

10 THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A WEB DESIGN AGENCY

One of the hardest things about launching a new website or revamping your current site is choosing the designer. With so many design companies out there, it can be a monumental task just trying to figure out which one is right for you.

This is certainly not a decision you want to take lightly. After all, your website is your online face of your business. It will be the first point of contact for many of your potential customers. Your website will be a driving factor behind whether people choose to do business with you.

That's why it's so essential to choose a design company that will actually help you reach your target audience—and your business goals. So how exactly are you supposed to choose? Here are ten things to look for when selecting your design company:

THEY LISTEN TO YOUR IDEAS

You're an expert in your industry. As such, you know what you're selling, and you have some idea of how you need to present it to your potential customers. No one knows your business better than you do! If a web design company won't listen to your ideas, then you probably don't want to work with them. Your designer needs to be able to put your ideas into action, not create their own pet project.

THEY HAVE THEIR OWN IDEAS

While it's important for your web designer to listen to you, you don't want a yes-man. You may know your business, but your website needs to be designed by someone who knows design. If a web design agency does nothing but nod their heads and produce an exact replica of what you say, then you aren't getting your money's worth. Your designer must be able to bring exciting ideas to the table.

THEY HAVE A MARKETING DEPARTMENT

A web design agency without a marketing team is like a Ferrari without an engine. Yeah, it may look great, but it's not going to go anywhere. You want more than an eye-catching website. You need something that actually will work. When a web agency has designers, developers, and marketers, you can be confident that the finished product will be more than just a pretty paperweight.

THEY DESIGN WITH CMS IN MIND

You need a content management system for your website. Without it, you'll be calling a developer every other day with another request to update your site. Any web design agency worth anything at all is familiar with the best content management systems (WordPress, Drupal, Magento). If your designer

recommends a static HTML website, then you need to find a time machine so you can get back to this decade.

THEY KNOW RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Responsive design is not a fad. It's simply the best way to design a website these days. Even Google thinks so. If a web design agency isn't well-versed in responsive design or suggests a separate mobile website is always better, then they're probably not right for you. While there are some cases where a separate mobile site might have some advantages, responsive design is generally the preferred solution. As mobile and tablet usage continue to grow, you need to be sure your business is optimized for every device. The right designer will get you there.

THEY HAVE A PORTFOLIO OF LIVE WEBSITES

What's the best way to see if a web design company knows their stuff? Look at the work they've done. But don't trust screenshots of home pages. You want to see the websites they've made in action. Take the time to look through their portfolio and actually visit the sites they've designed. If you don't see anything you like, then they're not going to be a good fit.

THEIR DESIGNERS KNOW CONVERSION

A designer must know more than how to make something look nice. A good web design agency includes a team of designers who know what makes websites convert. That means they know proper layout, navigation, and calls to action. An "if-it-looks-good-they'll-convert" philosophy doesn't cut it these days. Your designer needs to use data and proven methods when creating your site.

THEY HAVE EXPERIENCE IN MORE THAN ONE INDUSTRY

You might think it would be great if your web design company only worked with one industry. After all, if they only do websites for cat leashes, then they must really know cat leashes, right? Perhaps, but it also means you're probably going to end up with a cookie-cutter website that's indistinguishable from the other seventy-five cat leash websites they did this year. A web design company that works with a wide variety of industries is more likely to create a unique website that will reach a bigger audience. Your website must stand above the competition, not be identical.

THEY KEEP UP WITH MODERN DESIGN TRENDS

The last thing you want from a new website is a design that looks like it would've been popular last decade. A web designer needs to keep up with the latest technology and modern design trends. Customers are much more likely to trust a business if their website looks modern. Good design companies incorporate what's hot in their websites. A web designer needs to be familiar with parallax

scrolling, flat design, responsive, and dozens of other styles and elements. Of course, that doesn't mean they should just push all the newest fads. There needs to be a balance between what's modern and what's proven. A website must do more than just look fresh.

THEY'RE NOT DIRT CHEAP

Your website is one of the most vital pieces of your business. This is not an area where you can afford to cut corners. When a web design company tells you, they'll build a custom website for \$2000, they really mean they'll drag and drop your text and logo into a \$99 WordPress theme that 12,000 other websites use. If you want a website that's going to work for your business, you must be willing to invest in it. A great website will yield a high return on investment. A bad website will result in a stagnant business.

Finding the right web design agency is not the easiest job you have as a business owner. But once you find the right designer, your job becomes a whole lot easier.