23

# Questions to Ask Your Website Designer Before Hiring

oracle
ADVERTISING

Intro

If you're looking to hire a web designer to help you with your small or medium business website you've come to the right place.

We put together a list of 23 questions to ask before hiring a web designer. It's important to ask the right questions during your selection process because who you pick to work with and build your new website for you will determine both the end product and how much you enjoy the process. Video call, chat on the phone, or meet-up in-person to set up your project for success.
By asking these smart questions you will sound more prepared earning you more respect and a better understanding of your next web design project. Read below to learn what you should ask web design companies so that you can get the best website for your needs.
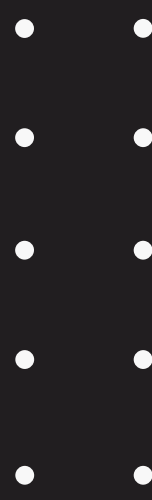
01

What kind of research will you do on our business?

- Good branding and website design requires research of your business and industry to successfully strategize, design, and market your business.

- Work with a designer who understands your ideal client. Your customers, prospects, and partners are the life of your business. Build your marketing strategy around them.

- Even though most designers can design a website for any business, ask if they specialize or have lots of information about a particular industry/audience.

Will you review my existing website prior to building my new website?

- If you have an existing site, ask your potential web designer to provide you with a site analysis or feedback of your current site to learn about the designer's thought process and ideas.

- A designer genuinely interested in helping you get what you need won't convince you to build a new website if making a few tweaks to your current site is all you need.

- Also, if you need to import content from a current site into your new site and/or forward links to a new domain, definitely make sure to ask about this process.

03

Do you offer other services other than web design?

- If your web designer has graphic design, typography, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and marketing skills that means they will be able to build a high-performing website that will generate leads.

- Sometimes web designers offer additional services that you may need such as logo design, copywriting, illustration, video or sound editing, and social media graphics. It's often rare that one designer is skilled in every area of design so designers will sometimes outsource the skills that aren't their expertise. For more info see question 5 about outsourcing!

04

Can you design a website that fits my budget?

- It's always good to clearly communicate your budget before starting any project. Some companies list packaged pricing on their websites and some require a custom quote that includes all services.

- Ask your web designer what options they offer and consider them against your budget. Web hosting, domain registration, plugins, and stock images are typically additional costs to you unless otherwise noted.

- We are in favor of being upfront about what we offer and like being transparent about our prices.

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Do you work in-house or outsource your projects?

- Some agencies offer web design and development as a service and will outsource the work. This can sometimes be incredibly helpful or it can lead to communication challenges, project delays, and additional costs.

- If your web designer plans on getting additional support it's a good idea to know who they're working with and what they're working on to eliminate any misunderstandings on either side and help you get the best website for your needs.

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Will I have a project manager or one central contact?

