IBSwebpro Web Design Services

What to Expect From Your Web Design Team

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Introduction

Building a Web site, whether it's for your business, or for a hobby or family is an exciting experience, full of hope and promise for the future. It can also be a stressful experience until you know it's done and is exactly what you're looking for. We believe that we can help reduce some of the stress associated with the uncertainty surrounding your project by making sure you understand "what happens next" after you've paid someone to do this work.

We believe in transparency, which means that we've gone to great lengths to provide you with visibility into the Web site design and build process where possible, as well as an abundance of means to talk to a human if you ever have question or concerns.

Our Web site design and development process is made up of five (5) distinct stages, including:

1. **Requirements**. This is where we gather information and content from you to build your Web site. Think of it as developing a blueprint before you buy materials or the old construction adage, "measure twice, and cut once."
2. **Pre-Build**. Before we set out to build anything, we document requirements and solicit your approval.
3. **Build**. Now that we've finalized the plans, we build. Should be a pretty solid draft at the end of this stage.
4. **Review and Comment.** The initial build is complete, time for your review and comment. Based on the pre-build work, we expect this to be minor with few adjustments needed.
5. **Test, QA, and Finish.** We incorporate any changes requested in the Review and Comment stage, run the site through a battery of tests, and validate functionality before considering the Website complete. Note, if you've provided personalized content or paid for content development, we will implement that as well.

We'll dig deeper into each step below, and hope to answer any of your questions below. If you have more, please do not hesitate to speak with your Client Coordinator.

Glossary of Terms

Client Coordinator: Communicates with customers to review initial design scope, communicates information to designers, the Client Coordinator works with designers in project delivery.

Joomla: An award-winning, open-source content management system which enables us to build Web sites and powerful online applications. Many aspects, including its ease-of-use and extensibility, have made Joomla the most popular Web site software available. http://www.joomla.org/about-joomla.html

Word Press: An open-source platform we use to develop our web sites. Using Word Press allows us to utilize administrative areas for customers to edit and update their web sites at their convenience.

osCommerce: State of the art standard platform to build online stores. osCommerce allows store owners to add/edit/delete product categories and prices.

Content: All the text, images, and various elements that go into the body of your web site pages.

Development: The period when your site is still under construction.

Review and Comment Phase: A round of delivering content, having it added by designers, and having customers view the finished requests. At this time, customers may ask for specific adjustments to requests before a coordination step is considered complete.
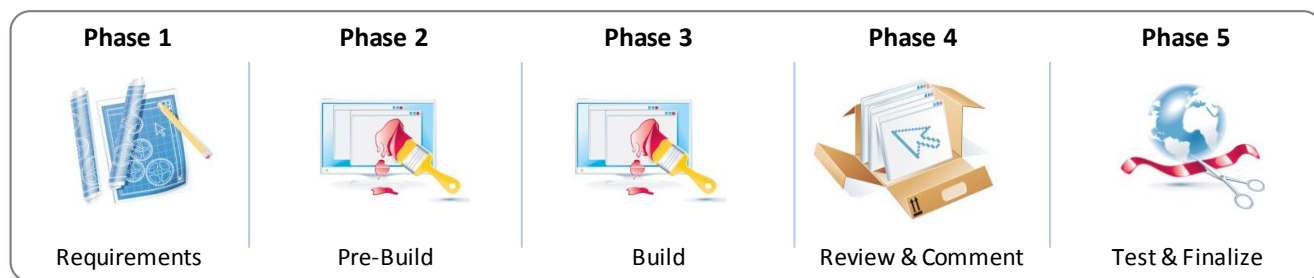
Test, QA, and Finalization: When all design elements have been completed and implemented, and any personalized content provided to us has been implemented, we test, and set the project to a complete status. A complete status is one where a designer is no longer needed, and your Website is awaiting your personalized content, or your decision to publish. We will also provide training on how to edit or update your Website, and/or how to contact a maintenance engineer if you have purchased a maintenance agreement.

Maintenance: All work that would require a developer has been completed. Now, any minor remaining work can be completed by Maintenance engineers or by you as we transition into the Maintenance phase. Our sites are developed on platforms that allow easy access points for all the minor edits and updates that happen during the life of any web site. We've utilized administrative log ins to your web site where you can update text, phone numbers, upload new images, and even create new pages. At the beginning of the Maintenance phase, we encourage you to access these areas of your site. If you require assistance in the Maintenance of your web site, we offer monthly Maintenance plans.

