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Tips Cheat Sheet

1. **Talk to those who have gone before!** Meet with other nonprofit professionals who have recently redone their websites. Here are some questions to ask:
   a. What was unexpected in redoing your site?
   b. What have you learned/what would you do differently?
   c. Do you have a developer recommendation?
   d. What CMS or platform did you use and why?
2. **Prepare before talking to a developer.**
   a. Consider your current site
      i. Is it mobile friendly?
      ii. Does it look outdated?
      iii. Is it easy for visitors to navigate?
      iv. What content is most viewed?
      v. What does it *do* that the new site will also have to do?
   b. Consider the possibilities
      i. What do organizations similar to mine have on their websites?
   c. Make a list of features – must have and nice-to-have
   d. Think about your aesthetic
3. **Involve your developer as early as possible.**
   a. They will help you create a site plan and can talk you through cost and timeline.
4. **Do your homework before choosing a developer.**
   a. Make sure you can talk to developer directly
   b. Get referrals
   c. Look at portfolio
   d. Make sure you can talk to developer directly
   e. Get referrals
   f. Look at portfolio
5. **Choose a small, lean internal project management team with decision-making authority.** This will lead to quicker turnaround and sharper design.
6. **Plan, plan, plan.** Make sure all necessary stakeholders approve the full site plan before coding begins.
7. **Avoid "graphic designers."** Choose a designer who understands the dynamic nature of the web.
8. **Start your content process last week and finish it yesterday.**
   a. You may need to work to get visual assets like photos if your organization does not have them.
   b. Writing and content organization will take longer than you think.

