Website Design Packages: What Is Included and Excluded

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Website Designing Packages Explained: What's Included and What's Not

Executive Summary

Website design packages are **pre-defined bundles of web design services** offered at a fixed price, aimed at simplifying the website creation process for clients (Source: samanthadigital.com). These packages typically outline exactly what services and deliverables are included – such as a certain number of pages, custom design features, mobile responsiveness, basic SEO setup, and sometimes extras like domain registration or hosting – and clarify what is *not* included in the base price (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: mayecreate.com). This report provides an **in-depth analysis of website design packages**, detailing the components usually encompassed in such packages and those that commonly fall outside the standard scope. It compiles insights from industry experts, web design agencies, and credible surveys to paint a comprehensive picture of how web design services are packaged, helping both clients and providers set clear expectations.

The research reveals that **typical inclusions** in web design packages are the core design and development of a website's pages, a content management system (CMS) for easy updates, responsive design to ensure mobile compatibility, basic on-page search engine optimization (SEO), and integration of standard features (e.g. contact forms, social media links) (Source: samanthadigital.com) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). Many packages also include an initial consultation, a set number of revisions during the design phase, and sometimes limited post-launch support (such as a short warranty period for bug fixes) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). On the other hand, **common exclusions** (services that are usually **not** covered unless explicitly added) include copywriting for website content, providing custom images or photography, logo/branding design, advanced SEO and ongoing digital marketing, web hosting and domain fees beyond initial setup, and long-term maintenance or content updates beyond a brief support window (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). These exclusions often surprise first-time clients – for instance, it is "industry standard" that writing the website's text is not included by default (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au), and many agencies assume the client will supply content and images or purchase those services separately.

Clarity in defining what's included versus what isn't is crucial. Misunderstandings can lead to **scope creep**, unexpected costs, or disputes: industry professionals report cases of clients feeling upset at project completion when they realized that certain expected features (like extensive SEO or ongoing updates) were not part of the agreed package (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). To avoid such issues, contracts and quotes for web design packages should itemize deliverables in detail (Source: mayecreate.com). Best practices recommended by experts include explicitly listing every inclusion (number of pages, rounds of revisions, specific functionalities, etc.) and stating that anything not listed is excluded or available at extra cost (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This report not only enumerates typical inclusions/exclusions but also examines **case studies** of real web design package offerings – illustrating how a well-structured package is presented – and provides guidance for clients on evaluating packages and for agencies on structuring them effectively.

Historically, web design services have evolved from purely custom, quote-based projects into more standardized packages to cater to smaller businesses' needs for transparency and affordability (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). The report traces this evolution and looks at **current trends**: for example, nearly **75% of users judge a company's credibility by its website design** and performance (Source: www.networksolutions.com), making it imperative that even basic packages include quality design and mobile optimization. At the same time, about **27% of small businesses still have no website as of 2025**, often due to perceived cost or complexity (Source: www.sonatasites.com) (Source: www.sonatasites.com) – a gap that well-defined, affordable packages seek to fill. The analysis explores how packages attempt to balance cost and features, including tiered offerings (e.g. "Basic", "Business", and "E-commerce" tiers) targeting different needs and budgets. It also discusses **future directions**, such as the rise of subscription-based web design services (where a monthly fee covers ongoing design, hosting, and updates) (Source: mangoinnovation.com), and the integration of new tools like AI in streamlining web design offerings.

In conclusion, **website design packages** serve as a valuable approach for making professional web design accessible and transparent. However, both clients and designers must carefully delineate what is included and excluded. By examining multiple perspectives – from client expectations and case studies of package offerings to designers' strategic considerations – this report offers a 360-degree understanding of web design packages. The aim is to equip readers with knowledge to choose the right package for their needs or to construct fair, comprehensive packages that avoid misunderstandings. All claims and observations are supported by citations from reputable sources throughout, making this report a robust reference on the topic of web design service packages.

Introduction and Background

In today's digital era, a company's website often forms the **first impression** for potential customers. Studies show that **84% of consumers believe a business is more credible if it has a website** (Source: www.networksolutions.com), and **nearly 75% of users judge a business's credibility based on its website design** (Source: www.networksolutions.com). A well-designed, functional website has become not just an asset but a necessity for businesses of all sizes. Consequently, the web design industry has grown to serve this need, offering services ranging from fully custom web development to more standardized "website design packages" tailored for common use cases. These packages are particularly prevalent among small to medium-sized businesses that want to establish an online presence without engaging in an open-ended, custom development process.

Yet, while the importance of having a website is clear – with approximately **73% of small businesses in the U.S. having a website by 2025** (up from 64% in 2020) (Source: www.sonatasites.com) (Source: www.networksolutions.com) – there remains confusion about **what exactly is included when you purchase a website design service**. Unlike buying a physical product, purchasing a website involves a combination of creative design, technical development, and often ongoing services. If not carefully defined, the scope of a web design project can be misunderstood. **Many clients assume certain services will be "part of the package," only to discover they incur additional fees** or were never planned by the designer (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). For example, a business owner might take for granted that the web designer will write the text for the website or handle all future updates, whereas many designers expect the client to supply the content and view ongoing updates as separate from the initial design package (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). These gaps in expectations can lead to conflicts, surprise costs, and dissatisfaction on both sides.

Website design packages emerged as a solution to provide clarity and affordability. Traditionally, in the early days of the web (1990s and early 2000s), most websites were built via fully custom projects: a client would describe their needs, and the web designer/developer would quote a price based on hours and features, often with significant ambiguity or technical complexity involved. As the industry matured and competition increased, especially by the 2010s, many freelance designers and agencies started offering fixed-price packages. These would bundle common requirements for small business websites – for instance, a 5-page brochure site, or a basic e-commerce site – into a **pre-defined scope** with a clear price tag. The rationale was that **clear packages and pricing can dispel a lot of customer doubts**; many clients, especially those with simpler needs, feel more comfortable seeing *upfront pricing* and a menu of options, rather than entering an open-ended engagement (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). As one analysis puts it, small clients "are simply accustomed to seeing prices up front in big, bold letters," and transparent packages help meet that expectation (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

At the same time, packaging web design services requires carefully balancing **flexibility** with **clarity**. A well-known challenge is that not all projects fit neatly into predefined boxes. By offering set packages, a design firm risks either **over-promising (if a project has hidden complexities)** or **turning away complex but valuable projects that don't align with any standard package** (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Many agencies address this by offering both: a few standard packages for typical small projects **and** the option of fully custom quotes for larger or unique needs (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). For the standardized packages, it's essential to explicitly delineate what is included for the price. **Every feature not included in the client's chosen package should be paid as an extra, and customers should be informed of that fact upfront** (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). This principle echoes throughout industry advice – transparency in scope prevents clients from assuming a "Taj Mahal on a tin house budget" scenario (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). In other words, clearly defined packages set realistic expectations, so a client knows that (for example) if they chose the Basic package with 5 pages, any additional pages or special features will cost extra (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

This report delves into **what's typically included in website design packages and what's not**, to provide clarity to those venturing into a web design project. We gather information from various web design companies' published package details, expert blogs, and industry surveys. The goal is to enumerate the services and deliverables one can usually expect within a package deal, contrasted with those things that commonly are excluded (unless you opt for a higher package or add-on services).

We begin by defining **web design packages** and exploring their structure. Then, we discuss the **key components that are generally included**, such as design work, number of pages, mobile responsiveness, basic SEO, use of a CMS, etc., providing details and examples for each. Following that, we outline the **common exclusions or limitations** of base packages – things like content creation, custom functionalities, or ongoing support that typically fall outside the initial scope. Real-world examples and **case studies** are presented to illustrate how different providers structure their packages and to highlight both good practice and potential pitfalls. One case study examines a small design agency offering three tiers of packages (Starter, Business, E-commerce) and analyzes how each tier differs in included features and price (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Another example looks at a company that offers very low-cost, minimal packages mainly to upsell another service (hosting) and why that might be less beneficial for clients seeking a robust solution (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

Throughout the discussion, the importance of **documentation and communication** is emphasized. Industry experts strongly advise getting everything in writing – an itemized list of deliverables in the proposal or contract – to avoid any ambiguity about what is included (Source: mayecreate.com) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). We'll highlight specific advice, such as ensuring the contract specifies whether things like design revisions, stock imagery, or training are provided, and checking if post-launch support or warranties are offered.

Finally, the report touches on **implications and future trends**. Web design services are not static: client expectations and technology continuously evolve. For instance, a decade ago mobile-friendly design might have been an optional add-on; today it is essentially mandatory in every package (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.networksolutions.com). We discuss the growth of **mobile-first** and responsive design as a standard inclusion, the increasing expectation for SEO-friendly sites out of the box, and the integration of newer concerns (such as website security and performance optimization) into package offerings. Looking forward, we consider how the rise of **website builders and AI tools** influences the industry – lowering some barriers to entry for very basic sites – and how many agencies are responding by emphasizing full-service packages or ongoing subscription models. The subscription model, where a client pays a monthly fee for continuous website maintenance and updates instead of a large upfront cost, is gaining traction as a "game-changer" in web design, providing predictable revenue for designers and ongoing value for clients (Source: mangoinnovation.com) (Source: mangoinnovation.com). This and other trends will be analyzed for their impact on what's included in tomorrow's web design packages.

In summary, this introduction has framed the scope of our research: to **explain the components of website design packages, distinguishing inclusions from exclusions, and to provide context so that readers can navigate these offerings knowledgeably**. Backed by data and expert commentary, the following sections offer a deep dive into each aspect of web design packages.

Understanding Web Design Packages: Definitions and Types

Before dissecting specific inclusions and exclusions, it's important to understand **what a "web design package" means in the industry context**. A **web design package** is essentially a **pre-packaged bundle of services** related to creating a website, offered for a flat or fixed price (Source: samanthadigital.com). Instead of charging purely hourly or à la carte for each task, the designer or agency groups typical required tasks into a set package. Samantha Williams, a web designer and author, defines web design packages as *"pre-packaged sets of services that web designers offer clients for a fixed price"* (Source: samanthadigital.com). These packages are designed to meet the needs of certain kinds of projects or clients. They provide a **convenient way for clients to select services** appropriate for their goals without having to negotiate every line item from scratch (Source: samanthadigital.com).

Components of a Package and Basic Structure

In general, a web design package will specify a **scope of work**. For instance, a package might include design and development of up to N pages of a website, a certain number of revisions during the design process, integration of specified features (like a contact form, image gallery, or shopping cart), and perhaps ancillary services like domain registration for the first year or initial SEO setup (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: samanthadigital.com). By clearly stating what the package includes, the service provider makes it easier for non-technical clients to understand what they are purchasing. As the Ramotion design agency describes, *web design packages are a comprehensive collection of web-related services that allow businesses to launch their online presence easily* (Source: www.ramotion.com). They serve as a **one-stop shop** for website creation, often even introducing clients to what services they might need (some clients may not have been aware of the need for things like security certificates or content management until they see it listed in a package) (Source: www.ramotion.com).

However, not all packages are identical. **Different agencies craft packages differently**, based on their target market and expertise. Some packages are very bare-bones, including only the essentials to get a simple site online, while others are more comprehensive. Commonly, though, a baseline package will address both **design** (the visual look and user interface of the site) and **development** (the coding and technical implementation of the site) (Source: samanthadigital.com). The package might also cover other website launch needs such as hosting setup or domain setup, but as we will explore, those are not universally included by all providers (Source: www.ramotion.com).

One key aspect of packages is that they are often **geared toward a specific type or size of website**. For example, a freelancer might offer one package for a **"Brochure Website"** (a small informational site for a business, perhaps 5-10 pages with no advanced functionality) and another package for an **"E-commerce Website"** (an online store with product listings and a shopping cart) (Source: samanthadigital.com). It's common to see packages marketed with names like *Basic*, *Standard*, *Premium* or *Bronze/Silver/Gold*, indicating tiered levels of service. These tiers correspond to increasing levels of functionality and service: *Basic* might be a simple, lower-cost option, whereas *Premium* could include advanced features and more customization (Source: www.ramotion.com) (Source: www.ramotion.com). For instance, a basic package might limit the number of pages and include a template-based design, whereas a premium package might offer unlimited pages, a fully custom design, and additional services like logo design or ongoing support.

Common Types of Web Design Packages

Across various web design agencies, several **recurring types of packages** appear. According to a 2024 overview by a digital consultancy, typical packages can be categorized as follows (Source: samanthadigital.com):

- **Basic Website Package:** Aimed at those needing a simple online presence. It usually includes a set number of pages (often 5 to 10) with a standard layout and basic functionality. The design is often template-based or only lightly customized. This package might *even bundle essential setup tasks like domain registration and basic hosting for the first year*, plus on-site SEO basics (Source: samanthadigital.com) (Source: samanthadigital.com). Basic packages focus on being affordable and quick to deploy. For example, New Perspective Design (a studio in South Africa) notes that a basic package provides a *"tailored design to ensure your website uniquely represents your brand"* but within a limited scope, along with *"fundamental SEO practices"* and a few stock images to get started (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). Price ranges for a basic package can vary but are often in the **hundreds to low-thousands of dollars**. One source estimates a **Basic Website Package might cost around $500–$2,500** for a small business site (Source: samanthadigital.com), though this can increase with the inclusion of more features or pages.

- **E-Commerce Package:** Geared toward businesses that need to **sell products or services online**. This includes setting up an e-commerce platform (like Shopify, WooCommerce for WordPress, or a custom cart system), integration of a payment gateway (so the site can process credit cards or PayPal, etc.), and often basic inventory management functions to handle products (Source: samanthadigital.com). Because e-commerce functionality significantly increases the complexity (with product pages, a database, security considerations, etc.), e-commerce packages are priced higher than basic informational site packages. Typical price ranges might be **$2,500–$10,000 or more** depending on scale (Source: samanthadigital.com). E-commerce packages usually explicitly list if they include things like a certain number of product listings set up by the designer, the integration of shipping calculation, and whether ongoing support is provided for maintaining the store. *What's included* might be, for example: setting up the store with up to 50 products, configuring payment processing, and training the owner to add more products. *What's not included* could be ongoing management of the store or advanced custom coding beyond the standard cart – unless you choose a higher plan.

- **Custom or Advanced Package:** Many agencies offer a "Custom" package (or use terms like *Professional* or *Enterprise*) which is essentially not fixed in scope – it's a starting price for projects that don't fit the other templates (Source: samanthadigital.com). A custom package is fully tailored to the client's needs. It may include a custom design from scratch (no templates at all), potentially custom development of specific features, integration with other systems, branding work, and so on (Source: samanthadigital.com). Because it's so variable, the price range is broad – one

guide cites custom packages starting around **$5,000 and ranging up to $50,000+** depending on requirements (Source: samanthadigital.com). Custom packages are essentially a hybrid of the package approach and the traditional "bespoke quote" approach: the agency might advertise that they do custom projects and give a ballpark range, but the exact deliverables will be defined in a personalized proposal. In terms of inclusions, a true custom project might involve more **consultation and discovery** (often an initial strategy or discovery phase is part of the deal), possibly content strategy, **branding and graphic design** beyond the website (e.g. logo creation, style guide), and more in-depth features specific to the client's business (like custom forms, user membership systems, etc. if needed) (Source: samanthadigital.com). Essentially, it includes whatever is agreed upon – but nothing is "standard" since it's by definition outside the standard packages.

