

Web Design Pricing Transparency in 2026: A Census of 50 Top-Listed Agencies, 34 Published Price Lists, 6 DIY Platforms and 7 Cost Guides

Madiha Fatima

99creatix, Founder and CEO. Correspondence: contact@99creatix.com

DATA COLLECTED 30 AUGUST 2026 · PUBLISHED 31 AUGUST 2026 · VERSION 1.0 · DOI
10.5281/ZENODO.22684627

ABSTRACT

Buyers searching for the cost of a small-business website meet two kinds of source: agencies that will not state a price, and cost guides whose figures span two orders of magnitude. This study measures both. On 30 August 2026 we sampled 50 agencies from four directory lists that rank for agency searches (Clutch US, Clutch UK, DesignRush, OneLittleWeb) and classified each agency's own website by whether it publishes concrete prices, a range only, or nothing. Of the 42 reachable agencies, 33 (78.6%) publish no prices, 6 (14.3%) publish concrete prices and 3 (7.1%) publish a range. We then compiled first-party price lists from 34 providers that do publish, recorded as published without currency conversion. Among US providers, the median custom small-business website is \$7,000 (n=6, range \$4,000 to \$18,000), the median basic brochure site is \$799 (n=3) and the median entry-tier SEO retainer is \$2,200 per month (n=4). Year-one cost of a business-capable site on six DIY platforms is \$125 to \$360, or \$250 to \$590 with e-commerce, before transaction fees and build time. Seven cost guides ranking for "how much does a website cost" claim \$100 to \$35,000 for the same product; all seven sell the service they price, one claims underlying data and none shows a method. The dataset behind every figure is published under CC BY 4.0. The authors are a web design agency and disclose their own prices inside the same table.

KEYWORDS web design pricing · pricing transparency · website cost · small business · SEO retainer pricing · website builder pricing · agency pricing disclosure

1. Introduction

The price of a small-business website is one of the most searched commercial questions in the web design market and one of the least answered. Agencies rarely publish rates. The guides that rank for the question are written by companies with a product to sell. A buyer who wants a number before a sales call has, in practice, no verified source.

This paper reports a one-day census of the market as a buyer meets it. It asks four questions. What share of top-listed agencies publish any price? Among those that do, what do they charge? What does a do-it-yourself platform cost over a full year once fees and add-ons are counted? And where do the

numbers in the ranking cost guides come from? The aim is a set of dated, sourced figures that can be checked line by line, with a method that can be re-run.

The study is written by a web design agency, and that conflict of interest is addressed directly in Section 5, where the agency's own published prices appear in the same table as the market medians.

2. Method

2.1 Collection window

All data were collected on 30 August 2026 in a single-day window. The same sample is scheduled for re-collection each August, with changes published, so that the figures carry a date rather than drifting.

2.2 Pricing disclosure sample

Fifty agencies were sampled from four list pages a buyer lands on when searching for a web design agency: Clutch's US and UK web designer directories [1, 2], DesignRush's website design and development category [3], and OneLittleWeb's ranked list of web design agencies [4]. For each agency we visited the homepage and the pricing page where one existed, and recorded only what was on the agency's own site. Directory metadata, such as DesignRush's hourly-rate tags, did not count as published pricing. Eight of the 50 sites blocked automated visits and were excluded from percentages, leaving 42 classified into three categories: concrete prices, a range only, or nothing.

2.3 Published price dataset

Separately, 34 providers with first-party pricing pages were found through search: agencies, studios and productized services across the US, UK, Ireland, Canada, the UAE and other markets. Only figures visible on the provider's own page were recorded, in the currency published. No estimates were made and no currency conversions applied. Medians are reported with sample sizes on every row because several cells are small, and a median of two is a midpoint rather than a market figure.

2.4 Platforms, marketplaces and cost guides

Six website builders (Wix, Squarespace, Shopify, WordPress.com, Webflow, GoDaddy) were priced from their live pricing pages [11 to 16], on annual billing at the business-capable tier, with year-one totals computed from the platform's own stated fees. Squarespace, Webflow and GoDaddy blocked automated access; Squarespace and Webflow were re-verified in a browser before publication, and GoDaddy figures rely on dated third-party captures. Freelance marketplace rates were taken from Upwork's and Fiverr's own published hiring guides [17, 18], which also blocked automated access and carry the same caveat. Seven cost guides ranking for the query "how much does a website cost" were reviewed for the cost range claimed, any data cited, the guide's date, and what the publisher sells [5 to 10, 19].