- Working with a team of people on your website can sometimes be efficient and sometimes slow things down, but having a central point of contact dedicated to your site will ensure that one person is managing the project each step of the way: research, strategy, design, development, launch, and review. Ask about your designer's project management workflow.
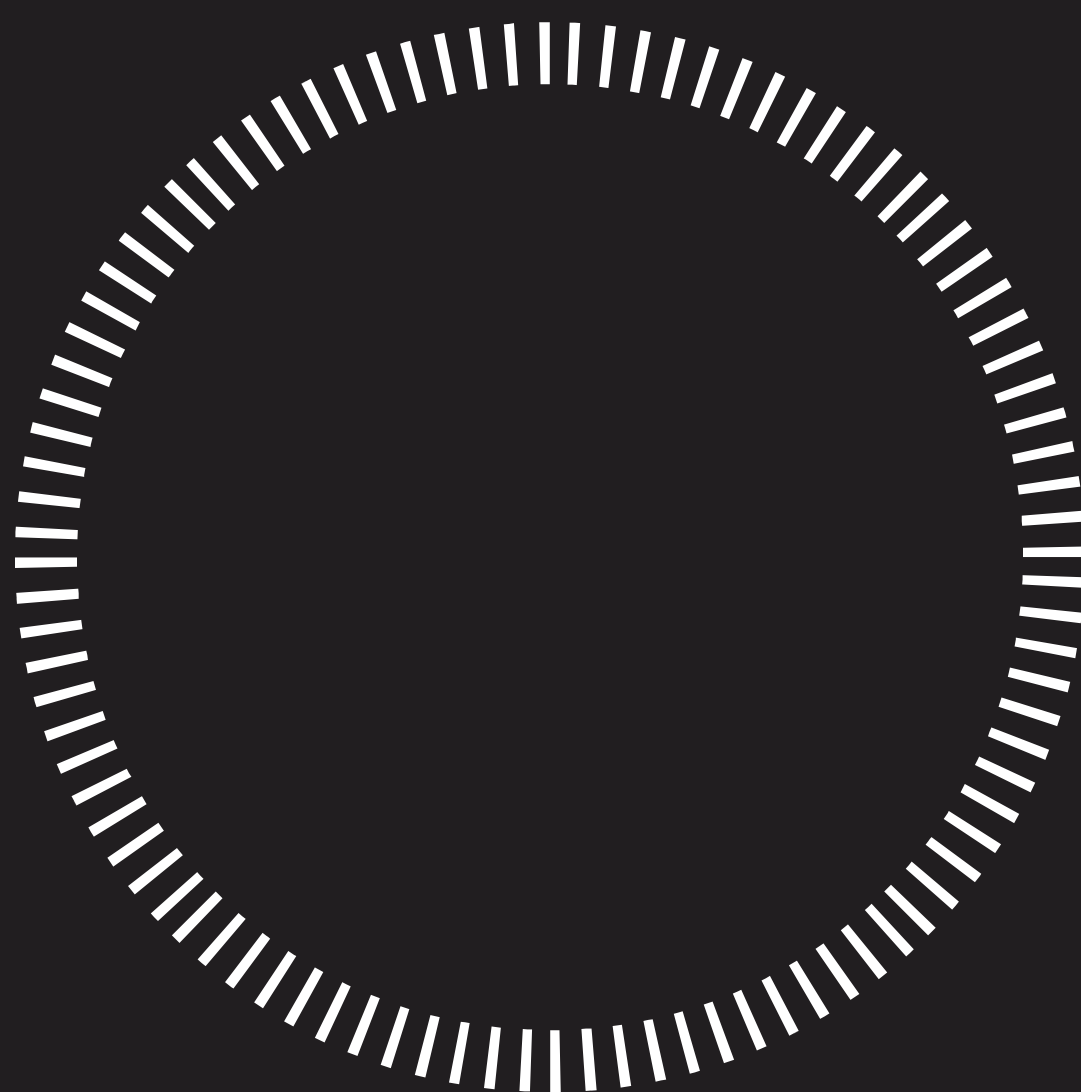
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What is your design process?

- Ask your web designer if they have a documented design process or use project management software. If they do, it's a strong sign they have solid experience and will lead you through the entire web design and development process from start to finish like a pro.

- Find a designer/project manager who will keep you on task, on budget, and launched by your scheduled date!
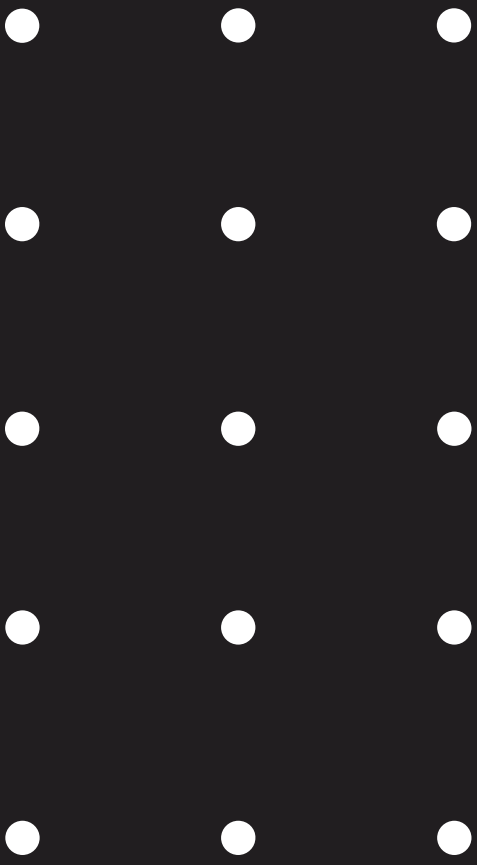
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How long will it take to complete my website design and development?

