

Helping You Make An Informed Decision

This document is provided as a tool to assist businesses that are in the process of selecting a Web Marketing company to work or partner with. It is designed to help decipher the many service offerings provided by the web design/development/marketing community and guide you in making an informed, low-risk decision.



Questions to ask your potential new supplier relating to the main aspects of web marketing including website design and development:

Website Design

Questions	Comments
Will you be designing my website from scratch, or buying/obtaining an existing website template and customising it for my business?	Many web design companies purchase, or obtain free, website templates from many different sources, then simply make minor adjustments to the template. Websites often look very similar as a result. If they answer yes, ensure that they are not charging a hefty design fee as they will be doing minimal work for your money. A custom design from scratch ensures your website is unique and will stand out from your competitors.
Will I own my website when it is finished?	Periodically we hear of businesses that fall out with their web designer only to find that they don't actually own the website! Ascertain your website ownership rights up front - if you are paying for it, you should own it.
Who will write the content for my website?	You and your staff know your business best and are therefore the best people for the job. Some companies do provide a service for writing websites though this can be costly and require extensive revisions to get the wording the way you would like it.
How will you get traffic to my website?	Web designers are different to web marketers. A web designer will generally brush over the importance of Google, the major search engines, Pay-per-click programs etc. whereas a web marketer will explain and compare the various online marketing channels (search engines, directories, pay-per-click engines,

	social networking, blogging etc.) available . If your intention is to generate new customers from your website be wary of anyone that focuses too heavily on design and functionality elements - it is pointless having the world's best website if no one knows about it!
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Content Management Systems (CMS)

Questions	Comments
Will I have the ability to update the website myself?	Content Management Systems (CMS) vary considerably in functionality. Ask for a demonstration and see if the system appears logical and easy to use. Be wary of CMS's that provide only limited access to certain aspects of the website as it means you may need to engage the company's services for ongoing updates.
What support materials come with the system?	Many CMS's are developed in-house and as a result have limited functionality and minimal support materials. Most modern CMS's come with rich functionality and online support materials including training videos and tutorials, providing superior value overall.
How many businesses use your CMS?	This will give you an idea of how well tested and bug-free their CMS is. If it has been used by <100 businesses it is likely that it has bugs, is limited in functionality, and may not meet your requirements.
When an enquiry or order is placed through my website where does that information get sent to?	Most CMS systems will send a copy of the enquiry or order to your inbox, and that is the only copy of it. If you delete this by mistake or it gets filtered as spam you risk missing a potentially valuable business enquiry or sale. MySuperWeb has an inbuilt customer database which keeps a record of all enquiries and orders so that you can refer back to them at any time. This is a useful backup tool to ensure nothing goes astray!

Hosting

Questions	Comments
Where will my website be hosted?	Reliable website hosting is critical for any business. Most Australian businesses are best suited to their website being hosted in Australia - load times are faster, and it can have some impact on your search engine rankings. Reliable companies such as iiNet,

	Westnet, Amcom, are good options. A server located in a back room somewhere in Perth is not such a good option. The more the business can tell you about the level of security, backups, reliability, up-time etc. the better.
How often do you back up my website?	Most companies will offer this as an additional service as hosting fees alone tend not to include backups. The reliability and reputation of the hosting provider will often determine how much of a need there is to back up your website.
If we part ways because we are not happy with your service, what happens to our website?	If your website is hosted through a 3 rd party the company should have no claim to your website (we suggest changing passwords if this were to occur). If they host your website they should be willing to provide a full backup of the website. If you are licensing a CMS from a company you will not have access to the CMS unless it is Open Source (i.e. a free CMS they have customised for you and that you have paid for).
Is there a minimum contract term?	Establishing this upfront is important as you should multiply out the regular fees to understand what your minimum commitment is. Be wary of locking yourself into 12-24 month contracts with a business whom you have never had any prior business relationship with.

Domain Names

Questions	Comments
What domain name would you recommend for my business?	A company that doesn't understand the importance of online marketing will probably tell you to register your business name and to have your website reside under that domain name (e.g. www.cranesrus.com.au). If being found on search engines is a priority, the domain name should reflect the primary keyword you would like to be found for (e.g. www.cranehireperth.com.au). You can still register your company domain name and have this automatically redirect to the keyword-rich domain name. Getting your domain name choice right can have a major impact on the speed at which your website ranks high on Google and generates new business.
How much do you charge for domain names?	All domain name registration companies provide the same service, but the price variations can be huge. Crazy Domains (www.crazydomains.com.au) is one of the cheapest in Australia - \$24 inc. GST for 2 years registration. Don't fall for companies that charge anything more than \$50.