9. **There is no launch date.** Save yourself some pain by never publicly publishing a site launch date.
10. **Save money where you can.** Here are some strategies:
    a. Ask about a nonprofit discount
    b. Minimum viable product
    c. Project-based estimates
    d. Standard functionality
    e. Pre-built theme
11. **BONUS tip: think future.** Make sure you know how your site will be maintained and that it is extensible for future changes and updates.
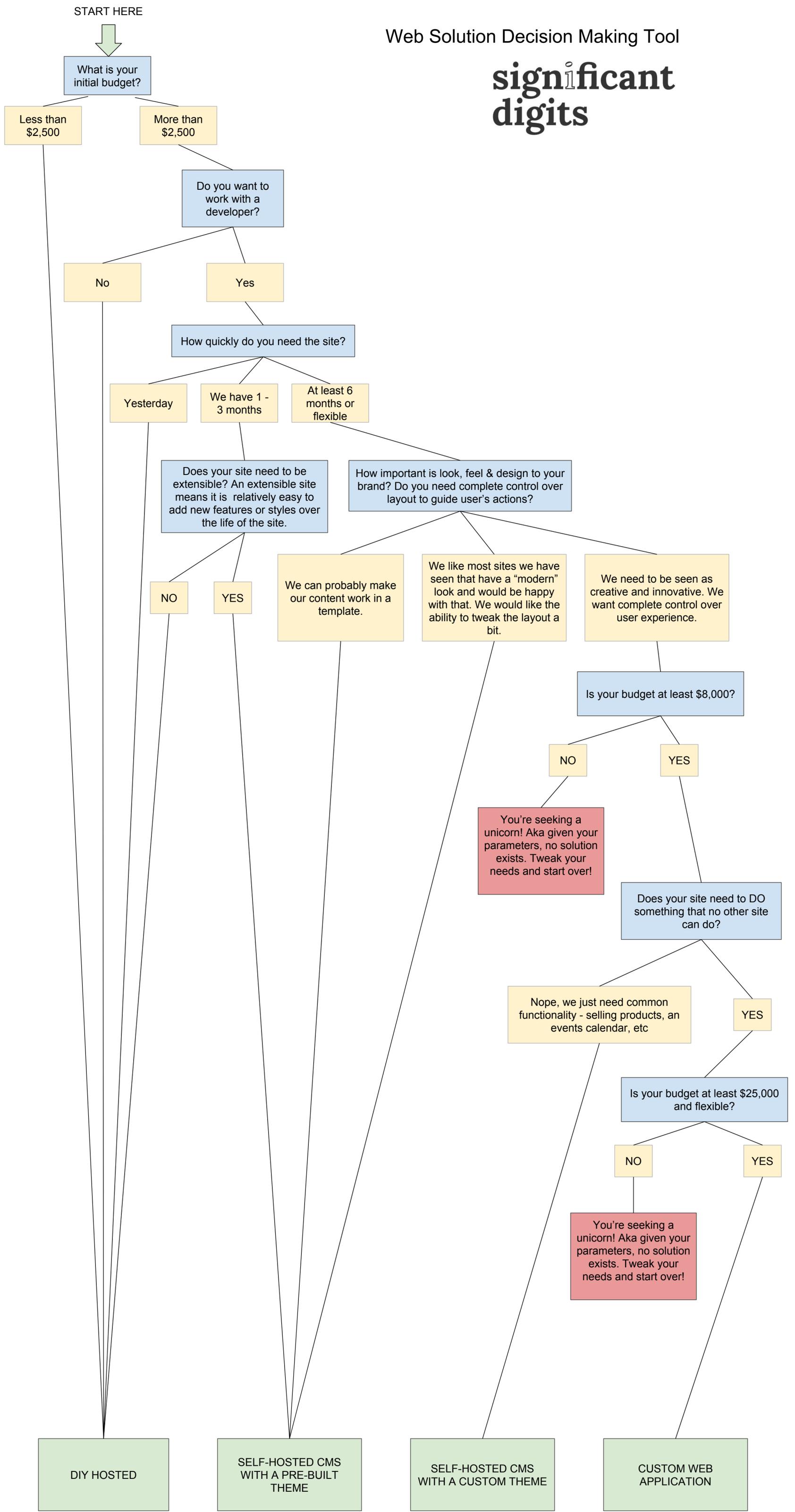
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- Meet with several other nonprofit professionals who recently redesigned their websites for insight and feedback about the process.
- Walk through the Web Solutions Decision Making Tool to help you decide on a web solution within your timeline and budget.
- Get developer recommendations from peers.
- Think through why now is the time for a redesign – does your site look outdated? Is it mobile optimized? Are users able to find the information they need? Can you easily edit the content?
- Look over your current site's analytics to determine the most engaging content.
- Create a list of must-have and nice-to-have features for your new site.
- Review websites of organizations that do similar work. Think through what they do well that you might like to integrate on your new site.
- When you browse a site that you think is well designed and aesthetically appealing, save the link. Create a list of inspiration sites.

START HERE

Web Solution Decision Making Tool

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What is your initial budget?

- Less than $2,500
- More than $2,500

Do you want to work with a developer?

- No
- Yes

How quickly do you need the site?

- Yesterday
- We have 1 - 3 months
- At least 6 months or flexible

Does your site need to be extensible? An extensible site means it is relatively easy to add new features or styles over the life of the site.

- NO
- YES

How important is look, feel & design to your brand? Do you need complete control over layout to guide user's actions?

- We can probably make our content work in a template.
- We like most sites we have seen that have a "modern" look and would be happy with that. We would like the ability to tweak the layout a bit.
- We need to be seen as creative and innovative. We want complete control over user experience.

Is your budget at least $8,000?

- NO
- YES

You're seeking a unicorn! Aka given your parameters, no solution exists. Tweak your needs and start over!

Does your site need to DO something that no other site can do?

- Nope, we just need common functionality - selling products, an events calendar, etc
- YES

Is your budget at least $25,000 and flexible?

- NO
- YES

You're seeking a unicorn! Aka given your parameters, no solution exists. Tweak your needs and start over!

