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SmartBank Landing Page UI Kit included

DESIGN LIKE A PRO

a UI Professional's

free copy

# Ultimate Guide to Web design

How to find clients, get paid, manage projects, design high-converting websites in Figma and deliver work.

350 pages | Figma UI Kit | Practice Files | Design Templates | Document Templates

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## What is this ebook about?

This ebook is divided into 6 main segments - The Freelance Guide, the Design Basics, Designing for the Web, The Web Design Process, Intro to no-code tools, and Project Wrap-up.

Before we even discuss the design basics, visuals, and design processes, we'll start by addressing the things most people forget (or deliberately omit) when talking about freelancing, which is the business side of things.

The emails, client calls, briefs and questionnaires, deposits, invoices, setting up payments, contracts, managing client work, and finally, kicking off new projects. That's one major thing I had to figure out all by myself, and I'm here to help you figure it out for you. (You'll receive my favorite templates too!)



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After that, I'll introduce you to no-code development tools like Elementor and Webflow.

And while this is not a mandatory skill to master for a designer, it can easily double your project salary (and rates) and make you much more sought-after as you can design and “develop” an entire website from start to finish - a real full-stack designer.

Lastly, we'll finish our ebook with a short guide and checklists to ensure you carry out a design and website handoff the right way!

## Who is this ebook for?

Simply put, we wrote this ebook as a complete web design guide for everyone interested in web design. It covers everything from the business side of things through design basics and guidelines to design process and handoff. **This ebook is for you if you want to:**

- improve your web design skills** and overall knowledge of designing with development in mind (box model, responsive design, etc.)
  - increase your rates** and make a better living
  - learn how \$15k+ websites are created** and what goes on behind the scenes, from getting your first lead on a call, closing them, and sending out contracts, invoices, and briefs.
  - streamline your web design process**
-

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## **What this ebook isn't about.**

This ebook **is not about web development, and it's not about no-code tools.** It has an introduction to Elementor and Webflow, hosting, plugins, and website optimization, but it does not cover the technical aspects of building a website.

### **It's primarily about web design and Figma.**

I'm currently recording a larger technical introduction to no-code development on Elementor. It will be published (or has been published) on Skillshare and Youtube in the upcoming weeks or months, depending on when you're reading this ebook.

### **My message to you**



I hope this ebook will answer all the questions you might have about web design, running a freelance business, and becoming a better designer overall. With that said, our little introduction is over.

**Thank you again for grabbing a copy of my ebook and supporting my work - it really means the world to me! 🙏**

Without any further ado, jump to the next page and get immersed into an exciting world of web design, freelancing, and kickass websites. You're in for a treat! 💫

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## Humble beginnings

Let's face it, when you're starting out, you don't have any experience or designs to show, and still, people need to trust you. How do you have them work with you? **You design for pennies or for free.**

While it sounds counterintuitive, that's how a lot of designers start out. And even though I didn't have to design for free, I pretty much started from 0. To be precise, I even had -\$4000 in my bank account when I got my first client and had to sell half of my equipment to keep my "business" going. And it was the best decision ever.

See, the good thing is, once you get past that first obstacle and reach a healthy cashflow, there are no boundaries when it comes to freelance work, literally. I know designers who don't speak communicative English and earn a lot of money, a lot.

What they do is they outsource the client-facing work to project managers and sales reps and just focus on the fun part - designing websites and posting their results online. And these results gain momentum and bring enormous exposure after a while.

**They know one important thing, once your snowball starts rolling, you're unstoppable.**



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Personally, it took me close to 3 years to get my own snowball rolling because I had to figure everything out myself. In September, I moved back to freelancing again. And now, besides my social media, I'm on a trajectory to reach over \$400k/year combining my lead designer earnings and a couple of freelance gigs on the side. All that with working between 5-6 hours per day.

And you know what the best thing is? I live in Poland, and I'm still able to earn a steady \$20-30k+/month from my design work. With my current cost of living, **it is a TON of money** 💰💰💰

Not to mention how good it feels to wake up at whatever time I want to, work with clients I choose to work with, have enough freedom to go to a 9 am workout when most people clock in to start their stressful 9-5s, and have naps in the middle of the day.

### **Ahh, the sweet life of a freelancer. Is it still considered working?**

I'm sure you can do the same for yourself. And you don't have to work your a\$\$ off and learn from your own mistakes for 3-4 years as I did. I'm here to tell you that you can get your snowball rolling in 3-6 months, and I'm almost certain that with enough consistency, drive, and dedication, you can kickstart your career and save yourself a few solid years of your life.

Now, how should you start your career? Let's talk about that.

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Later, I landed 4 more projects from the same client and, if I remember correctly, earned around \$10,000 just from that single lead on Upwork. After a few projects, we took it outside of the platform as they needed more direct contact, and the Upwork fees were killing their wallets, and so they did mine 😂

I got around 6 or 7 projects through Upwork, and I'd say it's worth a try. Although, as mentioned before, you will need at least a few projects created before joining Upwork. Give it a try, for sure.

## I'll let you decide for yourself.

[View profile](#)

Web Design

Product & Industrial Design

All work

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**\$6.6K** Total Earnings    **6** Total Jobs    **44** Total Hours

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Video introduction

Hours per week

More than 30 hrs/week

Languages

English: Fluent

Polish: Native or Bilingual

Verifications

**UI/UX Designer | Elementor & Webflow Expert** \$50.00/hr

Hey!

I'm Adrian and I co-own Designme a full-service design agency providing UI/UX design, branding, and website development solutions for startups, SMEs, and b2b businesses.

We are a husband and wife duo taking care of the majority of agency work, from UX research, wireframes, UI designs, no(low)-code development, to motion design, and... [more](#)

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Work History

Completed jobs (2)   In progress (4)

**Website Design - UX/UI**

**5.00** Nov 19, 2021 - Jan 11, 2022

*"Adrian has worked with us on several projects so far. As always he delivered way above what was expected. We are extremely satisfied with his work and will continue to hire him for future projects!"*

\$1,760.00 Fixed Price

**Pro tip:** I recommend trying Upwork once you have completed at least 2-3 commercial projects. Otherwise, they might decline your application.



## How to write a design contract

A good contract will not only protect you from a scope creep, it will also make your most difficult (not that you'd want to work with them!) clients slightly more reasonable to deal with.

**You need to set the right expectations and outline your work exactly as described.**

Otherwise, you'll end up in a hell of constant design iterations, revisions, and updates.



A well-written contract is a must. It will protect both sides of the agreement, you and your client, in case of any disagreements or problems. If you have everything written on paper, there's no way to outsmart each other.

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## You got this!

Ok, let's sum up what we know already.

I've shared my personal story and told you what worked for me best when looking for clients. If you're struggling with leads, try this:

**Start a 100-day content plan and post new concepts everyday on each of the platforms I explained, day after day.**

Once you attract new leads, you now have the scripts I used as your reference point when replying and setting up sales calls.

You also have the script I used to close my first 5 international clients. And you have the email template I used to make sure they convert into paying clients. It's all in there.

We've covered what you should do right after your sales call ends, and you also have the premade message templates, so you're not missing out on anything.

You've got the discovery questionnaire, the invoice templates, the contract agreement template, and the kick-off message templates.

**The project prep is over; we're ready to discuss the visuals now.**

Roll up your sleeves, and let's go!

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## Visual hierarchy

Visual hierarchy, in its simplest sense, means the arrangement of elements in order of importance. Designers create hierarchy by manipulating the size of certain elements, applying color, changing contrast, adding visuals, or increasing/decreasing negative space.

### Hierarchy through size

Sizing is a simple yet important concept that can help attract the viewer's eye to a specific area and create a level of importance. Increasing the scale and size of certain elements immediately attracts the user's attention. Look at the example below and read it without thinking much.

