

# 15

## Questions

To Ask Before Hiring  
A Web Design Firm



## How do the sites look that they've designed before?

01

Although past experience isn't always an indicator of future success, a solid portfolio will not only give you an idea of the level skill any given design firm has, but it will also let you know what style and website type they feel most comfortable working on. Also, keep in mind that any samples a designer sends you will probably be what they consider their best work.

## What references can be provided?

It's not all about the design. Even if their work looks amazing, a firm may be difficult to work with or not very good at hitting important deadlines. References can help you get a better picture of how a firm's business operates and how they treat their clients -- important things to consider before signing a contract.

02

## If you like a certain example or design, will that specific designer be assigned to you?

03

Web design firms may have multiple designers on staff or working as freelancers. If you have your mind set on a specific style that you've seen in a firm's portfolio, getting the original designer on your project can help ensure that the firm really nails it when your first mock-ups are completed.

## How long has this firm and your assigned designer been doing web design?

Talent is important, but it can't trump experience when it comes to web design. A firm and a designer with experience are not only more likely to do great work, they'll also better understand how to listen to their client's needs and often have the ability to spot potential roadblocks before they happen.

04

05

## Do the developers code by hand or use frameworks? Could they code by hand if necessary?

Even the best designs can't function without well-written code. In addition, code written by experienced developers will be less resource-intensive and will have quicker load times, which has a direct impact on traffic and conversion.

## What is the process?

Because it can involve so many people, web design projects must be managed well from start to finish. Be wary of any firms that don't have a very clear process for navigating through web design projects.

06

07

## What is the typical budget range for projects?

This is a pretty obvious one. Make sure you're working with a firm that is comfortable with your available budget, but don't be afraid to adjust it some after talking with a few firms.

## How are payments structured?

Many firms offer a split payment structure, with a portion due at the beginning, sometimes a portion due in the middle after a key milestone, and the remainder due at the end. Some even offer monthly payment structures. Make sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to the payment schedule, or your website may be "held hostage."

08

09

## What is the typical turnaround time for projects?

Web design projects can vary wildly when it comes to turn-around times. Make sure your expectations match up well with the timetable that a firm gives you. Also be warned that even minor changes during the design process can add significant, unplanned time to a project.

## When will the project start?

Firms can only accommodate so many clients at a time within their design pipeline. Make sure your preferred choice can start on the project at a time that fits your needs.

10

11

## What is required of you as the client?

Some firms are very collaborative with clients, while others prefer to present something first before asking for feedback. Make sure that you choose a firm that will work with you the way you want.

## Does the price include making the site responsive/mobile friendly?

Modern websites have to work on a wide range of screen sizes and devices. Don't assume that a firm will make sure their designs are responsive on all resolutions and devices.

12

13

## Does the price include a content management system? What else is included?

A CMS (content management system) typically costs more to implement than a simple web page, but it brings a lot of versatility and customizability without needing a developer. Sometimes, plug-ins and extra features, such as ecommerce, multi-language support, or others, are necessary for your website to function as required. Make sure these extras are explicitly priced out and included in the contract.

## Does the firm provide custom design or use templates?

Templates can go a long way, but if you're looking for a custom website, make sure you get one by asking up front.

14

15

## Does the firm offer maintenance, support, or training for the finished site? Is it included or extra?

Websites, like all code, can experience bugs. Some feature-heavy websites can be very complicated to manage and require training before handoff to the client. Make sure you ask about all the after-care that your website may need and clarify the firm's ongoing role after the web design and development is complete.

## Contact

If you have any questions for the team at MWI, you can reach us here:

info@mwi.com  
(855) 222-4230