3. Results

3.1 Most top-listed agencies publish no price

Of the 42 agencies classified, **33 (78.6%)** publish no prices: a quote form, a discovery call, or a book-a-call button. Six (14.3%) publish concrete prices: WebFX, Pronto Marketing, The Bureau of

Small Projects, eSEOs, Probey Services and Rudo. Three (7.1%) publish a range only, the widest being one studio's statement that the majority of its projects sit between £30,000 and £150,000.

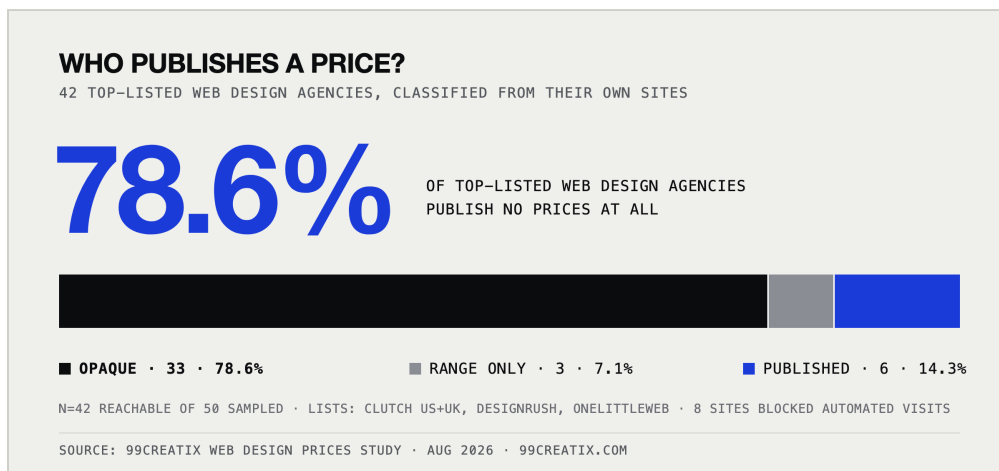


Figure 1. Pricing disclosure among 42 reachable top-listed web design agencies, 30 August 2026. Eight further agencies blocked automated access and are excluded.

Three patterns in the non-disclosing group are worth recording. One agency maintains a page titled "Pricing" that contains no prices and instead explains why none are published. Two agencies ask the prospective buyer to declare a budget in a contact-form dropdown while publishing no figures of their own, so the disclosure flows one way. Among the award-led studios in the sample, published pricing was zero for zero: the more design awards on the homepage, the less likely a price appears.

3.2 What providers that publish prices charge

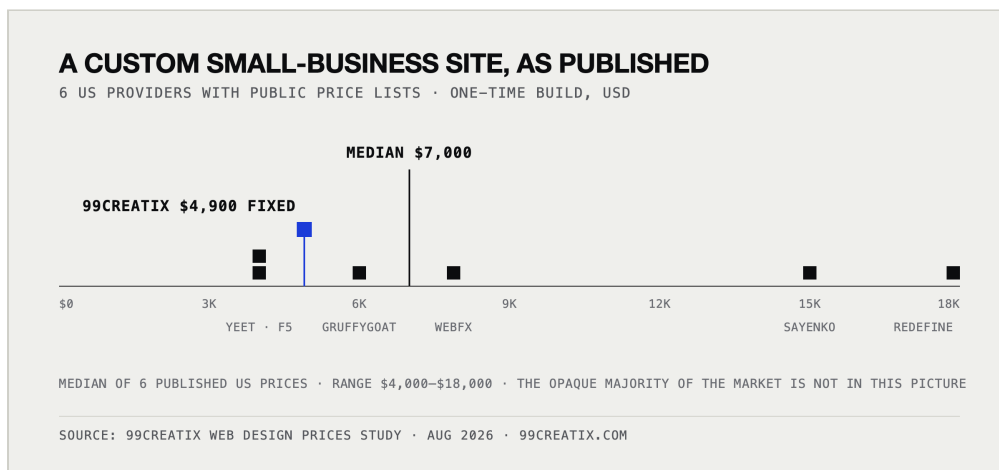


Figure 2. Published US prices for a custom small-business website from six providers with first-party price lists. Median \$7,000, range \$4,000 to \$18,000.

Table 1. Published prices from 34 providers with first-party price lists, recorded as published on 30 August 2026. No currency conversions. Sample size shown on every row.

