



So, you're
looking for a new...

WEB DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY?

A useful checklist to help you ask the
right questions.



ONE / EXPERIENCE

- Have they identified to you who their ideal customer is? And who they are able to offer the most value to?
- For the key people working on your web project, how much experience do they have?
 - Who will be the project manager on the project?
 - Have they been in business long enough to be sound and experienced?
 - Are they are member of any governing industry bodies?

TWO / EXPERTISE

- Will they build your website with SEO in mind?
 - What is their on-site SEO and off-site SEO strategy?
 - Are they Google Adwords Certified?
 - Do they offer copywriting?
 - Do they offer hosting and domain purchasing?
 - Do they offer custom programming and development?
 - Do they offer logo and branding design?

THREE / PERSONALITY/ TRUST

- Do you actually like the people at the agency and will you be able to work with them?
- Are there references, testimonials or recommendations?
- Do they communicate well with you? Are they able to articulate back to you what you're after?
- What is their reputation? Have your colleagues heard of the agency, and what do they think?
 - Do they appear to be honest and professional?
 - Does their own website reflect well on their abilities?
 - Do their referees recommend them?

FOUR / UNDERSTANDING

- Has the agency asked about the demographics of your target audience?
- Have they demonstrated an understanding of your business, the requirements for the website, and helped you to define the goals and outcomes?
- Does their solution make sense and address your needs?
- Do they seem to be good listeners?

FIVE / PROCESS

- How do they plan to build your website?
- Do they propose a sound, workable project management methodology?
- What are the milestones associated with their development process?
- What are the deliverables associated with each of these milestones?
- Are they comfortable with hitting the deadline you've identified?
- Do they offer any project management tools, client portal or a way for you to collaborate with them during the project?

SIX / AESTHETIC / DESIGN / USER EXPERIENCE

- How does their site look? Can you navigate it with ease?
Find what you are looking for?
- What does their online portfolio look like?
Do you like what they have designed and developed for past clients?
- Have they talked to you about the mobile audience, and how their design will accommodate users on smaller screens?
- Do their previous sites demonstrate a sound knowledge of UX (User Experience)?
- Do they develop sites that demonstrate a logical flow and hierarchy to the content?

SEVEN / TECHNOLOGY

- Will they build it in a CMS? If so, what CMS are they using? Do they use Open Source or Proprietary? Have they explained the benefits?
- What technologies and development environments like Ruby or PHP do they have experience with?
- What changes will you be able to make to the site without their aid, or that of another designer? Ask for a demonstration on another site they've worked on of how to make those changes.
- Do they talk about where and how to host your web project?

EIGHT / PERFORMANCE

- Have they discussed website performance?
- Do they put as much detail into the behind the scenes code as they do to the design?
- Will they optimise the site to provide the best possible load time?
 - Will they optimise for the greatest browser compatibility?
 - Do they use version control on their code?
 - Will they limit the use of unnecessary plugins and third-party scripts?

NINE / QUALITY

- Do they outsource their work? If so, what parts and to whom?
- Do they adhere to industry best practice, such as W3C Standards or Google Webmaster Guidelines?
- Do their sites work well across all devices?
 - If they host or provide SAAS, do they have a service level agreement or guaranteed uptime?
 - Do they have security measures in place to protect your site from virus, hack or malicious practices?

TEN / BUDGET

- How do they charge? Hourly or under a fixed fee?
- Does the project proposal look professional? Does it detail exactly what they plan to do with your website, is it easy to understand?
- In their proposal, have they accounted for additional costs, such as stock photography, software subscriptions or copywriting?
- How will billing work?
- What happens if they find they need to exceed the budget?

ELEVEN / DETAIL

- Is everything you requested in the proposal?
- Who will own the source files (Photoshop files and such) associated with the project after their work is complete?
- Who will own the copyrights associated with their work on your web project?

TWELVE / SUPPORT

- What are their maintenance and support options?
- Do they offer a CMS so you can maintain/update the website yourself?
- Do they offer ongoing support? If so, how much does it cost?
- What response time do they offer with their support package?