QUESTIONS TO ASK A WEBSITE DEVELOPER/DESIGNER

1. How many years of experience do you have in website design and development?

2. Can you provide examples of websites you have designed for similar businesses or industries?

3. What is your design process like? How do you approach creating a website for a new client?

4. Are you familiar with responsive design? Will my website be optimized for mobile devices?

5. Will the website be built on a content management system (CMS) that our staff can access and make changes and additions in a timely manner to keep our website timely?

6. What Content Management System (CMS) will you be building this on (Wix & Square Space are the simplest – WordPress is the most powerful but not always needed and does have a steeper learning curve.)

7. Do you provide website maintenance and updates after the initial design? What are the associated costs?

8. Will you provide training on managing the website's content?

9. How will you ensure that the website is search engine friendly (SEO optimized)? (See next page on basics you should know about SEO before hiring a Website Developer)

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10. .Will you be handling all aspects of the project in-house, or will you outsource any parts of it?

11.Can you provide a detailed timeline for the project, including key milestones and deliverables?

12. How do you handle revisions and changes during the design process? Is there a limit to the number of revisions?

13.Will the website be customized to reflect my brand's unique identity and aesthetic?

14.Can you assist with creating or sourcing visual assets such as images and graphics for the website?

15.What are your preferred methods of communication during the project? How frequently will we have check-ins or progress updates?

16.Will you integrate analytics and tracking tools into the website to monitor its performance?

17.Can you provide references or testimonials from past clients?

18.What is your pricing structure? Is it a fixed fee or based on an hourly rate? Are there any additional costs I should be aware of?

19.How will you ensure that the website is secure and protected against potential threats?

20. Are you familiar with accessibility standards and guidelines? Will the website be designed to be accessible to all users? (These are available at the end of this document)

SEO BASICS

1. **Keywords**: SEO starts with understanding the words and phrases that people use when searching for businesses like yours. These are called keywords. It's important to use relevant keywords naturally in your website content to help search engines understand what your business is about.

2. **Content**: Good content is important for SEO. Make sure your website has high-quality, useful, and relevant content that provides value to your visitors. This could be informative articles, product descriptions, or engaging blog posts. Search engines like to see fresh and helpful content.

3. **Page** Titles and Descriptions: Each page on your website should have a title and a brief description that accurately describes what that page is about. These titles and descriptions appear in search results, so make them compelling and relevant to encourage people to click on your website.

4. **Links**: Links are like recommendations from other websites. When reputable websites link to your website, it tells search engines that your site is trustworthy and relevant. You can try to get links from other relevant and trustworthy websites to improve your SEO.

5. **User Experience:** Search engines want to provide the best results to their users. They look for websites that offer a great user experience. This means your website should be easy to navigate, load quickly, and work well on mobile devices. Make sure your website is user-friendly and accessible.

SEO BASICS

6. **Local SEO**: If your business serves a specific geographic area, you'll want to optimize your website for local searches. This involves including your location in your content, using local keywords, and getting your business listed in online directories like Google My Business.

7. **Analytics**: Analytics helps you understand how people find and interact with your website. Tools like Google Analytics can provide insights into your website's performance, including the number of visitors, popular pages, and how people navigate through your site. Use this data to make informed decisions and improve your website over time.

These basics will help you have meaningful conversations with website developers or designers about implementing SEO best practices. Remember, SEO is an ongoing process, and it's important to regularly update and improve your website to stay competitive in search engine rankings.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Accessibility standards and guidelines for websites aim to ensure that web content is accessible and usable for people with disabilities. Here are some key accessibility standards and guidelines to consider:

1. **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):** WCAG is an internationally recognized set of guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). It provides a comprehensive framework for making web content more accessible. The current version is WCAG 2.1, which consists of four principles: Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust (POUR).

2. **Perceivable:** Web content should be presented in a way that can be perceived by different senses. This includes providing alternatives for non-text content (e.g., images, videos) and ensuring content is distinguishable by color contrast.

3. **Operable:** Users should be able to navigate and interact with web content using various input methods (e.g., keyboard, voice). This involves providing keyboard accessibility, clear and consistent navigation, and giving users enough time to read and interact with content.

4. **Understandable:** Web content should be easy to understand and use. This includes using clear and simple language, organizing content in a logical manner, and providing instructions or help when needed.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

5. **Robust**: Websites should be designed to work effectively with current and future technologies. This means using code that is semantically correct, following web standards, and ensuring compatibility with different browsers and assistive technologies.

6. **Section 508**: Section 508 is a U.S. law that requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. It outlines specific accessibility requirements for different types of digital content, including websites.

7. **Accessible Rich Internet Applications** (ARIA): ARIA is a set of attributes that can be added to HTML elements to enhance the accessibility of dynamic content, such as menus, sliders, and interactive components. It helps assistive technologies better understand and interact with these elements.

8. **Assistive Technologies:** Consider the needs of users who rely on assistive technologies like screen readers, screen magnifiers, or alternative input devices. Ensure that your website is compatible and works well with these tools.

It's important to note that accessibility is an ongoing process, and it's recommended to consult official guidelines and resources to ensure compliance with the latest standards. Implementing accessibility best practices not only benefits users with disabilities but also enhances the overall usability and user experience of your website for all visitors.