SERVICE	MEDIAN	SAMPLE AND RANGE
Basic brochure site	\$799	USD, n=3, range \$799 to \$2,500. Elsewhere: £1,165 (n=2), €1,139 (n=2), CA\$2,000 (n=3), AED 1,500 (n=2). One-time build.
Custom small-business site	\$7,000	USD, n=6, range \$4,000 to \$18,000. Elsewhere: £3,129 (n=3), €1,839 (n=2), CA\$5,000 (n=3), AED 7,499 (n=2).
E-commerce build	\$4,000 and \$6,500	No median: the USD sample is two, both tiers of one studio, so the figures are published raw. Other published examples: €3,479, AED 3,600, from CA\$3,000.
SEO retainer, entry tier	\$2,200/mo	USD, n=4, entry tiers \$1,000 to \$2,900; published tiers run to \$10,000/mo. UK: £499/mo entry median (n=3), tiers £110 to £1,999.
WordPress care plan	\$89/mo	USD, n=3, entry tiers \$49.99 to \$147; tiers run to \$359/mo.

The ranges behind the medians are wide. Custom builds in USD ran from \$4,000 to \$18,000. Entry-tier SEO retainers ran from \$1,000 to \$2,900 per month, with top tiers at \$9,200 to \$10,000. Subscription models exist at every level: websites from \$39 per month to £59 per month at the shop tier, and unlimited-design subscriptions from \$699 to \$5,995 per month.

One caveat belongs on the record. Providers that publish prices skew toward productized and marketing-led shops. The medians describe the part of the market willing to show a number. The boutique end of the market is absent from Table 1 by its own choice.

3.3 DIY platforms and freelance marketplaces

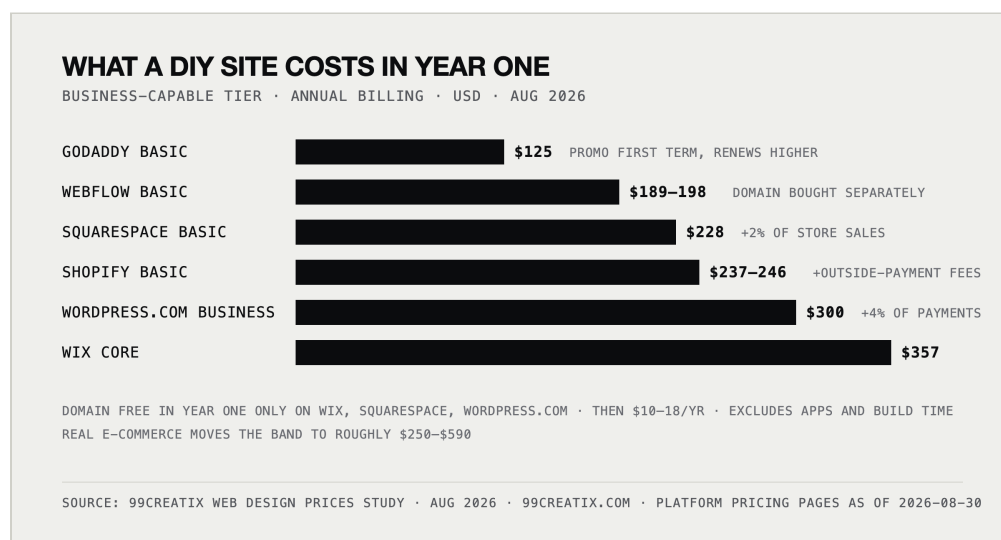


Figure 3. Year-one cost of a business-capable DIY website on six platforms, annual billing, with each platform's fees and caveats.

On annual billing at the business-capable tier, year one on the six platforms runs from **\$125** to **\$360**. Real e-commerce moves the band to roughly \$250 to \$590. Each headline number carries a catch: a

first-term promotional price with no free domain on one platform; transaction fees of 2% to 10% on store sales or payments on four of them; domains free for year one only, then \$10 to \$18 a year; apps and plugins priced separately; and none of the totals counts the hours spent building the site.

Prices also vary by the visitor's country. Squarespace's pricing page showed \$12, \$17 and \$25 tiers when loaded from Pakistan, where US sources list the same plans at \$19 and \$29 and up. The plan structure is identical; the price is not.

Freelance marketplaces sit between DIY and agency. Fiverr's own guide puts a basic small-business build at \$175 to \$1,000 and hourly design work at \$30 to \$70 [18]. Upwork lists designer rates of \$15 to \$75 and more per hour, and its hiring guide prices a small-business website project at \$2,000 to \$9,000 [17]. That upper figure overlaps the low end of published agency pricing in Table 1.

