

## Important questions you need to ask before hiring a website designer.

1. **Do you outsource your work?** There are many self-proclaimed website designers who don't really know anything about designing websites. Many marketing companies and Graphic Designers need to offer websites as part of what they do, but don't really have the capability. They either outsource the work to India, which can be *big* problems down the road, or they use a build-it yourself website template and customize the graphics. This may work until you need a feature that isn't available on the build-it-yourself site. Sometimes they outsource the work to me and double the price to you. I see Graphic Designer and Marketing websites all the time who have an "About Us" page that raves about their experience in Graphics/Marketing, but doesn't say a word about their website design experience. This makes me wonder how they built all the pretty websites in their portfolio.
2. **Can you write code?** Most website designers use a design tool like Dreamweaver to build websites after we create the graphic interface in Photoshop. Dreamweaver generates most of the code, but if something goes wrong, the designer has to be able to look at the code and figure out where it is missing a "<" or a ">". I starting designing websites in 1996 when writing code was the only way to design a website, so I know html code – inside and out!
3. **What is the timeline to design my website?** I've heard so many stories of webmasters who take in work, collect a large deposit or full payment and never follow through with a website. At some point they usually disappear into the woodwork. This is an unfortunate situation, but can usually be avoided if you screen your webmaster carefully. I will give you an accurate timeline for completing the job and I stick to the schedule! I keep you informed every step of the way.
4. **What kind of support will I receive after the job is done?** You need to know what kind of help you will get and what the cost will be for updating your website, helping you set up your email, blog and other features you have on your website. I offer live training sessions along with supplying my clients with step-by-step written instructions with photos to step them through whatever they need to do. The technical support is free if I am hosting your website. I charge \$25.00 per half hour increment to update your website or do additional training for features like Blogs, Forums and even using your own computer programs efficiently. I've been on a computer every day since 1983, so I'm pretty well rounded in most programs.
5. **Is website design your main source of income?** This is important because a lot of website designers are doing it as a sideline. They may have some training in website design, but it takes a lot of work and business knowledge to get a full time business off the ground so they keep their full time job and do websites "on the side" for extra income. The big problem here is that they don't have the time to keep up to date on the constantly changing world of design code and search engine optimization – not to mention you may be waiting a long time to get your website or updates done.
6. **Do you have a referral list of clients?** You should at least want the option of contacting some past clients. If you aren't comfortable asking for that, go to some of the websites in their portfolio and email the clients. Ask them how satisfied they are with their webmaster. If the clients are happy with their webmaster, they will be more than happy to respond and help their webmaster get new business. If they don't respond, they probably don't have anything too good to say.
7. **How do I pay for my website?** I think just about all webmasters require some kind of deposit up front, but you shouldn't have to pay the entire amount up front. I require a 50% deposit and will work with you until you are happy with the design. You don't pay the balance until the website is ready to go live.

*Please feel free to call and ask me these questions and any others you may have!*

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