

## **Choosing the right Web Design company**

Choosing a web design company can be a little tricky, and many times it's a gamble, but if you know what to look for, you can save yourself a lot of stress and frustration. If you don't, however, you could be stuck with poor service and empty promises as well as being faced with ridiculous bills. Take time to empower yourself with the following knowledge, and learn to spot a bad choice in web design companies from a mile...

### **Good Looking Website**

This is one of those times that judging a book by it's cover is in your best interests. A webdesign company's website is it's book cover, so naturally if their website is not stimulating...chances are that they will create an unstimulating design for your website...which in turn is YOUR book cover. If your bookcover is amateurish, your potential client may very well pass you by, imagining that your service or product to be as exciting as the site they've just seen...not very!

### **Website Looks Vs Website Price**

If the client liaison of the webdesign company drives a Ferrari, there's a very good chance that they are overcharging their customers. Web design prices vary greatly. There are no set guidelines for quality nor are there any recommended pricing structures, so one must use one's own discretion here. I can't tell you that R 4000 is a good price for a small website, because it depends on the web design itself. If I may use a fine art analogy here. R 1 million is a ridiculous price to pay for a Tretchikoff, but an incredible bargain for a Van Gogh.

### **Web Design Examples**

If the web design company does not supply examples of their work or some form of portfolio, it can mean one of two things. Either the company is just starting and has no work to showcase yet, or they are not confident to display their work because it is not very good. The other problem I've come across here is when a web design agency has a long list of clients that they have allegedly done work for, but no links to the work itself. In cases like these, you can rest assured that at least half of their clientele are made up and the other half of their clientele are upset by their shoddy workmanship. Bottom line is: If the company is any good, they will proudly display examples of their work. If the company just doesn't have any work to display, you're taking a gamble.

### **Good Service is Hard to Find**

We all want to deal with people who respond promptly and keep their promises. The level of service is vastly different from company to company, and if, like many of your countrymen you are tired of being jerked around and faced with utter ineptitude on a daily basis, it's important to sift out any web design companies that are likely to give you gray hairs. The first kind of web design company you will want to avoid is the long-winded kind: Should you ask for a quote from a web design company or get in touch with them via email and they do not get back to you within twenty four hours, then you can expect this kind of service for the entirety of the job. They are either too busy to take on any new jobs, or more likely, they are lazy and do not feel that you are important enough for them to reply promptly. The second kind of web design company you will want to avoid is the silver-tongued kind, the kind who send a charismatic sales person to butter you up to make up for their own skill inadequacies. Please keep in mind that many web design companies will simply tell you what you want to hear. "Yes, we have the skill level to do that.", "Sure, we can meet that deadline.", "Of course, you will be number one on Google.", etc. Unfortunately, it's not always

easy to tell apart someone who can do the job, from someone who simply says they can. If you have any doubts, why not ask for references or testimonials. If they are as good as they make out, surely they will have one or two happy customers to vouch for them.

## **Location**

A good internet connection for both parties, in most cases, rules out the significance of where the designers offices are located. In fact, if you have a tight deadline, it is probably better to have an online relationship because when you send an email with instructions, the webdesigner is already at his/her computer to make the changes, as opposed to having to drive back to their premises and prepare themselves for work mode again. Even material for the job can be emailed because unlike their graphic designer counterparts, the files are low resolution, therefore small in size. One thing to keep in mind though, is that if their offices are in a very exclusive area/office park, you can probably expect to pay "exclusive" prices. They have rent to cover after all.

## **SEO**

A good web design company will design your website with search engine optimisation in mind. It is no good to have a beautiful website that no one is ever going to see because search engines can't read the format in which it was designed. Ask your designer about their website marketing options. A lot of companies say they offer this but really don't know much about it. If a designer can't tell you exactly how they have optimised your site for search engines, then they probably have not.

## **Deadlines**

The last factor to take into consideration is the web designers ability to work within given deadlines. As mentioned, in the 'Good Service is Hard to Find' section, you may simply be told what you want to hear to be ultimately disappointed with non or late delivery. A good web designer should be able to provide you with at least a rough timeline if requested. I say 'rough' because from personal experience, clients themselves hold up the work process more often than not. Please keep in mind, that while your web designer is waiting for feedback, approval, content, etc from you, there are likely other jobs scheduled that may need to be postponed if you don't deliver what is needed promptly. Treat people how you want to be treated.

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