The Ultimate Guide To Hiring A Wordpress Developer

By StableWP

We are a dedicated team of Wordpress developers, digital marketers, designers and technical specialists who really love helping SMBs excel in competitive niches.

STABLEWP

Hiring In-House vs. Offshore Freelancers vs. Wordpress Agency [Pros and Cons]

No matter if you're a startup or an established business, your website should be one of your most valuable marketing assets.

71% of all purchases begin with a Google search to discover new products/services

An SEO optimized website will help your potential customers discover your business. Not only that, a stunning site can persuade those visitors to buy what you offer!

Your website works for you like an **online marketing machine.**

Now, I know you're thinking: *"I'm not a web developer! I'm no marketing expert! I don't know how and where to get started."*

Have no worries, this article will break down the Top 3 options available for building and managing your business website:

1. Why You Need A Website

2. Hiring An In-house Developer

3. Outsourcing To An Offshore Developer

4. Managed WordPress Agency

5. Head-to-head Comparison

Why You Need a Website?

Think of your website as a storefront of your business, open 24/7, that's constantly attracting new customers to check out your products/services.

And it doesn't stop there… Your website can be used for:

- Showcasing your services/products

- Sell online (e-commerce)

- Tracking user behavior
  (use analytics to monitor visitors activities)

- Lead generation (capture contact information
  from your potential customers)

- Announcement / News
  (sales, discounts, special offers)

- Engaging with visitors (such as reviews,
  comments, live chat)

- And so much more…

A website can get you unlimited exposure from users all over the world. You can reach more potential customers and expand your business to new markets.

Without a compelling website to represent your business on the internet, you are leaving all that potential revenue on the table.

It doesn't matter how good your products are or if you're a guru in your field, people won't be able to find your business and buy from you!

Your bottom-line is revenue and growth, and a strong online presence can do wonders for your business.

Now let's have a look at what options you have for building that website worthy of your business.

Hiring a Full-time WordPress Developer (In-House)

An in-house WordPress developer might be the first idea that comes to your mind.

This means you would hire a local developer to be your full-time employee. With the help of the internet, it's fairly easy to find decent talent to hire.

You can post a job listing on LinkedIn.

If you're looking for developers online, you may also consider Indeed…

or Glassdoor

You may also try your luck on Kijiji or Craigslist. Post your job listings, and you're sure to get dozens of replies within a few days.

These are all great options to find your ideal candidate to hire as full-time developers.

But before you start posting job listings all over the internet, let's take a closer look at some pros and cons of this approach.

Pros [in-house developer]

1. Full control
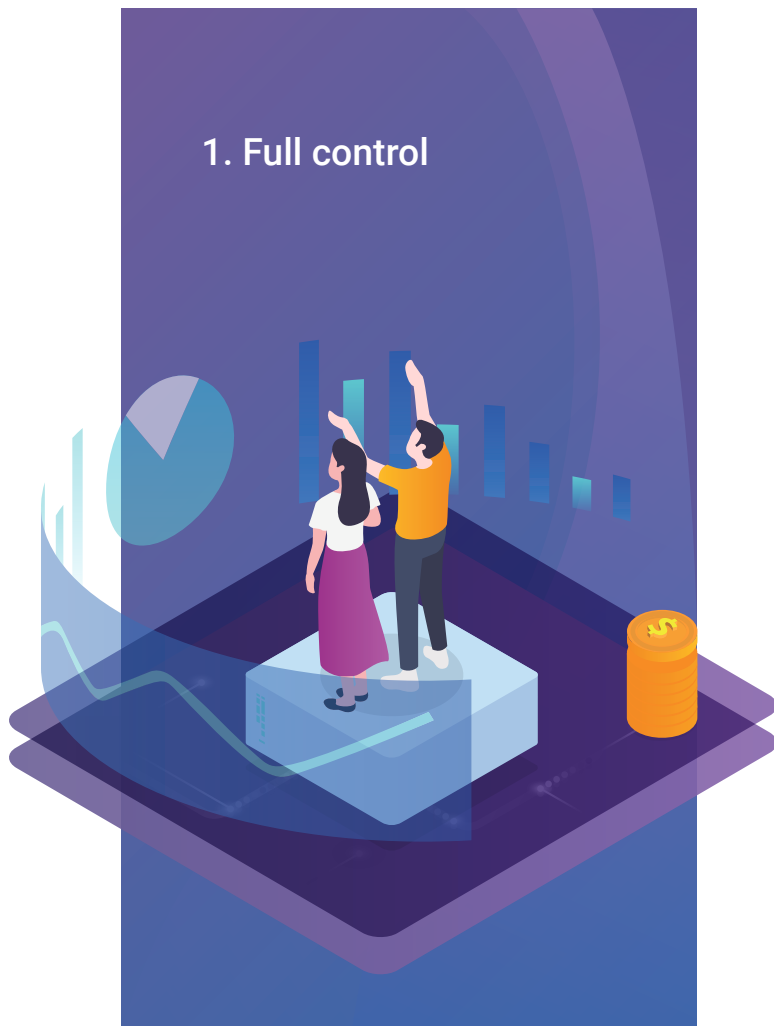
If you hire an in-house developer, you have full access to this person's skills during office hours. You'll have complete control over the time, activity and the quality of the work.

