

## 10 Questions Before Beginning Web Development

What every prospective online homeowner should consider before breaking ground

### Purpose

When we're approached about beginning a new Web presence, eCommerce system, or online application, era//404 likes to pose 10 questions to our clients. This not only stirs up ideas to begin the process, it also allows all parties to fully explore what the process of Web development entails.

### Questions

#### 1. What are three words you would use to describe your business in terms of *focus*, *pace* and *culture*?

Oftentimes, the description of your business is identical to your Web site. If your business *focus* is technology, customer relations, politics or health, your site should have a similar feel. Is your *pace* dynamic and fast-moving (like an online service or new product) or conservative and rock-solid (like a bank or a law firm)? Your business's culture (fun, friendly, approachable, professional, formal, methodical, meticulous) should also be represented in your Web site's design.

Focus: \_\_\_\_\_ Pace: \_\_\_\_\_ Culture: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. What are the general purposes for your Web site?

Your site should have a primary and secondary purpose (and sometimes even a tertiary one). Purposes could be to increase sales and awareness, to assist in distribution of products or services, informational, educational, eCommerce, subscription-based marketing, customer feedback, ISO or employee intranet, employment postings, product support, entertainment or forums.

1st: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Will this site be part of an existing marketing strategy?

Does your business already have a marketing strategy in place with previous printed collateral material, web sites, or advertising campaigns? If it does, please send samples of these pieces to assist in ensuring the site works within the framework of your existing strategy. If it doesn't, or if you'd like to deviate from your existing strategy, can you provide a description and/or examples of conceiving for a new strategy? Would you be interested in working with era//404 to develop this new cross-media campaign?

- |                                                                           |                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, this site is part of an existing strategy.  | <input type="checkbox"/> We're developing a strategy in-house and will provide samples and a description. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, this site varies from our existing strategy. | <input type="checkbox"/> We're interested in working with era//404 to develop a cross-media strategy.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We currently do not have a strategy.             |                                                                                                           |

#### 4. What reactions (calls-to-action) are you hoping to achieve with this new Web site?

While this question hinges on #2 (general purpose), it's important to outline your customer's reaction to determine if the site is successful. If the site is information-based, this can be monitored with statistics. Other reactions could be: customer contact, online sales, forum/chat participation, increased customer retention, decreased phone, fax or email support calls, growth of marketing opportunities (mailing lists, newsletters, event participation and RSVPs), etc.

1st: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd: \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. How do you plan on maintaining your site?

era//404 provides a number of maintenance opportunities including an online content management system (CMS), maintenance contracts and on-site/telephone tutorials for manual site updates. If you plan on updating your site at regular intervals, which opportunities interest you?

- CMS     Maintenance Contract     Training     Other\*

\*Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

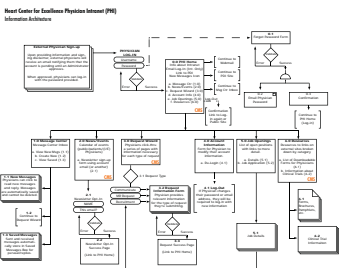
### DID YOU KNOW?

In addition to Web and New Media Design and Development, era//404 also provides the following services:

-  Print Design     IT and Networking
-  Identity Design     Motion Graphics
-  3D Graphics     Environmental Design

### INFORMATION ARCHITECTURES

Information Architectures (IAs) show detailed workflow processes for navigation and functionality.



**6a. Do you have direct competition?**

Providing era//404 with links to competition sites enables us to gauge what your competition is doing, how they've been successful, how they've failed, and what makes your business different. Please list some links to competitor sites here:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**6b. How are you different from competition?**

If you have direct competition, please list why your business is different and what you do that makes your business unique. What do you do that is different from these other businesses?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Which existing site designs appeal to you?**

Existing site designs do not have to be competition, nor do they have to even be in the same industry. List some sites that you feel satisfy your general purpose and embrace your company's *focus, pace* and *culture*.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Aside from your calls-to-action, what are your short-term and long-term goals for this site?**

Do you expect this site to grow, to have new sections, to have new features? Will this site work in tandem with other sites that your business may have? Do you expect changes in offerings, strategy or functionality? While era//404 designs all sites to be flexible, we believe pre-planning and preparation can assist in ensuring your site is cost effective and successful at attaining short- and long-term goals.

Short-term: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Long-term: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. What additional materials do you have to assist us in providing you with an estimate and timeline?**

Before beginning design and development, era//404 provides site Mechanicals (wireframes) and Information Architectures (IAs) to describe site layout, pages and functionality. Do these materials already exist? Can you provide us with sample page content, photography, identity pieces and artwork? What is your estimated budget and site launch target? Check all that apply.

- Mechanicals
- Information Architecture
- Design Storyboards
- Digital Content
- Digital Identity
- Artwork/Photography\*
- Budget: \_\_\_\_\_
- Launch Target: \_\_\_\_\_
- Copywriter\*

\* If you do not currently have a copywriter or photographer, would you be interested in working with era//404 to provide these services?

**10. What are your expectations to deem this Web site a success?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**MECHANICALS**

Mechanicals show visual representations of sites without content or graphics to prepare for content organization.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

era//404 has a network of 35 designers, developers and artisans who specialize in different areas of the industry?

- Illustration
- Printing/Production
- Copywriting
- IT and Networking
- CAD Drafting
- Photography
- Market Research
- Animation