



Adrian K
@uiadrian



SmartBank Landing Page UI Kit included

DESIGN LIKE A PRO

a UI Professional's

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

Sold to

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Introduction

Nice to see you here! 😊

Hey, thank you for grabbing a copy of my ebook. You just made the right choice! Before you venture any further, please, let me tell you about the idea behind this ebook and show you what to expect.

The general concept behind this ebook is to show you the ins and outs of being an ultimate web designer, from learning the basic web design principles to creating your very own web design project.

The future of the web lies in your hands, literally.

I hope you're as excited as I am!



The new state of web design.

Like it or not, the no-code revolution has taken the creative industry by storm. Now, everyone can be a web designer. You watch a video or two, create your own website, find a fancy name, and boom - you own a design agency.

All you need is a working computer, an internet connection, a little bit of know-how, and a desire to make it happen.

While this opened up doors for so many people, it also created a lot of misconceptions around the web design industry.

I remember starting out, thinking about how on earth people are charging upwards of **\$5000-10000+** for websites that look really plain and simple. I had a hard time justifying such high price points looking at sites other people or agencies designed (a lot of them using no-code tools), and I was clueless as to what clients were really paying for. I remember one site in particular, someone was boasting on a Facebook forum he charged \$5000 for a 5-pager. I looked at it and saw 5 pages of copy, a few shapes, images and design that was pretty tasteless. I knew I could create better looking sites but I didn't know what the secret to charging that much was.

Fast forward 6.5 years, and I know that behind the visuals, there's a myriad of other complex things that build the entire web experience, and I'm here to talk about them with you. The real value of a website is in good design and things you can't really see, like the UX research or dozens of UI guidelines and principles.

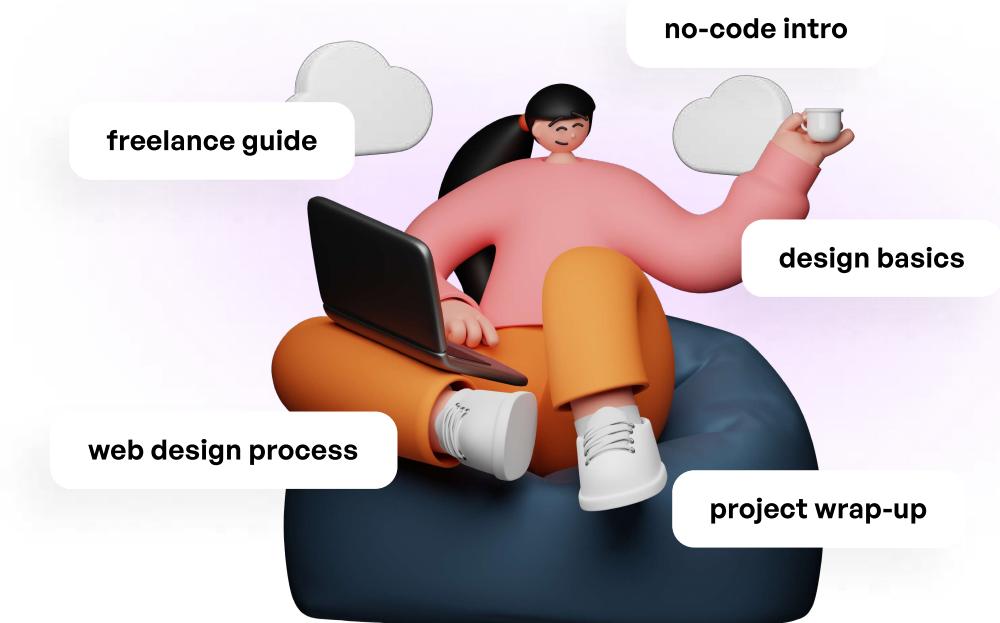
There are a few important areas of design (and not only) you need to master to charge what other successful designers and agencies are charging. I'll simplify this for you as much as possible and help you progress in your career by letting you follow my exact steps when designing web experiences for commercial clients.

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.

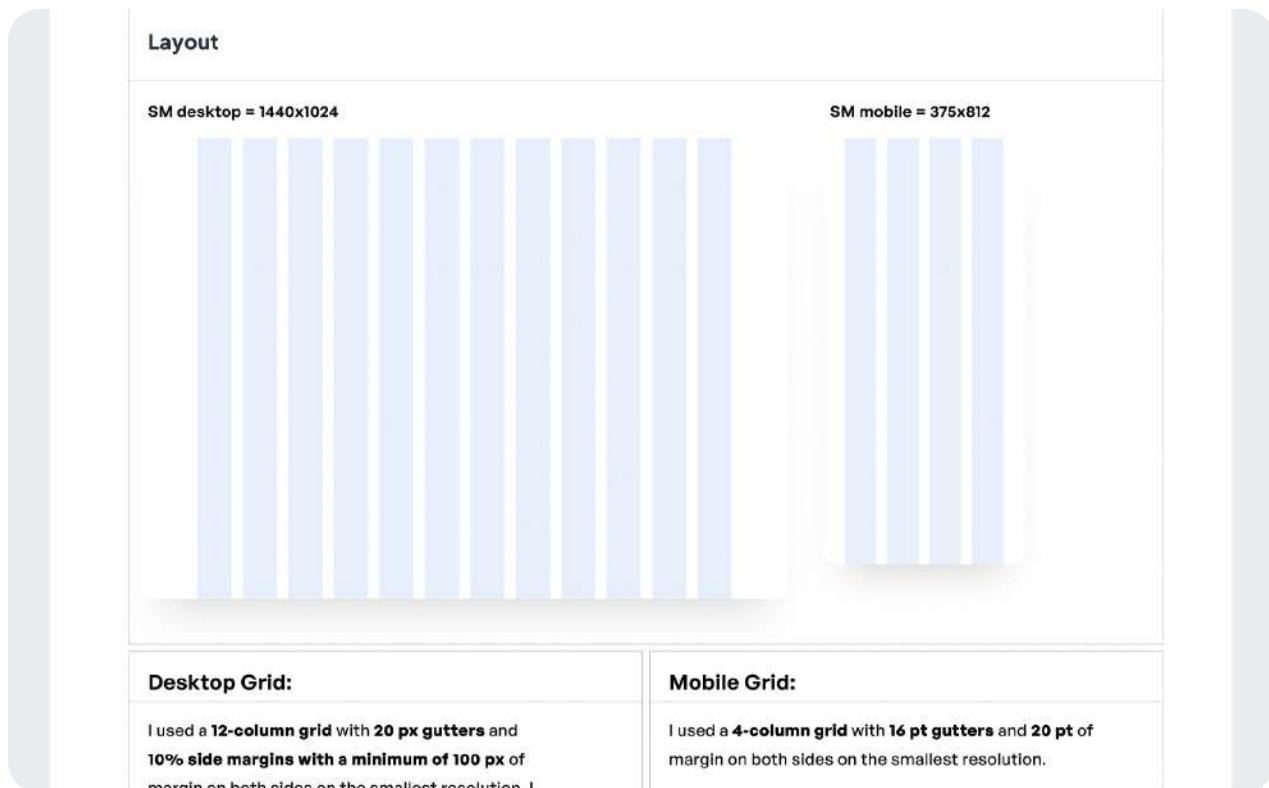
Before we even discuss the design basics, visuals, and design processes, we'll start by addressing the things most people forget (or deliberately omit) when talking about freelancing, which is the business side of things.

