

Checklist for commissioning a website correctly

Do ...

- **Research on what you need to be finding out about** – talk to a lot of web designers and developers just to get a feel for the requirements. They won't mind
- **Research on what you have found to be necessary to find out about** – go back to those same designers, if appropriate, and other ones you may have learnt about. Again, they won't mind *(as long as you're not just trying to pick brains to do it yourself! This is not unknown.)*
- **Use a professional designer who knows how to do what your site needs**
- **Make sure you have a comprehensive design brief**
- **Involve all relevant parties in the project**
- **Arrange for professional copy that is targeted to your market and site requirements**
- **Allow enough time for the project**

Don't ...

- **Use your neighbour, friend, cousin (unless they are qualified – and even then think about it)**
- **Pay peanuts ... because, what do you get?**
- **get carried away with how the site is to look and ignore the functional side of the site**
- **Near the end of the site build try to tack on another design/function requirement**
- **Try to do without adequate testing time**

What you should be asking a web designer

- Ask your potential designer about SEO and optimisation. (If you have done your research you will know why this may be important for you) Do they do this or can they recommend somebody who is expert in this area?
- Do they set up Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools?
- Ask about security for your website. How do they go about it and how firm are they about its importance?
- Ask about site maintenance after the build. What do they offer?
- Where would they recommend your website be hosted? If they offer hosting – what is the nature of the set-up and where (what country) is it managed?
- Will your site be responsive? (Hopefully, in your first stage of research you will have found out what this means)
- How will they optimise your site for search engines?
- Will your site be able to be extended for function and page number later if necessary?

What a web designer should be asking you

- How many people in your organisation need admin access to your site?
- If you have IT staff can they meet with them?
- How would you like to administer the site
- What functions would you like your website to have?
- Have you seen some example websites that do what you want for your website?
- What are your marketing aims for your site?
- Are there any particular events for which you want the site live?
- Where is the site copy coming from and will it be professionally written to target your market and search engines?
- Are you using social media and do you want it incorporated into your site?
- Where are you on SEO aspects for your site?

You should expect the following from a web designer in a website project

- A comprehensive session (where questions are asked by both parties) to establish a good design brief
- Production by the designer of a design brief for agreement by both parties. This brief should detail the scope of the project and deal with client and designer expectations and dependencies. Quotations should be appended and it should be explained when and how payment for the work will be made. An up-front payment of a percentage of the overall cost and staged payments throughout the project is common
- From here the designer will produce an agreed number of visuals based on the design brief and the client will make comment and choices to enable further development
- Upon agreement of the visual and functional aspects the designer will commence the build. At some point the site will be able to be viewed by the client as a live object. usually on a local site (not open to public) or on a private server. This building part of the project is usually the lengthiest as many things need testing and doing