



BILLING POLICIES

A final invoice can be a very sticky subject. We don't want it to be. The following notes will be very important to you, as they are our final word on our billing practices. Please read them thoroughly and feel free to ask questions. These notes outline what you are paying for when you contract to work with Barrett Newton Inc., and what you should expect when you work with us.

SERVICE, NOT PRODUCT

Barrett Newton, Inc. is a **service-oriented business**. All of our work is provided on an **hourly basis**, all estimates & quotes we provide are only **guidelines** and **not statements of final costs**. We provide you with an efficient, experienced staff that can fulfill all of your needs in the interactive medium at rates comparable to other quality design & development agencies. Our experience & knowledge, our problem-solving abilities & creative ideas are what you pay for, **not a technology product. When we are working for you, we are billing.**

We like to work with our clients long-term. Paying us a reasonable rate for the work we do ensures that we'll want to work with you long-term. We do not operate as adversaries of our clients, we act like a part of your company, like a group that reports to you. We do our best to always provide you with great work at the estimated price we provided, but both sides have to agree that it's not always possible or reasonable that the initial expectations will be completely parallel to the final product.

You should consider prioritizing your desired features list so that we work on the most important features first. Lower priority features will be worked on last, or not at all if prioritized features are over budget.

PRIORITIES

If final price/budget is of critical importance, please let us know that in advance. We can help you prioritize your feature set; we're experts in usability with over 10 years of experience, we know what works & what doesn't and those features that website visitors really use.

FINAL INVOICES

After we close each job, you will be presented with a final invoice. Corrections, changes, & bug fixes initiated after your job is closed **will be billed as part of a new job, in addition to the final invoice**, and you will receive a supplemental invoice for those items.



FAQ (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

My website has a bug, BNI built my website, why should I pay BNI extra to fix a bug BNI created?

No developer can promise perfection. Fixing bugs is part of the development process. During the process of building your site, every moment we are implementing a feature or fixing a bug, we are tracking & billing for our development time. **Before the final invoice**, we are finding and fixing bugs at our standard rate. **After the final invoice** we will continue to do the same at your request. **We do not bill based on the final technology product.** We bill for our skills, experience & time involved in doing work for you.

Many aspects of your site's creation will probably be our responsibility. From the ground up during the design & development process we charge hourly for the creation of your website. Once we deliver a site, you may find bugs that we did not. We will **fix every bug you find** at our standard rate. Fixing bugs requires the same process as developing a site, and requires us to charge for that process. We don't quibble over whether a bug is a bug, a feature that works different than what you imagined, or the fault of a user operating outside of our expectations; we just fix them to your satisfaction. If a bug will take more time to fix than it's worth, you can accept its existence and avoid additional costs involved in correcting it.

Paying us to fix bugs is integral to ensuring the quality of your website. When we are being paid to do so, we are encouraged to **find bugs before you do**, and before they become a problem. We are much more motivated to look for new bugs when we're being compensated for correcting them.

Providing our clients information about hosting is our responsibility for which we are paid. Designing a website is our responsibility for which we are paid. Suggesting technology & ecommerce partners is our responsibility for which we are paid. Similarly software bugs are not our "fault," but they are our responsibility. We take that responsibility seriously, and we correct bugs to our client's complete satisfaction at our standard rates.

Why doesn't Barrett Newton Interactive (BNI) provide a warranty for my website?

We can fix problems that occur to your satisfaction at our standard rates, that is our warranty. We design & develop websites for our clients on an hourly basis. Unlike a company that sells **toasters**, every time we create a new product it is **something completely different** from the last product we created. Warranties for products like toasters benefit both the consumer & the companies that create them. The companies that create toasters & warranty them benefit from consumer provided information that helps them continue to cut costs, evaluate suppliers & refine their products over time.

We may reuse small portions of code, but in total, your website is a new & unique creation. Unlike the manufacturer of toasters, there is no benefit for us to assume responsibility for maintaining your site long-term for no additional cost. Many systems are very complex & bugs are bound to occur. Due to the nature of the web, some bugs are very specific to one system, to one font, to one machine, or are created by advances in computer technology, new browsers & new browser plug-ins which are completely out of our control. We don't provide a warranty because your website is completely yours, built for you, to your specifications. If a problem does occur, you can always contact us and we will make a concerted effort at our standard rates to correct the problem for you, or offer mitigating solutions to work around the problem.

Most product warranties are only good for one use. Unlike a warranty, our services are on-going, and can be used over and over and over at our standard rates. You may also purchase a monthly



maintenance plan (similar to a retainer) at discounted rates¹ to guarantee top priority for your maintenance and trouble-shooting needs.

Finally, we may implement technologies originally built by third parties (like ExpressionEngine or X-Cart.) Using these existing technologies can save you tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars for a high quality product. However, since we are not the creators of these products, we are not directly responsible for their development, and can not take financial responsibility for any problems that may occur due to their use. We can and do correct bugs for these systems at our standard hourly rates, and discounted maintenance plans are available.

If BNI is charging me hourly, won't I be greatly overcharged?

We've been doing this a long time, and our estimates are very accurate. If we stick to the items outlined in the estimates we provide you, your invoice will be almost exactly the same as the estimate. When we work against our estimate, the final costs rarely deviate more than 15% over / under. Hard to believe, but we **sometimes bill for less** than the estimated costs. If you were paying a flat fee, that would never be the case.

Our invoices will deviate from the estimate when the work we're doing deviates from our estimate.

