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A HANDY GUIDE TO HIRING A  
**PROFESSIONAL**  
WEB DESIGNER OR DEVELOPER

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Congratulations! You've got an idea for a website, you're ready to invest in it, and you are looking for a real professional to help you get it done.

Whatever your idea, work style, aesthetics, or timeframe, you'll need someone reliable who knows what the @#\$\$%&! they're doing. That's what this guide is for: to help you find that special someone. So, in that pursuit, here are some questions to ask your prospective web developer or designer:



### **Are they a designer, developer, or implentor?**

First and foremost, let's figure out what sort of beast you're dealing with. Web designers do not always know how to code, but they'll be rockstars on the Adobe Creative Suite. Any designer worth their salt will be familiar with Photoshop. If you're looking for a logo design, they should also know Illustrator. If you're after an eBook, you want someone who knows InDesign.

Just like designers aren't always coders, coders sometimes don't know a thing about design, but that doesn't mean they can't turn designs into beautiful, functional websites. So if you already have a design and you just need someone to bring it to life, a web developer can suit you perfectly. Ask your developer about his or her experience, too. Some developers mainly work on large corporate websites while others (like myself) work more with small startups and one-person businesses. You'll want someone with experience that matches your needs.

You'll also want to ask whether he or she will be using a purchased theme. If so, you are likely working with a implentor and not a developer (in the strictest sense). Implementors use purchased themes and plugins to configure your site, rather than building it with code. This can sometimes result in a less expensive site but your customization options (in both design and function) will be more limited as purchased themes tend to contain convulted code which implementors do not always know how to edit correctly. Additionally, if you do decide to use an implentor, be sure you own the license for your theme or it can be a real problem down the road!

In general, hiring a designer and a developer (as opposed to an implentor) will result in a more unique, functional, and forward-compatible website.

Finally, some people can do both design and development! That's lucky, isn't it?

### **How does their process work?**

The development process tends to be pretty straightforward: you deliver designs; they deliver a website. Design processes, on the other hand, can work a number of ways. Some designers will deliver any number of "comps" for you to choose from, and then you'll get a certain number of revisions. As for myself, I am a big proponent of a fluid design process that starts with one design and unlimited revisions. Either approach can be great, but be sure you know what to expect.

**Will you be able to edit the site yourself and will they train you how?**

If you want to be able to maintain and edit your website personally, be sure you make that clear to your developer. He or she should be working with a Content Management System (CMS) like Wordpress that allows you, the client, to log into the website and make edits without learning HTML. Which is not to say you won't need to be trained to use the CMS -- it's easier than code but there's always a learning curve. Ask your developer if they will teach you how to use the CMS and provide support after your site is built.

**What is the timeline for the project?**

Ask about milestones and deadlines. Be sure you're both on the same page even if your timeframe is flexible.

**Do they build responsive (mobile-friendly) websites?**

These days with so many people using their phones as their primary surfing device, mobile compatibility is no longer optional, so be sure that responsiveness is included in your estimate or quote.

**How does billing work and what will this cost you?**

Some designers/developers work with project rates and some work hourly. One is not necessarily better than the other, but you definitely want to know up front! Additionally, you'll want to get a quote or estimate for the project so you can budget accordingly. An honest designer/developer doesn't want you to be surprised by your bill anymore than you want to be.

**Who owns the final product?**

It should be you. For designers, be sure you will get the rights to the vector files of your logo and the layered files for your site designs. For developers, be sure that you own and have control over the code. For most professionals (including myself), the ownership will transfer to you upon receipt of payment for the work.

Not only will these guidelines help you hire a reliable professional, but they will also help you start off your relationship with your new web partner with greater understanding and common expectations. Good luck!

*If you'd like to discuss this advice further or reach out to start on your next amazing project, please [reach out at ansleyfones.com/contact](http://ansleyfones.com/contact)*