

Chapter 4

How to Match the Right Website Service Provider with your Business

Compare Your Business Size to Theirs

One way to see if a website designer is right for your business is to match up the size of their business with the size of your business.

One Person Show – This is one person working full time or part-time (at night or on weekends) as a website designer. They are probably working out of their home. This means they have no business infrastructure. When they are busy with other clients, they can't work on your website. They may or may not have any formal training. They can probably design brochure type sites with no interaction.

The web designer is often a friend or relative of someone in the company needing a website.

The work is often provided at very cheap rates (\$25-\$45/hour is not uncommon). One disadvantage is that they tend to be very unreliable and unable to provide consistent service to their customers.

Website Company – This is a company with employees. Each employee may be a generalist or have a specific spe-

cialty. These companies are usually skilled at developing small to mid-sized sites, E-Commerce and custom database websites. Their clients are typically small to mid-sized businesses.

They also typically offer some level of website marketing and hosting packages.

They can handle most projects in-house but may subcontract higher level specialized website features. They're also usually affordable with rates from \$85 to \$125/hour.

The website projects that these firms typically work on cost from \$3,000 to \$50,000. Some firms are large enough to work on projects up to \$100,000.

Large Website Company – These are large full-service web development companies. They may have multiple locations. The staff has many members with the same specialties working in teams to complete large complex projects.

They work on websites that have no tolerance for downtime. They provide hosting on redundant and mirrored servers. They offer 24/7 support plans. These firms work on projects from \$100,000 to Millions.



Suggestion: Ask about their company size and the complexity of their website projects. This will give you a good idea if their client references represent a situation similar to your business.

What Programming Language will they Develop In?

This is one of those questions that you probably don't care much about. After all, you just want your site to look good and function well.

Most companies only worry about what programming language their site uses after problems begin to crop up. Often the relationship has deteriorated with their current web developer and now they'd like to look elsewhere.

It is easier to move your site from one firm to another if the first firm has programmed your site in a common programming language like:

- Html
- PHP
- ASP
- ASP.net

And used common databases like:

- MySQL
- MSSQL
- Access

If your web developer has used an unusual language or the coding is poor, your new web developer might not be able to work on your site without starting over.



Suggestion: Ask your web developer what programming language they prefer.

Who will do your Work?

The nature of website development makes it very easy to outsource work to individuals or companies in other towns, states or even other countries. This can be good, since you don't have to rely on local talent to service your company.

But it can be bad when your website company outsources work to unreliable individuals or companies. Outsourcing to other countries can also create language barriers that delay projects and create additional problems.



Suggestion: Ask your website developer who will be doing your work. Will you get direct contact with the developer or will you never know their name?