

UX Vendor Vetting Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate potential freelancers and agencies.

Part 1: Vetting Freelancers

Where to Look

- [] Dribbble (Filter by "Available for freelance")
- [] Behance (Look for detailed case studies)
- [] Contra (Commission-free platform)
- [] Referrals (Ask other founders)

The "Must-Have" Checklist

- [] **Portfolio:** Shows 3+ relevant projects (not just concepts/redesigns).
- [] **Role Clarity:** Can explain exactly what they did (UX vs UI vs Code).
- [] **Testimonials:** Has verifiable recommendations (LinkedIn is best).
- [] **Responsiveness:** Replies within 24 hours during the hiring process.
- [] **Curiosity:** Asks insightful questions about your business, not just the design.
- [] **Pricing:** Rates match market standards (Suspiciously cheap = red flag).

Critical Interview Questions

1. "What happens if you get sick or have an emergency mid-project?"
 2. "Who owns the IP and source files upon payment?" (Answer should be YOU).
 3. "What is your typical weekly availability for this project?"
 4. "Can you provide 3 client references I can call?"
 5. "What is specifically NOT included in your quote?"
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Part 2: Vetting Agencies

Where to Look

- [] UXAgencies.com (Vetted European directory)
- [] Clutch.co (Verified reviews)
- [] Referrals (Investors/Advisors)

The "Must-Have" Checklist

- [] **Team Access:** You can meet the *actual* people doing the work, not just sales.
- [] **Process:** They can clearly articulate their methodology (e.g., Double Diamond).
- [] **Relevant Experience:** Portfolio includes 5+ projects with similar complexity.
- [] **References:** 3+ verifiable client references available.
- [] **Transparency:** Clear pricing structure, including "extras" or scope creep fees.

Critical Interview Questions

1. "Who specifically will be working on my account day-to-day?"
 2. "What is your team's experience in my specific industry?"
 3. "How do you handle scope changes or additional requests?"
 4. "What is included in the base price vs. what is billable extra?"
 5. "Can we have a 30-minute call with the lead designer before signing?"
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Part 3: The Reference Check Script

Always call at least 2 references. 15 minutes can save you thousands.

Ask these 5 questions:

1. "Did they deliver on time and within the original budget?"
2. "How did they handle feedback or pushback?"
3. "What was the biggest challenge working with them?"
4. "Did the quality of work match what was in their portfolio?"
5. "Would you hire them again for a similar project?"