

6 Questions to ask a Potential Designer or Design Firm

Given that there are hundreds of companies, and even more independent contractors that offer web design services, how do you tell the qualified designers from the inexperienced ones? To help you with this, here are some questions you should ask before hiring a designer:

MAY I SEE SOME EXAMPLES OF YOUR WORK?

This is the easiest way to see first hand the quality of a designers work. Some designers come from a corporate background where they are not able to show you what they have done for that company. That is okay as long as they at least have a personal website they can show you.

WHAT GRAPHICS SOFTWARE DO YOU USE?

Look for companies that use graphics software such as Photoshop and Illustrator. Watch out if the designer says that they develop only in Flash. While sometimes it is desirable to produce a site in pure Flash, because of the bandwidth and platform requirements associated with Flash, the designer needs to be able to determine whether or not a pure Flash site is appropriate for the clients target audience.

WHAT PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES DO YOU USE?

This is a great question to separate designers who don't know how to create anything more than a nice-looking, static web site from those that can build you a site that will grow and evolve with your needs. Look for developers who in addition to knowing HTML also know a scripting language such as PHP, or ASP. They should also be familiar with a database such as MySQL.

WHAT IF I WANT CHANGES MADE TO MY SITE?

Another issue to discuss is how ongoing maintenance will be done -- you will almost definitely have to pay for future enhancements and updates to the site, so you will want to find out in advance how this will be handled. You also want to be sure that the company you hire will be around in the future to serve your ongoing needs.

DO YOU PROVIDE DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION AND HOSTING?

Because hosting and domain name registration are a necessary part of the launching a website, you want to be sure that the designer you work with can provide this service to you or can at least handle setting this up on your behalf with an independent site hosting company.

If you would like to contact IM to find out our answers to the above questions, please either contact the Account Manager in your area, or send us an email at info@inspirationmedia.com!