Website brief instructions

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The point of a website brief or RFP (Request For Proposal) is to give potential suppliers (agencies or freelancers) a good understanding of what you need them to consider when quoting to design and build your website.

The best briefs are clear, concise and to the point. They don’t need to be long and complicated, and they can include your organisations personality and tone of voice. A good supplier will be able to work alongside you to develop the brief, discover new opportunities or areas you may not have been thought about.

So, it’s good to give them enough information about your organisation or practice, but also give them some room to shine and show their expertise and excellence when they come back to you with their proposal.

**IMPORTANT! It is essential all stakeholders and decision makers approve the brief before it is circulated!**

There are also lots of other resources on our website to get you started:

<https://digitalculturenetwork.org.uk/knowledge/specialisms/websites/>

**How to use our website template**Our template contains 10 headings. These are not mandatory, you can adapt these or add additional headings to suit the specific needs of your project.

Use the template on the following pages and follow the instructions in blue to write your brief. Example text is in green for you to replace. Don’t forget to remove the instructions and delete this first page before you circulate the document. If you have supplementary documents to include, reference them within this brief.  
  
**Helping you with your website project**  
We are happy to review your brief prior to it being sent to your preferred suppliers. The Digital Culture Network are here to advise and ensure you get the best out of your website project. We can also offer an opinion on the proposals you receive. If you need help sourcing a supplier shortlist, we can assist with that too.   
  
You can also get contact us if you need or have any questions:  
<https://digitalculturenetwork.org.uk/ask-a-tech-champion/>

Website brief

**Date:** <insert here>

**Author:** <insert here along with your email address>

**Version:** <insert here e.g. v01>

# 1. Summary

This should be a broad outline and a general introduction to your organisation. It should summarise the problem to be solved (i.e. why you are seeking a new website and what you hope they can do for you. **(remove prior to sending)**

**Example: (replace with your summary text)**

*We are a performing arts charity based in the heart of Birmingham.*

*Our mission is to provide high quality, relevant and inclusive opportunities for people across The Midlands to engage with live events, performers and audiences. Through performances, artist development, and participatory work we create opportunities for people to learn about themselves and others, and to understand and shape the world around them.*

*We are approaching agencies to redesign our current site. We feel it is complicated to use, is outdated and no longer meets our requirements or we are rebranding and need the website to be consistent with our new identity.*

*We need the new site to focus on raising awareness around our events and activities, promote ticket sales, encourage donations and help us build our mailing database.*

# 2. Background

Use this area to share a short history of the organisation and outline who your main visitors are and what they want from you. Include information about your audiences – who the site is aimed at **(remove prior to sending)**

**Example: (replace with your background text)**

*Founded in 1944 we have been putting performing arts into the heart of the Midlands. We aim to bring artists, audiences and communities together so that everyone can find, explore and share extraordinary performances in one of the most vibrant areas of Birmingham.*

*The main types of visitors are musicians and actors who perform with us, and schools and residents who attend our events and donate to our charity. We also have a performance space that can be hired – this is important as it helps us raise funds. Our funders and partners also visit the site.*

# 3. Core Objectives

Use this section to outline what you hope to achieve with the new website. Be honest about why the current site isn’t performing as required. **(remove prior to sending)**

**Example: (replace with your objectives)**

*We need the new site to focus on raising awareness around our events and activities, promote ticket sales and encourage donations.*

*The current site is built with WordPress but we are open to other Content Management Systems. Managing content is quite complicated at present. We need the new site to be easy for administrators to use.*

*We feel the design needs modernisation. It was designed on 2017 and has grown over time but is in bad need of a refresh to better reflect the organisation we are today.*

*Lots of content is out of date so we need advice on auditing what we have and help with the site structure to ensure all our different audiences are catered for.*

# 4. Project scope and deliverables

This is where you tell the supplier what kind of services you need. You may have requirements beyond the website. List each clearly – there are some examples below – and request these costs are itemised in their proposal.

**Example: (replace with your text)**

***Website:*** *We would like a new responsive website with a modern look and feel that is easy to use and navigate. The site should dovetail with our organisational branding and present us in line with our values.*

***Training:*** *We will need a training session for our team to allow them to feel confident to prepare and upload new content onto the new website.*

***Animation:*** *In addition to the website, we will also need a short video or animation that creatively explains who we are.*

***Photography:*** *We would like some photography taken of our premises as well as pictures of our team*

***Copywriting:*** *We are interested in getting some help with our written content.*

*Please cost each activity separately within your proposal.*

# 5. Site structure

Planning your sitemap is one of the most important stages of the website process. It shows how your website content is going to be structured and should allow users to find information easily. Think carefully about how this is going to be organised – what do your website visitors need and how are you going to help them find it?

Simple navigation is crucial – it’s the starting point for how people are going to use your site. Your most important content should be available from the main navigation and clearly labelled (avoid clever titles that may confuse people). If you have a lot of pages on your site, you could consider a secondary navigation menu for less important content.

Your new supplier will be able to help you with this, so use this section to give an initial draft of your structure.

There are plenty of free online tools you can use to create your sitemap, such as

[www.gloomaps.com](http://www.gloomaps.com). You can export your finished sitemap and include within this brief. If that’s too complicated, follow the example below or simply sketch it out on paper and photograph it.