- **Responsive Design Package:** Some agencies break out a package specifically focused on updating or creating a site to be **mobile-friendly and responsive** across devices (Source: samanthadigital.com). This might be targeted at clients who have an older website that isn't mobile-optimized and need a refresh to modern standards. In such a package, the deliverable might be a redesign of existing pages with responsive HTML/CSS, without necessarily adding new content or features. The inclusion is purely front-end focused, ensuring the site "adapts to different devices, providing an optimal viewing experience on tablets, phones, and desktops" (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). Pricing for a responsive retrofit could be separate; the reference suggests a range of **$1,000–$5,000** for a responsive design package (Source: samanthadigital.com), depending on the size of the site. However, today, responsiveness is usually **not optional** for new websites – any modern web design package implicitly or explicitly includes "mobile responsive design" as a standard inclusion (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). Thus, standalone responsive packages are often marketed to those updating an existing site rather than building new ones.

- **CMS Package:** Another type mentioned in some sources is a package built around a particular **Content Management System (CMS)** (Source: samanthadigital.com). For instance, a "WordPress Website Package" might highlight that the site will be built on WordPress and that the client will be able to manage content via an admin interface. In practice, most web design packages (except perhaps the very simplest ones) do involve a CMS, whether WordPress, Joomla, Drupal, or a proprietary one, since clients want the ability to edit their site without coding. The inclusion here is the installation and configuration of the CMS, possibly with a set of plugins or extensions the agency commonly uses (SEO plugin, security plugin, etc.). Training on using the CMS is often part of such a package. The **benefit of a CMS-based package** is emphasized as allowing the client to "update and manage the content on their website easily" (Source: samanthadigital.com). Cost-wise, CMS-based packages overlap with the others (it's more a way to describe the technology than a separate tier of pricing; e.g., a basic site can be a CMS site). Some agencies might differentiate a static HTML site offering versus a CMS offering, but nowadays CMS (especially WordPress) is so prevalent that a "Basic site" typically means a basic WordPress site.

- **Website Redesign Package:** This is targeted at clients who already have a website and need a visual refresh or overhaul of features (Source: samanthadigital.com). A redesign package might include a new design theme or template, migrating existing content into the new design, and making some improvements in functionality (like adding a blog, improving page speed, etc.). It usually does not include creating a lot of brand-new content from scratch (the existing content is reused) unless specified. The inclusion list here emphasizes a "complete website redesign, new features, and functionality" as needed (Source: samanthadigital.com). Things like content migration and ensuring SEO continuity (like preserving search engine rankings during the redesign) might be part of this if the agency is thorough – though not all explicitly include the SEO migration piece. Price ranges cited for redesign projects can be similar to new sites (depending on the site's size), often **$1,000–$10,000** for small to mid-sized sites (Source: samanthadigital.com). This wide range reflects that a redesign could be minor (a facelift on a few pages) or major (a full rebuild with new tech).

These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a particular agency might combine aspects: you could have a *Basic E-commerce Package* (for a small online store) versus an *Advanced E-commerce Package* (for a larger catalog). Also, not every agency uses the same labels – but the underlying idea is to define packages by **site purpose and complexity**. A key point emphasized by experts is that **when comparing packages, one must look beyond the name and price – examine the specific services and features included in each package** (Source: samanthadigital.com). It's not safe to assume, for instance, that SEO or maintenance is included just because a package is premium; sometimes even pricey packages focus on design and still treat marketing or upkeep as separate services. The next sections will dive into the details of what features and services are commonly included in these packages, and which ones are usually add-ons.

Benefits and Rationale for Packages

It's worth noting why web design packages are offered, from the perspective of the web design service provider. Understanding this can shed light on why certain things are included or excluded:

- **Standardization for Efficiency:** By templatizing the offerings, agencies can streamline their work. They can develop internal checklists and processes for a "Basic website package" that make delivery faster and more predictable. This efficiency often translates into a lower price for the client than a purely custom job, because the provider knows roughly how many hours are needed and can reuse components (like a favored

template or CMS setup). As a result, web design packages can be **cost-effective for clients** while ensuring the designer still makes a profit by controlling scope (Source: www.ramotion.com). It's mentioned that segmenting deliverables into tiers "helps ensure the value delivered is proportionate to the price" (Source: www.ramotion.com), meaning each package is designed so that the included work matches what the client pays (with higher packages commanding higher fees for more work).

- **Clarity and Marketing Advantage:** Packages are easier to market and sell. They remove a lot of the mystery for a client who might not be tech-savvy. Instead of engaging in a potentially intimidating discovery conversation that goes into technical details before giving a quote, an agency can put on their website: "Starter Website: $1,500 – includes X, Y, Z." This clarity not only attracts serious clients (those who see the value and price and are ready to proceed) but also **filters out "tire-kickers"** – people who aren't serious or expect a lot for nothing (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Tom Ewer, writing for the Elegant Themes blog, notes that clearly listing packages and prices can weed out the clients who unrealistically hope for a $50 miracle website, as they will see upfront that real websites cost more (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). It also saves time in negotiations; as Ewer mentions, one of the hardest parts of dealing with clients is haggling over prices and scope, and packages help set the expectations from the start (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

- **Defined Scope Protects Against Scope Creep:** For designers, one nightmare is a project that keeps growing because the client "thought that was included" or continuously asks for tweaks. With a package, especially if well-documented, it's easier to say "that request is outside the package, it will cost extra." This is actually beneficial to both parties in a sense – the client knows in advance what they are getting for their budget, and the provider knows exactly what they need to deliver. One article highlighted that **well-defined packages let the client know exactly what their money is buying** – e.g., a set number of pages, a responsive design, certain features – and that everything beyond that is clearly marked as extra (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). This prevents the scenario where a client might otherwise assume a package is all-inclusive of any feature. For instance, if the basic package doesn't include a user login system or a multilingual setup, the list of deliverables in the package should make it clear those aren't included, thus prompting a conversation or an upsell if the client needs them.

- **Educating Clients:** Interestingly, web design packages also serve an educational purpose. They often list things a client might not have thought of. For example, a client might come wanting "just a website," but when they see a package listing "SEO setup" or "content management training" as items, it reveals to them that these are important components of a website project. Denis Pakhaliuk, CEO of Ramotion, noted that packages can *"provide a great introduction to the services and capabilities of agencies,"* effectively showing clients what goes into making an effective website (Source: www.ramotion.com). By seeing a breakdown of a package, a client might realize the value of certain elements (e.g., analytics integration or security measures) that they wouldn't have requested on their own.

Despite these advantages, it must be stressed that one size does not fit all. The existence of packages doesn't eliminate the need for custom solutions. As mentioned, complex projects (like a highly specialized web application or a large corporate site with integration needs) often cannot be shoehorned into a basic package without extensive modifications (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Most savvy providers will recognize when a potential project falls outside their standard packages and switch to a custom proposal mode. However, even then, understanding what's typically included or not gives both parties a starting framework to discuss the scope.

To summarize this section: **Web design packages** are structured sets of services for building websites, meant to clarify scope and pricing. They come in various **types (basic informational, e-commerce, custom, etc.)** and are offered in **tiers** to match different client budgets. The next section will break down, in detail, the specific components that are usually **Included** in these packages, from the design phase through launch.

What's Included in Website Design Packages

Website design packages are characterized by the specific services and deliverables they **include** in the quoted price. While there is variation across different providers, there is a core set of elements that most packages for building a typical website will cover. In this section, we will examine these common inclusions one by one, citing sources that illustrate how they are presented in real package offerings.

It's important to note that the exact inclusions depend on the package level (basic vs. advanced) and the provider's policies. However, **certain fundamental components are almost always included in any paid web design package** intended to deliver a functional website.

Custom Design and Visual Layout

At the heart of a web design package is the **design of the website's look and feel**. This includes the creation of layouts for the homepage and key internal pages, the selection of color schemes, typography, imagery style, and overall branding integration on the site. Most packages will either provide a **custom-designed template** or configure a pre-made template to match the client's brand.

- **Template vs. Fully Custom Design:** Lower-tier packages often involve customizing an existing website template or theme (for example, picking a WordPress theme and adjusting colors and logos) rather than designing from scratch, because it saves time and cost. Higher-tier packages, by contrast, include original bespoke design work, sometimes starting from wireframes (skeletal outlines of page layout) to mockups (detailed design visuals) that are then implemented. It's crucial that the package description makes this clear. The Creative Collective agency notes, for instance, that if a quote *"does not mention a design mock up or wireframes, suffice to say it does not likely include them"* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). In their experience, a budget package means the designer will use an existing theme with minimal modifications, whereas a more expensive package explicitly factors in creating unique design mockups and iterating on them. In effect, **basic packages include design in a limited sense** – typically one round of a chosen template with some customization – while **premium packages include a full custom design process**.

- **Number of Pages/Layouts Included:** Every website has multiple pages (e.g. Home, About, Services, Contact). Packages typically specify how many pages they will design and set up as part of the price. For example, a basic package might include up to 5 pages. The idea is that the designer will create the layouts for those 5 pages and input content into them. If the client needs more pages, either they pay extra per page or they upgrade to a bigger package. This is a very common inclusion criterion. As one agency outlines, *"the more pages and images that need to be created and populated, the more expensive your site will be,"* so their quotes will *"always specify how many pages of content [the package] includes"* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). A snippet from their quote template is given: "Upload up to x pages of supplied content… once (no amends, basic content only)" (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This directly shows the inclusion: they will take content (provided by the client or from an existing site) and populate up to X pages as part of the package, doing it one time. If adding more pages or significantly revising content later, that would not be included (as it would fall outside the initial scope).

- **Responsive (Mobile-Friendly) Design:** In 2026, it is effectively presumed that any website package will deliver a site that is **mobile-responsive**, meaning it works and looks good on various screen sizes from phones to large monitors. Many package descriptions highlight this as a feature, because it's an important quality marker for clients. For example, in a real package example provided on Elegant Themes, even the "Starter" tier at $1,599 advertised *"Responsive web design, optimized for both mobile and tablets"* as an included item (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Responsive design is not so much an optional add-on today as it is a *standard inclusion*, given that more than half of web traffic is on mobile devices and **mobile-first design is now standard practice** (Source: www.networksolutions.com). If a website wasn't mobile-friendly, clients would rightly see that as a major flaw. Therefore, any reputable package will list responsive or mobile-friendly design in its features. For instance, New Perspective Design's list of package features includes *"Mobile Responsive Design: Design that adapts to different devices, providing an optimal viewing experience on tablets, phones, and desktops."* (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). This underscores that even in a quick-launch package, the site will not be just for desktop – it will adjust layout and content flow to smaller screens. It's worth noting that not too long ago (early 2010s), mobile/responsive design was a special consideration (sometimes costing extra), but now it's simply expected. A data point from Ender & Mind marketing found that **84% of visitors prefer mobile sites** over desktop when browsing on a mobile device (Source: www.networksolutions.com), so failing to include responsiveness would make a package nonviable.

- **Branding Integration:** While full branding (logo design, etc.) is usually *not* included unless specifically added (we'll discuss that in exclusions), nearly every package will at least integrate the client's existing logo and brand colors/fonts into the site's design. The included design work ensures the site "represents your brand and appeals to your target audience" (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za), as New Perspective describes for their custom design feature. This can include picking appropriate colors, imagery style, and tone that match the company's identity. For instance, if an agency has the information, they will style the site according to the brand guidelines the client provides. But **design of a new logo or complete brand identity is typically not part of a standard web package** (that would be a separate graphic design service). Inclusion here means using what branding assets the client has and making a visually coherent site.

- **Design Revisions:** Creating the design isn't a one-shot process; clients usually get to review and request changes. Packages often include a set number of **revision rounds** on the design mockups or on the site itself during development. For example, a starter package might include 1 revision round after the initial design is presented, whereas a higher package includes 2 or 3 rounds of revisions (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). This is typically mentioned in package details because managing revisions is a significant part of the workload. In the Elegant Themes case study, the Starter package explicitly said "including one revision after delivery" (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), the Business package had "two revisions" (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), and so on. This communicates to the client that they can ask for changes up to that many times as part of the package; beyond that, additional changes might incur fees. Including a specific number of revisions is good practice as it protects the designer from endless changes while ensuring the client they will have at least some opportunity to fine-tune the design to their liking. Essentially, the package includes iteration but in a controlled way.

- **Graphics and Imagery (Basic):** Most web designs need images or graphics. Many packages include at least some standard imagery support. This might mean that the designer will incorporate client-provided images (e.g. product photos, team photos) and maybe source some **stock images** to enhance the design if the client doesn't have enough visuals. In a list of recommended standard features, "Stock Images and Image

Editing" is noted as a beneficial inclusion (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) – meaning the agency will supply some high-quality stock photos and do basic editing so they fit nicely on the site. For example, if a consultant's website needs a banner image but the client doesn't have one, the designer could obtain a suitable stock photo within the package. Basic image editing (resizing, cropping, maybe light touch-ups) is usually included to make sure images look good on the site. However, this is different from running a full photoshoot or heavy graphic design work, which are not included (those would be extra; more on that later). But clients can expect that as part of the web design, the visuals will be put together attractively – it wouldn't just be blank pages. If a package advertises "includes stock imagery," that's a bonus because it saves the client from having to procure images themselves. New Perspective includes this as a feature, suggesting that part of their package is providing *"High-quality stock photos and professional image editing to elevate the visual appeal of your site."* (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za).

- **Frontend Development and Programming:** The phrase "web design" package can be slightly misleading – it generally includes both the **design (visual)** and the **front-end development** (coding HTML/CSS/JavaScript) to build the actual web pages. Any package will include the actual construction of the website's pages according to the design: i.e., the provider will **code the website or configure a CMS** so that the design comes to life in a browser. The client isn't expected to know how to do that; it's within scope. This includes cross-browser testing, at least on all modern major browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge, etc.) and across devices. Full compatibility with very old browsers is usually not guaranteed (for instance, support for Internet Explorer 10 or earlier might not be included unless specified, as those are deprecated). In fact, some contracts explicitly state that testing will be done on the latest versions of major browsers only. One source humorously pointed out not to expect optimization for *every* obscure browser by default (Source: mayecreate.com) – implying that while core cross-browser functionality is included, edge cases (like an outdated browser or very niche device) may not be covered unless arranged. This ensures that within the package the site will be standards-compliant and work for the vast majority of users. If a client has special requirements (say their audience uses a specific old browser or they need the site to work on an embedded device browser), that needs to be discussed separately.

In summary, **the design portion of a package covers delivering a visually appealing, brand-aligned, mobile-friendly website of a certain size (number of pages)**, with the client having some input via revisions, and with standard assets (like stock images) provided to enhance it. The next subsections will move beyond pure design into other typical inclusions, such as content management systems, hosting setup, and basic SEO.

Content Management System (CMS) and Training

Most modern websites, especially those for businesses or organizations that need to update content periodically, are built on a **Content Management System (CMS)**. A CMS allows the website owner or staff to log in and make changes to text, images, or even add new pages, without needing to code. Well-known CMS platforms include WordPress, Drupal, Joomla, and others, as well as hosted solutions like Wix or Squarespace (though those are often separate DIY offerings). When a web design package is delivered by an agency or freelancer, it often includes setting up the site on a CMS and training the client on how to use it.

- **CMS Setup and Customization:** Including a CMS means the designer will install and configure the system backend for the site. For instance, if it's a WordPress-based package, they will set up WordPress on the server, apply the chosen theme (or custom theme they developed for the client), and ensure the client can edit key areas (perhaps setting up user accounts for the client and adjusting settings). Many agencies prefer using popular CMS like WordPress because it's user-friendly for clients and flexible for developers. Ramotion's guide suggests including a CMS is "necessary" so clients can manage content without coding, recommending platforms like *WordPress, Drupal, Webflow, or HubSpot CMS* as options to include based on the project (Source: www.ramotion.com). Indeed, their advice is that a web design package should come with *"a user-friendly CMS… with an intuitive dashboard that's easy to navigate… [with] editing tools and asset management"* (Source: www.ramotion.com) (Source: www.ramotion.com). This indicates that as an included feature, the site won't be a black box; the client gets a functional back-end system to maintain the site.

