TEMPLATE · WEBSITES

Website Brief Template

The questions we ask every client before we design a website, with why each one matters and examples. Fill it in once and get accurate quotes and a better site.

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Most website projects that go wrong were unclear before they started. Three designers quote $3,000, $9,000 and $25,000 because each one imagined a different website. A good brief fixes that: everyone quotes on the same job, and the site that gets built is the one you needed.

These are the questions we ask every client in our first meeting. Copy them into a document, answer in plain words (dot points are fine), and send the same brief to everyone you're getting a quote from.

Time: about 30 minutes. Skip a question if you don't know yet; "not sure" is a useful answer too.

Part 1: your business (5 minutes)

1. What do you do, for whom, and where? One sentence. ***Why it matters:*** this usually becomes the headline of your homepage. If you can't say it in one sentence, the website can't either. ***Example:*** "We're a family-run physio clinic in Victoria Park helping desk workers and weekend athletes get out of pain without months of appointments."

2. Who are your best customers? Describe the two or three types of customer you'd like more of: their age or stage, what they're worried about when they find you, and what makes them pick you. ***Why it matters:*** a website written for "everyone" convinces no one. The words, photos and even the layout change depending on who it's for.

3. Why do customers choose you over the business down the road? Ask a few recent customers if you're not sure. Their answer is often different from yours. ***Why it matters:*** this is what the website has to prove, with photos, reviews and examples.

4. Who are your main competitors, and what do you think of their websites? List two or three, with links.

Part 2: what the website has to do (10 minutes)

5. What's the one thing you want visitors to do? Book online, call, request a quote, buy, or visit in person. Pick one main action; you can have a second. ***Why it matters:*** every page is designed around this button. A site with five equal options gets fewer of each.

6. How do enquiries or bookings work today, and what should happen after someone clicks? ***Example:*** "They fill in a form, we email back within a day with a quote, then book a site visit." Name any booking or payment system you already use (Fresha, Cliniko, Square, Calendly, Shopify).

7. Which pages do you need? Start with this list and cross out what you don't need:

Page	What it's for	Need it?
Home	Who you are and the main button, in five seconds	
One page per service	Each service explained, with price guide, photos and FAQ	
About	Your story, team and why you do it	
Work, gallery or case studies	Proof: before and afters, projects, results	
Reviews	Every review in one place	
Pricing	How pricing works, or set prices	
Contact or booking	Form, phone, map, hours	
Blog or guides	Answering customer questions so Google finds you	
Locations	One page per location or service area	

8. What questions do people ask before they buy? List the top five you get on the phone or in person. ***Why it matters:*** answering them on the site saves you time and is exactly what Google and AI assistants look for.

9. What must the website connect to? Booking system, online payments, email newsletter, Google reviews, Instagram, a CRM, a members area.

Part 3: look and feel (5 minutes)

10. Three websites you like, and why. They don't need to be in your industry. Be specific: "I like how calm it feels", "you can see prices straight away", "the photos are huge".

11. One website you don't like, and why. Often more useful than the ones you like.

12. What do you already have? Logo files (ideally SVG or high-resolution PNG), brand colours, fonts, photos and videos, written content. Say honestly what's out of date. ***Why it matters:*** if you don't have

good photos, plan a shoot. Nothing makes a new website look average faster than old or stock photos.

13. Three words people should feel when they land on your site. ***Example:*** "warm, expert, local" or "premium, calm, precise".

Part 4: practicalities (5 minutes)

14. Do you have a domain and hosting? Who has the logins? Find out before you start. Lost logins delay more launches than anything else.

15. Budget. Give a range. It isn't a negotiating tactic; it tells the designer what's realistic and lets them suggest the best site for that amount. As a guide in Australia, a small business website from a professional studio usually starts in the low thousands and goes up with the number of pages, custom features and content needed.

16. Timing. When do you need it live, and is there a real reason (a launch, a season, a new location)?

17. Who approves the work? Name one decision maker. Websites stall when three people give feedback that cancels each other out.

18. Who will look after it after launch? Updating prices, adding photos, fixing anything that breaks, keeping it secure and fast. Decide now: you, someone on your team, or the people who build it.

Before you send it

- [ ] Every question has an answer, even if it's "not sure".
- [ ] You've included links (competitors, sites you like) and attached your logo.
- [ ] The budget is a range, not "as cheap as possible".
- [ ] You've sent the same brief to everyone quoting, so you're comparing like with like.

What to ask the people quoting

When the quotes come back, ask each one:

1. What's included after launch, and what does it cost per month or per change?
2. Who owns the website and the domain if we stop working together?
3. Will it be fast on a phone, and how will you check?
4. Who writes the words and who supplies the photos?
5. Can I see two or three sites you've built for businesses like mine?

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