



20 QUESTIONS AN AGENCY DOESN'T WANT YOU TO ASK!



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We advocate *disruptive modern marketing*, but what does this actually mean?

Marketing usually tells you all about all the benefits you get from a certain purchase or service, and makes you want to buy their and only their product or service.

We disrupt the marketing scene by being fully open and transparent about both our benefits and drawbacks and give you the tools to make an informed decision.

“Wow, are you guys communists?”

Hell no, we want long lasting partnerships to take more of your money! By providing quality and once in a while a small f*#% up that we'll set right.

If this is nothing for you? Go partner up with another service provider! ;-)

That being said, let's dive into the questions we digital agencies would prefer you not to ask:



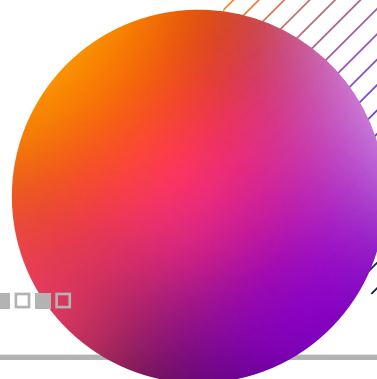
1. What does your process look like?

A clearly documented business process (standard operating procedure) shows a level of professionalism and you'll know exactly what to expect.

This is actually one of the most important questions to ask and don't stop there, dig deeper with questions like:

Which project management tools do you use?
How do you keep track of all project related tasks?
What do you expect from me?
When is the delivery?

All of these should be known when you start a project, web development isn't cheap so you want to be sure you're in the right hands.



2. Do you outsource any aspects of the process?

A lot of agencies are going to write about outsource vs in-house, most of them are going to tell you why outsource is dangerous for project delivery etc.

They're right, it could!

By the way, we outsource a lot of work.

Yeah and that after admitting that it could delay work...

Emphasizing on could, we don't know how the internal kitchen of other companies work so we don't have an opinion on their way of working.

But: At the end it's about transparency and open communication, we're not gonna say our way is better than theirs. It has to be what works for you.

Anyway if someone does outsource, just ask them:

- ▶ Who do they partner up with?
- ▶ What's their agreement?
- ▶ How do they assure on time delivery?

Ow and one last thing on outsourcing, read what forbes has to say about it.



3. Will you research our business?

This depends on how much you pay us. ;-)

Research is one of the most important things in any kind of development.

Who are our customers?

What do they like?

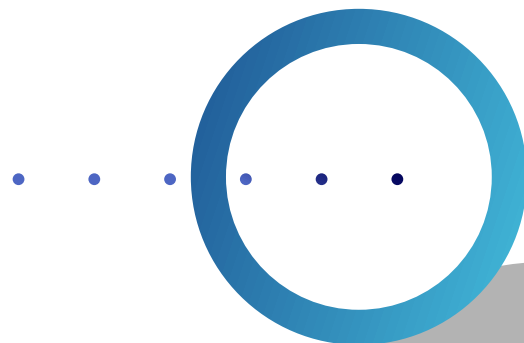
How do they get engaged?

What do our competitors do?

What are the benchmark KPIs in our business?

You won't get research on every price level but it never hurts to pay some more for this step. Why? To put in the words of Benjamin Franklin "By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail."

So the better the research, the better the plan, the better the execution.



4. What will be required of us?

Imagine you're going to a tailor, who knows best how to work with the fabric and what the latest trends are in the fashion industry? We'll give a little hint, it's not you.

However, who knows best what you like?

Like the tailor we'll require your input, depending on the services you chose from us we'll ask more or less from you like:

- ▶ Images
- ▶ Content
- ▶ Blogpost
- ▶ Etc...

It's possible you'll want certain copy on your website & sometimes we'll even tell you "No, we're doing it this way because ...".

We know "customer is king", but we're the expert.

What we require most of all is communication, we'll tell you exactly what or when we need something.



