



Episode 1: Finding the Right Web Development Company

E1: FINDING THE RIGHT WEB DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Ken Franzen: Hey everyone! This is Ken from Neon Goldfish. In this episode of the NeonNoise podcast, Justin and I explore specific questions you should ask when hiring a website designer. This is often challenging for a lot of business owners because they just don't know the right questions to ask or what to look for to help them weed out the bad from the good, and the good from the exceptional. We dive into areas that you should focus on, but make sure you can tell the difference between someone's going to give you the website you envision, rather than someone who might turn your project into a nightmare.

Accompanying this episode is a downloadable pdf that covers all the major areas we touch on and a worksheet you can use while interviewing each website designer to make sure you hit all the main points. This pdf can be found [Here](#). We hope our conversation will give you the knowledge and confidence in choosing the right person or company for your next website or project. Enjoy!

[Music]

Justin Johnson: Hey everybody, this is Justin and Ken with Neon Noise.

Ken Franzen: How're we doing, everyone?

Justin Johnson: Today we're going to discuss some helpful tips on what to look for when hiring a web designer. Ken, how's it going over there today?

Ken Franzen: It is going fabulous today. I'm kind of excited to talk about this topic of going through the process of hiring a website designer because it's not an easy one for the average business owner.

Justin Johnson: It is not.

Ken Franzen: No, no. I mean, think about some of the bad experiences that we hear when we get that first meeting, Justin.

Justin Johnson: Oof, my website disappeared. Where did it go, Ken? Where did it go?

Ken Franzen: Right? Oh, like the one that was being worked on that's no longer good there?

Justin Johnson: Yeah. No, it just happens often, too too too often. People come and, you know, 'I've had my website, it's been developed, it's been getting developed for, I don't know, 9, 10, 12 months, and, you know, we thought it was going to take 5-6 weeks And, you know, how often have you heard that

Ken Franzen: ...the braces are off, right?

Justin Johnson: You get that often. You hear that the updates, they just never happen and, you know, I can't find the person who has my domain anymore. Just how -- we hear it all the time.

Ken Franzen: Sure, or my favorite is when someone had something built they paid for or they thought they were getting an apple and the designer thought they were quoting an orange and delivered an orange and

Justin Johnson: Sure



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Ken Franzen: -- the person is looking for the apple, right? Just communication.

Justin Johnson: Just all communication. You'll get the call about 'My SEO, everything, we thought that our website was going to show up on page one, page two once we had our website developed and, you know, it's on page 30.↑

Ken Franzen: Sure. They just thought that the website being live and present was going to lead to search engine exposure, which doesn't ñ

Justin Johnson: It's just not the case.

Ken Franzen: No, no, not at all.

Justin Johnson: Not anymore.

Ken Franzen: And so, what we want to talk about today is how will they know if the person ñ how they're going to find out if the person they choose is the right one. So, for the sake of the conversation today, I think that we want to, uh, we should talk about the diverse types of sources a business owner could go to for getting a website. Now the first platforms, the do it yourself platforms, you have the Wix, the Squarespace...what are some of the others Justin?

Justin Johnson: Oh, Wix and Squarespace are the big ones, um

Ken Franzen: Shopify

Justin Johnson: Shopify, GoDaddy has got one, you know, these are platforms that are positioned for somebody that, they've got a lower budget. They want to do it themselves. You know, somebody that's got some time on their hands that they can take care of it by themselves.

Ken Franzen: Sure, and they're lower cost platforms, so they're basically exchanging your time in learning the platform and doing it yourself for that cheaper cost.

Justin Johnson: Sure.

Ken Franzen: And the other two are freelancers and website companies or digital agencies. We're going to, for the sake of this conversations, focus on the latter of these two.

Freelancers are going to be single individuals that range from being very experienced to being right out of the gate.

Justin Johnson: [laughs]

Ken Franzen: ...worked at Barnes and Noble last week, they read it and now they're a website designer. But, there is a mixture of...there's some good ones that I would love to have work for us at Neon Goldfish.