DIY HOSTED

SELF-HOSTED CMS WITH A PRE-BUILT THEME

SELF-HOSTED CMS WITH A CUSTOM THEME

CUSTOM WEB APPLICATION

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*Each bullet is a different responder

How did you choose your developer?

- We did it ourselves because of the cost savings. The website was built on WordPress and we had some WP experience. We decided to install a new theme.
- We have an internal dev ops team we are utilizing.
- Worked with her before, chose her the first time based on chatting in person
- Professional recommendations, past experience with vendors
- We interviewed three firms and got bids, then chose the one that seemed like the best fit overall. They were not necessarily the cheapest, but were the most responsive and seemed to understand our needs and brand very well.
- We had been working with our developers (Madeline & Josh of Significant Digits!) for years and had enjoyed working with them on a previous website overhaul a few years back, so it was a natural fit to continue the partnership.
- Much research and looking at sites

How did you know it was time to redo your site?

- Content areas not being updated, long lists of options on nav menus (it had bloated), looked "old," had been several years since it was created
- We are a department of a larger org, and our web presence up until now was a subpage on a Wordpress site. We couldn't promote anything with our URL because the website was so bad! THAT is why we needed to build/redo our site.
- It wasn't meeting our needs & wasn't as relevant to young people as we wanted it to be.
- Not mobile friendly, not flexible, too much need for technical support
- People reported being unable to find things on our site, it was not mobile friendly, and it was starting to look very dated.
- Our organization recently acquired and launched major new programs that needed their own "microsites" within our overall organizational site - plus, we underwent a rebrand at the beginning of 2018. Our website needed a new look & feel plus new navigation to better reflect who we are now.
- It was five plus years old, had no search function and I could not update it's look at all

What was unexpected about the process of redoing your site?

- How technical the process became. I quickly realized our team didn't have a strong expertise beyond "Find a theme, click install."
- How VARYING opinions of different stakeholders is on what your site should look like.
- This was my 8th website redesign, so it was actually a really smooth process because I'd failed enough before. :)
- You can have too much content (that no ones reads or can find)
- Content migration was more labor intensive than we expected. We had to go through almost 1,000 pages by hand because they had been created without using the defined styles. We

also saw our visitors reduced to about 1/4 of former levels, because we removed some old content that turned out to be driving a ton of search engine traffic.

- The amount of content we needed to redo on our end!! I knew going into the process that Significant Digits would handle the visual aspect of things and support us in creating new functionalities, so nothing on that side of things really came as a surprise. But once I conceptualized our new primary and secondary menus, I started to realize how many pages of our website I was going to need to rewrite & redo completely so they would accurately represent our organization. This led to some serious crunch time in the end, mostly rewriting/redoing/posting new content here in the office (and in doing this we figured out a few web tweaks we needed that set our developers into a scramble as well, by no fault of their own)!
- The length of time

What did you learn & what would you do differently?

- I would affirm some of the things I did do, which our team didn't require or ask for: updating our brand standards before doing the site's color palette, engaging WP developers to make sure we were on the right track, do a user flow and map of content, consider content structures rather than just move everything over to the new site. If I could change anything, I would have made these part of the process in a planful way. I also would have saved a version of the site before switching it, since we wound up using the Wayback Machine to grab old content to bring forward.
- While its important to get input, don't get stuck in a feedback loop. Set a clear project and implementation timeline from the get-go to keep you in check and let stakeholders know.
- We did a professional photo shoot with our clients so we'd have all of our own images for the website and marketing collateral, and I think that worked really well for us. If you have the budget, work photography into your website redesign process!
- Traditional website CMS platforms are overkill for many basic websites
- We needed an internal project manager with enough time and authority to keep the project on track. We falsely assumed the agency would do this.
- When you are redesigning your website but not starting completely from scratch, I think it's easy to assume that the bulk of the work will happen on the developer side - but content is key and planning ahead to make sure you know your content plan, get all stakeholders involved, and have plenty of time to PRODUCE is crucial. Especially because, as previously stated, this may lead to new developer projects that wouldn't have otherwise anticipated.
- Leave it open for time frame and cost. budget half again as much as you think you might need

What would you tell another nonprofit ready to embark on their own site redesign?

