

**20 Critical Questions To Ask A Website
Designer Before Paying Them.
(Pay wisely and save your money!!)**

Hi all, thank you for downloading this PDF guideline. In this guideline, we will be revealing some of the critical questions that you must ask before paying a website designer to design your website. All of the questions listed below were from our experiences PLUS research that we have made from the Internet. Yes, you are right, this required lots of time of preparation and we know that a business-type person like you has limited time so we have helped you to compile all the questions in this guideline! (You saved a lot of time!) We hope that this guideline can help you to find a suitable designer to design your own website. Let's go!

*Of course, there will be other question that we didn't list down, but the questions below are exactly what you need.

Section 2: Let's get it started!!

But first of all, let us introduce some of the most basic terms in a website design. This can let you to be more familiar with some of the components of a website. If you have learned all these terms before, then you can skip this section.

1. Anatomy of a site in search result



Site structure [Adapted from Pinterest]

2. What Is a domain?

Domain is an identification string which represents your device or a website IP address. Actually, the IP address is either a 32-bit or 128-bit of string of digits. For example, 10101100.00010000.11111110.00000001 (32bits)

Then you will say, 'wa so longggg', how to memorise oh?

That's why computer scientists created the domain name system in order for people to communicate the domain effectively. How can I look for a domain in a link address?

Example:

[Https://www.domain.com/aboutus](https://www.domain.com/aboutus)

Here, the domain is '.com'

Types of domain

- A) Top level domain
- B) Second level domain
- C) Third level domain
- D) Country code top level domain
- E) Generic top level domain

Top level domain

- 1).com - The most common
- 2).net - For internet service provider
- 3).edu - For education institution
- 4).org- For nonprofits organization
- 5).mil - For the US military

Second and third level

Example, [Https://www.domain.com.my/aboutus](https://www.domain.com.my/aboutus)

'domain' is referred to as second level domain

'www' is referred to as third level domain

Country code top level domain

To distinguish between country,

country code top level domain such as .my will be used in conjunction to the top level domain.

Example: domain.com.my

To know more about the domain,

you can visit,

<https://www.domain.com/blog/2018/10/30/domain-name-types/>

2.What is SSL?

Why SSL is important for a website? But wait.....

What is SSL? Send Some Love? No la! SSL means Secure Sockets Layer and they are small data files that establish an encrypted link between a web server and a browser.

What it is for?

To protect the passing of private data/information between the web server and the browser. For example, if you fill up any form on a website that requires private information like bank details, personal info, the SSL protects these information from capturing by a hacker.

Hacker!!? Really mou? Macam Mission Impossible.

Don't play play. So how to check if the website you visit or your website has SSL certificates? Some of the easiest ways to identify:

1.You can check the website link and see whether it contains https:// or http://. HTTPS://, with the 's' included means the website has SSL certificates.

2.Some browser like google chrome doesn't show the full link, so you can check if a padlock icon exists in the search bar. If the website does not have SSL, 'Not secure' notice will exist in front of the address link.

Interested to know more about the SSL?

You can visit the website below

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-ssl>

3. Web hosting

Wondering how is your website published on the Internet?

In order for your website to be published and viewable for your visitor, you need to find a web hosting service provider. The web hosting provider will rent some space on a server to store all your website's content files such as images, codes etc. So that your visitors can view your website content online. In shorts, web hosting is a process of renting spaces to house a website on the World Wide Web.

Well to be more interesting, you can think of your website like a house. You pay for a land (a space on the server) to build your house (website) and the website domain is your house address so that your visitors can find your house.



Concept of hosting [Adapted from Hostinger]

Interested to know more about web hosting and server? You can check it out through the link below:

<https://www.namecheap.com/hosting/what-is-web-hosting-definition/>

<https://www.hostinger.my/tutorials/what-is-web-hosting/>

4. Landing page vs Website? Wondering which one is more suitable?

A) What is a landing page?

A landing page is a page which you can provide a resource in exchange for visitors' contact information. It can be also a page where you ask your visitors to complete a desired transaction.

Purpose

- 1.To generate leads
- 2.To capture visitors' contact information for follow-up
- 3.For visitors to sign up

Suitable for

- 1.New product launch
- 2.Promotion campaign
- 3.Event

4. Goods/service offer

B) Website

A website is a set of related web pages that is directed towards a target audience.