Justin Johnson: Absolutely.



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Ken Franzen: So, I think it's important to identify the sources that a business owner can go to for a website. There are three that I want to talk about quick.

The first is the do it yourself platforms. They're going to be Wix, the Squarespaces, the GoDaddy's, the shopifys. the low cost platforms that you can go to and actually build your own website from one of their templates. The other is a freelancer, individuals that build websites for companies and the third is a web site company or a digital agency.

So, we're going to concentrate on the latter two because the do it yourself really doesn't apply here. And we're going to go ahead and discuss eleven different areas that will help identify some points, topics, that will help identify some proper questions to ask when you're looking at a new website designer. So, let's get started with process Justin.

Justin Johnson: Yean, let's just dive in. I think processes are a good starting point, you know do you think it's important to have processes in place?

Ken Franzen: Do I? Yes, yes, the importance of process really tells a couple of things here. Obviously, if they have a process in place it shows that they have some organization and structure in their company. That's as far as I see things. I think a great question to start out with asking them is 'Do you have a process?'

Justin Johnson: Alright, so let's get into something Ken said already. I think process is a great starting point. What do you think Ken, is it important to have processes in place?

Ken Franzen: Yeah, absolutely. I think that a process is going to show organization, it's going to show structure. Not having a process is going to be a bit alarming don't you think?

Justin Johnson: I agree.

Ken Franzen: I mean, having a process allows me understand, or if you're asking someone, it shows that they've done this before. They have this established methodology that's going to show them that after this step, we are going to do this step

Justin Johnson: You're going to do this .correct.

Ken Franzen: So you as a business owner you're not going to know what's the first step, or the second step, or the third step. That's why you're hiring a web designer.

Justin Johnson: Absolutely.

Ken Franzen: Relying on their expertise and knowing and trusting that they have an established processes. They are going to be your guide through this process. It's important. So, point blank ask them, 'What is your process, from start to finish?' You know?

Justin Johnson: How would you feel about actually seeing...can I stop in next week and, you know, just see what your process is like? See how your staff works? I feel that a hands on experience there would be extremely helpful for knowing how your project is going to take place.



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Ken Franzen: Absolutely, and that wouldn't be a horrible angle to go. You think about that and you can see the operation. If you were a manufacturer and you were having a fabricator build a part for you, you're going to want to see...especially if you're going to spend a \$100,000 on a particular piece of equipment being built, you would want to check out their facilities and see. Now, websites can cost \$100,000, along those lines, but you still want to check out and see what that operation looks like. So, getting a glimpse..and if it doesn't. If they are a freelancer, let's say, they don't have an office, they work from their home, uh, having them identify, outline the process and show how those steps are going to go along the way is super important.

Justin Johnson: Yep! I would say next in line, which is just as important as processes, is your communication throughout the project...

Ken Franzen: Sure.

Justin Johnson: ...and understanding how you're going to communicate with each other. What is the best method to contact each other during the project.

Ken Franzen: Sure. Sure. Yeah, I mean, are we going to exchange phone calls...is it going to be e-mails? Are we going to have all face to face meetings? Will they be virtual meetings on Skype? Understanding how that goes, I mean, step one, project kick off meeting and then I'm never going to see you again until the project launches, right?

Justin Johnson: [laughs]

Ken Franzen: Just understanding the mode of communication and then, additionally, do they have any tools that will be involved in the communication of your project. Here at Neon Goldfish we use Project Teamwork, which is similar to very popular Base Camp, which we used to use. And I can't imagine running a project here at Neon Goldfish without the Teamwork platform.

Justin Johnson: It would be extremely difficult in order to do so.

Ken Franzen: Absolutely.

Justin Johnson: What happens when you're not available? When the person that is your main contact, he's no longer available, how do I have someone else solve my problem?

Ken Franzen: Sure

Justin Johnson: Is there a way for me to send a message or make a phone call? Do you have a support system set up if you have a project management platform in place? It makes it that much easier to be able to communicate with the rest of the team.