5. Can my existing website be upgraded?

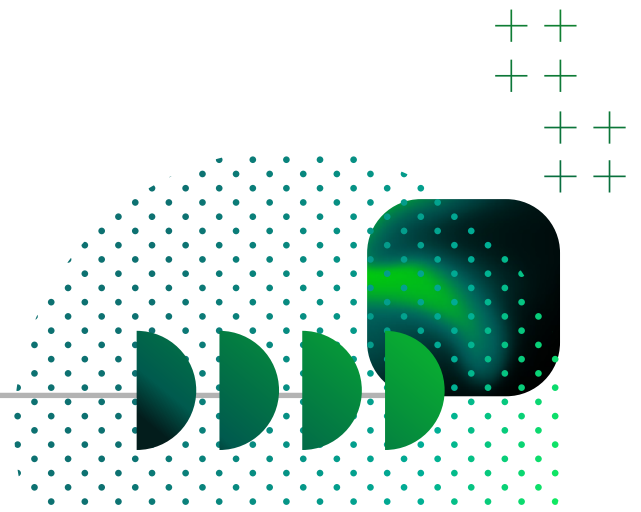
God damned, really? We just made this amazing plan of getting you the best of the best, completely custom, fully functional everything.

The best possible way to make the most out of your money and then you dare ask us this?

Well, yeah it might be possible...

However this depends on the in-house knowledge of the agency, don't ask us to upgrade a drupal website with magento webshop (it's out of our league at this moment).

But do you have a webshop running on woocommerce, shopify or a website on wordpress? Sure we can see if it's possible to upgrade what you have or revamp it.



6. How will my website be structured?

You impress us with all these amazing questions you're asking us. It seems like Monsieur is a connoisseur.

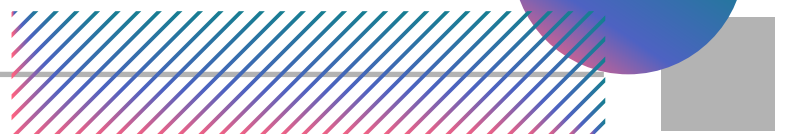
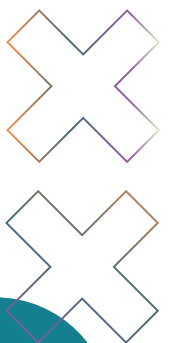
This can go very broad with terms like information architecture, sitemaps, etc.

It depends, like a lot of things, on your needs.

A website with a couple of pages doesn't need a visual sitemap but might have a need for information architecture.

Information architecture is where you make a visual representation of all the tools you use like CRM, mailing software etc. And how the information flows between these tools.

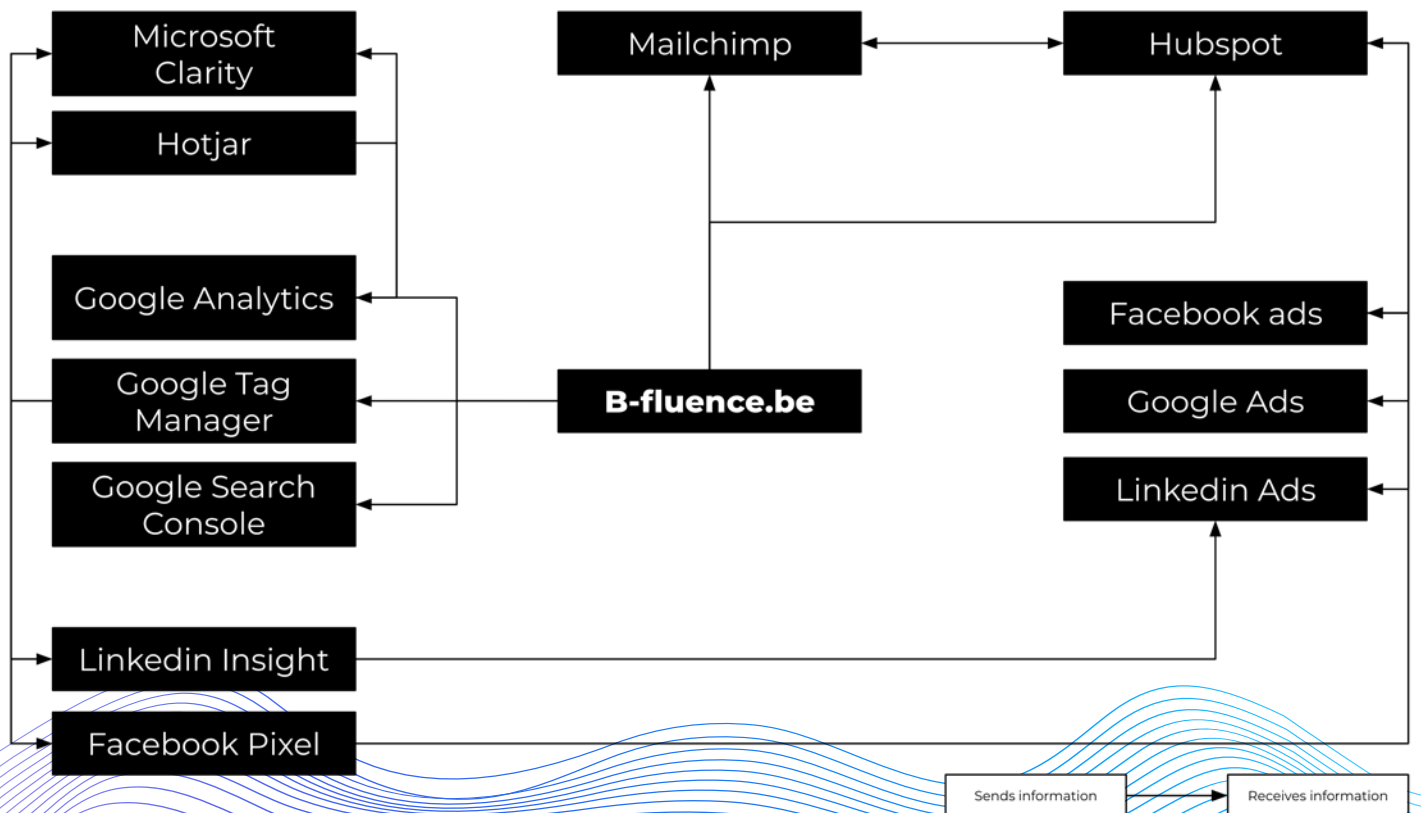
Where a sitemap can be a visual representation of your webpages or a way to tell search engines how to crawl your website. (Search engine bots navigating your website)



