## Web site Visual Design Brief

Version 1.0

Fill in your site name and project date

website.com.au

January 1, 2006

Introduction

Fill in your site's name. This section defines the document's purpose as a visual brief, as opposed to a technical or marketing brief for the site.

The primary purpose of this document is to define the visual design objectives for the Website.com.au website. The visual design is mostly concerned with the “look and feel” or visual style of the site. It’s distinct from the User Interface Design or Interaction Design of the site.

The purpose of this document will provide direction for Design Company’s work on visual design concepts for Website.com.au. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that all appropriate members of the business and marketing staff carefully review this document and that any outstanding questions or concerns are resolved prior to the start of the design phase.

Site Design Strategy

This section outlines the objectives of the site's visual design. It's also useful to outline the site's business objectives, but they should be included in a different document.

2.1 Overall Design Goals

The three goals listed below are examples that you can use or improve on. Other design goals might include:

* contrast with competitors
* provide design continuity with a previous site or other marketing collateral
* establish a new brand or product line online

The high-level goals for the Website.com.au design include the following:

* Communicate the Website.com.au positioning
* Support the usability goals of the underlying page layouts and
* Provide a specific content experience (i.e. the ability to learn from and have fun with content)

2.2 Key Message

“*Positioning Statement."*

The primary objective for the Website.com.au design is to visually support the overall site strategy of providing visitors with an appropriate experience. Specifically, the Website.com.au design should use color and other graphic elements to create an appropriate content experience for site visitors. That said, this experience needs to be conveyed in such a way that the design will be visually appropriate for the existing Website brand.

2.2.1 Key Design Challenge

Many similar sites appear a particular way. For this reason, a key challenge of the new Website.com.au visual design is to provide a link to the language of those sites wile also appearing unique.

2.3 Themes / Keywords

The following themes and keywords represent a target sensibility for the new Website.com.au visual design:

* Helpful (useful)
* Caring
* Interesting
* Approachable (softer, friendly)
* Conversational
* Simple (clean, easy, not complex or confusing)
* Credible (trustworthy)
* Human (real people are behind the content)

Make sure you think carefully about these words- less is better. Don’t cram this list with keywords that you like- try to keep them specific to what you’d like from your site.

2.4 Colours

You may have corporate colours that you need to integrate into your site, or you may be creating an identity from scratch. Keep in mind the colours used by competitor and complementary sites. Consider which ones address a more corporate audience, which one more consumer based, etc.

There are no restrictions with respect to the use of color in the new design. In our review of comparable sites, it appeared that, while a colourful design conveys richness, an excess of different non-complementary colors creates an impression of clutter or busy-ness. A palate consisting of a variety of similar colors and tones was preferred.

2.5 Target Audience

The target audience for your web design might be the same as for your overall business, or you might be targeting a particular market segment or trying to open up a new channel.

Although the design should have appeal broadly to a wide demographic range (consistent, mainly, with the audience of the web at large), Website.com.au will have a “sweet-spot” with the following target audience:

• Age 30 - 45

• Women (note: the target audience offline is 85% female)

• Middle to High income

• Urban mums with children 2-10yrs

• Moderate level of Internet sophistication

2.6 Visual Priority of Page Elements

Visual priority does not mean things at the top of the page. It lists the page elements that will first grab the user’s attention. Keep in mind that readers of web pages typically scan the content quickly to find what they're looking for, and they don't stop to read until they've drilled down into the content that interests them.

From a branding and visual priority perspective, there should be three primary elements:

• Current Content

• Website.com.au Logo

• Site Subject

In all cases, the main focus of the page should be the content that the visitor came to the page to view. The site subject should receive the main priority, and the Website.com.au logo should receive secondary priority.

The visual priority should be:

• Primary Priority: Page title/banner

• Secondary Priority: Website.com.au logo

• Tertiary priority: Content

As described, the Website logo and branding should be present and noticeable, but of secondary visual priority to the content designations of site subject or article title.

3. Site Comparisons

Take your time to fill out this section thoroughly, as this is one of the most useful areas of a design brief. It provides relevant context to your design team. Consider competitor's sites, but also make sure you refer to other sites that appeal to the same target audience. Pay attention to the site elements, what works on their site, what doesn't work, and what's missing (if no one in your industry offers eCommerce facilities, there may be a good reason!).

The following sites contain design elements that should be considered in order to achieve the design goals described in this document. Also, because the Website.com.au audience is likely to overlap with the audience of its peer sites, these sites, taken together, may represent a current visual standard with which visitors to Website.com.au are likely to be familiar.

Competitor site xyz.com.au

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Company | XYZ Corp |
| Site | xyz.com.au |
| What they do that works | * Good use of colours, well-targeted to corporate target audience * consistent font styles for headings, links, body text * visually engaging homepage design |
| What they do that doesn't work | * Confusing navigation * no call to action apart from on "Contact Us" form * too much important information in images (low accessiblity) |

Technical / Performance Parameters

Your web design company will help you with this section, and will make sure your site is standards-compliant. Questions to ask yourself are:

* Will visitors to my site be browsing when they are at work or at home?
* Are they more likely to have dial-up or broadband connections?
* Are the likely to have the latest computers with the largest monitors?
* Are they likely to be colour-blind or vision impaired in other ways?
* Are there any patterns that appear in existing web usage analysis (log statistics) that provide useful pointers to how people will use the new site

The Website.com.au visual design will be constrained by certain practical and technical limitations, as follows:

* The site will be accessible to XXX level, with attention to making sure that all flash content is usable without a mouse device.
* The site will utilize flash for images and diagrams, but all content should be in HTML
* Page will be optimized at 1024px (so design to 960px)
* Needs to use XYZ ecommerce technology, so product images will need to follow a XYZ sizing and format
* All pages should load over a 56k connection in no more than 999 seconds