

## GRAPHICS / IT - TASK 8: DESIGNING A COMPANY WEBSITE

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*Note: This task may be assigned to a member of the Graphics/IT Department or a member of another department who has web design skills.*

### VE Departments Involved

Graphics/IT  
Sales and Marketing

### Month for Activity/Time Frame

November / Three weeks

### Outcomes

*Employees will:*

- Plan a website design for the firm.
- Develop a website for the firm.

### Activities/Strategies

#### Plan the Site

- Convene a department meeting and brainstorm all of the aims for the website with the departments and write a short mission statement. The following questions can be used as starting points for conversation:
  - What is the main idea for our website – what is its purpose?
  - What do we want our visitors to come away from our website with?
  - What do we want to avoid in our website?
  - Who is our target audience? Members of the department can brainstorm descriptors for this target audience. For example, if the website is for a new record label that produces hip-hop music, then the target audience is going to be urban high school and college students. Some descriptors for those groups are: young, urban, street-smart, club-goers, etc.
- Members of the department should find examples of websites that are aimed at a similar audience and note any similarities found among them in terms of design, content, etc.
- Based on the students' research, choose a basic structure and create a "look" for the website.
- Students should begin to gather content based on their research. Content includes: text, images, sounds, etc.
- Explain that a Website is a collection of Web pages, which you can view on the Web.
- A Website usually includes a home page, the first page of a site that contains general information and hyperlinks that connect the home page to the other pages that make up the site.
- Define the Web hierarchy. Use post-it notes to design the navigation of the site. It is important to know how pages will be linked to each other.

**Create the Site**

- Facilitator will ascertain the skill level of those who offer to develop the Website. There are a number of software programs available to tackle this task, from the simplest, like Word, to more complex packages, like FrontPage, Dreamweaver, and Flash.
- If the VE does not have a staff member who is skilled in developing a web page, secure the services of another VE in this business and/or call VEC for assistance.
- Review the document *Website Dos and Don'ts* before starting the development of the site.
- The content of each page should be written by the copywriter who works in conjunction with a member or members of the Sales and Marketing Department. Remember that a website can be a powerful marketing tool that reaches a vast audience.

**Test the Site**

- View the completed website on different computers, test all the links, and note any changes that need to be made.
- Ask several people who were not involved with the website creation to navigate through the website to offer suggestions and point out problems. A survey based on the original mission statement and ideas may be created and conducted.
- Revise the website as needed.
- Send completed web files or link to VEC, who will post them on the VE website.

**Online Follow-Up****Copyright-Free Images**

- Most websites that feature copyright-free images contain links to other, similar websites. Below are sites worth trying:
  - <http://creativecommons.org/>
  - <http://build.tripod.lycos.com/imagebrowser/index.html>
  - <http://www.freestockphotos.com/>
  - <http://www.freebyte.com/>
- Have students find examples of websites that are aimed at audiences similar to the one they have chosen for their website and note any similarities found among them in terms of design, content, etc.

**Materials/Resources****Design Resources**

- <http://www.colormix.com>: Stock photography at affordable prices.
- <http://www.pageresource.com>: Web development tutorial and information site.

**Books**

- The Web Designer's Idea Book, Vol. 2: More of the Best Themes, Trends and Styles in Website Design* by Patrick McNeil, F&W Media, 2010.
- When Search Meets Web Usability* by Shari Thurow and Nick Musica, Peachpit Press (Pearson), 2009.
- A Practical Guide to Designing for the Web* by Mark Bolton, Mark Bolton Design, 2009.

### **Web Software**

Microsoft: Word, Publisher (Contains templates to help develop sites.)

Adobe: Flash, Dreamweaver (Contains templates to help develop sites.)

[SmartStore.biz](#)

### **Mastery and Assessment**

A final website in which all the links work.