6. How will my website be structured?

Information Architecture

Here you can take a look at our website information architecture as an example in order to understand it better.



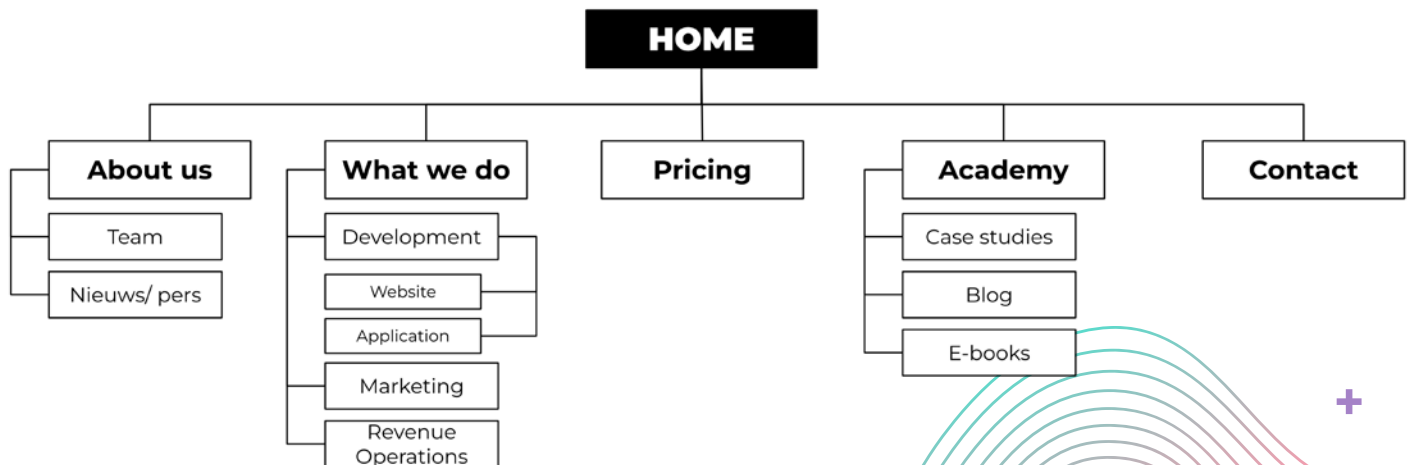
6. How will my website be structured?

Website Map

Here you can see the Website Map on its first stage.



And here the Website Map iterated and improved.