Ken Franzen: Absolutely. Absolutely. In that platform, that project management platform, it helps keep a collective log of our conversations, which tasks need to be done, the files involved. I think, more importantly, it helps establish and keep track of our next topic, which is timelines, right?



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Justin Johnson: Yep, absolutely.

Ken Franzen: And so, timelines themselves are important to have, right?

Justin Johnson: It's extremely important to have. Let's look back at our, you know, the reasons people call us. Why, why, why is my website taking so long? If you've got timelines established and you know, it helps eliminate those problems people are having initially, um, when they contact us.

Ken Franzen: Oh sure, and they're being followed. And let's be honest, I mean, timelines are needed. But the timelines being established and followed .

Justin Johnson: What happens when a timeline is missed .

Ken Franzen: Sure, sure. Absolutely. What's the protocol? When you establish a timeline how realistic are they? Justin [laughs] we've had websites take, we have had quick turnarounds, and we've had them take long long periods of time because the clients disappear. But, uh .

Justin Johnson: Where do they go? Do they go on vacation?

Ken Franzen: Right. Exactly. When we look at the timelines that are established, sometimes projects end up being out of scope in a timeline and how is that managed? What does, because, let's face it, business owners are busy running and operating their businesses. While they want a website developed, it's not their top priority often times. And if they're managing that project themselves, it can very easily come to a point when the project requires their attention, and they're not around.

So, how are timelines managed or how are timelines established? Or the web designer could get out of scope as well and they get too busy, or unfortunately, disappear. But, you gotta look at these timelines and you really try to identify and adhere to them because you think about the cost of what a missed timeline cost either the client or the business owner that had the website built or what it cost the agency or freelancer that's building the site. So, timelines are important for both parties to be established and followed.

Justin Johnson: Completely agree. Make sure you've got your established timelines in place before you start your project.

Ken Franzen: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Justin Johnson: Alright, so what about guarantees? We didn't get what we agreed upon when we started our project. Is that something I should be concerned about if a certain company doesn't have a guarantee?

Ken Franzen: Yeah, I mean, you can look at...I don't think every company you come across is going to have a guarantee. Some will, some won't. It's good to ask if they do, or at least bring that conversation up .

Justin Johnson: Sure.

Ken Franzen: ..and say, what happens if we don't accomplish or deliver on what we agreed upon



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Justin Johnson: Are you going to stand behind your work?

Ken Franzen: Exactly. I mean, at Neon Goldfish what's our guarantee? It's we're going to keep working on your project

Justin Johnson: Until you're satisfied.

Ken Franzen: Until you are a 100% satisfied. And while, you know, it's not the guarantee like at Applebee's where you'll get your lunch in thirty minutes or it's free. No, it's not that, but we're standing behind our work. We're going to guarantee that your satisfaction is achieved.

And so, it can be something as simple as that or it could be if a timeline is missed .

Justin Johnson: Something is reflected

Ken Franzen: Exactly. It's a 10% discount. And that might be something that is agreed upon in the contract. A guarantee, it's worth asking and exploring what type of guarantee or how confident they are because a guarantee is going to show them, you know, they are either going to cower, or kinda hide from the question. Or they're going to maybe puff their chests out a little bit like 'I'm very proud of my work'. You'll see the confidence level and get a good feeling from that as well.

Justin Johnson: Alright, so, let's get into skill set. You know, what if I'm a company and I come to you and I want an ecommerce website developed and I just simply don't know what type of skill set should be required in order to do so.

Ken Franzen: Sure. So, that's a tough one because, a lot of times when we venture into the technical world where I think some of the lingo comes up where the average business owner might be intimidated by and they're just not real familiar with it. And I don't think they need to understand what the exact coding languages are going to be used. But, I think that it's important that they know the person they're hiring is experienced and skilled in the needed

Justin Johnson: Sure. It's not going to be something that's coming out of a box.

