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## A Primer To Hiring A Qualified Web Designer

This is reading that every small to mid size business should have on hand when approaching a web designer or design company. Many clients lose money with their websites because they failed to do the necessary due diligence of hiring a designer. At Sachi Studio, we believe that an informed client is the best client to have. After finishing this brief guide, you will be able to;

1. Identify the goals for your website,
2. Know what questions to ask of a web designer,
3. Understand the various costs associated with developing a website,

If you approach 10 web designers about their prices, you will get 10 different answers. When a prospect uses price as the sole criteria of hiring, they will usually focus on the lower end designers. This is exactly when trouble begins and horror stories occur. Instead, you should be approaching designers with the goal of who is most qualified in terms of skillsets instead of prices. By hiring designers who add the most value, you will receive a website that will prove to more valuable to your business.

So how then, do you find a designer who can add value to your bottom line? The answer lies in the goals that you want out of your site. Below are five questions to ask yourself to help clarify your goals. Once you determine the website goals, you will then use them as a guide to help you find the right designer for your business. Remember; not all web designers are created equal. These questions are meant to help you filter out the unqualified web designers.

1. **Do I want my website to be ranked well within the search engines for certain keywords that customers could be using to search for my business?** If so, then you want to find a designer who has skillsets in Search Engine Optimization Strategies.
2. **Do I want the option to update the website on my own rather than rely on a web designer?** If you want to update the site on your own, then you should find a designer who is familiar with various Content Management Systems and how to design for the CMS Software.
3. **Am I planning to sell products online?** If you do, then you should find a designer who has skills in database programming and ecommerce functionality.
4. **Will I be writing the web copy for the website or should I find someone who can?** If you write it, your webcopy should be finished by the time the designer is done on their end, otherwise this delays the project further. If you want your web designer to do this, then you should make sure that she knows how to write webcopy. Most people know how to write, but few know how to write effectively on the web and to get visitors to buy from you.
5. **Do I want the site to play a marketing role in my business?** If so, then you want to find a designer who understands various types of online marketing strategies and how those techniques can be integrated into your website to bring in more customers.

**In summary, these are what you should look for in a web designer. We recommend that you ask the questions below of your designer. The designer should also be able to show previous work with respect to these requirements.**

1. Does the web designer have knowledge of search engine optimization strategies? If so, does he have a portfolio of work to show his competency in SEO? What kind of techniques will he be employing and does he have a methodology to developing a well-ranked site? How is the research performed?
2. Does the web designer have experience in designing for ecommerce websites? What type of software will he be using?
3. Does the web designer have experience with designing for content management systems? Will he be training you on how to use the software so that you are not reliant on him for future maintenance? Is it proprietary or open source software?
4. Does the web designer know how to write effective web copy? How are the rates structured?
5. Does the web designer have an understanding of various online marketing strategies that can help the customer make more money from the website? What type of marketing strategies does the designer provide? Brand creation? Email marketing? Business blogging consulting? SEO? Article writing?

## What affects the cost of a site?

The cost for a website, even for basic brochureware, can vary quite a bit. One designer can charge \$700 for a 5-page site. And yet I know another who charges \$1300 and yet I know another company that charges \$2000. And all three clients will be happy with what they receive and paid for the site. Most people only see the end result of a design, but below are some of the elements that occur “under the hood” and are factored into the cost of any website. Beware of the designer who quotes you a concrete price without finding out more about the information below from you.

1. **Mockups.** How many mockups or drafts do you wish to have? Some clients wish to have three or four iterations of the site before coding commences. The more mockups that a client wishes to have, the more time it takes for the designer to implement thus increasing costs significantly.
2. **Technology.** Depending on the goals of the site, technology and software can play a critical role in the site design. Some people want the option to update the site on their own without relying on the designer. This means that a CMS, Content Management System, is needed. This will usually increase the cost of the site design since it takes a bit more time to design for a CMS.
3. **Creatives.** If you want a lot of creative juice to be integrated into the site design, then this will increase the cost. Design elements such as customized icons, buttons, flash, and graphic illustrations are time and labor intensive. Creativity will vary widely from one designer to another. There will be a balance that you need to achieve with the aesthetic look of your site, what your designer can produce, and how much you are willing to pay to achieve that look.
4. **Revisions.** How many times do you want to revise a site before it is finally launched? The more revisions a client wishes to have, the further this delays a project and the more time a designer has to put into it. Time is money.
5. **Services offered.** Aside from coding and design, there are other services that some designers can offer. Search engine optimization strategies, online marketing strategies, email marketing, and web copy writing are just a few of the added value that some designers can offer to your business. Building a website is just the first step. Getting visitors to buy from you requires a designer who has a solid understanding of marketing. What you are willing to pay will depend on how much value you place on your online presence.

### A couple buying tips;

1. **Register your own domain name rather than rely on the web designer.** Relying on a web designer to register the domain name for you mean they have ownership of the domain name and not you. Should something go wrong with the relationship between you and designer, you will not be able to get your domain name back. This can cost you a lot of business.
2. **Don't focus on pretty but focus on marketable.** A lot of website owners tend to think that a website that is beautiful in graphics, full of flash, and has music, will help them make money from the website. This is simply not true. At the end of the day, website owners don't want something pretty but want something that will help them make money. Focus on having a site that loads fast and is full of content and resourceful to the visitors.