7. Why do you use CMS x, y or z?

A lot of agencies will tell you to ask “what CMS do you use?” and to be really honest, this doesn’t really matter...

Yeah we said it, the what is not important, the why is.

Every business and need is different:

- ▶ Are you going to scale?
- ▶ Will you be doing omni-channel marketing?
- ▶ Will you or your agency update the content?
- ▶ What’s your budget?

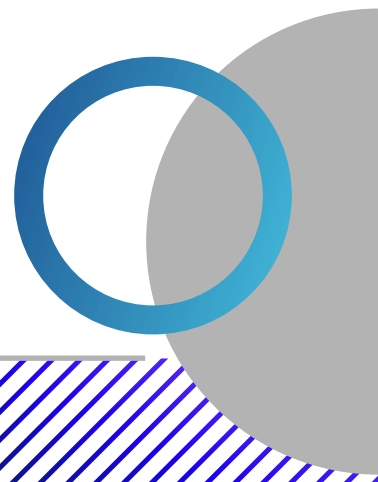
There’s also non-stop development in the CMS landscape so truth be told, we wouldn’t even know all the CMS out there at the moment.

Let’s look at forbes again to see some different CMS (we’re kinda lazy so we use other people’s content to help educate you)

At B-fluence we use wordpress.org, the lowest forbes star rating for a couple of reasons.

Do you want to know why? Just ask us!

But depending on your needs, you might need another CMS or agency.



8. Do you use templates or fully customize?

This is where a lot of money gets spent or is saved.

A template is a ready made structure, just like you can make a document template in word.

From here your website can receive a lot of customization or not.

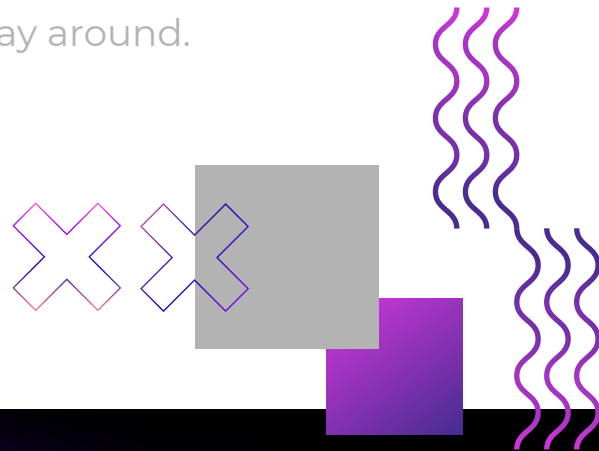
The pros of templates:

- ▶ Cheap
- ▶ Fast
- ▶ Easy

The cons:

- ▶ Not unique
- ▶ Might not look professional

With custom websites it's just the other way around.

