

## 4 Rules

### ***Rule #1) Symmetrical – bad***

[By thinking creatively and approaching a design asymmetrically the possible solutions are endless. A novice designer will often resort to a symmetrical design in lieu of exploration and experimentation. Symmetry is not necessarily a bad approach when used correctly, however, the more visually interesting and complex layouts are typically asymmetrical.]

### ***Rule #2) White space – good***

[A common misconception by non-designers is to feel that white space (negative space) is unused real estate. On the contrary white space is crucial to good design. It offers a relief for the eye, allows us to focus on the content, creates vital contrast that establishes the hierarchy our mind perceives when looking at a design.]

### ***Rule #3) Less is more***

[A common phrase, but so important to good web design. Too many pages, too much content, too many links, too much graphics and too much download time can all cause confusion and viewer dissatisfaction. The content of the site must be organized into a clear and concise architecture that allows for the correct number of links and pages. Content need not be cut, just organized correctly.]

### ***Rule #4) Contrast is key***

I can't emphasise this rule enough. Contrast is key, contrast is key, contrast is key! Oh, did I mention contrast is key. If nothing more when creating the layout and design to a web page or site focus on the amount of contrast on each page and between pages. Types of contrast to look for:

- Contrast of Visual Elements
- Contrast of Shape (geometric vs. organic, angular vs. curvilinear, planar vs. linear, simple vs. complex, symmetrical vs. asymmetrical, mechanical vs. calligraphic, abstract vs. representational, clear vs. distorted)
- Contrast of Size (large vs. small)
- Contrast of Color (light vs. dark, warm vs. cool, bright vs. dull)
- Contrast of Texture (fine vs. course, smooth vs. rough, even vs. uneven, matte vs. gloss)
- Contrast of Direction (horizontal vs. vertical vs. diagonal, up vs. down, left vs. right)
- Contrast of Position (top vs. bottom, high vs. low, left vs. right, center vs. off-center)
- Contrast of Space (occupied vs. empty, positive vs. negative, advance vs. recede, near vs. far, two-dimensional vs. three-dimensional)
- Contrast of Gravity (stable vs. unstable, light vs. heavy)

## Information Architecture

### 1) Define Goals and message:

The first step involves surveying key people to get a clear idea of what should appear on the site. Create questions to determine site's mission and purpose by involving everyone in the creative process. Next, you should define the scale of your project and time frame for completion. How to obtain these goals? Call meetings with key players; Prepare agenda and questions; Talk to client employees one-on-one, record their responses; Get their thoughts, ideas, opinions; Get approval from key people. Group goals into categories and have people rank the importance of each category separately. By doing this step, you will establish a clear set of goals which will be used to design the site. Be sure to share these with your client and the employees involved in key decision in the company.

### 2) Define Audience:

The purpose of this step is to determine who your users are and what are their goals and objectives? This also means that you need to define user experience; understand how users will react with the site.

### 3) Create and Organize Content:

Most of the time, programmers and designers are not responsible for creating content for clients. Content, in this case, refers to written text and images which appear on the site. Text is usually written by marketing people, copy writers or public relations staff on your team or the client's team. Images may be supplied by the client or generated by designers. It is your job as a designer to organize content into major sections. In the initial stages of development, you need to answer two questions regarding content: "What content does the site need?" and "What functionality will be required?" Then, you need to create a content and functional requirements list where you label and group content. Complete and prioritize content and functional requirements list: Rank the importance of each item and ask yourself: Do you have the technology and the skills to meet each requirement? Do you have the time and money to buy or build the functionality?

### 4) Create and Organize Form:

Concept can be defined as a visual direction, an idea or theme for the site. Concept is the idea you want to communicate and present. Design is how you express that idea. It is important to keep concepts simple. Our rule regarding concepts is this: Articulate your concept in one or two sentences. If you have to write two paragraphs to explain your concept, you're probably trying to say too much.

### 5) Develop site structure and navigation:

The site map is a comprehensive, diagramed layout of the site, that describes its organization structure. Site maps are synonymous with site structure and at their best, map out major sections of a site and construct pattern in layers and levels.

### 6) Produce Site:

Visual form is the way your site looks. Visual form refers to all things visual on the site such as: layout, type, graphics, colors, logos, charts, photos and illustrations. Visual form is created when all previous steps have been completed. It is the part of your site design which requires your creative ability, as well as formal training. It is the part of your site which identifies the client, creates a brand, creates the look and feel of the site, and sets the mood for all you say about your client's goods and services.