

10 Questions to Ask Before You Trust Your Dev's Estimate

A short, honest checklist for non-technical founders working with a developer or agency.

01 Can they explain the plan in plain language?

If every answer is dense with jargon and nothing lands in terms you understand, that's not a communication quirk — it's a preview of every future conversation you'll have about your own product.

02 What exactly is included in the estimate?

Ask for a written breakdown, not a single number. A vague total is the easiest place for scope and cost to quietly drift later.

03 What's explicitly NOT included?

The gaps matter as much as the scope. Hosting, maintenance, bug fixes after launch, third-party integrations — get these named, not assumed.

04 How do they handle changes mid-project?

Requirements shift — that's normal. What matters is whether there's a clear, agreed process for it, or whether every change becomes a renegotiation.

05 Can you see and test work in progress, not just at the end?

Regular working demos — even rough ones — are a sign of a healthy process. Radio silence until a big reveal is a risk, not a strength.

06 Who owns the code and the accounts?

Confirm you'll have real access — source code repository, hosting, domain, admin logins — not just a finished product you can't independently touch.

07 What happens if you want to switch developers later?

A good answer describes a clean handover. A defensive or vague answer is worth noticing.

08 How do they estimate time — and how often are they right?

Ask for a real example: a past project's original estimate versus what it actually took. The gap tells you more than the estimate itself.

09 Is the architecture right-sized for where you are today?

Early-stage products need the smallest system that proves the idea. Excess complexity now usually means slower, costlier progress — not future-proofing.

10 Would they be comfortable with someone else reviewing this work?

A confident, competent team welcomes a second opinion. Resistance to that idea is itself a data point.

Want an independent second opinion on an actual project?

iThink Creatives reviews what your developer or agency is building — and tells you plainly what state it's in.

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