

6 questions to ask your future Web Designer



Over the many years we've been in this business, we've heard many horror stories from people who didn't use care choosing their web design provider. Never finished websites, deadlines extending into months, sites that can't be updated without professional help and major expense, "invisible" sites on page 236 of Google search results, and sometimes plain robbery – "web designers" who vanish after they take your money.

About 20% of our customers come to us to fix or finish someone else's work. Yikes! Here are the 6 questions you should have on your checklist.

How to avoid having a bad web design experience:

1. **Always ask to see a portfolio.** Every professional web design company has one. This will also give you an idea about whether the designer's style matches your vision.
2. **Ask for references.** A designer should be able to get you in touch with at least one satisfied customer.
3. **Ask for search engine results.** A designer should be able to show you at least a couple of examples of websites that place on first or second page of Google – you'd get a couple of search terms (keywords) a site is "primed" for, and find the given site in the results yourself. Please note that the exact placement changes over time, as Google changes its search engine parameters constantly. Still, a well SEO'd site should show up high and stay there.
4. **Always ask for a written legal contract.** Contract should specify the project's price, deadlines, and scope of work, as well as procedure in case of extra work needed, or the breach of contract. It doesn't matter if you're getting a tiny

personal website or a huge online mall – always, always get a contract. A designer who doesn't want to provide one, or doesn't have a standard contract ready is *not* a professional.

5. **Ask how the website will be updated.** You should be able to add or change the basic content yourself – write new articles, change in-page photos and such. Don't expect to be able to change the basic look of the site – if you could do this, you wouldn't be needing a professional designer to begin with :-). A cheap website that only a pro can update will very soon become either out of date, or very expensive.
6. **Payment** should not be 100% down, except maybe in case of a very small sum. For example, we require 1/2 down for smaller projects, 1/3 down, then 1/3 on the first approved draft for medium size ones, and arrange for a similarly reasonable payment schedule for large projects. The final payment is always made upon delivery – once the website is up, and you've seen it work. Some designers will not like that – we often have to spend months trying to wrestle that last payment from a customer; so please be professional too. After all, your web designer is someone you'll likely need in the future (and they have full access to your new site!).