

# FIVE REASONS WHY MOST WEBSITE PROJECTS FAIL

SmartCEO's

# WHITE PAPER

**DISTRICT AGENCY**
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1. Organizations distribute a poorly conceived RFP
2. Organizations assume web design companies are also strategy consultants
3. Organizations expect web design companies to make technology recommendations
4. Organizations are not prepared for a high-level of participation during the project
5. Organizations fail to create a clear post-launch plan

## SOLVING THE PROBLEM

### Write a Good RFP

Most organizations make the same fatal mistake: they ask a young, inexperienced employee to create their website project RFP. A well-written RFP begins with an introduction to your organization, the problems you're trying to solve and the expected budget and deadline. In addition, many technical RFPs contain functionality details and specifics that are essential to those bidding on the project. This level of organization and understanding requires participation from executives and department heads, and the guidance of a seasoned expert. Important components to include in a web project RFP include:

- Full content inventory (what types, and how much)
- Content Management System Requirements (technology platform)
- Third Party Integration (other web tools, such as a CRM, jobs module, payment gateways, etc.)

### Educate Your Web Vendor Prior to Starting the Project

If you expect a web design company to really understand your organization without providing necessary information you're setting yourself up for failure. This false assumption can lead to many problems during the course of the project. Without a consultant acting as the go-between it's the organization's responsibility to educate the web vendor on the following:

- Goals of the website
- Target audiences
- Internal business processes
- Core competencies
- Content types & relationships
- Competitor set
- Internal resources


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### Be Educated About Web Technologies

You will be required to evaluate and ultimately decide which tools are the best for your company. This is a very difficult challenge – there are many options, so having a working knowledge of every vendor's software recommendations is impossible. If your organization doesn't have an IT department, hiring an outside technology consultant is extremely beneficial. Having a technical expert in your corner provides a comfort level when making complex functionality and platform decisions, and makes vendors defend their technology choices, not dictate them.

### Be Prepared to be Involved During the Project Lifecycle

You will need to provide clear direction to your web vendor on many aspects of the project; unless you have hired an advertising agency, or public relations firm, web vendors will look towards the organization for answers. Without an experienced consultant, you will need to take the lead on the following:

- Content architecture
- Messaging
- Conceptual imagery
- Branding protocols
- Marketing strategies

This can be a daunting task that most organizations assume the web vendor will absorb.

### Create a Post Launch Strategy

Most websites have the exact same lifecycle – they get a shiny new look and feel, get ignored for three or four years, and then get repainted. In truth, the vast majority of websites are neglected to the point where they are actually detrimental to the company. To prevent against this, prepare to invest time on your site every month: update content, change out pictures, post recent company or industry-related news, add new technologies, and commit to on-going Social Media and Search Engine Optimization plans. A website that makes consistent changes over time will be more far successful and produce better results for your organization.

### Conclusion

Most organizations do not have the internal resources to properly plan, organize, and supervise a website project. District Agency helps businesses of every kind through this difficult process. Our executive level consultants will help you prepare for each stage of a website project, with services including strategy consulting, RFP creation, vendor selection, project oversight, and site management. Following our initial consultation we will tailor our consulting services to the exact needs of your organization. If you're planning or preparing for a website project, please give us a call: 410-740-9181, or visit us on the web at [www.districtagency.com](http://www.districtagency.com).

Mark Cyphers is a leading IT and web-marketing expert, and the founder and president of District Agency, a vendor-neutral consulting firm.