



**NEED A
WEBSITE?
QUESTIONS
YOU SHOULD
ASK BEFORE
YOU BUY!**



**TOP
10
TIPS**



TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT WEBSITE DESIGNER?

Unsure of the right questions to ask? Want to make sure your choosing the right company?

The following tips are to help you ask the right questions before you spend your hard earned cash!

Unfortunately in the web design industry there are many scammers and non registered businesses charging a fortune for sub-standard work, people offering prices too good to be true (If it is too cheap...there will be a reason for this!) This gives ethical and trustworthy designers a bad name. We want you to protect yourself and have the knowledge to choose the best company for you.

When looking into getting a new website and when talking to a web designer, ask these questions to help protect yourself from **THROWING MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN!**



QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK:

1. Is the company a registered business? Have you seen their portfolio, testimonials and looked at earlier work?
2. Do they have clear Terms and Conditions and give you a clear quote and state what's included?
3. Can you edit your site content yourself after completion?
4. How easy is it to edit your site?
5. Do you have FTP and control panel access to your web hosting?
6. Can you create email accounts for your own domain? If so, how many?
7. Is your domain registered to you or your designer's company?
8. What other charges are there for "extra" services?
9. Does your site have any Search Engine Optimization on it when completed?
10. Does your site need monthly maintenance and how much does this cost? Can you do it yourself?



LETS LOOK INTO THOSE QUESTIONS IN MORE DETAIL:

1. Is the company a registered business? Have you seen their portfolio, testimonials and looked at earlier work?

It is very important when choosing a web design company to make sure they are who they say they are. You want to find a registered business with a good reputation. Do your research into the company. Check on Google, Give them a call on the number they list as their contact number, email them, and check online reviews. You can ask them for proof of their business, meet them at their work address, make sure they are registered with HMRC, ask if they have an accountant that can confirm they are a registered business? Do they have a business bank account ? Are they registered with the Information Commissioners Office, as they must be under the Data Protection Act 1998 if they handle any personal information? All these answers will give you a picture of the type of business they are and if they are running legally and correctly. Have a look at testimonials on social media and have a look at their portfolio of earlier websites to see the quality of their work.



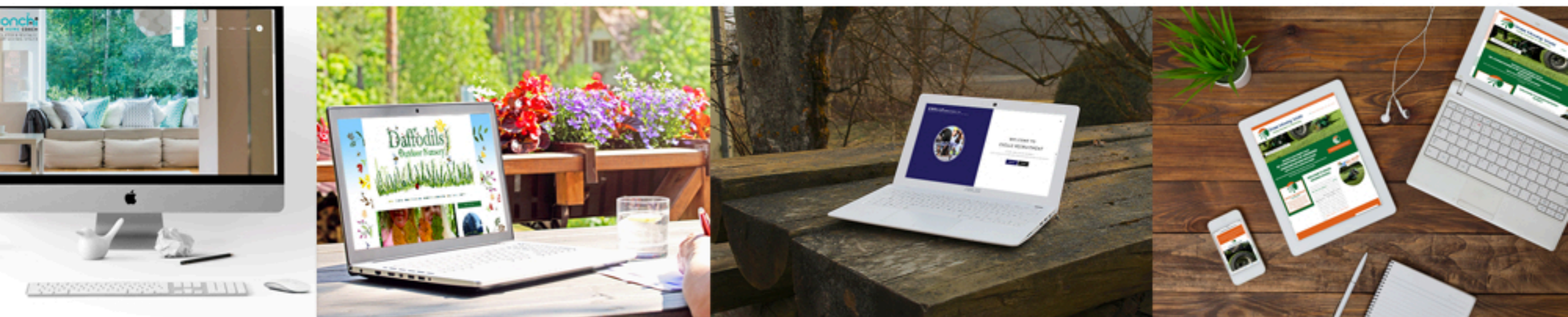


2. Do they have clear terms and conditions and give you a clear quote and state what is included?

Terms and conditions are important when you are picking a designer to create your website. Websites are not cheap, and you and the design company need protection. You need to look at things like deposit required, can you change your mind, do you lose your deposit, is there a cooling off period etc? Ask to see the designer's terms and conditions so you can be sure that you have all the answers you need before ordering.

