



## **Request for Proposal Development Guide**

Aristotle has prepared the information included in this Request for Proposal (RFP) Development Guide to help your organization put together an organized RFP for your website design, online/offline integrated marketing, search engine optimization, or application development project.

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## Questions You Should Ask

The questions and recommendations below are designed to elicit important details about the consulting, design, programming, technological and marketing expertise of development firms. The recommended questions in this guide will help you request the information you need in order to make an informed decision about whether a company is qualified to work with your organization and whether their development philosophy and process will fit well with yours.

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### WEBSITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

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#### Consulting & Project Development

1. How much experience does the firm have with projects of a similar scope? How much experience does the website design firm have with projects in related industries?
2. Can the firm provide consulting and recommendations for the website development project?
3. Can the firm provide references and testimonials from satisfied clients?
4. Can the firm provide a list of the number and types of awards the firm has been awarded for various website projects?

#### Technology & Programming

5. What experience does the development firm have integrating other website technologies, third party software tools and applications into web development projects?
6. What specific programming features, online tools and applications has the firm developed for other clients? Request that the firm please provide details about the features developed and how these were implemented with other clients.
7. Does the firm custom program the project to the client's needs?
8. Will the firm be using "off-the-shelf" software packages? Will these packages require upgrades and licensing fees for programming?
9. Does the firm sub-contract a substantial portion of the design programming or implementation of their website development projects? The awarded firm should not sub-contract substantial portions of the project.
10. Does the firm have experience in developing websites for a mobile/PDA audience? Request that the firm provide examples.
11. To what extent will the firm test the website for compatibility with different browsers and operating systems? Will the site be tested for usability at various connection speeds?
12. Does the firm have experience consulting and coordinating with its clients' IT teams?

## **Development Process**

13. Does the firm have a documented development process? Request that the firm provide an outline of the development process for the project, including significant milestones or project deadlines. This outline should also include details about how related communications will be handled.
14. Does the development firm offer an experienced development staff? Request that the firm provide details about the individuals who will work on the web development project, including information about awards received, pertinent qualifications and experience.
15. Does the firm provide an online portal for the review and approval of copy, designs, photography, video, etc?

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## **INTEGRATED MARKETING**

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### **Integrated Marketing, Branding & Tracking**

16. Can the development company demonstrate an understanding of the unique branding opportunity offered on the Internet and to interactive audiences?
17. Can the firm demonstrate an understanding of the impact of audience patterns, social technologies, and online behavior on both offline and online campaigns?
18. Is the firm performing hands-on research in the Internet industry and tracking trends for user interface and customer acquisition? Request that the firm provide details about past research conducted by the firm.
19. Can the firm provide advanced reporting and analytics beyond basic visitor tracking? If so, what type of reporting is available?
20. Does the firm provide in-house consultants that continually evaluate the performance and return on investment (ROI) of the site and provide recommendations for changes?

### **Search Engine Marketing, Email Marketing & Optimization**

21. Does the firm have a dedicated search marketing team in-house? How many are on that team?
22. Request that the firm describe the team's experience in regard to SEO, online advertising, paid keyword placement and public relations initiatives.
23. Request that the firm provide case studies of the firm's SEO successes.
24. Does the firm develop email campaigns? Request that the firm please define the types of campaigns and the successes.
25. What types of SPAM filtering services does the firm offer if any? How does the firm assist with email delivery rates?

## Online/Offline Integrated Marketing

26. Does the firm have skilled staff in-house for search engine optimization and both online and offline media planning and buying? Request that the firm provide basic media buying commission structure.
27. Can the firm provide an integrated approach to traditional advertising?
28. Does the firm have experience in planning, creating and executing integrated online/offline marketing & advertising campaigns that include the coordinated integration of the following channels/mediums:
- Broadcast TV and radio
  - Cable TV
  - Online video advertising & podcasts
  - Print (newspaper & magazine - space advertising and inserts)
  - Interactive CD/DVD & kiosk
  - Direct mail
  - Website
  - Mobile
  - Social networking & blogs
  - Game development
  - Public relations
  - Online optimized press releases
  - e-mail campaigns
  - e-news distribution
  - Search
  - Pay-per-click
  - RSS
  - Landing pages (unique, track-able URLs)
29. Will the firm plan and place offline media on a fee-basis instead of commission?
30. Can the firm provide photo/video/audio production or panoramic photography services?

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## CREATIVE SERVICES & INTERACTIVE MEDIA

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31. Does the firm have qualified in-house production capabilities including:

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Still photography | Video production     |
| Audio production  | Broadcast production |

If the firm does not have qualified in-house production capabilities, will these services be provided at net cost to us (no mark-up of vendor costs)?

32. Does the firm offer content development assistance? How much experience has the firm had in content development for client websites, landing pages, microsites and e-newsletters? Does the firm have experienced in-house writers on staff?
33. Does the firm have the technological capability and experience to provide information in Internet Kiosks?

## HOSTING & ISP SERVICES

34. What are the processes in place for resolving technical website performance issues or getting the website back online if the site goes down?
35. Is FTP access granted for free with hosting services?
36. Does the firm host onsite or rely on a third party?
37. If the firm provides hosting services, does the firm offer dedicated and shared hosting?
38. Uptime? Disaster Recovery
39. Can the development firm provide email services at the client's domain?

## Information You Should Provide

The details you provide in your RFP will be used by the development firm to understand your company, your industry, your project goals and your project scope of work. Providing this information to development firms will help you evaluate how the responding firms' qualifications and experience match with your organization's needs.

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### COMPANY BACKGROUND & INDUSTRY INFORMATION

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1. Provide background about your company, including how your company's major competitors and your company measure success.
2. Provide information about your industry and any trends you know of that will affect the website such as whether other competitors are moving more business on to the Internet

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### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

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3. Provide information about your current presence online, including details about how successful this has been and how much of this material will be included in the new website project.
4. Provide details on how you anticipate the website (project) will help serve your company. Include specific goals you have for the site. (i.e. increased number of phone calls or leads generated, increase in traffic, products sold or e-newsletter subscriber obtained.)
5. Provide target audience information for the project, such as specific technology levels, age ranges, income level, and geographic location focus. Given your target audience, do you have screen resolution requirements for the design?
6. Are there primary audiences for different sections of the website? If so, who are they?
7. Provide a detailed scope of work that you want the firms to bid on including
  - A list of features you want to incorporate in the site
  - Static pages and the sections that will require content management tools
  - Photography, video or other graphic requirements
  - Reporting and online marketing needs
8. Who will be updating the website and how often? Does the person making update have basic HTML or programming skill? (This will help determine where content management tools are needed.)
9. Provide any accessibility requirements your company requires, such as compliance with some of the ADA's recommendations or WC3 standards.
10. How much interaction will the project require with other third party software programs or technologies?
11. Who will host the site? Do you need the bidding firms to provide hosting services?

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## VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS

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12. Provide a list of minimum requirements you expect from the website development firm such as number of years of experience, programming language requirements. Inform vendors if hosting and updating services should be included in the project estimate.
13. Technology requirements: Do you have a requirement for Windows based or Linux/Unix based development? Do you have preferences or requirements on what languages or platforms the firms use to develop the site? (I.e. PHP, .asp, Microsoft .NET etc.)

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## RFP RESPONSE FORMAT & EVALUATION

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14. Provide details about the required response format, including the order and type of information you would like the firm to provide.
15. Include details about the RFP evaluation process, such as how much weight will be given to different requirements, such as experience, RFP response format and pricing.