



The New Zealand Web Design Consumer's Guide



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Dear Business Owner,

Choosing a web designer isn't easy.

Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information. From super-low prices and high-pressure sales, to nerdy technicians and near-worthless websites, how do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional web designer?

You start by reading this Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you'll discover:

1. **Why you want a Google-friendly website.**
2. **The importance of value versus price.**
3. **How to avoid 4 website rip-offs.**
4. **8 mistakes to avoid when choosing a web designer.**
5. **5 steps to a website that delivers effective results.**

This guide has been written to help you better understand web design. Now, with this information, you can make an informed and intelligent decision.

If you have any questions about websites or web design, you're invited to call us on **0800 686 237 (0800 NUMBER)**.

We've dedicated our business to designing excellent websites by educating consumers. We'll be happy to help you.



Toby Yorke
Founder & Owner – Geek Free

6 Costly Misconceptions About Web Designers

USE A TEAM OF EXPERIENCED
PROFESSIONALS TO AVOID STRESS –
THAT WAY YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT.

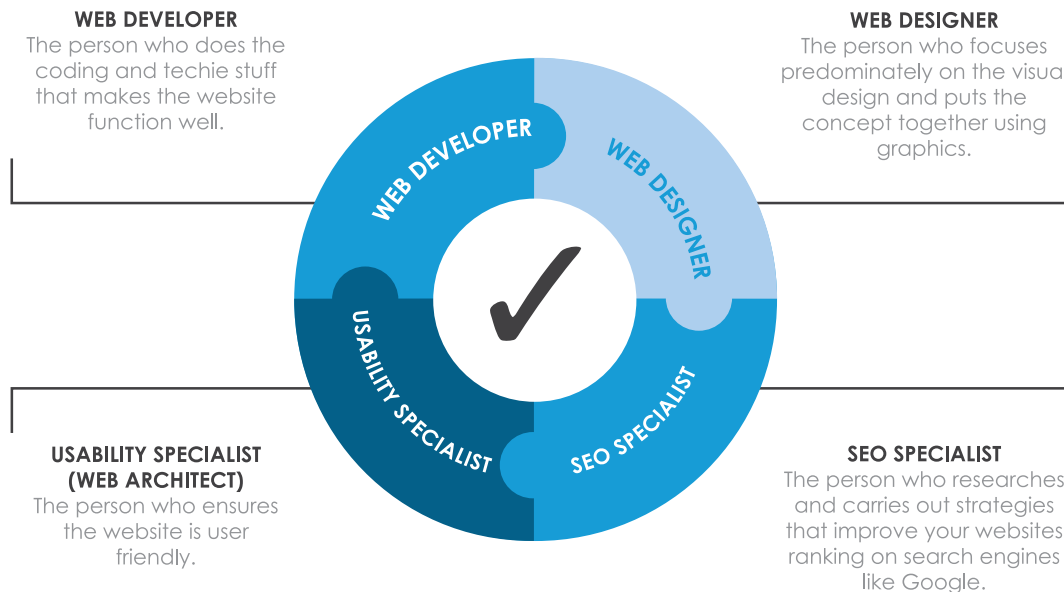


1 A WEB DESIGNER IS ALL YOU NEED TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE

The term 'web designer' is a bit overused, or used somewhat incorrectly. The name is usually, but not always, used to describe a person who builds websites.

One of the biggest traps Joe Public falls into is employing the services of one person who professes to be good at everything.

