

From Figma to Code (Without Dev Mode)

Introduction

Figma is one of the most popular design tools for creating user interfaces. While Figma provides a **Dev Mode** feature to inspect designs and copy code, not everyone has access to it. This document explains how to write clean code directly from a Figma design, step by step, without relying on Dev Mode.

1 Why Learn Without Dev Mode?

- Not all accounts have Dev Mode access.
- Helps you develop a deeper understanding of spacing, typography, and layout.
- Improves problem-solving skills when translating design to code.

2 Understanding Layouts in Figma

One of the most important skills when converting a design to code is understanding how Figma layouts map to HTML and CSS concepts.

2.1 Horizontal vs. Vertical Layout

In Figma, a **Horizontal Direction** layout is similar to `flex-direction: row` in CSS:

- Elements are placed **side by side** (left to right).
- Example: Navigation bar items (Home, About, Contact).

A **Vertical Direction** layout is similar to `flex-direction: column` in CSS:

- Elements are placed **one below the other**.
- Example: A card with an image on top, then a title, then a description.

Code Example:

```
.container {
  display: flex;
  flex-direction: row;    /* Horizontal layout */
}

.column-container {
  display: flex;
  flex-direction: column; /* Vertical layout */
}
```

2.2 Gap in Layouts

The **Gap** in Figma means the space **between child elements inside a layout**, equivalent to CSS `gap`.

```
.buttons {
  display: flex;
  flex-direction: row;
  gap: 16px; /* space between each button */
}
```

2.3 Width and Height

Width and height represent the size of the selected element or frame:

- Frame: overall size of the frame.
- Rectangle, Button, or Image: size of that element.

```
.element {
  width: 300px;
  height: 200px;
}
```

2.4 How to Select Elements in Figma

1. **Double Clicking on the Canvas:** Keep double clicking until you reach the specific element inside a frame or group.
2. **Using the Layers Panel (Left Sidebar):** Click the element name in the layers panel for quick and precise selection.



Figure 1: Sample Figma layout selection from left panel

3 Export Assets Manually

Even without Dev Mode, you can export images, icons, or logos for use in your code.

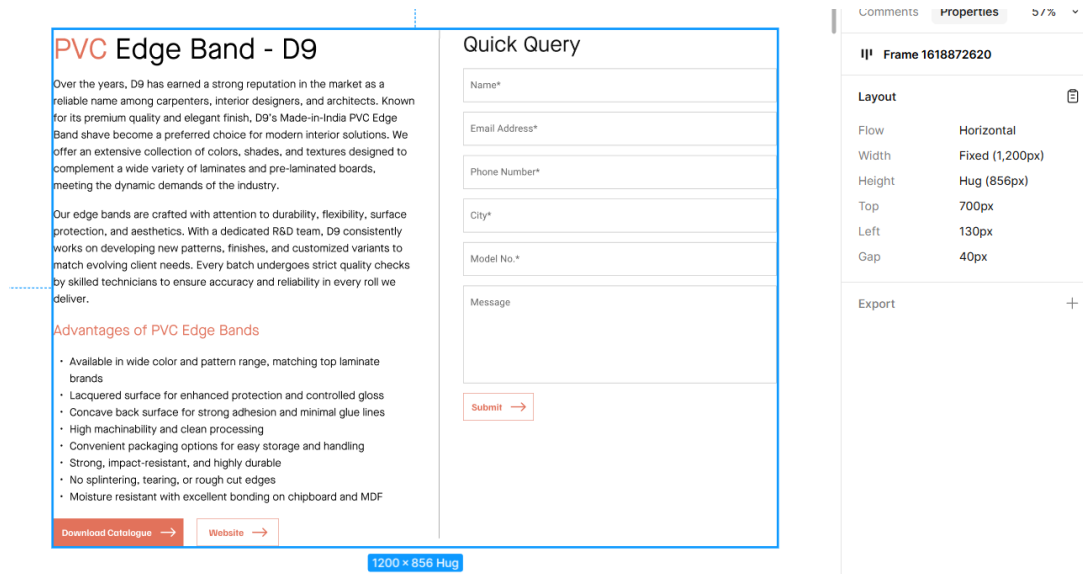


Figure 2: Sample Figma layout with properties panel on the right

3.1 Where to Find the Export Option

1. Select the element you want to export.
2. Look at the **right-hand side panel**.
3. Scroll down to the **Export** section.
4. Click the **+** button to add an export setting.
5. Choose the format (PNG, JPG, or SVG) and click **Export**.

3.2 When to Use PNG vs. SVG

- **PNG:** Best for photos or detailed images.
- **SVG:** Best for logos and icons; scales perfectly and allows color changes via CSS.