and you will read this last

**You will read  
this first**

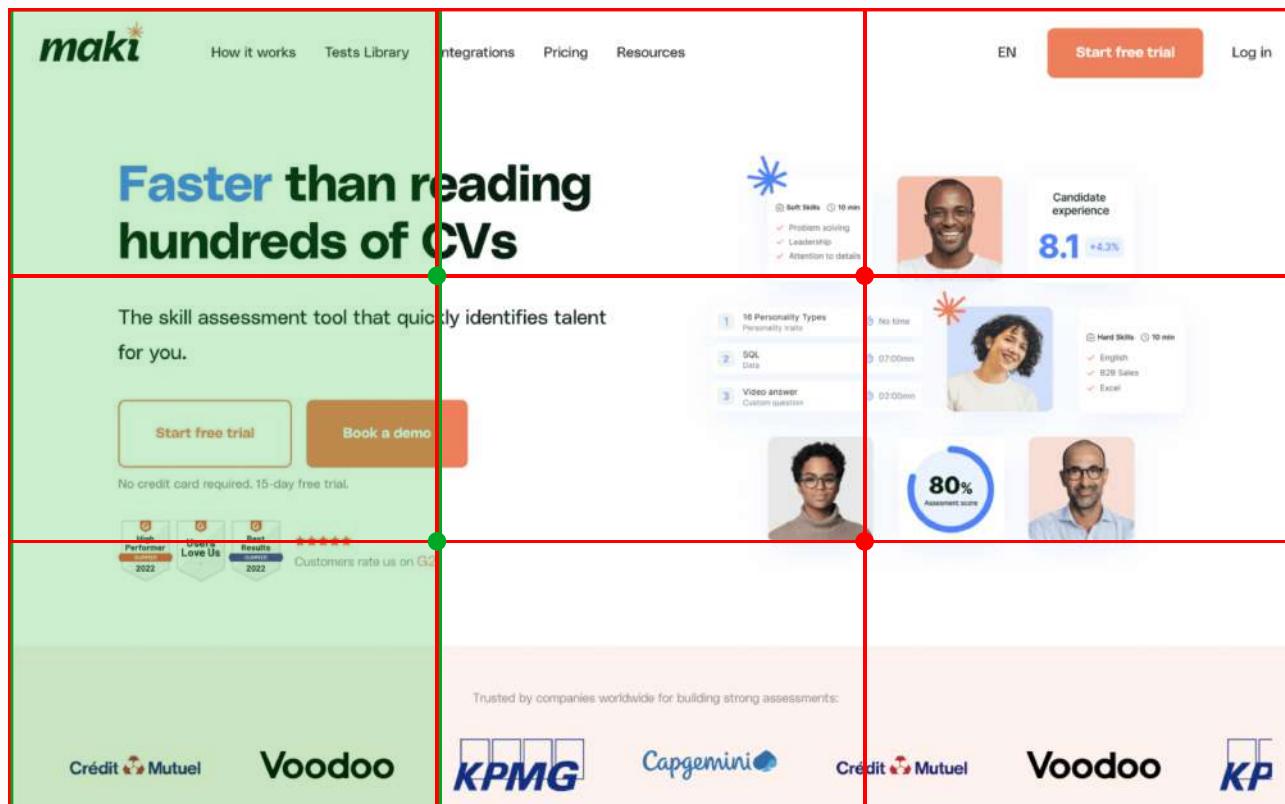
**And then you will read this**

Then this one

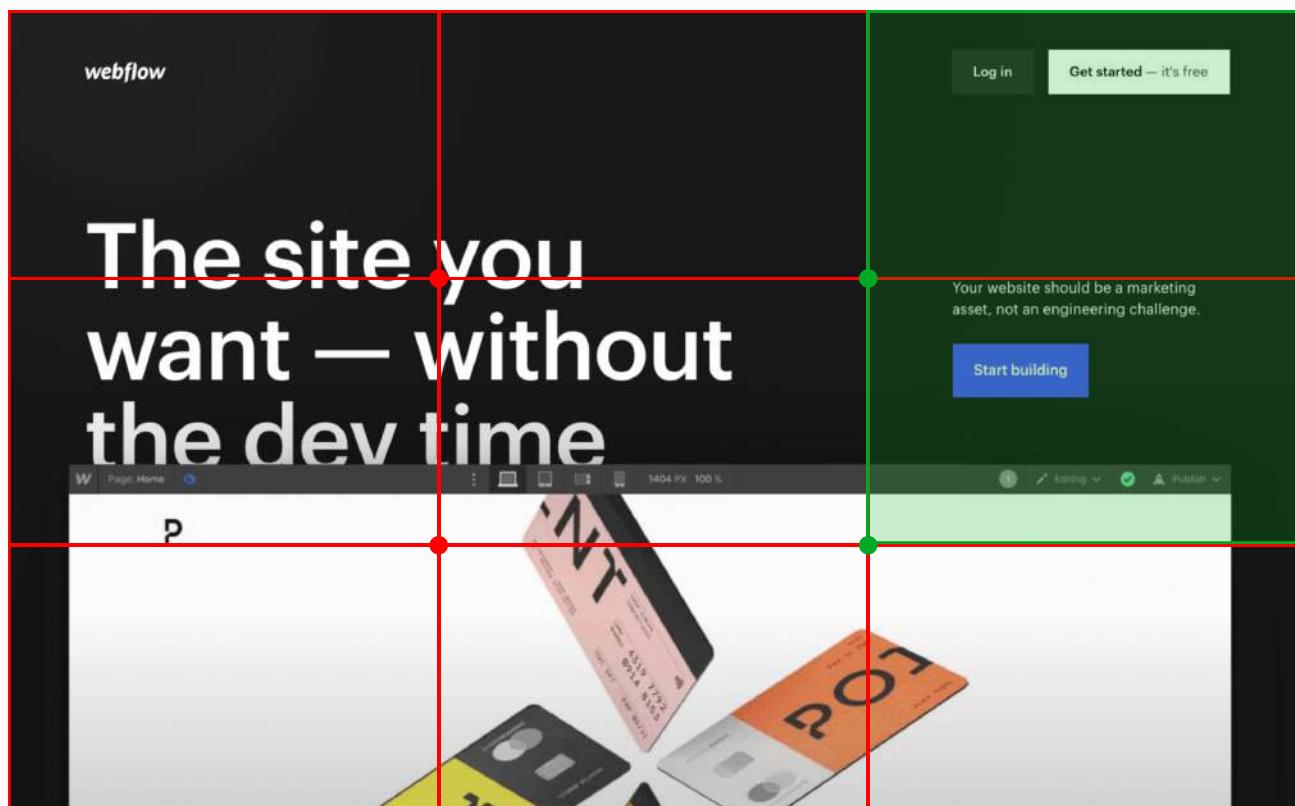
If you're like most viewers, you probably read all the text in the order of importance. Pretty cool, huh? That's how we designers can manipulate the order in which users read content.

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For example, on the Maki website, the main focal point is in the first 3 squares on the left, off-center, overlapping two intersection points.



Or as on Webflow's site, off-center, in the middle-top right

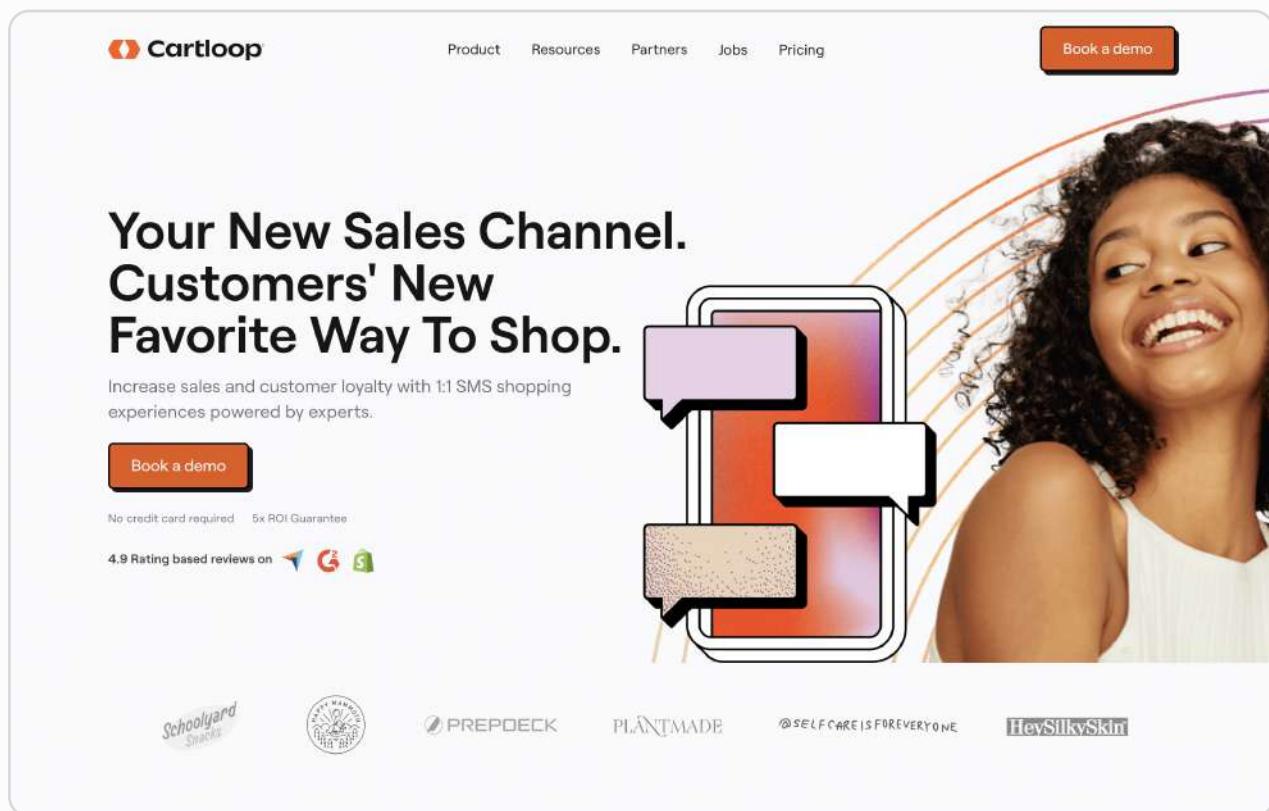


## Best principles of web typography

You should follow several best practices when using typography in your website designs. Here are some of them:

### Limit the number of typefaces

Use no more than two different typefaces on your website to maintain visual consistency. Many websites are doing just fine with one typeface. Especially if they opt for a legible and variable font with many different styles for headers, body text, button text, etc.

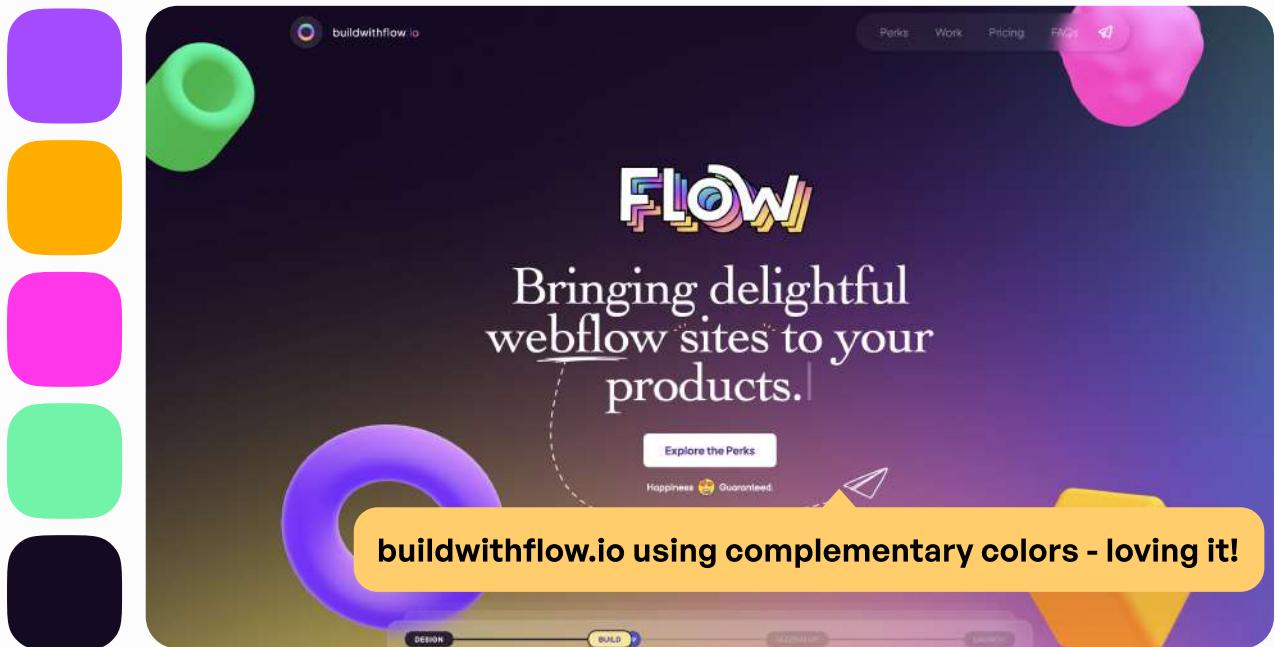


Cartloop.io

Cartloop is a great example of a website with one typeface but with a variety of fonts in use. As you can see yourself, **you don't need many typefaces to build great looking sites.**

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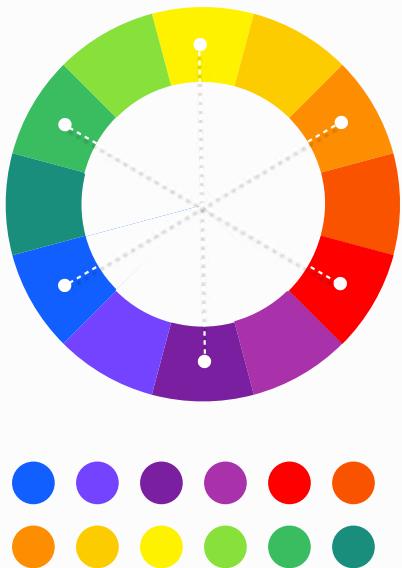
**Complementary** color palettes consist of colors located on opposing sides of the color wheel. These color schemes are fantastic for making websites look balanced and exciting..