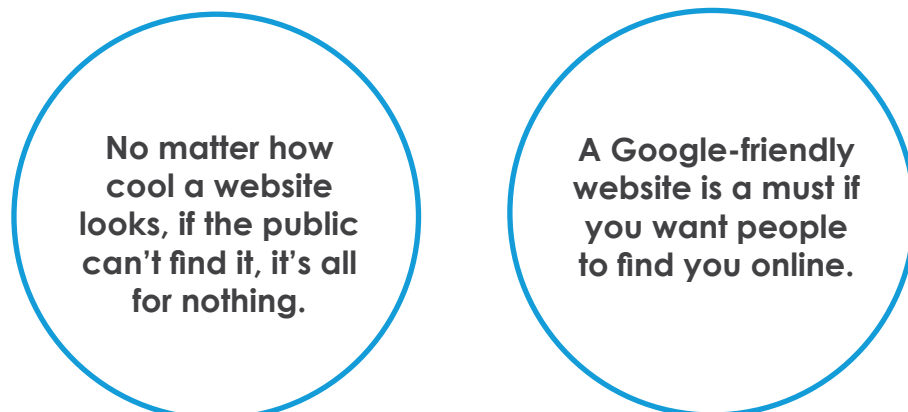
We've yet to meet a single person who's highly skilled at everything. Similarly, you'd be hard-pressed to find a builder who is also a skilled plumber and electrician. All are needed to build a house, but not any one person can do all jobs well.



If a single person claims they fulfil all these roles in their business, you'll undoubtedly end up with an inferior website that doesn't work too well and that could let you down, costing you money and a heap of hassles.

2 ALL WEB DESIGNERS BUILD GOOGLE-FRIENDLY WEBSITES

Whilst people are becoming more educated about how to create a google-friendly website, the vast majority of web design companies are not doing basic search engine optimisation (SEO) on their clients' websites, nor are clients being informed how to get good ranking. Therefore, their sites don't rank well on Google and clients find it hard to get business online.



3 WEB DESIGNERS SUPPORT THE WEBSITES THEY'VE BUILT

If I had a dollar for every time I've heard... "They built my website but I can't change XYZ and they won't return my call", I'd be a wealthy man.

Initially, many people don't plan to change much on their website. However, as time progresses business owners often want to update details and improve their website's performance. It's at this point that they look for assistance. Some companies don't offer ongoing support or, if they do, you pay through the nose for it.

When contracting a company to produce your website, you should check to see if you get ongoing help and what type of help your entitled to.

Ask to speak to current clients about the support they've received. If the web design company doesn't state they provide ongoing support, you may be on rocky ground. After all, if they did support their clients, why wouldn't they mention it?

4 WEB DESIGNERS KNOW HOW TO SELL SERVICES ONLINE

Having a website is one thing, having a website that generates business is another. Your web designer should be able to provide you with examples of websites that have brought in business for their clients, and provide you with strategies for putting together a website that looks good and generates leads for your business.

Your website should incorporate specific elements to increase conversion and turn lookers into buyers. A general outline of these is in '5 steps to a website that delivers effective results'.

5 ANYONE CAN BE A WEB DESIGNER

It is true that given the right tools, a willingness to learn, sufficient time and support, you can learn to build a website and get more leads from marketing your business on the internet.

The key really is finding the time to do everything for yourself as well as securing the level of support you need from someone who can communicate in a way that's easy for you to understand, someone who can provide you with the right sort of help as and when you need it. If you have neither the time, the inclination nor a good team, you're better off getting somebody who knows what they're doing. Your time may be better spent doing what you're best at.

Whilst your neighbour's nephew may know something about websites because he's a geek, it's often not such a good idea to employ his services, even if they're free. Here's why...

YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S NEPHEW MAY NOT BE YOUR BEST OPTION.

There can be a communication problem because "geeks" don't tend to speak in a way that's simple to understand.

Should something go wrong with your website (even if it's self-inflicted) he may not be around to support you or he takes forever to do it.



His level of business experience maybe limited, or non-existent, and therefore he may not have any web-sales experience (i.e. making money online and getting consistent results on the web).

He probably hasn't helped many business owners get in the Top 10 on Google.

6 ALL WEB DESIGNERS BUILD WEBSITES THAT ARE MUCH THE SAME AND IT'S JUST THE PRICE THAT VARIES

Have you noticed some companies are selling websites for \$299 while others are selling for \$5,000 and even higher amounts?

There is a big difference in pricing, isn't there?

Not all web designers, nor websites, are equal. As in the case with clothing, cars and homes, quality can vary enormously. All restaurants serve food, but not all restaurants have the winning trifecta - good food, ambience and service.

