

Requesting a Quote for a Website

You wouldn't phone up a plumber and say "Please can you give me a quote on a small plumbing job", and then expect him/her to get back to you with an exact figure and how long it's going to take him/her. Web designers, however face this obstacle from a good 80% of their clients. A potential client will email/phone up a web designer and say "What will you charge to design me a small website?...And when can you have it done by?" If you want a concise quote, you will need to give them a concise brief, and here's how...

Know what you Want

Surprisingly, many potential clients seem to break out in a cold sweat when probed for more information on what they want. Phrases like 'I know nothing about websites' start to pop out... And that's perfectly fine: Nobody expects you to give a technical brief full of web design tech jargon. I'm going to show you an easy and logical way of figuring out and communicating your website needs.

Basic Purpose of the Website

A good place to start is to answer why you need a website in the first place. Do you want to promote a product that you are selling? Are you offering a service that needs more clientele?

Functionality of the Website

Once you've answered that basic question, think about what you want your potential clients to be able to read or do on your website. Do you have information you want them to read? Do you want them to register and login? If so, why? What are you offering? Do you want them to be able to purchase a product from your site using a credit card? Etc etc. All these questions will help clarify the purpose of the website. It's also a very good idea to have a look at the websites of your competition. What are they offering their clients? Please don't take the easy way out and simply send your web designer a link to your competitors site and expect them to base a quote on that. Unless a web designer charges for quotations, this is rude as you're effectively asking them to do your homework for you.

Working out the Website's Pages

Now it's time to start grouping those ideas into logical pages. This may sound daunting, but just think of your typical experience on any half decent website...you have a menu of options in the form of buttons. Something like: Home | About Us | Products | Contact Us. Let's say, you choose the products button: On that page you may have a brief summary of 10 products with 'read more' links. Etc etc. It takes time, and thought, but you will find that it is not difficult to list what you want from your website in a straightforward manner.

What's it worth to you?

You need to know what you are willing to spend. If a web designer asks you what your budget is, they are not trying to figure out how much they can fleece you for. They are merely trying to figure out if they can provide what you need within your budget. If they can't, they may have suggestions to tweak your website plan in order to cut costs here and there so that you can afford it. If you are serious about commissioning a website, then you will have a figure in your mind of what it's worth to you. If you aren't serious, and you are just curious about what it may cost you if you decide to

get serious, then say so. At least that way, the web designer can simply provide an estimate or ballpark range which will satisfy your curiosity and save the web designer the time of working out an accurate quote.

Website Extras

A few extras that go hand in hand with websites...

Domain Name & Website Hosting

Every website on the internet needs a domain name (website address like yourcompanyname.com) and it needs to be hosted by a web host (company offering a permanently on-line server that the physical files of your website will be located on). The domain name needs to be renewed every year and the hosting service will either be charged monthly or annually. If you haven't already organised a domain and hosting package, chances are your web designer either offers this service or will have contacts in this field and will be able to organise this for you at a decent rate.

Website Marketing

Do you require it to be optimised for search engines and have it submitted to engines and directories? A good web company will keep search engines in mind when they are designing and optimise it for this purpose, but actually submitting it to engines and directories is quite time consuming and usually requires an extra cost.

Content

In terms of text, will you supply the content? If not, perhaps the web design company offers copywriting or has contacts in the copywriting industry...either way, it will more than likely cost you extra. Pictures, especially can be a pricey ordeal, if you yourself are not supplying them but want specific pictures included. Unless the designer offers photographic services, he/she will have to purchase the pictures from a stock art company.

Maintenance

If your website is one that will require regular maintenance, you should enquire about a CMS (Content Management System) or maintenance plans/rates. A CMS is special functionality built into the website that allows a non-designer to update it. A good CMS will be expensive but if updates are regular, it will pay itself off. If you only need updates every now and then, rather opt to pay the website designer for them as needed, but first find out the web maintenance rate.

Checklist Summary

Here's a list of questions your web designer will likely need answered...

1. Official name of business to go on quote?
2. Full name of person responsible for payment to go on quote?
3. Do you have a deadline for this particular job?
4. Is there a budget that you need to work within?

5. Please list the pages you want your new site to contain (e.g. home, contact us, etc) and brief description of what is to go on them.
6. Do you require any animation? If so please give a fairly good idea of what sort of elements will be animated and how.
7. Have you organised domain registration & web hosting or would you like us to include that in the quote?
8. If you need us to host, how many email addresses do you require?
9. Do you need the website submitted to search engines?

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