3.4 Where the cost-guide numbers come from

Seven guides ranking for "how much does a website cost" claim between **\$100** and **\$35,000** for a small-business website, a 350-fold spread for the same product. Table 2 records each guide's claimed range, the data it cites and what its publisher sells.

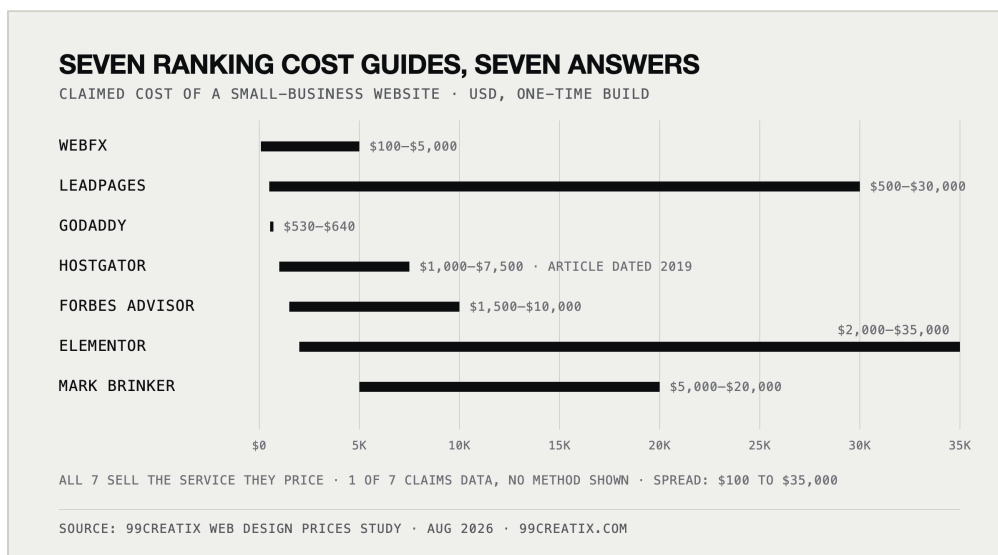


Figure 4. Claimed cost of a small-business website across seven ranking cost guides, reviewed 30 August 2026.

Table 2. The seven guides ranking for "how much does a website cost", reviewed 30 August 2026.

PUBLISHER	CLAIMED COST	DATA CITED, AND WHAT THE PUBLISHER SELLS
WebFX [5]	\$100 to \$5,000	Claims "2,000+ businesses", no method shown. Sells web design services from \$8,000 per month.
Leadpages [6]	\$500 to \$30,000	No data. Sells a \$99 per month site builder, promoted throughout the article.
GoDaddy [7]	\$530 to \$640	No data, self-described "rough guide". Sells the builder, hosting and domains it prices.
HostGator [8]	\$1,000 to \$7,500	No data, and the article is dated March 2019. Sells hosting and a builder.
Forbes Advisor [9]	\$1,500 to \$10,000	No method visible. Earns affiliate commissions on the builders it reviews.
Elementor [10]	\$2,000 to \$35,000	No data. Sells Elementor Pro, hosting and AI tools, recommended in the article.
Mark Brinker [19]	\$5,000 to \$20,000	"Our research", no sample size or method. Sells web design consulting.

The pattern is consistent: the claimed cost of a website tracks what the publisher sells. Builder companies anchor low. Agencies and consultants anchor high. One publisher in seven claims underlying data, and shows no method. One top-ranking result has served 2019 figures for seven years.

4. Discussion and limitations

Taken together, the results describe a market in which the price of the product is withheld by most sellers and estimated, without method, by parties with a stake in the estimate. The share of top-listed agencies that publish any price is below one in four. Among those that do, the spread for a custom small-business site is more than four-fold in a single currency. For a buyer, the practical consequence is that the first reliable number usually arrives on a sales call, after the seller has assessed the buyer.

The study has four limitations, stated so the figures are read at the right weight. Sample sizes per cell are small, and every median carries its *n*. The sample is English-language. The window is a single day, chosen so that every figure shares one date. And the population that publishes prices skews toward productized and marketing-led providers, so the medians describe who tells you the price, not what every project costs. This is a census of disclosure and of published rates, not a survey of project outcomes.

5. Conflict of interest and the authors' own prices

99creatix is a web design agency and sells the service this study prices. The same conflict noted in Table 2 applies here. The mitigations offered are a stated method, a link for every figure, a public dataset, and the agency's own list prices placed inside the same table as the market, on the same basis.