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!)



Next, we're going to discuss the design basics, specifically applied to website design, the spacing, containment, typography, colors, etc., all you need to know to be considered a good designer.

After we cover the basics, we'll go into more advanced design techniques, and explain how to setup our Figma files and grids.



Layout & Grid - SmartBank Landing Page Style Guide

We'll talk about responsive design, the box model, web design best practices, and css properties. I'll also share the template/framework I use to design a high-converting landing page.

Next, I'm going to show you my **exact web design process** I follow with every new website project I take on.



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 \$10k+ 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**

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! 💫



The Freelance Guide

Freelancing

Why should you consider freelancing

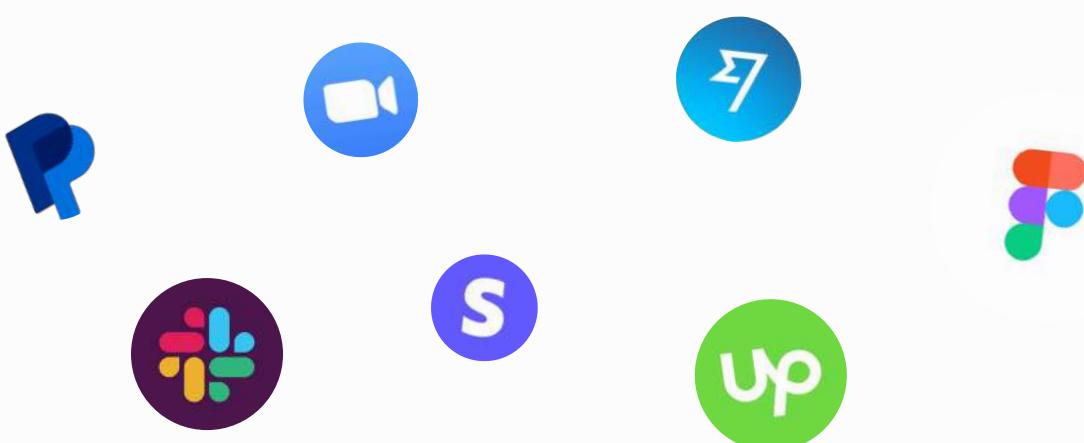
Freelancing is awesome! And it has never been this easy. It's become extremely and increasingly popular in recent years, especially among designers. What has made it that way?

For one, every single aspect of our design work has been simplified through use of an appropriate app.

We have **Slack** for project communication, **Zoom** for client calls, **PayPal**, **Wise**, **Stripe** for taking payments, **Notion** for organizing our project documents, **Youtube**, **Instagram**, **Skillshare**, and a bunch of specialized **forums** and **Discords** for learning and solving problems.

We have **Fiverr** and **Upwork** for outsourcing work, **LinkedIn**, **Dribbble**, **Behance** for finding clients, and of course, **Figma** for designing our beautiful websites.

We are truly blessed with new technologies.



Back when I started, even way back before I switched my career to web design, still as a student, we didn't have this many courses on Youtube, and educational niche was pretty much non-existent. And that was only around 8 years ago.

The life of a freelancer is much different now. In fact, it's much easier in every aspect of the work. You can very easily earn \$3-5-10k in your first months of being self-employed, even with little to no experience. Designers with very poor design skills are charging \$5k and upwards from clients that simply don't know any better. What's the secret you may ask? There's no secret and we'll talk about that in this ebook, don't worry. But for now, let's get the full picture and ask this - what are the alternatives to being a freelance designer?

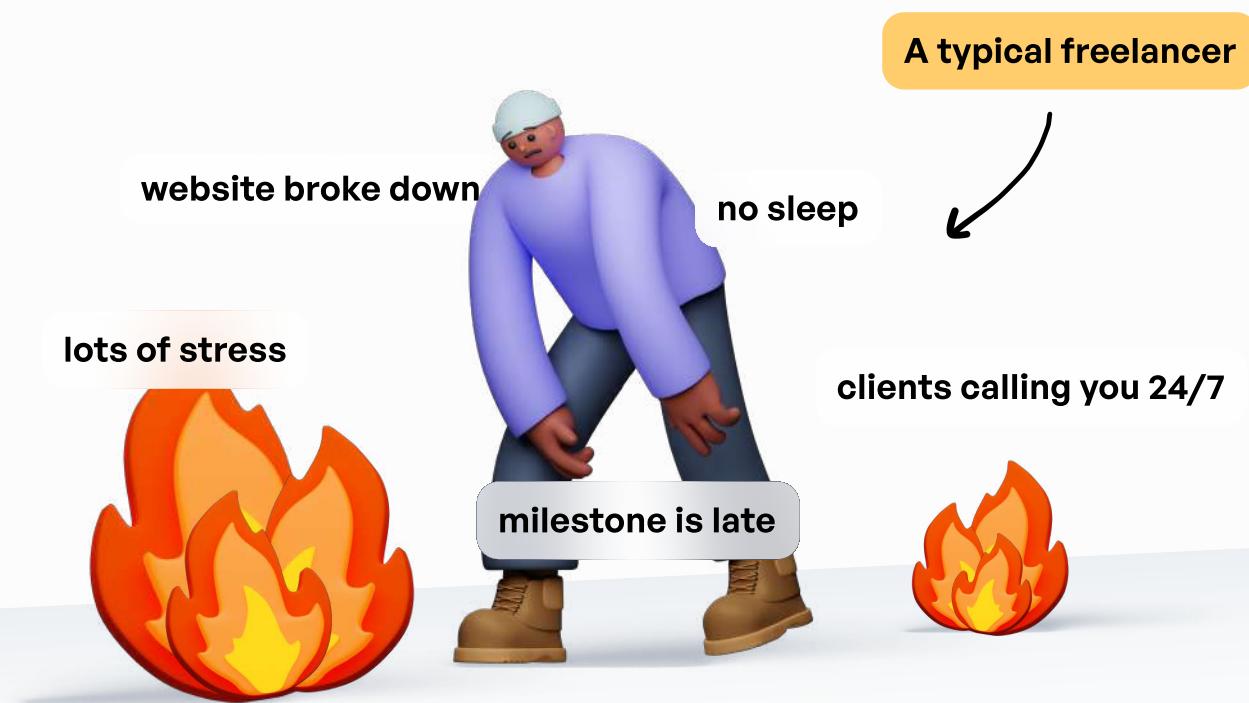
Your alternative is a career. If you decided to start a new career in a design agency, you'd most likely find only entry-level jobs. Not to mention the fierce competition you'd have to beat to get these jobs.

