products
website technology & marketing
creators of the Composr CMS

Your new web site: Choosing the right team to make it

If you look around for prices for website design you will find most publicly advertised cost figures are measured in the hundreds of dollars/pounds. This sets the expectation for a lot of people shopping for a website for the first time, but to be frank it is not realistic and we will explain why in this document.

We've set ocProducts up to be able to offer the best value for money whilst also keeping quality high. The Internet is a highly competitive environment, and this pulls down the kinds of prices that get advertised, but it is important to look at *value for money* and not just *cost*.

Low cost operators will be doing two things to keep their costs down (and they won't advertise it!). Challenge companies on the points we make here before agreeing to a quote.

Be wary: Dodgy low-cost staff

One/some of the following structures will be in place:

- offshoring (usually to India)

- people paying themselves low salaries as they are only working part-time to supplement their normal full-time salary

- staff with a low-level of skill/qualification/experience used

- individuals with a specific skill-set (i.e. skilled in some things, but not others), often posing as companies

If none of the above are in place then a low-quoting business will be making a loss on your work and in risk of going out of business (which is very bad for you if you require future maintenance). Remember that computer programmers are extremely skilled employees who have to go through degree-level education before they can even truly start the process of becoming experts in the dozens of technologies they work with on a day-to-day basis. It is entirely analogous to solicitors needing to go through law school and doctors having to go through medical school.

Be wary: Cutting corners

You will get the absolute minimum for the quote they give you. Unless you specifically ask for something or the provider advertises it as standard, you won't be getting any of the following:

- full requirements analysis, to make sure important details aren't missed (imagine if you were buying a house – you couldn't be confident that you'll get what you want without having a professional discussion beyond your original list of rooms)

- a standards-compliant web-site (W3C validation)

- accessibility for disabled users (a legal requirement in many jurisdictions)

- code review for security holes by a secondary developer

- testing by someone other than the primary developer

- functionality that has been properly designed specifically to your needs

- training so that you know how to use your website

ocProduct's tailored approach

At ocProducts we like to work with our full-agency service (as described on our web-site). This ends up in higher quotes, but it provides a comprehensive service that covers the points described above under 'cutting corners'; it gives you the best possible start for your launch.

It is also true that not everyone needs this service, or can afford it. Therefore we also have our rapid service where we can maximise time-to-market whilst minimising cost, giving you the option to make refinements as your website becomes popular and you can afford to/need to. Rather than cutting-corners we concentrate on what is needed to launch and we make sure you're educated on what you're not getting at launch-time via a secondary price list.

Both our processes are 'agile' processes, but the rapid process offsets certain things until post-launch.

We will have a very good idea what is best for you when we see your requirements and budget and advise accordingly in any proposal we send to you.

How ocProduct's ensures true value for money, without tricks

At ocProducts we also will do the following to give you the best possible price:

- Our software provides the quality of a high-end commercial CMS, completely for free. When people compare what Composr does to what other Open Source CMS's can do, they are amazed – commercial CMS's that do what Composr can do can easily cost $10,000.

- Our software gives us efficiency because it is designed to make all common feature implementation very easy. We don't reinvent the wheel, the wheels come pre-attached. This time-saver is to you a cost-saver, both in terms of immediate cost, and also total future cost of ownership (as your requirements grow).

- For clients that are not needing to maintain a unique brand we are able to customise existing designs for you to cut-down on design cost. We have approximately 40 Composr design templates almost ready-to-go, and they can all be customised to look as good as if they were designed from-scratch for full-cost.

- Unlike other companies that provide cheap solutions on third-party Open Source packages, we actually develop Composr and hence have real expertise in it. We aren't just practitioners running off someone else's back, we're industry experts.

- As has become the industry-norm we do do offshoring. However, we take ultimate responsibility in-house and check everything over carefully. This gives you get the best of both worlds – as much of development as possible is done in the lowest-cost way, but in-house expertise ensures that shoddy-work is avoided.

Seek third-party advice

As a company we don't really want anyone to have to take our word on things. We're here to make money, so there is no reason you should have to trust us.

We strongly advise that you consult with someone who has been involved in the development of at least one *modern* and *successful* website to get a third-party opinion from them for how much your site should cost (make sure they include the value of your time too).