

What to ask before you sign a web design quote.

Five questions worth putting to anyone who quotes you, including us. After each one we have printed **our own answer**, so you have something concrete to hold the other quotes against. **We sell web design, so read our answers as a worked example, not a neutral benchmark.** Where an answer involves a price we point you at the page where we publish it, because a PDF cannot stay current. The last page has a grid for writing down what each studio tells you.

01 What will this cost me in year two?

A build price is a one-off. A website is a running cost. Ask for the second-year number before you compare two quotes, because the cheaper build is not always the cheaper site.

- ☐ **What do I pay every year after launch?** Ask for a figure in writing, and whether you can check it anywhere.
- ☐ **Is hosting in that number, or billed separately?**
- ☐ **Who pays to renew the paid plugins and the theme licence?** These renew on their own schedule, whether anyone is watching or not.
- ☐ **Who renews the domain, and whose card is it on?**

OUR ANSWER

Year one is the build price. After that you are paying for **Website Care, hosting, the domain and your Google Workspace accounts**, and we publish a yearly figure for each of the three priced builds. **That figure is Website Care plus hosting plus the domain; the Workspace accounts renew on top of it**, at Google's price rather than ours. Website Care runs on a **twelve-month term**. **The fee does not include hosting**: we manage it, you pay for it. Paid plugin licences from our own stack **are** inside Website Care, so they stop being your bill, but **we do not publish the list of what that stack covers**, and anything outside it is yours. We say so before the build rather than after. We publish nothing about theme licences, so ask us. Custom builds are quoted against requirements, so there is no published figure for those. All our prices **exclude GST**. Current numbers, and the arithmetic behind them, are at xsquare.com.sg/services/web-design/pricing-singapore. We keep that page current, which is something a PDF cannot promise, so trust that page over any figure copied out of a PDF, including this one.

02 What does "unlimited revisions" actually mean?

Two questions turn this phrase from a slogan into a term you can rely on.

- ☐ **Unlimited until when?** Ask where the policy ends. If the answer is that it does not, ask what that covers after launch.
- ☐ **Unlimited up to what?** A colour change and a new page are not the same request.
- ☐ **Do extra rounds cost money, or time?**
- ☐ **What can I still change after launch, and on what terms?**

OUR ANSWER

Unlimited while design and development are under way. The window closes when you sign off that phase, which happens before launch, not at it. Extra rounds **push the finish date rather than the price**. We publish where that boundary sits, because unlimited without an end is not a real offer. **We do not publish a limit on what counts as one revision, and we publish nothing about changes after launch**, so ask for both in writing.

03 When do I pay, and what triggers each payment?

Two quotes can name the same total and stage it very differently. Ask what triggers each payment, not just when it falls due.

- ☐ **Is it staged, or all up front?**
- ☐ **What has to happen before each stage is due?** A date is not a stage. Ask what you are signing off.
- ☐ **Is the deposit refundable, and until when?**

OUR ANSWER

Brochure sites are paid in full up front. Business and e-commerce builds are staged **50% at start, 40% when you sign off design and development, 10% at launch.** That middle payment falls due at the same moment the revision window closes, so one signature ends both. **We do not publish refund terms for the deposit**, so ask us for ours, and ask whoever else you are talking to for theirs. Custom builds are quoted against requirements and we have not published payment terms for them.

04 Who owns the accounts?

This is the question that decides whether you can ever leave. Ask it early, while everyone is still friendly, and ask for the accounts to be created in your name from the start rather than transferred later.

- ☐ **Domain registrar login.** The single most important one. If the domain sits in someone else's account, everything else is on loan.
- ☐ **DNS control.** Sometimes separate from the registrar. Ask which service holds it.
- ☐ **Hosting account and its billing.**
- ☐ **A WordPress account with the Administrator role.** Log in and check the role reads Administrator, not Editor.
- ☐ **Google Analytics property and Search Console property.** Your history lives here, and it does not follow you into a new property.
- ☐ **Google Business Profile ownership.** Ownership, not manager access.
- ☐ **Paid theme and plugin licences.** Ask whose account they renew on, and what happens to them if you leave.
- ☐ **Design source files, logo originals, and the photography licence.**

OUR ANSWER

Every build **includes** the domain, hosting and a Google Workspace account for the first year, with Analytics and Search Console connected. **Included is not the same as owned:** some of those sit in your accounts and some sit in ours while we run them. Ask us which is which, and ask for any of them in your name from the start. On the back end, **a brochure site does not need a content management system**, so unless you ask us to build it on one there is no dashboard to hand over and no training session. For a **WordPress or e-commerce build you get your own administrator account**, plus a **short training session** on finding your way around it. The other items on this list vary by client and by who set them up originally, so ask us and we will tell you where each one sits.

Two checks you can run today, on the site you already have. Ask whoever built it for the registrar login, and try it. If it works, the domain is reachable to you; if nobody can produce it, that is your answer. A public WHOIS lookup rarely shows the registrant name on most domains now, because records have been redacted by default since 2018. If your site runs on WordPress, log in, open Users, find yourself, and confirm your role says Administrator.

05 What is not in this quote?

A quote is accurate about what it includes. The gap between two prices sits in what neither of them mentions, so ask about the things that are not on either page.

- ☐ **Is GST included in this figure?**
- ☐ **Who writes the words?** Ask whether copywriting is in scope or whether you are expected to supply the text.
- ☐ **Who supplies photography, and is it licensed?**
- ☐ **Is anyone maintaining this after launch, and on what terms?**
- ☐ **Are backups being taken, and has anyone ever restored one?** A backup nobody has restored is not yet a backup.
- ☐ **What happens if the site goes down on a Saturday?**

OUR ANSWER

All our published prices exclude GST. After launch, on a WordPress build, Website Care covers WordPress and plugin updates, **daily backups kept for 30 days**, daily malware scans, uptime monitoring, hosting management and the plugin licences from our stack, on sites we built and, after an assessment, on sites we did not. **A brochure site is a different shape, so ask what its plan covers.** On photography: images and video we supply are **generated or licensed from stock, so they are licensed for use on your site rather than sold to you outright**: you can use them on the site, but not resell them or put them on something you sell, and we cannot pass on full commercial ownership. Copywriting is in every published build price. We do not publish a weekend response time or a restore-test schedule, so ask us for both, and ask whoever else you are talking to for the same. Payment gateway fees are yours. The photography terms and the gateway note are on our web design page; the GST line is on the pricing page.

Write the answers down

Fill this in as you go. Two quotes that look far apart often are not, once the second-year row is filled in.

QUESTION	STUDIO A	STUDIO B
Build price, and does it include GST		
Cost in year two		
Revisions: until when, up to what		
Payment stages, and what triggers each		
Domain and hosting in whose name		
Who maintains it after launch		

If you want a second opinion on a quote

We design and build websites in Singapore, and we publish what we charge, so you can price us without talking to anyone. If you are holding quotes and something in them does not read right, send us the answers you were given and we will tell you what we would want to know. **No obligation, and we will say so if nothing in them worries us.**

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