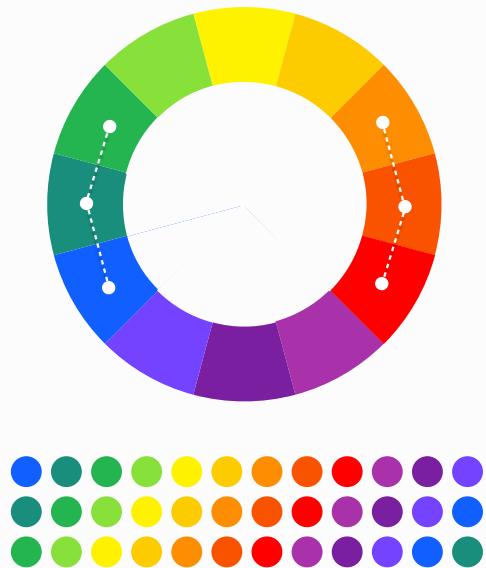
**Triadic** palettes consist of three colors evenly spaced apart on the color wheel, forming a triangle, like red, yellow, and blue. Typically one color will act as the primary, while the other two will act as accents.



## Complementary color combinations

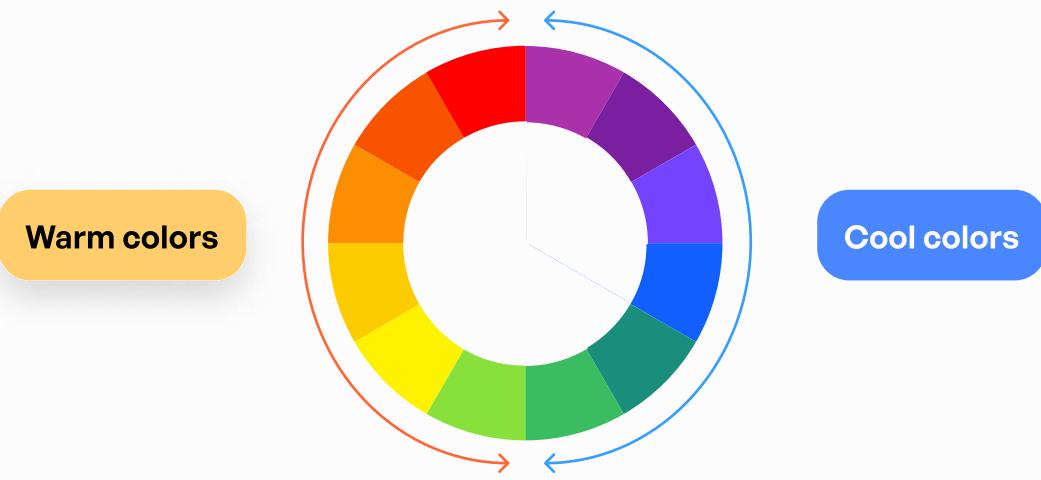


## Analogous color combinations

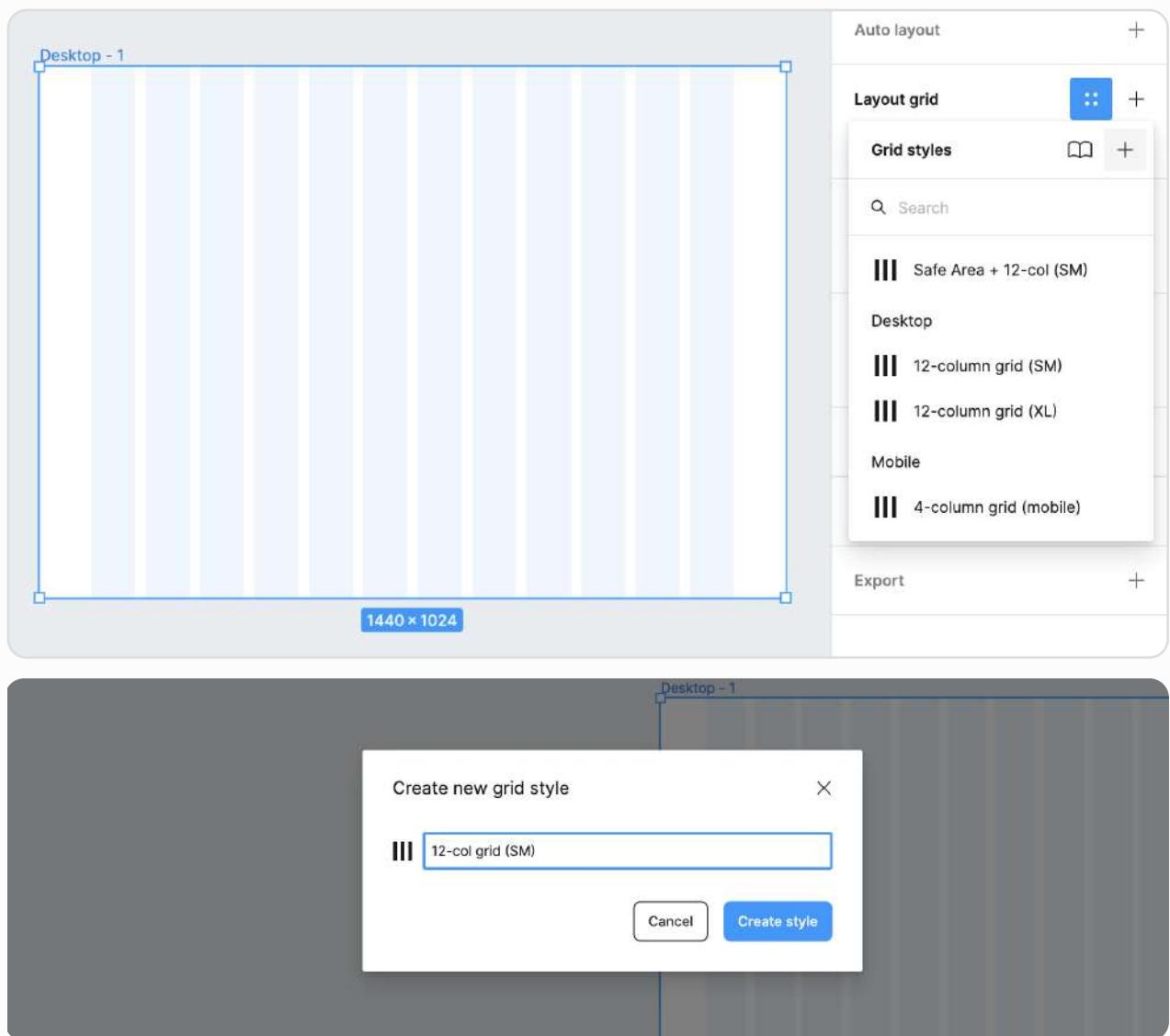


Many designers find it easier to work with analogous or complementary colors. The first is better for a more subtle effect, while the second is best if you want to create a strong contrast.

## Color warmth



Colors can be described as either “**cool**” or “**warm**”. Warm colors evoke emotions from passion, health, and strength to danger and rage. In contrast, cool colors create a calming sense of relaxation and calmness but can also evoke melancholy and sadness.

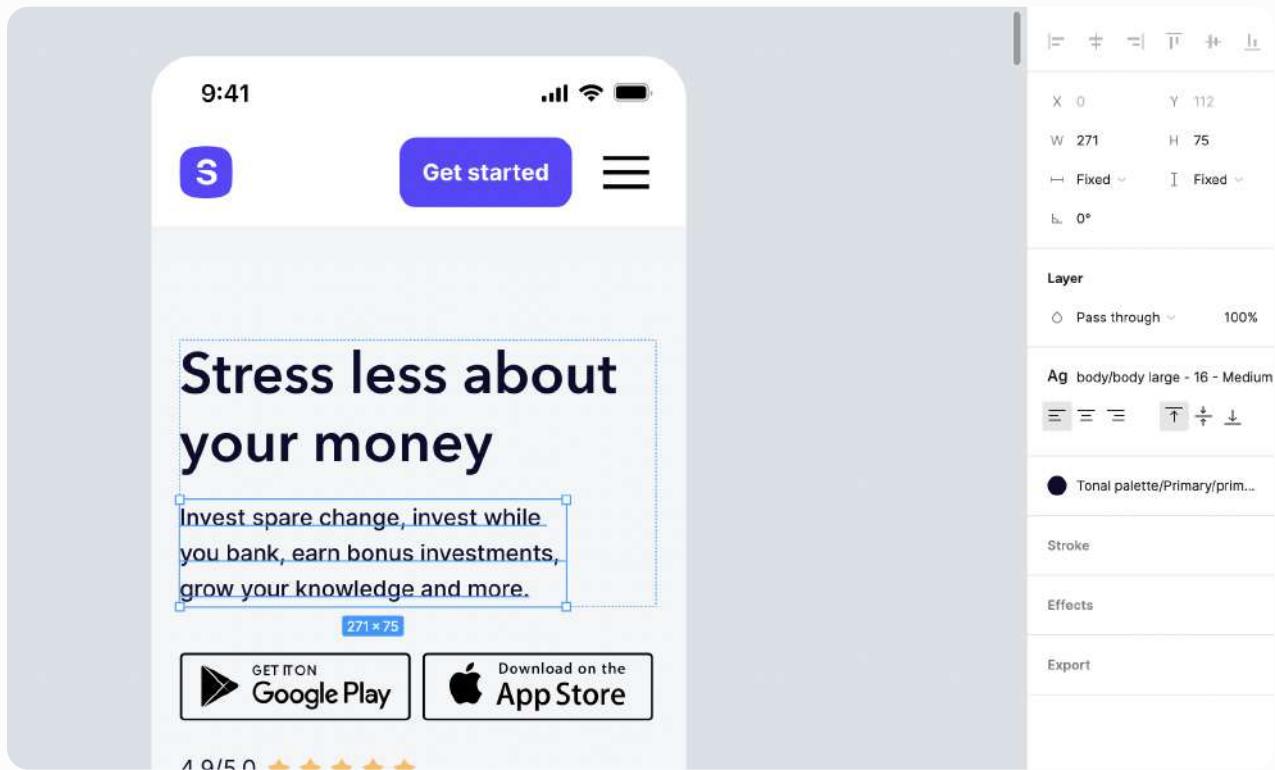


Saving and reusing global styles is crucial for creating a consistent design, so I'd suggest you set your layout grids up before you start designing your website pages.

