



When Searching for a company to develop your web site, keep in mind these tips...

1. He Calls Himself a "Webmaster"

Any web guy that calls himself a "webmaster" probably isn't a master of anything. The term "webmaster" has become a translation for the word "amateur." The web has diversified into so many different realms that webmaster is no longer meaningful (was it ever though?)

2. He's a FrontPage Expert

Any developer / designer with a degree knows that Microsoft FrontPage most definitely isn't a professional tool. FrontPage will pass for Mom and Dad who want to create a website dedicated to their dogs, not someone who's trying to do business. I'd argue that a solid Web Developer should work at code level. Damalak Associates works with Dreamweaver exclusively.

3. He'll Submit Your Website to *[Inflated Number Here]* Search Engines

Submitting your website to hundreds of search engines would be great...10 years ago. Websites are indexed by relevant search engines by how rich their content and keywords are. Search engine optimization is big business and submitting sites to search engines simply isn't the way to get to the top of Google.

4. He Wants a "Designed By" Plug on the Bottom of Every Page

You've paid this person to create a marketing tool for you — not a billboard for him. Your website is a launch pad for your business and Poindexter McScooner is simply the man behind the curtain — keep him there. In some cases, and requested by the client, will we place our link on a clients site.

5. He Created a Cool Website for *[Insert Family Member / Friend / Employee Here]*

Your business needs someone who's been there before. The most common answer to my "Who was he and what business did they work for?" question is "Oh, he did a website for the CEO's daughter's *[insert lame organization here]*." I honestly hear that friend-of-a-friend story or we have someone in the company who knows how to build web sites all the time. Choose someone with a portfolio that can provide references. We would be happy to provide contact information to our clients upon request.

6. He Can Make You a Great Splash Page Flash Animation

Translation: "I can spend dozens of hours wasting your money to create something that will take too long to load and will be skipped more times than dessert at a bad restaurant." Consistency and website flow are important to web design — not meaningless animations that waste visitors' time and your money. With the advent of tablets and phones that will not play flash animation without a special app, and that is not even a sure thing, you only have less than a minute to capture the interest of your visitor, make it count!

7. He Mentions He's HTML Expert

Who the hell isn't? I would argue that dropping any language acronym on a customer (PHP, Ruby on Rails, ColdFusion, etc.) unless they ask is meaningless fluff. A mechanic could use a banana on my car if it would fix it. Keep your tools, especially HTML, to yourself — the customer doesn't care.

8. He'll Fit a Cool Counter on Your Site

You'll add an ugly relic of the early internet on my site so that my competitors have an idea of my web stats? Sweet! Counters make a website look as unprofessional as possible — don't use them. Our clients receive a quarterly report on web site traffic at no extra charge.

9. He'll Place a "Best If View in..." Message on Your Website

Any real Web Developer knows that he doesn't make the rules. Follow standards in the initial build and then fix it in the web browser that the client is using — that's the flow. No responsible programmer would place a "best if view in..." message on the front-end of a website.

10. Free / Low cost web page services.

We have all been inundated by ads for low and no cost services. REALLY. How do they stay in business? If it's too good to be true, it usually is. Often times a company will opt for this path only to find that it cost more than to hire a professional web design company. How many times we have "rescued" clients who tried the DIY route only to find that they did not have the time to build and manage their site.

11. We call-em "Cookie Cutter Sites!"

There simple, fast and LOOK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE! Usually these are found on the DIY sites or as part of an "Industry Specific" program. What do we mean by industry specific? You're in the insurance business and a guru who was an insurance agent found that he, or she, could rake in plenty of extra cash by providing "Winner" web sites and marketing packages. Often times these are marketed in a seminar type venues by people who are specifically trained to motivate with success stories and exaggerated claims. The "Package" ends up costing more, producing less than promised and the web site looks like the rest of the companies that attended the seminar. And this does not even include the "Easy to manage" issues that will constantly pop up.

A good rule of thumb; **"Never buy anything in a room with a chandelier!"**