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A FREE GUIDE FROM DORI STUDIO

Before you pay for a new website

Six questions to settle first, so the new website explains your business and doesn't become one more job on your list.

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The price is the easy part to compare.

Your business has moved on and the website hasn't kept up. You know it needs replacing. Then the proposals arrive, and the only line that is easy to compare is the total.

The differences that matter sit elsewhere: who writes the words, who looks after the site once it's live, how you'll know whether it works and what you keep if you leave. They are easy to miss in a quote. They also decide whether the new website helps you win clients or turns into one more thing to manage.

This guide covers six questions to settle before you pay anyone, us included. Each has two parts: what to decide yourself, and what to ask whoever builds the site. At the end you'll find a worksheet and a table for putting proposals side by side.

> You shouldn't need to become a website specialist to choose the right website.

1 What a new customer must understand first

2 What your customers ask before they buy

3 Who writes the words

4 What happens after launch

5 How you'll know the website works

6 What's yours if you part ways

Worksheet · Comparison table · How we answer these questions

1

What must a new customer understand first?

Someone who has never heard of you gives your homepage a few seconds. In that time they need three answers: what you do, who it's for and what to do next.

If they have to guess, they may not ask. They can go back to the search results and choose someone whose website was clearer.

Settle these three answers before any design work begins. They're harder to write than they look, because you know your business too well and everything seems important. Choose what a stranger needs first. The rest belongs further down the page or deeper in the site.

SETTLE IT YOURSELF

- Write one sentence each: what you do, who you do it for and what a new customer should do next.
- Show your current homepage to someone outside the business for five seconds. Ask them to tell you those three things, and note where they hesitate.

ASK THE PROVIDER

- How will you find out what my customers need to understand first?
- Who decides what goes at the top of the homepage?
- How do I check it before launch?

2

What do your customers ask before they buy?

The questions customers ask you on the phone make the best brief a website can have. They show what people are unsure about, who they compare you with and what nearly stops them from buying.

A website that answers those questions does part of the first conversation for you. Customers arrive with the basics settled, and you send a link instead of explaining the same thing again.

Most of this knowledge already exists: in old offers, emails, presentations, a previous website and your own head. Gathering it is the first real piece of work, whoever does it.

SETTLE IT YOURSELF

- List the questions customers ask most often before they buy.
- Collect what you already have: the current website, offers, presentations, company profiles, photos and reviews you have permission to use.

ASK THE PROVIDER

- What will you need from me, and how much of my time will it take?
- Do I have to write a brief, or will you ask the questions?
- Will I see in writing what you understood about my business before you write the pages?

3

Who writes the words?

Design is easy to picture in a proposal. The words are what a customer actually reads.

If writing the text is your job, the project can stall at the point where the design is ready and the pages are waiting for copy. Writing about your own business is hard for the same reason as question 1: you know too much of it.

Whoever writes, every claim on the site should be one you can stand behind. Numbers need a source, quotes need permission and promises need to be ones you can keep.

SETTLE IT YOURSELF

- Decide whether you'll write the text or want it written for you.
- Mark what you'd rather not say in public: prices, client names, results.

ASK THE PROVIDER

- Who writes the text of each page, and is it part of the price?
- Will I review every page before launch?
- How do you check that what the website says about my business is true?

4

What happens after launch?

Launch day feels like the finish line. For your business it's an ordinary Tuesday: prices change, services change, new questions come in and photos go out of date.

Someone has to keep the website in step. If that someone is you, working in an editing panel, the website becomes one more job on your list. That can suit a business with time to spare for it. If it's the provider, you need to know how to ask for a change, what it costs and how long it takes.

The technical side needs an owner too: hosting, the domain, the security certificate and someone who notices when something breaks.

SETTLE IT YOURSELF

- Decide whether you want to edit the site yourself or have changes made for you.
- Choose who in your business asks for changes and approves them.

ASK THE PROVIDER

- After launch, how do I request a change, and how long does it take?
- Which changes are included, and what counts as a new project?
- Who looks after hosting, the domain and the certificate, and who fixes the site if it breaks?
- What does the year after launch cost, and on what terms does it renew?