YOUR WEBSITE NEEDS TO BE USER FRIENDLY OR PEOPLE WILL GET FRUSTRATED AND LEAVE.

SOME THINGS THAT CAN OCCUR WITH CHEAP SITES

**No help,
support or
after-sales
service**

**Limited
design
customisation**

**Every
change you
want could
cost you
extra**

**No on-page
Google SEO
is done**

**No regular
backing up
of your
website files**

**Slow
hosting**

**If the
website breaks
down, there's
no one to
fix it**

**If the
company
goes bust,
your website
goes too**

**The CMS
(updating
tool) may not
be owned
by the web
company**

**If you want
to add pages,
you pay
more**

**The website
is not mobile
compatible /
responsive**

You need to be informed about what you're actually getting AND not getting. Get this in writing! And make sure you speak with current clients of that web design company you are considering for your project.

Why You Want a Google-Friendly Website

WHEN PEOPLE LOOK AT WEBSITES THEY TEND TO MAKE A NUMBER OF DECISIONS (FREQUENTLY IN A MATTER OF SECONDS), BASED ON A RANGE OF FEATURES, ABOUT THE WEBSITE AND THE BUSINESS IT REPRESENTS.

UNFORTUNATELY, A WEBSITE THAT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL WON'T NECESSARILY BE GOOGLE-FRIENDLY.



GOOGLE-FRIENDLY MEANS YOUR WEBSITE HAS A NUMBER OF KEY ELEMENTS WHICH MAKE IT EASY FOR GOOGLE TO PROCESS THE INFORMATION ON YOUR WEBSITE.

I don't want to get too technical, or get bogged down in tech talk, but I am going to highlight (in no particular order) some of the key elements needed in a good website.

FEATURES YOU'LL WANT IN A GOOD WEBSITE

✓ RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Websites that are designed to change shape to fit mobile phones, tablets and different sized desktops perform better on Google. Google favours mobile-responsive sites on mobile searches.

✓ SITE MAP

This is not a map like a Google map, or a map of a location, but a layout of your website that Google reads. It shows all the pages of your website in a text format that Google likes and this means Google can view your website with ease.

✓ CLEAN CODE

Clean code is website code (the strange concealed letters, signs and symbols that program your website work) typed in a way that Google can effortlessly read and interpret. If the person who built your website doesn't use clean code, it may look OK to the outsider (i.e. correct and tidy), but to Google it may represent a meaningless mess. Google web crawlers therefore won't be able to read your website. You may see pretty pictures while Google sees this...