Management is much more effective, and it's easier to supervise someone right next to you in your office. This can certainly help make faster decisions when necessary. Being able to work face-to-face can also help improve productivity.

Developing your website in-house enables you to monitor the process every step of the way. You can set quality standards and make sure they are being implemented.

If something goes wrong, you can signal immediately to your developer so that the issue can be dealt with right away.

It also helps reduce security and confidentiality risks when you keep everything within your own premises.

Pros [in-house developer]

2. Great communication

Another benefit of having an in-house WordPress developer on your team is they will have a greater understanding of your business and your needs.

This can be a huge advantage, especially if you offer complex or unique services. It'll be much easier to explain what you need to be done to someone who's aware of the challenges your business is facing.

Communication is much quicker with in-house staff. You don't have to schedule or wait for a meeting each time you have something to discuss. This can play a big role in emergency situations when you need something done ASAP (like bug fixes or setting up a new feature).

It's also quite important to team up with people who share your values and fit your company's culture.

With a full-time web developer, there's no/limited communication gap, mismatch of expectation or any other excuse for failure.

3. Aligned interests

Your in-house web developers (if compensated properly) may "feel at home," or as a part of the "family." They may identify with your company, seeing your success as their own.

Positive working environment may motivate your developer (all staff in general) to put in the extra effort and build a site that has the potential to disrupt the market and generate massive revenue, which is perfectly aligned with your interests.
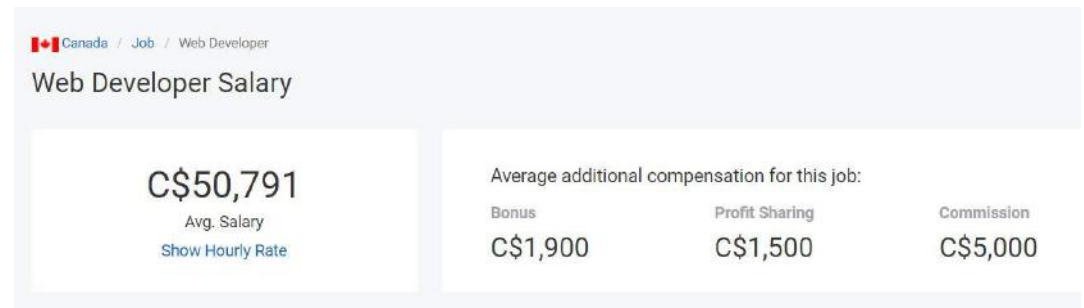
But this will require huge investments in your human resources. Which brings us to the cons…

Cons [in-house developer]

1. High overhead expense

Obviously, the biggest drawback is the cost. Hiring an in-house web developer is the most expensive solution out of the three!

According to PayScale.com, the average compensation for a Web Developer in Canada is CAD $50K/year

Most experienced developers (with a few years of experience) can easily make close to C$100k/year (plus bonuses, benefits or even profit sharing) which will increase your expenses even further.

Hiring an in-house developer will also have additional expenses such as office furniture, hardware, software licenses and more.

Cons   [in-house developer]

2.   Potential risk
(Job Hopping)

Superb web developers are always in high-demand. This reflects in their high salaries, but also in their readiness to switch jobs, known as "job hopping."