3. Do you have the ability to edit your site content after it has been completed?

Some designers will give you a lovely looking site but won't give you the ability to edit any pages, and after completion you will have to pay them for every change you want. You should have full access to edit your site, so ask if you will have this. After you have paid for the initial web design you also do not want to have to keep paying the designer for small changes that you should be able to do yourself. You could end up with a large bill for small changes that can be avoided. Ask your new designer if you can make changes if you need to, and what costs are involved if you need larger work and updates. The designer should give you an upfront and honest answer from the start so you are aware of any potential costs. If you do not want to edit the site yourself, make sure you know the costs of tweaking it so you know from the very start.



4. How easy is it to edit your site?

They may give you access to change your site, but if you have to learn HTML coding to do so, this is not an easy task!. Check if the company will give you tutorials in order to learn how to edit your website and use it's different functions. Check that you do not need to know any complicated code and that the designer has made it easy for you to make changes. Make sure the designer you choose gives you easy access to update your pages if you need to, or offers you a maintenance service at a reasonable rate to help you maintain your website.

5. Do you have FTP and control panel access to your website hosting?

We are shocked at the number of clients we see with current websites that have no access to their cPanel/hosting management or FTP access. So many customers do not even have their own cPanel account for their hosting and do not have access to even create a database or a full back up of their site and database. Do you know why some untrustworthy designers do not give customers this? Because you, the customer, can choose to move your hosting and website away from them at any time you want! If you receive poor service or realize you are getting ripped off, you cannot get access easily and go to a better company. They hold your business in their hands!





6. Can you create email accounts for your own domain? If so, how many?

We've seen a number of businesses that have their own domain, but use a free email service like Gmail or Hotmail. This looks unprofessional, and is easily fixed. Some web developers will give you a couple of email addresses for your site, and charge you for every extra address you want created. For a small company with only one or 2 addresses that might be fine, but if you want a range of addresses for other functions like events, bookings, info, enquiries etc., the costs can really add up. Ask if you have the ability to create email addresses, and how much do they cost.

7. Is your domain registered to you or your designer's company?

If you register a domain through your Web host, they may keep control of your domain name. They can use this as leverage to make sure you stay with them for any further work. Find out who has control of the domain registration and who owns your domain. Having full control of your website is essential, but your domain name is key to your brand. If you lose control of your domain name your website is of no use. Check if you can change where your domain is registered and if you have full access to your domain name.



8. What other charges are there for “extra” services?

There can be legitimate extra costs involved in web design but these costs should be explained to you from the offset. Websites need to be kept updated to stay secure so ask what the charge is for monthly maintenance. If you cannot make updates yourself, ask how much the company will charge you to do these so you know for the future. Ask for any extra costs related to hosting/domain charges/maintenance and updating. Check that you can update your theme/plugins yourself or will you be charged for that? Check if the site requires anything else at all that may be hidden in the small print of their terms and conditions.

9. Does your site have any Search Engine Optimization on it when completed?

Basic SEO is important for any site. There is very little point in having a website that customers can't find in a Google or Bing search. Nobody can guarantee what place your site will appear in search results, and any company that promises this is not telling the truth. No web design company has access to the algorithms that Google uses to decide where any site should appear in their results. With basic SEO your site could appear within the first couple of pages in Google for local results, but without any SEO at all, you may end up appearing on page 20 (or lower) in the results, thereby guaranteeing that your site will almost never be seen. Ensure that the website designed for you will have basic SEO included.



10. Does your site need monthly maintenance and how much does this cost? Can you do it yourself?

Many websites need monthly maintenance to stay up-to-date and secure. Popular website software like WordPress, Joomla and Drupal need to stay up-to-date with maintenance on a regular basis. If you are opting for a CMS like WordPress or other coding for your site, check with your designer on what is needed to keep the website secure. Can you do the maintenance yourself? What does the company charge monthly to keep the website up-to-date? Know all the costs upfront to avoid any unwelcome surprises down the line.

We hope these tips have helped you for when you are choosing a web designer for your business.

Many thanks for reading!

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