12 Questions to Ask Any Web Agency

A weekend read for anyone getting quotes for a new website in 2027, with a worksheet to compare three agencies side by side.

> **A note on fairness.** JOGO is a web agency, so this is us writing down what we'd want to be asked. The questions are not trick questions. A good agency will answer all twelve quickly and in plain language, and will probably be relieved you asked. If an answer is vague, ask it again. If it's still vague, that's your answer.

Typical price bands in Australia for a small business WordPress site, so you can read quotes in context: **$1,500 to $3,000** for a template with your logo and text dropped in (often offshore or a solo freelancer); **$4,000 to $8,000 + GST** for a custom-designed 5 to 10 page site with copy help, speed and SEO basics done properly (ours are typically $4,400 + GST); **$10,000 to $25,000+** for ecommerce, booking systems, integrations or a larger brand project. A $900 quote and a $9,000 quote are not for the same thing, and these questions find the difference.

1 Who owns the domain name, the hosting account and the website?

Why it matters. The single most common mess we untangle. The agency registers the domain in its own name, or builds on a platform it controls, and when the relationship ends you discover you don't own your own address. Some "website from $49 a month" deals work exactly like this.

> GOOD ANSWER "You do, from day one. The domain is registered in your name with your ABN, in an account you hold the login for. The site and its files are yours when the final invoice is paid. We'll give you admin access and a full backup on request."

2 What exactly is included in the price, and what isn't?

Why it matters. Quotes vary by thousands because they include different things. Copywriting, photography, logo, stock images, premium plugins, forms, a booking system, Google Analytics setup, the SSL certificate, training: each is either in or out.

> GOOD ANSWER A written list of pages and features, and a written list of exclusions. "Up to 8 pages, mobile responsive, contact form, Google Maps, GA4 and Search Console set up, one hour of training. Not included: copywriting (see question 3), photography, logo, premium plugin licences over $100 a year."

3 Who writes the words?

Why it matters. This is where most projects stall. The design is done in three weeks and then sits for three months because nobody wrote the service pages. If the answer is "you send us the content", ask yourself honestly whether you'll do it.

> GOOD ANSWER "We interview you for an hour and write the first draft of every page, then you correct it." Or, plainly: "You write it, and here is a template and a deadline for each page; the project pauses if the content is late." Either is fine. "We'll sort it out as we go" is not.

4 Where is it hosted, what does hosting cost, and what happens if we leave?

Why it matters. Hosting is a yearly cost for the life of the site and it decides your speed (Door 10). Some agencies make their margin on hosting and make leaving painful. You want to know the server location, the price, and the exit process before you sign.

> **GOOD ANSWER** "Australian or Singapore servers, $X a year or $Y a month, invoiced annually, and here's what's in it: backups, updates, SSL, support. If you leave, we hand over a full export and help the new host migrate it. No exit fee." For reference, ours is $275 + GST a year (Singapore) or $100 + GST a month (Australian high-speed).

5 How long will it take, and what do you need from us to hit that?

Why it matters. Six to eight weeks is normal for a small business site when content arrives on time. Projects that take six months almost always stalled on the client side waiting for words, photos or sign-off, so the second half of the question matters as much as the first.

> **GOOD ANSWER** A timeline with dates and named dependencies: "Design concepts in week 2, you approve by week 3, content due from you by week 4, build weeks 4 to 6, testing week 7, live week 8. If content is late, launch moves by the same number of days."

6 How many rounds of revisions are included, and what counts as a round?

Why it matters. Unlimited revisions sounds generous and means the project never ends. No stated limit means a surprise invoice when you ask for a fourth change to the homepage.

> **GOOD ANSWER** "Two rounds on the design concept, two on the built site. A round is one consolidated list of changes from you. Changes after that are billed at $X an hour, and we'll tell you before we start." Clear numbers, agreed in advance.

7 What are your targets for mobile and page speed, and how will you prove you hit them?

Why it matters. Most of your visitors are on a phone. A site that looks good in the agency's presentation on a 27-inch monitor can be slow and cramped on a phone, and you only find out after launch.