You don't need to have your grids visible at all times.

Turn them off (**control+ G on mac or shift + ctr + 4 on windows**) if you need to look at your design without columns obscuring the view, and turn them on (same shortcut) if you need to align a few elements and balance them out.

## Fixed width and height

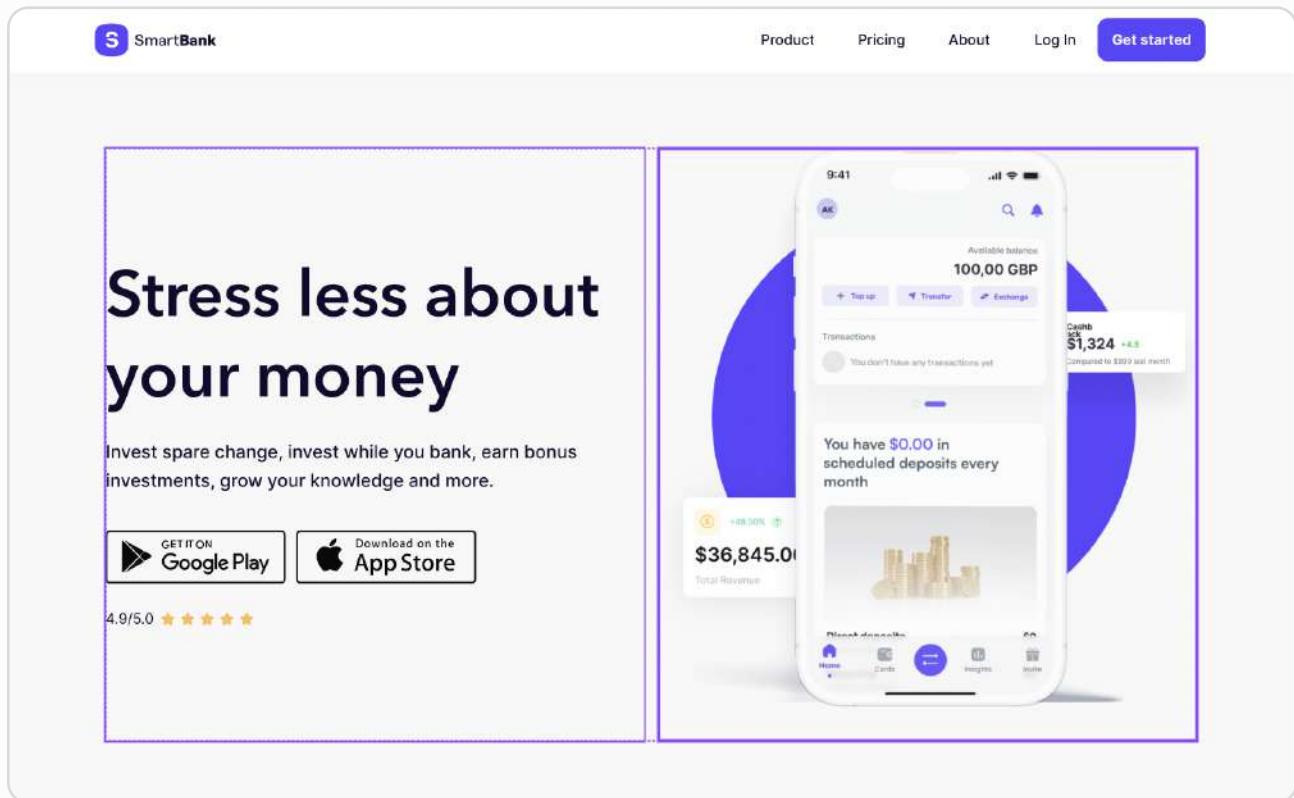


If we set our auto layout frame to Fixed width or height, the frame's dimensions will remain the same no matter the size of the content we place within them. The frame size won't react to changes in the objects within them.

**Fixed dimensions are helpful in setting constraints for content like images, avatars, and vectors.**

You might also find some use for fixed width when setting the size of your text containers in certain breakpoints.

The column is nested in a section consisting of two columns.



The image shows a mobile application interface for 'SmartBank'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the 'SmartBank' logo, 'Product', 'Pricing', 'About', 'Log In', and a 'Get started' button. Below the navigation is a large hero section. On the left side of the hero section, there's a purple-bordered container containing the text 'Stress less about your money' and a brief description: 'Invest spare change, invest while you bank, earn bonus investments, grow your knowledge and more.' It also features download links for 'GET IT ON Google Play' and 'Download on the App Store', along with a 4.9/5.0 rating and five yellow stars. On the right side of the hero section, there's another purple-bordered container showing a screenshot of the app's main dashboard. The dashboard displays an 'Available balance' of '100,00 GBP', a 'Total Revenue' of '\$36,845.0', and a 'Cashback' of '\$1,324 +8.5% compared to \$100 last month'. It also shows a message: 'You have \$0.00 in scheduled deposits every month' and a graphic of coins.

You've got the block on the left containing all your text layers and the block (column) on the right with the main image. That image is also put in a nested container in the right column.

The entire hero section is a part of the page that consists of several sections like a hero.

If you structure your designs the same way and consciously think about how the columns and grids you'll use later in Webflow or Elementor - you'll be a step closer to understanding web development.

# Designing for mobile - best practices

When we design with responsiveness in mind, we must always remember to design a mobile version of the website.

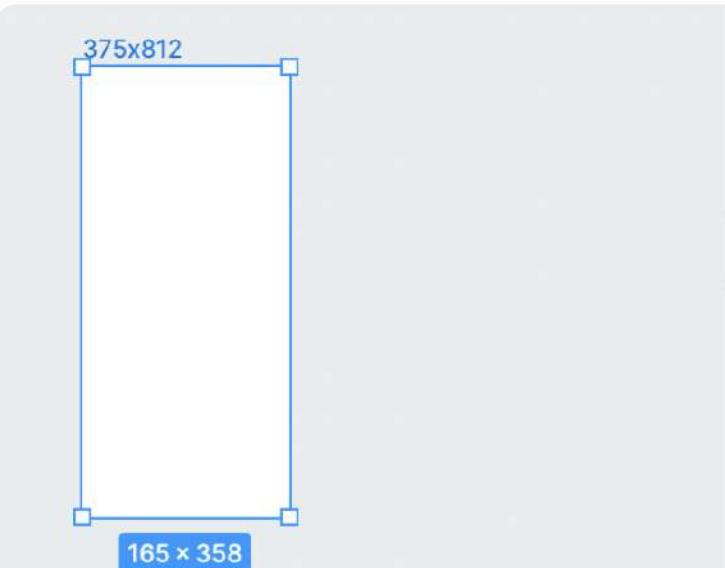
Mobile means not only phone devices but also tablets. For both versions, you'll need to properly rearrange the layout of each desktop page and make sure it fits right in the contained space.

It's not hard, no. It's relatively easy if you ask me. There are, however, a couple of things you need to keep in mind when designing for mobile devices.

## The right screen size

As mentioned previously, we will need to design for one of the smallest resolutions for most popular devices like

**iPhone 13 Mini (375x812) or Android (360x800).**

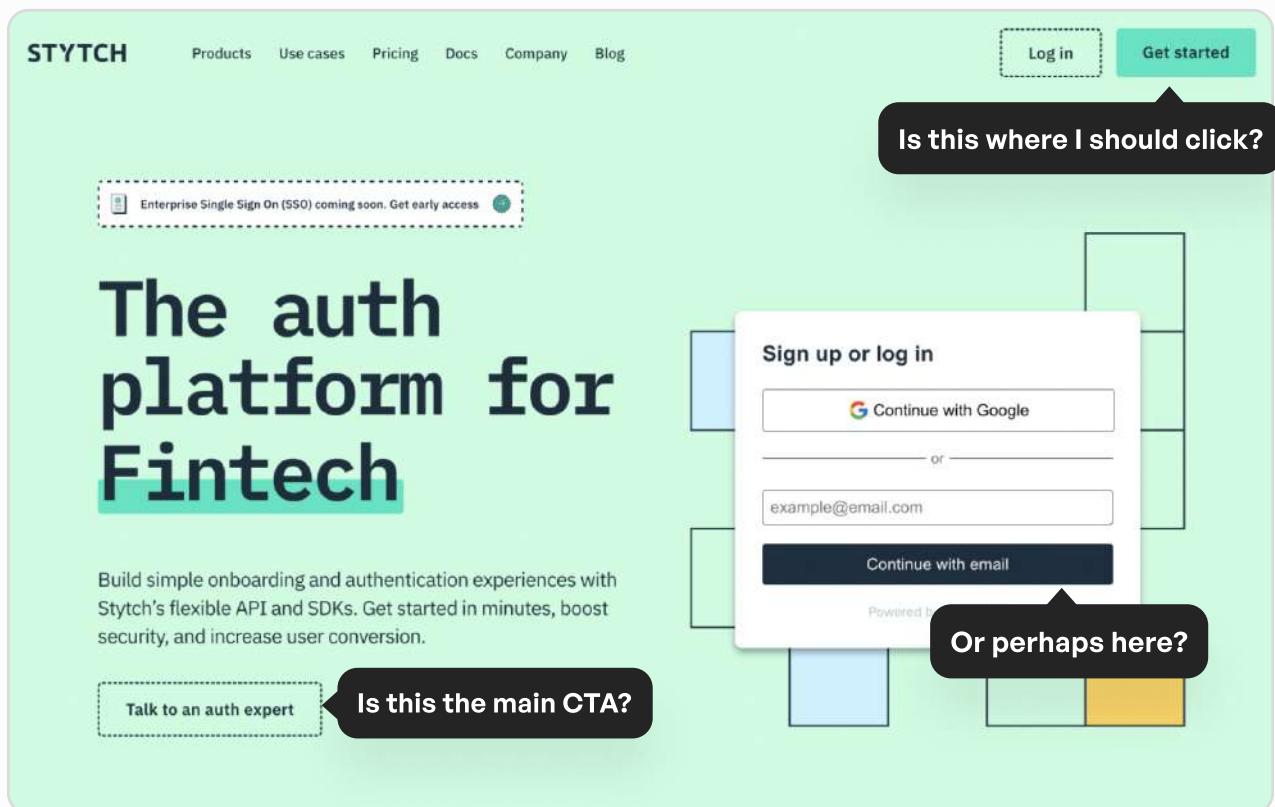
	iPhone 14 Pro Max	430×932
	iPhone 13 Pro Max	428×926
	iPhone 13 / 13 Pro	390×844
	iPhone 13 mini	375×812
	iPhone SE	320×568
	iPhone 8 Plus	414×736
	iPhone 8	375×667
	Android Small	360×640

From there on, we scale the design up.