The Five Stages of Development

As noted above, our Web site development process has five (5) distinct stages, which are shown in Figure 1.0 below:

Figure 1.0: My Web Site Development and Launch Process

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Requirements	Pre-Build	Build	Review & Comment	Test & Finalize

Please see the sections below for a more detailed explanation of each phase; we describe what we're doing, what we may need from you to be successful, the estimated timeline to complete each phase and the overall project status.

Please note, timelines for completion are estimates only, and should not be viewed as a commitment to complete a project on or before a certain date. Your client coordinator is always the best person to contact to discuss the estimated completion date for your project.

Phase 1 – Requirements

This is the step where we begin to turn your vision into reality. It's never good practice for us to begin building your Web site without knowing more details about your business, about the messages you want to get across to your prospective customers, about your style, about the products you want to sell, etc. As such, we will be asking you to participate in some way in this and almost every stage in the process.

What we're doing in this phase:
We are assigning a project team, including a Client Coordinator who will reach out to you within a few days of completing your purchase to deliver a project kickoff call. We are also reviewing the project details and assigning you an action item to provide as much information as you can to help us build your site.

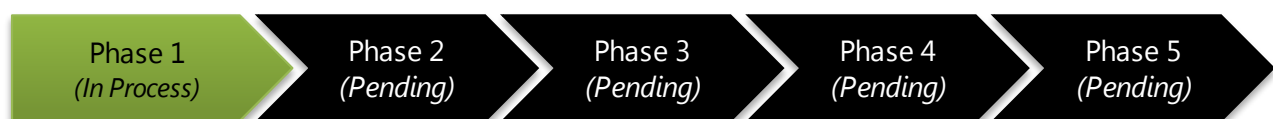| *What we need from you in this phase:* |
|---|
| 1. Your design layout and color selections (unless you want a custom site).
2. If you requested a custom site, we will provide you with a maximum of 2 mock-up designs and 3 revisions thereafter.
    a. The initial mock-up is created based on supplied information, and presented on our demo server.
    b. Based on your feedback, we make necessary adjustmets to the first mock-up and produce a second mock-up concept.
    c. You will then have the opportunity to choose the mock-up or elements from each to move forward with the design process with up to 3 more revisions to complete the site design.
    d. Once the design is approved, we move into actual site build or development
3. To validate the scope of the project and to help us ensure nothing is missed.
We can't begin working on your project until we've received this basic information from you. ***If you ever need content development help, please let us know.*** |

How long will it take to complete this phase?			
Days	Weeks	Months	Importance
5 to 7	About 1	-	**Critical**

Design Project Path to Completion – Current Status

Phase 1 *(In Process)* → Phase 2 *(Pending)* → Phase 3 *(Pending)* → Phase 4 *(Pending)* → Phase 5 *(Pending)*

At the end of this phase, your project will be **10%** complete from a design perspective.

We depend on you to provide us with the information we need to begin developing your Web site. We appreciate how busy you can be, and can provide options for developing this information if necessary. If you are interested in learning more about content development services, please ask your Client Coordinator.

Phase 2 – Pre-Build

In this phase we've completed the kickoff call where we've discussed the scope of the project in detail, documented all aspects of the project, discussed the project team and how to reach them, and if we uncovered any inconsistencies between your expectations for the project and ours, hopefully we will have resolved them by now.

This is the pre-build phase, and is an extremely important step in the overall Website design process. Let's discuss.

| *What we're doing in this phase:* |
|---|
| We document everything we learned in the kickoff call, and focus on the design elements of the project. We're building our plan for the next phase (build) based upon the scope of the package you purchased and your design direction. Once we have that plan together, we will reach out again via phone to discuss with you. Please note, we cannot move forward to the next phase (build) until this call has been successfully completed and we have your agreement to proceed. |

What we need from you in this phase:
Mostly your time and vision. This is the phase where we translate your vision into a working plan. We will present our plan in this phase, and need your feedback to make sure we get it right before we build. Our goal in this phase is to define and finalize the specific build instructions before building, significantly increasing the likelihood that you will love the output of the build phase.