According to hackerlife.com, most developers won't stay more than two years at a small company.
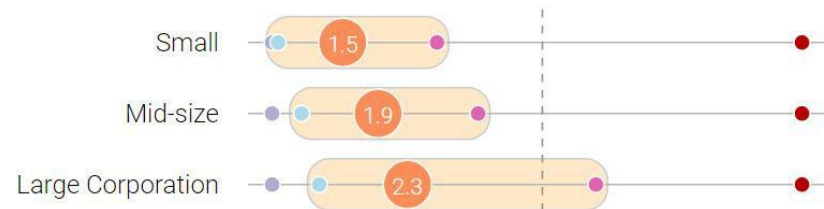
It is not uncommon to see individuals jump ship to another company if they get a better offer (compensation) or an opportunity to work on the 'next big thing.'

Not to mention some will even start their own business after gaining enough experience in the field, with all the knowledge and intel they learned from working with you

This can have a big negative impact on your business, increasing your hiring costs, loss of productivity as well as reduced morale and customer loyalty.

Cons   [in-house developer]

3.   Narrow scope of work

A "web developer" is a fairly broad term.

Some might specialize in certain programming languages such as PHP, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, while others focus on .asp, .net, etc.

Yes, there are 'full stack' developers for hire, but they are worth much more than the average 50K/year.

Furthermore, most web developers might not have sufficient 'marketing' skills. Knowing how to 'build' a website doesn't mean he/she knows about SEO, lead generation, conversation rate optimization, user experience, and third-party service integrations (Mailchimp, Infusionsoft, Google Analytics, etc.)

So for most businesses, hiring a developer (one person) can get you started but won't take you to the next level. Rather you will need a development team which also means driving your costs up further.

Also, if you're not tech savvy yourself, you'll need to hire someone to manage your developer team, and their salaries can get pretty steep as well.

Who is it for?

While this approach might make perfect sense for established companies, it might not be the best solution for everyone, especially small businesses.

For small and medium businesses (SMB), high overhead costs and potential risks outweigh potential benefits of hiring an in-house developer.

Outsourcing To An Offshore WordPress Developer

On the other side of the spectrum, if cost and flexibility are your main concerns, you might consider outsourcing your development offshore.

According to a Deloitte survey (2018), outsourcing is expected to grow, especially in the IT sector.

Again, you can turn to the internet to find great, talented developers from all over the world, who have the necessary skills to build and manage your site.

Upwork is one of the biggest freelancer platforms on the internet (formerly oDesk & Elance. They merged in 2013).

On Upwork you can pretty much find people with any skillset, from developers to designers and even marketers for a fraction of what it would cost to hire a local specialist (Canada and USA).

Fiverr is your next option, with a unique system where each service starts only $5!

As good as it might seem, you should really ask yourself: Are you willing to hand your business to someone for a fiver?

Freelancer.com (another freelancer marketplace) with an abundance of skilled professionals from all over the world.

Yes, hiring an offshore developer usually costs less than hiring locally. However, experience, knowledge, skills, communications, deadlines are things you should also factor in when deciding.

Pros [offshore freelancers]