## Follow Hick's Law

Named after British psychologist William Edmund Hick, the law states that the time it takes for an individual to make a decision is directly proportional to their possible choices.

Can you summarize your offering in a short headline, short description, and clear, non-confusing call to action? Or perhaps you need to include multiple CTAs, outbound links, popups, and videos to explain your offer. Simplify the choices.



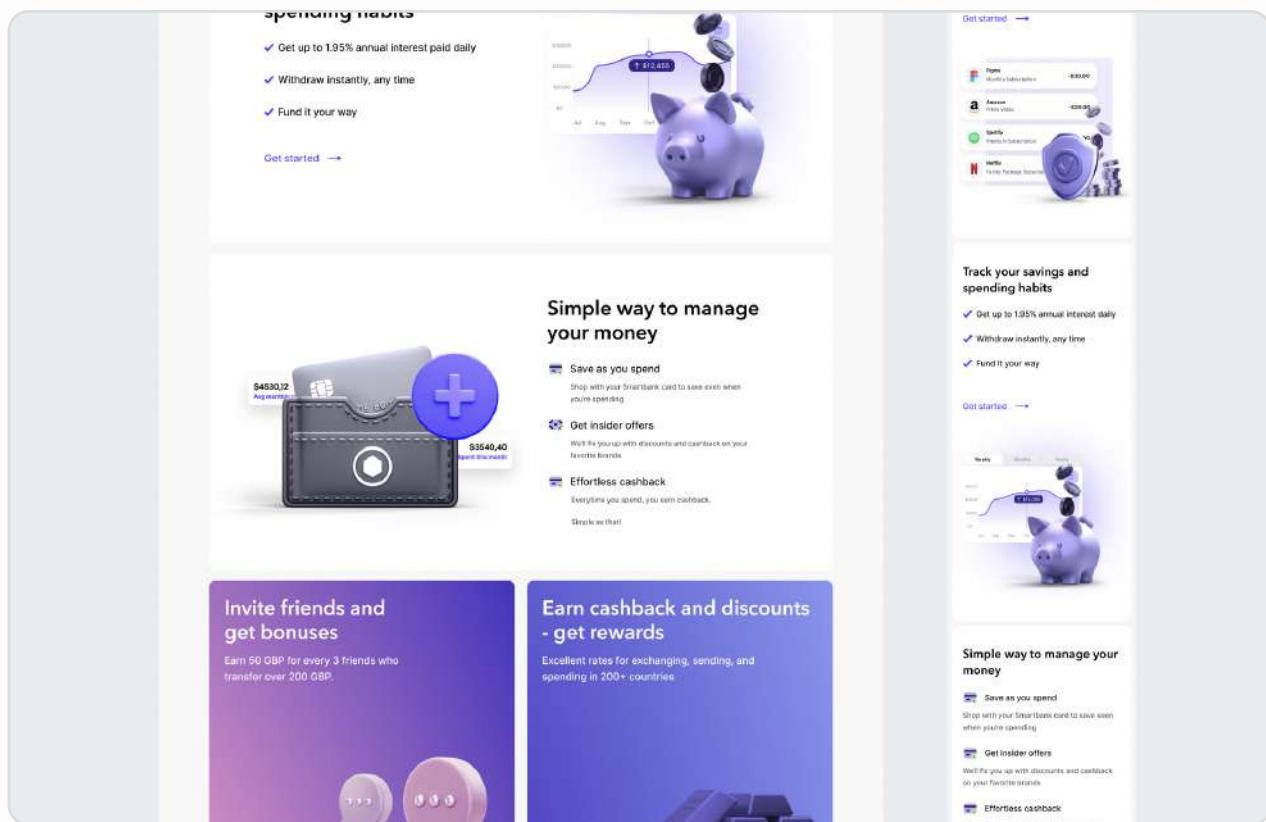
Don't overcomplicate the design. Simplify your navigation bar, use one main CTA, and limit the number of links that go outside of your site. You don't want to have too many links to click on otherwise, the user might leave your site and get distracted by another shiny thing.

## A few words before we start

The material in this ebook is meant to show you the best practices when designing high-quality landing pages for commercial clients (in the \$5000-15000+ price range).

I'm not saying that this is the one and only approach to designing websites; it's one that I have been successfully following for the past few years, working with multiple teams, developers, companies, and corporations where the prices of a single website reached \$50k+ in billables. This process will not cover building and maintaining extensive design systems, branding work, nor version control, but for a team of 3 and projects up to \$15k will work just great!

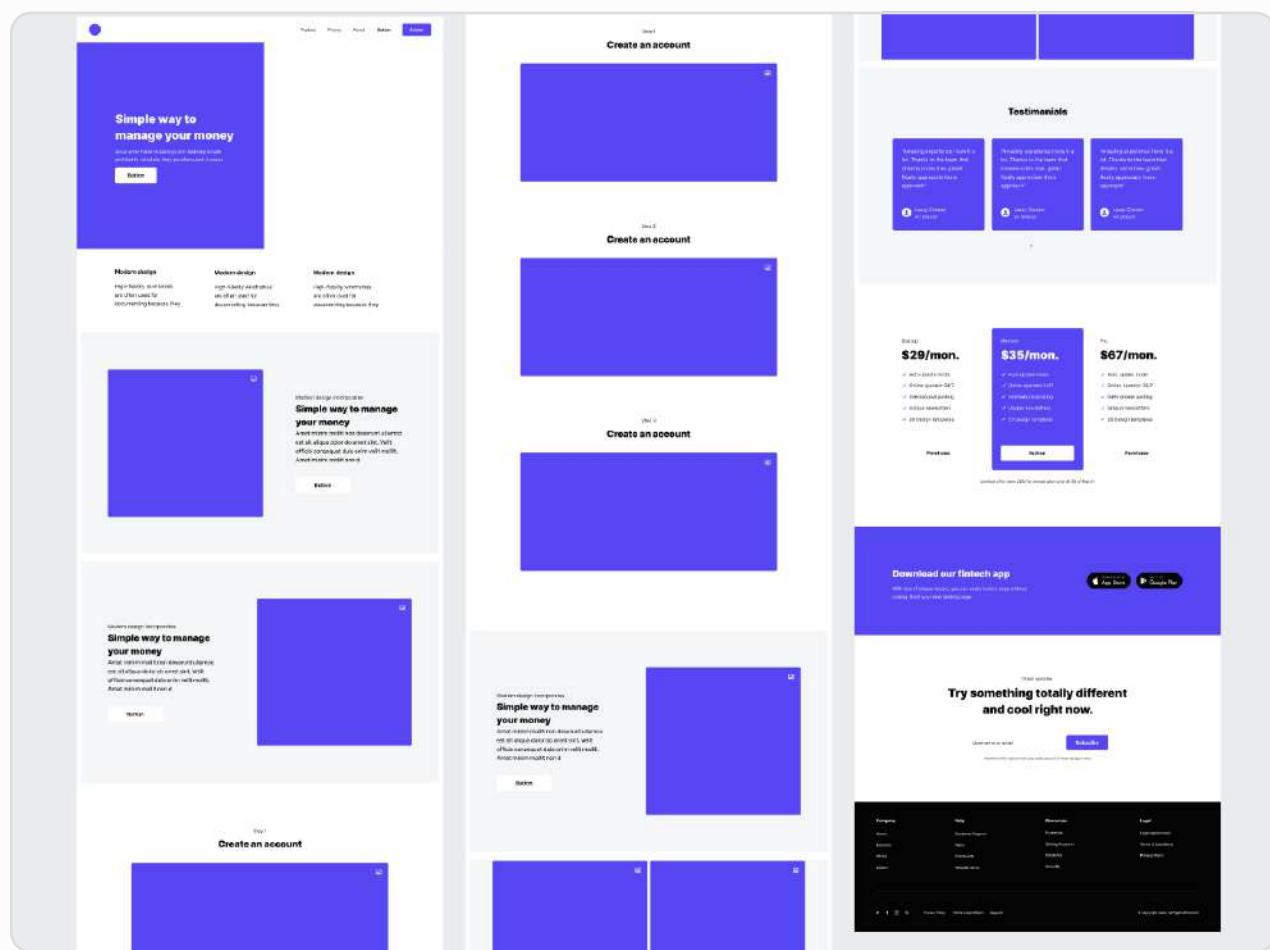
Sincerely, treat it as your reference point to start designing from.



In practice, that's rarely the case. You're limited by budget and time constraints, and if you're a solo freelancer, you'll rarely work with bigger teams and UX phase will be much simplified.

That's why you'd have to modify and adjust your scope of work depending on the budget and time you have allocated for a specific project. For most lower-priced projects, I start with the audit, create a SWOT analysis, create 1-3 user journeys to understand the flow better, create a sitemap, and start drawing a few sketches.

