

Ten Things to Know About Web Design

1. Provide Samples of Your Preferences

Send your designer several links or samples demonstrating what you like and what you don't. This will help articulate your expectations in regards to quality, layout, and the graphics of the finished product.

2. Always use Analytics

Web analytics help improve your web site's audience response as it can provide you with valuable information on what content is working on your site. Google Analytics and unique 800#s are two of the simplest.

3. Designers VS. Programmer

Many companies will have a different person for each function. Ask to see live examples of both design and programming skills especially when designing a more complex website.

4. Plan for modifications

Businesses change so prepare for the future. When paying for a website, make sure it comes with a content management system, so you can easily change the text by yourself when updates are needed and ask for raw files of any graphics.

5. Hosting should be easy

The vast majority of the time, it is best to use a third party [web-hosting company](#) to host your website. Ask for 2-3 recommendations from your web designer. You should expect and require a guaranteed 99% uptime.

6. E-commerce

and shopping cart functions can be bought off-the-shelf for simple products or custom designed for more complex transactions. Most reputable companies charge a monthly fee for these services.

7. Pricing

The price you pay depends mainly on the complexity of the site and the number of pages of content you require. Some basic guidelines: A simple website with around 4-6 pages of content should run around \$400-900 for a web template (again, make sure you have access to a tool to make text changes on your own). For something a bit more customized, expect to pay around \$800-3,000 depending, on, again, the complexity and number of pages. Sites with an especially complex functionality will usually be billed based on the number of projected development hours. These rates typically range from \$40-200/hour. Complex database driven sites can cost approximately \$50,000-\$100,000.

8. Payment and Timing

The typical payment arrangement includes a partial payment up-front with full payment expected upon delivery of the finished product. Always set a delivery time to be included in your proposals. If you don't specify at least a rough estimate of an expected project completion date, many companies will prioritize a client with a firmer deadline.

9. Who writes the text?

Most web design companies will not write text. You could write the content yourself or hire a copy expert or [marketing consultant](#) to write it for you.

10. Ownership

Make sure that you will own what you pay for. A designer may ask for ownership so be prepared to discuss ownership rights with them. It is often less expensive if the designer retains co-ownership (they will be able to use your design as a template in the future). Specify ownership rights in the contract, especially if you expect to be the sole owner of your design.