- A web designer should be able to give you a timeframe for your project based on your content in hand and what you will need to complete before the project can start.

- Check to see if the timeline fits your needs. It's a good idea to allow extra time for unexpected issues or changes. Clearly communicate the project deadline and always read the contract because some companies charge late fees if a project pushes past the deadline.

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What do you need from me before we start the project?

- Ask this at the beginning of the project to prevent scrambling for content, images, passwords, etc. Talk with your web designer and get a list of exactly what you'll need to give them to get started. Generally, you will schedule times to meet and provide written content, images, account information, and design feedback.
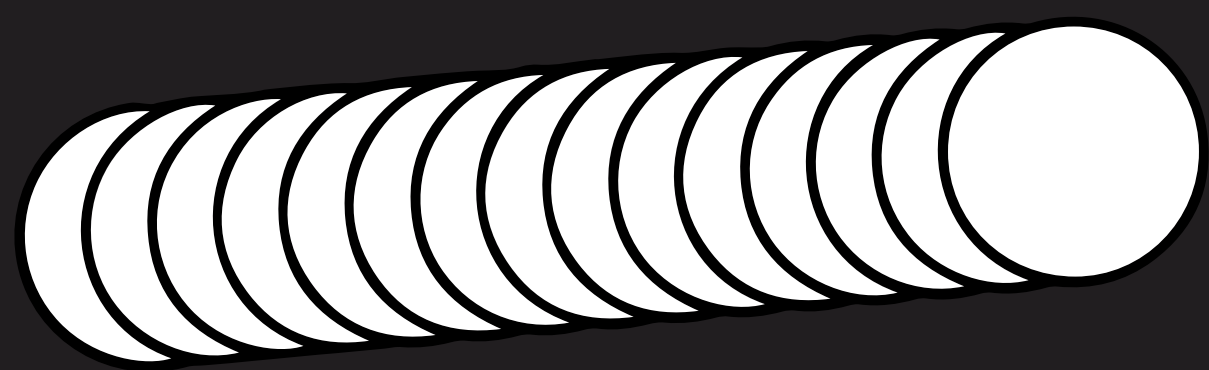
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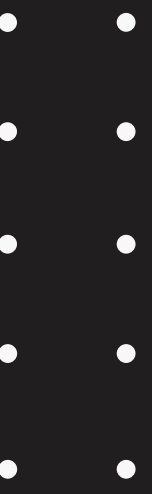
Should I provide the written copy for the website?