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/strict.dtd"> <html lang="en"> <head> <pre style="font-size: 0; display: none; visibility: hidden;"> </pre> <script type="text/javascript">serverResponseTimeDelta=window.external&&window.external.pageT?window.external.pageT:-1;pageStartTime=new Date().getTime();</script> <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=UTF-8" /> <title>Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - Webmaster Tools Help</title> <link rel="canonical"
```

✓ CORRECTLY NAMED IMAGES

The images or photos on your website should be named what they are or what you want to be ranked on, not a meaningless image number such as 00971.jpg. Also there should be no gaps in the file name e.g. fire-wood-supplier.jpg

Google sees value in images labelled with relevant keywords. Images should also be compressed, that is reduced in size, so they load quickly. The higher the definition and size of the image, the slower it may load. This may cause would-be-visitors to leave your website because it takes too long for them to find what they are looking for.

✓ META DESCRIPTION, TITLE & TAGS

You should have access to your website and be able to change the keywords in the back-end of your website. When you do a search using Google and all the listings come up, you'll see a title and a description and then a domain name. The title and description are controlled through the back-end of your website and can affect how your website ranks. You'll also want to add keywords here as well.

✓ GOOGLE-FRIENDLY URLS

A URL presents your domain name with specific information added at the end that reflects the unique address or reference on the internet for the exact website page to be identified and found.

e.g. <http://www.example.com/toyota-van.html>

A URL on your website needs to be easy for Google to read and for your visitors to copy.

Website SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) is a whole topic in itself, but suffice it to say that if your web designer doesn't understand what Google friendly means, can't explain what the above features are, AND / OR can't show you results of clients in the Top 10 on Google, then run, run away.

The Importance of Value Versus Price

IF YOU GO WITH THE BOTTOM END OF THE MARKET, YOU COULD END UP WITH EGG ON YOUR FACE.



HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE SAYING “COMPARE APPLES WITH APPLES”? OF COURSE YOU HAVE.

EVERYONE HAS HEARD THAT PHRASE, YET, UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN IT COMES TO WEBSITES, SOME PEOPLE PAY NO ATTENTION. WE BELIEVE THIS IS BECAUSE THEY REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A HIGH PERFORMANCE WEBSITE.

Aside from word-of-mouth, websites are possibly the best marketing investment you can make, unlike flyers, radio or newspaper adverts, websites go 24/7, and you can easily check their results and make changes in seconds.

Once the Yellow Pages is printed, for example, that's it for the year, you can't change your advert. You have no idea how often people open a Yellow Pages Directory and see your advert, or how many people heard your radio ad on a day. Similarly, if you print 1,000 flyers, you have to reprint another 1,000 to change your offer. On the web, you can track all this and make changes to improve your responses quickly and at no additional cost.

WEB DESIGN CHECKLIST		✓
We've compiled this list of questions as a general guide to assist you...		
1.	Does your web designer understand your business?	
2.	Have they created websites you like the look of?	
3.	Can you update the website yourself?	
4.	Will your website be designed to be mobile responsive?	
5.	Who owns the CMS (Content Management System)?	
6.	Do they offer training?	
7.	Can you easily integrate features into the website free of charge at a later stage?	
8.	Do you get charged extra if you want to make changes to the design?	
9.	Is there support available and what type?	
10.	Are security updates done?	
11.	What type of functionality is included with the website, e.g. member's area, videos etc?	
12.	Do they have a team of specialists or is it actually one person pretending to be good at everything?	
13.	Have they done business online themselves, other than websites? If so, what?	
14.	Do you pay extra for more pages?	
15.	Do you get on with the people and do they listen? and understand your requirements?	
16.	Do they have many clients in the Top 10 on Google?	
17.	Will they share their knowledge with you?	
18.	Do they offer a guarantee?	
19.	Is photography included, and if so, how many images?	
20.	Are there any fixed-term contracts?	
21.	Can you change providers if you want to?	

How to Avoid 4 Web Design Rip-offs

1. KNOW WHAT YOU WANT YOUR WEBSITE TO LOOK LIKE AND DO.
 2. GET REFERENCES AND SPEAK TO PAST CLIENTS.
 3. MAKE SURE THE WEB DESIGNER UNDERSTANDS YOUR BUSINESS.
 4. WATCH OUT FOR BAIT AND SWITCH.
-



KNOW WHAT YOU WANT YOUR WEBSITE TO LOOK LIKE AND DO

1 >

In order for your expectations to be met, you need to be clear about what you want from your website, and your web designer needs to be on board with you. If you don't express your expectations, you're likely to get something you don't want and still pay for it. One of the best ways to make your expectations known is to create a list of things you like and dislike about other websites, including what colours you want and what photos you'll be using.