5

How will you know the website works?

A website is there to help you win clients. Without numbers you can't tell whether it does, or what to change.

Two free Google tools cover the basics. Google Analytics shows how people use the site. Google Search Console shows how the site appears in Google Search: which searches show it, how often, and how often people click through. The numbers help only when someone reads them with you and turns them into decisions.

Be careful with promises of rankings, traffic or a number of enquiries. Google's own advice on hiring an SEO says that no one can guarantee a first-place ranking in its results.[1] A provider controls the website and its care. Search results and your customers' decisions are not theirs to promise.

SETTLE IT YOURSELF

- Decide what a good result means for you: calls, emails, quote requests or bookings.

ASK THE PROVIDER

- Will you set up Google Analytics and Search Console, and will I have access to both?
- Who explains the numbers to me, and how often?
- What exactly do you promise, and what don't you?

1. Google Search Central, "Do you need an SEO?", developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/do-i-need-seo

6

What’s yours if you part ways?

Nobody starts a project planning to leave. Circumstances change anyway, and the time to agree how leaving would work is before you sign.

Four things matter: the domain, the website’s files and source code, the analytics and search accounts, and the text and photos made for the site. Some websites can move to another provider. Others are tied to the platform they were built on.

SETTLE IT YOURSELF

- Check who registered your current domain and whose name is on it.
- Find the logins for your current website, domain and email.

ASK THE PROVIDER

- Whose name will the domain be registered in?
- If we part ways, do I get the website and its source code, and will you help move it?
- Who owns the text and photos made for the site?
- What happens to my website if you stop trading?

WORKSHEET

Your answers, before the first call

Fill this in once. Bring it to every conversation with a provider, and you'll hear the same questions answered side by side.

What a new customer must understand first

WHAT WE DO

WHO IT'S FOR

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Questions customers ask before they buy

1

2

3

4

5

What we already have

- [ ] Current website
- [ ] Offers or price lists
- [ ] Presentations or company profiles
- [ ] Photos we have the rights to
- [ ] Reviews we have permission to use
- [ ] Logo and brand files

On our side

ASKS FOR CHANGES AND APPROVES THEM

A GOOD RESULT MEANS

COMPARISON TABLE

Put the proposals side by side

One column per provider. A blank cell is an answer too: ask about it before you decide.

	PROVIDER A	PROVIDER B	PROVIDER C
Who writes the text			
I review every page before launch			
Hosting, domain, certificate, repairs			
How changes work after launch			
What counts as a new project			
Who explains the numbers, how often			
What is promised			
Domain registered in the name of			
I can take the site and its code			
Price of the build			
Price of the year after launch			
Payment schedule and renewal terms			

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HOW WE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

Our answers, in short.

1 **What a customer understands first.** We work it out from your materials and your answers, then write the website around it.

2 **What customers ask.** You share what you have and we ask the questions, so you don't need a brief. You check what we understood before we write.

3 **The words.** We write the copy. You review it before we build and approve the website before launch.

4 **After launch.** For twelve months you send us what needs updating. We make, check and publish changes within the scope agreed for your website, and look after hosting, the domain and technical repairs. There's no editing panel to learn.

5 **The numbers.** We set up Google Analytics and Search Console. Each month you receive a report with a short explanation. Each quarter we review it together. We don't promise search rankings, enquiries or sales.

6 **Parting ways.** After the year, continue with us, or take the website and its source code elsewhere. We help with the move.

Start with your business, not a technical brief.

After the first call, you receive the proposed work, total price, payment schedule and renewal terms, in writing, before any work begins.

If you're struggling with a website that hasn't kept up with your business, handing it to Dori is the right decision.

Get your winning website →

No brief needed. We ask the questions.

+48 789 448 619 · contact@dori.studio · We talk in English, Polish or Spanish.

Websites we have built: franlugo.com · kancelaria-stefanik.pl · dekhon.pl · komisprusice.pl