

Custom Template Kickoff Preparation

Overview

The primary purpose of the template kickoff meeting is for the designer to gather requirements. Each designer will ask slightly different questions, but the items below are typically a part of the kickoff conversation. If you can come to the meeting prepared to answer the majority of these questions, it will provide your designer with great direction for the design.

Who Should Attend?

It is strongly recommended that you limit the number of people who attend the template kickoff meeting to less than five. If you have more than five people who need to be present, please assign one person as the primary speaker on behalf of the group. The person assigned as the primary speaker should also be the primary contact/decision maker for the project (see below).

Primary Contact

Please delegate one person (from the group of kickoff attendees) to serve as the primary contact for the project. (We understand that there may be multiple individuals who are equally important decision makers for the project, but the number of primary contacts needs to be less than three people in order to avoid confusion and complications with communication during the project lifecycle)

- The primary contact should have the authority (or be in direct contact with someone who has the authority) to make final decisions and sign off on important project milestones
- Needs to have been a participant in the pre-requisite trainings and have an understanding of how to edit and create content within Web Community Manager
- Should be deemed the most appropriate individual to represent your district/organization's website needs and goals (for example; webmasters, marketing/brand coordinators, technology directors, etc., are typically chosen to serve as the primary contact)
- Keep in mind that this person will be making design and functionality decisions about the new website, so familiarity with your current website's pros and cons is recommended

Resources:

- Template Process: <http://cerc.blackboard.com/domain/42>
 - Template Packages: <http://cerc.blackboard.com/domain/46>
 - Made to Order Portfolio: <http://cerc.blackboard.com/domain/41>
 - Interactive Elements: <http://cerc.blackboard.com/domain/55>
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General Information:

- Who is the primary contact for the project?
- Do you have a specific timeline that needs to be met (if possible)?

Global Icons:

- What are the top visited links/pages on your current website? Your designer can include icons (or an alternative design solution) to highlight these links.

Social Media:

- Which social media platforms are you currently using? Are there any that you don't have right now, but may want in the future?

Translator:

- Is this a feature that you need/want? Do you prefer a dropdown menu containing multiple languages, or would you prefer to call out only a few key languages?
- Which translator is a better fit for your organization; Google Frameset or Google Branded? Your designer can discuss the differences.

Interactive Elements:

- Every template package includes a certain number of Interactive Elements (special functionality features that require additional coding). Your designer will help you decide which Interactive Elements will best meet your needs, but you can see examples of how other organizations have used their Interactive Elements at the URL listed above, under Resources. If you need additional Interactive Elements, your designer will let you know the cost and will coordinate with your salesperson.

School Dropdown:

- If your district has 30+ schools, you may want to consider a custom school dropdown (Interactive Element). Another option is to incorporate a link that goes to a school directory or Minibase.

Photo/Video Area:

- Do you want to feature rotating photos, streaming video or both? (Including both rotating photos and streaming video would require two Interactive Elements) What is your size preference for the photo/video area?

Apps/Content:

- What kind of content do you plan to feature on the homepage? How much content? Will you use the Blackboard calendar/upcoming events app? Your designer will construct a layout and make design recommendations based on your content needs, although you control the actual content.

Emergency Announcements:

- Do you need/want a design solution for this? Your designer can include a hidden announcements app region for this purpose, or you can choose to use the On-Screen Alert feature that is available in site manager.

Colors and Branding:

- What are your district colors? Please provide exact hex codes if you have them (ex #C3C3C3)
- Do you have any existing brand materials that would be beneficial for the designer?

Color Configurability:

- Color Configurability (Interactive Element), enables each subsite to apply a different color scheme. Is this a feature that you will need?

Logo:

- Can you provide a high-resolution copy of your district logo?

Subsite Logos:

- If you have schools/subsites, will they each be featuring their own logo? Your designer won't need these files, but it's recommended that you begin collecting them.

Tagline:

- Do you want a place within the template design for a tagline, mission statement, etc?

Reference Sites:

- Are there any Blackboard or non-Blackboard websites that have caught your eye? What did you like about them? What kind of features and functionality did these sites have that made them stand out?

* Our design team cannot replicate an existing website exactly, but we can pull design and layout inspiration from one

Tell us about your district/school/organization:

- What makes your district unique?
- Are there any geographical or historical elements that you would like to incorporate into the design to personalize it?
- Who is your target audience?
- What are your overall goals for the new website?
- Any special needs or legal disclaimers that your designer should know about?
- What do you like/dislike about your current website? Are there any features that you have on your current website that you would like to keep?