1. What content management system (CMS) will be used?

Why this matters – The CMS you select ultimately impacts the people you'll be working with on your website project. Different CMSs have different functionality, and you want your developer to be experienced in the CMS you're using.

2. What items need to be content managed?

Why this matters – Within modern CMS frameworks, many page elements can be moved within the CMS, opening up the ability for their content to be easily modified. Identifying these items up-front will lead to an easy-to-use website for marketers.

3. What are the specific features and functionality of the website?

Why this matters – Forming an understanding of what the final vision for the website looks like helps to prevent later surprises. What are the things that the website has to do for the project to be considered "done"? What are the must-haves for this website?

4. How many templates will be involved?

Why this matters – The overall number of unique templates is one of the best ways to determine the overall size of the website project from a development perspective. This helps guide decisions on scope, resources, and complexity.

5. What browsers must be supported?

Why this matters – All browsers show webpages slightly differently. Knowing which browsers will be targeted allows the developers to cater to their unique implementations and allow the quality assurance process meets expectations.

6. What devices must be supported?

Why this matters – Responsive web design allows a website to rescale for different sized browsers. This partly manifests itself with catering to mobile devices. The developers need to know which devices to design and develop for, in order to ensure that the website is viewable on the supported devices.

7. What level of WCAG compliance is needed?

Why this matters – Many countries and international organizations require certain levels of WCAG compliance. Because of this, it's a good idea to provide alternative text for all on-site images (this can take time to write), as well as activate external link alerts throughout your website.

8. How will creative files and notes be passed to developers?

Why this matters – The completion date of a website has a lot to do with when and how developers receive creative files. To stay on scope and on time, creative files should be sent to developers as layered PSD files.

9. Who is responsible for content input?

Why this matters – This question helps surface any decisions around who (client, agency, or developer) will be inputting content on the website. This can be a time consuming task so it's best to know right away who will be responsible.

10. What Google Analytics property will be used?

Why this matters – Making sure the proper analytics account is integrated on the website will ensure accurate analytics reporting throughout the life of the website. If you don't add basic Google Analytics tracking, you will regret it at some point in the future.

11. Will the website use any third party connections?

Why this matters – Third party integrations (e.g. MailChimp, payment systems, calculators) increase complexity, take up extra scope, and require careful planning for other parts of the website.

12. Does the website need to support internationalization and localization? What languages will be supported?

Why this matters – Depending on the company, project, website, or goal, there may be a need to have the website targeted to multiple languages or countries. These processes set up the text to make the translation and serving of the website easier to manage.

13. Where will the website live when launched?

Why this matters – The website has to live somewhere. Whether it's hosted by you, the developer, or a web hosting service, having a web hosting plan provides peace of mind to all parties involved in your website project.

14. Who will be responsible for ongoing website and server maintenance?

Why this matters – All websites require ongoing maintenance. Things like server updates, plugin updates, and domain renewals are all crucial to the ongoing health of the website.

15. Who will need training on the CMS?

Why this matters – All team members who will be involved in content updates and general website upkeep should be trained on how to use the CMS.

16. Does the website need to send administrative emails?

Why this matters – If the website needs the ability to send emails, there are additional setup and configuration steps that need to be taken.

17. During the quality assurance stage, do testers know how to report issues?

Why this matters – One of the best tools for any developer looking to solve a bug with a website is a detailed report as to what the issue is. Providing this will make the fix easier, faster, and cheaper.

18. Will the website need an SSL certificate?

Why this matters – An SSL certificate is a must-have for many eCommerce websites and websites that deal with sensitive material (e.g. sensitive customer information, usernames and passwords).