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Selecting a Small Business Web Design Company - Five Easy Points

We've all heard about disasters where someone chose a dodgy small business web design company. Often a friend of a friend, a one man band who seemed affordable at the time or even a professional company that seemed above board.

Many times your web site build begins well and things go from bad to worse as the cost sky rockets or your web guy focuses on other projects and does not call you back. She does not want to do small business web design any more and vanishes to another country. Or you discover after paying 100% up front that your web designer has no visual design skills.

So here's a simple list of questions to help small business owners choose a web design company that builds you an effective web site at the agreed price.

1. Service - will you help me grow my business after the web site is built?

Request proof that your web company provides great after sales service. Many small business web design companies focus solely on the initial project of building your web site. They are terrible at providing ongoing support and marketing services.

What do you do when your web site requires an urgent change or it breaks because of a problem with the hosting company and you can not get hold of your web guy?

For many businesses your web site is a critical component. If it goes off-line your customers can't reach you.

Great web designers want to have a long association with your business. They'll constantly suggest ways to improve your web site and your business.

If you want to know how good a web firm is do not simply ask whether they provide service after the sale. They'll obviously say yes.

Ask what to expect once the website is launched. By asking this you find out if they will be proactive or simply ignore you.

2. Will the design of my web site look fantastic and fit my brand perfectly?

An effective website creates the right first impression and matches your branding.

Your brand is vitally important to your business and this is an area where many web sites fail to deliver.

When somebody visits your web site their first impression of your business and recognition of your brand are formed in an instant. This establishes how credible your visitor perceives you to be and can significantly influence whether you convince them.

Good branding means your web site, business card, letterhead, vehicles and sign-age should all look the same. Every time a prospect sees your brand you get an opportunity to enhance their confidence and familiarity with your business.

When your brand is not recognized by a visitor due to inconsistency in visual design the process of building recognition and credibility starts again from scratch.

So never let the all important first few seconds be wasted having to reacquaint your prospect with your brand. Your brand must be consistent across everything that has your logo on it.

Look at some of the web sites your potential web designer has built and compare them to the companies shop, vehicle signage, letterhead or anything else you can get your hands on.

A quick check will reveal all.

3. Will you help me write the text for my website?

Well written sales copy instantly shows your best customers they are in the right place. The info your visitors seeks is easy to find and all of their fears and questions are answered.

It builds an intimate bond with a visitor, who is potentially your ideal customer, and it leads them along your sales path and convinces them to make contact with you.

If you don't take care of this important step, the number of visitors to your web site may not matter, because none of them are persuaded to call you.

Again, look at sites your web designer has built. Do they consistently have a convincing message or do they put you to sleep?

4. Can I easily edit my web site my self?

A good content management system (or CMS) makes it simple for you to update your website without requiring a degree to operate it. It also removes any possibility that you can break more complex areas of your website that you don't need to edit (like page layouts).

It's easy to change what you need to change and you can do so at your convenience. And since you don't have to pay your web company by the hour to make every change you can save a fortune over time.

Ask for a demonstration of the content management system your web designer uses before you proceed. You can afford to discover you've chosen the wrong system after it's too late to change your mind.

5. What sort of results do your customers get?

A huge number of tasks go into developing a successful website. From html coding and search engine marketing to social media and email marketing. It's very difficult for somebody who new to web design to properly evaluate every aspect.

It's much easier to evaluate the results.

Any web designer worth their salt will guide you through a process and identify what methods will get you the best results. So check out the websites they have developed and the successes that they are helping their clients to achieve.

While a web designer can not be responsible for the success of their clients, having a large number of successful clients is a good sign.

I never assume anything when helping a customer to determine what they need from a website. And don't you make any assumptions either. Before you take the plunge make sure you answer the biggest question of all:

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