



Build an Online Business Checklist

When you're ready to roll up your sleeves and begin building your site, look over these questions.

Think about two things here: what technologies will help you achieve the capabilities you want for your site (and your customers) and what development tools, training, or partners will you need to build it?

1. Which Web development tools does your IT department know how to use?

Are these tools sufficient to create the functionality that will help you reach your Web business goals?

Do you need to provide additional training in enabling technologies?

2. If you are Web-enabling an existing business, what legacy data systems do you already own?

How can you leverage that investment?

3. Which devices will your customers use to access information on your Web site?

Desktop or handheld computers, smart phones, smart cards?

4. What types of security features will you need to keep data safe and private?

How can you generate customer confidence that their data is secure without adding complexity that would detract from the customer experience?

5. How much (and how quickly) do you expect your site to grow-both in traffic and in your ability to build out new features?

Is your infrastructure flexible enough to allow you to adapt your business quickly to new opportunities?

What is a reasonable response time for adding new features to the site? Can you take advantage of existing "building blocks," off-the-shelf components that perform various online-business processes?

6. What performance levels do you expect your Web site to achieve?

Reliability? Manageability? Availability? How will you get there? What additional resources do you need to optimize and maintain site performance?

7. Can your site withstand the traffic you hope to generate?

Can it scale? What are the costs of the site not being available?

8. Do you have the staff resources to handle all aspects of a Web site?

Design work? Site Construction? Site Hosting? Maintenance/Updates? Credit-card processing? Fulfillment?

Customer support? What elements should you consider outsourcing?

9. How nimble will your Web site development platform and infrastructure be?

Do you want a quarter horse or a battleship?

10. Do you have a process for evaluating the impact of your IT investments that will help you align your choices more closely to your business goals? Does your approach consider the cost of lost opportunities as well as costs of implementation and maintenance?