2 >

GET REFERENCES AND SPEAK TO PAST CLIENTS.

Check what others have said about the web designer. Don't risk not doing so – it's your money. Call up previous clients and read the web designer's testimonials.

3 >

MAKE SURE THE WEB DESIGNER UNDERSTANDS YOUR BUSINESS

To get good results on the web, it's important that the web designer understands your business and puts together a website that will present your business the way it should be portrayed. If you want to market to high-end clients, your site needs to look high-end. If you're marketing to people with lower budgets, then your site should look less sophisticated. I know it may sound a little weird, but think about it. If you were after a second-hand dealer on Google and found a website that looked really flash, you'd think their stock was expensive, wouldn't you?

Nor would you want a website that looks American if you live in New Zealand and are selling products and services to New Zealanders. You don't want to be left with a website that makes your company look like unprofessional: you've only got one chance at a first impression.

4 >

WATCH OUT FOR BAIT AND SWITCH

A technique often used is advertising a website for \$X, then when you want something done it's always an additional charge and will cost you \$Y, and then \$Z, and so on. They bait you with a cheap price and then switch you into more expensive add-ons. Get clear communication from your web designer about what you are and aren't getting for your money. Otherwise it may cost you a lot more money than going to a quality web design company in the first place.

1. NOT OWNING THE CMS (CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)
2. SET AND UNCHANGEABLE DESIGN
3. NO SUPPORT
4. PAYING EXTRA FOR FUNCTIONALITY
5. CAN'T RELATE – COMMUNICATION ISSUES
6. CAN'T ILLUSTRATE CONSISTENT RESULTS
7. OUTSOURCING YOUR WEB DESIGN OVERSEAS
8. JACK OF ALL TRADES

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X 1. NOT OWNING THE CMS

(CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)

Avoid a web design company that doesn't give you access to a content management system you can walk away with. A CMS allows you to make basic changes to the website. You want a CMS that is simple to use so you can update the website yourself and add things like photos, text and links. Avoid what is called a proprietary CMS which is licensed to you by the web company because it will likely keep you locked into their services. If they cease trading and your website can't be moved you may lose your site.

X 2. SET AND UNCHANGEABLE DESIGN

You should avoid being caught out with a set design that has no flexibility to develop in the future. Having the ability to change the website's layout, colours and the general look and feel is important because no business remains the same.

Your requirements will change over time: having a website that can evolve with your business is important. If you don't have a future-proofed site, it can become expensive.

A website that meets your requirements today may not do so in two years' time: you don't want to have to pay all over again for a website.

X 3. NO SUPPORT

You may be in a situation where you want to make a change but you can't remember how, or maybe you want to improve the results your website is getting on Google.

If your web design company doesn't provide comprehensive ongoing support, and you are not already a skilled internet marketer, it's likely that you won't get the results you now want.

Support is never important until it's not there.

X 4. PAYING EXTRA FOR FUNCTIONALITY

Why pay more when the basics should be included? You should avoid websites where you can't add and remove things like videos or galleries, in a simple way. You may not feel this is important, others have felt the same way. However, later down the track, they then found that it cost a lot more to have just simple things done. You should be able to add simple functionality when it suits you without having to pay extra.

X 5. CAN'T RELATE – COMMUNICATION ISSUES

If the person you're dealing with demonstrates any of these behaviours, there's cause for concern...

- Talks down to you.
- Makes you feel ignorant.
- Doesn't explain things in a way that you understand.
- Is slow to return your answers or enquiries.
- Makes you feel uncomfortable.

X 6. CAN'T ILLUSTRATE CONSISTENT RESULTS

I want to paint a picture for you. You want to train for a marathon and you've been given the opportunity to have access to a personal trainer.

If you win the marathon, you win a million dollars. Do you choose a trainer who has won a marathon themselves, or a trainer who has won a marathon themselves and helped numerous others win as well?

Another easy question, right?

No matter what your web designer tells you, or what they say they know about Google, if your web designer can't show you documented proof of their clients' successful results on Google, then what are your chances?

X 7. OUTSOURCING YOUR WEB DESIGN OVERSEAS

Outsourcing overseas is fraught with challenges. It sounds like a perfect solution though, doesn't it? Why not have someone who works for 1/10th of the money a Kiwi would charge build you a website?

