

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FINDING THE BEST WORDPRESS DEVELOPERS FOR YOU

HOW FINDING OUTSTANDING DEVELOPERS
ISN'T AS HARD AS YOU THINK

How do you find the right WordPress developers for your business?

We have all been there. You need someone to develop a WordPress site for you as you are too busy and don't have the in-house resources. You find a developer who looks good, says all the right things and allows you to make a good bit of profit on the site.

Then things go wrong...

Deadlines are missed, the site is of poor quality and communication from the developer is non-existent. HELP!!

So how do you go about ensuring that this doesn't happen and you get a very high level of professionalism and standard of work?

The outcome of this guide is to help you through the minefield that is choosing a WordPress developer and to help you make an informed choice. From levels of expertise, to price, from standards of work to communication skills, this guide gives you the knowledge you need and also the questions you can ask any prospective developers.

We cannot guarantee that you will choose the right developer as sometimes things still go wrong, what this guide will do is give you the confidence to know what you are looking for.



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This e-book is laid out in sections and has a set of questions you can ask any developer who you might want to work with. After all, the better the questions we ask, the better answers we get.

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1. Experience

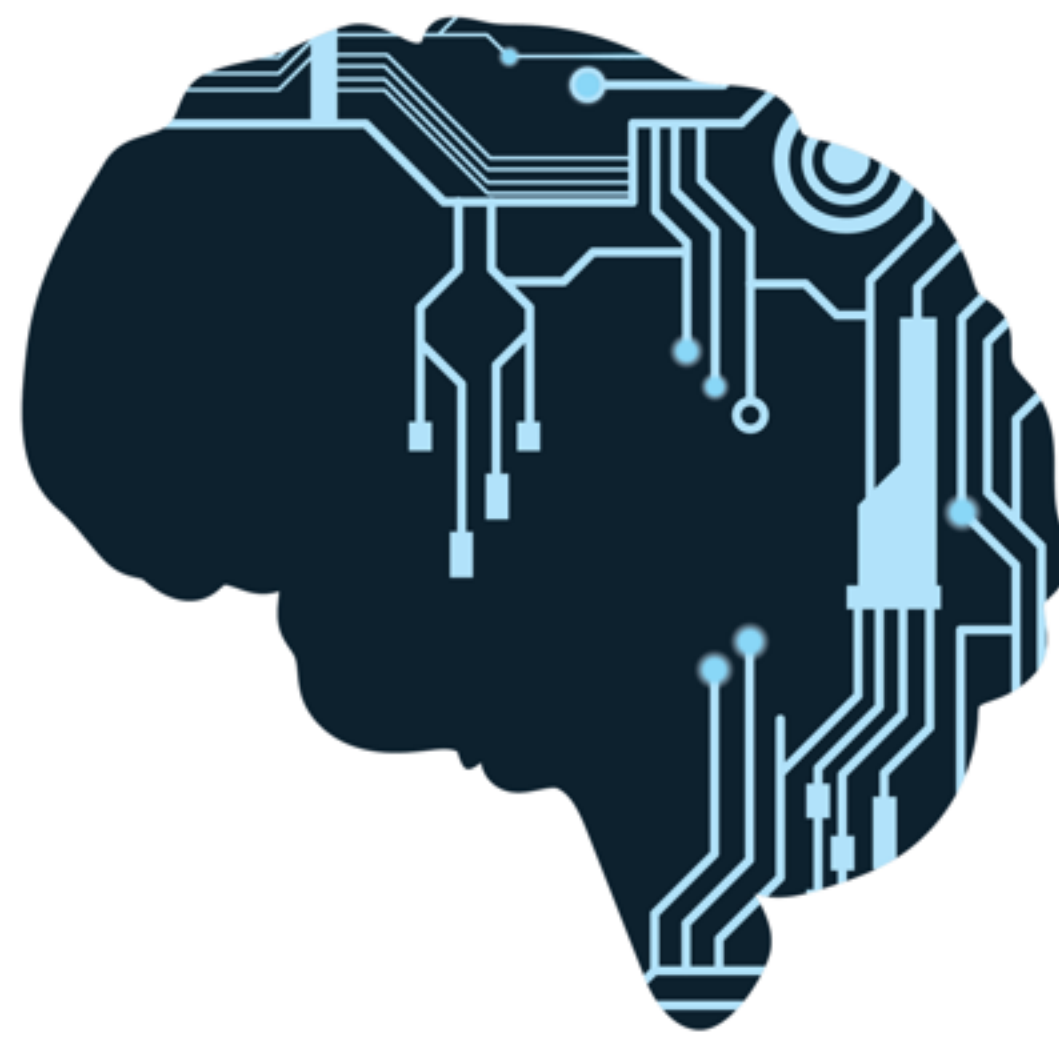
How experienced the developers you choose can make a massive impact on the quality of site that gets delivered to you.