- Most web designers aren't copywriters, so they will outsource a copywriter who will be responsible for creating the marketing-focused content for your site. Alternatively, you can create the content for your site. It's an excellent idea to give your written content to an editor for review and ask colleagues to critique it. The text on your website is so important we recommend hiring an expert to get it done right the first time.
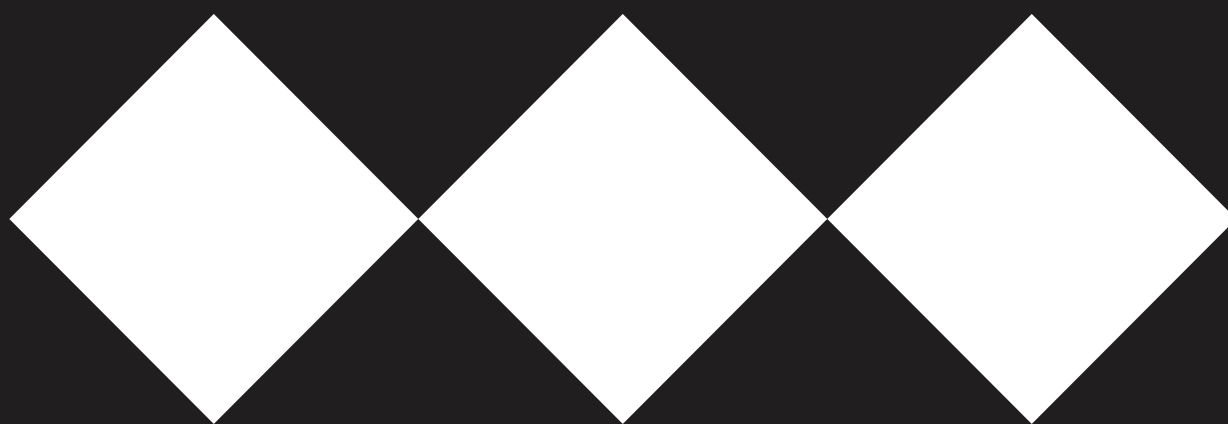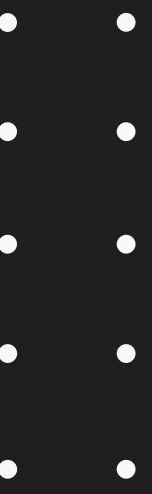
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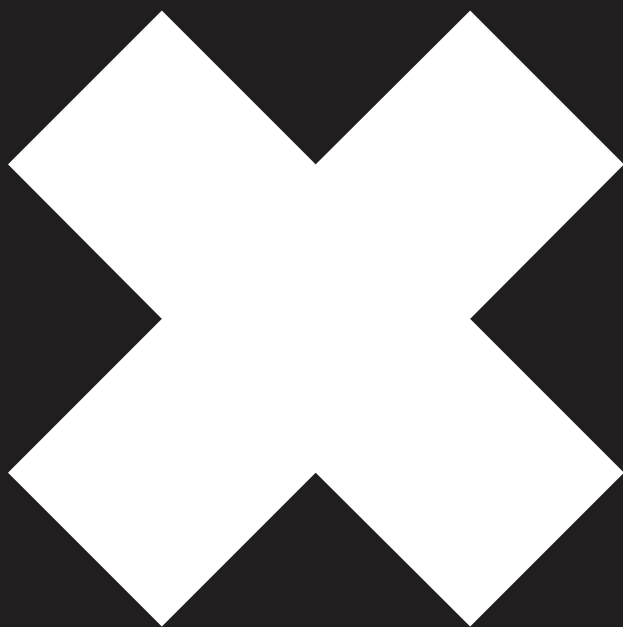
Should I provide the images for the website?

- Gather your images, graphics, videos, and brand materials (logo, fonts, colors). Ask if the images you have can be used for the new design. Find out if you will need to get professional photography or pay for stock images.

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Do you have a portfolio I can see?

- Many design companies showcase their work on their website. Make sure to take a look at their client work and take note of the design styles and user experience. Some companies only put a few featured projects on their website so if you want to see more of their work just ask them!

- When looking at their portfolio ask yourself these questions: Is their work modern? Are the websites they built mobile responsive? Does it align with what you're looking for on your website? Does the client have good testimonials from past clients?
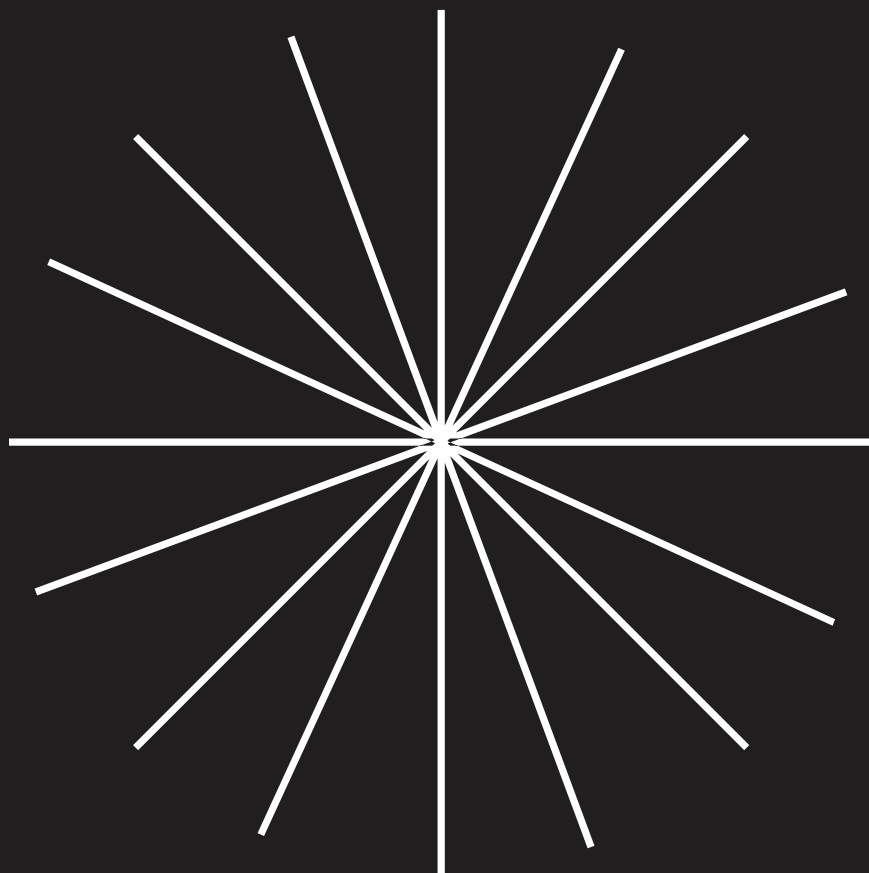
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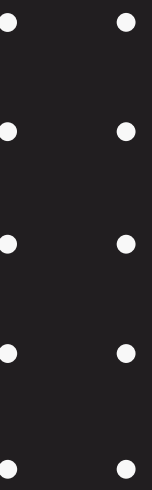
Which content management system do you use?