Example in HTML:

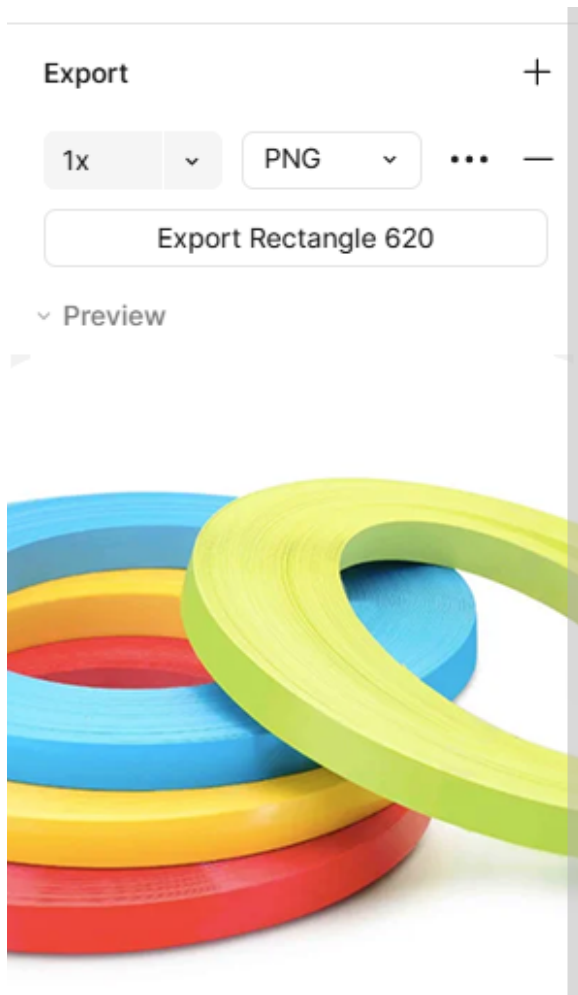
```


```

4 Translate Typography and Styling

Figma text layers include properties to replicate in CSS:

- **Font Family** (e.g., Inter, Roboto)
- **Font Size** (e.g., 24px)
- **Font Weight** (e.g., 700)



(a) Figma layout with right-side properties panel



(b) Export options shown in the panel

Figure 3: Understanding how to inspect and export assets in Figma

- **Color** (e.g., #333333)
- **Background Color** (e.g., #f5f5f5)
- **Line Height** (e.g., 28px)
- **Letter Spacing** (e.g., 0.5px)
- **Text Alignment** (left, center, right)

Example in CSS:

```
h1 {
  font-family: 'Inter', sans-serif;
  font-size: 24px;
  font-weight: 700;
  color: #333333;
  background-color: #f5f5f5;
  line-height: 28px;
}
```

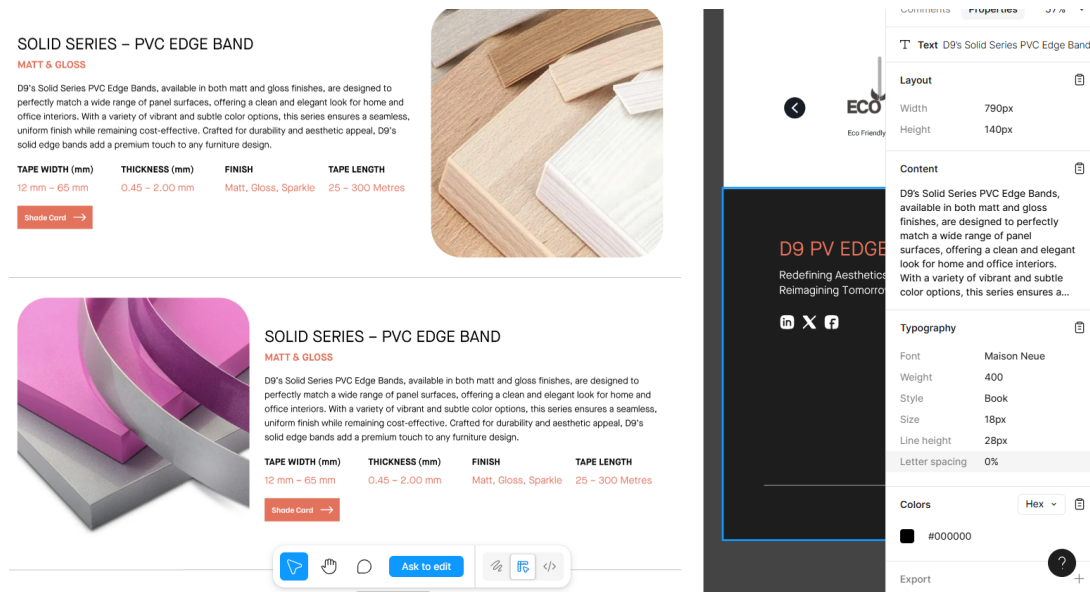


Figure 4: Sample typography panel with all styles

```
letter-spacing: 0.5px;
text-align: center;
}
```

5 Measure Spacing Manually

Using the Inspect Tool

1. Select the element to measure.
2. Hold **Alt** (Windows) or **Option** (Mac) and hover over another element.
3. Note the distances; these translate into padding or margin in CSS.

5.1 Padding vs. Margin

- **Padding:** Inside an element between content and border.
- **Margin:** Outside an element between it and other elements.

```
.container {
  padding: 20px;      /* Inside space */
  margin-bottom: 16px; /* Outside space */
}
```

6 Recreate Components

For buttons or cards, note:

- Background color

- Border radius
- Text style

```
<button class="primary-btn">Click Me</button>
```

```
.primary-btn {  
  background-color: #4A90E2;  
  color: white;  
  padding: 12px 24px;  
  border: none;  
  border-radius: 8px;  
  font-size: 16px;  
}
```

Conclusion

Even without Dev Mode, you can successfully transform a Figma design into working code by carefully observing typography, spacing, and structure. With practice, this improves both design interpretation and coding skills.