# Developing a Website Business Case

Every website needs to have a driving force, the business case. You can adapt your organization's case or create one just for the website's purpose. The website business case needs to be specific so that you can draw ideas from it for the structure of the site. It also allows you to update your site in a way that logically fits into the business needs.

Be sure to align the business case with the agency's strategic documents. Questions to help develop the business case include:

- Specific goals
  - What are the specific purposes/goals for your website?
  - How do they align with the agency goals?
  - Is the site intended to save money and time? In what way? If so, do you have metrics before and after launching the website?
- Relevance
  - Tie your goals closely to the topics of your site.
- Audiences
  - Who are the website's audiences?
  - How can you tell whether you are reaching them? (may have to use non-web methods to find out)
- Measurements
  - What do your visitors want to do? Can you measure whether they did it? Your measurement should be in business terms - orders, inquiries, registrations, etc. - rather than techno-geek numbers such as "hits" or "page views"
  - How often will they visit? Do you have enough changing material to make each visit interesting? Have you committed enough resources to support updating? Your business case should include the value of the time you have to allocate for maintenance of the site's content.

**Examples**

Business Case for New Energy Website
Minnesota Department of Commerce

The goal for this project will be to separate the energy content from the Department of Commerce website into a stand-alone site that functions as a comprehensive source of energy related data and information in Minnesota. The new site will be built with a user friendly architecture that can easily expand to keep up with this dynamic and growing issue area. Eventually, the site will include tools for collecting and disseminating energy related data from a variety of governmental and nongovernmental sources.

Generic business case:

- Accessible to target audience 24/7/365.
- Introduce, promote, sell product or service to a larger market, potentially outside normal geographic limits.
- Advertise at a lowered cost, in a flexible transient way, with scope to provide additional information that will support or supersede existing traditional communication channels.
- Compete with or exceed competitors marketing efforts.
- Improve communication and customer service via site interactivity via online query/feedback forms. Provide contact details, directions and maps.
- Answer questions that are frequently asked, thereby free up time and effort to direct to other areas of your business.
- Incorporate an eNewsletter campaign within site marketing to regularly drive traffic to your site and encourage customer loyalty.
- Provide visual approach to promoting product or service. Photograph can express much that the printed word can't.