Well, if it was that easy, surely there would be no web designers in New Zealand and all web designers would outsource their work.

The truth is, it's not that simple. Yes, it's doable, but we'd suggest you go through our 'The Importance of Value vs Price' list.

X 8. JACK OF ALL TRADES

There are many people in the marketplace who consider themselves adept web developers, who think they can do graphic art, graphic artists who think they're web developers, a mix of internet marketers who think they are graphic artists, and so on.

If the company you are considering employing has one person who does it all, you'll find some things may not work out as well as they could. It's rare, if not impossible, for someone to be excellent in all areas.

No All Blacks can play well in every position in a game of rugby. They do what they're best at on the field: they play their position; the other players do the same, and as a team they create awesome results.

5 Steps to a Website That Delivers Effective Results

TO GET EFFECTIVE RESULTS ON THE WEB, YOU NEED TO COMBINE A VISUALLY APPEALING WEBSITE DESIGN WITH GOOD SEO AND A COMPELLING MESSAGE.

YOU NEED TO ANSWER THESE TWO QUESTIONS...

Q 1. WHY SHOULD THEY BUY?

Q 2. WHY SHOULD THEY BUY FROM ME?



THE FOLLOWING 5 STEPS OUTLINE HOW YOU CAN ANSWER THESE TWO QUESTIONS

STEP 1. UNIQUE OFFER

Whilst there are many unique business owners, in reality there are few unique businesses. Most other people out there selling products and services are 'me too' businesses; they offer little to nothing that differentiates them from other companies.

Your website needs to offer something unique to your visitor so they will choose you over your competition. It's important that you define your unique selling proposition (USP) or unique business advantage (UBA).

STEP 2. PROMISE

Besides presenting your unique offer, you need to back it up; it's not enough to simply say, "We guarantee it." In fact that's worthless. How many companies do you hear saying 'We guarantee it'? Every Tom, Dick and Harry.

Would you choose a plumber who said...
"We'll be on time, I guarantee it"? OR "We'll be on time or your first hour's free"?

It is a no brainer, isn't it?
Back your offer up with a promise.

STEP 3. OVERWHELMING PROOF

This is where you illustrate that you actually do what you say. Proof can be: photos, testimonials, videos, references, news reports and articles.

Basically anything and everything that adds credibility to your offer should be included. There should be no doubt in your website visitors' minds that you can, and will, deliver on your promise.

STEP 4. IRRESISTIBLE OFFER

This step is very similar to Step 2, but this is where you present an offer that makes your website visitor say...

"I can't believe they can offer that?" "How can they do that"? Creating an irresistible offer is a whole subject in itself, but the essence of this step is that your offer needs to be IRRESISTIBLE. Your website visitor would have to be mad not to buy your products or services!

STEP 1 TIES INTO STEP 2. BEING THE BEST OR NUMBER 1 IS NOT A USP

Often companies have their USP worked into a slogan... 'New Zealand's lowest prices, everyday'. Let's look at a few other examples so you've got an idea of what I'm on about...

We start off with your customer's pain.

Business: Dentist

Pain: People generally hate going to the dentist because of the physical pain they may experience and having to wait around before being seen.

USP: "We guarantee you'll have a comfortable experience and never have to wait more than 15 minutes or your examination is free".

Business: Plumber

Pain: Tradespeople in general have a bad name for being late to appointments and leaving a mess.

USP: "We guarantee that we'll be on time and clean up after ourselves or your first hour is free"!

Business: Courier

Pain: Late delivery and breakages.

How is your business unique?

USP: "Your parcel to its destination on time AND in perfect condition, or you pay nothing".

STEP 5. REASON

Last but not least, Step 5. Initially I said you needed to answer two questions. Those two questions were...

Q 1. Why should they buy?

Q 2. Why should they buy from me?

By this stage you should have answered the second of these questions. Now's the time to seal the deal and give your website visitor the reason to do business with you. This reason will be highly emotional. Let's say you sell hair transplants for men.

The reasons you may choose to highlight might be the following (For the record, I'm not suggesting these are legitimate reasons)

- Look younger
- Make yourself more attractive to the opposite sex
- Improved self-esteem

For people who are concerned about hair loss these may be good reasons to get a hair transplant.

You need to give your website visitors compelling reasons to contact you now.

THANKS

Thanks for reading our New Zealand Web Design Consumer's Guide.

You should now be more up to speed on web designers and things to be aware of when having your new website designed and built.

If you have any questions about websites or web design,

You're invited to call us on **0800 686 237 (0800 NUMBER)** or email us via the **www.geekfree.co.nz** website.

