



5 Things Your Agency Should Consider When Choosing a Sitecore® Partner

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There are dozens of content management systems out there — and plenty of good ones. According to the [2019 Gartner Magic Quadrant For Web Content Management Systems \(CMS\)](#), there are five different solutions in the Leader Quadrant alone, and four more listed as Challengers. So it's no surprise that clients approach agencies and marketing companies with their own CMS preferences in mind.

That said, it's just not practical for a small-to-medium agency to build and maintain a team of experts for every CMS on the market. It's particularly impractical when you're talking about an enterprise-class CMS like The Sitecore® Experience Platform™.

Large global organizations rely on Sitecore across their entire web ecosystem. Thus, when an RFP specifies Sitecore, the project is probably a huge opportunity for your agency, representing a substantial chunk of business. You can't afford to sit on the sidelines just because you don't have Sitecore expertise in-house.

Time to bring in an expert who can help you with [Sitecore implementation](#) — but it pays to be careful. Finding a partner who can truly deliver for your client while protecting your company's interests can be tricky.

To find a Sitecore expert, the independent research and analysis firm [Clutch](#) is a good place to start. You'll also want to consider the following five key things as you evaluate potential partners.



Free Interview Template

At the end of this whitepaper, you'll find a checklist capturing all of the questions you need to ask when evaluating potential Sitecore partners. We hope you'll find this helpful. Feel free to print it out and use it as your interview template.

1. Do they specialize in Sitecore, or do they just dabble?

Clients generally specify Sitecore because they're already using it across the organization. They've got the workflow processes in place, and they know what to expect from the platform. You need a partner that can meet — and hopefully exceed — those expectations.

Sitecore is extremely complex, and inexperienced developers can't master it quickly. For example, an organization could be hosting hundreds of websites on one implementation, translated in 10+ different languages, representing ten of thousands

of products, with numerous contributors publishing. There are myriad considerations in terms of architecture, orchestration, scalability, maintainability and implementation. You need a partner that’s “been there, done that” a hundred times — especially if you want to win more projects from your client.

Look at it this way: You wouldn’t let a general practitioner perform heart surgery on you. **You should only consider partnering with firms that specialize in Sitecore** and have completed a substantial number of successful implementations.

You’ll find the [top-reviewed Sitecore firms at Clutch.co](#). To compare these firms, look closely at:

- The Leaders Matrix — Focus on firms in the Proven or Market Leaders quadrants. Your project should not be anybody’s test case.
- Reviews, both quantity and quality — You want good reviews, and plenty of them. (More on this in Question #2 below.)
- Service focus — You’ll get the best results from a firm that does nothing but web development, all day long. (More on this in Question #3 below)
- Frameworks & CMS — Is Sitecore their entire focus, or do they also work with Drupal, Ruby on Rails, etc.? You want a team that lives and breathes Sitecore.

An important note here: Size doesn’t matter. It’s not about throwing bodies at the problem. It’s about having the right team of experts who are hyper-engaged in ensuring your success.

2. Are they collaborative, flexible, and eager to please?

This is where reviews come into play. A good review will be more than just “These guys are great.” If a client really valued its relationship with a Sitecore partner, their review will speak as much to the working experience as the end result.

You’re looking for compatibility and alignment — a partner who shares the same values as your firm. Dig deep into the reviews, combing for words like “collaborative,” “team work,” “customer service,” “flexibility,” “commitment” and “follow-through.”

If your [Sitecore partner isn’t aligned with your values](#), the deliverable will suffer.

3. Do they offer strategy and design services?

On the surface, this is a similar issue to the Sitecore specialization question above. You want a partner who is laser-focused on implementation and will leave the design and strategy to your team.

Going a little deeper, this question can also reveal potential competition and conflicts of interest. Many Sitecore integrators do have a design and strategy practice and it's a big part of their top line revenue. If a prospective partner has competitive services listed on their website — particularly if their client roster has a gap where your client might fit in — **proceed with caution**. The last thing you need is a partner who might sabotage parts of your project or your client relationship, in the hopes of stealing future work away.

