

20 Questions to Ask a Web Designer Before Hiring Them

- 1. How long have you been in business?**
(**Why to ask this:** *It's good to know if they are just starting out or have more experience.*)
- 2. Do you outsource any of your design or development work?**
(**Why to ask this:** *It's good to know whether your work will be done in-house, or outsourced to 3rd party designers or developers.*)
- 3. How will you manage my project and what team members will be involved?**
(**Why to ask this:** *You will be an active participant in your website project so it is good to know what the designer's process to manage the project is, how you'll be able to interact with them, and what members of the designer's team will be working on the project.*
NOTE: *if the designer does have a team, ask what qualifications those team members have to work on the project.*)
- 4. Are your website designs and coding custom or do you use any templates or themes?**
(**Why to ask this:** *If a designer is using pre-made designs, templates, or themes, you should be aware of any pitfalls. For examples, are the designs copyright free, can the template or theme be modified to meet your functionality needs, etc. As a general rule, custom design will ensure that your exact needs and goals are met.*)
- 5. What if I don't know exactly what I need?**
(**Why to ask this:** *This is a great question to ask when you really aren't sure what functionality you need because the answer will give you more insight into how the designer approaches a project that needs upfront consultation to determine the exact needs.*)
- 6. Can you show me examples of similar projects you have worked on?**
(**Why to ask this:** *It's always important to ask for real examples of past projects from a designer. This shows they've been able to successfully deliver a similar project.*)
- 7. Can you provide some referrals from past clients?**
(**Why to ask this:** *You want to get 3rd party, hopefully unbiased, input on how the designer handled a client's project, how it was working with them, whether the overall project was successful, etc.*)
- 8. Can you show me some case studies/results from past projects?**
(**Why to ask this:** *A website project should always have goals. Asking for case studies or results will show you if the project met the particular client goals/needs. This is a good indicator of return on investment for a project.*)
- 9. Before we get underway, do you take the time to learn about my business as well as do research on my competitors and/or my industry, and analyze my existing website (if applicable)?**
(**Why ask this:** *This is a key question that often separates the good designers from the not-so-good designers. The reason is because a good designer should always do this type of research before beginning a new project to better understand these things and make design choices that dovetail with your marketing goals.*)
- 10. What other services do you offer?**
(**Why ask this:** *It's good to know if the designer can also assist with other your needs such as logo or graphic design, printing, online-marketing, copywriting, etc. **NOTE:** If they*

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say they do offer additional services, you can also ask for examples of these services as well.)

11. **What happens if I don't like a design?**
(**Why ask this:** You want to know what the designer's procedure is for handling design change requests, is there a set limit to the number of designs or changes, etc.)
12. **What happens if I need to add something to my project or something changes after we get started?**
(**Why ask this:** Similar to #11, you want to know how the designer handles additions and change requests to the website development. **NOTE:** this is also something that should be covered in a written agreement.)
13. **How long will my project take?**
(**Why ask this:** Typically, a designer needs to know the exact specifications for your project and if there are any additional needs, such as copy writing, in order to give an accurate timeline. However, you ask this question to get a ballpark figure.)
14. **Will my website work well on desktop computers as well as mobile devices such as tablets and phones?**
(**Why ask this:** These days, your website must function properly on all devices, so the only appropriate answer for this question is a yes.)
15. **What will I need to provide to you to get started? How about during the project?**
(**Why ask this:** The answer here will vary based on your specific needs that the designer is aware of, however, asking it should reveal more of their procedure and process.)
16. **Once we get started, how does the design process work?**
(**Why ask this:** This delves deeper into how the designer actually works. How will the design mock up process work? How about once the design is approved and the website coding starts?)
17. **Do I own my design and website once it's completed?**
(**Why ask this:** It's important to know whether the designer provides work as a "work for hire" or whether they retain the copyright to the design and completed website. **NOTE:** You should always own the design and website content. The exception is when you are using 3rd party services such as a shopping cart system or other pre-developed programming or stock images/photography.)
18. **If I need hosting or a domain name, do you set that up?**
(**Why ask this:** Some designer offer to set this up for a client, but be careful that your domain name is registered to you, not the designer.)
19. **How is on-going updates and/or maintenance for the website handled?**
(**Why ask this:** A website will always need updates and some content management systems need monthly maintenance in order to function properly and for security. So you need to know if the designer offers maintenance and the costs.)
20. **Do you guarantee your work / what is your warranty?**
(**Why ask this:** A professional designer will always offer a guarantee or warranty for the project.)

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

Make sure that your designer offers a written agreement/contact and review this thoroughly before signing and beginning a project. This document will cover many items such as costs, payments, project specifications, copyrights, change requests, and other issues.

If you are unsure exactly what you need for your project, you might find the following blog articles helpful:

- How Do You Know What Your Small Business Website Needs:
<http://jvmediadesign.com/blog/design/how-do-you-know-what-your-small-business-website-needs/>
- How to Determine Objectives for Your Business Website:
<http://jvmediadesign.com/blog/design/how-to-determine-objectives-for-your-business-website/>

For more information about pricing and the design process, check out:

- Custom Website Pricing – What You Need to Know:
<http://jvmediadesign.com/blog/design/what-does-it-cost-to-build-a-custom-website/>
- Guidelines for Being a Great Website Client:
<http://jvmediadesign.com/blog/design/guidelines-for-being-a-great-design-client/>
- What Goes Into Your Typical Website Project:
<http://jvmediadesign.com/blog/design/what-goes-into-your-typical-website-project-infographic/>