

Interviewing Your Website: Questions You Should Be Asking

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Undoubtedly you've interviewed employees before, but never one like this. This employee works twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. They work in every department of your business – marketing, customer service, HR, sales – and it's a position that every business must fill in today's times. This employee is your website.

Maybe you've never hired for this position before or perhaps you're looking for something new. Either way, there are several questions that you should be asking before anyone else gets involved. Start with this one, "How much am I willing to spend?"

If you were interviewing for a normal position, you might wait until the end to talk money, but with a website, it's the first question that you should be asking. Unless you know exactly how much you have to spend, it's going to be hard to determine how to spend the money. Websites can range in price from free to millions of dollars. Nothing is impossible; it's just a question of money and time.

Speaking of time – the next question that you should be asking is "When can you start?" Your timeline will help determine how much can be built, but it will also have an effect on your budget. Less time often means more money. Once you know how much you're willing to spend and when you need your website done by, you can begin to outline a job description.

Your website should have a job description. It should outline what the purpose of the site is. Do you want to sell product? Recruit new clients or serve current ones? Are you looking to simply provide information to visitors or are you looking at providing a more interactive experience?

When you have this description of what needs to be accomplished, now consider how a prospective client might find your website. Do you have specific search words that you need to be found by? How does your site tie into a larger marketing plan? Will you want to tie the site in with your social media efforts? Do you need landing pages for online advertising?

By now, you should have a nice plan coming together. For a minute though, consider the future. Who's going to update the site once it's in place? Do you need a content management system or is paying for infrequent updates more affordable? What ideas do you have for expanding the site in the future?

The one question yet to be asked is the one you might have started with, "What does this look like?" While we all have our preferences on the visual look, the more important aspect of a website is what it does, not what it looks like. Gather two or three sites that you like, and two or three sites that you don't. Make a short list of design considerations, but don't spend too much time on this because the next question you'll need to ask is, "Who's going to build this?"