How long will it take to complete this phase?

Days	Weeks	Months	Importance
5 to 7	About 1	-	**Critical**

Design Project Path to Completion – Current Status

Phase 1 *Complete*	Phase 2 *(In Process)*	Phase 3 *(Pending)*	Phase 4 *(Pending)*	Phase 5 *(Pending)*
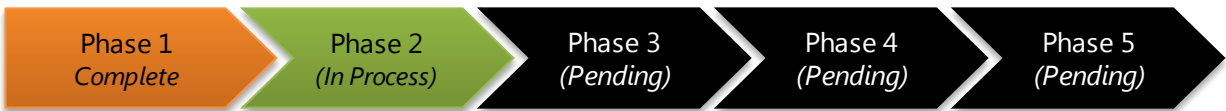
At the end of this phase, your project will be **25%** complete from a design perspective.

Phase 3 – Build

You've done your part by providing us with the information we need to get started; now it's our turn. It's time for us to start building your new Web site.

What we're doing in this phase:

We are literally building your Web site according to the specifications defined in the pre-build phase. From implementing your selected colors, to custom logo's, to building Flash or other animation, to building your online store with your products, to writing and implementing custom content, in this stage, we're building what was discussed and agreed upon.


What we need from you in this phase:

Not much, really. Again, this is where we build the site we discussed. However, if you plan to accept credit cards, now is a good time to apply for your merchant account, as we'll need this information before your site is complete. Otherwise, we're moving forward until we have something to show you. A link to a development version of your project will be provided to you during this phase.

How long will it take to complete this phase?

Days	Weeks	Months	Importance
7 to 15	1 to 3	Less than 1	**Critical**

Design Project Path to Completion – Current Status

Phase 1 Complete	Phase 2 Complete	Phase 3 (In Process)	Phase 4 (Pending)	Phase 5 (Pending)
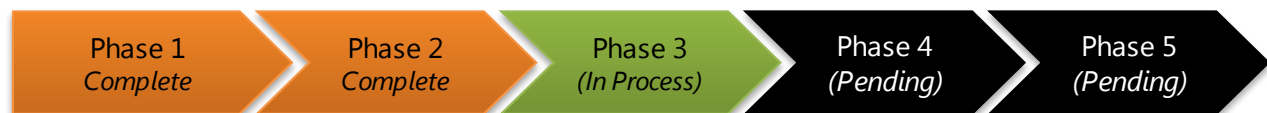
At the end of this phase, your project will be **90%** complete from a design perspective.

Basically we take the information you provided to us and validated with us in the previous step and begin building. We build everything from the Web pages themselves, to main navigation, to setting up products to be sold, to fixing bugs, etc. Based on the pre-build meeting, we believe we have a solid plan on what to build, so the end result is not expected to be what you might consider to be a rough draft, it should be a fully functional version of your Website which needs a few tweaks, and your personalized content.

Phase 4 – Review and Comment

We have completed the primary build phase, and now we'll hand it over to you for review and comment.

| |
|---|
| *What we're doing in this phase:* |
| We present the site we've built for you, and give you and provide you with an opportunity to review the site and verify that the design specifications we documented and reviewed during the pre-build phase have been implemented. Based on the pre-meetings we've held, the output will be very close to a final version, less very minor, superficial changes and adjustments. If you have any very minor changes you'd like to make, we allow one round of changes to your site. If you'd like to make other types of changes (major design changes, additional site functionality, etc), those can be discussed as a follow-up design request once this project is completed. |

What we need from you in this phase:
Ultimately, we need your time and prompt attention. We ask that you spend some time to review our work, verify that the site is built according to the pre-build document, and make note of any very minor changes you want made. If any changes are needed, you can send that list to us via email or we can discuss it with you over the phone before any changes are made.

How long will it take to complete this phase?

