



CHOOSING A WEB SITE DEVELOPER FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE BUSINESSES

You need a website, but how can you tell the professional business web site developers from the college kid in his basement? The answer is fairly simple if you know what kinds of questions to ask. Professional web site developers are just that - professionals. They have college degrees and/or experience related to web site development. They understand small and medium size businesses for it is likely they are one too. Most importantly, they speak to you in your language, not theirs.

Purchasing a web site is a form of advertisement for your business. Would you pay for the development of a radio or television commercial if you were not sure you would get a return on your investment? Why risk your professional reputation by trying to get the cheapest site possible just so you can put the www.yourbusinessname.com on your business card? If you have seen the work of a web site developer and the pages look great, do they contain keywords, titles, and descriptions to help search engines like Google and Yahoo find them?

These are some of the basic questions a professional business web site developer should be able to answer:

1. How will you measure my ROI (Return on Investment)?
2. What information will be included in my monthly web site analytical reports? The reports should answer these questions at a minimum:
 - ..a. What time of the day do most people visit?
 - ..b. What search engines are they using to go to my site?
 - ..c. How long does someone stay on my site?
 - ..d. Which pages do they visit?
 - ..e. Where do they go when they leave?
 - ..f. What are the demographics of my typical online customer?
 - ..g. Has my search engine ranking changed?
3. Will my site be monitored 24/7 with guaranteed 99.8% reliability?
 - ..a. Are all links checked every day?
 - ..b. Are broken links corrected?
4. What is my conversion rate (how many potential online customers have turned into actual customers)? Also,
 - ..a. Why did they visit my business online?
 - ..b. Were they happy with their purchasing experience?
 - ..c. What would they change about my site?
5. How will you help me increase my business over time?

If you are having trouble finding a web site designer, visit the sites of your competitors or other local businesses. Most reputable web site developers list themselves and include a link in the small print at the bottom of the sites they have created. Call the businesses whose sites you like and ask the owners if they are satisfied with their Internet presence. Consider using a web site developer who is not local. They should be able to gather the information they need over the phone or through a web conference. Finally, ask for proposals with price quotes from more than one web site developer. The quality of the proposal will be a good indicator of the professionalism of the business.

Ms. Davidson is a Certified Internet Business Consultant with WSI Advanced Internet Solutions. She specializes in developing Internet Business Strategies for small and medium size business owners with the objective of providing a positive return on their Internet investment. Contact Ms. Davidson at [rmdavidson@premierwsiwebmarketing.net](mailto:rm Davidson@premierwsiwebmarketing.net) or visit her website at www.premierwsiwebmarketing.net.