If you ask us to do something that isn't on the estimate, chances are, you will be sent an invoice that is higher than what we initially estimated. Some of our clients ask for a detailed estimate and immediately begin changing the scope of the original project once our work process has begun. We won't quibble over scope change, but we will track our actual time spent on your project. At the point that our invoiced costs are going to exceed our estimated costs, we will warn you. At that point, you can choose to close the existing job and cease additional work, follow continuing costs in our online time tracker,² or request additional estimates for remaining uncompleted items.

Keep this in mind, almost 100% of invoice overages are due to client scope changes during the project. We try to figure out what you want before we begin the project, but what's in your head may not be what's in ours. If you are flexible in your requirements, we will be able to come very close to our estimate. If you know exactly what you want beforehand, the more specific you can be, the more accurate our estimate will be.

Before my project is complete, how can I find out how much time has been spent on my site?

Ask us. We track all of our time daily, and can provide you a detailed summary of time actually spent at almost any time.

If I tell BNI my actual budget before you create the estimate, won't BNI charge me more than the work is really worth?

Reluctance to share a budget is somewhat understandable, but makes it difficult for both of us to come to a quick agreement.

Our clients often fear that by specifying a budget, we will automatically provide an estimate that uses up the entire budgeted amount. They feel that not specifying a budget will lead to us providing a significantly lower cost, and therefore will save them a lot of money. Both of these assumptions are somewhat off-the-mark.

¹ Please contact us for rates & details.

² You must be logged-in to the Barrett Newton back end system, and have privileges to view time tracking data turned on. If you view an estimate for an open job and there is no detailed time tracking data, please contact us, and we will activate it for you.



It is our job to help you make the most of your money. We've never yet had a client with a greater budget than what they can imagine. Without goals or budget it makes it impossible to provide the best solutions in either case. Without a budget we can provide a speculative quote, based on whatever information you've provided (maybe based on a dream-website laundry list.) Most often this results in an estimate that is far too high, and exceeds any available budget amount you have in mind. Based on that estimated cost, you may assume we're too expensive or even unreasonable based on our ridiculous prices. The end result is that you may end up choosing an agency based on price, rather than on skill, or qualifications.

What if I don't know exactly what I want, or how much it costs?

We can charge a few hours of our time to help you craft a budget based on your wants & expectations, and a detailed scoped document as well. At that point, you can ask additional agencies to quote on your needs, we won't have any hard feelings about it.

If BNI has never done X before, how can BNI know how much it's going to cost?

We're often asked to integrate shopping carts with a new banking system, or asked to generate an application unlike those currently in existence. It's true, we don't know everything, and in some cases, we will need to charge you a bit for exploratory research in advance so that full estimate is as accurate as possible. To completely restore a '66 Ford Mustang, a mechanic will charge you just to find out how much it's going to cost for that mechanic to fix it. Without getting under the hood, it's impossible for us to know how much time some things will take.

Can't BNI charge me a fixed cost, rather than hourly?

If you need 10 similar widgets built a day, or you need 10 closely-related emails built each week, we can provide a fixed cost. If your project is more open-ended (like a website) then no, we will have to bill hourly. If you have a client that requires you to deliver a project at a fixed cost, please let us know in advance, and we will fix our costs at a figure that you set. In that case however, we will not guarantee that all of the work will be completed at that cost, just that we won't exceed the cost.

My client didn't pay me, so I don't have to pay BNI until I get paid right?

No. In the industry, that is called "speculative work" and that is something we absolutely never, ever do. You should have funds in place to cover our estimated costs before work begins so that you can pay us shortly after the completion of your project. In the case that we have to bill for greater than our estimated costs, we will be happy to provide a 90, or 180 day payment plan at 10% APR for those additional costs, or you may pay us overages by credit card.

If you require your site to be completed before you can begin making money, please make sure you arrange a business loan in advance so that you can pay us when our invoice is delivered. We are not a bank, and can't bank roll your new business.

My site took too long to be completed, shouldn't BNI be penalized for that?

Generally, if a site takes longer than estimated it's due to client scheduling conflicts & scope changes, or a greater than anticipated complexity. If there is a business reason for a specific launch date, please share that with us in advance, and we will make sure that the delivery date is considered a paramount concern. Otherwise we will work under the assumption that the overall scope is paramount.

Another agency promised a fixed-rate cost, isn't that better than being billed hourly?

Knowing what the final bill is going to be down to the cent should be fantastic, but there are hidden costs that will drive down the value of the final product. When agencies bill at a fixed-rate, the quality of the product suffers, an adversarial relationship builds, and that relationship is short-lived. Agencies



don't want to give their clients carte-blanche when they're doing fixed-rate work. They're forced to argue fine points of the contract, quibble over scope, and drag their feet when it comes to making changes, because every bit of work they do is eating into their profit margins.

Generally relationships sour very quickly when an agency is billing fixed-rate; the client doesn't get what they want, or they do and the agency never wants to speak to them again because they've been raked over the coals. We like forging ongoing relationships with our clients, so we responsibly bill for our time, at a reasonable rate, and do our best to keep our clients informed about what we're working on and how much time it's taking.

Not every piece of work can be accomplished at any budget, and a fixed-bid almost ensures a system where the agency looks lazy, and the client appears too demanding. We'd rather be a resource than a roadblock. Use our intelligence to keep your costs down. We're experts at doing a lot with a little.

What does all of this really mean?

We are a partner for the long term, someone that will get to know your products, your company, and your technologies, and can help you year after year. We take care of problems with no fuss or worry. Utilizing our maintenance plans & a little planning, we work with clients on maintenance & continuous feature implementation for a very low long-term cost, great simplicity, and incredible value.