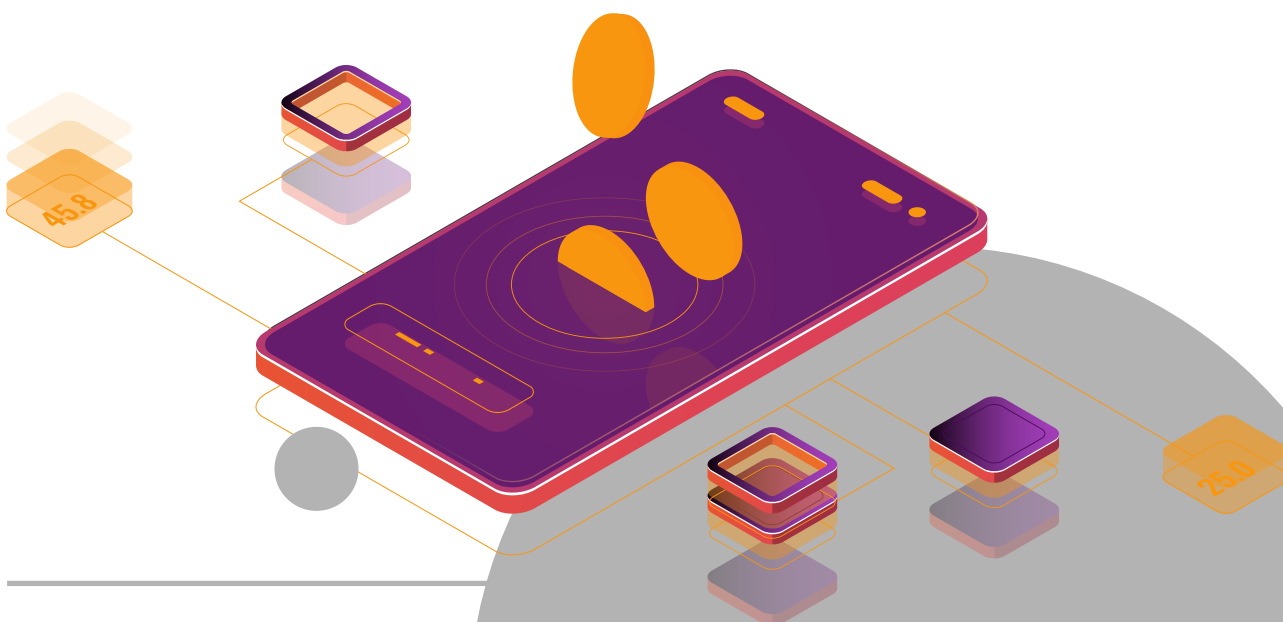


9. Do you provide edits / revisions?

It's important to ask this question. Your website will not be perfect from the first time, how many revisions are included?

When there are only 1 or 2 included it's important to take your time with doing the revision. Ask advice from your friends and family and take all of that in account for your revision.

We'll sometimes tell you we won't change a certain thing like a call to action (CTA) because we know better than your friends and family what works and what doesn't.




10. What kind of quality checks will you do?

Mobile or desktop, browsers, there's lots of ways to surf to your website. Before launch all these different ways need to be tested.

Do all the forms and pop-ups perform how they should?
Is my mailing set up properly?
Are there any death links on my website?

These are just a couple of questions when it comes to pre-launching a website and hey, sometimes there can be an error somewhere, nothing is perfect.



What matters most here is that your agency thinks about these things and that if things go wrong, they can help you within a certain period of time that is agreed on.

For an ecommerce website, this should take more than a couple of hours max. Is your website more of an online business card? Then 24 hours should be okay. It's important to make agreements in advance.



11. How will you handle security?

Most hosting platforms and CMS systems offer great off the shelf security. SaaS solutions like webflow or squarespace will always be up to date.

Solutions like wordpress are safe if they're maintained properly, this means being updated in a timely manner and having the right monitoring tools in place.

Then your host will also provide a couple of measurements like daily back-ups or extra secure login mode.

Unless you're fort knox you won't need very heavy security because the chances of hackers targeting you are slim to none.

What if a competitor targets me with DDoS attacks? Most hosting companies are equipped against this and in the worst case scenario, you'll be offline for a couple of minutes.

Don't let agencies make you overthink about security, truth be told, the most needed protection will be from spam.



12. Will you offer ongoing support?

A website is like a plant, it needs water, sunlight and love. But most of all it needs updates and constant monitoring.

You can either do this yourself or ask this of your agency, probably this will come in some sort of ongoing hosting package.

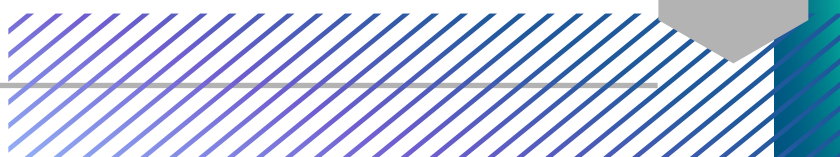
If they don't offer ongoing support, this might be a red flag.

The other end of the spectrum would be making a service level agreement or SLA, then these guys are absolute pro's and you're probably playing in the big league.

The last might be a little too early if you don't have legal support but making a written agreement by mail can never hurt.

This way you can always fall back on your mail when something doesn't happen and you can give the service provider a chance to improve his game.

Or worst case scenario you have a way to get out of a contract if the level of service you require isn't met.



13. How will my website be improved?

We already went over questions like ongoing support and the expiration date of your website.

Best practice however dictates to continue optimizing your website if you use it for lead generation or sales.

The first idea can always be improved and only one method should be used for these optimizations. Data driven change!

So based on A/B tests, analytics etc. Not because your gut feeling tells you something is wrong.

Yeah even if you like or dislike things like images, it's not about you, it's about your visitors. So even these should be A/ B tested.

This is something you can do yourself or ask your agency how much this service would cost you.