Ken Franzen: Exactly. Well, what are some options, some things that you'd have to, uh, some threats, some things to look out for? The wannabe developers that you just said, Justin, the things that come out of a box. There's a lot of prepackaged, you know, directors in a box. You know, you got some e-commerce in a box. I'm not gonna say they're bad because you think of some of the platforms we use, like Wordpress or Magento to build ecommerce platforms.

Justin Johnson: Yeah, they're already developed.

Ken Franzen: They're open source foundationally, but you have to be skilled in development to turn those into good looking websites to make them to do what you want them to do. So, it's important to ask the person you're working with: what experience they have, what platforms they use, what coding languages they're experienced with, who's doing the coding? And we will touch on that a little bit more in a second.



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But, the purpose and understanding and really feeling confident that they have the skillset they need is so that your project is going to be in good hands and will move along on a good basis.

When I touched on real quick on who's doing the coding, I was referencing the next item I want to bring up is the use of subcontractors. Subcontractors, they're not necessarily bad, are they Justin?

Justin Johnson: [laughs] They're not particularly bad, but, I don't know if they just get a bad name in our business or not. We use subcontractors for a lot of the different items we're just not experts at. We're not experts at video, or audio and stuff along those lines. So there is a great need for using subcontractors.

Ken Franzen: Sure. Absolutely, and I think that it fills the void. Where I think that subcontractors should be brought up, because, you need to understand

Justin Johnson: Who's doing the work?

Ken Franzen: Who's doing the work? Is it being done in house? Is it being subcontracted out?

Justin Johnson: Yep. How much is being outsourced?

Ken Franzen: Absolutely, because if it's the core components of your project then you're going to have to ask this question .

Justin Johnson: What's going to happen when I need to get something fixed?

Ken Franzen: Exactly. Down the road after the project is all said and done things will likely break, could they not?

Justin Johnson: Sure.

Ken Franzen: But there's going to be things that happen. There's going to be hiccups that happen and the use of subcontractors makes that more challenging to get fixes done after that. Because after that point, everyone's been paid. The money's been handed out. And let's go back to the guarantee. Let's say that the person you worked with has a guarantee 'I'll stand by my work'. Great. I need you to stand behind your work because

Justin Johnson: Who's gonna pay for that?

Ken Franzen: There's a bug and now who's going to pay for that?

Justin Johnson: [laughs]

Ken Franzen: They're going to give you resistance because they gotta pull money out of their pocket to get that fixed from the subcontractor. Again, the use of subcontractors aren't bad, especially for specific skill sets that maybe you don't have on your team or don't possess yourself. Know in advance how heavily subcontractors will be used.



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And ask, what happens down the road when we do have an issue and it's three months post launch and I'm getting an error on my site, how does that get fixed? What's that going to cost me? And if it's 'yeah, that can happen and it's going to cost x amount of dollars, and you may say 'I'm willing to do that, that's not a problem. I'm willing to pay for that maintenance so that I can go ahead and upgrade. They may say 'our guarantee is we'll stand behind our work for six months and after that. So, just know the answers to all these questions in advance so that you don't get to that point and you get upset and there is finger pointing, right?

Justin Johnson: Exactly. Alright, let's talk a little bit about portfolios. Is having a strong portfolio important?

Ken Franzen. Oh yeah. I think so, I mean, why do you think a strong portfolio is important?

Justin Johnson: I think that if you've got a project in mind that you want to get developed and you go to company xyz and maybe they don't have anything that's similar to your project in their portfolio does that raise red flags? Is it a concern or, you know, at what point do you...I mean, I don't know, do you think that is a red flag?

Ken Franzen: It may or may not be. I mean, it depends if you're looking for it on their website before you contact them they might just not choose not to have their portfolio there. I mean, we did that for a long time

Justin Johnson: Sure.

Ken Franzen: Hey, we don't want to list our portfolio

Justin Johnson: [laughs]

Ken Franzen: ...cause we don't want to show who our clients are.

Justin Johnson: I don't think we updated it for about two years so

Ken Franzen: [laughs] I think that's the case too. At any rate, you can ask them for examples of their work as well. And I think it's important to ask because you want to see what their best work is and if you're looking for an ecommerce site to be developed and they don't have one they've developed to show you. Or if some of their websites look like, uh, some of the sites you'd develop in the late '90's, Justin.