How can you measure experience? Someone may have been developing sites for 10 years part time, another person might have been developing for 5 years full time but uses out of date technology. Another developer might have been developing for 2 years full time and is bang up to date with the latest technology and has a fine eye for details. In our opinion, the last developer would be the first on our list.

Someone who is passionate about the latest technology and spends enough time to work on their craft tends to care more about the final end product that gets delivered to you and your client.

Questions to ask

- 1) How long have you been developing full-time?
- 2) How many projects have you completed?
- 3) How many clients have you worked with?



2. Expertise

‘Can the person I am paying for WordPress development do the job to the standards i require?’ is a great question to ask and can be measured easily enough through seeing examples of previous projects and work they have done.

As in the previous example about experience, finding someone who invests time in improving what they do can be invaluable. Look for their qualifications or ask if they have attended any conferences. Find out if they are up to date with technologies such as HTML5, CSS3, LESS/SASS and Git. Keep asking questions until you get the answer you are looking for.

Remember, talking the talk and walking the walk are two completely different things. Get examples of their work, speak to people who know what they do, make your own opinion based on this.

Questions to ask

- 1) How many WordPress sites have you completed?
- 2) What is your experience using GIT or SASS (or other technology)?
- 3) Are you involved with the WordPress community and do you attend WordCamp’s or meetups?



3. Price

For a lot of agencies, the most important thing to look out for is the price of the project. Making a good margin on a website is paramount and if your margin is low then it puts a squeeze on other parts of your business.

We recommend a 50% to 70% margin on web projects so if your client's budget is £20k then we would say look for a development team that is around the £6k to £10k mark to build the website. This gives you the remainder for design and project management. Sometimes you can have a higher budget of say £40k and can also get the development completed for £6k, in that case, that's awesome.

The best WordPress developers will be charging £45 to £85+ per hour of development time or £360 to £680 per day so make sure you consider this when pricing up your next project.

Questions to ask

- 1) What is your hourly and daily rate? (if they don't know the answer to this question then we would suggest steering clear of them)
- 2) How long would it take you to produce this site? (provide an example)
- 3) Do you provide a fixed price on the site development?



4. Standards

After price almost certainly comes standards in the pecking order of what you must look for. Standards set the tone for how the website will launch and prosper over the coming months and years. A website that is built with low standards might look good but might perform horribly and even worse might break when upgrading WordPress.

Let's consider two examples:

Developer Billy has low standards for his work. If the WordPress site kinda looks like the design files then its fine. Billy doesn't take care with his code and may use a pre-bought template from Themeforest & change a few colours and add in a logo and think that it's good enough.

Developer Rob has really high standards for his work & ensures that the end result looks identical to the design files and hand codes from scratch with the utmost care with SEO, security and site loading speed in mind. Rob believes that every site he does is better than the last site and constantly works to improve what he does. Rob is who you are looking for.

Questions to ask

- 1) Do you follow the WordPress coding standards?
- 2) How do you ensure the site is optimised for security, search engines and fast loading speeds?
- 3) Have you got examples of sites that you have developed?



5. Security

There have been some high-profile attacks on Wordpress sites in the last year and this might only increase considering that WordPress drives over 27% of the web. Having a well-built site from an experienced development team can make a big difference in how secure your client's site is.

How will you make sure that the site you have got back from your developer is optimised for security and does not contain malicious code or security issues?

Again, this is a question of getting into conversation with the prospective developer and finding out what their views are on security and what steps they take to ensure that the sites are secure. From renaming of the database prefix to the installation of WordPress security plugins, there are steps that can be taken and you should ensure that you use someone who has a security conscious outtake on development.