> **GOOD ANSWER** "Designed mobile-first. Before launch we'll show you a PageSpeed Insights report for the home page and your main service page, with a mobile score above 70, LCP under 2.5 seconds and all images compressed." If they don't know what PageSpeed Insights is, keep looking.

8 Which SEO basics are included in the build?

Why it matters. "SEO" ranges from five free things that take an hour to a $2,000-a-month retainer. You're asking about the five free things, which any competent build should include without being asked.

> **GOOD ANSWER** "Title tags and meta descriptions on every page, one H1 per page, clean URLs, image alt text, an XML sitemap submitted to Search Console, Google Analytics 4 installed, redirects from every old page URL to the new one, and LocalBusiness schema." Redirects are the one agencies forget, and forgetting them loses the rankings you already have.

9 What happens after launch? Who updates the software, and what does support cost?

Why it matters. WordPress, its theme and its plugins all release updates, some of them security fixes. Nobody applying them is how small business sites get hacked. You want to know whether that's included, optional, or your problem.

> **GOOD ANSWER** "We include 30 days of post-launch fixes. After that, optional monthly support at $X covers updates, backups, security monitoring and up to N hours of small changes, or you can manage it yourself and we'll show you how." Ours is $250 to $275 + GST a month with hosting included; an answer in that range with a clear list is what you're looking for.

10 Who will I actually talk to during the project and after it?

Why it matters. The person who sold you the project is often not the person who builds it. That's fine if you know, and frustrating if you find out when your emails start going unanswered. For small agencies, ask what happens when that person is on leave.

> **GOOD ANSWER** A name, a role and a response time: "Ming is your contact throughout. Emails answered within one business day; urgent site-down issues same day on the mobile." And a plain answer about cover.

11 Show me three sites you built two years ago that still look good and still work.

Why it matters. Anyone can show you last month's launch. A site from 2024 or 2025 that still loads fast, still looks current and is still maintained tells you the agency builds things that last and keeps its clients. Then open each one on your phone, and run it through PageSpeed Insights while they watch.

> **GOOD ANSWER** Three live URLs, without hesitation, and ideally the owner's name so you can ring them. Bonus points if the agency says "and here's one that didn't go well, and what we changed because of it."

12 What's your view on page builders versus custom code, and why?

Why it matters. There's no single right answer, but there is a wrong one: not having a view. Page builders (Elementor, Divi, Bricks, Gutenberg) let you edit the site yourself and keep costs down; custom-coded themes are faster and cleaner but you depend on the developer for every change. You want an agency that has chosen deliberately for your situation.

> **GOOD ANSWER** "For a business your size we use [builder] because you'll want to edit pages yourself and it keeps the build around $4,000 to $5,000. We keep it fast by [specific things]. If you needed [a complex integration], we'd recommend custom and here's what that costs." Specific tools, specific reasons, specific trade-offs.

> **THREE THINGS NOT TO DO**
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> Don't choose on price alone (question 2 explains why the numbers aren't comparable). Don't skip the two-year-old sites (question 11). And don't sign anything that doesn't answer question 1 in writing.

Comparison worksheet

Score each answer 1 (vague or worrying) to 3 (clear, specific, in writing). The highest total isn't automatically the winner, but a 1 on question 1, 2 or 9 should rule an agency out.

#	Question	Agency A	Agency B	Agency C
1	Who owns the domain, hosting and site?			
2	What's included and excluded, in writing?			
3	Who writes the copy?			
4	Hosting: where, cost, exit process?			
5	Timeline with dates and dependencies?			
6	Revision rounds, defined?			
7	Mobile and speed targets, proven?			
8	SEO basics included (incl. redirects)?			
9	After launch: updates, support, cost?			
10	Who do I talk to, response time?			
11	Three two-year-old sites shown?			
12	Builder vs custom: a clear view?			
	Quoted price + GST, and ongoing yearly cost (hosting + support)			
	Score out of 36			

GUT FEEL: WHO DID I ENJOY TALKING TO? DECISION AND DATE:

Ask us the twelve

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