



Search Optimization and Marketing

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Questions To Ask Potential Web Design / Development Firm

Design and Development:

- Do you provide a mock-up and wire frame of the site design prior to development?
- Does your cost estimate include graphic design work? Please explain, and provide additional cost if any.
- Do you migrate our existing website content? What about content we provide during development?
- Do you migrate our existing Title, Keyword, and Meta Descriptions?
- Do you provide assistance in implementing 301 redirects from the old site urls to the new urls?
- Will the site have a Visitor and XML Sitemap, and will they auto-generate as we add pages?
- Is the site scalable?
- Will the site be mobile friendly? Describe.
- Will the site be compatible with all browsers?
- Will you be using Adobe Flash (or similar) as an element on our site? If yes, describe.
- Do you plan on outsourcing any part of my project? If yes, why? If yes, who is responsible for the cost if the subcontractor determines that some part of the project is beyond the original scope of work, or is unable to deliver?

Software:

- Is the CMS software upgradeable? Who is responsible for updates?
- If there is a security issue with the software in the future, and work needs to be done to apply patches or updates, will we incur a charge?
- Are there any ongoing update or licensing fees for the software you are proposing?
- Is the design and platform you are proposing widely used? In your absence could another development firm step in and work on my site?

Hosting:

- Can the site be moved to another hosting company in the future? What is the hosting platform you are proposing? What is the database type you are proposing.
- What is the name of the hosting company you plan on using, and what is the level of hosting (dedicated, shared, VPS, etc)

Will we have a shared or dedicate IP address?

- What are the bandwidth and storage limits? What is the cost for expansion?
- How are hosting issues handled (downtime, email issues, etc) and is there a charge?
- Does the hosting you are proposing provide any sort of admin panel access?
- What is the site backup (and restore) plan?

Service:

- How long has your firm been in business, how many people in your operation, and who will be doing the actual work?
- Have you built websites like the one you are proposing to build for me? Please provide references and urls.
- Do you have a contract for your services? If yes, please provide a copy.
- Do you provide training and support? What is the cost?
- What is the cost for development work done in the future?
- What is the process for reporting and correcting problems in the future? What is the cost? What if the problem is software related?
- Do you provide assistance with the migration of our email system and addresses? Is this included in the cost or additional?

Getting Your SEO Company Involved in The Design Process:

If you have retained an SEO company you should contact them prior to making any decisions on a new web site. Getting your SEO involved early in the project can (will!) save most projects thousands of dollars during the transition. Some design firms also offer SEO services. Your website developer should never dictate that you (the client) use their services over your current service provider. If they do it can be a real warning sign that the projects control is being taken away from you.

Additionally, you may have a separate SEM (Pay Per Click Marketing) consultant. Remember to keep them in the loop, as all of your sites URLs will most likely change. If your site has a large number of PPC specific landing pages your SEM provider can help with some direction in the process. This is a good time to add new landing pages!

Not sure what to do? Give us a call!

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