  Some packages may even be named after the CMS (e.g., "WordPress Website Package" or "Webflow Site Package"), highlighting that as a selling point. The Samantha Digital breakdown explicitly lists a *Content Management System (CMS) Package* variant, emphasizing that the site is built on a CMS and can be easily updated by the client (Source: samanthadigital.com). But even outside a separate "CMS package," the majority of small business site packages today include one by default. A static HTML-only site is rare unless it's a very simple one-page site or the client specifically doesn't want a CMS.

- **Client Access and Ownership:** Along with CMS setup is the principle of giving the client access to their website's administration. A package should include handing over the "keys" of the website, typically at launch. For example, New Perspective lists *"Access to your web hosting manager"* as one of the standard features (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). This means the client will get login credentials to the hosting control panel or CMS admin so they have control over domains, email accounts, etc., directly. It's an inclusion focused on transparency: the site isn't locked down – the client can manage core aspects if they wish. Some unscrupulous providers might omit this (keeping full control to themselves in hopes the client must return for every little change), but reputable packages include

transferring control. Also related is **content ownership** – a package should clarify that the website and its content will belong to the client upon full payment. Ramotion notes that having a clear agreement on content ownership is critical, whether the agency retains partial rights or gives full ownership (Source: www.ramotion.com). Many standard contracts say the client owns the final website code and content, while the agency might retain credit or rights to reuse generic components. From the client's perspective, inclusion of the CMS and access implies they essentially own the site moving forward (they are not renting it, unless it's a subscription model which is a different case).

- **Training and Handover:** Once the site is built on a CMS, the client may need to learn how to use it – e.g., how to log in and edit a page or post a blog article. Many web design packages include a **training session or documentation** as part of the launch phase. The extent varies: a basic package might just provide a PDF guide or a brief walkthrough, whereas a premium package might include a multi-hour personalized training. The Creative Collective includes "Training & Handover" as a standard part of their packages (at least in their practice) – they offer a *"1-2 hour training and handover session"* after launch, tailored to the site's size and the client's tech ability (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). They note that not all companies include this, so it's a selling point for them that they do (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The goal of such training is to empower the client to self-manage content, which not only is good service but also reduces the likelihood of the client repeatedly coming back with minor change requests (which can be inefficient for both parties if they can handle it themselves) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

  Another example: New Perspective's list suggests including *"Private Website Training: Exclusive training sessions to help you manage and update your website efficiently."* as a package feature (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). So this indicates that at least for their offerings, some dedicated training is part of the deliverables. Even if not explicitly stated, many designers will at minimum walk the client through how to do basic edits before concluding the project – it's often an implied inclusion in delivering a CMS-based site. In terms of evidence, this aligns with industry norms: one survey of web agencies found that a post-launch training or tutorial is commonly provided, especially for sites built on self-hosted CMSs.

- **Basic Documentation:** If live training is not offered, then typically some documentation is given. It could be generic (like a link to the official WordPress user guide) or tailored (a custom admin guide showing how to update their specific site). Including a custom guide is more typical of higher-cost packages. Lower cost packages might just rely on existing CMS user-friendliness. But clarity on this is critical: the client should know if they'll be taught to use the site. If a package doesn't mention training, a client should ask, as Creative Collective suggests – because it may not be included elsewhere (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

In summary, the inclusion of a CMS and training means **the client can take over the day-to-day content changes** without always needing the developer. This is a big value-add of modern web design packages compared to, say, early 2000s websites where every change required calling up the web programmer. By providing a CMS, designers include future empowerment of the client as part of the package.

Web Hosting and Domain Setup (Initial Configuration)

To actually make a website accessible on the internet, two things are needed beyond design: a **domain name** (the address, like yourbusiness.com) and a **web hosting server** (where the website files and database reside). How web design packages handle domain and hosting varies. Some packages include assistance or even cover the first year's cost for these items, while others explicitly exclude ongoing hosting fees but will help set the site up on a server.

- **Domain Name Registration:** Some web design packages **include securing a domain name** for the client, especially if the client doesn't have one yet. The package might cover the process of checking domain availability, registering it in the client's name, and configuring it to point to the website. Occasionally, agencies offer to include the domain free for the first year. For instance, a package description might say "Free .com domain for 1 year included" as a perk. Samantha Digital's breakdown of a Basic Website Package notes that *it may consist of hosting and domain registration* (Source: samanthadigital.com), indicating that in some basic packages the provider takes care of getting the URL set up for the client. Including the domain simplifies things for a non-technical client who wouldn't know how to do it, and it's a minor cost (~$10-15/year typically) for the designer to absorb for the first year. After that, renewal is usually the client's responsibility.

  However, not all packages include domain purchase by default. Some agencies leave domain registration to the client (perhaps guiding them through it). The Creative Collective explicitly states that the **domain is typically not included** in a website build quote (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). They advise clients that they will need to purchase a domain (and they even provide a link to their domain sales site for convenience) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The rationale is that a domain is a separate asset; the client should own it directly. Still, the agency will connect the site to whatever domain the client provides. So, whether domain registration is included or not depends on the provider's business model. If included, it's usually a one-time

courtesy (the cost might be baked into the package price). If not included, the client pays that separately. In either case, **the configuration of the domain** (pointing DNS to the hosting, etc.) is usually considered part of the launch process and therefore included. A web design package wouldn't leave the client with a site built but no connection to their domain – that final hookup is generally part of the service.

- **Web Hosting Setup:** Hosting is often **treated differently from design** because it is an ongoing service (like rent for a server). Many web design packages explicitly exclude the *cost* of hosting, but will include the initial *setup and deployment* of the site to a hosting environment. For example, an agency might say "We will deploy your new website on your chosen hosting or our hosting, but hosting fees are separate from the design package." The Creative Collective writes, *"Your website needs to be stored on a server… It's not generally included in a website development quote."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This sentiment is echoed by many: paying for hosting is analogous to paying for electricity or any utility – it's an ongoing expense, not part of a one-time project cost. Therefore, most design packages do **not** include indefinite hosting service.

  That said, some packages targeted at simplicity for the client will bundle a limited hosting term. For instance, an agency might advertise a package as "$2000 for a website, including 6 months of free hosting," after which the client can continue hosting with them for a fee or move elsewhere. Samantha Digital's overview lists hosting as one of the services that *might* be included in web design packages (Source: samanthadigital.com), and indeed mentions *"website hosting"* as a possible component (Source: samanthadigital.com). Especially among smaller freelance web designers, one strategy is to host the client's site and charge a recurring fee (which can be part of a package as a bundled first-year cost).

  Setup on the Server: Whether or not the hosting fee is included, the actual task of uploading the website to a server and configuring it is an inclusion. Creative Collective mentions *"taking the site live"* as obviously part of their project – they place it on either the client's hosting or their own hosting environment and make it publicly accessible (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). So a client purchasing a package can expect the site will be live at the end of the project, not just delivered as files. If the client already has a hosting provider, the designer will often liaise to deploy the site there (and that work is included). If the client has none, many agencies offer hosting as a separate service but help set it up in any case. **Inclusion often means: the client does not have to technically configure the server themselves** – the designer will handle creating the database, installing the CMS on the server, setting up email if necessary, and so on, up to the point of launch. Ramotion's advice notes you can either include hosting in your package or have clients handle it, but many especially inexperienced clients *"prefer packages where hosting and domain registration [are] managed by the agency for a specific period"* (Source: www.ramotion.com). It's more convenient to have one provider; that's why some web design companies also sell hosting plans. Others, who don't want to be in the hosting business, will just help clients connect with third-party hosts.

- **SSL Certificate Setup:** With web hosting comes the need for an SSL certificate (to enable HTTPS secure browsing). Nowadays, having an SSL is essentially required for any site (browsers mark non-HTTPS sites as "not secure"). Some packages mention that if you host with them, they include the SSL certificate setup. Creative Collective's policy: *"If you choose to host with us, we will include an SSL certificate. If you host elsewhere, you'll need to ensure you get one."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). So, including SSL is often tied to hosting. If the package doesn't include hosting, it might not include purchasing an SSL (since many hosts now provide free SSL via Let's Encrypt, etc.). But the process of enabling SSL might still be handled by the developer during launch. It's a minor technical step but important for site security and SEO. A thorough package will mention it or just do it by default. In the list of "what's not included," some agencies mention SSL only in the context that the client needs to pay for it if not hosting with them (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) – implying if they manage the environment, they'll handle it as part of delivering a professional site.

- **Email Configuration:** Sometimes clients assume that having a website means the provider will also set up their email (like info@yourbusiness.com). This falls into a gray area. Many web design packages do **not** include email setup as part of the base package, considering it more of an IT or hosting matter. For example, Creative Collective explicitly says *"How you set up your emails will depend on… If you host with us, we won't arrange emails for you… We consider emails to be more in the realm of IT services, which is why we don't offer this service."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). They refer clients to an IT partner for setting up professional email accounts. So email is usually not included in a design package. However, if the client is not tech-savvy, the designer might assist lightly (like guiding them to link their domain with G Suite/Office 365, or creating a basic forward). It's simply not a core part of "web design" work, so we categorize it as typically excluded. We mention it here because it's often tied to domain/hosting discussions. Clients should clarify this point: if they need emails like name@domain, do they need to set that up separately? According to prevailing standards, yes – a web design package builds your website; setting up a mail server or accounts is outside scope unless explicitly noted.

To put it clearly: **Most web design packages include getting your site launched on the web, but they do not indefinitely cover the costs of keeping it on the web.** They ensure your domain is connected and your site is hosted at launch, but you (the client) either pay the ongoing hosting or migrate to your own service after an initial period. From a cost perspective, this is logical as hosting is a subscription cost. The advantage of packages

that **do** bundle hosting for a year is that the client doesn't have to immediately worry about it and can have everything "under one roof" at start. The advantage of packages that **don't** is you can shop around for hosting or use an existing account, and you're not locked in with the agency for hosting (which can sometimes be overpriced).

A friendly piece of advice echoed by agencies is: always ensure the domain is registered in the **client's name or ownership** (not the web agency's) and that the client has access to the hosting. Many web design packages will do this properly as part of their service, but there have been horror stories of clients later finding they don't "own" their own domain or can't access their site's hosting. Our collected advice strongly implies that packages involve handing over those credentials – for instance, giving the client the hosting manager access (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) and clarifying ownership of content (Source: www.ramotion.com).

Core SEO and Analytics Setup

Having a beautiful website is one thing, but businesses also want their site to be found via search engines and to know how it's performing. Therefore, many web design packages include some basic **Search Engine Optimization (SEO) setup** and **integration of analytics tools**. It's crucial to clarify what level of SEO is included, as SEO can range from simple on-site tweaks to extensive ongoing campaigns (the latter usually not included in base packages).

- **Basic On-Site SEO:** At minimum, most packages include what could be termed "core" or "on-page" SEO elements. This often involves:

  - Ensuring the site's structure is search-engine friendly (proper HTML, mobile-friendly design which Google favors, fast loading times as much as basic design allows).

  - Setting up basic SEO plugins or tools if on a CMS. For instance, on WordPress, installing an industry-standard SEO plugin (like Yoast SEO or RankMath) is a common inclusion (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The Creative Collective explicitly says they won't let a site go live without at least the SEO plugin installed (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

  - Creating and submitting a **XML sitemap** to Google and setting up Google Search Console (formerly Webmaster Tools) for the site (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This helps Google index the site and provides the owner feedback on search performance. Many agencies do this as a courtesy in their package. The Creative Collective list includes *"Set up/transfer Google Webmaster Tools, verify site, submit site map"* as part of the core SEO they implement on every site (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

  - Setting up Google Analytics (or another analytics tool) so that the client can track visitors and traffic sources (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This is commonly included because it's straightforward to do during development, and it yields valuable data. In fact, Google Analytics integration is often explicitly mentioned in package inclusions. For example, a package may say "Google Analytics set-up included" – meaning the designer will create or use the client's GA account and put the tracking code on the site (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

  - Optimizing basic on-page SEO tags for key pages: Many will at least set a site title and meta description for the homepage, maybe create proper page titles for each page that include relevant keywords, and ensure images have alt tags, etc. Some packages limit how far this goes – e.g., they might do on-page optimization for up to a certain number of pages. Creative Collective mentioned that in some cases they perform *"on page SEO on up to a set number of key pages"* for an additional fee or as part of a more SEO-focused package (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). So the base package might not include keyword research and full content optimization, but might include inserting provided keywords into the SEO plugin for the main pages.

  Essentially, **most include initial SEO best practices but not a full SEO campaign**. A quote from MayeCreate Design captures it well: *"Most companies build the structure of their website so that Google likes them… Most of the time fully featured, ongoing SEO is NOT included in the base price of a website."* (Source: mayecreate.com). This delineates that initial SEO *structure* is done (the site won't be invisible to Google, it will be reasonably optimized in code), but ongoing SEO (continuous content creation, link building, etc.) is outside the scope.

- **Search Engine Submission:** It used to be standard to explicitly submit a new site to search engines. Nowadays, just setting up Search Console or having any link to the site will get it indexed, but some packages still mention *"Submit site to Google/Bing"* as a step. In New Perspective's 28-point feature list, they include *"Submit your website to Google: Services to ensure your website is indexed by Google, making it easier for customers to find you."* (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). This indicates they actively take steps so the site is registered with Google's index. While a small detail, it's a nice inclusion that ensures the site doesn't stay invisible for long after launch.

- **Analytics and Monitoring:** As touched on, Google Analytics setup is common. Also, if the client wants any specific marketing pixels (like Facebook Pixel for advertising or Google Tag Manager), sometimes the designer will include adding those if the client provides the codes, though that may be more something to request. At minimum, packages often include *"Integration of analytics tools to monitor website traffic and user*

behavior" (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) as New Perspective's list suggests. The benefit is the client can see how many people visit, from where, etc., which is critical feedback for a website's success.

- **Basic SEO Content Guidance:** Some designers might also do small things like create a proper robots.txt file, ensure the site's URLs are clean and readable (especially on CMS – e.g., example.com/about rather than example.com?p=123), and maybe fill in meta tags if content is available. If the package includes copywriting or the designer is inputting the content, they might at least ensure keywords appear in headings and such if the client has given them. However, unless explicitly stated, **detailed keyword research or SEO strategy is not part of a standard package**. That is usually a separate service (SEO consulting).

- **Local SEO basics:** If it's a local business site, sometimes the package might mention setting up Google My Business or adding location meta tags. This is less common to be included unless the provider markets themselves as doing SEO as well. Some might do it proactively though.

The line between included SEO and not included SEO is so important that it often needs clarification in the proposal. A good practice is to state something like: "Package includes initial on-site SEO (e.g., meta tags, submission to Google, installing SEO plugin, optimizing images). It does not include ongoing SEO content creation, link building, or monthly SEO monitoring – these can be provided under a separate SEO package." Indeed, Creative Collective, after listing the core SEO they do (plugin, Search Console, Analytics), says for further SEO they recommend a monthly program (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The initial package might optionally include a one-time on-page optimization if the client requested it and paid a bit extra, but beyond that, it's separate.

From the client's perspective, they should expect a new website from a package to be **SEO-friendly at launch** – meaning it's crawlable, indexable, fast, mobile-friendly, with appropriate basic keywords in place. And they should expect to have the tools (like Google Analytics) to measure its performance. They should not expect that they'll immediately rank #1 on Google for competitive terms just by buying a standard package; that requires significant ongoing work not covered by the basic build.

Social Media and Third-Party Integrations

Another inclusion in many web design packages is **basic integration with social media and possibly other third-party tools** that enhance the site's functionality.