Questions to ask

- 1) How do you ensure that the site is hardened against hacking attempts?
- 2) Have any of your sites ever been hacked and what have you done about it?
- 3) Do you install any security plugins to help with the site security?



6. Communication Skills

The lost art of successful communication is something that we hear a lot about, “I am not able to contact my developer” or “I haven't heard from my developer for over a week” are all too common.

What can you do to ensure you get the right level of communication?

Look for someone who has a proven track record of communicating well with their clients. Speak to them on the phone and use your gut feeling to see if they are a good communicator or not.

Set a schedule - Good development teams will already schedule regular communication as either updates or feedback. We would recommend 2 to 3 times a week during the early stages of development and then daily during the final week of end-user testing.

Set boundaries - It might be unrealistic to expect an immediate response from a developer so ask them how long it typically takes them to respond to emails and calls. Have a conversation about your expectations and set the boundaries and set them early.

Questions to ask

- 1) How do you communicate effectively with your clients?
- 2) Do you have a schedule for how often you update clients?
- 3) What tools do you use to ensure that we are kept informed with your progress?



7. Timekeeping

Possibly the number one thing that we hear complaints about is whether or not the project is fully delivered within the timescales requested. We hear about so many projects that are late or that the developer can no longer do the job, it's frightening. Excellent timekeeping is a make or break element of a successful project.

Good development teams will provide a full schedule of how the development will commence. From initial development to testing, this will be delivered to you before the project starts. Make sure this fits into your client's expectations and gives you time to test it your end and to populate the site with content if required.

Before you start any project, make sure you have a full schedule for the development and ask for communication when each part of the development is completed. Make sure you stay on top of any delays early so they can be managed and don't let it get to the last few days before chasing up on missed internal deadlines.

Questions to ask

- 1) How do you ensure that the project will be delivered on time?
- 2) Have you ever delivered projects late and what were the circumstances?
- 3) Do you track the time you spend on each project



8. Location

Whilst this might be more important when buying a house, location of the developer can make a significant difference on how smoothly a project runs.

Having a development team who natively speak your language and are on the same time zone as yourselves make communicating a lot easier and stops you having to wait until the development team start working again before they respond to your urgent emails about the project (if you follow this guide then there shouldn't be any need for urgent emails, but you get my point!).

Sometimes using a developer from another country may be a more cost-effective way of building a WordPress website, it doesn't necessarily mean it's the best way. In our experience its best to work with a development team that is in the same country as yourselves, you need to work out what works best for you.

Questions to ask

- 1) Where are you based?
- 2) What are your hours of work?
- 3) Are you contactable outside of these hours in emergencies?



9. Size of team

Whilst it's not a definitive indicator of project success, we know that for some agencies the size of the team they are working with is still an important factor.

There isn't any difference in the level of competency and professionalism that you get from a one-man band freelancer over a larger development company as this depends on how good each business is at what they do. What you will get from a bigger team is typically a dedicated project manager and cover for sickness and holidays which the freelancer cannot easily provide. You will also get more security in that you are dealing with an established business rather than someone who might be available all of the time.

Freelancers have a different set of advantages as they are often more agile in their approach and will work outside of normal hours to complete projects. You may also find that you get a better level of rapport with a freelancer rather than having to go through a project manager to get to speak to a developer.

Questions to ask

- 1) How big is your team?
- 2) How do you manage projects effectively?
- 3) What skill sets do you have access to in your team?



10. Payment Terms

Payment terms are often forgotten and whilst are not the most important item on this list, they are a good indicator of the professionalism of the development team you are looking for.

Find out as soon as you can what the terms are and whether they fit into your plans for the project. Find out when payment is expected and by what payment method. The best development teams will allow for BACS transfers on 14 to 30-day terms. Easy to pay and easy to structure.

Good development teams have the flexibility to accommodate your payment terms and compromise where required as an act of goodwill. They are looking to have you as a long term client so anything small like this can help the relationship.

If they don't have any payment terms then I wouldn't recommend using them, they are probably not organised enough to be an asset to your business.

Questions to ask

- 1) What are your terms of payment?
- 2) Do you have any flexibility in your payment terms?
- 3) What deposit do you require before starting?

Conclusion

We hope this guide has been of use in the minefield that is finding a good WordPress development partner.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with us to discuss your project and we will be happy to answer any of the questions from this guide.

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