

How to Evaluate Companies that Manage Website Operations: A Guide

As society becomes more and more digitally driven, your website is everything. Even small, local businesses need a good one as customers consult the internet before almost every buying decision. First impressions are crucial and website performance must be strong.

Running a business is stressful enough, you shouldn't be fretting over website logistics. If you want to make a good impression, website operations are best left to professionals.

Choosing your website operations management company is a process. Not all are equal, and everyone has different priorities. Use this guide to help you identify your specific needs, find a company that meets them, and spot red flags early.

The Value of Good Website Operations Management

It's often the little things that take a website from good to great. You want every facet of your site to provide a good experience. This includes an attractive design, responsive navigation, accessible features, mobile optimization, and more.

A solid online presence builds trust and transparency with customers. Besides a good appearance, you also want reach and visibility.

Bringing this together requires skill, finesse, and know-how. For example, [SWARM](#) is a website operations team that combines design, SEO, and top-notch support to keep your website running smoothly and ranking well.

This frees you up to do what **you** do best and run your business.

How to Get Started

Before you begin the search, determine what you're looking for. What website features are most important to you? Write a few things down in order of priority. Then, consult your team. This affects everyone and it's crucial you're on the same page. Discuss a few key points:

- What problems are they running into most often?
- What services would benefit them?

Their pain points and insight should give you a good idea of what the website needs.

The last step is to identify your budget. Services come at all different levels so it's good to know what's in reach right off the bat.

Ask Around

Before hitting the vast and wide-open internet to look for companies, ask those in your circle. Whether it's business partners, network connections, or friends, nothing beats personal experience.

- What do they like about their website operations team?
- What would they like improved?
- Do they recommend any of the companies they've worked with?

If you're able to get positive recommendations, start with those companies and go from there. Take note of negative feedback, too. Knowing which companies to avoid is just as valuable as knowing to who consider.

How to Evaluate

Once you've compiled a list of options, it's time to research. Browse websites before anything else and familiarize yourself with each company. Confirm they have the services most important to you and then get in touch!

Always ask the following most crucial questions:

What best practices do they follow?

Developing and maintaining a website isn't only about appearance. Back-end operations and performance are equally important. Examine their portfolio websites to ensure best practices are being followed:

- **URL structure.** Long, messy URLs are confusing and also an eyesore! You want a clear, well-optimized URL that offers insight into the page content. Look for all lowercase letters, hyphens between words, and appropriate keyword usage.
- **SSL.** Security is everything when browsing online. The secure socket layer is an essential piece that ensures a secure internet connection when on the website. It also protects data such as passwords, phone numbers, and payment info that's entered on the page. Without this, neither your customers nor the Google algorithm will trust you. Look for "HTTPS" and a lock symbol to ensure SSL is present.
- **Speed.** Slow page load times may have been acceptable in the past, but not anymore. If a page takes more than three seconds to load, many customers will leave before they give you a chance. Even Google takes speed into account when ranking websites. Use Google's [PageSpeed](#) service to make a proper assessment.
- **Meta description and title tag.** These are key for helping customers understand your website and for strong Google rankings. The title tag should contain a good balance of keywords, not only the page name. The meta description should offer a concise and compelling summary of the page you're on.

Do they offer maintenance and support?

Setting your website up is only step one. Ideally, your website operations team should offer ongoing support and maintenance. How easy is it to add new products, update information, and generally manage the website yourself? What is the support process if you run into issues here?

How robust is their SEO strategy?

SEO is the backbone of any website wanting to do well in Google. Not only that but SEO trends and practices are constantly evolving as Google updates and improves its algorithm. Ask what SEO features they offer, such as alt-tags, content, linking strategies, internal linking, and more.

Also, ask them to show you previous Google ranking success. If they can provide examples of clients' websites in top positions, this is a great sign.

What are their hosting options?

Website hosting plays a huge role in the success of your project. If you can get good hosting in the same place as the rest of your website operations support, this is ideal.

Ask about the following:

- How frequently do they backup the site?
- How long do they retain backups?
- What is their guaranteed uptime?
- If the site goes down, how fast do they get it back up?
- How fast is the processing power?
- Do they offer mobile optimization?

Mobile performance should be non-negotiable. As of August 2022, about [60 percent](#) of all website traffic comes from mobile devices. There has also been a consistent upward trend in this number over the last several years.

If your website looks great on desktop but is clunky on mobile, you're losing lots of business. Ask about mobile optimization and make sure they're on top of it. When browsing their portfolio, check the websites on both desktop and mobile to see how they function.

What is your role?

This is important to discuss beforehand, so you don't run into arguments or misunderstandings. Determine which team will be responsible for what and make sure you're on board with their process. Some companies are more hands-on than others and you don't want to relinquish more control than you're comfortable with.

Examine Case Studies

A strong portfolio is a great start, but case studies reveal all the details. They should have several case studies to show you that clearly document before and after. You should see significant improvement in both design and performance, plus a clear explanation of how they achieved these results.

Red Flags to Look Out For

It's important you ask your questions and do your due diligence, and this includes looking for red flags. We've covered all the things you want from a company. Here are some things you don't want:

- **No case studies/weak portfolio.** They can make all the claims they want, but with no evidence to back it up, you likely can't trust them.
- **No experience with businesses in your industry.** Even if they have experience and a strong portfolio, compatibility is key. If all their experience falls outside your industry, you may not want to take the risk.
- **They provide vague information.** Have you looked over their website and still aren't sure what they offer? Have you asked some questions and gotten fluff for answers? Avoid this company.
- **Poor company website.** When looking at examples of websites they've produced, include their own in your scrutiny. If the company website itself is bare, slow, and/or unprofessional, how can you trust them to make yours shine?

If you want some objective, third-party opinions, [Clutch](#) is a great resource. Here, you can compare specific features and services between companies and read reviews. You can evaluate a service's strengths and weaknesses and look for red flags you may have missed.

Reach Out to Learn More

To thrive in today's competitive world, you must stand out. To stand out, you need a strong website operations partner. SWARM offers a wide variety of top-notch website, strategy, and growth services to help you reach and surpass your goals.

[Our services](#) help you design and strategize. We then stay with you as you grow and evolve. We help you innovate by staying on top of emerging tech and leave no customer behind with our strong mobile performance and accessibility compliance.

[Get in touch](#) today to learn more about how we can take your business to the top.