Days	Weeks	Months	Importance
5 to 7	1	-	**Critical**

Design Project Path to Completion – Current Status

Phase 1 *Complete*	Phase 2 *Complete*	Phase 3 *Complete*	Phase 4 *(In Process)*	Phase 5 *(Pending)*
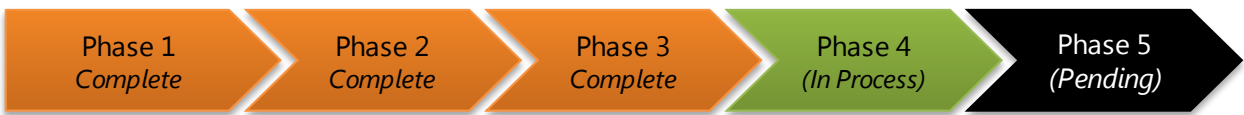
At the end of this phase, your project will be **95%** complete from a design perspective.

Ideally this phase should take less than one week to complete if everyone does their part. If we receive timely feedback from you about any minor changes you require, we can implement those changes shortly after we get them from you.

We do work on multiple projects simultaneously, making it possible – although not likely – that we will not be able to implement the changes you request as soon as we receive them. Our goal, though, is to give you what you want, and will place a higher priority on finishing in-process projects than on starting projects where we don't have enough information.

How many opportunities will I get to make changes to My Website during development? This is one of our most frequently asked questions**. The answer is you will be offered two main designs (one at a time), and you will have the option to make up to three main revisions for each design. At that stage we expect to have an approved design. If you require further designs, they will be charged for separately. Once the development has started with the approved design, you'll have one primary opportunity to make changes to your Website.** We like to take the time up-front in the kickoff and pre-build calls to make sure we know what you want, which is why we wait to begin development until we've gathered the necessary data, and finalized our plans. We know changes – big or small – can be time consuming and expensive, and we try to avoid them whenever possible. We do, however, expect relatively small changes to be made once you've seen the Website, and are happy to make them so you get what you want.

Please deliver any changes to us in bulk, i.e., please spend some time to review each page and note as many changes as you can, and send them all to us at the same time. We've found that multiple emails with small changes can get lost, and a bulk list is much more productive for both sides.

The nature of changes we expect in this phase:

Please note, our hope is that you **LOVE** the Web site we've built for you, and that you don't have any changes, but if you do, below is an explanation of the nature of the changes we expect.

- **Primary review**: Based on the kickoff and pre-build calls, we collected information from you, validated choices and functionality, identified and resolved issues and conflicts, prior to beginning work. The implication of that up-front work is that we know what we're building before we build it (measure twice, cut once – the old carpenters analogy), and that the kinds of changes allowed in this review are expected to be and are limited to minor cosmetic or very minor functional changes. More specifically:
  - Fixing typos
  - Minor color changes
  - Image or other personalized content addition / replacement
  - Other

  Please provide a **BULK** list of changes to your client coordinator.

  Please note: we will of course fix bugs which impair with normal functioning of your Website before it can be launched.

- **Subsequent changes**: Once the primary review has been completed, any further fine tuning or other functional changes can be accommodated by purchasing one of our maintenance plans or additional programming hours. If maintenance is not purchased, we will provide you with training on how to make personalized content edits.

Will you ever say no to a change request? It's best for us to just address this topic up front so we're all on the same page. It's not a simple yes or no answer to this question, unfortunately. We try our best to accommodate change requests where possible, but may also require that repeated requests for small or larger changes be handled once the main Web site project is complete, and maintenance has begun. In most cases this is a fixed price project, which includes a fixed amount of development labor, and once this labor allocation is exhausted, we

will have to table further requests and discuss the best approach for managing any remaining change requests as part of your maintenance plan, or through a change order.

Phase 5 – Test and Finalize

By the time we make it to this phase, we're very close to completion, but, because this is still a software development effort, we need to test all aspects of the Web site before it's ready for prime time.

What we're doing in this phase:
We are testing everything, finalizing the design, completing any last minute fixes, making our final backup of your Web site, delivering all the files we need to your host, and notifying you that your Website is ready for any further personalization or to be published.

What we need from you in this phase:
Not much, just review your new Website for any issues, add your personalized content, ask us to help you if you like, and then get ready to publish!

How long will it take to complete this phase?

| Days	Weeks	Months	Importance
2 to 3	Less than 1	-	**High**

Design Project Path to Completion – Current Status

Phase 1 *Complete*	Phase 2 *Complete*	Phase 3 *Complete*	Phase 4 *Complete*	Phase 5 *(In Process)*

At the end of this phase, your project will be **100%** complete from a design perspective.