Table 3. 99creatix list prices set against medians from the dataset, on the same basis as every other provider in it.

SERVICE	99CREATIX	PUBLISHED MARKET
Custom website, designed and built	\$4,900 fixed	Published-agency median \$7,000, range \$4,000 to \$18,000. The 99creatix figure is the floor for a build of up to 8 pages; e-commerce, integrations and migrations move it.
E-commerce build	from \$5,900	Published examples ran \$4,000 to \$6,500.
SEO, monthly	\$1,350 flat	Published entry-tier median \$2,200 per month.
Local SEO / content / branding	\$750 / \$950 / \$1,800	Monthly, monthly, and from-price respectively.

Data availability

Every row behind this study is public under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence, free to reuse with attribution and a link to the source page. The complete dataset and five component files are listed in the references [20 to 25]. Each file carries the source URL for every figure in it. Questions, corrections and disputes may be sent to contact@99creatix.com; any accepted correction will be published.

How to cite

Fatima, M. (2026). Web Design Pricing Transparency in 2026: A Census of 50 Top-Listed Agencies, 34 Published Price Lists, 6 DIY Platforms and 7 Cost Guides. 99creatix Research, working paper, version 1.0, 31 August 2026. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22684627>

References

- [1] Clutch. Top Web Design Companies (United States). <https://clutch.co/web-designers>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [2] Clutch. Top Web Design Companies (United Kingdom). <https://clutch.co/uk/web-designers>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [3] DesignRush. Website Design and Development Agencies. <https://www.designrush.com/agency/website-design-development>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [4] OneLittleWeb. Top Web Design Agencies. <https://onelittleweb.com/top-agencies/web-design-agencies/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [5] WebFX. How Much Does a Website Cost? <https://www.webfx.com/web-design/pricing/website-costs/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [6] Leadpages. Average Cost of Website Design for Small Business. <https://www.leadpages.com/blog/average-cost-of-website-design-for-small-business>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [7] GoDaddy. How Much Does a Website Cost? <https://www.godaddy.com/resources/skills/how-much-does-a-website-cost>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [8] HostGator. How Much Does a Website Cost? (March 2019). <https://www.hostgator.com/blog/how-much-does-website-cost/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [9] Forbes Advisor. How Much Does a Website Cost? <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/software/how-much-does-a-website-cost/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [10] Elementor. How Much Does a Small Business Website Cost? <https://elementor.com/blog/how-much-does-a-small-business-website-cost/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.

- [11] Wix. Premium Plans. <https://www.wix.com/plans>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [12] Squarespace. Pricing. <https://www.squarespace.com/pricing>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [13] Shopify. Pricing. <https://www.shopify.com/pricing>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [14] WordPress.com. Plans and Pricing. <https://wordpress.com/pricing/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [15] Webflow. Pricing. <https://webflow.com/pricing>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [16] GoDaddy. Website Builder. <https://www.godaddy.com/websites/website-builder>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [17] Upwork. How Much Does It Cost to Hire a Web Designer? <https://www.upwork.com/hire/web-designers/cost/>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [18] Fiverr. How Much Does It Cost to Build a Website? <https://www.fiverr.com/resources/guides/business/cost-to-build-web-site>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [19] Brinker, M. How Much Does a Website Cost? <https://markbrinker.com/website-cost>. Accessed 30 August 2026.
- [20] 99creatix (2026). Web Design Agency Pricing Study 2026: complete dataset, all five tables (CSV). <https://99creatix.com/wp-content/uploads/data/web-design-prices-2026-full-dataset.csv>
- [21] 99creatix (2026). Pricing opacity audit of 50 top-listed web design agencies (CSV). <https://99creatix.com/wp-content/uploads/data/web-design-prices-2026-opacity-audit.csv>
- [22] 99creatix (2026). Published price lists from 34 providers (CSV). <https://99creatix.com/wp-content/uploads/data/web-design-prices-2026-published-prices.csv>
- [23] 99creatix (2026). The seven ranking website cost guides reviewed (CSV). <https://99creatix.com/wp-content/uploads/data/web-design-prices-2026-cost-guides.csv>
- [24] 99creatix (2026). DIY website builder plan pricing and year-one totals (CSV). <https://99creatix.com/wp-content/uploads/data/web-design-prices-2026-diy-platforms.csv>
- [25] 99creatix (2026). Upwork and Fiverr published rate guidance (CSV). <https://99creatix.com/wp-content/uploads/data/web-design-prices-2026-marketplaces.csv>