1. Low cost
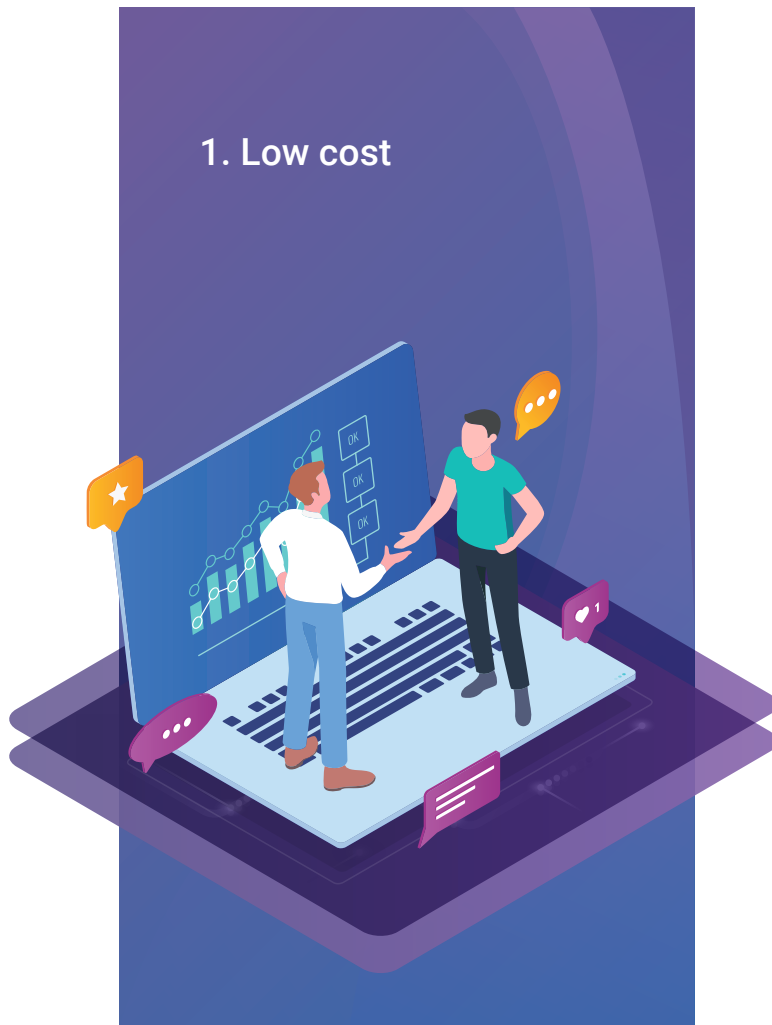
In most cases, the biggest advantage of outsourcing your work to offshore freelancers is the cost.

They can be hired at a much lower rate than local developers.

Look! Someone from India will be more than happy to do your web development for only $10/hr.

Furthermore, most freelancers are responsible for their own software or scripts needed to complete the task, so you will only have to pay the agreed hourly rate.

Also, you won't need to provide office space, equipment or furniture— another great way to save some money.

Pros [offshore freelancers]

2. The highest flexibility

Outsourcing enables you to hire professionals for a limited time, according to your business or project needs.

You are not 'tied or committed' with the service.

You can hire freelance offshore developers on a project basis. When the task or project is done, you pay for the efforts and part ways.

Then when the next project comes up, you can hire the same person again or get another freelancer to complete your task.

3. Speed and scalability

While hiring a local developer can take from weeks to months (collecting resumes, interviews, background checks, etc.), finding and hiring a freelancer on Upwork (or other platforms) can be done within a few days, if not hours.

Whatever your requirements are, there are dozens of freelancers eagerly waiting to work with you. All you have to do is narrow down the list of candidates and pick the right one and get started.

Projects can also vary in terms of team size. For some tasks, a single developer can suffice. On the other hand, more complex projects may need a whole team of specialists with different expertise.

With outsourcing, you can scale up the team of developers to fit specific needs of each project.

Cons [offshore freelancers]

1. Communication issues

Communicating efficiently with a non-native English speaker can prove to be more than challenging.

This is especially true if you aren't tech savvy yourself. You might not be using the right terms/words when explaining your requirements. It can lead to all sorts of misunderstandings, and your project might fail before it even starts!

Furthermore, it's not just about language barriers; culture gaps can also pose a problem.

Hiring freelancers from different cultural background can become a massive obstacle for mutual understanding of specific project requirements.

This can lead to a miscommunication hell, extended downtimes and missed opportunities which can potentially cost you a lot of money.
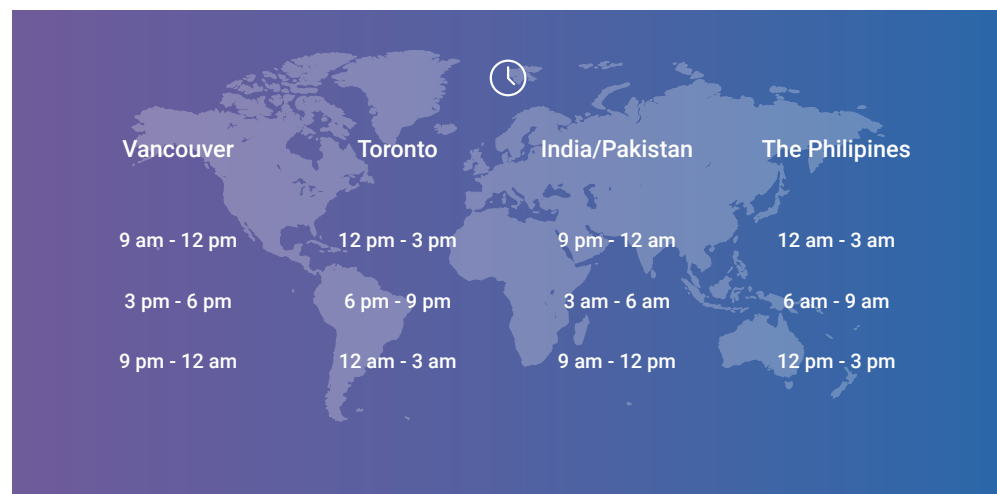
Cons   [offshore freelancers]