**Example: (replace with your navigation structure or sitemap)**

**Main Navigation:**

* Home page
* What’s On
  + Future shows
    - Show detail pages
  + Archive
    - Show detail pages
* Donate
* Hire our venue
* About us
  + History
  + Our team
    - Team biographies
  + Vacancies
* Latest News
  + Press releases
  + Blog
* Contact us

**Footer links**

* Press
* Privacy & Cookie Policy
* Accessibility statement
* Sustainability statement
* Our Partners
* T&C’s

# 6. Design preferences

This is the place to give details about what design preferences you may have and any brand considerations that need to be flagged. You can include links to websites you like explaining why. This helps the supplier to understand what creative direction you have in mind. If you are looking for some general inspiration, have a look at <https://www.siteinspire.com/> which you can filter and browse by style and subject.

**Example: (replace with your design preferences)**

*We would like the new site to have a modern look and feel and be easy to use and navigate. The site should dovetail with our organisational branding and present us in line with our values. We are looking for the design to reflect our creative programmes and the work we do.*

***Sites we like and why***

[*https://macbirmingham.co.uk/*](https://macbirmingham.co.uk/)

*We like the clarity of presentation and use of white space. The What’s On section has a useful filter by interest function which helps the visitor find what interests them.*

[*https://www.geese.co.uk/*](https://www.geese.co.uk/)

*We love the big, bold photography and the minimalist look-and feel of the site. The case study content looks really great, beautifully laid out with interesting fonts and excellent images used to tell the story.*

[*https://festival.newyorker.com/*](https://festival.newyorker.com/)

*This isn’t our sector exactly, but some of us really liked the quirky approach and use of brash colours and fantastic illustration and animation.*

# 7. Functional Requirements

This is the place to give details about what specific functionality the site will need to have. Include any integrations you need or are considering. Below are a few examples.

**Example: (replace with your functional requirements)**

*The site will need to integrate with Spektrix for ticketing sales.*

*The site will need an intuitive search function.*

*The site will need to be built to W3C AA accessibility standards.*

*We will need an itemised quote for migrating the content from our current site.*

*The site must allow easy donations using PayPal and our Just Giving page.*

*The site should be built with best SEO practices in mind and must have the relevant 301 redirects set up to direct traffic to the new pages.*

*We use Mailchimp to send emails to our subscribers – the new site will need to integrate this with our contact and mailing list forms.*

*We take our carbon footprint seriously and want our site to adhere to best practices relating to sustainable web design. This includes consideration over fonts, colour, imagery, code compression and tracking scripts.*

# 8. Timeline

This is where you explain when the site needs to be completed by. Include a rough timeline if you can. If not, indicate your desired launch date if you have one. In due course you can work with the supplier to agree timings and milestones.

**Example: (replace with your timeline or launch date)**

We would like the site to be ready for the Summer to coincide with the launch of our new season programming. Our rough plan is as follows:

* **January** – meet suppliers, review proposals, appoint supplier, agree final costs
* **February** – audit existing content, begin writing any new content required
* **February/March/April** – website design and build (to be agreed with supplier)
* **May** – content entry, proofing and testing
* **June** – launch the site
* **June onwards** – maintenance and support contract begins

# 9. Budget (optional)

We recommend being transparent on how much you have to spend on the project. This saves time and filters out suppliers than are not a good commercial fit. Suppliers can also tailor their approach and recommendations to suit your budget. It’s important to cover off post-launch support – ask the agency to clarify how they work with their clients.

If other services are required – eg. Video, copywriting, photography etc – include these here and allocate a rough budget against each.

**Example: (replace with your text)**

We have a budget of £10,000 (exl. VAT)\*

£400 per quarter budgeted for ongoing site hosting and maintenance support

\**Some suppliers may be VAT rated, so ensure you make it clear if the budget is inclusive or exclusive of VAT.*

# 10. Your proposal and costs

You can use this section to list required responses. This ensures the proposals returned can be judged equally. If you require a suppler with specific experience or skills, make this clear. For example, a track record working with Arts & Culture organisations or expertise with a specific technology e.g. Spektrix integration. Ideally this has already been addressed when reviewing the suppliers invited to respond.

**Example: (replace with your text)**

If you are interested in working with us on this project, please provide a written response to this brief covering the following:

* Your approach to the project to ensure it delivers our objectives.
* A summary of your project process and how we would work together.
* Initial thoughts on how you would approach the creative / design delivery.
* A description of the technologies you would recommend and why.
* Your thoughts on web site accessibility and sustainability.
* Highlight any potential project problems you foresee.
* Any relevant experience delivering comparable projects for other clients.
* Itemised project costs by activity, hosting charges and payment schedule.
* What an ongoing support and maintenance arrangement would look like.
* An overview of your agency, who would be working on the project and why you feel you are the ideal supplier to work with us.
* 2 references for clients you have worked with in the past 3 years.

Please email your proposal to <insert name and email address> by <insert time and date>. You can email us any questions arising and we will do our best to respond – all correspondence will be shared with the other invited parties.

This brief has been circulated with <insert number> potential suppliers.