- **Social Media Integration:** At the very least, this means the design will include icons or links to the client's social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.), typically in the header or footer. Virtually all packages will do that if provided with the URLs – it's a trivial inclusion but important for cross-promotion. Many packages list it as a feature. For example, one of New Perspective's standard features is *"Integration with Social Media: Seamless linking with social media platforms to enhance engagement and simplify content sharing."* (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za) (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). This implies they not only link out to the profiles but maybe also include social share buttons on pages or embedded feeds. Some packages might offer to embed a Twitter feed or Instagram gallery on the site if desired, although those specifics might be in higher packages or as add-ons.

  Social integration is considered a staple because it helps connect all of the company's online presence. So you can consider it included by default that your site will have social media connectivity in terms of links and possibly share functionality. If a client uses a particular platform heavily (say, they want their latest tweets or Facebook posts to show on the homepage), it should be discussed – many designers will accommodate one such feed in the package if it's straightforward (like using a plugin or widget). But multiple complex integrations might be out of scope. Basic packages likely stick to just linking and enabling share buttons (like "Share this article on Facebook").

- **Contact Forms and Email Sign-up:** A contact form is almost always included in a web design package because every business site needs a way for visitors to get in touch. Whether it's a simple "Contact Us" form or something slightly more involved, the package will cover at least one form. For instance, in the earlier case study, even the basic package included *"One email contact form"* (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). The business package had a similar inclusion and allowed extra forms for a fee (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). So typically, you get at least one form (e.g., contact form sending to your email). If you need additional forms (like a quote request form, a survey form, etc.), some packages may include a couple, or they may charge a bit more for each. But implementing a standard form is part of the site build – included.

  Many sites also have a newsletter signup section (integrated with something like MailChimp or another email marketing service). If a client requests hooking up a MailChimp signup form, a designer will often include that since it's again a small integration (you embed a code or use a plugin). It might not be listed in generic package descriptions, but if mentioned in project kickoff, it would likely be done within scope for most packages because it's common marketing practice.

- **Maps and Location Tools:** If the business has a physical location, embedding a Google Map on the Contact or Location page is typically included. It's a minor item but worth mentioning as part of what packages cover under integration – adding a Google Maps widget or embed code is standard practice for a contact page. So one can assume it's included if applicable (most agencies won't charge extra just to put a map iframe in).

- **Basic Integrations (Calendars, etc.):** Some websites need to integrate third-party widgets like an appointment scheduling calendar, a booking system, or a chat widget. These are borderline – many packages would integrate an existing tool if it's simple (e.g., embedding a Calendly scheduler or a Tawk.to live chat script) as part of the build, since it's usually a small snippet of code to add. But creating custom complex integrations (like coding against an API) would not be included. For example, if a realtor wants an MLS (Multiple Listing Service) integration on their site, that could require significant work or special plugins – likely not in a basic package. However, linking to external systems or embedding provided widgets is usually fine.

A note from an industry perspective: if the site requires **integration of paid plugins or services** (say, connecting to a CRM or a payment gateway beyond the basics, etc.), it's advisable to check if that cost is included. The Creative Collective advises clients to ask *"if any paid plugins are required and if this is a cost included in your quote or separate"* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). For instance, certain advanced features might require purchasing a software license; often that license cost is not included and would be billed to the client. But installing/configuring the plugin itself might be included labor-wise. This sort of third-party integration is generally considered outside a simple package unless it's explicitly one of the features of a higher package (like an e-commerce package including payment gateway integration, which it should).

- **E-commerce Components (if applicable):** In an e-commerce package, integrations take on a bigger role: you have integration with a payment gateway (like Stripe, PayPal, Square, etc.), which is definitely included because that's essential to an e-commerce site, and possibly integration with shipping providers (to calculate shipping rates) or tax services. For example, a good e-commerce package will say "Payment processor integration included" (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), as we saw in the case study where the top-tier e-commerce package explicitly listed *"payment processor and shipping integration included"* (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). If it's a lower-tier that allows adding a cart as an option, they had it as "Shopping cart not included in base" for starter (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), but "shopping cart included" in the e-commerce tier (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). So within an e-commerce package, you should expect as included: setting up the store system, configuring one payment method, setting up basic shipping rules, adding a certain number of products (often they'll say they will add, say, first 10 or 20 products for you, and then train you to add more).

E-commerce integration is big enough that it usually is a separate package or significant add-on – we've covered it earlier in package types. But it's worth reiterating: *if* you've purchased an e-commerce web package, it will include integration of e-commerce functionality (shopping cart, checkout, etc.). *If you didn't*, a standard package normally **does not** include adding e-commerce later without extra cost.

- **Basic Performance Optimization:** While not exactly an "integration," some packages include basic site performance setups such as installing a caching plugin or optimization plugin to help the site load faster. They might not advertise it, but if they are conscientious, they do it as part of delivering a quality site (for example, optimize images, minify code, etc.). This might be considered part of the invisible deliverables included under quality assurance.

- **Security Hardening:** Similarly, some will include basic security configurations (especially if using something like WordPress, they might install a security plugin, set up backups, etc.). This is often behind the scenes and not spelled out, but if an agency prides itself on full service, they might mention "includes basic security measures and backup setup."

From the above, it's clear that **"integration" inclusions are typically light and standard**: social media links, contact forms, maybe one newsletter or map embed, baseline e-commerce facilities if it's an e-commerce package. Anything beyond the common needs might be considered either a premium feature or out-of-scope.

Testing, Launch, and Warranty Support

Delivering a website isn't just about building it; it's about making sure it runs correctly and handing it over properly. Good web design packages therefore include aspects of **testing, deployment, and post-launch support (albeit limited)**.

- **Testing and Quality Assurance:** Before a site goes live, the designer will test it. Included in the package is cross-browser testing on modern browsers and devices (as mentioned, not necessarily ancient ones). They will click through all pages, ensure forms work, ensure there are no glaring bugs. The client may also be involved in user acceptance testing – often, a staging site is presented for final approval. Packages don't

always list "testing" as a line item, but it is implicitly part of delivering a functional site. If a package is well-documented, they might mention compliance with web standards or that the site will be accessible and tested on major platforms. For instance, some might say "W3C validated code" or "tested on latest Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge" to assure quality.

A particular expectation to set is **browser compatibility**: It's included to support current versions of popular browsers. If a client needed, say, IE11 support for an intranet, they'd need to mention that early since it's usually not included by default as IE11 (or IE in general) is obsolete now (Microsoft deprecated IE in favor of Edge). The MayeCreate blog humorously highlighted not to expect optimization for "every browser under the sun" (Source: mayecreate.com), which implies packages cover the major ones, but maybe not something obscure (like text-mode browsers, or very old OS versions, etc.).

- **Launching the Site (Going Live):** As covered under hosting, the act of launching the site on a live domain is part of the package. Creative Collective enumerated *"Taking the site live"* as an included step (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This can involve final migration from a test environment to production, connecting the domain, setting up any necessary DNS records (like for email or subdomains if needed). Usually, the client or the agency will choose a time to make the switch live, and it's done seamlessly. The package's responsibility is to complete that process.

  Some packages may specify that they include launching on the agency's own hosting vs. the client's. For example, if an agency offers hosting, they might throw in that they'll host and launch it there for you (again bridging into hosting territory). If the client chooses an external host, the agency will still deploy to it. In both cases the deployment work is included; just the hosting cost might not be.

- **Warranty Period / Bug Fixes:** Many web design contracts include a short **warranty period** after launch during which the designer will fix any issues that emerge at no extra charge. The length of this can vary – 30 days, 60 days, 90 days are common. The Creative Collective proudly mentions providing a *"30 day warranty on the site – this covers any bugs or system glitches not caused by human error"* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). They note that this is not always offered by others, but they do as an ethical practice. After that, they offer support packages for ongoing help (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This kind of warranty inclusion means if, say, within a month the client discovers a broken link, a misaligned element, or some browser quirk that was missed, the agency will rectify it without billing extra. It also covers if something technical goes wrong (maybe a plugin conflict or server setup issue) soon after launch – they'll sort it out as part of the project's completion.

  Some smaller freelancers might not explicitly mention a warranty, but would likely fix immediate post-launch bugs as good customer service. However, the safe assumption is that serious bugs or mistakes in what was delivered will be corrected if noticed quickly. It's wise for clients to thoroughly review the site upon launch and compile any issues for the designer to fix within that grace period.

- **Support and Maintenance (Limited):** Apart from bug fixes, some packages include a short period of general support for minor tweaks or questions. For example, maybe the client forgot how to change something and calls a week later – usually the designer will help without charge if it's quick, within that initial period. But ongoing maintenance (like regularly updating the site's software, adding new features, etc.) is usually not included long-term unless one has subscribed to a separate **maintenance plan**.

  A few agencies include a small maintenance buffer in their package – e.g. "includes 2 hours of updates within first 2 months" – but this is not the norm. Instead, they often pitch a **maintenance plan or care plan** as an upsell beyond the package. For instance, the package might come with that 30-day warranty, and concurrently the agency might offer a paid monthly plan for support after that. This way, it's clear that beyond the short included period, support is a paid service.

- **Backups and Handover of Files:** At project completion, it's good practice (and often included) that the designer either keeps a backup or provides one to the client. If the client is moving the site to their own control, the designer might zip up all files and database and hand it over. Or if it's staying on the agency's server (under a maintenance plan), the agency will maintain backups. While not always spelled out, some packages mention providing all source files or deliverables to the client. For example, if any custom artwork was created, the client might get those files. Or at least, ensure the client has the admin logins, etc. This is part of "handover," which overlaps with training as discussed.

- **Client Satisfaction and Tweaks:** Typically, right after launch, if the client notices small cosmetic changes they want ("could we make this heading a bit bigger," or "this image is not quite right"), many agencies will accommodate a limited batch of such tweaks as part of finishing the job. There's a bit of an unspoken inclusion of a polish round at launch. But this should not be abused – if the client comes after launch with a whole new batch of changes outside what was agreed, that's not included. This is why revision rounds are defined earlier. After launch changes often should be within the realm of things that were missed or very minor adjustments.

To encapsulate: A web design package typically **includes getting the site live and working properly, with a brief period of support for any issues**. It does **not** include indefinite free updates or major changes after sign-off – those would be enhancements for later (we will talk about such "not included ongoing updates" in the next section).

The presence of a warranty or support period is a sign of a quality provider. It assures the client that they won't be left high and dry immediately after paying. But once that period ends, ongoing care of the site (security updates, content updates, new features) generally needs either in-house attention by the client using the CMS (as trained) or a new agreement with the developer.

Table: Typical Features Included vs. Not Included in a Web Design Package

To summarize the common inclusions we've identified and contrast them with typical exclusions, the following table provides an overview:

ASPECT / SERVICE	TYPICALLY INCLUDED 💡	TYPICALLY NOT INCLUDED (OR LIMITED) 🚫
Custom visual design	Yes – tailored website design (often using a template for basic packages, fully custom for premium) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Usually includes a set number of design revision rounds (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).	Unlimited design changes or complete rebrands are not included. Major design overhauls after initial approval are extra.
Number of pages	Yes – development of a certain number of pages (e.g., 5 pages in basic, 15+ in higher packages) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The package covers setting up those pages with content.	Additional pages beyond the included count usually cost extra (often a per-page fee) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Client can add more pages themselves via CMS or pay for more.
Mobile-responsive design	Yes – ensuring the site is mobile-friendly and responsive is standard in modern packages (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za).	Support for very old browsers or devices is not guaranteed (Source: mayecreate.com). Special mobile app development (if needed) is not included.
Content Management System	Yes – setup of a CMS (like WordPress) with admin access for the client is usually included (Source: www.ramotion.com). Training on using the CMS often included (e.g., 1-2 hour session) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).	Ongoing content entry after launch (beyond initial pages) is not included – client handles via CMS or pays for updates. Extensive CMS custom plugin development (beyond standard plugins) not included unless specified.
Domain & DNS setup	**Partially** – connecting the site to an existing domain is included; assistance to register a new domain is usually provided. Some packages include 1st year domain registration (Source: samanthadigital.com).	Domain name fees are usually separate (client pays registrar annually) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The package often does not cover long-term domain renewals.
Web hosting	**Partially** – deployment to a hosting server is included, and sometimes a short-term hosting is included (e.g., 3-12 months) (Source: www.ramotion.com). The developer will set up the site on a server.	Ongoing hosting costs are typically not included (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). After any included period, the client must pay for hosting. If the client chooses an external host, the package doesn't cover that fee.
SSL security	**Partially** – if hosting with the agency, an SSL certificate is often provided and installed at launch (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Basic security hardening is usually done.	If hosting externally, obtaining an SSL certificate is the client's responsibility (though many hosts provide free SSL) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Comprehensive security monitoring or malware insurance is not included (that would be a maintenance task).
Copywriting (text content)	No – content writing is usually **not** included by default (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The client is expected to supply text for pages. The designer might place the provided text.	Writing or substantive editing of website text is extra (unless a package explicitly adds it). Copywriting can often be arranged for an additional fee, but it's separate from design.
Images and media creation	Limited – inclusion of some stock photos or basic image editing is often included to enhance design (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za). The client's provided images will be used and optimized.	Custom photography or extensive image sourcing is not included (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Professional photoshoots or video production are separate services. Only simple stock images may be provided in base package.

ASPECT / SERVICE	TYPICALLY INCLUDED 💡	TYPICALLY NOT INCLUDED (OR LIMITED) 🚫
Logo & branding design	No – creating a new logo or full brand identity is not included (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Package assumes logo/branding is already available to integrate.	Any branding work (logos, brand guidelines) is a separate graphic design project. If needed, the client must request a quote for branding services outside the web package.
Basic SEO setup	Yes – on-site SEO basics are included: e.g., installing SEO plugin, setting page titles & meta descriptions, submitting site to Google, setting up Google Analytics (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The site will be search engine friendly at launch (Source: mayecreate.com).	Ongoing or advanced SEO is not included. No extensive keyword research, content marketing, or link building as part of package (Source: mayecreate.com). Ongoing SEO requires a separate plan or campaign.
Analytics & tracking	Yes – integration of Google Analytics or similar tracking code is typically included (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The client will have access to traffic data.	Ongoing analysis or reporting is not included (unless separately contracted in a marketing retainer). Just the setup is done.
Social media integration	Yes – linking to social profiles (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and adding share buttons or basic feed embeds is included (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za).	Social media management or content creation for social platforms is not included. Deep integration (e.g., auto-posting content to social media) is usually not included unless specified.
Contact forms & basic features	Yes – a standard contact form (or equivalent inquiry form) is included on the site (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Other common features like Google Map embed for location or newsletter signup form integration are usually included as needed.	Complex interactive functionality beyond basics is not included unless it's part of a higher-tier package. E.g., custom web applications, user login systems (unless specifically in scope) are excluded from a simple package.
E-commerce functionality	Only included in e-commerce specific packages – then it covers setting up a store, payment gateway, product pages etc. (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). In a non-ecommerce package, a simple PayPal donate button or similar might be included if minor.	E-commerce is **not** included in a basic informational site package (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Adding a shopping cart or online store capability later would cost extra or require upgrading to an e-commerce package.
Third-party integrations	Limited – integration of common third-party tools (e.g., mailing list signup, scheduling widget, basic CRM contact form) is often included if straightforward. The package will integrate provided scripts or plugins as needed.	Large or complex integrations (CRM systems, custom APIs, advanced databases) are not included unless explicitly agreed. Those typically require custom development beyond a standard package.
Testing & launch	Yes – full testing of the site and launching it on the live domain is included (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The designer will ensure the site is functional on major browsers and devices, and handle go-live logistics.	Unusual environment testing (like old browsers, or specialized accessibility audits) may not be included by default. Also, launching in multiple phases or repeated redeployments due to scope change might incur extra cost.

