

— FOR BUSINESS OWNERS CHOOSING A WEB OR APP AGENCY

The agency **selection scorecard.**

Questions to ask, a way to compare proposals line by line, what you must own, how payments should follow the work, and the red flags to stop at.

TIME

One copy per agency

FOR

Owners and managers buying a website or app

EDITION

October 2026

— HOW TO USE IT

Compare the answers, not only the prices.

Two proposals with different prices are often two different projects. One includes the texts, three revision rounds and a year of support; the other includes none of that and says so in small print, or not at all. Comparing the totals tells you little until the scope is the same.

Send the same brief to two or three agencies. Then use one copy of sections 2 to 7 per agency: tick an item when the agency answered it clearly, in writing. A vague answer is not a tick. At the end, put the agencies side by side in the table.

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- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Step 1 | Fill section 1 and send the same brief to each agency on your shortlist. |
|---------------|--|
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- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Step 2 | On each call and each proposal, fill sections 2 to 7, one copy per agency. |
|---------------|--|
-
- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Step 3 | Count the ticks, read the red flags, ask in writing about every gap, then decide. |
|---------------|---|
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01

Your brief, before you call anyone

Agencies can only be compared on the same brief. Write it once and send it to everyone.

What do you need, in one or two sentences?

A new website, a rebuild, an app, an online booking system. Say what the business does and for whom.

What should it do for the business? Name the main action you want from visitors or users.

A call, a WhatsApp message, a booking, a quote request, a signed-in customer.

Your budget range and your target date. What happens if the date moves?

A range is enough. Agencies propose better when they know the frame.

Who decides, and who will answer the agency's questions during the project?

☐

Every agency received exactly the same brief.

02

Questions for the first call

Tick when the agency answered clearly. Listen for specifics: names, steps, dates, examples.

☐

Who will work on my project, and who is my day-to-day contact?

A good answer names roles and people, not "our team".

☐

Can you show similar work, and can I speak to a past client?

Ask for live sites or apps you can open, not only screenshots.

☐

What are the steps from signature to launch, and what do you need from me at each step?

☐

How do I approve work, and how many revision rounds are included?

☐

How do you handle a request that is not in the scope?

A good answer: it is written down and priced before the work starts.

☐

How quickly do you reply during the project, and on which channel?

03

Proposals, line by line

Put the proposals next to each other and compare them line by line, not by total.

☐

The scope lists the deliverables: pages, features, languages, integrations.

☐

It says clearly what is not included.

Texts, photos, translations, hosting, ad budget, extra revisions.

☐

There is a timeline with milestones and dates.

☐

It says what I must provide, and by when.

Delays on your side move the dates; a good proposal says so.

☐

The price is fixed for the scope, or the way it is calculated is clear.

☐

Recurring costs are listed: domain, hosting, licences, support plans.

Ask for the cost of the first year, not only the build.

04

What you will own

If the agency disappears tomorrow, you should still have your site and everything behind it.

-
- ☐ The domain name is registered in my company's name.
 - ☐ Hosting, Google accounts, analytics and app store accounts are in my company's name.
The agency should be invited as a user, not be the owner.
 - ☐ On full payment, I own the code and the design files.
 - ☐ Fonts, photos and plugins used are licensed for my business.
 - ☐ I get admin access to the site or app at handover.
 - ☐ It is written down what happens if we stop working together: files, accounts, a handover.
-

05

Payments that follow the work

The payment schedule shows how the agency works. Each payment should match something you can see.

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- ☐ There is a written payment schedule in the proposal.
 - ☐ Payments are tied to milestones I approve, or to clear dates.
For example: a deposit at signature, a part when the design is approved, the rest at launch.
 - ☐ Changes outside the scope are quoted in writing before work starts.
 - ☐ Invoices are clear, in the agreed currency, with the agency's legal details.
 - ☐ It is clear what happens if the project is delayed, on either side.
 - ☐ The final payment comes at launch or on my written approval, not before I can see the work.
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06

Support after launch

Launch is when your visitors arrive. Know who is there when something breaks.

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- ☐ There is a support plan after launch, with what it covers.
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- ☐ The plan has a written reply time.
For example, in business hours. "As soon as possible" is not a reply time.
-
- ☐ I know how to ask for help, and who answers.
-
- ☐ Security updates and backups are included, or it is clear who handles them.
-
- ☐ Problems found in the first weeks after launch are fixed under the original project.
-
- ☐ The agency explains what it will measure with me after launch, not what it promises.
Rankings and sales depend on many things; reporting what was measured is honest.
-

07

Red flags

Tick if you see it. One red flag is a question to ask in writing. Several are a reason to walk away.

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- ☐ A promise of results: first page of Google, a number of sales or leads, by a date.
Nobody controls Google or your market. Agencies can promise scope, dates, quality and reply times.
-
- ☐ No written scope, or a scope of a few vague lines.
-
- ☐ No work you can open and no past client you can speak to.
-
- ☐ The domain or accounts would be registered in the agency's name.
-
- ☐ Pressure to sign today, or a discount that ends tomorrow.
-
- ☐ Passwords asked for by chat or email, or questions answered only by phone.
-

— YOUR SCORE

Score each agency.

26–30

A clear, written way of working. Sections 2 to 6 have 30 boxes; check the few gaps in writing before you sign.

18–25

Possible, with questions. Ask about each missing item in writing, and compare the answers with the other agencies.

Under 18

Too much is left open. Unless the gaps are answered in writing, keep looking.

Count ticks in sections 2 to 6 only. Section 7 counts against: any red flag is a question to ask in writing before you sign, whatever the score.

Your agencies, side by side

AGENCY	TICKS (SECTIONS 2 TO 6)	RED FLAGS AND QUESTIONS TO ASK
1		
2		
3		



— PUT US ON YOUR SHORTLIST

Ask us every question on this scorecard.

Send us your brief or book a 30-minute call. We answer each question here in writing: who works on your project, the steps and dates, how you approve each stage, what you own and how support works after launch. Then you receive a written proposal you can compare line by line.

- A written scope, with what is not included and the revision rounds
- Milestones with dates and your written approval at each one
- On payment, the domain, accounts, code and design files are yours
- A support plan after launch, with written reply times

Tell us about your project

qafza.dev/en/contact



Qafza designs and builds brands, websites, apps and custom software for businesses, with a written scope, milestones you approve and support after launch.