Typically this is a very quick phase to complete, we test as we develop, and you benefit from our experience and methodology by incorporating best practices into the development phase, which is designed to reduce bugs and errors and deliver a high quality end product.

Overall Project Timeline:

Phase 1 5 – 7 Days	Phase 2 5 – 7 Days	Phase 3 7 – 15 Days	Phase 4 5 – 7 Days	Phase 5 2 – 3 Days
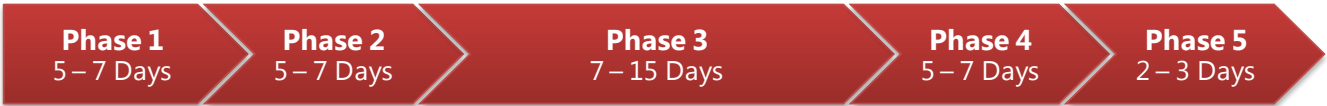
Estimated* Project Timeline
24 – 39 Days
* Assumes timely customer participation

When do we consider a project done?

Ideally we consider a project done when you have the Web site you want.

Our criteria for project completion are as follows:

- Development and implementation of design selection or custom design choices is complete, this includes custom color choices and any logos we've designed for you.
- Development and implementation of all Web pages purchased as part of the project are complete.
- If you've provided personalized content (images, text, etc.) to us during the development process we will implement, otherwise we will implement sample content where appropriate. If you've purchased content development or selection services, that will be completed and implemented.
- All online contact forms purchased have been implemented.
- The online store has been implemented (if applicable).
- Any custom options purchased have been implemented.
- All major graphic design work (headers, footers, backgrounds, etc) has been completed.
- All hyper linking and navigation has been completed.
- All back-end coding has been completed.
- You've had one primary opportunity to review and make comments to your Web site project.
- We've tested everything and fixed any known bugs.
- We've moved all necessary files to the appropriate directory within your hosting account and have published your Web site.

Based on experience with hundreds of customers, we occasionally see a mismatch of expectations related to the number of times changes can be made, and the scope of these changes.

> *Once a design selection has been made – custom or otherwise – we cannot implement a significant change to that design selection as part of the standard package. We consider this type of change as structural, and is akin to starting over. This kind of change, if requested, would require the project to be re-quoted, and is likely to incur additional costs.*

The kinds of changes which are supported during the Review and Comment phase include:

- Substituting or changing content (text, images, products, descriptions).
- Adjusting page titles, images, menu text
- Adding or dropping links
- Other minor changes

> *We strongly encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity provided during the development of the project to make changes which are considered to be in scope.*

> *We reserve the right to limit the number and scope of changes, and will only do this if requests become excessive or unreasonable and delay web site completion. We want you to have your Website, and often times it's best to simply declare yourself done, publish your site, and make changes after your customers have had a chance to interact with it. After all, your Web site should be considered a living project (of course we know it's not alive), and needs to evolve as your business evolves.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I have to provide you with my content?

To put it simply, you really don't have to provide us with content. The major strength of our service (we believe) is to provide the expertise to give you the Website you want. We don't, however, know the ins and outs of your business, what appeals to your customers, etc. That's where your expertise comes into play. We need you to provide personalized content to us to make your Website come alive. We encourage you to think about a Website designer as a contractor you hire to build a house; we can build you your dream house, but wouldn't dare decorate it for you. If you give us your decorating (content) choices during the build, we'll install them for you. If you need time to think about what you want, no problem, we'll provide guidance on how to add your content when you're ready, and if you have a maintenance contract, we'll do it for no additional cost. If you would like us to help write some content for you, we can do that too, please contact your Client Coordinator for more details.

Please note, if you are not able to provide content during any active phase of the project, we will add sample content in all appropriate areas.

Q: How do I provide my content to you?

A: We provide each customer with an FTP account to submit all content. By using FTP, we have all content in a central location, it's documented, everyone can access it, etc. Experience has shown that by using multiple delivery sources like personal email or work email can be difficult to manage, people don't always check personal email, etc.

Q: What is the difference between 'design' and 'personalization'?