Building a career is not as easy as it may seem.

And so is freelancing. Frankly, not everyone can or want to be a freelancer. Obviously, there are a few pretty major drawbacks.

As a freelancer, you are responsible for yourself. How much you work, as well as how much you can earn, is all dependent on you. You need to find your own clients and onboard them.

You need to have them trust you with their hard-earned money, collect all the important information about the project, send invoices, get paid, carry out the handoff processs, and be available for all your clients in all the different timezones. You need to know when and where to set boundaries, so you're not getting overwhelmed (like I did many times before).



Web design, simplified.

That's why in this book we're not only going through the design basics, principles, and best practices for web. We'll go through the entire process of web design; starting from finding clients, sending out questionaires, pricing websites, moodboarding, wireframing, iterating, and carrying out a website design/development handoff.

How I got started as a freelancer

Before I started working as a freelance designer I was a freshly graduated engineering student building Shopify stores for my failed ecom brands. I couldn't care less about a career in design.

This all changed when one of my marketing clients saw my agency website and asked if I could create a website for them.

I said yes without knowing much.

That's when I fell in love with design.



In retrospect - was it hard to find new clients?

If I had to say, gun to my head - if it's hard to find clients, I'd say it isn't. But it wasn't always like that. Like every rookie designer, I struggled a lot with that. Finding enough work to earn as much as I wanted (which now seems like pocket change) was surreal. Where on earth will I find someone willing to hire me to make them a website, let alone pay me money for that?

First few months as a freelancer I didn't know what do to so I started simple, locally, and cheap. I made my first few websites for \$300-400, and I did spend close to 50-100+ hours on each one of them. Was it worth it? Hell yeah. I still felt blessed that I could do something I wanted to, and it wasn't for free.

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.



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 \$180k/year combining my lead designer earnings and a couple of freelance gigs on the side. All that with working between 4-6 hours per day.

And you know what the best thing is? I live in Poland, and I'm still able to earn a steady \$10-15k/month from my design work. With my current cost of living, **it is a lot 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.

How to find freelance work

Finding freelance clients is hard when you’re starting out and gets increasingly easier as you get more experienced with more projects to back you up.

As a new freelancer, you basically have two options:

- Actively look for design work, send proposals, and pitch your services to cold audiences or...*
- Create concept works and case studies, post them online, be active on platforms where your clients hang out, and let them find you first.*

As a beginner with no cash flow, you’ll feel more pressured to accept every work that comes through, and that’s normal. Every client is good when you’re not in a position to be picky.

As you progressively get more experienced, not only the quality of your work is speaking volumes - your clients are “getting better” as a result. It might take you a little bit longer to build the momentum you need to attract better clients, but it’s so, so worth it. Trust me.

It’s the easiest way to “find” clients.

But here’s the catch - you need to be at least better than an average joe designer to be chosen first. It’s not that hard, btw.

The competition is fierce for all beginners, but here's the truth - you attract the type of client your work is speaking to. Clients will come if you can show off your skill and work on your presentation.

Where to show off your skills is another story - here's my take on it:

Fiverr - the platform most beginners start from

I'll be honest - I don't really like Fiverr.

It's overcrowded, super competitive, and clients that look for designers out there are looking for someone inexperienced and most importantly, inexpensive.

That's what the name stands for - Fiverr, as in five bucks, the starting (and very often average) price you can pay for a given service on that platform.

I know that people in less developed countries are willing to work for much lower prices than, let's say, Central Europe or the better-developed West, but if you can find people who design websites for \$10, how do you want to be competitive?

We're not even going to discuss the quality of that kind of website but let's be serious, someone who wants to pay \$10 for a service of this size is simply trying to take advantage of others.

You don't want to work with people like that.

I, for one, would never choose someone based on a lower price but rather on the quality of work.

And that's what you need to be considered for.

Your quality, not your rates.



Starting fresh on Fiverr

For that reason, starting fresh on Fiverr and trying to work for at least reasonable prices is **tough**. You're going to compete with thousands of other designers willing to work for less.

I'm not saying it's impossible to get through that mess of an audience, but it's hard. There are better and easier ways to get experience and earn money than sticking with Fiverr.

I tried to make it work there. I remember adding two or three services, one for web design (starting at \$50) and one for design and development (starting at \$90). I got nothing.

I even asked two friends to purchase each of my services through their accounts and leave a review for me. I would, of course, give them those 50 bucks (and a little kickback) to buy it back from me.

I know it wasn't necessarily a fair move, but hey, you got to do what you got to do to make it work. I tried applying for a few jobs, but the lower-priced designers always got the gigs in the end.

After a while, I left Fiverr for good.

The image displays a grid of six Fiverr gig listings from 2015, illustrating the types of work available on the platform at that time:

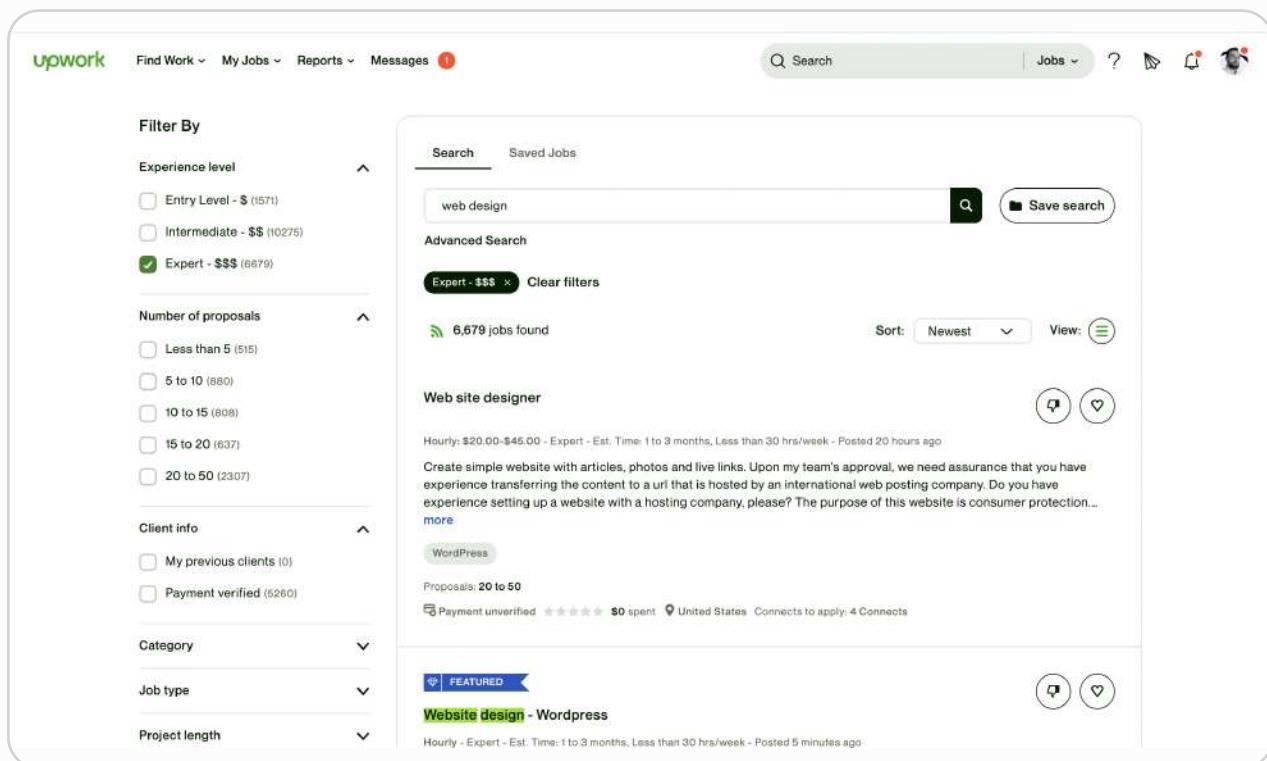
- SWITCH UP YOUR PROFILE PIC**
I will create a comic version of your profile picture
\$40 STARTING AT **\$5**
- I will create shopify dropshipping store for your**
... \$100
- I will create exclusive, modern website for your**
... \$450
- I will create a professional, customized website for your**
... \$100

Bye bye, Fiverr 🖐

Upwork - is it worth it?

Short answer - yes, longer answer - it depends. What I mean by that is that it's perfectly fine if you can invest some extra time on that platform. First, you need to work on your profile, and have something to show in order for Upwork to even accept you as a freelancer.

They're a bit more strict than Fiverr, and you have to show them at least some of your completed work to be accepted. Then, there are credits that you either earn or purchase.



The screenshot shows the Upwork website interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with various filtering options: Experience level (Entry Level, Intermediate, Expert), Number of proposals (Less than 5, 5 to 10, 10 to 15, 15 to 20, 20 to 50), Client info (My previous clients, Payment verified), Category, Job type, and Project length. The main search area has a search bar containing "web design", a "Save search" button, and a "Clear filters" button. It also shows "6,679 jobs found". Below this, there are two job listings: one for a "Web site designer" (Hourly: \$20.00-\$46.00, Proposals: 20 to 50) and another for a "Website design - Wordpress" (Hourly, FEATURED). Both listings include details like payment status, location, and connect counts.

Credits? What are those?

You use these credits to apply for posted jobs. To get these jobs, you need to send a proposal, CV, and very often, motivational letters to sell yourself better than the rest. For some of these projects, hundreds of people directly compete with you.

What I did was I got my first 3 or 4 websites created for local clients, then I sent my application to Upwork and got accepted the next day. I was even awarded a “Rising Talent” badge next to my profile which meant that the quality of my work was above the average designer on that platform. This really helped me get more exposure.



How I got my first client on Upwork

I spent a few days working on my portfolio, updating, polishing it, and adding new projects. Then, I started sending proposals.

I got a few replies and one or two calls, but nothing solid. Until one day, I got an invite to apply for a website redesign gig. A German client needed a landing page for their upcoming urban photography ebook. We set up a 30-minute Zoom call, I asked my questions, they replied, we decided it's a good fit and I got the job.

I liked that project, and the client too. It took me around 30-40 hours to design and build their website on Elementor. They were thrilled and paid me \$1800 for the job.

I was amazed how easy that money felt.

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

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

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](#)

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.



Linkedin or Linked Out?

Linkedin is awesome. It's one of the best places to get hired for a full-time job. Well, it was created for that very reason. Is it good to get freelance work, though? Yes and no. It all depends on your offer.

Adrian Kuleszo

Design Lead | Author of the "Design Manual" and "How to Design Better" | 20,000+ eBooks sold

Talks about #uxui, #uitips, #uidesign, #uxuidesigner, and #productdesign

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7,123 followers · 500+ connections

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Your offer matters, a lot

Right now, my main call to action is to check out my latest design ebooks but it used to be more service-based. I ran all LinkedIn traffic to my old agency website. I used a chatbot and a simple chat flow to collect visitors' contact information and try to close them on design subscription services. These were great!

Design retainers were the perfect offer for LinkedIn. I charged my clients around \$3000 for design and no-code services each month.

Linkedin was a platform that brought me the most amount of leads.

At one point, I had 5 concurrent subscription clients and a dozen more in the pipeline. They all came from Linkedin.

My mailbox was full every day.



See, Linkedin is great if you're already a professional with enough experience to show and attract the right type of client.

My offer was perfect for early-stage startups and design agencies. Instead of hiring a full-time employee for \$6000-8000+ per month, they were paying me \$3000 and between 40-60 hours of my time, during which I worked on projects that really mattered.

We all know that half of the 140 hours you spend at a job is spent on meaningless chores, talking with your friends, having PlayStation breaks, or drinking 5 coffees a day. This was all focused work.

If I had 5 clients at 60 hours each - did I have a life?

If you're thinking about how I could work close to 300 hours per month and not go insane - Well, I wasn't working 60 hours on every single subscription.

In reality, the offer was based more on value, rather than time.

I needed a good price to package my deal. I knew I worked fast and could easily deliver a \$3000 value over a 60-hour-long period of time. That's why even though some months I spent 40 hours working on a single client, the next I might have spent 70 or even 80. I'd still use 60 hours as a reference price for every single one of them.

Whatever the design services I was doing for my clients they far exceeded that price anyway and they were happy to pay the amount.

