The Ultimate Checklist for Hiring a Web Designer

The **five big things** you need to be looking for.

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Welcome!

Looking for someone to create you a new website? You're in the right place. Finding someone you can trust can be difficult. This guide covers the five things you should be looking for and uncompromising on!

How to use this guide:

1. **Pick one or two questions** from each category that you don't know the answer to yet, and ask your designer during your discovery call!

2. No need to ask every single question. **The goal of this checklist is to ensure that you are able to be informed** enough to say: "my designer is responsive, proven, professional, strategic, and legally aware."

3. You want to get an overall feel for how working with them would work, and to bring out any red flags **before you sign a contract.**

4. After your call, **ask yourself the "gut check" questions** and make sure you feel at peace with moving forward with this designer.

Got it? Awesome, let's get right to it!

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The five big things you're looking for:

- Responsive
- Proven
- Professional
- Strategic
- Legally Aware



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Responsive

They should be willing to set and meet deadlines, **even** for minor interactions during the sales process.

What you could ask:

- [ ] What's your typical response time for clients?
- [ ] How often will I hear from you?
- [ ] What channel of communication will we use? (email, calls, etc.)
- [ ] What types of deadlines are there in this process?
- [ ] If I have questions, can I schedule a call?
- [ ] What are your business hours (are they full-time, or is this a side gig?)

Red Flags:

- More than a week before they reach out to you from your lead form, or at minimum, with an autoresponder or quick note.
- Unable to identify the communication method that you will use throughout the process, or unable to put a typical turnaround time out there for client responses.
- Can't identify how often that you can expect to hear from them, or "you'll hear from me when I'm done".

Gut Checks:

- [ ] Since reaching out, how have I felt about their response times?
- [ ] Will the communication method they prefer work with my style of working?
- [ ] Does it sound like I will get regular updates about my project?

The Big One: Do I feel heard and cared for?

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Proven

You want to find someone who's built (great!) websites for clients before, and has received testimonials that prove it.

What you could ask:

- [ ] What's your experience with website design and development?
- [ ] Have you worked with clients in my industry before?
- [ ] Have you worked with businesses in a similar size and growth stage before?
- [ ] What is your process?
- [ ] Do you have a reference list, testimonials, or case studies you can send me?

Red Flags:

- Unable to provide examples of what they've worked on in the past, or a reference/testimonial list.
- No (or minimal) experience in website design or development, and not partnering with anyone to make sure their knowledge gaps are covered.
- No documented process to walk you through.

Gut Checks:

- [ ] Have they been honest with me, even when it isn't necessarily what I want to hear?
- [ ] Are their featured website results something that, although maybe not my specific style, are professional and polished?
- [ ] Do I trust this person based on what they've said and my own research?

The Big One: Do I trust this person to build my business a website that will be the "virtual welcome mat" of my business for the next 3-5 years?

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Professional

Your designer should be **familiar with the full design process**, and work with you to create a website that truly works for your business.

What you could ask:

- [ ] Where can I view your portfolio?
- [ ] What's your background in website design and development?
- [ ] What's your approach to the design process?
- [ ] How do you determine the direction of a design? Is it custom for each business you work with?

Red Flags:

- ▶ Their portfolio only has examples that look very similar to each other, with minimal customization.
- ▶ No understanding of the full design process, or skips over one of the key steps: Research > Plan > Create > Test > Improve.
- ▶ They feel offended that you are asking them these questions.

Gut Checks:

- [ ] Does this designer emphasize the importance of strategy/research/understanding before they get to the design phase?
- [ ] Do I feel comfortable sharing my feedback during this project, and confident that it will be taken seriously?

The Big One: Do I feel confident that their design will be specific to me and my business needs?

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Strategic

They should have a focus on strategy, knowledge of conversion patterns, and a deep understanding of user experience. You want a good merge of strategic thinking, technical know-how, and design skill.

What you could ask:

- [ ] What types of things do you do to optimize my website for search (SEO)?
- [ ] What is your process for laying out content and menus?
- [ ] What types of things do you like to know about businesses before diving into the design phase?
- [ ] Do you use my historical website data to inform the new design?
- [ ] What common UX faux pas do you see in my industry, and what on my current site (if applicable) would you correct?

Red Flags:

- ▶ No basic SEO knowledge (e.g., alt tags, meta descriptions).
- ▶ Can't point out potential UX improvements on your site or in your industry.
- ▶ Not sure why you're asking them these types of questions - they "only do the design."

Gut Checks:

- [ ] Do I feel like the basic usability of my website will be closely taken care of and not an afterthought?

The Big One: Does this person have a reasonable understanding of what they'll need to evaluate to ensure this website meets my strategic business goals?

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Legally Aware

Your web designer doesn't have to be a lawyer *(that'd be interesting!)*, but they **do** need to have a solid understanding of copyright, image licensing, basic legal needs for a website, and accessibility.

What you could ask:

- ☐ Where do you source images and graphics? Are they properly licensed?
- ☐ What types of legal documentation do you typically need from clients before launching? (ie. privacy policy, terms of service, etc.)
- ☐ What do you do to help me make my website as accessible as possible?

Red Flags:

- ▶ Using Google to search for images and graphics.
- ▶ Unaware of licensing or what you may need for that.
- ▶ Not sure what designing with accessibility in mind means.

Gut Checks:

- ☐ Do they treat basic accessibility and usability as a standard baseline rather than a hassle?

The Big One: Do I feel confident that - as a layperson (not a lawyer!) - this designer is reasonably aware of the laws surrounding copyright, licensing, and accessibility?

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Ready to level-up your web presence?

You shouldn't have to choose between a designer who gets strategy and a strategist who can execute. At Hopp Creative, we give you both.

We partner directly with founders, firm leaders, and mission-driven humans to turn jumbled ideas into clear messaging, strategic positioning, and websites that actually convert. No drama, no agency bloat — just a proven team doing great work.

Let's figure out what actually matters about your work and make sure everyone else sees it, too.

Book your free discovery call at **hoppcreative.com**