

choosing a web designer

it doesn't have to be complicated



hexagon

w e b w o r k s





hi

“I love seeing happy faces...”

I'm Sarah, a web designer based in Steventon, near Oxford.

I spend my time transforming the online presence of organisations – through the creation of simple, stylish and effective websites.

I love seeing the impact that my work has on my clients' businesses – seeing happy faces at the end of the project.

But I also get very exasperated sometimes. I meet so many people who have made the wrong decision previously and have been landed with an ineffective website. That's why I've written this brief guide to choosing a web designer - hopefully to help you avoid some of the common pitfalls & ensure you end up with a website you love!

Find Someone Who Listens!

First things first. It sounds obvious, but find someone who listens to what *you* want, someone who is interested in what you do. Someone who talks English, not 'techie'. And someone that you like!

If it works, it will be an on-going relationship, so find someone that you get on with!

“find someone who talks English, not 'techie'”

Think!

Think about the type of site you want. A simple brochure site? A site you can update yourself? Do you need to sell online? Do you want a blog?

Don't feel you have to have all the answers before you go and talk to a designer, but do think about what your goals for your website are.

Resist the urge to simply go with the latest trend - think about what will really fit *your* business. Work with a designer who is prepared to explain & discuss the options with you.



How Much?

The cost of a website will vary hugely, and is dependant on your requirements, timescales, the overheads of the designer, and more. Don't be afraid to ask for ballpark figures from several designers.

As well as comparing prices, focus on the people - the extent to which you feel they understand and can meet your requirements. Check that your designer has included on-going costs in their proposal (for hosting and any on-going maintenance, for example).

If you don't have the necessary cash up-front to buy the website you need, consider 'website rental' or payment over 6 or 12 months. This can be a really useful way of obtaining the web presence you need, without having to make a lump sum payment.

Can't I Build It Myself?

Yes, you can. There are many tools/sites that allow you to build a website for free. If you have a good head for design & a degree of technical know-how, you might get away with it.

BUT! Nine times out of ten, it will show. Usually badly. If you wish to portray yourself as a professional organisation, having an unprofessional website is arguably worse than not having a website at all. Consider waiting and getting the job done properly in a few months time when you can afford it.

"Focus on people - the extent to which you feel they understand & can meet your requirements"

Web Standards.....Boring But Beautiful

Admittedly not the most riveting of subjects. But the quality of the code behind your website is important for:

- accessibility (a legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act)
- compatibility (ensuring your website looks good on everyone's computer, not just yours)
- effectiveness in Search Engines

Any good web designer will be aware of, and working to, W3C standards.

Check Them Out!

Check out examples of previous work. This is a must! Most web designers will have an online portfolio – please, please go with someone who has a portfolio that impresses you! Ask for references too - any credible web designer will be happy to provide them.

"Please, please.... check portfolios"

www.hexagonwebworks.com

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This is a very brief guide! For lots more information, take a look at www.hexagonwebworks.com.

If you are still completely baffled by the whole web design world, would like a candid review of an existing website, or would just like a chat, get in touch:

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Thanks for stopping by!

Sarah

