YOUR LOGO

YOUR COMPANY NAME

TITLE OF DOCUMENT
Invitation to tender for new website

Author
YOUR NAME & POSITION

DATE
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Contents

Introduction

Good web designers will want to learn as much information as possible about your organisation. Supplying a bigger picture about your organisation will help them to fully appreciate and understand how your organisation was created, where it is now and what the future plans are. Remember your are asking web designers to invest their time into your organisation and they will become a valued out sourced asset. Provide at least a page of insightful information, although you penultimately will be the paying client, at this stage you need to engage your brand and vision with a web designer or web design company. And the more understanding they have, the better their response to your tender will be. After personally responding to hundreds of tenders over the last 20 or more years, I found those that were professional and friendly in tone, made me want to invest more time in the tender process. For a web designer to write and respond a tender takes a lot of time which is unpaid. A response to a large tender took on average about three to four days for me, as I took the time to research and incorporate suggestions and recommendations on how else they can enhance their website. This always helped me to progress to the next stage.

Project Scope
In this section you will need to go into detail about your project.

Current Website

Learning from your existing website is key to making sure the next one is even better! In this part of the document provide information to cover

- How old is the existing website.
- Feedback information about what is liked and disliked with regards to functionality and design.
- Provide analytical performance data, ideally by providing a supporting document with reports from Google Analytics or any other insight tools you use, but as a minimum provide information such as visitor numbers per month, most popular pages, number of sales per month, how many registration you receive per month, devices used, etc.
- Details of any PPC campaigns you run and where they point through to on the website
- Details of Social Media channels you use, how you use them and how many followers you have on each channel.

Content

Ok, this is a big one. You really need to fully understand the importance of writing copy and understanding how big a project this is in itself. I can't tell you how many projects I have taken on have just come to a grinding halt as the client didn't appreciate the time it takes to collate, write, re-write content and supply. Depending on the size of the website, organising the content can take weeks. If you want the web designer to manage this for you, state this here, as they will need to incorporate this into their response and it will have an impact on the budget. Ask the question "how do they manage the content process". It might be that you can migrate content from the current website via the database, remember content isn't just your service pages, if you are an e-commerce store you have product pages, product images etc, if you have a blog, you will have lots of posts, and they may have replies etc. Content migration and creation is a large part of any new website build, and often only thought about at the end of the design and development stage - it should be first on your meeting agenda as it has an impact on timescales, design & development!

Appearance

In this section of the document, provide information about your brand, such as colours, imagery to be used etc. Brand guidelines should be supplied as a separate document. As an organisation you might have thoughts on what you like and dislike - it is useful to provide screen shots of websites or elements of websites you like and the reasons why.

Please remember that you are tendering your website to be designed as well as built. They are the professionals and a major reason why you are asking for a quote if for them to design it, so let them. Modern websites are designed to enhance user experience and lead the visitor to buy a product, fill in a form or read information, quickly and easily with minimal barriers. A good web designer will have the experience to design and layout a website to maximise these customer journeys. My recommendation is that you ask to review a lot of their live work - so you have a good understanding of their design abilities and style. If you don't like what you see, then they might not be a good fit for you.

New Website

Use this area to layout your thoughts and objectives for the new website. Are there any specific goals you want to achieve in the next 2-3 years? Are there any areas that the current website is failing and that you need suggestions and advice on how to address this. Does the new website need to support any admin processes as well as marketing? Do you need to improve your search engine rankings? (How a website is structured, written etc affects the outcome, don't assume every web designer will just do this, SEO should be integrated into any new website, but not all web designers offer SEO or have that experience).

Essentially use this area to write a wish list of your objectives and list them in bullet format, so that it is easier for the web designer to read. Use as many pages as you feel needed, I have received tenders with up to 3 pages of 'things we want the new website to achieve and do', and although it can be overwhelming for the web designer, it helped me to respond with ideas on how we would address each objective - this then will help you to qualify which web designer moves forward to your shortlist as those that don't respond to your objectives might not have the answers or experience or just fail to realise this is important part of the web design process.

Audience

In this section of the document explain who your target audience is. If you have carried out any market research on your audience include it here. This starts the conversation, so that when you make your final decision on which web designer you are going to go with, they can carry out there own research on your target audience and find out where they hang out online. It really depends if you are looking for a web designer to just design and build or if you are looking for a company with all round experience in online marketing as well.

Functionality & Features

Use this area to highlight in a list format all the front end and backend features and functions you would like to include on the website. Go into as much detail as possible, as you might have in place on your existing website some quirky features that are not visible from the front end, such as pulling user generated content from another source - or a complicated booking system. This is your opportunity to provide all details that will eventually end up in the project specification document that both parties agree to work to.

Tender Criteria

Provide a guide to how you will be rating the responses you receive. This will help the web designer in approaching their proposal. Below is an example, please change headings and score to what you feel is appropriate to your needs.

Item	Demonstrate	Score Total 100
Specification	That you have understood our brief, our goals, functionality of the website and provided explanations and alternative ideas.	50
Communication	Explanation of how you communicate with us e.g. How many face to face meetings are included in the price.	10
Financial	Clear break down of the costs of design, development, hosting and ongoing support services.	20
Understanding or our sector	Experience and understanding of the sector we operate in.	10
Commitment to service	Demonstration of meeting deadlines, being the best, and providing excellent customer service and after care.	10

Project Timescales

Break down the timescales you would like to follow, this should include the tendering process. State when proposals should be sent over by, (date & time) and if you prefer to receive them in the post or on email. If on email, please ensure you reply to the web designer that you have received their proposal, otherwise they will be calling you up! Give a period of time that if successful they will be asked in for a face to face to meeting, so they are aware and it gives them the opportunity to let you know if they can't make any of the dates due to holiday commitments etc.

Let them know a date you would like the new website to go live, but be realistic, quality work takes time and should not be rushed. A good web designer will let you know if a deadline you have outlined is not achievable and won't commit, so make sure you can be flexible and build in extra time. My suggestion would be to work out how long it will take for you to write and collate all the content for the website, as like I say, I have seen many deadlines come and go, not because of a delay in the development but the content took far longer than expected.

Project Budget

It is really important that you specify a budget or budget range. After reading your brief, a web designer or company will have the experience of how long a project of your specification will take and will know what overheads they have to make a profit. Please remember the tender process for a web design company is an expensive process if done correctly, a lot of time and research will have gone into the responses you will be receiving at their own risk. Providing a budget allows web designer or company to review if they can afford to take the project on. If you write an impressive professional tender, the assumption will be that you will have a large budget, so it is best to state a budget range at this stage as it will qualify those web designers that can afford to take your project on.

Contact Details

Provide a list of main contacts for the project. The web designer or company may want to do some background checks on your organisation and the people running the project before committing to get a feel for who you are. Both parties are entering a relationship that needs to fit. I will be honest and say that over the years, even though I had many long standing relationships with my clients, there were a handful that sadly didn't work out. B2B all is all about liking the people you work with, if there isn't respect from both parties, the project may not flow and be a happy experience for either party.