

# TOP 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE HIRING A WEBSITE COMPANY

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Choosing a website company is a critical decision. You're not just putting a project in their hands, your trusting your business to them.

This questionnaire will help you assess the website design companies that you are considering. From understanding the pricing structure to evaluating the results of their past work, you will gain a better understanding of key factors that should go into hiring a website design company.

## 1 How do they price their services?

You're buying a **professional service**, where a team of experts should be putting in time to plan, design, develop and manage your project.

- › Which of their team members will be working on your project and what are their qualifications?
- › How much time will they be spending on your project?
- › Do they provide a flat project price that corresponds to a detailed agreement?
- › Does the cost of the project match up with the agreed upon deliverables and hourly rates?
- › Is there a clear procedure for billing for extra features or work otherwise out of scope?

## 2 What is their track record?

A more important question than 'how much is this going to cost?' is 'how reliable is your company?' You should be confident that you can trust the team in producing the best results for your project and that they are able to show you a return on your investment.

- › What types of clients have they worked with?
- › What kind of **results** have they delivered for those clients?
- › Do they have **hard figures** to prove their results?
- › Do they retain their clients and have ongoing working relationships with them?

## 3 How do they measure their results?

A website is a marketing tool that should be used to generate more business and increased brand loyalty. A professional company should address the bottom line: how did they increase the market value of their clients.

- › Do they measure results in terms of lower bounce rates, higher repeat traffic, conversions (i.e. sales, memberships, etc.) and Page One Google rankings for multiple keywords?
- › Are their results published and verified by their clients?

#### 4 What are their core services?

A company that has the capability to handle your entire project, from planning, to design, to development and marketing success is better qualified to do things right from the start.

- › Do they have the ability to provide comprehensive **web design, development and marketing services** to industry standards?
- › Have they done system integrations or customized web projects that require excellent problem solving skills or advanced coding capabilities?
- › Do they have experience developing mobile applications?
- › Do they have search engine optimization expertise and a **proven track-record of achieving Page One Google results**?
- › Do they have copywriting abilities to create both compelling copy for the website itself as well as quality content for the social web?

#### 5 What are their credentials or qualifications?

You want to be sure that the company you are entrusting your business to are respected professionals in their industry.

- › Are their key players **recognized as industry leaders**, speaking at events, or published in the media?
- › What is their Dun & Bradstreet rating? (D&B is a third party source monitoring client satisfaction.)
- › Are they authorized to work for government agencies? Do they have other special credentials showing other expertise?
- › Have they developed any special applications or done groundbreaking projects.

#### 6 What does their operation look like?

Before getting into a relationship with a company, make sure you go visit their operation and see the people face to face who will be responsible for the success of your project.

- › Are they fully staffed with professionals or do they rely on freelancers or outsourcing for the heavy lifting?
- › Do you get the sense from talking to staff members that they are skilled, passionate and trustworthy? Simply put, do you get a good vibe?
- › Do they have the type of operation that **you would entrust your business to**?

#### 7 How do they assure your project is executed properly?

From following coding standards to employing an in-house team of professionals, be sure any assurances you are given are put in writing.

- › Do their agreements stipulate that coding will be done according to industry standards, and that the work is customized for your needs?
- › Do you own the work produced, and have access to it, or is there a licensing fee?
- › Do they plan your website in accordance with your business goals?

## 8 How big is the company and what is their structure?

If the team is too small, you may run the risk of delays, lack of available expertise, or even company closures. If the team is too large, you may run the risk of getting lost in a bureaucratic systems, and lack of personal service or care for your project. No matter what size company you decide to work with, it's important that you feel comfortable throughout the process.

- › What is their methodology for website planning and execution? Is it right for you project?
- › Do they have a 'Go To' person that holds your hand and takes accountability for the success of your project?
- › Do you feel confident that the company has the stability to continue providing your business with the same level of website service, for edits, maintenance, and future phases of growth?

## 9 How do they staff individual projects?

Building a successful website takes a skilled project manager, a professional team, and concrete objectives. A proper team consists of information architects to plan the site, web designers to design the user interface, web developers to code the site, quality assurance engineers to test it, and online marketing specialists to develop and implement an efficient online marketing strategy. This team should work under an experienced project manager to ensure a successful outcome.

- › How many team members will be working on your project?
- › Who takes accountability for your project?
- › How often will they send you updates and what is the communication process?
- › Are they pro-active in leading a project or do they count on you, the client, to direct them?

## 10 Who owns the company? Is it financially stable?

You want to give your project and the future of your company's image to a stable company that will be around well beyond your website's beta launch. Compare apples to apples. Don't compare a reputable company's prices to a guy working out of a tiny office with a 'team' halfway around the world.

- › Who owns the company, and who are its key officers?
- › What motivation does the team have to put best efforts into your project?
- › What is their financial strength? How long can they survive without any new projects or if something goes wrong?

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