

**Website Development RFP Questions and Answers:  
8/17/2010**

In order to provide clarity to both the Graphic Website Developer and the Technical Website Developer, we have included all questions in one document. This approach reflects our desire for this relationship to have an open communication channel and to work closely together.

Please note, where applicable we have duplicated questions in both the Graphic and the Technical Questions sections, as the answers pertain to both applicants.

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**General RFP Questions:**

1. The instructions say that Electronic submissions are encouraged, but it also states that at least 2 written copies should be submitted. Do you require both an electronic and hard copy responses? If so, we will need your telephone number for FedEx.
  - a. We will need 2 written copies for our records.
  - b. Full contact information is:  
Noah Dater  
VEIC  
255. South Champlain St  
Suite 7  
Burlington, VT. 05401  
802-860-4095 ext 1169.
2. Were you looking for a response to all of the questions/requirements in the proposal or just a background for the proposal?
  - a. We are looking for proposals that give enough information to VEIC to make an educated decision to choose our developers. The level of information that is provided in each proposal is up to the respondent, but should adequately demonstrate that the developer can meet the needs of our organization, as well as the information identified in the RFPs.
3. We did not see a timeline in the RFP – when do you wish to go live? Or what impending event are you striving toward to get a new site up and running?
  - a. The Timeline for this work can be found under “Phases of Work” on pages 4-5 of our RFPs.
  - b. We seek to launch the redesigned EfficiencyVermont.com website during the 2010 calendar year.
4. Would it be possible to move the testing and review dates so the last day of testing does not fall on Christmas Eve?
  - a. We seek to launch the redesigned EfficiencyVermont.com website during the 2010 calendar year.
  - b. We welcome development schedules that achieve this goal without encroaching on national holidays.
5. Do you have a specified budget for the project (both design and technical)?
  - a. As part of this RFP process we are looking to potential firms to provide budgets for the work specified.

## Strategic and General Questions about the Website:

6. *From Draft of Requirements: "Visitors will be pre-qualified at three initial levels: Residential, Business & Partner"*  
Is this saying that you want to quickly identify users as one of three different customer types (Residential, Business & partner)? Or, is there a specific reason you used the term "pre-qualified"?
  - a. We are using the term "pre-qualified" as a way to describe that our 3 different types of customers (Residential, Business & Partner) will self identify and proceed to the corresponding section of the website. From the Homepage we anticipate that they will also be able to directly select their Customer Type ("Residential Home Owner" for example) and proceed directly to their corresponding Customer Type page.
7. *From Draft of Requirements: "Efficiency Measures will have Purchase and Partner locator, where possible"* Is this currently reflected in the efficiency opportunity wireframe (page three of the wireframe document)?
  - a. Yes, The Efficiency Opportunity wireframe outlines the Purchase and Partner locator (marketplace) aspect of this statement.
8. You reference some statistics under "Key Challenges to the Current Website." Are these statistics based on a recent study? If so, will the "Website Implementation Team" have access to this study?
  - a. VEIC will provide all necessary Analytics (Google & WebTrends) and the results of our recent online survey as needed to inform the Website Implementation Team.
9. How many VEIC decision makers will be a part of this process?
  - a. We anticipate that the Graphic Website Developer and the Technical Website Developer will do the majority of their communication through VEIC's Internet Marketing Project Manager, and as needed the Applications Developer associated with this project.
  - b. The Internet Marketing Project Manager will coordinate with the Applications Developer, Website Core Team and Stakeholders as necessary.
  - c. At major milestones we do anticipate some interaction between the Graphic Website Developer and the Stakeholder group as needed.
10. Is there an independent RFP being circulated for the Information Architecture consultant? In our experience the front end shop typically develops both IA documentation and visual design.
  - a. We have already hired an Information Architecture Consultant whose role will be to help translate VEIC's needs to the Graphic and Technical Website Developers. We anticipate this to be an open communication stream with the shared goal of a successful website.

## Graphic Website Development Questions:

11. Are you looking for spec creative? You write in the RFP that "Proposals should include a high-level concept..." What exactly do you mean by this? Are you seeking big ideas, themes or page layouts?
  - a. VEIC is looking for proposals that give insight into the type of website that the graphic website developer is proposing. Specifically we are interested in what the user experience will be, the level of interactivity, and general feel of the site. We are leaving the specific execution of how to communicate this information up to the organizations creating the proposal. At this point we feel that we have not

provided enough information to create specific page layouts, etc, and will not be ranking the proposals based on its inclusion. However, if this information is necessary to communicate your proposal we are happy to review it.