Purpose

1. To provide information such as corporate information, background, product story
2. To list/sell goods or service
3. For community purpose
4. For function such as booking appointment, food ordering

Suitable for

1. Company, government website
2. E-commerce business
3. Educational website
4. Restaurant website

And more....

You can click the following link to look for more information 😊

<https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/7177/what-is-a-landing-page-and-why-should-you-care.aspx>

<https://www.webascender.com/blog/landing-page-vs-website-which-do-you-need-and-why/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website>

5. Search engine optimization (SEO)

It is a process which increases your website's visibility in search results such as in Google search results. In order for your website to have a high visibility, you have to apply some SEO techniques to improve your website ranking in the search results for a given query. There are various search ranking factors in determining the ranking of a website which includes, keywords, content quality, mobile-friendliness, links etc.

To learn more about the SEO, you can check at:

<https://searchengineland.com/guide/what-is-seo>

Section 3: What are those questions?

20 questions to ask your website designer (They are optional and just select the questions which you think is important to you at the moment)

Project portfolio

Ask them for their project portfolio and look for those past website projects they had completed. Here, you can determine whether their design suit your needs, style or if their design work quality meets your requirement. Usually from the project portfolio, you can know about their design skills and experience which can guide your decision in selecting the suitable website designer for your website.

Testimonial

Testimonial is one of the best ways nowadays to determine the quality of service a website designer can provide. Look for testimonial at their own website or ask for past clients' testimonial from them. If you are worried of the fake testimonial, you can also ask the website designer for their clients' contact, so that you can directly communicate with their past clients about their performance and service.

In- house design or outsource?

Some website designer outsources the work to other party although they listed the service on their website. A website designer would outsource if they do not have the required experts or need more assistance for a skill so they need to rely on other company that provides the skill. You can ask this question because outsourcing may bring more complexity, scheduling problem to the project.

Fully custom or customized theme?

Some of the website designer use free or pre-built theme (From Wordpress, Drupal, or In-house pre-built theme) to design a website and they will also customize the theme to suit client needs. While other company will also provide 'hand-code' website (code from scratch without any theme) for their client. Ask this question if you are going to pay much or expect a fully custom-made website. A website designer which 'hand code' will usually charge more and this can help you to determine whether the website designer overcharge you.

Project process

Ask them about their project design process: Steps to complete the project, what tool will be involved, communication method, how will you be involved in the process. A great or proven process will largely determine the success of your website.

Web pages

The basic web pages for a website includes:

- a) Homepage
- b) About us/portfolio
- c) Your service/product
- d) Blog/news (optional)
- e) Contact us

However, the choice of web pages needs to depend on your business needs. So, you have to ask them how many web pages are included for the price given. Sometimes, a website company charges a cheaper price but it provides limited number of web pages and you will need to pay extra cost for the additional page. It is suggested that you ask them for a free session (direct call/ meetup/ online zoom) to discuss together about your website needs.

What is the cost and what is included in the price?

Back to the reality, you must ask about the cost of the project. Different website designer will have different ways of pricing their service. Some of them charge one-time design fee followed with yearly fees while some of them charge yearly subscription. The cost is determined based on:

1.Number of web page

2.Different types of package

-Depends on website designer, they will provide different offer in each package.

3.Complexity of project

4. Experience of designer

5.Website functions

6. Customized theme/ hand code

7. Charge per hour (Hourly rate)

8.Yearly/monthly subscription

9.Other service included.

-For example, SEO service, content writing etc.

Ask them how they charge your website and what is included in the package. Besides, also make sure to ask them about the website maintenance fee and any cost after the website is completed. After you have collected the information, you can compare the cost and price among different website designer. Nowadays, a website usually costs around from Rm 500 to 5 figures. A website will usually cost more if they 'hand code' or the website company has greater experiences and able to provide a more professional design. Besides, a freelancer will charge lesser than a website company because of the difference of their business costs such as employee salary, office rent. However, some freelancers do not have much experience or lack of design skills which results in a less attractive website. Lastly, be aware of any hidden cost and the cost of renewal fee.

Is your website mobile responsive?

More and more people nowadays use their mobile phone to do online stuff such as online searching, buying, playing social media, checking website etc. You have to ensure your website is mobile responsive in order to ensure to provide a great user experience for your users.

How long will the project take?

One of the basic questions that needed to ask. You should ask them about how long will your website take to finish. If you need your website urgently, it is suggested to select a website designer that is able to build your website within your acceptable timeframe.