2. Logistical issues

Time-zone differences can be a real nuisance; it can be quite demanding to manage and coordinate a team of remote developers across the world.

For example, if you assign a task at 3 pm EST, your offshore developer might not see the task until 3 am EST (12 hours difference).

To make matters worse, if your instructions aren't clear, then they will email you back with a bunch of questions. So, you and the developer will email one another back and forth – nothing gets done. This can translate into days of wasted time.

In a business where time is money, I would say this is the biggest disadvantage.

Vancouver	Toronto	India/Pakistan	The Philipines
9 am - 12 pm	12 pm - 3 pm	9 pm - 12 am	12 am - 3 am
3 pm - 6 pm	6 pm - 9 pm	3 am - 6 am	6 am - 9 am
9 pm - 12 am	12 am - 3 am	9 am - 12 pm	12 pm - 3 pm

Cons   [offshore freelancers]

3. Management issues

Similar to in-house developers, most freelancers have a very narrow skill set - you can only hire one to do a specific set of tasks.

For a complex project or if you have high expectations, you might have to hire multiple freelancers (assemble a team) to achieve the results you want. A whole team means you might also need to hire a 'project manager' to manage and coordinate all your offshore developers.

If you find managing in-house employees challenging, then you will find managing a team of virtual devs/designers to be a (virtual) nightmare!

4. Limited support

Hiring offshore freelancer developers might sound great, but it's usually a one-off solution.

They might be available today but not tomorrow (or ever again for that matter). There's no long-term commitment between you two. Freelancers have no obligation to continue supporting the development once it's completed.

As you know, most websites will eventually need upgrades, updates, fixes, modifications, etc., and you need that support. So, you might just end up hiring another developer for this.

And this can be a huge hassle - having to train them and explain the problem again. It will take quite some time and effort before your new developer understands the previous work and what needs to be done.

Cons   [offshore freelancers]

5. Reliability

Not all freelancers can be accessible when you need them (see logistical issues above).

They might not finish the work in time, their expectations and standards might be completely different than yours.

Some might take on more work than they can handle, which could cause delays or even cancellations. To you, this is a waste of resources and may result in loss of opportunity.

Besides, not all freelancers are in pursuit of a long-term partnership. Most are just looking for a gig.

Some are just looking to make a quick buck, then disappear into the air. You won't be able to find them again.

Others might seek new challenges and don't like working on the same project. So even if you're happy with their service, you won't be able to get ahold of them again.

6. Security and confidentiality

This depends on how comfortable you are giving access or sharing trade secrets with a complete stranger living on the other side of the world.

Different counties have different regulations when it comes to copyright, intellectual property and other laws meant to protect your trade secrets and other interests.

And it's not exactly easy to enforce laws and confidentiality agreements when you're working with people from varying political and legal systems.

Without firm regulations, your relationship is purely based on trust, which may not always be a good thing.

Who is it for?

This is a great one-off solution for anyone on a tight budget.
I find this approach work best if you have a small, straightforward
task or project.

For anything more complex, when you have high expectations
and need a long term partnership, best consider the other
two options.

Managed WordPress Agency (MWA)

A Managed WordPress Agency (MWA) is a specialized service for WordPress and WooCommerce development.

Managed WordPress services will ensure your website launches successfully and is always running with up-to-date WordPress plugins, themes, integrations and more.

