



Your Web Coach, Christine Chubenko:

Stay diligent with your Web developer

**by Christine Chubenko | for Oakland Business Review
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Previously, I discussed the importance of trusting your Web developer. Specifically, I talked about John of ABC Co. who spent \$6K to get his Web site developed and published, but did not receive the goods.

My intent was to narrate something that happens frequently to business owners and might even sound familiar to you. I have since uncovered more details of ABC Co.'s experience, and I'd like to share some tips that may help prevent a bad situation from turning worse.

I was shocked to find out that ABC Co. made the agreement with XYZ Web Pros (not their real name) approximately THREE years ago. I'm going to guess that this tremendous delay occurred because both parties assumed the other was doing "something."

Tip No. 1: Assume nothing. As the business owner, it is your responsibility to see that your Web developer stays close to the given timeline by staying in communication and giving your developer the materials they need to do their job. Many businesses fall short when the design layout is done and the next step is to supply the content for the Web site.

Your developer is probably juggling a number of development projects at a time, so the longer it takes you to deliver the materials, the more likely it is that your project gets shoved to the back of the line. However, if you have done your part and your developer is still not progressing, then you need to take action.

Tip No. 2: Don't pay for your Web site in full, up front. If your Web developer requires 2/3 or more at the beginning (not including domain registration and Web hosting fees), that should set off a warning. Find out exactly what will be done in every stage, the cost and get it in writing.

XYZ Web Pros had set up e-mail accounts, but they never worked. Given that ABC Co. was going to launch their new product, they really needed their e-mail. XYZ Web Pros said it wasn't their problem (in fact, it was) so they told ABC Co. to call the "computer experts." They came out, realized they couldn't help ABC Co. and then charged them.

Tip No. 3: When calling for outside help, state the problem clearly and ask if they've handled similar situations. Understand their service policies in the event they can't help you.

Tip No. 4: Ask someone you know for assistance in finding a solution. In John's case, he has a relative who has been a software/Web application developer for years. For some reason, he overlooked the fact that Steve is an expert in his field. When Steve learned of the situation, he was able to pull together a working site for ABC Co. in approximately four hours. Yup, four hours.

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