- Consider it an opportunity to clean up and freshen your content and web presence. Figure out what tasks to do, and do them in the right order. If you or your contractor aren't considering navigation, content strategy, UI, design, brand integration, etc., find someone who can help you at least make sure these are on the radar. Beware the temptation of the new and shiny. Make sure you track analytics so you can operate from goals and make sure your site is actually impactful in reaching them (new site should reach goals better than the old one; otherwise, why do you have it?). And make it a priority to cut, cut, cut content as it's likely you don't need everything that's there.

- Invest the time up front to map it out! Get lots of feedback from internal and external stakeholders about flow - its a lot harder to re-org a site halfway through development than taking the time to workshop it up front.
- It will take longer than you think. Get as much of your content together as early as possible. Know who the decision makers are.
- Look at modern hosted solutions that don't tie you into needing a developer every time you want to revamp something
- If you need to stay within a budget, then be willing to scale back your requirements; know what is critical and what is nice to have. Make sure you dedicate enough time to the project.
- Really try to nail down your navigation and what every page on your site needs BEFORE you embark on the redesign journey. Of course, things will change and you can't anticipate everything (especially in dealing with a bulky website like ours that houses many programs and many, many pages), but at least it sets you off on the right foot.
- Go with a professional!

Anything else you'd like to add?

- A board member wanted us to keep some content and we wound up burying it somewhere. :/ Not sure how to handle that kind of thing, honestly.
- Bring cookies to your status meetings
- Overall we are happy with our site, and I think the main success factor was having a very clear sense of goals for the site but allowing the designers to figure out how to accomplish those goals--not being too prescriptive about design choices. We were careful not to let our personal tastes and preferences get in the way of what worked best for the audience. Just because my favorite color is purple doesn't mean our website should be purple!
- Redesigning a website is hard but in my opinion, so very satisfying. When launch day finally came, the new look went live, and all the content was up and ready to go, I felt immensely proud of our new online presence and how much more closely it aligned with who we are as an organization. Another thing we did, which may not apply in all cases, was that we moved our site to a new hosting platform, which meant we could thoroughly test and redesign within the "staging" side of things without showing the site to the world. Our developers flipped the switch and repointed everything to the new site once it was ready. Because we had done it this way there were shockingly few glitches to deal with once we launched!
- Work hard at having one "voice" on the site. Don't have multiple people writing everything, it diffuses the brand

What Is A RACI Chart?

RACI (say: racy) is a way of categorising stakeholders to define their roles and responsibilities on a project. The letters across the top stand for:

- Responsible: These people have responsibility for certain tasks. They are the 'creator' of the deliverable.
- Accountable: This is the person accountable for the job in hand who will give approval.
- Consulted: These people would like to know about the task and we would seek their opinions before a decision or action.
- Informed: This group get one-way communication to keep them up-to-date with progress and other messages after a decision or action.

Remember that people can fall into several categories. Here's an example.

	Annie	Bill	Charly	Devi
Project Planning	A	R	C	
Define Requirements	C	R	R	C
Develop Options	C	R	R	
Finalise Solution	A	R	C	I
End User Training	I	A		R

Example of a RACI Chart

What Is Different About The RASCI Model?

Not much, actually. RASCI includes an extra option to mark people as 'Supportive' (that's the S). This is someone who can provide resources, information or will generally support you in getting the work done.

Text and image taken from A Complete Guide to RACI/RASCI Charts by Elizabeth Harrin published on A Girl's Guide to Project Management website.

Read the full article at www.girlsguidetopm.com/a-complete-guide-to-raci-rasci-charts