- The content management system (CMS) is what's used to create and organize content on your website unless you are getting a website coded from scratch. It's important to know what CMS your designer is using to develop your website especially if you will be adding content and maintaining your own website post-launch.

- Does your CMS support growth and e-commerce? Can you make updates on your own? Do you have all the functionality your business needs and will need in the future?

- At Oracle Advertising, we build websites on the Webflow platform and we recommend it to everyone out there for its unlimited creative capabilities.

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Do you build custom sites or use templates?

- Web designers offer template websites, complete custom coded websites, and a mix in between. Is your website truly custom made and coded from scratch? Or is it a website built on a CMS and customized from an existing theme/template?

- It's important to know how your site will be developed because not all CMS platforms are made equal. Do you have a specific design or tech feature you need? Make sure to ask about features and limitations on what can and cannot be done.

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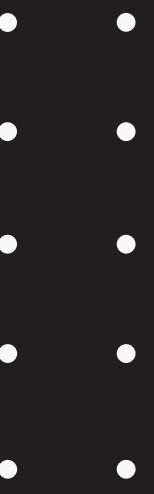
Are your web designs responsive?

- Google's Mobile Index makes having a mobile-friendly design non-negotiable. A website that responds for desktop, laptop, tablet, and mobile with one HTML code on the same URL is responsive web design (RWD). Basically, the website layout adjusts depending on the device screen size it's displayed on. At Oracle Advertising we create websites that are fully optimized and responsive to all devices in the market.

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Do you follow SEO best practices when building the site?

- Search engine optimization should be included from the beginning of your site development. SEO strategies like image optimization, alt tagging, mobile-friendliness, and keyword research help your site rank higher on Google.

- Ask if your web designer builds in SEO from the onset of the project to ensure your website is built with the framework you need to be found online.

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Will you integrate my marketing strategies?

- Your website should be one of your most important digital marketing sales tools. How will your website convert website visitors into leads and generate more sales? What strategies will you use?

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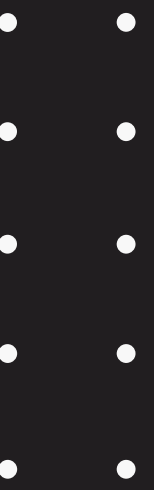
How many pages will your website have?

- Most websites small service businesses have a 5-page foundation:
    - Homepage
    - About
    - Services
    - Blog
    - Contact

- The type of website and content you have will help you figure out how many and what pages you need. If your website is e-commerce or a blog it will be designed as such. Ask your web designer if a custom 404 page, terms and conditions, privacy policy, cookie policy, and any other landing pages are included in your build.

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Can you build an e-commerce site?

- The design of an e-commerce site differs from a brochure service business website. Ask your web designer if your CMS supports online stores and accepts online payments.