Justin Johnson: [laughs]

Ken Franzen: Not to say that your design skills were bad back then.

Justin Johnson: I'm going to be completely honest with you. I do know that some of those sites are still live and doing well.

Ken Franzen: [laughs] I'm sure that they are. I'm sure that they are.

Justin Johnson: [laughs]



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Ken Franzen: We'll have to do a look out. Tweet us if you can find any of Justin's circa 1999 websites out there.

Justin Johnson: [laughs] I love it.

Ken Franzen: Fun stuff. So, with the portfolio, yeah, definitely ask them for some examples of their work. And then to follow up with that, references. So, ask them examples of their work.

Justin Johnson: Huge area.

Ken Franzen: Let's talk about references. References are huge. I think that

Justin Johnson: We never get asked for references. It's so, it just doesn't happen and I think that that's an area that, you know, people are missing out on. You've got the opportunity to speak directly to individuals that have done work with this company. You can ask them, you know, pretty much any question that you're concerned about. And if they have just recently worked with that company, what better to talk to than somebody that, you know, has their experience.

Ken Franzen: Sure. And you might be thinking, sure, that's fine, but no one is going to give a bad reference. But

Justin Johnson: Yeah, I agree.

Ken Franzen: Here's the thing though, I mean, it's like a testimony. When you put the bad testimony on your website, but, here's an example that I recently had that I'd like to share. I like to...I've began over the last year or so been asking our clients when we're doing the website training after the projects kinda been built in it's state that it's going to live on the web. We're doing website training and I always ask them at the end of the training what Neon Goldfish could have been done better during the process of the project build.

Justin Johnson: Sure.

Ken Franzen: In this particular instance, I thought we crushed it. I thought we knocked the ball out of the park. We answered and attended to every need that this client had. And they're like 'well, we're kind of disappointed with, you know, not giving enough instruction during the product upload. We felt like at the beginning we didn't quite know what to do.

Oh my gosh, I

Justin Johnson: I wouldn't have even guessed.

Ken Franzen: I would have never guessed, and they seemed really happy. They even recommended us to one of their vendors already at this point. And I'm thinking to myself, I assumed I had a great reference and great report. The reason I asked is, these are the things that will be brought up when from a reference when you call them directly and the person you're considering hiring isn't on the phone.

You might get great reviews. But, you also might get a little bit of honesty, 'hey, they're great but .



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Justin Johnson: This could have gone a little bit different.

Ken Franzen: Be sure to press the on their guarantee. So, asking for references is an important thing that you could gain real good insight on from some of their perceived customers. And ask them questions. What were the things that they did great?

Justin Johnson: What did they do bad?

Ken Franzen: And what were the things that could have been done better, correct?

Justin Johnson: Bottom line, ask questions.

Ken Franzen: Right.

Justin Johnson: Alright. The next big thing is going to be cost. How many times do we get through our presentation and everything looks great...however, man, that is really a lot more money than I thought it was going to be?

Ken Franzen: Sure. That happens right?

Justin Johnson: Yep! You know, it's just something that looking at the amount of cost of the project versus the actual value that you're going to be getting, right?

Ken Franzen: Oh sure, you got the argument the cost versus value. And the old cliché 'you get what you pay for' does apply here. But I think it's important to understand what you're paying for. If you're going to evaluate multiple vendors, understand what they're going to bring to the table from the things we already discussed and some of the things we will still touch on. But, thoroughly understanding and asking the right questions to really gauge what it is you are being charged for. Because, a lot of times the actual cost at the end of the day doesn't always include everything it should. Does it include the hosting?

Justin Johnson: What do you mean, there's add-ons?

Ken Franzen: [laughs] Well, exactly

Justin Johnson: C'mon...there's not add-ons to projects.

Ken Franzen: Sure. Sure. C' mon, imagine that, right? So, think about this: what's one of the biggest cost pieces of a project we do? It's content creation, right?