A: We do make a distinction between design and personalization as it relates to your Website project. In most cases our customers hire us to build them a first class Website, period. When we 'build' or 'design' the Website, our focus is on the true development tasks which are required to meet the requirements you defined when the project began, essentially, what you want the Website to do from a functional perspective. Personalization is what you want the Website to say. Moreover, it's directly related to your business, your group, your family, etc., and that is something only you can provide, either in written form which we can implement, or through the purchase of content development services. We make this 'design' versus 'personalization' distinction because in cases where your personalized content is not provided to us during the natural course of the design or build phase, we will continue to do our job of finishing the technical aspects of the project which require a developer and implement sample or generic content, and either implement your personalized content during the maintenance phase (if a maintenance agreement is purchased), or provide you with instruction to implement your personalized content on your own.

Q: Tell me about my project team and how I communicate with them?

A: Our design program works on multiple customer projects at a time. Therefore, it is likely that the team members that are assigned to your project are working on others as well.

Over time, we've found that the best and most productive model is to provide you with a primary Client Coordinator as your point of contact to the design team. Your Client Coordinator acts as the bridge between you and the development team to communicate changes, requests, issues, etc., and is your escalation point in the

event you have any concerns which need to be addressed right away. We like to keep our developers and engineers focused on yours and other customers' projects, and as such do not provide their contact information.

Also, the activities associated with a Web site development effort ebb and flow according to a number of variables, including resource specialties, vacation or sick time, waiting for content, waiting for comment, testing, etc. As such, we will likely have more than one person actually working your project during its lifetime with us. This ebb and flow allows us to work on multiple projects at a time without significantly impacting individual projects. Your Client Coordinator will always be available and responsive to any questions or requests you may have. They can be contacted via phone, email or through submitting a ticket on the support portal http://support.ibspoint.com

Q: How long will it take to complete my project?
A: The short answer is, it varies from project to project based on a number of factors, including; what you want the Web site to do and say, i.e., your requirements, whether or not you can provide us with personalized content in a timely manner, i.e., can you send us products, or descriptions, or video, or pictures relatively quickly. If you have everything ready, then it's likely we can finish pretty quickly. We can also offer assistance in developing content if you wish.

 Please also see the overall project timeline estimate above, and well as our project completion criteria.

Q: How do I get in touch with my Client Coordinator and development team?
A: We provide three methods of communication for Client Coordinators. Within ServiceCentral, the My Team tab will list all the team members we've assigned to your project, and how to contact them. We've provided their work phone number, work email address, and in some cases, chat functionality, which is available during normal business hours.

Q: How often can I make changes to my design?
A: Please see Phase 4 for more details.

Q: What kind of changes can I make to my design?
A: Please see Phase 4 and the project completion criteria for details.

Q: Will the cost of the project ever change?
A: Nobody likes surprises, especially when they end up costing us more money, so we try to gather as much detail from you about what you want your Website to do and what you want it to look like (the scope) before we finalize a quote, so we end up at the right place at the end of the project, with no surprises. During Phase 1 of the design project, we will review the items that were purchased in order to verify that what you are looking to build is in fact what was purchased. If there are any discrepancies found, we can identify and address them quickly. If the scope changes after Phase 1 has completed, meaning if you ask us to change something and it's not covered by our change policy, it is likely to cost more to accommodate that change.

Q: Once my project is done, how do I make changes as my business needs change?
A: The Web site for your business can be considered a living thing (obviously it's not, but for this analogy, let's assume it is), and as your business changes, your Web site should as well. For this reason, most customers purchase a maintenance plan in conjunction with their design package. The maintenance plan gives you access to

maintenance engineers who can make the changes you request to your Web site. Realistically, maintenance is not the vehicle to completely re-design or make significant changes to your Web site. Rather, it is the time to add products and prices, change descriptions, announce promotions, fix typos, etc.

If, however, you feel comfortable maintaining your Web site without the help of a maintenance engineer, a maintenance plan is not required, and you are free to make the changes yourself.

Please note, if you do decide to maintain your Web site yourself, please make backup copies of all site files **BEFORE** beginning to make changes, just in case something happens. Please be aware that any issues caused by customer site changes will require an additional cost to fix.