

General Needs Assessment Questionnaire

The purpose of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire is to assist project stakeholders in defining the initial scope and objectives of the project from a business perspective. Based on these core business needs, the Web development team, led by the project manager, will suggest appropriate web-based solutions. Since there are crucial tradeoffs between cost, speed of deployment, and the quality of features and functionality, it is important to clearly define scope and objectives.

The project profiler is comprised of three parts.

- Background and Goals
- Audience, Content, and Functionality
- The Field Trip

Background and Goals

Company

Please provide corporate and industry descriptions, including competitors, along with a brief critique of their sites. Include contact information and a description of the group who will be working on the project:

- Who are the decision makers?
- Who are the other members of the project team?
- What are the roles of everyone involved on the project team?
- What human resources do you have for various stages of the process?

Project Deliverables

- What is the mission statement or summary of your project?
- What are the basic goals of this project? (e.g., branding/identity reinforcement, improved access to information, direct sales, corporate communication, etc.)
- What outcome will make this project successful? How will you measure success?
- What are your schedule requirements?
- What is the budget for this project? Is there an acceptable budget range, depending on the level and comprehensiveness of services provided? Please explain.
- Describe any work that has been done toward designing/redesigning a new Web site.
- Will the Web site reinforce an existing branding or marketing strategy? How?
- Discuss any identity/branding assets (logos, other artwork, and fonts) or issues.

Business Priorities

Rank the following, in order of importance:

- A Web strategy that fits with our corporate strategy
- A Web strategy that fits with our marketing strategy
- Repurposing existing content
- Creating a community of dedicated visitors
- Quality execution (graphics, writing, navigation, etc.)
- Time to market
- Ease of maintenance
- Doing better than our competition on the Web
- High traffic in terms of return visitors and page views
- Membership sign-ups and/or newsletter subscriptions
- Staying within the budget
- Sending the message that we know the Web and use it appropriately

Audience, Content, and Functionality

Audience

- What types of visitors do you want to attract?
- What are your goals for each type of visitor?
- What are your goals for these products/services?

Content

- Where will content come from? Will it be new, repurposed, or both?
- How often will you add new content?
- Who will update the content?

Functionality

- What functional requirements do you believe to be necessary? (e.g., download areas, database-driven Web pages, commerce, catalog, applications, etc.)
- Who will update these functions?
- Are there extraordinary security issues?
- Are there other technical issues or limitations?
- Have you budgeted for hosting and maintenance of the site? If so, what is your budget?
- Who will maintain the site contents?
- How will the site be served/hosted?
- What types of legacy systems/databases are in place?
- What is your long-term plan for the site?

The Field Trip

This part of the profile is very important. The more work you put into it, the more your project will benefit. Find the three highest-quality sites (more is better) on the Web that relate to your project in the following categories:

- Branding in a similar situation to yours (new company, new brand, established brand, etc.)
- Appeal to the same target group of customers
- Whether or not you would build the site if you were in a different industry
- Colors, look-and-feel, user interface, layout
- Size of site
- Size of project
- Publishing model (frequency, novelty of content, etc.)
- Attracting new people to the site (newsworthiness, giveaways, impact, etc.)
- Your competitors' sites
- Quality of content
- Quality of graphics
- Interactive tools
- General functionality
- Community, special features, responsiveness, other categories important to your project
- Overall favorite sites (for whatever reasons)