

RESOURCE

Website design brief checklist

If you are considering a new website for your charity, you should ensure that the developer or agency who builds it understands what you need and can advise on the best approaches.

The simplest way to do this is to write a website design brief. A website design brief is a document that sets out what you want from your website design project, setting the foundation for the work and communicating your requirements clearly.

Once you have provided potential developers or agencies with a website design brief, they can begin to collaborate with you on the project's finer details and produce a plan tailored to your charity. With their experience and industry insights, they will provide guidance on what works, challenge what may not, and explain what can be feasible within the given time and budget constraints.

The better the brief, the smoother the project and the stronger the end result.

Use this checklist to structure your website design brief. Some sections require technical knowledge, but don't worry if you don't have this now. Note it down and a good developer or agency will help you find what's right for your charity.

Website design brief checklist

Your details

Include essential information such as your charity's name, website address, a brief description of your charity's mission, and key contact details.	
Specify the primary contact for agency inquiries and who will oversee the project from the charity's side.	

Existing site overview

Provide insights into the current website, mentioning what aspects you like and what you would like to improve.	
Outline the known issues with the existing site.	
Share any performance metrics and your analysis of them.	

Project objectives

Provide context by explaining why your charity needs a new website.	
Highlight whether it's a website redesign or a new design built from scratch and whether it's part of a broader digital transformation effort.	
Consider what goals you would like to achieve, such as increasing donations or the awareness of your organisation.	
Also, consider whether there are any long-term plans or functionalities that may impact the site.	

Website audience

State who the audiences for your website are – consider members of your charity staff as well as your supporters and beneficiaries.	
Share your website users' demographics, needs and behaviours.	
List any other charities (i.e., your 'competitors') or websites your supporters and beneficiaries use.	

New site details

Key features – Outline what pages or features your ideal site would have, such as a donation journey, a blog, case studies, an online shop, etc.	
Content requirements – Clarify how content will be generated or transferred to the new site. For example, do you have or need a content management system (CMS)?	
Design requirements – Describe your desired look for the new site, including any design preferences and examples of websites you admire or dislike, both within the charity sector and beyond.	
Technical requirements – If you know state your preferred platform or indicate if you're open to advice. This information helps agencies determine if they are a good fit for your project.	
Integration requirements – List the external platforms your website needs to integrate with. For example, payment providers or customer relationship management (CRM) software.	

Brand guidelines

Share these if you have defined brand values, culture, or tone of voice guidance. They can assist designers in creating a website that aligns with your charity.	
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Budget, timeline and scope

Clearly state your ideal budget range, any budget constraints and your desired project timeline.	
Define what elements of your site or journey you expect to be in or out of scope.	

Hosting and maintenance

Please express your hosting preferences and how you plan to handle ongoing updates and maintenance. The developer or agency you work with should be able to advise.	
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Next steps

Conclude with a summary of what's expected next, whether it's a written proposal, requests for agency pitches, or other details regarding the project's progression.	
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