Justin Johnson: Yes, content creation. Huge. Yes! Big costs.

Ken Franzen: Include content creation in all of our projects

Justin Johnson: To an extent



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Ken Franzen: To an extent, but, the main reason is business owners are busy and they need help with creating that copy.

Justin Johnson: Yep.

Ken Franzen: So, we have had some instances...another bad experience example: 'yeah, they built me a website but I had to write all the words for the pages and I had to add them at the end. They basically built the shell.' And I ask them, 'Did you understand that that was going to be the case going into it or not?' And I went to one of them and they said 'Well, the price was cheap.' And I said, 'Yes.'

Justin Johnson: [laughs] Yeah, but if you look back a couple of years ago, copy creation wasn't really included in the main price.

Ken Franzen: You're right. You're absolutely right. And so understanding everything that's involved in the project and understanding all the components that add up to that price will help you better understand that when the price is revealed and you get that response of 'Whoa, that's a lot cheaper than I thought it would be.' Or, 'Wow, that's more than I anticipated. You're twice as much as the last person I talked to.'

Justin Johnson: What about ongoing cost Ken?

Ken Franzen: Yeah, I mean, are you thinking about maintenance or marketing or along those lines?

Justin Johnson: Yeah.

Ken Franzen: That's the other thing that you want to touch on, because we're really focusing on the project cost and the build. Not to, uh, forget to really ask questions about hosting. The website has to live somewhere so it can be accessed through a browser by the general public.

Ask about hosting. Who's going to be hosting? Your web developer may insist that they host the site and you may want to consider doing so. Or you might choose to go to a hosting provider like Bluehost, or GoDaddy, Rackspace, or there are thousands out there to choose from that are very low cost. Understand what the costs are involved with that ongoing marketing. If there is going to be search engine optimization or content creation

Justin Johnson: That's an extra cost?

Ken Franzen: [laughs] Surprisingly, yes. Just having a website...

Justin Johnson: Hey, there's a lot of companies that think that's not an extra cost, right?

Ken Franzen: Yeah, well that's a common question we get asked, right? Is search engine optimization included in the cost of the project, right? And SEO, if you don't know this, SEO is not a one time thing. It's an ongoing process.

Justin Johnson: I thought that all I had to do was update my page titles and my .



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Ken Franzen: [laughs]

Justin Johnson: ...meta text, that's not true anymore?

Ken Franzen: Back in the day. For those circa 1999 websites that

Justin Johnson: [laughs]

Ken Franzen: ...still perform really well. [Laughs]

Justin Johnson: [Laughs] Hey, they still show up in the servers too.

Ken Franzen: Right. Right. Understand all that's involved. If you aren't sure, ask.

Justin Johnson: Right. Speaking of the old outdated methodology of SEO, that kind of rolls into how important content is nowadays, don't you think?

Ken Franzen: Ah Yeah. Content is probably the most important component of the site.

Justin Johnson: Have you ever heard that?

Ken Franzen: Say that again?

Justin Johnson: Content is king.

Ken Franzen: Ahh. [Agrees] Content is king. That is another common saying in the world. Content is king it does rule. It used to be the one of those 'Yeah, right, I have good content.' Now it's ever important. So we talk about SEO and how much content plays into the importance of showing up well in the search engine. Really, content is even more important to your site visitors.

Justin Johnson: [Agrees] It's not just the copy on your website is it? There could be video and audio. Stuff along those lines that it plays a big role in as well.

Ken Franzen: Yeah. No, the content doesn't just hold the form of text. There's video, audio, animation, photos, graphics and illustrations. All that pulls together your message.

Justin Johnson: Sure.

Ken Franzen: And your message needs to be consistent. The importance of that message needs to be driven and focused around who your target market is...your buyer persona that you want to speak to...the site visitors. Because where so many websites are lost is they gain traffic. They work so hard to build traffic...to generate traffic to get to the website and traffic disappears.

Justin Johnson: How come I don't have any leads, Ken?

Ken Franzen: Exactly.



