

10 Things You Should Know When Selecting a Website Design Company

It has been reported that you have about 8 seconds to create an impression on a visitor to your website. Selecting a website design company on price alone rather than taking a few extra steps in the selection process will cost you time, effort, money, and potentially customers in the long-run. Below we have outlined 10 things you should know or look for in selecting your website design company.

1. Do they understand your needs?

- The website design company you choose should seek to understand your business and website goals (both short and long term).
- Your website design company should provide you with a website design that is expandable and scalable for adding new functionality, so that as your business grows, your website can grow with it.
- Your website design company should gain an understanding of your budget and set realistic expectations on what can be achieved within a defined budget.

2. Do they have business knowledge or marketing expertise to meet those needs?

- Your website design company should have business and marketing expertise to assist you in defining the website design and functionality you need to meet your goals.
- Your website design company should have a wide range of clients and not cater to one specific type of business or industry.

3. Do they have good customer service / what is their communication type?

- How your website design company responds to your inquiries says a lot about the company. If you prefer to conduct business over the phone and they do not, this could be an issue down the road. Many website design companies are email only shops.
- Their response time in returning calls and emails says a lot about how they will conduct business once the project has started.
- Good communication between you and your website design company will be vital to meeting your website design goals.

4. Do they have an up-to-date portfolio and are their clients satisfied?

- Your website design company should have an online portfolio for you to review, make sure their design style and capabilities mesh with your vision.
- Your website design company should provide you with a list of references. Check the references for comments about their experience from initial consultation through final design, as well as the overall satisfaction with the website design company. Be sure to pay special attention to timeline and their ability to meet expectations.

5. Can they provide you with their web design standards?

- Your website design company must be able to provide you with the web design standards they follow.
- They should be able to assist you in understanding and navigating the world of Search Engine Optimization and Pay Per Click Marketing.
- A good website design company ensures that the website will be SEO friendly as well as user friendly.

6. Do they maintain and follow a website design methodology?

- A methodology provides you with a complete understanding of the process your website design company follows and can demonstrate that it follows a repeatable and proven technique.
- Your website design company's methodology should be interactive and include regular dialogue with you to ensure your needs and goals are integrated into the website design.

7. How do they manage projects and what information is available during the process?

- You should be given access to a secure website to track the status of your website design project through the entire process.
- Make sure your website design company provides you with a Project Manager. This designated person is responsible for setting goals, deliverables, and keeping you informed and updated on the status of the project as well as working with you on any information you need to provide.
- Your website design company should have a pool of resources or a project team available to meet your needs. Often website design companies are dependent on one designer or programmer. Limited resources can cause project delays and hinder creativity.

8. Can they provide in-house hosting?

- Your website design company should provide you with the option of hosting your website for you so that you do not have to search elsewhere for a web hosting company.
- They should be able to provide you with information on how and where your site will be hosted and whether it is an in-house web server or if they are just reselling hosting from a large hosting firm.

9. Can the website design company provide in-house application specific programming?

- Many websites need application integration, and some website design companies only provide front-end design, so they have to outsource application programming. This can cause breakdowns in communication and unnecessary time delays as your project transitions in and out of your website design company.

For example, if your website requires shopping cart functionality, your website design company should provide you with this functionality in-house, rather than outsourcing to another company.

- Your website design company should provide you with user-friendly tools that allow you to make edits and update your website as needed without having to go back to the website design company for each and every change, also known as a Content Management System (CMS).

10. Can they provide long term follow-up service / support?

- Your website design company should provide a detailed game plan for providing you service/support as your company grows and your website needs change and how they will facilitate those needs.
- A well established website design company provides peace of mind, in that they will not be here today and gone tomorrow. Too often there are reports of companies that cannot find the person or website design company that created their website or the original designs due to the website design company going out of business.