The alternative to that was hiring a full-time designer and that was way pricier and carried more responsibility. If you need to know one thing about hiring a designer full-time it's that it's much easier to find a couple of clients than onboard and retain a good designer 🤟



good designers are like superheroes

The illustration shows a superhero woman with long black hair tied back in a ponytail, wearing a blue top and green pants, flying through white clouds against a light blue background. A speech bubble from her says "good designers are like superheroes".

I was confident in my ability to work fast and knew that the \$3000 price was more than fair for my clients. Nowadays, I'd charge \$5k for the same service and I know it'd still be very popular.

All my clients stuck with me for 6-12 months until I switched to a full-time position. This model is still easily sustainable, and if I had to start over, I could have the same system running in a few weeks. We'll talk about how to find retainer clients too.

Maybe this could be the approach for you, we'll see :)



What changed the most for me on LinkedIn?

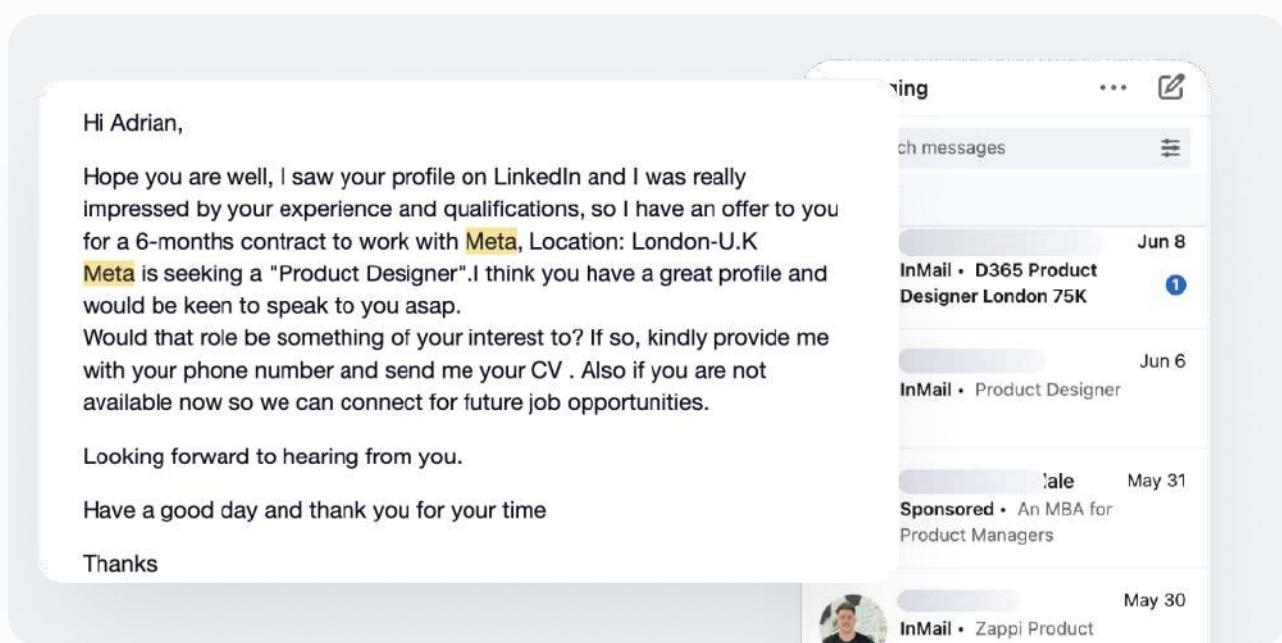
I simply changed my title from a WordPress designer to a UX/UI designer - I was already studying design and had 4 years of web design experience by that time. I immediately saw the difference.

And then, after a while, I changed it to **Product Designer**. At that point I was designing entire digital products for startups, all stages of UX and UI process included. It was more fitting.

I also started reposting all the content I shared on my Instagram, and that alone brought me 7000+ followers and over million impressions. As a result, with all the eyes I'm bringing on to my profile, I'm being bombarded with job offers. Startups, agency owners, and HR reps find me somehow.

Every time I log in to my profile, I see 2-3 unread messages. Some of these offers are pretty crazy - \$100k+ remote jobs with crazy benefits, free tickets to Las Vegas, equity packages, 401s, paid workstations, etc.

Some of them are from companies like Meta and challenger banks.



So, is LinkedIn really worth it?

No doubt! LinkedIn is the place to be if you're looking for a full-time job, a nice freelance gig, or a partnership with a startup, agency, studio, etc. It's also perfect for whitelabel agency work.

I haven't had much interest in one-time projects, and I wanted to create lasting relationships with my top clients. If you're struggling to find new design work, or if you're tired of looking for new leads each time you finish a project - try to increase engagement with your existing clients, like I did. I found **design retainers** to be the best-tailored offer for that, and LinkedIn turned out to be my number one source of higher-quality leads.

I would spend more time on LinkedIn if I were you. Even if you're not looking for a full-time job, it's a great place to find connections and build your network much faster.

If you know a guy who knows a guy who happens to be looking for a designer - you've increased your chances of getting new work. Don't underestimate the power of the network.

