

Your Website Wishlist:

Questions To Ask Before Selecting A Website Vendor

By: Allyson Ingerman, EX² Solutions

Since 90% of consumers begin their new home search online, your website usually the first experience prospective buyers will have with your company. A good website is the hub for all your integrated marketing activities and it is critical that you make a strong first impression.

You can probably quickly list off your top criteria for a website partner, but this article is designed to take things a step further. Here is our checklist of questions to ask any potential vendors to get to the heart of their capabilities.

HOW DO YOU TAKE MY GOALS AND TRANSLATE THEM INTO A WEBSITE?

It's one thing to understand your goals, but you deserve a partner who understands how to turn your goals into website results. Is the vendor knowledgeable about best practices? Are their answers specific and relevant to YOUR project?

WHAT IS THE CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS? DO YOU HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE CREATIVE CONSULTATION?

How will your potential partner gather input from you and your team to drive creative execution. A creative strategy session up front can save headaches and disappointment down the road.



WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE DESIGNING WEBSITES? WORKING WITH BUILDERS?

There are thousands of website development companies – but do they understand the unique needs of your business and the building industry? Do they understand the new

home buying process and what your potential customers are looking for online?

HOW WILL I MANAGE THE SITE AND ADD NEW CONTENT? IS THERE A CMS?

Having a Content Management System (CMS) means that in most cases, updates and content additions do not require extensive HTML programming knowledge and can be made quickly without additional costs.

HOW WILL THIS WEBSITE INTEGRATE WITH MY EXISTING PROGRAMS? WHAT ABOUT A MOBILE SITE OR APPS?

Can your vendor take your existing home data from a centralized place and use that to power your web, mobile and app presence – seamlessly without additional work on your end?

IS THE SOLUTION FLEXIBLE AND SCALABLE FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT?

The goal here is to make sure you're not just designing for today's needs but thinking a step ahead and make sure you're not going to be redesigning the site again next year.

IS THE TECHNOLOGY STATE OF THE ART, AND CAN YOU SHOW EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS WORK?

One of the best ways to gauge the success of your future project is to look at past work for the companies you are considering. Ask for a list of references.



WILL I OWN THE FINISHED PRODUCT AND ALL OF THE ASSETS ON THE SITE?

It's hard to believe that you could pay a company to develop a new site for you and at the end of the project, you don't own the assets within the site but there are organizations that use this pricing model to give you a less expensive upfront cost. Bottom line – Ask the question!

WHAT ARE THE COSTS AND WHAT TYPE OF LICENSING DO YOU REQUIRE?

This is a straightforward but necessary question. Understand the investment you are making in this project – both short and long term.

IN SUMMARY

Having a strong website can ensure the success of your online marketing efforts. By asking the right questions at the beginning of the project, you not only start off on the right track, but avoid surprises down the road.

Allyson Ingerman is a Program Manager for EX Squared Solutions. In her role, she works with builders to help develop effective web, mobile and application solutions. For more information email info@thebdx.com.