Project schedule

Ask them if they provide any project schedule or tracker for you to check the timeline of your project, stages of design, any milestone etc. This can help you to make sure your website is designed according to the project schedule to prevent any delay. A website designer will also let you know when do you need to prepare particular content in order for the stage to get started.

Domain and hosting

Domain and hosting are the most basic components of a website. Website designer usually have their own selection of service provider. The domain and the hosting are to be renewed every certain period. So you need to ask whether if you need to pay for the renewal fee and how much is the cost and who is going to renew? Nowadays, some hosting provider charge domain renewal fee for Rm 30-80 per year.

Is your website secured?

A website should be secured and this is to ensure the safety of your website visitors. For example, if you need your visitors/customers to leave their confidential or private information on your form, a secured website will prevent their information from being snatched by hacker or person with bad motive. A website designer will usually register a SSL certificate for your website. To check whether your website is secured by the SSL, you can check whether if your website link consists of 'Https://'. If there is 'Not secured' words appear in the search bar, that means your website does not have SSL registered.

Payment terms

How will you pay them? Based on design stages? Any deposit to be paid before the project begins? A website designer usually will send you a quotation for your website and you need to check carefully throughout every detail especially the payment terms and conditions. Remember to request quotation and invoice or any related payment proof for your own good. It is better if they can provide any service or anything before you make the first payment, at least you can know that they can be trusted and they can really help you.

How many rounds of edit/revision

Website designer would offer design revision to make sure that you are satisfy with their design before proceed to the next stage. Some website designer will limit the number of design revision during the design in order to avoid any scheduling challenges while some other designer do not limit the number of revisions. Normally, website designer provides 2-3 rounds of revision and you will need to pay for additional design edits/revision.

Communication channel

A well-established communication channel is one of the factors that determine the success of a project and it ensures that you can always reach them whenever you encounter any problem or have questions. Ask them how will the communication between you and the designer carry out. And who will be the responsible person that handles your project? Get their numbers.

Can you see the in-progress website?

Some website designer will let you to view the in-progress website during the process so that you can make suggestions or edits for the website content and design. This can also help you to check your website designer design progress.

What will be required from you throughout the project

A website can only be completed with the cooperation between client and website designer. You should ask them what content that you need to prepare for them, for example, images, videos, content of the website etc. The responsibilities for the content preparation should be discussed first before the website project begins. Who wants to be blamed for project delay right? You should also ask your website designer what are the factors that can cause the project to delay so that you know what you need to commit in order to make sure the designer complete your website in time. Discuss this with your website designer and it is better if they can provide a schedule that lists out what you should prepare and at which stage of the project.

Website testing

Even though your website design has been completed, your website designer should ensure they test the website before the launch.

After sales support

After sales service is another important factor that determines a service quality provided by a website designer. Would they continuously maintain your website? Would they help you to upload or update your content even after the website is completed and is there any charge for that? Would they provide customer support if you encounter any problem? Or you need to pay them every time when you consult them? Do they provide any redesign service or functions add-on and how do they charge this?

Can you edit the website after the project is completed?

Maybe you want to have some control over your website content and expect that you can update or change some content whenever you want without having to contact your website designer again. If this is the case, then you will need a content management system aka admin panel where you can edit your content on your website. Or else, you need to depend on your designer to help you to update content every time. In some cases, your designer could only able to update your content after few days of your request because they also need to handle someone else project. You should also ask them what content that you can edit yourself and what content you can't and how much you need to pay them in order to change/update the content that you can't edit by yourself.

Other optional questions

Research process

Do they conduct any research before diving into your website design. Research could be about your business, your goals, your market and audience, service/product you offer etc. The research will help in building a website that aligns with your business as well as offering content that speaks to your customers.

Have they completed any similar website?

Website designer that had completed past projects that are related to your industry can help to provide more helpful recommendations for your website. You can also look for a website designer that has not only completed website related to your industry but also other different types of website. They sometimes can also provide some useful opinions because they can design your website based on their vast experience.

What other service?

Some website designer not only provides website design service but also other related service like SEO, content writing, copywriting, marketing etc.

Search engine optimization (SEO)

A website with the right SEO will perform well in the google search ranking. You need to know whether if the website designer provides any SEO service if you need. A professional SEO service will cause a project to become more expensive.