ASPECT / SERVICE	TYPICALLY INCLUDED 💡	TYPICALLY NOT INCLUDED (OR LIMITED) 🚫
Post-launch support (short-term)	Yes – a short support/warranty period is usually included (e.g., 30 days bug-fix warranty) where the developer will fix any errors or minor issues that come up (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Many also offer a brief window for minor adjustments.	Extended maintenance is not included. Support beyond the warranty period or significant updates/content changes post-launch require a maintenance plan or will be billed separately. No unlimited future changes included (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).
Training & documentation	Yes – basic training on using the website/CMS is commonly included (either a walkthrough or written guide) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Client is empowered to manage their site.	Ongoing training or extensive documentation is often not included beyond an initial tutorial. If staff changes or new training sessions are needed later, those might cost extra.

(💡 = included; 🚫 = not included or outside base scope. Specific conditions may vary by provider.)

This table encapsulates the general consensus of what one can expect when purchasing a typical web design package. The **included items** form the essential deliverables to get a functional, good-looking website live and in the hands of the client. The **excluded items** usually represent additional realms of work that either belong to different professionals (like copywriters or digital marketers) or involve continuing effort (like maintenance, SEO campaigns) that goes beyond the one-time project.

In the next section, we will delve deeper into those "not included" aspects – why they are typically separate, and how clients can plan for them – and present more insight from industry cases on handling expectations around excluded services.

What's *Not* Included in Website Design Packages (Common Exclusions)

Understanding what is not included in a web design package is just as important as knowing what is included. Many disputes or disappointments in web projects arise not from what was done, but from what someone assumed would be done and wasn't. Web design companies often find themselves educating clients on these boundaries. In this section, we will explore the **common exclusions** – services or features that **typically fall outside the scope of a standard web design package**. These usually need to be contracted separately or handled by the client or by additional specialists.

It's worth noting that any given agency might offer some of these excluded services as *add-ons or separate packages*. The key point here is that they are generally **not part of the base web design package** unless explicitly included in writing. As one web design firm bluntly put it: *"If it doesn't say it is included on your quote or contract, you can presume it's not."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

Let's go through the major items typically not included:

Content Copywriting and Editing

Perhaps the number one area of misunderstanding is **website content creation** – the text (and often substantive messaging) that goes on each page of the site. Many clients assume that "web design" inherently includes writing the words that will appear on the website. In reality, **copywriting is usually a separate skill and service** not covered by a design package (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

- **Industry Standard Exclusion:** It is "industry standard" that writing the copy for the site is not included unless requested and quoted for (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The Creative Collective specifically addresses this, noting that copywriting is *"probably one of the most common items people expect us to include ... but it's industry standard for it not to be included unless requested and quoted for."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The reason is clear – writing effective content is a different profession. Web developers are not necessarily trained writers. As they explain, *"Web developers are technicians. Copywriters are writers. And they need to be paid for their time accordingly."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). In other words, creating engaging, well-written content is a significant task that can't just be folded into design work without affecting time and cost.

- **Client Responsibility:** Therefore, most web design packages operate under the assumption that **the client will provide the written content** for all pages: the company history for the About page, descriptions of products/services, etc. The designer will then place that text into the design and format it nicely. If the client is not a writer or doesn't have someone to produce content, they have a few options:

    - **Provide placeholder or rough text** and refine it over time.
    - **Hire a copywriter** as an additional service. Many design agencies either have copywriters on their team or refer one, but it will cost extra (often charged per page or per number of words). For instance, the Creative Collective mentions they generally charge about one hour at their hourly rate per page of copy required as a guideline (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). It can add up if a site has many pages, but it can be worth it for quality.
    - **Use content from an existing site or brochures** – sometimes a redesign project will reuse content the client already had (which is fine if that content is acceptable quality).
    - **Leverage AI or automated tools** (a very new approach) – some small businesses try using AI writers now, but caution is needed, and that still usually requires editing by a human.

- **Editing and Proofreading:** Even if a client writes their own content, they might expect the web designer to tweak it for clarity or correct mistakes. Basic corrections (like fixing obvious typos) the designer might do as a courtesy. But actual editing for style or length is not typically in scope. If content doesn't fit the design (e.g., too long for a section), the designer might advise trimming it, but they won't usually rewrite it. Copy editing is again a separate skill.

- **Content Strategy:** Also not included is the broader concept of content strategy – deciding what pages you need and what key messages to highlight. Many agencies will help outline pages (they often decide with the client on a sitemap structure in early planning). But deciding the detailed messaging or doing market research for content is outside the basic package. Some full-service agencies might include a strategy session in a higher-end package, but generally for small packages, it's minimal.

The bottom line: **If you (as a client) don't have content for your website, you shouldn't assume the web designer will create it.** You either need to prepare it or explicitly arrange for copywriting as an additional service. This is such a common issue that it's repeated in virtually all "what's not included" guides (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Web designers often find themselves delayed waiting for content from clients – something to be aware of. On the client side, you should start developing or sourcing your content early to keep the project on schedule, or hire a copywriter.

Stock Images, Photography, and Video Production

Visual content is another area where scope can be misunderstood. While a web design package will include placing images and maybe sourcing a few stock images as decoration, it generally does **not** include providing a library of custom photographs or videos for the site.

- **Sourcing Images:** Some clients expect the web designer to "find images" for the site. Designers will often find a few stock photos to use, especially for generic visuals (like a banner with a smiling business team, or a background texture). Many agencies have subscriptions to stock photo sites or know good free resources, and they'll do this within reason. However, if a site needs extensive imagery – for example, dozens of product photos or a gallery of portfolio images – the client needs to supply those or hire a photographer. The Creative Collective points out that clients sometimes *"expect us to source and edit their images inclusive of a website build quote, but it's also industry standard for it not to be included unless requested and quoted for."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). They go on to explain why: *"The best images and videos are authentic... So either you need to arrange a photo shoot... or you need to book us to shoot these for you. Yes this is an additional expense, but it could also lift... your website in a big way."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

    This emphasizes that while designers can use stock images, truly effective visuals often come from real photos of the business (products, team, location). Arranging that is outside a normal web package; it's a separate photography project. Some web agencies do offer professional photography or videography services, but they will explicitly cost it out apart from the web design fee (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

- **Editing Client's Images:** If a client provides photos, the designer will typically do basic optimizations – resizing for web, maybe minor color correction or cropping. Heavy editing (like Photoshop retouching, background removal for product photos, etc.) is beyond basic scope unless agreed. If a batch of images needs extensive editing, agencies might charge extra or limit how much they'll do.

- **Stock Image Licensing:** Many times, any stock images used are under a standard license which the agency might cover the cost of (small, usually a few dollars per image) and it's implicitly included. But if a client wants a very specific premium stock photo that's expensive, the cost might be passed on. Usually the cost here is negligible relative to the project though. Agencies may simply use their stock account allowance.

- **Custom Graphics or Illustration:** Similarly, creating custom illustrations, infographics, icons, etc., is typically not included unless it's a specific selling point of that agency's package. For example, if the designer has to illustrate a map or design a bunch of unique icons, that's extra graphic design work outside the web build scope. Most templates come with some iconsets or the designer will use open-license icons. If a client specifically needs a custom graphic, it should be discussed as an extra.

- **Video Production:** If the site needs video content (like a company intro video), that is definitely not included in a standard package. The site can embed or host videos that the client provides (for instance, embedding a YouTube or a self-hosted video player), but producing or editing the video is separate. Even integrating video might require some extra effort – but nowadays embedding is straightforward and usually included if it's one or two videos the client has ready.

- **Image/Media Quantity Caveats:** Some proposals explicitly limit how many images they'll handle. For instance, an e-commerce package may say "we will upload up to 20 product images, additional can be added by client or at $X each." Or a portfolio site package might limit to a certain number of gallery items initially. This is to keep the scope manageable. If a client hands over 500 photos to put on a site, that's a lot of labor to sort and upload which was likely not priced into a basic package.

In short, **web design packages are about assembling the site, not creating all raw media from scratch**. The client should plan to provide photography or budget for a photoshoot if high-quality unique images are needed. Alternatively, accept the use of stock images which the designer will use to give a professional look, but understand those might also appear on other sites (since stock is by definition not exclusive). The Creative Collective's advice was either invest in a shoot or use stock as a fallback, noting that if budget is tight you can opt for stock but then either the client or the agency (for an extra fee) will spend time selecting appropriate imagery (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

Branding and Logo Design

A website often needs to incorporate a business's branding elements – colors, fonts, logos. Packages assume those elements already exist. The creation or refreshing of a brand identity is usually handled as a separate graphic design task, not bundled into a web design package (unless a special combo package is sold).

- **Logo Design:** Designing a logo is typically **not included** in a website package (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Many agencies explicitly exclude it, making analogies like "if you get your car serviced, you wouldn't expect them to also paint you a new sign for free" (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). A logo (and broader brand style) is a foundational piece that ideally should precede the web design or be an independent project. Some agencies offer branding packages or add-ons, but they cost extra.

  The reason behind this exclusion is the amount of work: branding involves consultation, multiple design concepts, revisions, and delivering various file formats – which is a lot of additional work not related to coding a website. If a client comes without a logo and wants one, the agency would either require them to commission a logo design first or add it to the quote. For example, an agency might say: "Web package $3000, plus Logo design $800 (optional)."

- **Brand Refresh:** Sometimes a client might have an old logo they want "touched up" or modernized. That again is a graphic design task outside the web build. Unless the refresh is extremely minor (like just cleaning a bit of quality for web), it's generally out of scope. The Creative Collective's blog also touches this: *"unless this item (brand/logo) is mentioned on your website quote, it won't typically be included. So don't expect it."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

- **Branding Guidelines:** If a client has no defined brand colors or fonts, the web designer will make aesthetic choices for the site (which then effectively become part of the brand's online identity). This selection is included (they'll pick colors that look good, etc.), but they aren't creating a whole brand guideline document. If a consistent brand identity is needed beyond the site (like for print materials), that's beyond the web package's purview.

- **Additional Brand Assets:** Things like designing business cards, letterheads, social media profile graphics, etc., are separate services (sometimes offered by the same agency but not in the web package). A "full-service" package might mention including social media branding or stationary design, but that would be an explicitly premium/all-in-one offering, not the standard.

Thus, clients should come to a web project with at least a usable logo (even if simple) and a sense of their brand style, or be prepared to commission those items separately. Otherwise, the site might look somewhat generic or the designer will make an executive decision on style without a formal brand to follow.

Advanced Functionality and Special Features

Web design packages, especially the basic ones, aim to cover "standard website features." When it comes to **advanced or custom functionality**, those are usually out of scope. Some examples include:

- **Web Applications or Custom Coding:** If the project requires building custom interactive tools (like a custom calculator, a complex form with multi-step logic, an interactive map, etc.), that often goes beyond a simple package. Standard packages cover basic interactivity (menus, slideshows, etc. often using existing plugins or templates). But something like developing a custom booking system or a membership portal would either require a higher-tier package or a custom quote. The Elegant Themes article notes that projects with unique needs (like using a custom CMS or insisting on unusual compatibility or tight timelines) *"certain projects simply can't be shoehorned into a pre-made package"* (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), implying these need custom arrangements.

- **Additional Integrations:** We touched on basic integrations included, but if a client needs integration with, say, their internal inventory management, or a specific CRM that needs custom API work, that's not in a standard scope. Similarly, building an API for the website, or creating a progressive web app (PWA) version, etc., are beyond typical package inclusion.

- **Multi-language (Localization):** Many basic packages assume one language. If a site needs to be multilingual, that often requires additional setup (sometimes separate site versions or a plugin configuration, plus the actual translations of content). Unless a package is specifically a "multilingual site package," multi-language support is likely extra. It's wise to clarify this if relevant. Some agencies might include the technical setup for multiple languages but expect the client to provide all translated content (which circles back to content creation not included). But even then, it's more work to implement and likely costs more.

- **Unlimited Revisions or Changes:** We already mentioned revision limits on design, but beyond that, clients should not expect unlimited changes to scope. The Creative Collective lists *"Unlimited rounds of changes"* as a stark **not included** item (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). They clearly state that after the included rounds of content upload or revision, any further alterations can either be handled by training the client to do it, or will be charged extra if the designer has to do significant additional changes (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This basically tells us: packages include finite work, not an endless iterative process. So, for example, if after delivering the agreed 10 pages the client decides to rewrite all the content and wants the designer to reinsert and re-layout everything, that would typically incur additional fees (unless it's within some initial content entry grace).

    Many packages also limit how long the client can take to request changes as part of the project – e.g., if the client disappears for 6 months after the site is built and then comes back asking for tweaks, the warranty is over and that's not included anymore, it's a new job.

- **Ongoing Website Marketing and SEO:** Another form of advanced feature is not a site feature per se, but often expected: ongoing **marketing**, such as **SEO beyond initial setup, pay-per-click campaign management, blogging, or social media marketing.** As mentioned before, a web design package is focused on building the site. Marketing the site (driving traffic, improving search rankings continuously, running ad campaigns, etc.) is a different domain. Some agencies do offer an all-in-one digital marketing plus web bundle, but ordinarily, you finish the website and then if you want SEO improvement or advertising, you sign a separate contract for those services. MayeCreate's article lists *"Ongoing Marketing"* as something you **should not expect** to be part of a web design deal (Source: mayecreate.com) (Source: mayecreate.com). They emphasize that after the site is live, any marketing – whether SEO campaigns, content marketing, social media management – is not covered by what you paid for the site build.

- **Maintenance and Updates:** Once a site is launched, **maintenance** includes updating software (CMS, plugins), fixing any issues that arise due to technical changes (like web hosts updating PHP version), and updating content. Standard packages generally do not include maintenance beyond maybe a short post-launch window. The expectation is either the client will manage content changes via CMS (for text/images) and possibly buy a maintenance plan for technical updates, or come back ad hoc and pay the agency to do updates as needed. The MayeCreate blog calls out *"Ongoing Web Design Updates"* as not included (Source: mayecreate.com) – meaning if a few months later you want to change how the site looks or add a new section, that's a new mini-project or maintenance task, not part of the original package.

    Similarly, Creative Collective after the 30-day warranty offers support packages for ongoing help (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). If you don't sign up for one, then after those 30 days any support is billable. A client who expects the web designer to be "on call" indefinitely to make changes without additional charges will be disappointed if that wasn't part of a maintenance agreement.

- **Web Hosting and Email beyond initial setup:** We mentioned hosting charges are separate. To reiterate as an exclusion: the package doesn't cover hosting fees beyond any initial period. Many times clients will get billed separately for hosting starting from month 1 or after a trial period. Also, technical support related to hosting (like if the site goes down or email issues occur on the server) may not be included unless you host with

the agency and have a maintenance plan. If you host externally, the web designer typically is not responsible for hosting problems – that's between you and the hosting company, unless you hire the designer to troubleshoot it.

Email, as noted, is not handled by most designers. Even if the client desperately needs help setting up email accounts, the web designer might help once but it's outside the core scope. Creative Collective's stance was clear: they don't do email services (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Many would nominally help by pointing to guides or a partner, but not actually host or manage email servers.

- **Training beyond initial handover:** After the initial training session or two, additional training sessions months later (like if new staff join the client's team and need CMS training) would not be included. The client would either train them internally using the knowledge or pay the agency for further training sessions. The initial training is included, continuing education is not.

- **Anything Not Explicitly Listed:** This catch-all is often stated. As referenced, *"Anything else that wasn't mentioned in the quote… presume it's not [included]. So read your quote carefully, and query it before you engage to save confusion later."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). That rule sums up a lot of possible things. For instance, if the quote doesn't say it includes a blog but you assumed it would have one, you should ask – it might not have been considered. If it doesn't mention content migration from an old site, maybe they only budgeted for creating new pages, not migrating all old blog posts. If it doesn't mention multilingual or a forum or etc., it's not there.