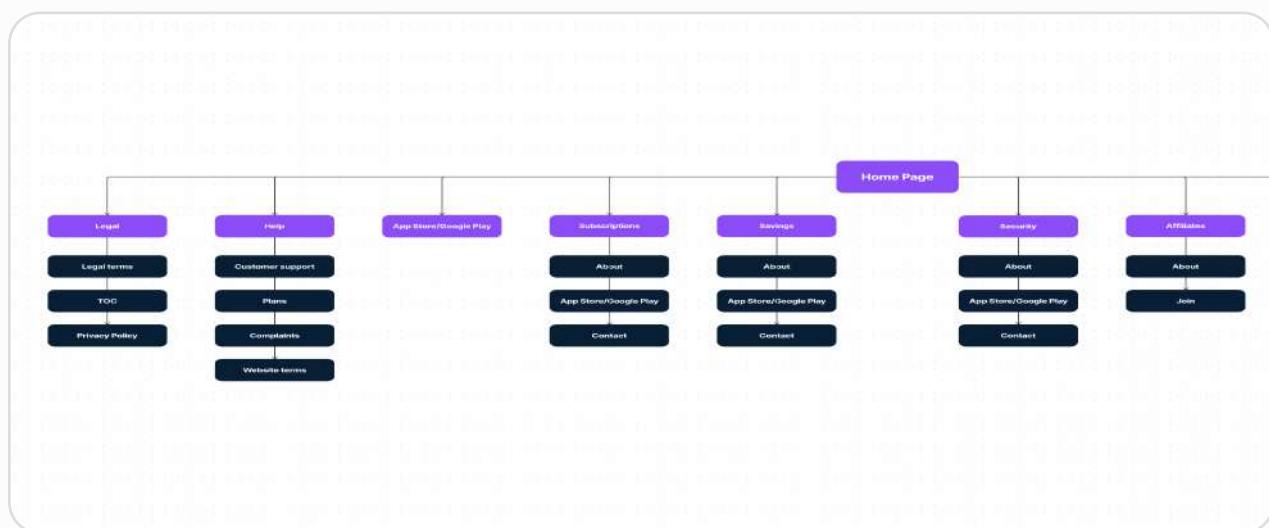
Once I have the initial research ready, I analyze the results and start with a really rough low-fidelity template to build the page's structure.



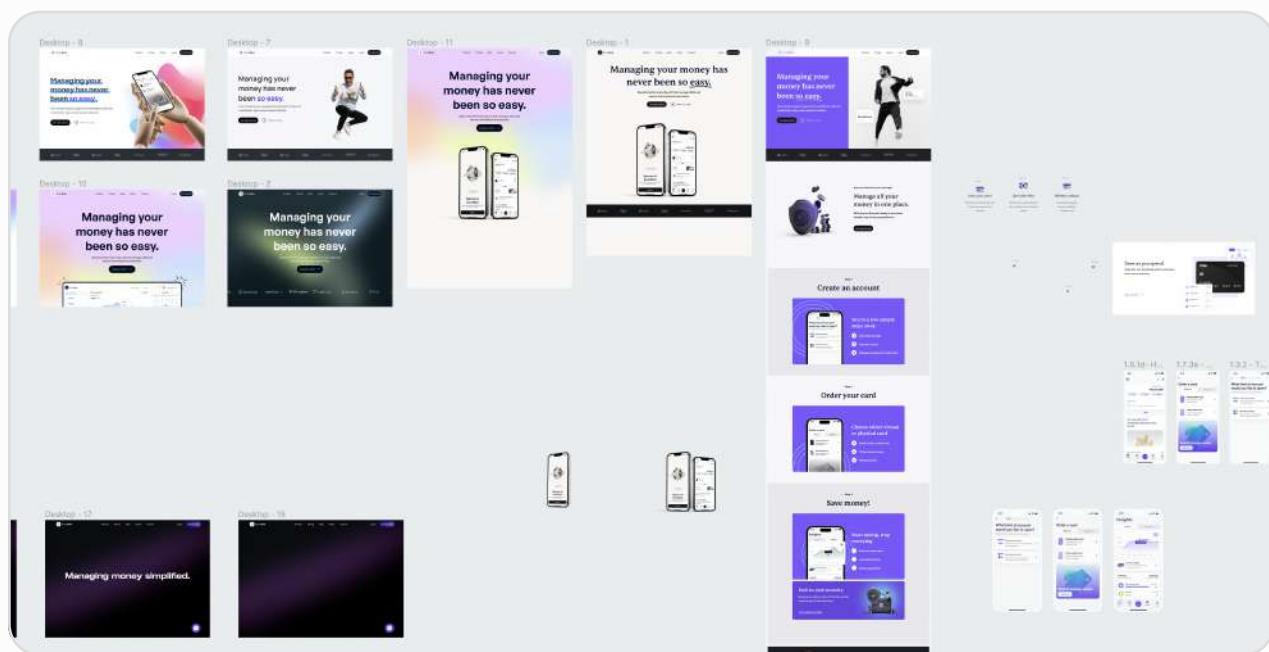
## How to visualize the sitemap

Sitemap, in its simplest form consists of blocks with names representing pages and showing relationships between them.

I've included a sitemap template I would normally use in the SmartBank Landing Page Figma file, so check it out later if you need some guidance.



Now that we have our sitemap let's move on to discuss our initial sketches and the importance of having a “Sandbox” page.



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## The web design process

There is no single web design process that everyone uniformly follows. On the contrary, I'd even risk it to say there are as many processes as there are designers. It doesn't matter what design process you follow as long as you include all these major steps.

In this chapter, I'll explain my personal web design process that let me design over 100 websites in the past 3 years, all successfully delivered and received.

To better visualize each stage of the process, I've included a custom-designed landing page for a fintech app - SmartBank.

### A word about UX

Once again, this ebook is meant to be a handbook for web designers. It will cover UX design and research on a really high level, the kind of research I would do for a commercial client that needs a refresh or a rebrand. More in-depth UX analysis for higher-ticket clients would require a much different approach, budget, and possibly a bigger designer team.

I wanted to make this ebook valuable to everyone, regardless of their level of experience and expertise.

We'll have to cover the higher-ticket projects (team projects) in a separate video course if more people are interested in that.

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## Client Project Brief

Usually, before you start any design work, client needs to provide you with a project brief. Either a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) or an email with a simple Client Brief attached.

It typically outlines the project's initial goals and deliverables, as well as many of the client's expectations for the final product's functionality and aesthetic. Deliverables include documents, branding and marketing material, sketches, wireframes, style guides, and anything else that and your client both provide.

The client may also specify due dates for each deliverable (milestones) however, whether they meet those dates is a whole different story. It's good to make your clients accountable too.

**Design brief**

- \* Project name:
- \* Client/company name:
- \* Owner: @Name
- \* Other stakeholders:
  - \* @Name
  - \* @Name
  - \* @Name

**i About the client/company**

*Capture key points about what the company does, how big they are, and what their key products or services are.*

**Project goals & objectives**

*Outline the overarching purpose of your project, as well as the granular methods you plan to use to achieve that purpose.*

**Target market/audience**

*Describe the customer, including their demographics such as age and gender, as well as*

Once they are all grouped, I organize them into a presentation template and add a title and a description to explain the color selection and the overall visual direction.

## **It pays to give this stage of the process more attention than it typically receives.**

Having a mood board in place and receiving verbal confirmation from stakeholders about the visual direction will save you countless hours on modifying and “fixing” the style of fonts, changing accent colors, or switching to completely different visuals.

DIRECTION 2

### **Light / Gray + Pastel accents**

CONCEPT

We use this text to set the scene for whatever we're about to talk about, which is definitely a good and nice time. We keep it short and get to the point.

We use this text to set the scene for whatever we're about to talk about, which is definitely a good and nice time. We keep it short and get to the point.

KEYWORDS

Modern	Bright
Clean	Fresh
Fun	Clever

**Fintech website**

Light / Gray + Pastel accents

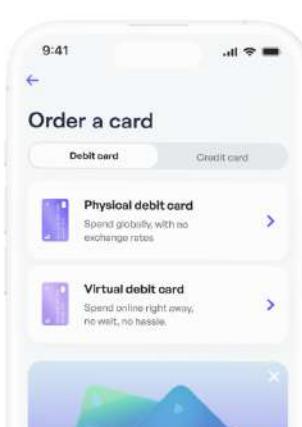
**Really, it's a huge time saver, don't skip it!**

## Typography system

The typography system is fairly easy to build. I use the styles generated by the Material Theme Builder or refer to Tailwind CSS guidelines. For my paragraph text, I will use the default 16px size. This will come in handy in web development, where 16px will be my root font size to design responsive layouts.

As for the rest, I structure my headings with web development in mind. That means I want to follow a semantic structure going from h1-h6. For example: my main hero heading will be an h1 heading, next section will have several h2 headings.

If a section under h2 heading contains a number of columns with titles, these titles will have an h3 tag, and so on.



Step 2

Order your card H2

Choose either virtual H3 or physical card H4

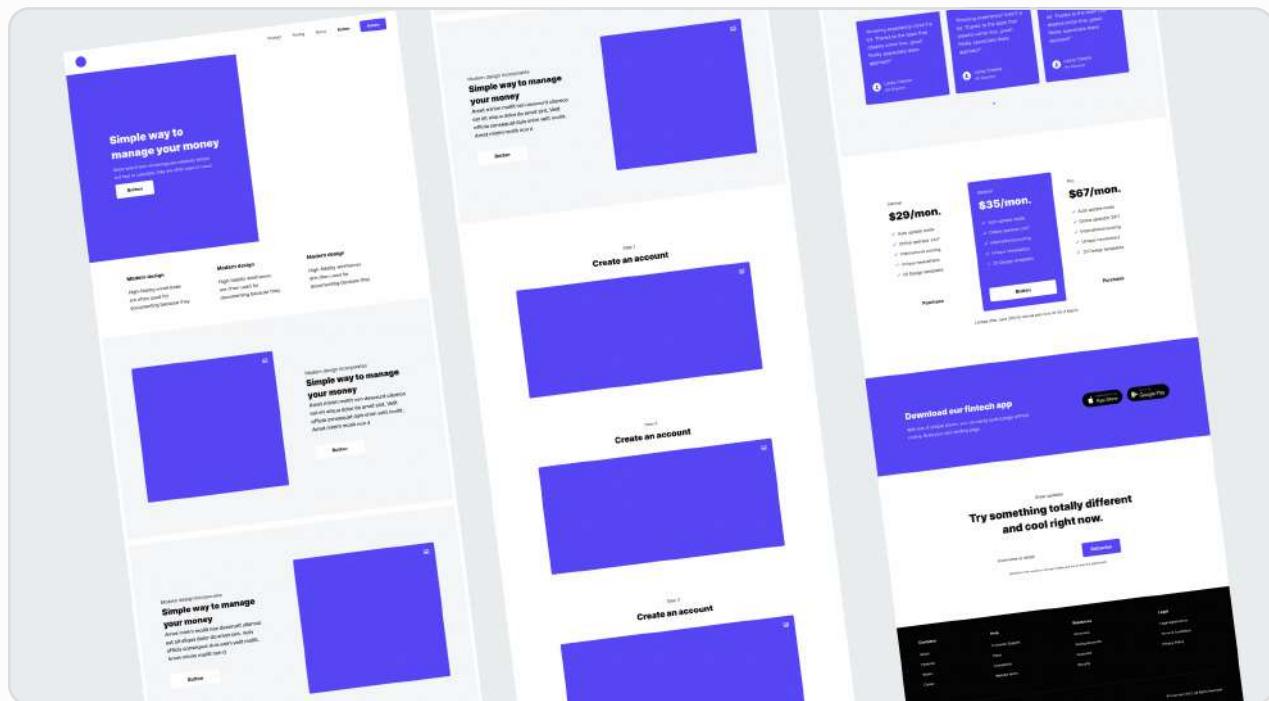
- Debit and/or credit cards
- Virtual instant cards
- Physical cards

A standard H2-H4 text hierarchy

## Foundation for the wireframes

We brainstormed multiple ideas on paper and on our “Sandbox” page. We shared them with stakeholders and created a low-fidelity wireframe to show the page’s future structure.