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Justin Johnson: How come I don't have any leads?

Ken Franzen: And that's because the contents poor. And they don't have

Justin Johnson: Right.

Ken Franzen: ...strong call to action and conversion opportunities. Things along those lines. So the content plays a much more important role than it ever did before. I think we get so wrapped up in the design of the site, what the pixels are going to look like on the mock-up.

Justin Johnson: Make it look special and have pop.

Ken Franzen: Make it pop

Justin Johnson: Can you make it pop and get me leads at the same time? Is that possible?

Ken Franzen: It is possible, right?

Justin Johnson: [Laughs] Right. So who's responsible for that content? Is that something we're going to do? Is that something the clients going to have to provide?

Ken Franzen: That's the question to ask and to know and understand. Who is going to create that content?

Justin Johnson: [Agrees]

Ken Franzen: If you want the web designer to create that content get some examples of what that content looks like. Ask what their experience is. Who's going to write that content? At Neon Goldfish we do subcontract out a lot of that content. We create a lot of content.

Justin Johnson: So much of it.

Ken Franzen: We have writers we've vetted. We do auditions for each client. We want to make sure that they understand who the client is...the buyer persona that we're targeting...the topics we're writing about. Ask the questions of who is writing the content. And then, if they are, how that process is going to go. What is going to be involved? If it's going to be the copy creation for the website itself, or if it's going to be ongoing blog posts? Or is it going to be ghostwriters?

However you go about that, ask those questions. Just understand who and how that content is going to be created. Because, it is important. If content is not a focal point of the person you're working with, make it a focal point.

Justin Johnson: You should probably look in a different direction.

Ken Franzen: Yeah, exactly. If they're not focused on the content and they're really focused on .we all want great designs. We all want beautiful websites. But, the message is what is going to make your website do



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what it's supposed to do, which is generate leads and educate. All those fun things. Make your brand better. The information that's on there is going to be the difference maker.

Justin Johnson: Right. We've had some other issues with content in the past with some companies that we should probably address too. It's just the fact that you can't just go and grab stuff from the internet anymore. There's copyright issues and make sure the company is using a reliable source to get your information that you'll be putting on your website. Because, guess what? You're responsible for that at the end of the day, not them. If maybe they grab an image and put it on your website and they didn't pay for it

Ken Franzen: [Agrees]

Justin Johnson: It happens. And it happened to us so...just something to be

Ken Franzen: Yeah, be sure the content you create is unique. It's not just copied and pasted from another website. The biggest mistake that Justin is referencing

Justin Johnson: Videos...photos

Ken Franzen: Yeah, photos are a big one right now. The rights to use a photo...there's plenty of royalty free stock photo sites. If you don't have your own photography, you can go get stock photos. They're fairly cheap and they may or may not be cheaper than the cost of doing a photo shoot.

Don't go to Google and right-click and save image as and put it on your website. Because here's what's out there...there's companies that have software that crawls the web and it works a lot like the fingerprint software the police use where they recognize pixel combination and they look and see. 'Hey, we've matched up a photo we own to this website over here and let's cross reference it across our database. Oh look, they don't have record of owning or a license to use that photo. Let's send them a nasty letter. I don't know if it's a scam or if it's legit, but they send a demand letter. Something crazy like \$1600 per use of image and [Laughs]...

Justin Johnson: It would have cost you four dollars.

Ken Franzen: That would have cost you four dollars to get the rights

Justin Johnson: Four dollars instead. You've got \$1596 going out to Getty images.

Ken Franzen: Exactly. And then you're like, 'ok cool, do I hire an attorney that's going to cost me three grand to fight this?' It's just a crazy, crazy situation.

Justin Johnson: Just suck it up and pay it.

Ken Franzen: Long story short, make sure your copy is strong, unique and is created for you. The photos, the images, everything used on your site...that's going to make or break the total effectiveness of your site. Whatever the goals might be.



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Justin Johnson: 100% agree with you. So good copy often leads to people finding your website and marketing.

Ken Franzen: Yep.

