

Website Design: Every man and his dog!



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Yes, it can seem as though every man and his dog designs websites for a living! What's more they all tell you that they are the right firm for the job. And it doesn't stop there. You would be forgiven for being utterly confused at what a website designer will charge for creating your website. Fees can range from £99 to £9999 as well as a monthly charge for ongoing 'maintenance and support'. To make matters more confusing, many web designers will now offer website rental facilities, but again the charges vary enormously.

How to choose the best man (and his dog)

Trust

Few would deny that one of the most important aspects of choosing your designer is that you trust them. Don't forget, they are designing one of the most important promotional tools that your business will ever have. So if you don't trust them with this responsibility: politely walk away! Also, this isn't just about designing a website, this should be about forming a professional and long-lasting relationship with your designer. If your business is successful or if you want to make any changes, you will need a reliable and trustworthy design company working with you.

Here's one I made earlier

Always ask to see a selection of previous projects that the designer has completed. Don't place too much emphasis on previous projects alone, they are merely examples of varied designs, functions and concepts. The most important thing is what the designer can do for you. Ask how much the examples cost as this should provide you with a rough guide to the cost of your website. Also ask for a couple of previous clients who are willing to talk to you as references for the designers work as a whole. Finally ask the designer for some ideas or design concepts so that you can gauge their experience and ability.

To CMS or not CMS, that is the question...

CMS stands for 'Content Management System' and it is basically a means for the client to update and edit their website themselves. The need to have one or not largely depends on your ability to regularly change, update or edit the content of the site yourself. This is not technically difficult (most CMS software is very easy to use), but may place extra demands on your time or staff. Without a CMS, you will have to rely on a web developer to make the changes and updates for you for an hourly fee. If you are not sure, ask how much the addition of a CMS will be in the original design quote, and ask for an estimate for its addition that is valid for at least three months later. That way you can decide what suits you.

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How much is that doggy.....?

The most common question we are asked is 'How much is a website?', and our most common response is, 'It depends what you want it to do!'. No, we are not dodging the question as each website is different and can take longer or shorter amounts of time to develop. The only way to obtain an accurate quotation is to try and provide the web developer with an accurate idea of what type of design you want and more importantly, what you want the website to do. For example, is your website just going to be a basic site that provides simple information to your customers, or do you require a complex e-commerce site that incorporates email marketing and video files?

Even the prices for basic websites vary considerably, so trying to provide an average price is fraught with difficulties. Be sure that you set a budget and don't be tempted by the lowest price. An effective, well-branded and successful website will not cheap, but it will be a valuable investment for your business.

What else should I be thinking of?

Be sure to clarify exactly what your designer is providing, as sometimes the extras can become expensive. For example, is your designer offering free bespoke photography for your site, or indeed providing any of the images? Who will write and provide the site text and what about logos?

Make sure you either buy the domain name (the www. Address of your site) yourself or seek advice about this, either way ensure that you own it.

Get Googling...

Perhaps one of the most important aspects running a business website is making sure it is found on the major search engines. Be wary though of any company that guarantees to get you to number one on any search engine as it is rarely that simple: Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a science as well as an art! Most developers will charge for ongoing SEO, usually on a monthly basis and this is quite normal and acceptable. However, make sure you ask for a report and update on at least a monthly basis to be sure that you are getting value for money. In our opinion, your developer should be meeting with you at least once a month anyway!

So, we hope we have helped with a few of the basic queries we get asked, and we hope you get in contact if there is anything we have not answered!
Why not contact Avanti Web Media today?

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