After confirming the layout, we moved on to the visual work.



*Low-fidelity wireframe - LP Framework*

## Choosing the visual direction

After a fairly extensive research phase, we’ve scouted the web for visual inspiration and compiled our inspiration board.

We organized and grouped all visuals and used them to create 3 mood boards showcasing different visual directions.

After a short presentation and a Zoom call with stakeholders, we were able to choose our winning mood board.

## Benefits / Incentives

These sections are meant to be short benefit-driven segments showing the many benefits of using your product.

Your copy should be user-focused because that's what they really care about – what's in it for them. This is a common mistake of many product landing pages - all they talk about how great their products are instead of focusing on the user.

### **It should always be about the user.**

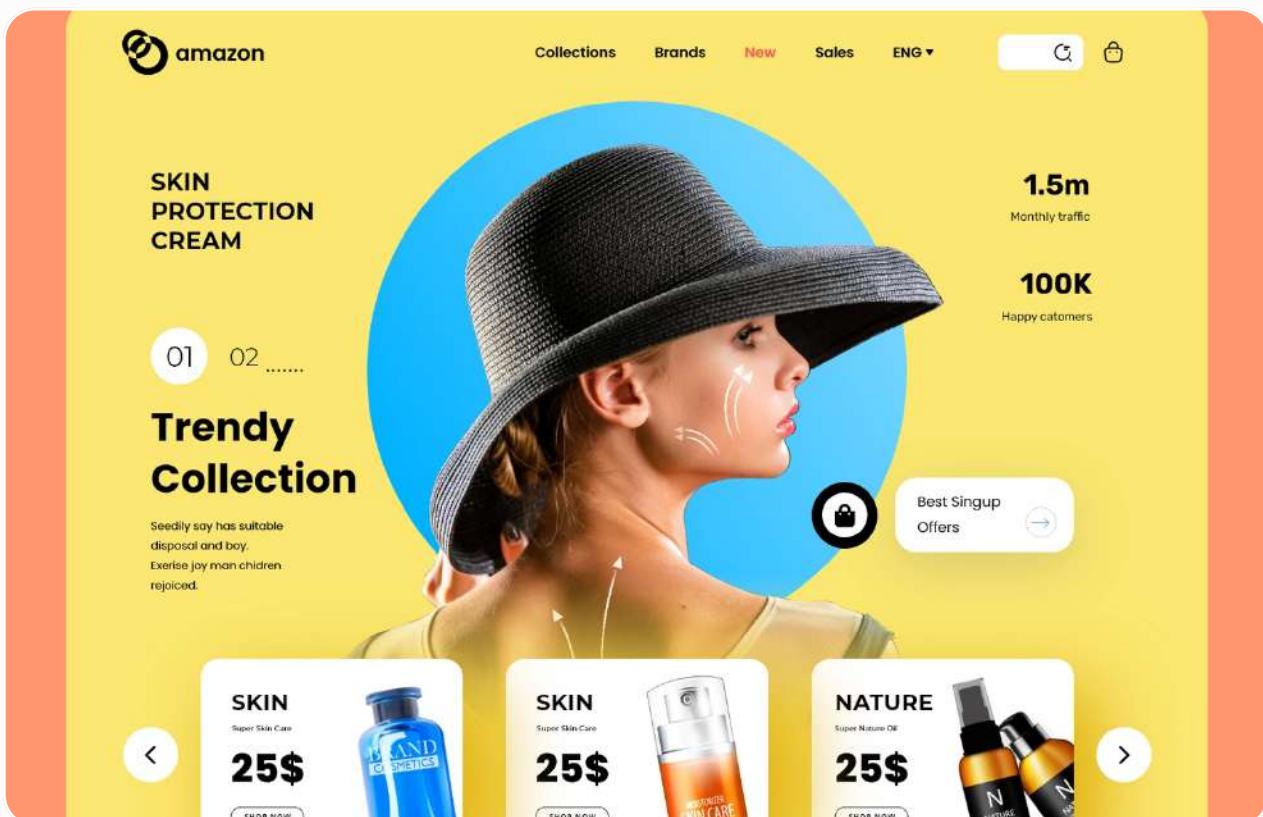
While features explain your product, benefits tell visitors how their situation will be improved as a result.

If you can introduce incentives, go for them! It's another great way to engage your users and help them take the desired action.

The image shows a screenshot of a Smartbank landing page. At the top right, there's a section titled "Simple way to manage your money" with three bullet points: "Save as you spend", "Get insider offers", and "Effortless cashback". Below this, there are two purple callout boxes. The left one is titled "Invite friends and get bonuses" and says "Earn 50 GBP for every 3 friends who transfer over 200 GBP." It features a "Get started" button and two speech bubble icons. The right one is titled "Earn cashback and discounts - get rewards" and says "Excellent rates for exchanging, sending, and spending in 200+ countries." It also features a "Get started" button and an image of gold bars.

## Are there any limits to this?

You have to remember that with web development, you can't just put elements in random places and expect that developers will be able to develop your crazy ideas. That's why under every "ambitious" design, you see someone commenting, "developers will be like 🤦".



Even though I could build this layout in Elementor, it's unnecessarily complicated, not to mention the complexity of the responsiveness. You'd have to create at least 20+ boxes here, and set minus margins to position the elements in the right places. It'd be a mess to adjust.

You need to build your layouts using logical structures. That's why mastering box model is crucial for your future web design work.

# The design handoff

If I had a penny for every DM, email, and comment asking me about a design handoff, I'd have... 2 dollars. Yes, I've been asked about it at least 200 times, no kidding. So what's the deal with the design handoff?

The design-to-development handoff often frustrates even the most experienced product teams. And every team probably handles handoff differently than others, and that's cool. As long as you communicate with your devs, and your devs communicate back with you and know exactly what needs to be done - you're good.

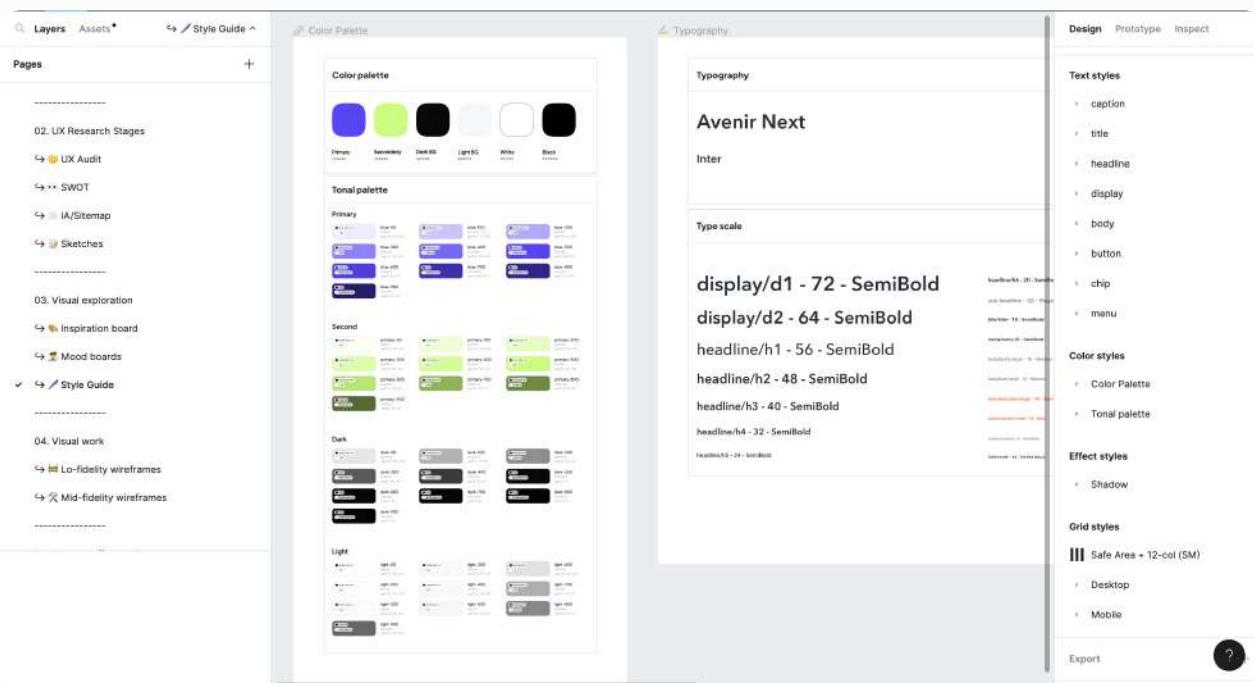
Historically speaking, designers and developers have had quite distinct roles to play in the product development process, and this has been a major cause of tension between the two groups and has sparked a huge amount of extremely accurate memes 😂



Zeplin's Facebook page

## Document everything

Making the appropriate choices early in the design process will help you produce the desired result. This includes setting up your style sheets properly, exporting elements in the appropriate form and size, setting up component libraries and design systems (if applicable), and documenting responsive grids and layouts, color systems, and type scales.



*File naming, design system, global styles - document everything.*

We want to gain a general understanding of what a development team actually needs from us before handing off the designs.