Unlike the other two options (hiring locally, outsourcing offshore), with Managed WordPress you get a full team of developers, designers and other professionals who provide the full stack of WordPress solutions to you.

What's cool is your site is fully managed by the agency, and you won't have to lift a finger. Hosting, maintenance, backups, updates, security, etc., all is handled by a professional WordPress team so you can focus on running your business.

Some providers go even beyond just Managed WordPress services. In that case, you're getting a full **Online Presence Manager**, taking care of everything your business needs online.

With Online Presence Management you don't just get a website, but also digital marketing services like SEO, Email Marketing, PPC, and others critical for success online.

Let's dive deeper and list out main pros and cons of this approach.

Pros   [wordpress agency]

1. Getting the 'full package'

As mentioned before, a single web developer won't be of much help. One person can only do so much, with limited skillset and knowledge (not to mention 'time').

An experienced team of developers and designers can get your site up much faster with a higher chance of meeting your expectations.

With a Managed WordPress Agency, you a team of highly-skilled professionals that take care of all your website needs.

Plus, if you go for a full Online Presence Management, you get everything you need to grow your business online in one place - a cool website and digital marketing working together towards your business bottom-line.

Having everything under one roof, can also you save a ton of time and effort on hiring and management.

Pros   [wordpress agency]

2. Round-the-clock support

Support is big when it comes to running a website. Especially for non-techy users.

To do well online, you have to provide a smooth user experience, which means your site needs to perform 100% all the time.

Unfortunately, fixes and updates are a necessary evil of every website. That's why, when the time comes, you want to make sure your developers have got your back.

Managed WordPress agencies (at least the good ones) offer 24/7 support for your peace of mind. Your site will be monitored round-the-clock for any issues to make sure it's fixed immediately for zero downtime.

Updates, security, backups, and maintenance also keep your site running without any hiccups for best user experience.

Pros   [wordpress agency]

3. Easily control expenses
(no surprise bills)

Managed WordPress agencies run on a subscription basis. You get all the services for a single monthly payment.

No matter how demanding your website is, the cost stays the same. You won't be charged extra even if you have hundreds of requests or questions per month.

This gives you full control of your business finances. The subscription model allows you to plan your expenses with no surprise bills.

And anyone running a business knows how important it is to be able to plan and control

4. Save money and time

It's also worth mentioning that with an all in one service you can save both money and time.

Managed WordPress in most cases would cost you less compared to the other two options.

Hiring a team of specialists required for your online growth would cost an arm and a leg, especially if you opt-in for in-house staff.

You can also save a ton of time on recruitment and hiring process. But not only that, you can cut down costs and time spent on managing your staff, too.

Cons   [wordpress agency]

1. No custom development and integration

Managed WordPress agencies won't work with custom developed integrations.

For instance, if you have a custom built software (such as custom coded CRM) that you want to integrate into your WordPress site.

To make sure your visitors get a smooth user experience, Managed WordPress providers only work with tested and verified integrations.

If this is a deal breaker for you, a better fit is perhaps outsourcing offshore or hiring an in-house developer.

Cons   [wordpress agency]

2. Limited on-site consulting and support

Most Managed WordPress agencies don't offer on-site support.

Developers and designers work remotely from their own headquarters. To ensure best results at reasonable prices, everything is done from within their own facilities.

You're still entitled to free 24/7 support so you can contact your dev team at any moment if you have any question or request.

However, if (for whatever reason) you prefer developers to work on-site (at your location), this is something you can't expect from Managed WordPress. In that case, you should go for hiring a full-time developer option.

3. Less control

Managed WordPress agencies do all the heavy lifting around your website (especially technical), so you don't have to. However, this takes some of the control away from you.

Providers fine-tune your website for best performance and reliability so they will be the ones picking your cache, security, and other plugins.

You can still access your WordPress dashboard and add new stuff, like content for example. But anything that messes with performance will be handled by the service provider.

This can be good and bad, depending on how you look at it.

Who is it for?

Managed WordPress is best if you're running a small or medium business since you won't have to worry about hiring and managing individual specialists for each specific task.

If you want to elevate your business online, you could even opt-in for full Online Presence Management and get the best of Managed WordPress plus Digital Marketing services under one affordable subscription.

Head-to-head Comparison

Now that you know all the pros and cons of each approach.
Let's compare them head to head.

