

Sample Questions to ask your Technology Expert during your Consultation – A Handy Checklist!



Technology Outsourcing – high quality, yet affordable solutions

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This is part of a series of business articles on our corporate website that aims to share our knowledge of how various business models and their associated processes are COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED by the Internet – for better or worse.

Sample Questions to ask your Technology Expert

Not sure what types of questions to ask during the special consultation with our technology expert (or our competitor's technology expert)? Here are general categories and some common questions to get you started. We thought you would enjoy having this information ahead of time so you can plan and get the most out of the time spent interacting with Information Technology/Web Design/Software Development companies. Print this document and write down your own questions in the space provided. This can serve as a useful checklist while you are on the phone with technology companies. This will soon be a small book!

Sample Consultation Questions –

1. Website:

- a. If you don't have a website
 - i. How does one get a website? Your technology expert can explain the process of obtaining the website of your choice (if available) and changing it later if needed.
 - ii. What are the annual fees for registering the website name? Your technology expert can explain the annual costs associated with owning a website name (sometimes free if you have a maintenance agreement with a technology partner company like Thummas Corporation).
 - iii. Can I get my own website name and email address? If the website name is available (example – Thummas.com), you can register it and henceforth have any number of email addresses with that name in it (example – info@thummas.com, sales@thummas.com, help@thummas.com, etc.).
 - iv. Can I get started in a small way without spending too much money and grow my website? Absolutely, there are many ways to get started – from registering a website name and holding it till you need it to having a simple 1 page website at that address informing your customers about basic facts of your business (map, phone, hours, etc.) to a full blown website that is an online version of your business. You can talk to your technology expert about this in greater detail.
 - v. Write your questions here –

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- b. If you already have a website
 - i. I don't like my website – colors, images, text, functionality, navigation, etc. What is involved in changing it? Your technology expert can explain what can be reused and what must be thrown away in order to do a makeover of your website.
 - ii. How can I get my website to increase my sales? In recent years, very few websites have made money for their owners. Most established business owners view websites as a necessary evil and hence spend very little time and money in leveraging their online presence. This can be very detrimental in today's world where your competitors are learning how to leverage the Internet to take away your business. You can talk to our technology expert about ways to increase your top line numbers (revenues) of your business.
 - iii. Write your questions here –

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- c. Showcasing Products and Services Online: Your technology expert can explain how easy it is to showcase the products and services of your business online to communicate the products/services of your business.
- d. Accepting Payments Online: Your technology expert can explain how easy it is to accept payments online (in a secure way) from your customers. This is one of the keys to increasing the power of your online business – accepting payments online for starter products/services so you can capture your customer while they are still excited about your product/service. Most Internet users feel comfortable trying out your products/services if they can pay online.
- e. Website Traffic and visitors: Your technology expert can explain how to keep tabs on your website traffic and visitors (on a weekly basis) to change your marketing campaigns or even your website.
- f. Write your questions here –

2. Running Marketing Campaigns and Special Promotions:

- a. Online Branding: What is online branding? Why is it important to pay attention to this? Is it just having your logo online? What do the colors of the website have anything to do with the logo and branding? These are some of the questions the technology expert can address during the consultation.
- b. Online Advertising: How does one do online advertising? Is it a waste of money? How can I measure results? Why is online advertising better than any other form of advertising?
- c. Getting found in major search engines: How do other people's websites show up in search engines when certain words are typed into search engines? Can I get my website to show up? These are questions that the technology expert can answer by showing proof of some of our websites that show up in search engines.
- d. Write your questions here –

Sample Questions to ask your Technology Expert

3. **Customer Databases:** What is a customer database? Is it like a rolodex? Why is this so important? What does this have anything to do with increasing my sales and retaining my existing customers?
 - a. Write your questions here –

4. **Integrating with other websites or software systems:** Your technology expert can explain how we can integrate your website with a leader in your industry to get data, features, etc. automatically.
 - a. Write your questions here –

5. **Having my own full time dedicated tech support person for my website:**
 - a. Can I have my own dedicated tech support person through a technology partner company? Isn't this expensive? You will be surprised to know that you can get a full time technical person dedicated to your technology needs for as low as the cost of an administrative assistant. This can be attained by taking advantage of offshore resources in other countries. The technology expert can explain how you can get measure results produced by the people you pay for (and other aspects of having a full time tech support person from our company).
 - b. Write your questions here –

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6. **Email:**

- a. More professional - Email address with my website name. How many email addresses can I have? What does this cost? Who will maintain this? Is it expensive?
- b. What is an auto responder? Can I have several of them? The technology expert can explain how your visitors can receive an instant email when they try to contact your company via email. You can have individual auto responders (automatic emails) when your customers email your sales staff, support staff, etc. even on a weekend when you are closed. Research has shown that people like to have acknowledgement that you got their email and an intelligent, customized acknowledgement.
- c. Can I access my emails from anywhere? Yes! You can access your company emails from any computer with an Internet connection and browser software.
- d. Can I access my emails from my cell phone? Yes! There are cell phone companies and special cell phones that can be setup to access your corporate emails. The technology expert can outline some of the details, benefits, and limitations of this technology and what it can cost (approximately).
- e. Email Newsletters: You have seen those email newsletters from small and big companies. They have been proven to keep your business name in front of your prospects and clients. It is also an effective tool to run marketing campaigns and weekly/monthly specials. You will need the customer database setup for this to function efficiently.
- f. Write your questions here –

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7. **Small office network:**

- a. Files in one place – even in a small office environment, a lot of time can be wasted because your employees don't have all the common files in one place. A network can facilitate productivity improvements by allowing your employees to share common files among other benefits.
- b. Corporate Intranet – your employees can securely access the electronic files from anywhere in the world if you need them to work from home or from their hotel room (when they are away on business). Being able to access one's corporate network remotely is a tremendous value to any business.
- c. Write your questions here –

Sample Questions to ask your Technology Expert

8. Security:

- a. Can I have a secure login on my website to certain portions of it? Yes! We can secure your website in ways most people can't even imagine! Specific portions of your websites can be locked from search engines or can require a generic login or a specific login. There is a lot that can be done in terms of security. You can have certain employees access only certain portions of your website if you choose to.
- b. Can I have secure email? Yes, secure email is possible but it comes with its own limitations.
- c. Can I accept payments online in a secure fashion? Yes! Accepting payments online is a very secure transaction under certain circumstances. We can explain what is involved and what it could cost.
- d. Write your questions here –

Sample Questions to ask your Technology Expert

9. Custom Software:

- a. Is it really affordable to build custom software just for me? Most people are amazed that it is possible to have your own custom software built specifically for your individual needs. It may sometimes seem expensive but not as expensive as it is for large corporations. The technology expert can explain the benefits, process, costs involved.
- b. Write your questions here –