Search Engine Optimisation

Questions	Comments
How does Google work?	Their answer should be specific and include the following factors - Content, Inbound Links, Website Age, Domain Name, and Time Spent At Website.
Explain how your company will optimise my website?	Be wary of companies that gloss over this by simply saying "We will mention the keywords throughout your website". There is much more to it than simply repeating your main phrase 10 times on the Home page (this can in fact get your website penalised and de-listed).
Do you optimise the Meta Tags?	Meta tags make no difference to search engine rankings. If the company says that they do, they most likely don't understand the other requirements of search engines and may achieve an inferior result.
How do we agree which keywords to target?	If you are asked to provide the complete list of keywords to target you may be missing the mark. Every time someone searches online this is tracked - this data is available to companies who know where to look. Keyword research is not merely a brainstorming session, but an analysis of what people look for versus what you think you should be found for. They should follow a proven keyword research process to ensure you are found for the right keywords.
Can you show me examples of some rankings you have achieved for your clients?	Be wary if they show you ranking results for unusual keywords (e.g. 'bobs chinese restaurant secret harbour'). The more generic the keyword, the harder it is to obtain rankings, and therefore the better they will be at optimisation (e.g. 'restaurant perth'). Ask to see at least 6 examples.

Link Building

Questions	Comments
How do you go about obtaining links to my website?	Submitting your website to hundreds or thousands of directories can do more harm than good. Link Building is a time consuming process that requires an understanding of what are good links versus bad links. Simply linking your website into all their clients will have minimal positive impact on your website, as most of their client websites will not relate to yours. Ask for a detailed explanation of how they go about obtaining links, and be wary of anything that sounds automated or that might impact on your website's credibility.

Google AdWords

Questions	Comments
Whose name is the account set up in?	Many Google AdWords service providers set up the accounts in their own name in an attempt to restrain clients from going to other service providers. If you part ways with such companies, your AdWords account will need to be re-architected and will lose its history with Google (Google factors in the age of your account when determining your click costs).
How much should I be spending on clicks through Google AdWords?	There is no right or wrong answer. However, a company that gives you a finite number (e.g. '\$10/day') probably doesn't understand how to best leverage this advertising tool. In simple terms, AdWords either works well or it doesn't work at all. If it works well you should be spending as much as possible because it is generating a positive return for your business.
Are you an AdWords Qualified Professional or Company?	Professional qualification status means that one of the individuals within the business is qualified, Company qualification status means that 2 or more are qualified Professionals. A qualified Company has greater experience in managing AdWords.
How much by way of AdWords spend have you managed?	A company that has managed in excess of \$1M of AdWords spend is likely to have a better idea of how to make your AdWords campaigns perform the best. Companies that dabble in AdWords and do not understand how to make the most of your campaigns can cost you dearly through wasted click costs. E.g. the business adds a keyword that is costing \$3 per click but is generating no enquiries/sales, every time someone clicks it's costing you \$3 for nothing!

Google Maps

Questions	Comments
Are you able to list my business on Google Maps so that it is found for my relevant keywords?	Most Google Map listings are for business names only - e.g. 'Johns Carpet Magic'. Google Map listings can be used to your advantage where they are set up to target specific phrases - e.g. 'label printing perth', or 'mens shoes perth'. Optimised Google Map listings are a powerful way of obtaining page 1 visibility on Google in a relatively short timeframe. Ask to see example listings and see whether you are being shown company names or relevant keywords.

Google Analytics

Questions	Comments
How will I be able to monitor my website traffic?	Most web designers and hosting companies will provide you with basic website statistics, however these are often hard to interpret and provide insufficient information to make informed business decisions. Google Analytics is a free website statistics program from Google, and is arguably the best on the market. PositionMEonline installs Google Analytics on every client website because of the depth of information it provides. It is a 10-15 minute job to install and is a must for every business website.

Business Relationship

Questions	Comments
How long will it take for my project to be completed?	On the basis your web designer has sufficient information from you, most websites can be built within a matter of weeks. A basic small business website can be produced in 1-2 weeks and then an allowance needs to be made for reviews and changes. Companies that give a delivery timeframe of 3+ months and claim that it is because they are so busy may not be using the latest in development technologies, and hence you are paying for their inefficiencies. Every day your website isn't online or marketed correctly will cost you in lost customers!
If something goes wrong with my website what do I do?	Website downtime can be costly - we suggest working with a business that has staff on hand to take calls during business hours.
How many full time staff do you have?	Businesses with staff overheads will generally cost more, but the value of internal knowledge amongst staff members is considerable. With the internet evolving at a rapid rate you will benefit from working with a team as opposed to an individual who may be unable to be across all important developments on the world wide web. A collective pool of knowledge at a company level means that your questions can be answered accurately and the best advice provided relevant to your business.
How will I be kept informed of the progress of my project?	Most web developers will email or call you as your project progresses. PositionMEonline has an online project management system that enables you to login online anywhere, anytime, and see the status of your project. In addition to this you will receive regular email and phone call updates as your project progresses.