When deciding on the best option for you,
these are the 6 main factors to consider:

- Cost
- Overall reliability
- Flexibility
- Control
- Scope of work
- Support

Cost

No matter if your big or small, the cost is still a major factor for any business.

Hiring an in-house developer is clearly the most expensive option, leaving the other two to battle it out.

Managed WordPress subscription model offers controllable expenses, ranging from around a hundred to several hundred dollars a month.

Outsourcing costs vary, it really depends on who you're willing to hire. You can get a developer for as low as $10/hr.

However, considering that one developer will probably not suffice for all your needs, and you'll probably have to assemble a team of developers, the cost of outsourcing goes up significantly.

It's still the cheapest solution for one-off and short-term projects, so it really depends on your needs.

That's why there's no clear-cut winner in this category.

WINNER: Tied between Outsourcing and Managed WordPress Agency

Overall Reliability

Reliability means you get what you pay for.

Out of all the options listed, outsourcing is likely the least reliable. Assigning and managing a project with people from across the world, you've never seen before doesn't actually spell out dependability.

Managed WordPress providers guarantee delivery on all of your tasks; it's in their core business.

But, having a staff member which you can supervise directly is hard to beat.

That's why this category champion, by a small margin is the in-house developer.

WINNER: Hiring an in-house developer

Flexibility

Running a business comes with a lot of uncertainty. Which is why flexibility is another major factor to consider when picking the right option.

Full-time developers working for you don't allow for much flexibility. The hiring and firing processes take time, and they're usually regulated, meaning you can't exactly change your team whenever you need to.

On the other side, you have offshore outsourcing which gives you almost full flexibility. You can hire and let go your freelancers according to your business needs.

Hiring someone to do your work even for a few hours is possible with freelancers.

Managed WordPress also gives you a ton of flexibility because you have an entire pool of specialists at your disposal. Anyone you need can jump aboard to complete tasks for you. There's zero delays, since all of the talents is already there and can join your project instantaneously.

WINNER: Tied between Managed WordPress Agency and Outsourcing

Control

This is also a key thing to consider, and it's not only important for control-freaks.

Control can come in various shapes and sizes, but it all comes down to knowing what you're getting for your investment.

You want to control your activities, expenses, quality, and confidentiality.

Outsourcing gives you least control; you can't reliably oversee your freelancer, it's difficult to control their activities and the quality of work.

It's especially hard to stay secure when you're sharing core business information with someone you don't even know.

Managed WordPress offers quality assurance, confidentiality as well as full control over your monthly expenses.

However, due to the hands-off approach, some clients may not understand what work exactly is being done for them.

With in-house developers, you get full control because everything stays under your roof. You can manage and oversee all operations to make sure it's up to your standards.

WINNER: In-house developers

Scope of work

A single developer will not be enough to build your site or manage it. You still need a designer, a content specialist, SEO expert, etc.

Both in-house developers and outsourcing struggle with a very narrow scope of work. This means you'll have to hire and manage multiple team members which can cost you money and time.

Managed WordPress is the clear winner here since you get all the specialists you need for a successful online presence in one place.

WINNER: Managed WordPress Agency

Support

It's necessary to have good support for something tech-related such as your website.

Your business hours might be done for the day, but your website needs to run 24/7!

So you need someone to constantly keep an eye on your site to make sure it's up and performing 100% always.

Freelancers almost never provide any guarantee or support for their work. As soon as the project's over, they continue on their way to find the next client.

In-house developers do provide great support, but it's usually limited to office hours.

Managed WordPress providers monitor your site round-the-clock and are also available whenever you have some task or question.

WINNER: Managed WordPress Agency

In-house Developers vs WP Agency vs Freelance Developers

Building and Managing a WordPress website	Inhouse web developer	Managed Wordpress Agency	Freelancer (Offshore)
Cost	★	★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★
Overall Reliability	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★
Cost Flexibility	★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Control	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★
Scope of Work	★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★
Support	★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★

Final Thoughts

Bottom line is there's no "one size fits all" solution.

It really all comes down to your needs, objectives, and budget.
And it's up to you to decide on the best option for your business.

Hopefully, this guide helped you understand what options
are available for building and managing that awesome
WordPress website for your business needs.

And Good Luck!