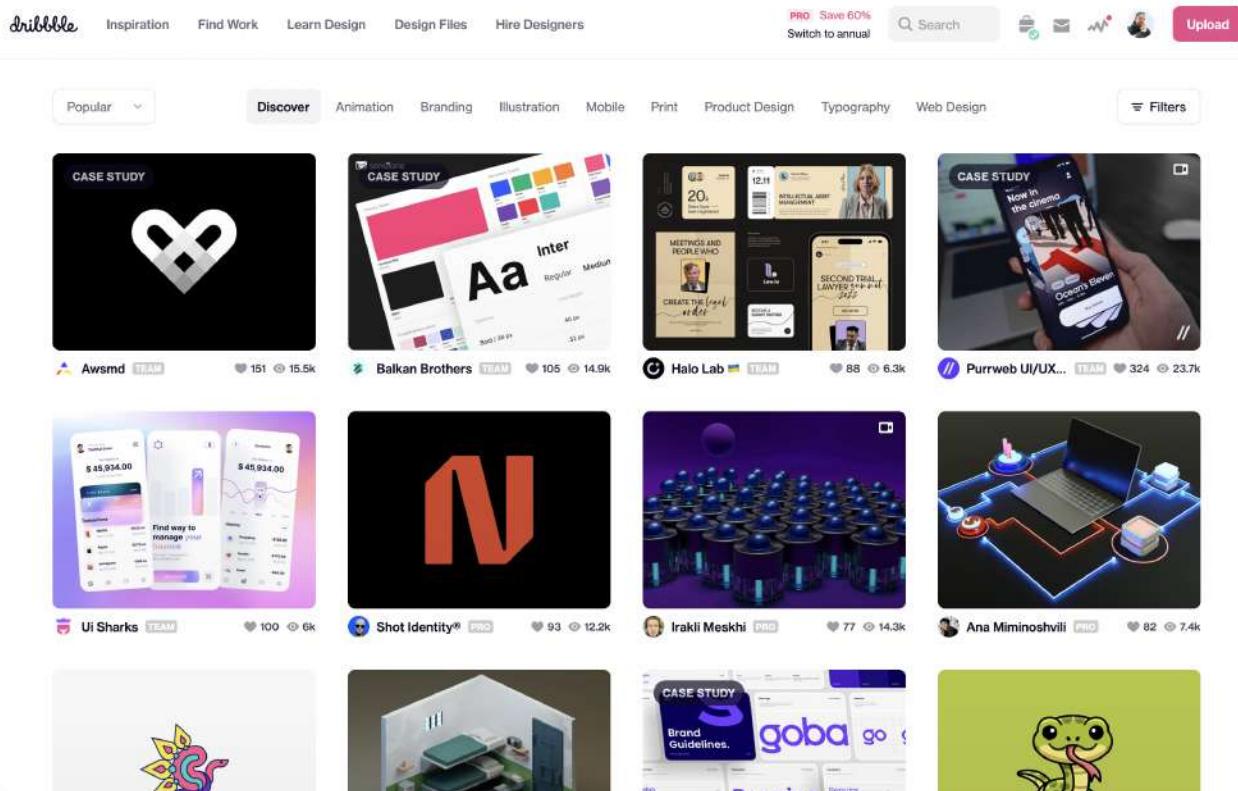
Your network = Your net worth.

Dribbble - my honest opinion

When I got introduced to Dribbble, I had mixed feelings. At first, I was full of hope and motivated to make it work, but I soon found out that the algorithm only favored the old, well-established accounts or profiles that were extremely active and I didn't have time for that.

No matter how objectively good your work is, it's hard to get through the top-performing posts, and your concepts get buried quickly.

Whenever you check out the top page, you see the same profile names, over and over, 100 or so creators that pop up all the time. And if you can invest a few months or a year of your life into building a similar following - **you'll do great over there.**



After a few years on this platform, I know how it works now. I bought a few ebooks, read hundreds of blog posts, watched several courses on how to grow on Dribbble (there aren't many, to be honest), and I started posting daily.

During the first few weeks, I didn't get much traction. A few followers here and there and some likes, but not too many; I think I even got one job inquiry in the first 2 weeks. Then, I picked it up a little bit, posted 2-3 times a day, spent around an hour commenting on other profiles, and started seeing results. And I'm not talking about followers (these grow suuper slow) but clients.

My posts suddenly blew up with one getting over 100k+ views

After that I started seeing job offers appearing every 1-2 days.

The image shows a Dribbble post card. On the left, there's a circular thumbnail of a design. Below it, the text reads: "Use shapes to decorate your designs". A detailed description follows: "Decorate your design products with relevant shapes. Use basic geometric shapes like squares, circles or more complex shapes such as hearts, stars, bubbles to draw attention to your design segments! Don't go overboard though, it may look cluttered if there are too many shapes." To the right, there's a section titled "Community engagement". At the top right, there are summary stats: Views: 175,025, Saves: 290, Likes: 409, and Comments: 13. Below these are several tags listed in a grid:

dailyui	daily ui	mobile app	register	modern
minimal	clean	login	login flow	
mobile onboarding	onboarding illustration			
onboarding ui	onboarding screens			
onboarding screen	onboard	walkthrough		
walk through	step by step	register flow		
onboarding				

Community engagement

Dribbble also has a paid subscription for professional users, enabling you to search through and apply for project offers. If you know what to say and how to say it - you'll crush your competition.

The screenshot shows the Dribbble Job Board interface. On the left, there are four project listings with details like posted time, budget, title, and a brief description. Each listing includes a small profile picture, the posted time (e.g., "Posted about 11 hours ago"), the budget range (\$1K - \$10K), the project title (e.g., "Website design and development", "Redesign a BJJ/MMA Course Website", "Consumer App Redesign", "Design Sprints for HR Development App"), and a "NEW" badge. Below each title is a short description. Under each listing are tags: "Web Design", "Mobile Design", and "Brand / Graphic Design" for the first; "Web Design" and "Mobile Design" for the second; "Product Design", "UI / Visual Design", and "Mobile Design" for the third; and "UI / Visual Design" for the fourth. To the right of the projects is a sidebar with filtering options. The "Filter" section contains a search bar labeled "skill, tag, keyword...". The "Specialties" section lists various design fields with checkboxes, some of which are checked (Animation, Brand / Graphic Design, Illustration, Leadership, Mobile Design, UI / Visual Design, Product Design, UX Design / Research, Web Design). The "Budget" section lists price ranges with checkboxes, some of which are checked (\$50 - \$1K, \$1K - \$10K, \$10K - \$20K, \$20K - \$50K, More than \$50K). A pink "Filter results" button is at the bottom of the sidebar.

Dribbble Job Board

Speaking good english? You could have leverage

When I worked at the London-based agency, Dribbble was our number one source of high-quality clients. We quickly found out that while the concepts that top agencies post on Dribbble are amazing, people running these businesses most often don't communicate well or know how to sell their services. And so we outbid them.

If you're good at selling, you'll have a huge advantage.

Apart from producing great designs, good communication is crucial for a successful project. With some clients it's a deciding factor.

The secret to grow on Dribbble

Dribbble is one of the best places to find good design work.

All you have to do is post, post, and post your work. If you're just starting, your best bet is to constantly practice your design skills by creating designs. And I mean, creating them like a maniac. That's pretty much the biggest secret to growing on any social platform.

Consistency + quality work = huge exposure and bigger 

Turn that concept work into a Dribbble shot and post it online. Keep repeating the process until you build good momentum.

Remember, though, posting once a week isn't going to cut it and get you in the game. You need to be consistent.

Make it a challenge for yourself to post daily for a  **100 days**,  **200 days**, or even a  **full year**. I kept posting for over 40 days, and it landed me my lead designer position and several high-quality projects that turned my freelance career around.

See for yourself what 100 days could do for you - you'll be amazed what being consistent rewards you with.

