

Website Planning Framework

A decision-first approach to building a website that performs

HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

Do not rush this document.

If completed properly, it becomes:

- the blueprint for your website
- a filter for every future design or content decision
- a way to avoid expensive rebuilds later

There are no right answers. There are only clear or unclear ones.

1. CORE BUSINESS INTENT

1.1 What is the primary business outcome this website must support?

Example: lead generation, direct sales, consultation bookings

Why this question exists:

A website is not a brand brochure. It is a business tool.

If the outcome is unclear, everything else becomes subjective.

What strong answers sound like

- “Generate qualified enquiries from companies with 10–50 staff”
- “Sell a specific product line consistently without sales calls”

What weak answers sound like

- “Increase awareness”
- “Look more professional”

Decision insight

Your entire site should be optimised around this outcome, even if it means saying no to other opportunities.

Trade-off to accept
Focus creates exclusion. That is a strength, not a weakness.

Write your answer clearly and specifically

1.2 What is the single most valuable action a visitor can take?

Example: book a call, request a quote, complete a purchase

Why this matters
Visitors rarely take multiple meaningful actions in one session.
Your job is to guide them towards the one that matters most.

Decision test
If you removed all other actions from the site, would this one still make sense?

Common failure point
Too many buttons, too many choices, too much noise.

Design implication
This action should be:

- visually dominant
- repeated naturally
- easy to complete

Write the action exactly as it should appear on the site

2. AUDIENCE DECISION LAYER

2.1 Who is this website primarily for?

Example: founders, operations managers, SME owners

Why this matters
When a site tries to speak to everyone, no one feels understood.

Clarity test

You should be able to imagine a single person reading your homepage.

Decision insight

Secondary audiences are acceptable. Primary audiences are essential.

Write the primary audience clearly

2.2 What problem is this person trying to solve when they arrive?

Example: inconsistent leads, unclear strategy, outdated site

Why this matters

People do not visit websites to learn about your business.

They visit to reduce uncertainty or solve a problem.

Strong framing

This problem should be clear enough to become your homepage opening line.

Avoid

- internal business language
- feature descriptions

Write the problem in the visitor's language

2.3 What is this person worried about getting wrong?

Example: wasting money, choosing the wrong partner, making a bad decision

Why this matters

Most buying decisions are driven by fear of regret.

Decision insight

Addressing this fear directly builds trust faster than any design upgrade.

Write the concern honestly

3. STRUCTURE & CONTENT LOGIC

3.1 What pages must exist for this site to function properly?

Example: Home, Services, About, Contact, Resources

Why this matters

Every page adds cognitive load. Fewer, clearer pages perform better.

Decision test

If you removed this page, would the site still achieve its goal?

List only essential pages

3.2 What role does each page play in the user journey?

Example: educate, reassure, convert

Why this matters

Pages without purpose confuse users and dilute SEO value.

Decision insight

Each page should answer one main question.

Map page → purpose

4. TRUST & CONVERSION

4.1 Why should someone trust you?

Example: experience, proof, clarity, approach

Why this matters

Trust is the currency of digital decisions.

Avoid

- vague claims
- buzzwords

Focus on

- evidence
- transparency
- clarity

Write your trust signals

4.2 What should a visitor feel before taking action?

Example: confident, reassured, informed

Why this matters

People act when uncertainty drops below a personal threshold.

Decision insight

Emotion is not decoration. It is part of the decision process.

Write the desired emotional state

If you want expert guidance applying this to your business, a structured website audit is available at codelabone.co.za.