12. Who's currently responsible for the creation of the Efficiency Vermont brand guidelines/visual language and messaging?
  - a. The current Efficiency Vermont brand guidelines have been created by Efficiency Vermont and our sub-contractors and are owned by Efficiency Vermont. These guidelines will be made available to both the Graphic and Technical Website Developers.
13. How much of this project will drive Efficiency Vermont's **future** brand guidelines/visual language and messaging (for both online and offline executions)?
  - a. Efficiency Vermont's current brand is clearly articulated, and we anticipate working within those guidelines.
  - b. Efficiency Vermont is currently engaging in a brand "check up," the results of which will be available to our development partners.
  - c. We anticipate that future online development will be consistent with the redesigned EfficiencyVermont.com site.
14. Will VEIC's internal staff be creating/writing the copy for the site, or will they be working with an outside copywriter? Are you open to the Graphic Website Developer providing some high-level thematic direction, including headlines?
  - a. VEIC's internal staff will be responsible for all written content for this website. We welcome input from our Developers concerning thematic direction on the Copy. We anticipate the Graphic Website Developer will assist in the identification and implementation of interactive content that furthers our website goals.
15. How important to VEIC is the use of a CSS framework? We have found CSS frameworks to be cumbersome and bloated. What advantage is VEIC hoping to gain by using one? Does that advantage out-weigh page load times?
  - a. We seek to create a CSS framework to facilitate the shared (between the Graphic Website Developer & the Technical Website Developer) front end implementation. If both developers feel that the framework will slow development and degrade performance we are open to other approaches to CSS development.
16. Is the visual designer charged with the front end development of the provided screens (HTML / CSS)? Again, this is usually best practice for a pixel-to-pixel translation of the design. However, Sitefinity in particular (as with all .Net CMS solutions) has some significant peculiarities that might make it important for the integration shop to do the HTML.
  - a. We anticipate that front end development will be shared between the Graphic Website Developer and the Technical Website Developer for the reasons stated in the question among others. The Graphic Website Developer should assume that they will be responsible for much of the front end implementation, but the Technical Website Developer will also be a key partner in the implementation of these designs.
17. Can you elaborate on "basic Mobile platform (iPhone) functionality?" Are you asking to create a version of the site **optimized** for mobile/iPhone delivery, or are you requesting that the site's functional and visual integrity is maintained through mobile/iPhone delivery?
  - a. We are requesting that the redesigned EfficiencyVermont.com website retain functionality and visual integrity on mobile platforms, but due to the low % of mobile users, at this time we are not seeking to create an optimized or specific

mobile site.

18. Is it an internal IT requirement to optimize the site for browsers as low as IE 6? What percentage of your users are currently using ie6? How long do you plan to support ie6 into the lifespan of this new website? If your percentage of ie6 users is low enough, I would recommend using this site re-fresh as an opportunity to move all your users off of the deprecated browser.
  - a. Over the last month 10.86% of visitors to EfficiencyVermont.com were using ie6. Efficiency Vermont strives to reach all Vermonters across the state – particularly in geographically remote areas (typically with slow internet connections). For this reason we feel that the inclusion of ie6 functionality is necessary. As the percentage of ie6 customers decreases we will evaluate strategies ceasing to supporting ie6.
19. In addition to the templates you listed, are there any unique Sitefinity modules requiring design and development?
  - a. Through the Creative Development Process we anticipate the identification of additional Sitefinity modules or controls that that will require both design and development. The design and implementation of these elements will be the shared responsibility where applicable between the Graphic and Technical website developers.

#### **Technical Questions:**

20. You are calling out the use of Sitefinity as your CMS. Do you own this application now or are you implementing it as part of this project? Or are you open to other CMS platforms based on a firms recommendations? Is there a specific reason a CMS has been selected prior to the completion of an Information Architecture?
  - a. VEIC has previous experience with Sitefinity, and has already purchased a Sitefinity license for EfficiencyVermont.com. We feel that it closely aligns with our internal development strategies, and overall IT framework. We also believe that Sitefinity will meet the needs of our organization and of this particular project.
  - b. Preference will be given to proposals that identify Sitefinity as the proposed CMS. However, if a developer has identified an alternative approach that meets our needs and has a significant benefit over Sitefinity we will take that proposal into consideration.
21. What data is currently stored in Sitefinity vs. an external data source (i.e. content for Partners/Marketplace)?
  - a. Currently all Market place data is kept in a separate Database. We are planning that the new Partner, Efficiency Opportunity, and Rebate data will created and stored in the Sitefinity database, and that this data will be managed through custom modules in the Sitefinity application.
22. Will the new Marketplace Sitefinity module be doing CRUD operations on the existing Marketplace database tables? Will additional tables be required to support the new Marketplace functionality?
  - a. We manage the marketplace data through a different process. Sitefinity will need to display (retrieve) the Marketplace Data, but we are thinking that will be the only CRUD operation needed. Again, at this point, we are planning to keep this data in a separate database. If this will make things overly complex, we can discuss this further.

23. How important to VEIC is the use of a CSS framework? We have found CSS frameworks to be cumbersome and bloated. What advantage is VEIC hoping to gain by using one? Does that advantage out-weigh page load times?
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26. Is a "VEIC CMS user" a VEIC employee?
- a. VEIC CMS users will be largely be VEIC employees (currently we have 6 employees making regular updates to our websites). We also anticipate sub-contractors having access to the EfficiencyVermont.com CMS as needed.
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