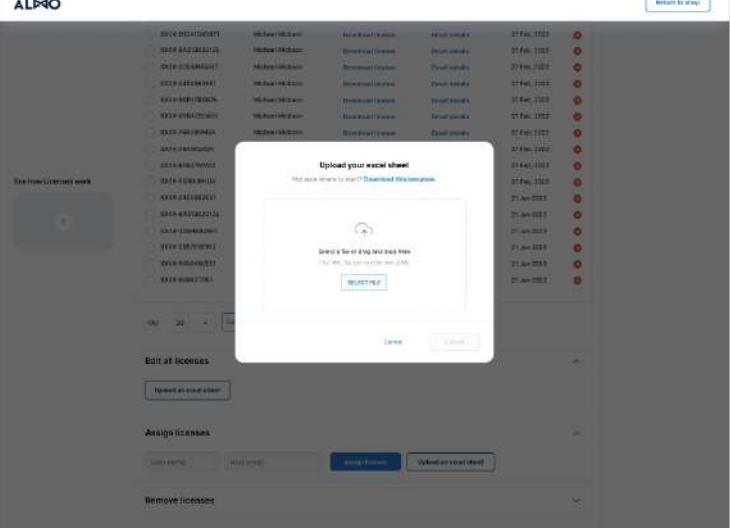
Making a list of the things we must prepare is a good place to start if we want the best results.

### This list includes the following:

Sometimes, the third number can include letters like “a,” “b,” “c,” etc. that’s when you have to split the flow to show two states like empty, finished, successful, etc.

**1.2.1.1a- Upload document 1/3**

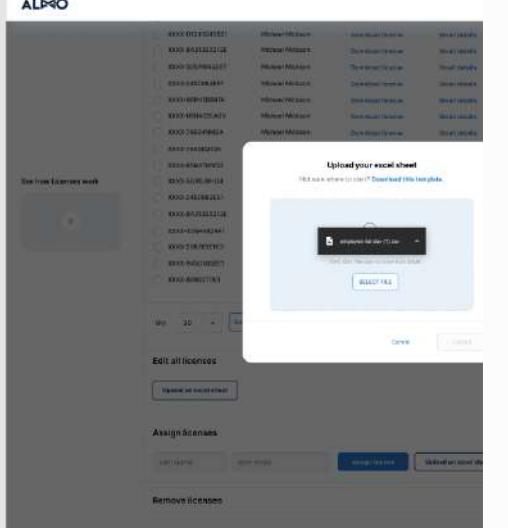
1.2.1.1a- Licenses Listed



This wireframe shows a list of licenses on the left and a central modal for uploading an Excel sheet. The modal includes fields for file selection, a preview area, and a 'READY FILE' button.

**1.2.1.1b- Upload document 2/3**

1.2.1.1b- Licenses Listed



This wireframe shows a list of licenses on the left and a central modal for uploading an Excel sheet. The modal includes fields for file selection, a preview area, and a 'READY FILE' button.

*My client's licensing software dashboard wireframes*

Establish explicit guidelines for the naming and labeling each component, asset, and file for designers and developers.

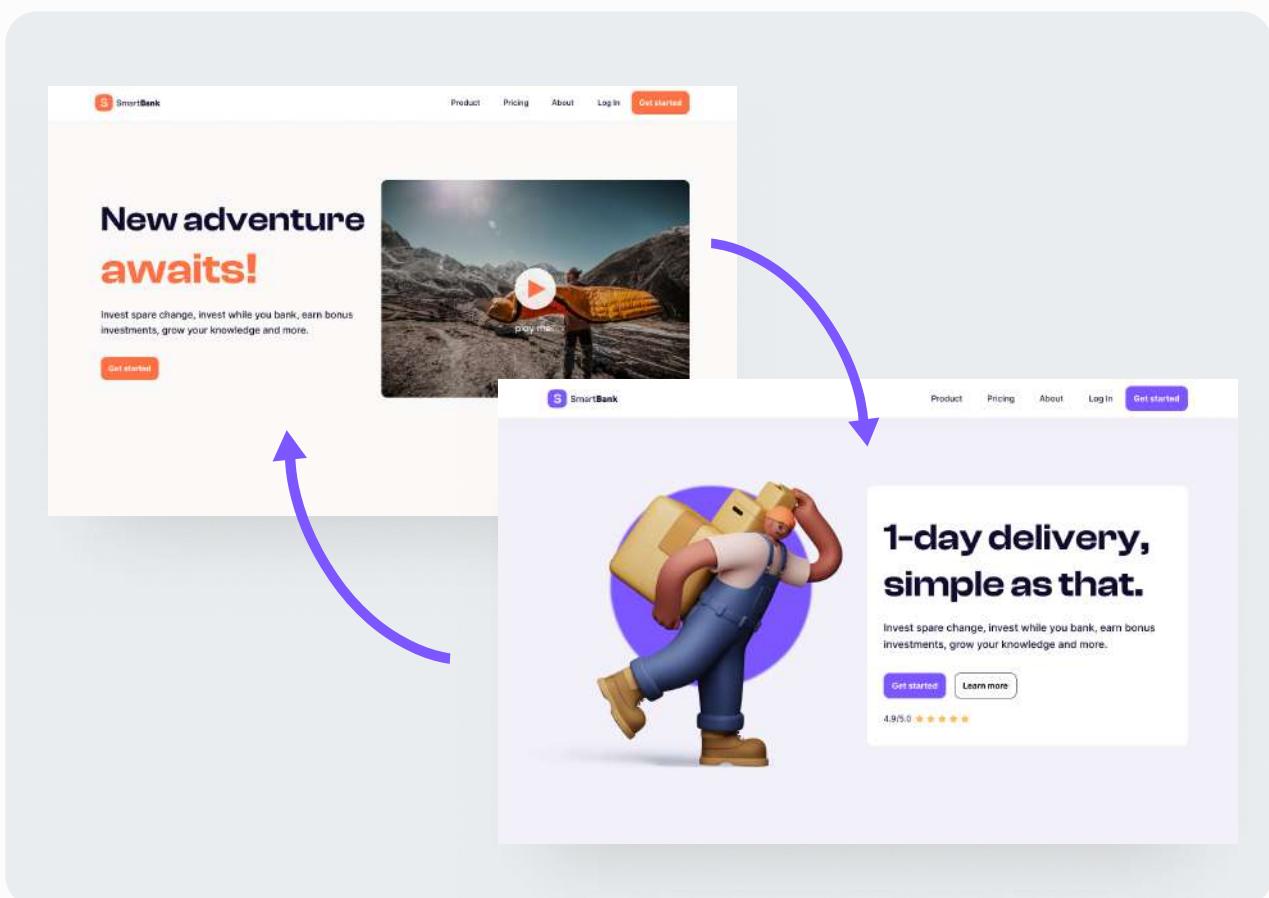
Even though it's time-consuming, doing it now will save you a ton of time and effort down the road.

## If you're a little bit more advanced - do this 🤞

If you're more familiar with Figma and web design, but you're not feeling comfortable enough to go out there and create sites for real clients, fire up the SmartBank Landing Page UI Kit first and start changing the global styles, update the copy, and replace the images.

### Just have a play around and see what you can do with it.

The goal of this exercise is to get you familiar with different design patterns. Even by following the landing page framework template and making changes to the UI kit, you'll be able to create some pretty cool-looking websites. See the examples below to see what I've come up with in 5 minutes of work.



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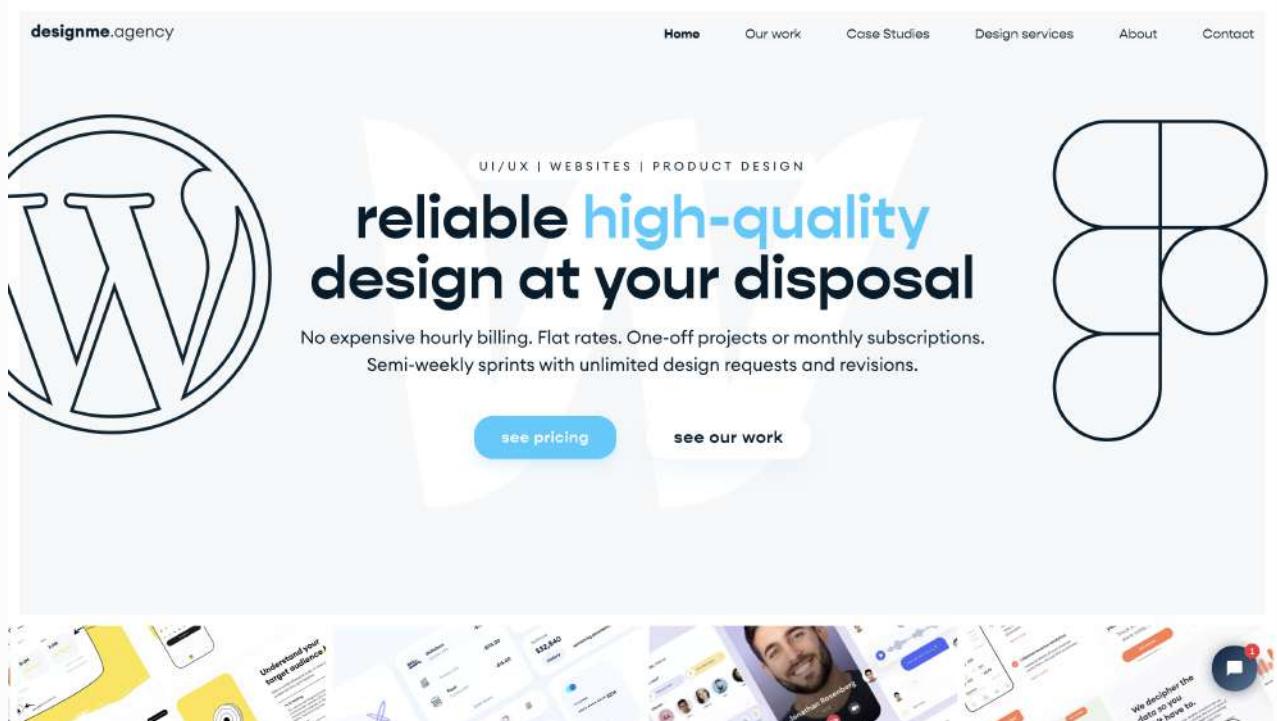
I simply agreed on fixed quotes (between \$2000-5000 for a project) and set specific deadlines and just focused on working.

### **I didn't have to look for clients for over a year.**

I was so occupied with agency work that I created custom design subscription services and started charging my partners fixed packages priced between \$3-5k/mo with set amount of hours.

If a new client reached out to me I was able to dictate higher prices because I didn't have to worry about being rejected; whatever their answer was, I still had work to do and it wasn't going away.

I started pitching the same services to everyone and it took off.



*My no longer active design agency website*

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# The End.



**See you around, Friend!**

