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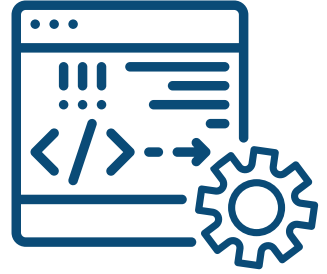
# How to Manage Your Web Development Project -

A Guide for Clients



# WooNinja White Paper

## Client Guide: How to Manage Your Web Development Projects



Here you can expect to briefly learn some of the best practices to make your web development project a success, whether you're hiring a development team to create a simple brochure site or a major development with features such as eCommerce, membership management and/or LMS.

You might wonder: I'm the client, so why should I bother to learn to manage a development project? That's the development team's job! To which we'll say, we've worked with hundreds of clients on projects small and large, and in every case the most successful projects are collaborative. In order to make your project efficient, cost-effective, smooth and ready-for-deadline, it's helpful to spend a few minutes learning some of the ropes, which we're happy to show you.

## Collaboration is Key

If you're like most clients, you have a vision for your site. Whether the project is a new concept or a revision, you have goals, and translating these into workable requirements for your development team is key to success. A good development team will take orders, spend the hours required, and work to your specifications. A great development team will do all those things and also be thinking partners in your process.



## Size Matters

Every web development project is not the same. Some engagements are as minor as a couple hours, while others

can require three or more months of project work followed by ongoing maintenance and development. Here's a rough guide to how our team handles various requirements:

## 1 Turnkey Solutions

The WooNinjas specialize in WordPress, so we love to make it simple for our clients. To that end, we've created a suite of turnkey solutions to common WordPress issues, including site audit and security as well as theme and plugin installations. Visit [this link](#) to learn about our audit and security solution, which will bring any WordPress website into an updated, stable and secure state. Have questions? [Contact us](#) and mention this white paper.

## 2 Customization

WordPress can do pretty much anything, and oftentimes out of the box solutions aren't enough to meet your goals. This is where customization projects come in, from full site builds to custom plugin/extension development and custom theme templates (pages, posts, etc.). These engagements vary in size depending on complexity, and proper planning and follow-through are critical to success.

## 3 Plugin Analysis

Because WordPress is so widely deployed, the plugin ecosystem includes thousands of useful plugins that can meet a wide array of requirements. When a requirement comes across our desk that calls for a plugin, our default approach is never to immediately recommend (expensive) custom development.



Instead we audit the plugin ecosystem and make the best recommendation that will achieve our client's goals. While we can't guarantee a plugin will exist to meet every requirement, very often it's better to base development work on an existing plugin rather than to start from scratch.



## 4 Consultation

Sometimes a client simply needs clarity around an issue, and a solid web development team will be available to provide expert advice on the clock, saving expensive hours down the road.



Let's say you're looking to develop a new website from scratch, or undertake a major customization to a plugin you've sourced. Here's what you can expect from various phases of a new development project:

## Our Web Development Process

Whether you're redeveloping an existing site or creating something new, here's our standard web development approach, honed over decades of collective experience on the front lines of WordPress development.



- ① **Discovery / Consultative Pre-Sale:** at this phase, you can expect a thorough conversation with your development team, to determine the scope of your project. Terms will vary depending on the clarity of scope, but a typical payment structure for a medium-sized project is a 50% non-refundable deposit, remainder due upon delivery. For larger projects, different terms may be proposed, including some variation based on adjustments to scope and hourly overage. And for extremely complex projects that require more than an hour to properly scope, (major LMS, eCommerce, membership, custom plugins, etc.), a set of consultative hours may be proposed in order to provide a guaranteed estimate, with up to a 20% margin of hours estimated.
- ② **UX (user experience) and Design:** depending on your budget and the nature of the project, this phase will be as simple as the establishment of a sitemap or as complex as a comprehensive set of wireframes (page maps) and/or "flat" compositions (designs that reflect the ultimate look

of the site). For simple, low-budget projects this phase can be very brief. For major developments with larger design budgets, this process can take weeks or even months.

- ③ **Development:** let's call this the nitty gritty, where the code hits the road. At this phase you can expect your development team to go away and execute what has been previously discussed and agreed upon. For larger projects, we encourage brief, weekly (verbal) check-ins to track progress. Communication is key. At this phase of the project, if something changes to your requirements (that is, if you have a new idea say and decide your brochure site now needs eCommerce) you can expect a change of scope notice and adjustment to rates and/or hours. This is why phases one and two above are so critical - the clearer your requirements up front, the less likely a change of scope will occur, leading to costly slow-downs, additional management time and restarts.
- ④ **Quality Assurance:** a major phase in any web development work, this is the period in which both the developer and client audit the site for quality, across browsers and devices. Does the site reflect the original (or adjusted) scope? Does it load quickly and look good on mobile devices? Ideally this is another highly collaborative phase, with all stakeholders engaged in ensuring the site is ready for launch.
- ⑤ **Launch, Documentation and Training:** here the site launches, brief documentation is created and shared, and the client receives any agreed-upon training in the management of content on the site.
- ⑥ **Maintenance and Ongoing Development:** however well a website is built, it will require maintenance and updates. We like to say a website isn't a print piece - that is, it's not a one and don't postcard or billboard. It's digital, and the online landscape is always shifting.

# Prepare to Succeed

Here is a short set of items you can do to prepare for a successful (and pleasant) engagement with a web development team:



- ① Find and save reference URLs that reflect your vision for your site's development. If you're looking to build an eCommerce site, find one that functions similarly to your requirements. This has the potential to save a tremendous amount of time throughout the development process. The point here isn't to plagiarize, but to have a reference to point to for layout, functionality and so forth.
- ② Gather your resources. Do you have stock photography, original photography, video or copy or other media assets you want included? Centralize these in a Dropbox or Google Drive.
- ③ Get your passwords together. If you purchased a domain name and/or hosting, be ready to share these credentials with your developers.
- ④ Know what you want, but you don't need to know (and will never know) everything. When you hire a development team, you're hiring experts. One of my colleagues years ago had a saying: "You don't go to the dentist and tell the dentist where, or how, to drill." So expect your web developers to know their stuff (presuming you've found a great team like the WooNinjas!) and trust their recommendations.
- ⑤ Be clear about how you like to communicate. Some clients prefer weekly calls, others prefer email, and yet others like to communicate through systems such as BaseCamp or Trello. Depending on the scope of the project and your budget, one or more of these methods will make sense. A great development team will adapt to your preference and work with you.

**Book up to an hour of consultation, free.**  
**Contact us** and mention this white paper.

We hope this has been helpful and wish you great success in all your endeavors online. Have questions or want to kick off your project? Reach out to us [here](#).




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