Ten Things Web-Developers Don't Want You To Know

1. There's more than one way to build a Web site. Some Web developers are hand-tied to single options, like re-sellers of certain software products or constrained to by a "Microsoft Partner" business relationship. You're then stuck with only the choices they can sell. Your Web partner should have the flexibility to look at your specific business challenges – and give you an array of choices to fit your needs.

2. There are very affordable Web site solutions for all businesses today – even those in start-up mode. Don't let a Web developer try to run up the bill just because you need e-commerce or other business capabilities.

3. Watch out when a Web company offers to register a domain name for you. To control your asset, they may register the domain name to themselves. Always make sure your company is listed as the domain name "registrant".

4. Be wary when a Web developer suggests incorporating Flash or other "bells and whistles" into your site. These techniques may look pretty, but will increase the load times and hamper your site's findability in the search engines. Don't let a Web developer line their pocket and pump up their portfolio -- at the expense of your business. Today's savvy Web users appreciate professional looking sites that provide answers to their needs – fast.

5. Third-party hosting solutions usually end up costing time and money. Look to Web developers that eliminate the middleman, giving you direct control over your site.

6. Search Engine Optimization should be done when your site is being designed and built. Your Web developer should not charge you an additional fee after the fact, because they're the ones who built your site in the first place.

7. A Web site is an extension of your company's total branding and marketing. Make sure your Web developer tightly integrates every communication dimension -- graphics, tone, business positioning, etc. – so your site accentuates your overall marketing strategy.

8. Your Web developer should provide options that compel Web visitors to interact with your company (not just a "Contact Us" page). It's critical to establish a two-way dialog quickly -- to build long-lasting customers and relationships.

9. Web site "tracking" should be more than a simple Web stats page. Your Web developer should offer tools that give you in-depth knowledge of your visitors and their behaviors on your site -- so you can determine your real return-on-investment.

10. A Web maintenance plan should be included in the price tag. This assures that your site content is always fresh. It also assures that you won't be "nickel and dimed" for simple changes (that's where many developers look to make extra money). In addition, your Web developer should include Web-based tools that will allow you and your staff to make Web changes without the need to know any programming.