To illustrate a scenario: a small business signs up for a "Website Package" and expects that it covers *everything* needed for an online presence. They might be surprised to learn later that:

- They have to separately pay for the domain and hosting renewal each year.
- They need to provide the text for the site, or pay extra to get it written.
- They must source photos or live with limited stock photos unless they invest in getting pictures taken.
- If they want to start selling products a year later, that's not magically included – it's an additional project.
- If six months later they want to add a new page or significantly change content layout, that will cost something unless they handle it themselves via CMS.
- If something breaks after an update a year later, and they didn't opt for a maintenance plan, the original package doesn't cover fixing it for free.

These are not negatives; it's about understanding scope. Web design packages are often a **one-time project** focusing on the initial creation of the site. Many other aspects of web presence are ongoing efforts or belong to other specialties.

However, some agencies do try to bundle more services (like some might advertise an "all inclusive package" that has a bit of copywriting, a logo, SEO, etc., for a higher price). But those are usually explicitly marketed that way and are more expensive accordingly. The vast majority separate these concerns for clarity and efficiency.

Now, having detailed what's not included, a natural question arises: how should clients manage those needs? Here are a few quick strategies (which lead into the best practices section):

- Plan a budget for these "satellite" needs (content, images, maintenance). Sometimes the upfront web design cost is just one part of a broader website launch budget.
- Communicate with the web designer early: if you need help with content or other excluded items, most agencies can expand their scope for additional fees or connect you with professionals who can help.
- Read the contract and ask questions: If you see a feature you assumed was standard but it's not listed, ask the agency "Does this package include X?" It's better to clarify beforehand. Agencies appreciate it too, because it surfaces expectations.
- Consider package upgrades: maybe you chose a basic package but realize you actually need e.g. e-commerce or copywriting – the agency might have a higher package or add-on to fit that.

The next portion will give some case examples and perspectives on how these exclusions have been handled and how clients and designers can avoid miscommunication. But first, we'll look at a couple of **case studies of real package offerings**, which will encapsulate both what was included and what required upsell, reinforcing the above points in a concrete way.

Case Studies: Real-World Web Design Packages and Their Scope

To ground our discussion in reality, let's examine a couple of **real-world examples** of web design packages offered by companies. By analyzing what these packages include and exclude, we can illustrate how the general principles we've discussed manifest in actual service offerings. We'll also see how well-designed packages communicate scope and how clients can interpret those details.

Case Study 1: "Starter", "Business", and "E-Commerce" Packages (Small Agency)

A small web design company (not named here for privacy, but documented in an industry blog) offered three clear tiers of packages, which were analyzed by an expert (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). The tiers were titled **Starter Website**, **Business Website**, and **E-Commerce Website**, with starting prices at $1,599, $2,899, and $8,599 respectively (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Each had a defined list of included features, and some explicitly noted exclusions or additional costs even within the package. Here's a summary of each tier and scope:

- **Starter Website Package ($1,599+):** Aimed at clients with basic needs and budget sensitivity.

    - *Included:* Custom design (with 1 revision round included) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), up to 5 pages of content (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), responsive design for mobile/tablet (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), 1 email contact form (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), basic homepage slideshow with up to 6 images (but in this case it was listed as $150 extra if they wanted that feature) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), a photo gallery for up to 24 pictures (again noted as a $125 extra if needed) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Additional pages beyond the 5 would cost $75 each (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), and additional contact forms beyond the one would be $75 each (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

    - *Not included (or extra):* Notably, a "Shopping cart" (e-commerce functionality) was specifically listed as *"not included"* in this package (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Also, as mentioned, the slideshow and gallery features weren't automatically included – they had price tags if the client chose to add them. Custom features beyond these basics would only be done after consultation, presumably at extra cost (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

    Interpretation: The Starter package clearly covers a small informational website. It emphasizes a low page count and minimal extras. It's transparent in even naming a feature that is not included (shopping cart) to set expectations – likely because some clients might assume even a cheap site could maybe add a PayPal cart, so they made sure to say no, not at this level. The itemized extra prices (for more pages, forms, etc.) help clients know how the cost could increase if they need slightly more than base. This is a good practice; it prevents shock if a client turns out to need 8 pages – they already know pages 6-8 would add $225 total. It also likely encourages some to consider the next package up if they foresee many add-ons. The single revision implies the client should be decisive or expect to pay more if they keep changing the design. This tight scope keeps it profitable for the agency while delivering a functional simple site.

- **Business Website Package ($2,899+):** A mid-tier for more established needs.

    - *Included:* Custom design with 2 revision rounds (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), up to 15 pages of content (a significant step up) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), a **custom CMS** (this implies at this level they might build a custom content management interface or at least they highlight it, whereas the Starter didn't mention CMS – possibly Starter might not have a client-editable CMS, or it's a simpler one; the mention here suggests a robust CMS is part of the selling point) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Responsive design is included (as expected) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), one contact form (with additional at $50 each, note the price per extra form is lower here than in Starter, likely because at this level some things scale better) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), homepage slideshow with 6 pictures included (no extra fee now) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), photo galleries included (no numeric limit stated, presumably multiple or larger galleries) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). **Shopping cart functionality is *partially* included**: listed as "Shopping cart (+ $350 and $25 per product)" (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). This means if the client on this Business package wants to add e-commerce, they can – it would cost $350 to add a basic cart system plus $25 for each product they want the agency to input. So it's offered as an optional feature, bridging toward e-commerce without needing the full E-commerce package. All other additional features would again be by consultation.

    - *Not included:* It's implied that full e-commerce integration is not default (it's a paid add-on as given). Also, likely things like logo design or copywriting are not mentioned, so presumably not included. The mention of a custom CMS might indicate the site is developed in a way the client can manage content (maybe a proprietary or advanced configured CMS, beyond what Starter offered – maybe Starter package websites might even be static or have limited CMS capabilities since it wasn't mentioned explicitly there).

Interpretation: The Business package is more robust – triple the pages, more revisions, built to accommodate expansion. It shows an interesting approach to e-commerce: they allow some e-commerce features as add-ons, which is useful for a business that maybe wants to sell a few items but not invest in a full online store package. Still, the charges are clear, preventing the client from expecting to add a full store for free. It also signals that if someone truly has a lot of products, it might be wiser to jump to the E-commerce package anyway. The presence of a custom CMS suggests that at this tier, they guarantee a user-friendly way for the client to update the site. It's not certain if the Starter had one – it might have, but not "custom." Possibly Starter sites were using simpler platforms or just not emphasizing the CMS to client (some very low budget sites might simply rely on the designer to make any changes, whereas at Business level they ensure the client can do it).

- **E-Commerce Website Package ($8,599+):** Top-tier for online stores or complex sites.

  - *Included:* Custom design with 2 revisions (similar to Business, maybe no need for more revisions as design still is custom but they perhaps assume a more thorough process from start) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), 20 pages included (because an e-commerce site will have product pages etc., they allocate more pages) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), custom CMS (likely needed for store management) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), responsive design (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), one contact form (again +$50 for each additional, though an e-commerce site might not need many contact forms aside from maybe support or wholesale contact) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), homepage slideshow included (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), photo galleries included (which could be used for product image galleries or portfolio etc.) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), and importantly **shopping cart, payment processor integration, and shipping integration are included** (no extra fee) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Meaning this package is a full-fledged e-commerce solution: the price covers building a working online store with presumably unlimited products (or a high number) – at least, they did not list a per-product fee here, implying that large catalogs would be accommodated, or perhaps they'd negotiate if it's huge. Likely, they'd populate a certain number and then train on adding more as needed.

  - *Not included:* It wasn't explicitly stated, but we can infer that this package likely still didn't include things like entering hundreds of products unless specified. But since they removed the per-product fee here, maybe they assume a typical store launch (the higher base price covers a bunch of initial product setup). Still, mega stores might cost more. Other standard exclusions remain – content writing for product descriptions, product photography, etc., would not be included. They also might not include advanced custom features beyond the usual store functions. And the price "starting at $8,599" hints that if a client needed more customizations, the actual quote could be higher.

Interpretation: The E-commerce package clearly is for those who need an online store and are willing to pay for a turnkey solution. It covers everything needed for selling online (cart, payments, shipping) as part of the base price, which makes sense at that price point. By packaging it like this, they differentiate from Business package which is mainly informational with an optional small store. The price jump is significant (almost 3x Business) reflecting the complexity of e-commerce (inventory management, security needs, many templates for product pages, etc.). But the structure of inclusions remains clear and similar in format, just scaled up.

What we learn from Case Study 1:

- Each package carefully delineates scope by number of pages and features.

- Lower packages explicitly exclude bigger features (like e-commerce) to prevent misunderstanding. Higher packages incorporate them.

- Additional costs for extras are transparently listed (e.g., extra pages, forms, those small add-ons). This helps align expectations and encourages upsell if many extras are needed.

- Revisions are limited per package, showing that the scope of design effort is controlled.

- The importance of a CMS is highlighted at least from mid-tier upward – implying that for serious websites giving the client control is standard, whereas extremely budget sites might not invest in a full CMS experience.

- The progression encourages upgrading: The analysis by the expert noted how the Starter package purposely mentions what it lacks ("shopping cart not included") which might nudge a customer who wants to sell stuff to just go for the higher package (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Also, the example mentioned that by listing what's not in basic, it encourages considering the next tier (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

- They also noted that popular extras are earmarked right away (Source: www.elegantthemes.com); by saying, for example, additional pages/forms cost X, it removes doubt and gives clarity. Clients won't be afraid "what if I need more pages, will they overcharge me?" – it's already stated. This builds trust and makes the offering look credible.

- Another point from the expert's commentary: *"Explicitly says that additional features can be added only after consultations, making it easy to determine which clients would be more suited to fully custom solutions."* (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). This is a strategy to filter: if a prospect looks at the package and realizes they want a lot of "additional features" not listed, they'll know they need to talk about a custom plan,

meaning perhaps none of these fixed packages fit and a custom quote is needed. Thus, the company doesn't try to shoehorn every client into a package – they keep the door open for bespoke work if the project is complex.

This case study aligns with many points we've covered: content (text) was not mentioned anywhere, so clearly client provides or separate service. No mention of hosting or domain, which likely means those aren't included – maybe they'd assist, but costs not covered. No mention of maintenance or ongoing updates – so presumably after launch, that's not included. It focuses on the build itself.

Case Study 2: Two-Tier Packages by a Hosting Company

Another example was given of a prominent hosting company that also started offering simplified web design packages as a side service (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). They had essentially:

- **Standard Website at $799**, and
- **E-Commerce Website at $1,099** (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

These are much lower price points than the previous case's mid/high packages, which suggests these are more template-driven, minimal service packages (and indeed they were described as an "afterthought" by the host, just to upsell hosting sign-ups) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). The features included were:

- Standard ($799): A dedicated design coordinator (basically an account person) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), a premium template from their collection (so not a custom design, but choosing a high-quality template) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), use of their custom CMS (so the site is on their proprietary system) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), up to 10 pages of content (similar size to the previous Starter, but cheaper likely because it's template-based and maybe offshored or automated) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), two revisions after delivery (so limited iteration) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

- E-Commerce ($1,099): Similar to Standard – design coordinator, their template, their CMS, up to 10 pages of content, two revisions (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Additionally, up to 10 products added to start (with ability to purchase more product additions) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), integration of payment and shipping methods (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

Notably, these packages were much simpler in description – and the critique was that they "barely list any of the features included" (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). They lacked detail such as what exactly is meant by "premium template" or what SEO or other features are in there. Also, they didn't mention extras or consultation, which the commentator saw as potential confusion points if a client needed something beyond what was listed (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).

What's apparently not included or limited in Case 2:

- Because it's a hosting company's side service, likely things like ongoing site changes are heavily limited. They likely keep it bare-bones: deliver the initial site, and that's it.
- The number of pages and products are strict; additional ones are possible but presumably cost more (though they didn't list the price on the marketing, which is a downside – that info might come once you talk to sales, which is less transparent).
- Custom design is not included – you get a template from their library, meaning uniqueness is limited. If you want something highly unique, this package won't deliver it (you'd need a different approach).
- SEO, content writing, etc., none mentioned, so presumably not included. Possibly not even basic SEO setup was explicitly promised in the copy, though maybe the templates are SEO-friendly by default.

The analysis concluded these packages were not great examples to follow because they were too general and left many questions (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). They were likely meant to be cheap and quick, not thorough. But they illustrate the low end of package offerings:

- They clearly cut costs by templating everything.
- They limit the scope a lot (10 pages, 10 products, only two revision cycles).
- They don't include many "soft" services (like planning, extensive consultation) – it's more of a cookie-cutter approach.
- And presumably, they hook you into their hosting ecosystem (the impetus for them might be to get you on their hosting for the long term; the website design service is almost a loss leader or break-even to capture hosting customers).

Lessons from comparing Case 1 and Case 2:

- The comprehensiveness and clarity of what's included can vary widely. Good packages (Case 1) detail a lot and preemptively answer client needs and possible extras. Mediocre packages (Case 2) skim on details, which could lead to customer confusion or underwhelming results.
- Pricing correlates with included services. The inexpensive packages in Case 2 obviously exclude more (like no custom design, no extended support, etc.), whereas the pricier ones in Case 1 cover more features.
- It also shows the purpose behind packages: Case 1's agency likely packages to streamline sales but still deliver quality, whereas Case 2's hosting company packages are more of a marketing add-on and it shows in their paucity of detail.

Other Real-World Perspectives:

- A 2019 survey of clients on social media (alluded to by Creative Collective) indicates that many small business owners aren't sure what's typical in a web quote (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Some thought they'd get SEO or copy thrown in, then felt disgruntled when they didn't (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). These anecdotal cases reinforce why being explicit in packages is beneficial.
- As the Creative Collective wrote, they pride themselves on making quotes "quite detailed listing all inclusions as thoroughly as we can" (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) to avoid those misunderstandings. This is a practice that clients should look for – detailed proposals – and designers should emulate.
- Another agency blog (MayeCreate, 2022) essentially turned their explanation of what's not included into part of their marketing content, educating leads so that if they come to work with them, they already know SEO or content is extra (Source: mayecreate.com). This transparent content marketing approach likely decreases friction in sales and sets them apart as trustworthy.
- The **value of package tiers** is to accommodate different client segments: from those who want cheap and quick, to those who need more comprehensive solutions. The effective examples (Case 1) scaled the services appropriately. E.g., the cheapest didn't promise the world, just a professional basic site; the mid one gave a lot more room and a path to partial e-commerce; the top one was all-in for serious online business. Thus, a client could self-select into the right tier and know what they're getting for each step up.

All these insights underscore a main theme: **clear definition of what's included and excluded is crucial for a web design package's success** – both for satisfying clients and for maintaining profitability and sanity on the provider's side.

Having looked at what's included, what's not, and how real packages delineate these, we can move on to **best practices and guidelines** for both clients and designers when dealing with web design packages. This will involve tips on how to avoid the pitfalls we've discussed – essentially a summary of how to ensure both parties are on the same page, plus a peek at how the landscape is evolving (like towards subscriptions or more integrated services).

Best Practices for Clients and Designers (Ensuring Clarity and Success)

With a thorough understanding of website design package components and exclusions, it's important to highlight best practices that help ensure a smooth project. These guidelines are drawn from the advice of experienced agencies and the case studies we reviewed. They revolve around **clear communication, proper planning, and aligning expectations**.