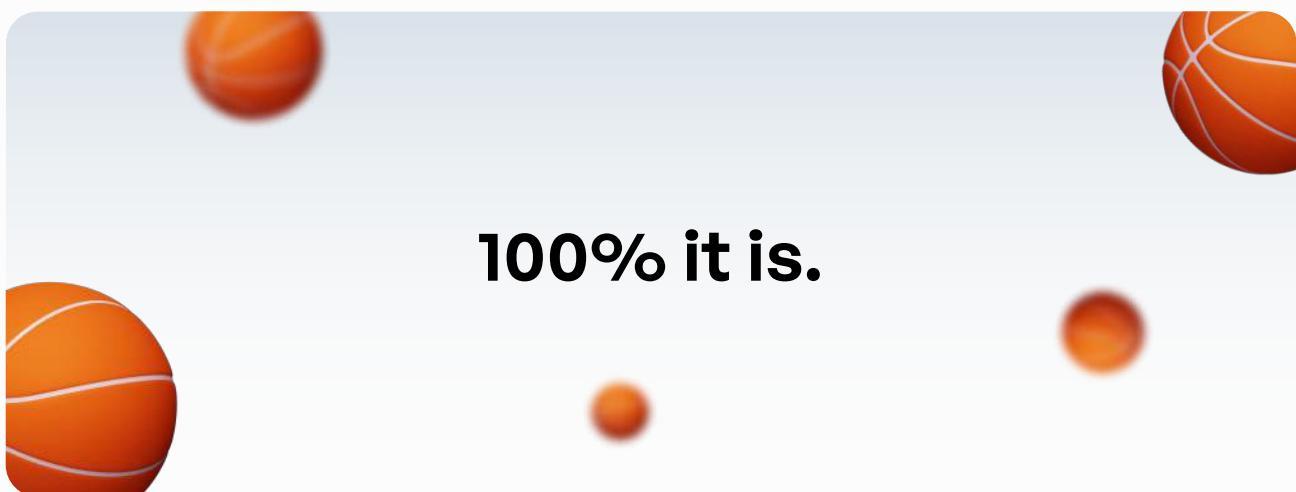
And one more thing - what's great about Dribbble is that you don't need to design fancy, time-consuming projects to get a few leads per week. There's actually much simpler and time efficient way.

Most of my designs are reiterations of the apps I built for my commercial clients under NDAs (work I can't share) or concepts I created in 30-40 minutes at most.

If your work follows the basic design principles and visual guidelines I'm going to share with you in this ebook, you'll attract the right set of eyes to your projects - clients that appreciate and recognize good design when they see one.

What I think about Dribbble

To sum up. Is Dribbble worth it?



All you need to do is create concepts, interface components, hero sections, and landing pages. You need to transform them into Dribbble shots, and post them online. Keep it up for as long as possible, be consistent, grow, and generate traffic.

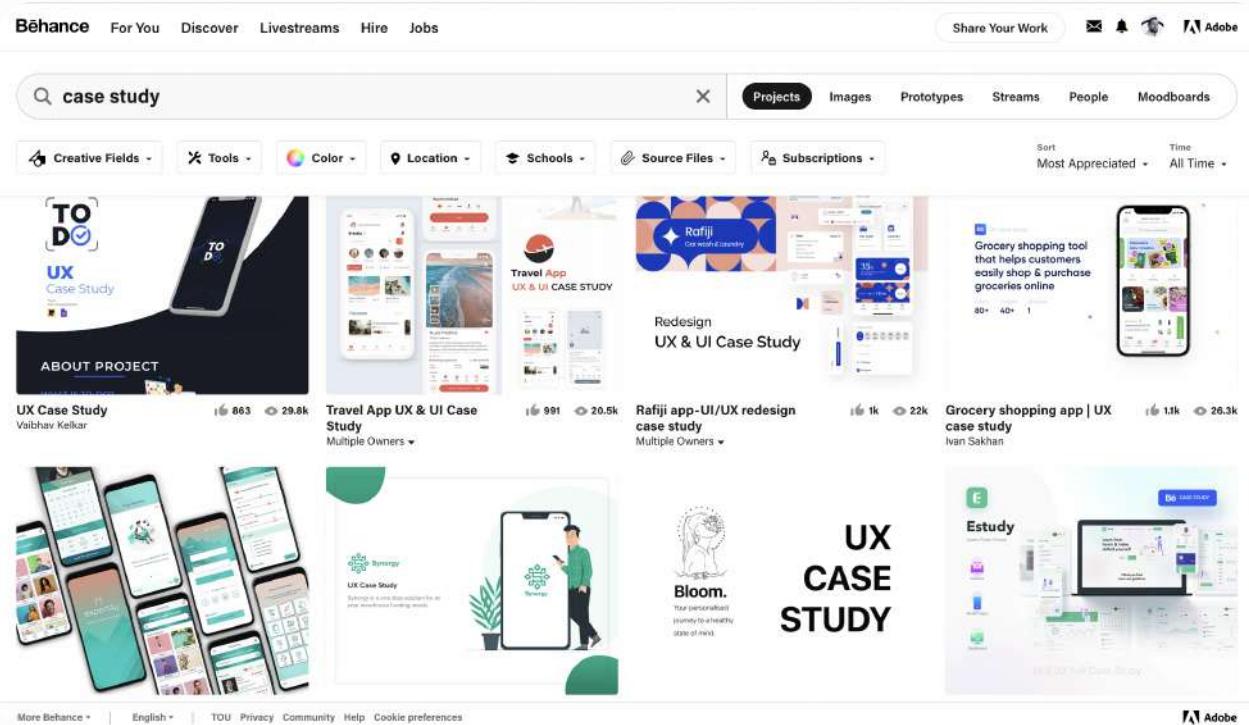
As a results you'll get leads. Guaranteed.

That's exactly what I did and I'm here to confirm it for you.

Behance - should you give it a try?

I'd say Behance is pretty similar to Dribbble. It's similar in the sense that you need to actually spend some time on this platform to get enough exposure and a good amount of traffic. With one small detail - it's way more time-consuming.

It's not enough to post one shot on Behance and expect it to blow up. You need to spend much more time on your presentation. It's an amazing place to show your case studies.



But as we all know, case studies take a ton of time to prepare, and you need good material to make a good case study. Your local yoga instructor's website might not be the ideal topic for a full-blown case study, but you know what they say - **fake it till you no longer have to fake it** 😊

You should sprinkle a little bit of fiction to make your project more interesting and engaging. It's all for good measure.

Have I had much success on Behance?

I landed one really cool agency partnership there and one project I regret accepting to this day - a young Italian hostel owner who kept suing everyone he worked with for no real reason.

So many  red flags I didn't see back then... we live to learn from our mistakes, though. We'll talk about what clients to avoid soon.