- If you aren't ready to add products or create a store just yet you want to make sure you will be able to add an online store into your existing site when you are ready. Otherwise, you would need to build another site and link to it your main site. Keep it simple and build a foundational site on a platform that lets you grow with your business.
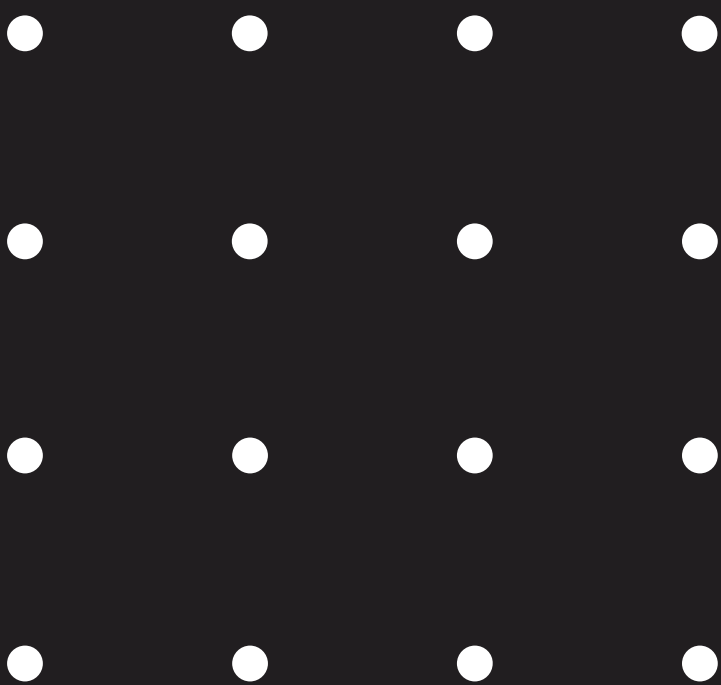
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How many rounds of edits/revisions are included?

- Establish checkpoints throughout the project so that you will be able to review and approve the work. What happens if the first draft version of your site comes back and you don't love it? Request changes by giving your designer constructive feedback.

- Typically designers offer 2–3 rounds of revision. If you need more than that you may pay an hourly rate based on changes until they're complete.

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Is my website secure?

- Properly maintaining a website includes keeping it free of bugs and hackers, updating your site's software and plugins, getting routine backups, and an SSL certificate to ensure ongoing performance. Ask your website what CMS platform your website will be developed with as this will determine how many security measures you need to take.

- We love Webflow because it doesn't require manual updates like WordPress, has an award-winning support team, an extremely helpful knowledge base and SSL Encryption is used throughout Webflow to protect PII and non-public data from unauthorized access. All communication between Webflow users and the Webflow-provided web application is encrypted-in-transit while using the application. All databases and database backups are encrypted at rest.

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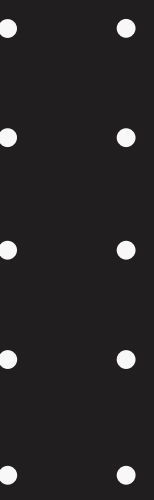
What training/support do you offer when the site is launched?

- If you're someone who will want to make changes and updates on your own make sure your web designer uses a web platform that's user-friendly and easy to use so you can own and maintain your site yourself. Ask your web designer about website training lessons. Some designers offer 1:1 training, group workshops, and custom video tutorials for clients.

- Or if you prefer to simply send edits and updates and not do it yourself, ask your web designer if they offer a post-launch support/maintenance package for long-term support.

- At Oracle Advertising we offer post-launch support/maintenance packages for long term support and full training & onboarding video for your new website

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Do I own the site and site contents after it goes live?

- Similar to social media platforms, you own the content you upload but you don't own the platform/template you use. Make sure your domain name and web hosting are registered in your name. Find out if your business will be required to lock into an ongoing contract post-launch or if the designer plans on delivering the completed site after launch.

- Often, designers will create graphics for your site (ie: logo). You will want to own these files and have a copy of them saved just to be safe.

One last question to ask yourself...

Do you feel more prepared and have a better understanding about what questions to ask your potential web designer before starting a project?

Contact Us

Ready to enhance your online presence and take your business to the next level? Get in touch today or fill out the form below to find out how Oracle Advertising can get you there.

https://www.oracleadvertising.com/business-form