

# How to Work with Your Website Designer

By Susan Dunn

How to Work with Your Website Designer

Susan Dunn  
sdunn@susandunn.cc

Web Strategies, Internet Marketing <http://www.susandunn.cc>

## CLIENT CALLS TODAY

My client, Marg, is upset with her webdesigner. She says, “Doesn’t he understand it’s my website? I don’t want this to be a constant battle.”

Nancy designs websites. She tells me, “I did a beautiful site for the client and then they c\*\*\*\*\* it up. I can’t even use it for my portfolio. She changed everything and it’s really hideous. I think she’s colorblind.”

Sandy is working with a webdesigner, too. She tells me, “I outlined what I wanted, but I left [the web designer] plenty of leeway. I know they’re creative and want to express themselves. I’ll tell her ‘from there, take it.’”

## THE BATTLE OF THE EXPERTS

Since I’m an Internet marketing coach, I’m often in a triad – the client, the web designer, and me! It becomes a battle-of-the-experts, a nightmare for all concerned. Basically when I accept an Internet marketing client, one of my stipulations is that they listen to what I tell them.

You’d think someone paying you would do that, wouldn’t you? Instead, they listen to their brother-in-law or the guy at the post office, or they start reading things on the Internet. One client, Julio, even started hiring other people – a PR consultant, a logo designer, an advertising agency. It became an impossible situation with input from all directions. Each of us contradicted the other at one point. Julio then made the decisions, trusting no one. Why, then, I asked him, did you hire people? (And then I fired him.)

## THE IDEAL CLIENT DOESN’T CONFUSE HIM/HERSELF

Other clients pay me and listen to what I say. It’s a novel concept, but it works well. When I started working with Gordon, I said, “Yes, I will tell you what computer to buy, but not if you plan to then go ask everyone you know for their advice. That would waste your time and mine.” Gordon said, “I wouldn’t do that. Then I’d get confused.”

Gordon is “the ideal client.” He paid me for my marketing consulting, listened, took action, and his practice is thriving as a result. He saved us both a lot of time, which, since I bill by the hour, saved him a lot of money.

So how should you proceed if you are working with a web designer? There are a few “musts”.

- Many of them work in a world of T1s, LANS, and DSL. This is a very different world from the rest of us mere mortals. WE live in another world – only 7% of “us” have broadband and this percentage doesn’t appear to be growing. What does this mean? Most people visiting your website surf at 56K or slower. 60% still surf at 28.8k. If you want people to visit your website and stay there, make sure the front page loads fast enough -- 8-10 seconds at 28.8k.

- Web designers, like all creative people, get bored. Okay? They like to try all the new “bells and whistles.” This may or may not work in your situation. It’s like the choir director at church. Most of us would like to sing “A Mighty Fortress” every Sunday, some hymn we know and love. It’s been around a long time because we love it! It works. The choir director, on the other hand, wants to be on the leading edge, try the new things. Know what you want and stick to it.

- Do your homework before you get there. Find 3-5 websites you like. The style, colors, font, layout, navigation. Show these to your web designer rather than trying to describe.

- Be clear about what you want. “Something professional-looking” is open to interpretation. “A site like this one: [www.professional\\_website.com](http://www.professional_website.com)” works a lot better.

- Trust your intuition. If they show you something you don’t like, go with your feelings.

- Find one with expertise in websites in your field. It will save you having to explain a lot of things.

- Find someone you trust and let them do their work.

## HOW DO YOU FIND THIS PERSON?

1. Get a referral from someone whose opinion you trust.
2. Find a site you like and find out who did it.

I recommend two web designers to my clients. I know them and I know their work. They are excellent in every aspect:

- They can get out of their own head and put the client on the webpage.
- They have the necessary technical expertise.
- They are professional and responsible. They meet deadlines.
- They set a price and stick to it.
- They are courteous to my clients.

All those points are important, but #1 is MORE important. (In fact you should expect the others.) It’s most important they have the knack of translating “you” onto the Internet.

## THE RELATIONSHIP

I’ve been in marketing for many years. It happens to be a field everyone thinks they know something about – and indeed we do. We’re all consumers, and we have marketing ‘working on us’ all the time, so we have our opinions. It isn’t like going to the dentist, for instance. I really haven’t much knowledge about root canals, and I pretty much leave it up to the dentist.

It’s takes maturity and emotional intelligence to make it a successful relationship that produces the kind of product you want. That means you need two mature people with EQ skills. Some web designers are all IQ and tech skills, with little ability to relate. Avoid those. Some web designers

are the creative genius type, like Frank Lloyd Wright, who wanted to do what he wanted to do, the hell with the client. Avoid those.

Something in between is nice. It doesn't have to be a fight. If it's feeling like a fight, you need a new web designer. Start with a web designer who comes well recommended. Then enter a relationship of mutual respect. He or she knows how to design a website. You know you and what you want. Together you can make music!

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)