Justin Johnson: How come I've got 3,000 people coming to my website every month and I get two form submissions.

Ken Franzen: [Laughs]

Justin Johnson: Is that even possible?

Ken Franzen: Yeah, it is. It's very possible

Justin Johnson: Does it happen a lot?

Ken Franzen: Sure. Think about building a store on the busiest intersection of town and when you open the store and the shelves are empty and it looks dusty and dirty in there.

Justin Johnson: Yeah.

Ken Franzen: It's all appearance and conversion. Marketing integration is super important. If you have a marketing strategy it's important to talk about that with the person you hire.

Justin Johnson: Would it be good to have that discussion while you're developing your website or after?

Ken Franzen: Before is the obvious choice there. Understanding what is going to be taking place after the site launches...what type of marketing...because consumers these days they're driven to doing their own research. Let's say you have a tv commercial out there, right? A tv commercial lasts 15 seconds, 30 seconds, or 60 seconds depending on the spot that you buy. That shelf life is gone. You'd be silly not to drive that traffic to your website and try to convert or tell your story more. Setting up your website with that in mind is important to all your other marketing efforts.

Justin Johnson: Right. So would you generally say that your marketing is going to be included in the initial design and website cost or is it an add-on?

Ken Franzen: No, that's definitely an add-on. Ongoing marketing has ongoing cost, ongoing labors. So, that's not anything that's going to be included in the initial cost of the build. But some of the things you can consider being a part of that initial build cost is having landing pages and a template. Let's say you're working in Wordpress and the website designer says, 'Hey, I'm working in Wordpress. What type of marketing do you like to do?' Your response is 'I have tv and radio campaigns. I like to do some paid search advertising.' They should set you up with a landing page.

Justin Johnson: So I should send people to a landing page?



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Ken Franzen: And they should set you up with a landing page that you can edit and create and start brand new. You're going to get better conversions from that new landing page then you would be driving that directly to your home page.

Justin Johnson: I can't even begin to tell you how many times that I go and click on an adwords campaign and it goes directly over to the index page.

Ken Franzen: Yeah and it's the front door and I was looking for something specific.

Justin Johnson: Where do I go next?

Ken Franzen: You end up getting lost because you got distracted by something else on the way. Yeah, you definitely want to drive all your marketing efforts through a landing page. The beginning of the project is the time to talk to the designer about these marketing efforts and how they can design and set the site up that you can best leverage further use and integrate your marketing. The additional marketing integration we talk about marketing automation software. Things that can capture and market leads from your website because not everyone that comes to your website is going to ready to buy, to pick up the phone and call, to fill out that contact us form.

Justin Johnson: [Agrees]

Ken Franzen: So having these nurture opportunities...we're a hubspot partner agency. We like and prefer to use the Hubspot platform. We think it's a great marketing tool and software tool that can help capture and nurture leads and better qualify customers or leads to become your customers. But talk about these different options. Talk about and understand how that can be set up and integrated into your site build.

Justin Johnson: Very very important. Well, I think we have covered quite a bit today and essentially what we're hoping to do is make sure you understand the details of your project and what to expect. Hopefully some of the items that we outlined today will be helpful while you are considering who to choose for your next website design. Hey Ken, do we have notes?

Ken Franzen: Yes.

Justin Johnson: For today's podcast? Where are those going to be located?

Ken Franzen: You can get the show notes by going to Neongoldfish.com/podcast and we'll have an outline of everything we have talked about along with the downloadable ebook that covers these same topics. At the very end of the ebook is actually a worksheet. The worksheet is meant to be used during your vetting process...your interview process. It just covers the points, makes sure you don't miss anything. Take some notes on the worksheet. At the end you can compare and contrast the different folks that you talk to and hopefully helps you make a good sound decision. The things we talked about today will give you the knowledge to understand what you need to look for.

Justin Johnson: Awesome! That sounds great. Alright, y'all have a great day. Until next time, this is Justin and Ken with NeonNoise.

[Music]



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Ken Franzen: Take care!

[Music ends]



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