, as a client, you might get started with a new website project, and work with me to prepare a website design brief.

## TYPICAL TYPES OF BRIEF

- ▶ Regain control of an existing website
- ▶ Update or enhance an existing website
- ▶ Replicate an existing website
- ▶ Build a new website or completely re-design what's there
- ▶ Follow current branding or develop the brand



These three statements describe the most common start points for my web projects but every once in a while a requirement arrives for a genuinely new website and of course this is an exciting prospect for me. Sometimes branding is already well defined, and sometimes it isn't.



Jonathan gave a superb talk on branding a couple of weeks ago and it is well worth speaking to him and to Claire about branding.

What I will reiterate is that your company's brand is much more than just the visual aspects such as logo, colour scheme, typography, etc.

It is the overall personality, tone of voice, and ethos of the business.

## WHAT BRIEF DO I GET?

- ▶ A logo
- ▶ A description or sketch of the planned home page
- ▶ A colour guide



It is fair to say, that for the majority of new websites or complete re-designs that I deal with, I receive a picture of the logo and a description of what the home pages should look like, possibly some ideas on colour, and very little else.

# CONTENT IS KING!

- ▶ Perhaps is a right brain vs left brain thing?
- ▶ Search engines like words
- ▶ Deliver your sales message and call to action



For me, the most important component of a website is the content, and for most websites, this is mainly text.

Perhaps my view is because I am more of a left brain person, but there are other reasons why the textual part of the content is so important.

Search engines use an index of websites built mainly around words and so the more relevant words you have in your website, the more likely it is to be found.

In most cases, your website's message and call to action will also take the form of words.

## WORK TO YOUR STRENGTHS

- ▶ Most business owners can describe their business verbally
- ▶ Successful business owners know what their clients want
- ▶ Business owners should have some understanding of how their clients will search for them on the web



If you agree with these three statements you'll see how someone requiring a new website should be able to start by writing down a draft of the text for their proposed website. This may be used directly or, better still, will provide a start point for specialists such as a copywriter, a marketing person, a branding specialist, a graphic designer, etc.

Rather than starting by thinking about what should go on your home page and what your logo should look like, think about your potential customers and what phrases they might type into Google in order to find you.

Write text for landing pages that is built around these key search phrases. At this stage don't worry about what other pages you will include in the site.

By starting with the content of the landing pages, you will naturally structure your site in a way that reflects the interests and priorities of your prospective customers rather than in a way that reflects the business owners view of his or her business.

Once you have prepared text for every landing page that you can think of, start to consider which products, services, or other aspects of the company these landing pages relate to and then prepare text for the more traditional core pages of your website and notes showing how each landing page links to a particular core page.

If you can produce this without thinking too much about the look of the website you will already be a long way down the search engine optimisation path.

You will have an excellent website specification that will get me off to a really good start for building your website. Better still, pass this to Claire to improve the copywriting, and to Jonathan as input help him with branding.

That's really all I have to say this morning.

Thanks.