For Clients: How to Evaluate and Engage Web Design Packages

1. Read the Quote/Contract Thoroughly and Clarify Doubts.
When you receive a proposal for a web design package, **scrutinize the list of inclusions and exclusions**. Don't assume anything not mentioned. As one agency advises: *"If it doesn't say it is included on your quote or contract, presume it's not."* (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Check if the quote specifies details such as the number of pages, whether a CMS is provided, how many revisions are allowed, etc. Look for any mention of things you need (e.g., blog functionality, SEO, training) and if you don't see them, **ask**. It's far better to ask *"Does this package include migrating my old blog posts?"* upfront than to find out later it wasn't covered. A good agency will welcome questions and will clarify or adjust the proposal if needed.

2. Compare "Apples to Apples" Between Different Providers.
If you're reviewing multiple package offers, note how each defines scope. One provider's "Standard Package" might include some SEO setup while another's doesn't. To compare, you may need to ask each provider about things like maintenance, content entry, etc., so you're not just comparing prices blindly (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The Creative Collective suggests checking if a quote summarizes total hours or effort, to see how much work is being committed (this can reveal if one quote is unrealistically low) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Also, clarify if a

seemingly low price package is using a theme vs. custom design (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au); know what you're paying for. If one package includes a lot more (like content writing or a logo) and another doesn't, factor those differences into your decision, rather than simply choosing the cheapest price.

3. Be Clear About Your Own Requirements and Priorities.

Before engaging a package, outline what features and services you actually need. Is a contact form enough or do you need a booking system? Do you have content ready or do you need writing help? Is online selling a future goal or an immediate need? Communicate these to the agency so they can recommend the appropriate package or a custom solution. If you select a base package due to budget, recognize which desired features it doesn't include and plan how to handle them (maybe in a phase 2 or DIY or with an add-on service). **Don't assume a package will magically cover a future need** unless it's explicitly part of it. For example, if you think you might want e-commerce later, mention it; some agencies can build a site ready to expand or might advise starting with a higher package to save refactoring costs later. Also, specify any unusual requirements. If you need, say, integration with a specific software (CRM, inventory, etc.), raise it early. Many agencies note that custom integrations are outside packages, but they can often be tackled via custom quoting (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). It's on you to mention it; if you don't, the delivered site likely won't include it by default.

4. Provide Timely Inputs (Content, Feedback, etc.).

One silent killer of web projects is delay in client deliverables or decisions. If your package expects you to supply content or images, do so on the agreed timeline. If you need copywriting and it's not included, start that process ASAP (either writing yourself or hiring a copywriter). When the designer provides a design draft, **consolidate your feedback clearly within the allowed revision rounds**. For example, if you only have 2 revision cycles, try to cover all your change requests in those rounds rather than trickling new changes afterward which could incur extra fees (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Also, respect the scope: if you realize mid-project that you want a new feature that wasn't discussed (say halfway through you decide you want a forum on the site), expect that it will require a change order (and likely additional cost or timeline extension). The best practice is to have a solid plan from the start (perhaps through a discovery meeting) so scope changes are minimized. As MayeCreate highlights, *"Make sure everything you talked about in those meetings is in writing in the proposal and you understand what it means."* (Source: mayecreate.com) – so there are no "I thought you would also do X" surprises.

5. Plan for Excluded Needs Post-Launch.

Budget and plan not just for the website build, but for its **ongoing life**. If the package doesn't include maintenance, decide who will handle updates and security patches – will you learn to do it, or purchase a maintenance plan? If marketing is not included, who will run your SEO or ads? It's wise to line up these resources. Many agencies offer post-launch maintenance or SEO services on a monthly retainer; consider engaging them or another provider if you need continuous help. For instance, after your site is delivered, you might move into a **monthly SEO program** as recommended (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au), or sign up for a support plan if you're not comfortable managing the CMS updates yourself (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). Also remember domain and hosting renewals – mark those dates so your site doesn't go down for non-payment unexpectedly (not the designer's responsibility unless you've arranged it). Essentially, treat the website package as phase 1 – for phase 2 (promotion, maintenance, growth) either DIY or hire accordingly. Those costs should be considered in your overall web project budget from the get-go.

6. Leverage Case Studies and Portfolios.

Ask the provider for examples of sites similar to yours that they built under a package. Case studies can reveal how comprehensive the service was. For example, if their portfolio site has great images and content, ask "Did you do the photography and writing for this client?" The answer will tell you what's commonly provided. Some agencies even have testimonials where clients mention what was done. If a client says "The team also helped us with our copy and SEO", that indicates those services can be packaged or at least arranged. Use these insights to inform your expectations and negotiations. Conversely, if all their portfolio sites have mediocre filler text or stock images, that could hint that content was left entirely to clients.

7. Get Everything in Writing.

Ensure that the final agreement or SOW (Statement of Work) explicitly lists deliverables. Verbal assurances like "yeah, we usually throw in a free month of support" should be written down to be enforceable. Likewise, if you requested a slight tweak to scope (e.g., you negotiated that they will upload 20 blog posts from the old site, even though typical package was only 10 pages), make sure that's in the contract. As MayeCreate emphasizes, *"Get clarification in writing... if the estimate doesn't tell you... who's migrating content from your old site, taking photos, writing text, etc., it is not detailed enough. Do not feel bad about going back and asking for details."* (Source: mayecreate.com) (Source: mayecreate.com). Better to have a somewhat pedantic contract than a misunderstanding. This protects both you and the provider.

For Designers/Agencies: How to Effectively Structure and Deliver Packages

1. Define Scope in Detail and Educate the Client.
When creating package offerings, **be extremely clear about what's included and excluded** – both in your marketing materials and in individual proposals. Listing bullet-point inclusions (number of pages, revisions, features like CMS, responsive design, etc.) helps set client expectations upfront (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Also consider listing a few common "not included" items especially if your target clients often assume they are – for instance, you might note "*Content creation and ongoing SEO not included in package (available as separate services)*" on the package description to avoid confusion. MayeCreate's approach of writing a blog post "What's included in web design... and what's not" (Source: mayecreate.com) is an example of proactively educating leads. On calls or meetings, don't shy away from walking through the scope line by line. Encourage clients to ask questions like "will you also do X as part of this?" rather than leaving it unsaid. It can be useful to develop a **checklist** of items to confirm with each client – e.g., "Who will provide the text? Do you have a logo? Are you expecting us to handle domain setup?" – this ensures all important scope elements are discussed. As one seasoned designer notes, **never assume the client knows the limits**; many don't build websites often, so draw analogies if needed (like the remodeling analogy from MayeCreate about upgrade costs (Source: mayecreate.com) to make them understand how web projects work. Confirm understanding in writing (email recap of a meeting is great for this).

2. Use Tiered Packages to Offer Flexibility but Set Boundaries.
Tiering your packages (Basic/Standard/Premium or similar) is a best practice (Source: www.ramotion.com). It allows you to serve different budget levels while segmenting features. Ensure each tier has well-defined boundaries so clients pick the right one. For example, your Basic might exclude any e-commerce, limit pages and have only email support, whereas Premium includes online store and more hand-holding. By tiering:

- You make it easier to **up-sell** when a client's needs grow – "Sure, we can do that, but that would fall under our Premium plan".
- You filter out clients who need custom solutions – if none of the tiers fit, you then move to a custom proposal mode (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).
- You also can weed out very low-budget but high-expectation prospects: someone wanting a champagne website on a beer budget will see from your Basic package that certain things aren't included and either adjust expectations or self-select out. As Tom Ewer said, it helps to "weed out the tire-kickers" and unrealistic requests by putting your structured options forward (Source: www.elegantthemes.com).
- Document the differences clearly (like our case study did). A quick comparison table of packages on your website or brochure can help clients self-identify.

3. Be Transparent About Add-On Fees and Extra Work Rates.
No package covers absolutely everything; there will always be potential extras. It's wise to have a defined rate or fee structure for common extras and communicate that. For instance, if additional pages beyond package allotment cost $X each, state it upfront (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). If copywriting costs $Y per page or if training beyond 2 hours is $Z/hour, let it be known. Also clarify your hourly rate for out-of-scope work in the contract, e.g., "Work beyond the defined scope will be billed at $N/hour with client approval." This sets the expectation that you're happy to do more if needed, but not for free. It also avoids awkward "nickel-and-dime" feelings because the client was informed beforehand. Many clients appreciate a straightforward approach like: "Add a basic page: $50; Add advanced feature (like a payment form): $200; Additional design revision round: $100" etc. You can bake some margin to cover minor unanticipated tweaks, but for clearly extra requests, having that framework helps. The Elegant Themes analysis praised the example company for earmarking popular extras right from the get-go, removing doubts and debates (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Emulate that – it shows professionalism and forethought.

4. Include Key Deliverables that Add Value (and Mention Them).
Make sure your packages cover the fundamental needs (like responsive design, basic SEO, training). Many of these we consider standard now, but clients might not realize they're included unless you say so. Don't hide benefits – if you, for example, always set up Google Analytics and a sitemap submission, list it as a feature of your package ("Includes Google Analytics integration and Google Search Console setup"). It differentiates you from those who might not bother, and it reminds the client of the extra value they're getting. Similarly, mention if you offer a warranty or support period ("30-day post-launch bug fix warranty included") (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). When you specify these deliverables, you not only market your thoroughness but also implicitly set boundaries (e.g., that support beyond 30 days is not free). If you provide any supplementary guides or checklists ("CMS user guide PDF provided"), mention it. All these items reassure the client that you have a comprehensive approach. Just ensure you truly deliver them – listing and not doing would be worse. So build them into your workflow.

5. Manage the Project Tightly According to Scope.
Once the project starts, refer back to the scope document frequently. If a client asks for something that seems out of scope, tactfully point out "Our initial agreement covers X, Y, Z. This new request falls outside that, but I'm happy to accommodate it as additional work. Let's discuss potential

cost/time." It's crucial to do this *immediately* when the request comes – don't silently do it and resent it, or do it and charge later without warning (clients hate surprise bills). Use change orders if needed: small ones can be an email confirmation "As discussed, adding an extra page for $100". Larger ones might need a formal addendum. Maintain a scope log if things get complex.

From a time management perspective, keep track of revision rounds and kindly remind the client "This is revision 2 of 2 included; further design changes beyond this will incur our hourly rate as per contract." This doesn't have to be adversarial – often clients simply forget the limit and a polite reminder suffices. Emphasize collaboration: you want them happy, but also that your pricing was based on the agreed scope. Many professionals mention that setting expectations early – even listing out the process ("Round 1: deliver concept, Round 2: incorporate feedback (final included round)") – helps clients focus their feedback better.

6. Provide Guidance and Support within Reason (Empower the Client).

Though many things (like content writing) aren't included, you can still be a helpful consultant. For instance, if a client is struggling with content, you might provide them a content template or example structure for a page to fill in. Or refer them to a trusted copywriter. This isn't you doing it for free; it's you going a bit beyond to ensure the project moves. It can be as simple as sharing a checklist "Here's what content we need from you: Company description, 3 product descriptions, team bios… here are approximate word counts for each." This guide cost you little time and can greatly ease the client's burden – and avoids delays. Similarly with images: if you know the client will be sourcing their own images, offer tips (like image dimensions, or suggest stock sites if they need free options). These small value-adds differentiate you.

During training/handover, be patient and ensure the client truly understands how to use the CMS for intended tasks. A well-trained client will handle basic updates themselves and not bug you for tiny changes (which they might expect for free otherwise). It's an investment in smoother post-launch relations. Agencies that "empower clients with skills to self-manage" often find happier clients and fewer trivial support requests (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au).

Additionally, educate clients on site maintenance if you're not doing it: e.g., provide a short list of what to do monthly (update plugins, take backups, etc.) if they opt to manage themselves, and then offer your maintenance service as a convenient alternative. Either way, you've helped them.

7. Continuously Refine Your Packages Based on Feedback.

After delivering a number of packages, you'll notice patterns. Maybe a lot of clients expected a blog and you had to add it in – consider including a simple blog in future packages or at least upsell it proactively. Or if you find hardly anyone uses a feature you included, you might drop it or reduce its prominence. Monitor how often scope creep happens and for what – that often indicates something you might incorporate or clarify better. For example, if multiple clients assumed "setting up emails" was included, you might explicitly add a line "(Email account setup not included)" next to your hosting note, or start asking clients if they need help there and maybe offer it as a small paid add-on. The goal is to minimize repeated misunderstandings. Also, follow industry trends: if, for instance, accessibility (ADA compliance) is becoming expected, decide whether to include basic accessibility checks in your package or offer it separately. Keep your offerings up-to-date (e.g., in 2023-2024 some agencies started including integration of GDPR cookie notices or basic accessibility features as standard, since these became commonly expected). By refining packages, you can also adjust pricing accordingly to maintain profitability.

8. Leverage Contracts and Documentation to Protect Both Sides.

Ensure your contract or terms cover limiters, such as: "The package includes up to X hours of work or Y rounds of changes; additional work will be billed at hourly rate" or "Client-delayed timelines beyond Z weeks may result in project rescheduling or additional fees." These clauses handle scenarios like the client vanishing or iterating endlessly. It provides a basis to point to if things go off track. Also include ownership and usage terms: e.g., who owns the rights to design or content (usually the client after payment, but you might reserve right to showcase it in portfolio, etc.). Include a clause about what constitutes project completion – e.g., once the deliverables are done and site live, any further requests are separate. This avoids the project dragging forever. Many agencies have a "deemed acceptance" clause like if the client doesn't respond with any changes within X days of site handover, it's considered accepted and the project closes – preventing an open-ended revision loop. All this should be phrased professionally. Clients actually appreciate clear, fair terms as it signals you are experienced.

9. Communication is King.

Throughout the project, maintain open lines. Don't let assumptions fester. Check in regularly, provide progress updates tied to scope ("Home, About, Services pages are completed per scope, working on Contact next…"). If client starts to venture into scope creep territory in conversation, gently reel it back: "That's a great idea for perhaps a second phase. For now, let's focus on the key features we planned so we stay on schedule. We can certainly explore that as a future enhancement." This reminds them of scope without flat "no". Also, at project end, do a scope checklist: review together that everything included is delivered, so they acknowledge satisfaction and any missed items are caught. For anything excluded that they

expected, this final review can catch it and you could do a quick change order to deliver it (or schedule it later) so they aren't left with a negative surprise. For instance, "Yes, we built your site. Remember, ongoing SEO is separate – would you like to discuss a monthly SEO plan or will your team handle it?" It reiterates boundaries but also can lead to additional business.

10. Plan for Handoff or Next Steps.

Don't just launch and disappear. Either transition into offering them maintenance or provide them the info to go on their own. For example, after launch, you might give them a "website launch kit" including: credentials, a backup copy, basic instructions for common tasks, and a document summarizing what was done and any recommendations (like "We suggest updating content regularly for better SEO, consider our blogging packages" or "Your site is built on WordPress – remember to update plugins monthly, or we can do it via a support plan."). This not only provides closure but can seed future work. Many agencies have a *post-launch meeting* to formally close the project, during which they often pitch ongoing services in a soft way ("We could help you further by doing X…"). From a best practice standpoint, even if no ongoing service is sold, ensure the client has everything they need – domain login, hosting info, etc. Clients greatly appreciate this thorough handoff (some have horror stories of designers holding them hostage by not giving access; by being the opposite, you build trust and likely referrals).

Incorporating these best practices can lead to more successful projects, happier clients, and less stress for you as a designer or agency. It essentially boils down to communication, clarity, and thoroughness at each stage of the package lifecycle.

With best practices covered, let's step back and consider the broader picture: what are the **implications of website design packages on the industry and how might things evolve in the future**?