14. What's the expiration date on my website?

Can I eat my website?! Yeah this might seem like a weird question at first because most people assume that a website can last forever but this can't be further from the truth.

The online landscape is evolving at the speed of light. Can you remember how the web used to look? Here's a reminder.

A website doesn't last forever, mostly because of your evolving business needs:

- ▶ Additional building requirements
- ▶ Website traffic, (meer onderzoeken)

The keywords however are “your business need” if you're happy with the status quo, your website will be ok for a long time.

However, if you're looking to grow aggressively your website will be under constant development. (read, you'll constantly be paying to improve your website)

At a certain point in time it might be more beneficial to get an in-house team to do this for you, we advise constant monitoring of your costs and benefits.



15. Can I make my own edits?

It's a simple yet complex question. The main thing you should be able to do is manage content. This is why a Content Management System is used.

However would you like to change things in the script, HTML or CSS files? Maybe add an extra plugin because you would like a new feature? Chances are you'll break something.

If you break something with us, you'll have to pay for us to fix it. So best to ask for our free advice before editing something that isn't content related.

This leads us to the next question



16. How are you going to improve our SEO?

This is one of our favorite questions of all time, but not for the reason you think it is. Yeah, SEO is important but do you want to hear the truth?

It's quite an expensive thing to invest in with no direct return on investment.

Don't get us wrong, SEO is f*\$#&^ù great, and will do a lot for you in the long run.

But we emphasize on "in the long run" here.

"In most cases, SEOs need four months to a year to help your business first implement improvements and then see potential benefit." Maile Ohye, Google

Ever hear of the phrase "cash is king"? Cash will go out but will not come in anytime soon.

Most agencies are going to advocate the importance of SEO (they're not wrong, but timing and budget are bigger factors here)

Our advice? Invest first in advertising and a website that actually converts and invest in SEO later. Unless you have a lot of budget, then invest in both.

Last but not least, SEO is kind of a buzzword used in the online world. A lot of people will tell you a lot of different things.

SEO is constantly evolving, so techniques of a year ago might not work today.

Want to arm yourself against the buzzword users? Watch this video of Maile Ohye that we quoted before.



17. Do you offer any type of training?

If you really want to go DIY on your website ask for some additional training.

You can also look on the internet but no one will know your site as good as your developer.

In our case we just make screen recordings of the things you need to know and get these for free.



18. Who owns everything?

This ranges from the domainname, content, website, etc.

We own everything as long as there's a hosting subscription running or when there are unpaid bills.

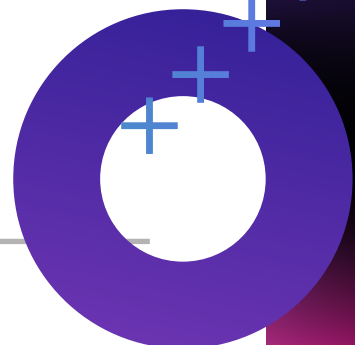
The moment you want to change ownership, just let us know minimal 24 hours in advance of your hosting renewal and make sure all your bills are paid.

What do we own?

- ▶ Domain name
- ▶ Webspaces

Why would you own my website you might ask? Simple because we pay everything upfront for you and you pay us back with your hosting subscription.

Want to own everything yourself? No worries, just arrange a hosting of your choosing but we won't be responsible for anything that breaks after we deliver.



19. Which other services do you offer?

At the end of the day you want to have as many services as possible from one partner.

Just imagine that all your digital work going from web or app development, data analysis, marketing and so on can be done by the same agency?

Instead of working with x amount of specialized agencies that now also have to communicate with a bunch of other agencies to deliver.

Instead always ask an agency that you love working with if they can provide multiple solutions to your challenges/ needs.

B-fluence can help you with a lot more than websites, it's not our core business but we're pretty good at things like optimizing sales processes and what technologies to use in your business.

But we really have to like you to offer you this, no seriously, it takes a lot of time and work so we won't do this for everyone.



20. Why should I choose you over B-fluence?

The last and most important question of them all, and you know what they will answer?

I don't know B-fluence, but here's why you should choose us...

And you know what? If their answer suits you, choose them, we only want to work with clients that really choose us.

To go back to the metaphor of the tailor, if we tell you the best way to wear your suit, we'll be open for discussion but it goes a lot easier if you trust our expertise without second guessing anything!