If you do decide to work with a firm that offers competing services, at least insist upon a non-compete clause in your contract.

4. Do they sweat the small stuff?

You put a lot of work into your design and when something is off, it can be incredibly aggravating. But you don't want to have to micromanage developers to make sure their work is acceptable.

An expert Sitecore partner can make the ultimate product look exactly like your design and will test the hell out of it to ensure the site looks and performs exactly as expected. They'll also be able to counsel your team if something in your design could be problematic in implementation, so you can course-correct before issues arise.

Check reviews and recommendations carefully. Look for mentions of “attention to detail” or “pixel perfect.” Reviews from creative leadership are particularly relevant here.

It's also a good idea to request an example of an initial design comp with a link to the final website. Compare the comp with the final to see just how “pixel perfect” this prospective partner can be.

5. Are they just a code factory or true craftspeople?

With the large enterprise websites that are typical of Sitecore projects, everything you build has to scale and integrate with what was built before and what will come after. The developer must consider the context, because a new Sitecore website leverages and affects everything else.

Some companies that offer Sitecore implementation services slap together poorly coordinated teams of contractors distributed around the globe to churn out the code required for your specific project as fast and as cheaply as possible. These types of shops don't care about the big picture, the long-term sustainability of the code, or the client relationship.

You'll get better results from a team of true Sitecore experts who will take the time to understand the context, and architect a solution based on [Sitecore best practices](#), that scales and integrates seamlessly. If you want to deliver a website on Sitecore that will be extensible and performant now and into the future, **you can't take an assembly-line approach — Sitecore is just too complex.**

You need a closely knit team that collaborates together every day, meets face-to-face to hash things out, and has produced outstanding results together for a long time. This is particularly important if you hope to win more business from your client.

To suss out the true nature of any potential Sitecore implementation partner, ask the following questions:

- How many years of Sitecore experience do they have?
- How much of their time is spent doing Sitecore work?
- Do they hire freelance contractors or offshore resources?
- Do they work remotely?
- Does their team include Sitecore Certified Architects, Developers, and Support Engineers?
- What type of quality control processes do they follow?
- What types of documentation will be created to ensure the quality of their work?

Try to understand as much as possible about how the prospective partner will tackle your project and whether they take pride in their work and building long-term relationships. If you aren't confident about their approach and the entire team you'll be working with, look for another partner.

Panic is no way to respond to an RFP.

Finding a qualified and relationship-driven Sitecore partner can be challenging, but it doesn't have to drive you off the rails. Engagency is a Silver Sitecore Certified Solutions Partner. Since 2015, we've been recognized by Clutch as a Market Leader among top Sitecore developers and partners. [Feel free to read our reviews here.](#)

Let's chat.

If we can help your agency with an RFP response or any other Sitecore issue, please reach out. We look forward to discussing how we can be of service to you.

[Click here](#) to schedule a time to talk.

Learn more about our [agency services](#).

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Sitecore Partner Interview Template for Agencies

Find the right fit for your agency with this interview checklist. Ask your potential Sitecore partners these questions.

Sitecore Specialization:

Tell me more about your team.

- How many years of Sitecore experience do they have?
- How much of their time is spent doing Sitecore work?
- Do you hire freelance contractors or offshore resources?
- Do you work remotely?
- Does your team include Sitecore Certified Architects, Developers, and Support Engineers?
- What type of quality control processes do you follow?
- What types of documentation will be created to ensure the quality of your work?

Agency Support:

Describe your typical work process with agencies.

- How do you collaborate with external teams?
- Do you offer strategy and design services?
- Do you have an example you can share with me of an initial design comp and the final website?
- Where can I find reviews of your firm?

- Can you share case studies from other agencies you've worked with?
- Are there a few agency leaders you've worked with, that are willing to act as reference?

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<https://www.engagency.com/sitecore-agency-services>

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