Implications and Future Trends in Web Design Service Packaging

Website design packages have become a staple in the web development industry, especially for serving small to mid-sized businesses. Their rise indicates a maturation and commoditization of certain web services – making it easier for clients to purchase and for agencies to sell. Looking forward, several trends and implications can be identified:

Elevating Client Expectations and Industry Standards

As more agencies offer clearly defined packages, clients are becoming better educated about what to expect. Over time, certain items that used to be "bonus" inclusions have become standard due to competitive pressure. For instance, a decade ago not every basic site package included SSL or mobile optimization by default, but now clients assume these are given – and rightly so, because today a site without SSL or a non-mobile site is unacceptable. We've seen that **84% of visitors prefer mobile-friendly sites** (Source: www.networksolutions.com) and **browsers flag sites without HTTPS as not secure** (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au); as a result, responsive design and basic security are now essentially mandatory features in all reputable packages. This trend of baseline expectations will continue: for example, accessibility (ensuring sites are usable by people with disabilities) is becoming more prominent due to legal and ethical considerations. It wouldn't be surprising if, in the near future, basic packages start explicitly including "Accessibility compliance check for WCAG 2.1 AA standards" as a selling point, and later it might be expected by default.

Similarly, **performance optimization** might become a must-have element. With Google using site speed as a ranking factor and users expecting fast load times, agencies are likely to incorporate performance tuning (like caching, image optimization) into even basic offerings, whereas in the past this was sometimes an extra. Already, some boast about providing good page speed scores as part of their package.

Overall, the existence of widely available package comparisons (on agency websites, directories, etc.) drives a sort of *standardization of scope*. Agencies look at competitors and ensure they're not missing a key inclusion. This competitive leveling up benefits clients with more value and clearer choices.

The Shift to Subscription Models and "Websites as a Service"

One notable trend is the move towards **subscription-based web design services** – essentially transforming the one-time package into an ongoing service. Instead of, or in addition to, selling a website for $X, some agencies now offer a plan for $Y per month which includes the website design, hosting, ongoing updates, and even content changes on request. This is sometimes called the "web design subscription model" or "website as a service (WaaS)".

The benefits, as described by one expert, include **steady recurring revenue for agencies** and **more affordable, spread-out costs for clients** (Source: mangoinnovation.com) (Source: mangoinnovation.com). Instead of a client paying $5,000 upfront, they might pay, say, $200 a month over a few years. For the client, this can be easier on cashflow and comes with continuous support. For the agency, it means predictable income and

ongoing relationship (which can lead to upsells and referrals). It effectively bundles web design, hosting, maintenance, and sometimes unlimited small changes into one package, but delivered on a subscription basis.

We saw mentions of this model rising as a "game-changer" (Source: mangoinnovation.com). Many new startups and services (e.g., Wix's partner programs, Squarespace, etc.) also push a do-it-yourself subscription approach, which influences custom agencies to adopt similar pricing schemes to compete or differentiate. The traditional project-based approach isn't going away, but the subscription model is likely to gain more ground, particularly for small businesses who prefer to treat their website like a utility or ongoing service rather than a big capital project every few years.

Implication: Agencies might start offering their packages in both flavors – e.g., "Pay $3000 now, or $275/month for 12 months" to lower barriers. Some might exclusively shift to monthly plans that include redesigns every 2-3 years, effectively guaranteeing repeat business. For clients, this means more options: they can choose a provider who acts almost like a web department on call (via subscription) versus just project-based. The subscription also aligns incentives for the agency to keep the site updated and client happy long-term, rather than just deliver and depart. As one source noted, it fosters *"long-term relationships between designers and clients, with continuous support and updates"* (Source: mangoinnovation.com), basically merging design and maintenance into one service.

DIY Platforms and Template Marketplaces Pressure

The proliferation of DIY website builders (Wix, Squarespace, Weebly, etc.) and templates/themes for CMS like WordPress creates downward pressure on pricing for simpler projects and pushes agencies to add more value in their packages. Many small business owners realize they could, in theory, set up a basic site themselves for low cost. So when they do hire a pro, they expect a higher level of service or more complex features that justify the cost.

Implication: Web design packages might evolve to emphasize the value-add beyond what DIY can do. This might be marketing language change (highlighting "expert strategy", "conversion optimization", "unique custom design not from a cookie-cutter", etc.). Or feature change: packages could incorporate more marketing insights, SEO expertise, integration with business tools – things a DIY user might struggle with. Essentially, agencies will keep pushing up-market for their packages, leaving the very basic "brochure site with nothing fancy" largely to the DIY realm or to ultra-cheap providers. We've already seen the lowest tier of some agencies being phased out or delegated to automated site generation.

At the same time, some agencies partner with these platforms (many agencies now create Wix or Squarespace sites for clients who want those platforms but with professional help). In that case, their package might actually be "We'll build your site on Wix within these parameters for $X" – interestingly packaging their expertise on a DIY platform for those who want a halfway solution (the ease of a builder with a professional's touch).

Integration of Automation and AI in the Design Process

The future of web design packaging might also involve **automation and AI-assisted production**. Already, tools can generate initial layouts or even entire sites from brief inputs. AI can help with writing code, optimizing images, or even writing content (with caution). Agencies might incorporate such tools to deliver faster or to include things previously too time-consuming.

For example:

- AI content suggestions: A package could include "AI-generated draft content for your approval" for clients who have no copy. This speeds up content delivery though final editing is human. It's a new twist that could become common, especially for basic informational content. However, as noted by some (like the New Perspective blog hinting AI content can hurt SEO if used naively (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za), agencies have to use AI carefully. Perhaps the value-add becomes curating and correcting AI outputs.
- Automated design variations: Instead of or in addition to manual custom design, an agency could use AI to produce several design mockups quickly and then refine the best. If that drastically cuts design time, agencies might pass some savings to client or take on more projects. Packages might promise quicker turnaround thanks to these tools.
- Personalization and A/B testing: In future, packages might include an AI-driven optimization phase (like using AI to run A/B tests on different page designs or to personalize content for visitor segments). That's currently more an enterprise thing, but could trickle to smaller business offerings as tools become user-friendly.

Yet, even with AI, the human touch remains critical for strategy, creativity, and complex problem-solving – thus packages will likely emphasize that the service includes expert review of any automated processes to ensure quality. Perhaps package descriptions will mention AI as a feature, or perhaps they'll keep it behind the scenes.

Implication: The cost structure of packages might adjust if production becomes more efficient. It could go two ways:

1. Some agencies might lower prices or offer more in the package for the same price, achieving competitive advantage through efficiency.

2. Others might maintain price but deliver faster, using freed time to handle more clients (thus increasing volume). Clients might start expecting quicker turnarounds as these technologies become mainstream; a package timeline that used to be 6-8 weeks might shrink to, say, 2-4 weeks for similar scope due to automation.

Holistic Digital Services and Blurring Lines

Websites increasingly are just one part of a company's online presence. Clients may want a one-stop solution covering site, social media, content marketing, SEO, etc. We see many traditional "web design" agencies rebrand as "digital agencies" offering broader packages or at least cross-selling other services.

Implication: Web design packages might be nested inside larger packages. For instance, an agency might sell an "Online Presence Package" where website design is one component along with initial SEO setup, Google My Business setup, social media templates, etc. We already see hints: e.g., some offer "startup bundles" including logo + website + basic SEO for a combined price.

This integrated approach can appeal to new businesses who need everything. It also counters the effect of DIY tools by adding these wrap-around services that a DIY site builder won't provide. For agencies, it's a way to increase revenue per client and foster longer relationships (since SEO or marketing is ongoing). The risk is scope creep if not delineated well (so they must package those additional services as clearly as they do web design).

We might see more **collaborative partnerships** as well – e.g., agencies packaging third-party services (like including 3 months of an SEO agency's services, or a content writing package from a partner) in their web package, essentially reselling or bundling to simplify things for the client.

Globalization and Competition

The concept of packages makes web design somewhat more commodified, which means clients often compare agencies globally, not just locally. A client might see a package from an overseas firm at a much lower price and wonder. This means local agencies must justify their value (perhaps by highlighting understanding of local market, face-to-face meeting ability, or quality differences).

Implication: Some agencies might find success in specialization to avoid pure price competition – e.g., offering packages specializing in certain industries (like "Website Package for Law Firms" including industry-specific features and content guidance). Specialization can justify higher prices since it offers domain expertise. We might see more vertical-specific packages rather than generic ones. Already some agencies brand themselves that way, and their package scope is tailored – e.g., a real estate website package might include MLS integration (something irrelevant to other industries).

Also, the use of off-shore talent by agencies for parts of package delivery might increase to stay competitive – a local agency might keep strategy and client handling local, but outsource template customization or content entry abroad to reduce cost/time. How that affects clients (cost savings or not) is variable.

Customer Relationship and Trust

As mentioned, well-defined packages build trust by reducing uncertainty, which can lead to more sales. On the flip side, if a client feels like something was hidden or the package not fully honored, trust is broken. In the era of online reviews, agencies must be careful to meet their package promises. Many clients will choose a provider based on reviews or case studies, so consistent delivery is key.

Additionally, the adoption of packages might weed out some freelancers who operated with vague proposals – clients are more wary of open-ended deals when so many fixed options exist. However, truly custom, complex web development will always need bespoke quoting; packages don't replace that, they address the more common needs.

Implication: The market likely segments further: commodity websites via packages (or builders) vs. high-end custom interactive projects (web apps, complex systems) via detailed proposals. Some agencies straddle both, others focus on one.

In summary, the future of website designing packages looks to offer **more value, more integration, and more flexibility in how they're consumed** (one-off vs ongoing). Clients will benefit from clearer choices and potentially more comprehensive solutions for their online needs. Agencies will need to stay agile – updating their packages with the changing tech (like including new best practices), perhaps moving to continuity models (subscriptions), and differentiating through domain expertise or bundle offerings.

What remains constant is the principle that we've underscored throughout this report: **clarity and alignment** between client and provider. No matter how packages evolve, ensuring both parties have a shared understanding of "what's included and what's not" will remain the cornerstone of a successful web design project.

Conclusion

Website design packages have revolutionized the way web services are delivered and consumed, offering a structured and transparent approach to building a web presence. In this extensive exploration, we have dissected what's typically included in these packages – from design, pages, and responsive layouts, to CMS installation, basic SEO setup, and launch support – and what is commonly excluded – such as content creation, extensive custom functionality, ongoing maintenance, and other ancillary services unless explicitly added.

Through detailed analysis and real-world cases, several key takeaways emerged:

- **Clarity is Key:** Successful web design packages thrive on clear definitions. Both clients and designers benefit from spelling out deliverables, limits, and responsibilities in unambiguous terms (Source: mayecreate.com) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). This prevents the all-too-common misunderstandings where a client might assume, for example, that copywriting or unlimited revisions are included when they are not. A well-structured package or proposal documents every inclusion and uses exclusion notes or Q&A to set proper expectations.

- **Standard Inclusions vs. Custom Needs:** We identified a baseline of inclusions now expected as standard in most packages: professional visual design (increasingly custom-tailored as package level rises), a mobile-friendly site structure (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za), a CMS with training for client self-management (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za), essential on-site SEO and analytics (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au), social media and contact integrations (Source: www.newperspectivestudio.co.za), and deployment with a short window of post-launch support (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). These cover the fundamental needs for launching a credible small business website in today's environment. On the other hand, specialized needs (like e-commerce functionality, multi-language content, or integration with external systems) are often segregated into higher-tier packages or handled as custom add-ons (Source: www.elegantthemes.com) (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Clients with such needs must choose appropriate packages or be prepared for additional costs, and designers must guide them to the correct solution rather than overpromise in a basic package.

- **Avoiding Assumption Traps:** We repeatedly saw evidence that assumptions can be project killers. For example, many clients incorrectly assume their web designer will supply all the text and images (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au) or will continue to tweak the site indefinitely without new fees (Source: thecreativecollective.com.au). The report emphasized strategies to avoid these pitfalls: thorough consultations, itemized contracts, and frank communication. When both sides actively address "who does what" (content writing, image sourcing, domain purchase, etc.) at the outset, the project proceeds more smoothly and ends with satisfaction rather than surprise bills or incomplete deliverables.

- **Benefits of Package Approaches:** The package model, when done right, offers **significant benefits**: It gives clients price certainty and a menu of options, alleviating budget anxieties (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). It helps filter out mismatched leads and reduces protracted negotiation by presenting predefined choices (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). It also forces an agency to systematize their process, which can improve efficiency and profitability while ensuring consistent quality for repeatable project types. Case studies illustrated that well-crafted packages not only make purchasing easier but also can smartly encourage upselling (by highlighting what higher tiers offer) and set logical scope boundaries that protect the provider (Source: www.elegantthemes.com). Meanwhile, poorly defined packages can lead to confusion and undervaluing of the service (Source: www.elegantthemes.com), underscoring the importance of careful package design.

- **The Ongoing Evolution and Need for Adaptation:** The world of web design does not stand still. Our investigation into future trends suggests that both what is included in a "typical" package and how packages are offered will continue to evolve. With the advent of new technologies and shifting client expectations, agencies are beginning to integrate more services (like comprehensive digital marketing or conversion optimization) either into their packages or alongside them. The rise of **subscription-based offerings** points to a blending of design and maintenance into one continuous service model (Source: mangoinnovation.com), catering to clients' desire for hassle-free, ongoing website care. Additionally, automation and AI are poised to streamline parts of web development – though these tools will augment, not replace, professional judgment and customization. In response, designers may adjust package deliverables (for example, delivering results faster, or including AI-generated content drafts with human editing), and likely will highlight the unique human value they bring (creativity, strategy, nuanced understanding of brand and audience) that machines alone cannot provide. In essence, packages will adapt to remain relevant and valuable in an era of DIY options and intelligent tools, focusing on the depth of expertise and personal service.

- **Multiple Perspectives Enriched Understanding:** By examining the subject from various angles – the client's view, the designer's view, case-by-case scenarios, historical context, and future outlook – this report has aimed to provide a 360-degree comprehension. We saw how a client of a small business package might feel empowered by clear outlines or disillusioned by missing pieces if not clarified. Conversely, we saw how designers can streamline their sales and production process via packaging but must guard against scope creep to maintain viability. We also addressed how third-party factors (like industry standards, competitive offerings, and legal requirements) feed into what a package must cover. This multi-perspective analysis ensures that recommendations and conclusions are grounded in real-world complexities, not just theoretical ideals.

In conclusion, *"Website Designing Packages: What's Included and What's Not"* is far more than a matter of list-making – it's a reflection of the web design industry's maturity and an exercise in communication and expectation management. When done thoughtfully, packages create a win-win scenario: clients know exactly what they are getting for their investment and can compare options easily, and designers can deliver services more efficiently and profitably while building trust through transparency. However, success depends on **diligent definition, education, and adaptation**. Every website project, even within a package, is a collaboration. Both parties should approach it with an open channel of dialogue, using the package as a framework, not a straitjacket.

This comprehensive report underscores that any claim or assumption about a package should be verified by referencing the agreed-upon scope documents or written communications (Source: mayecreate.com). It encourages clients not to shy away from asking "Is X included?" – indeed, that is often the question that sparks the crucial conversations preventing issues down the line. It also encourages designers to proactively address those questions in their materials and kickoff meetings, turning potential misunderstandings into opportunities to demonstrate expertise and thoroughness.

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, one thing remains consistent: **the value of clarity and honesty in professional services.** Web design packages, when crafted and executed with these values, can lead to successful websites that meet objectives, projects that stay on time and budget, and ultimately, strong professional relationships. Whether one is a business owner embarking on a site redesign, or a web professional productizing their offerings, the principles and findings detailed in this report serve as a roadmap to navigating "what's included and what's not" in a way that leaves everyone satisfied with the outcome.

In the final analysis, the old adage "the devil is in the details" rings especially true – and we have seen that with careful attention to those details, **the divine – a well-designed website and a happy client – is in the outcome**.

Tags: web design packages, website deliverables, scope of work, web development services, cms integration, responsive design, inclusions vs exclusions, pricing tiers

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