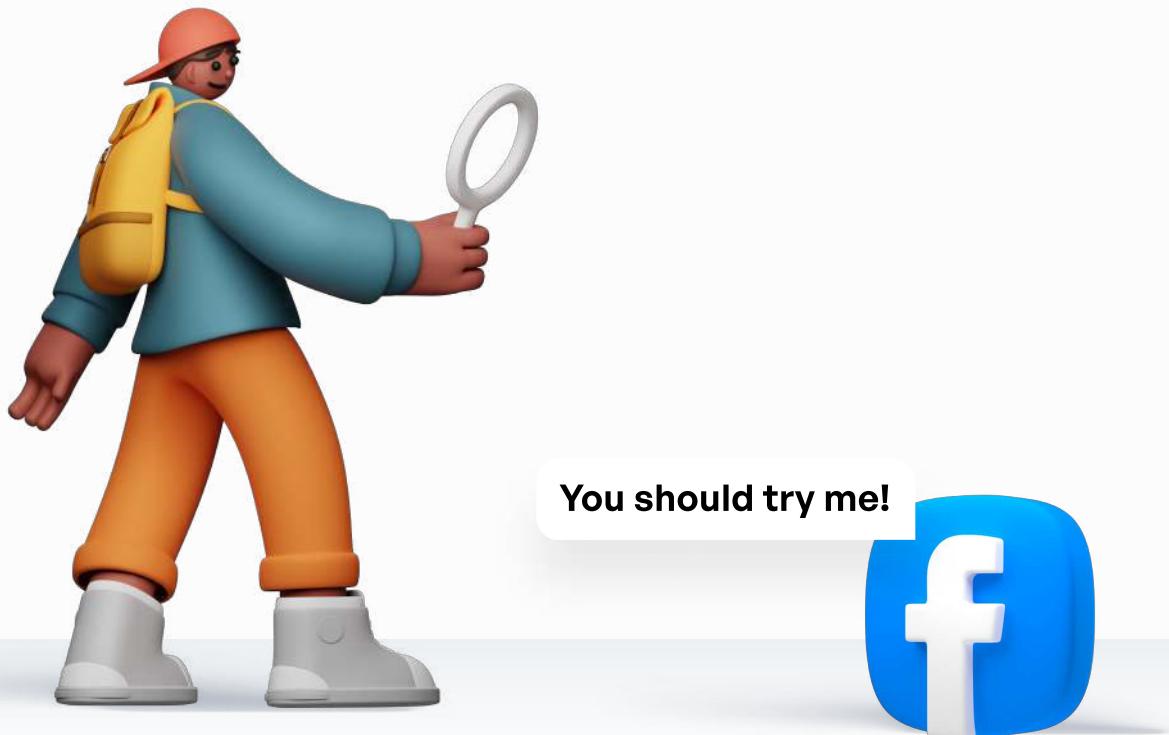
If you're freelancing, you should consider posting on Behance too. Every time I didn't have any new projects lined up for the next month, I posted daily on Dribbble and Behance, which then got me enough exposure to find new leads, to the point where I had to stop posting again. And I went on like that for a while.

If you repeat this loop a couple of times, you'll end up in a spot where you no longer have to look for clients, and you get a steady influx of new offers every few days.

That's where we're headed, so buckle up

We've got two more ways of getting clients to discuss, and then we'll go over my pricing systems and explain how to set up your new projects for success.

Facebook - my secret lead-gen platform



This might surprise you, but Facebook was the platform that changed everything for me. Let me explain.

The first year of my web design journey I haven't made any client website. All of the websites I created were e-commerce stores I made for myself trying to launch my clothing merch (I used to run a fitness channel on YouTube) and a few other businesses. I created like 10, maybe 15 different e-com sites - all failed miserably.

And even if it wasn't strictly design knowledge, I did learn a lot during the process. Next year, completely by random, I had my first local client breakthrough. The project was successful, and I created 4 or 5 more websites for them. I kept designing locally for over a year.

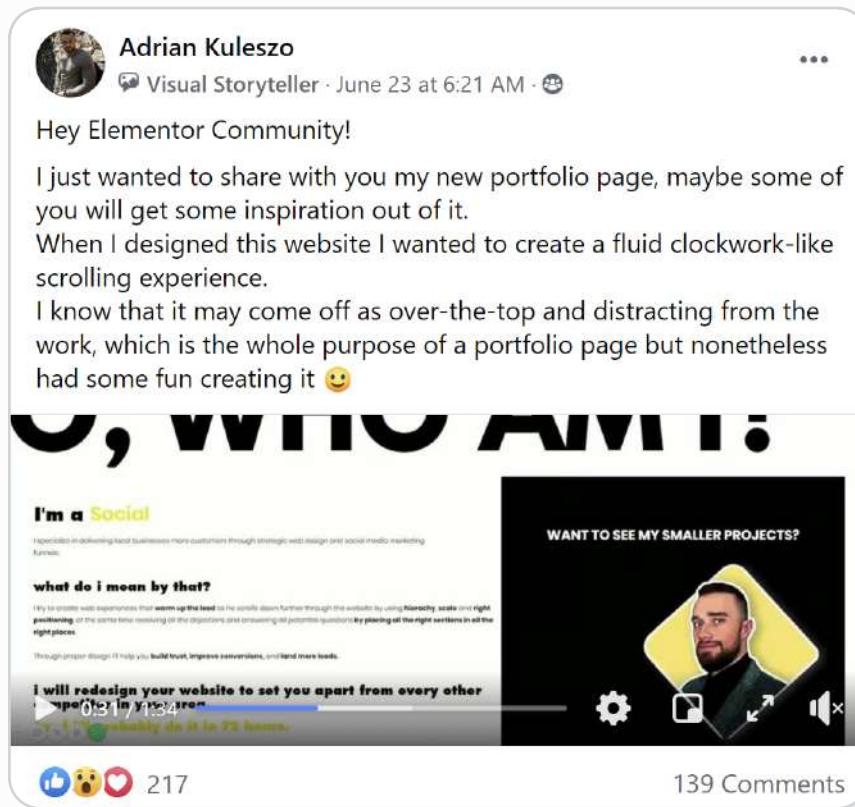
During that time, I was actively searching Youtube and Facebook groups looking for solutions to new problems I was faced with - how to create a page transition, animations, preloaders, how to link products from two stores, how to set up marketplaces, etc.

I stumbled upon the official Elementor group on Facebook and noticed many people posting their completed projects online.

I remember thinking their work wasn't even that good, and they were still getting tons of engagement and comments from people asking to create a website for them.

That's when it clicked for me. I'm going to do the same.

I posted my personal portfolio site - it blew up.



After 2 days I got over 200 likes, tons of comments, and lo and behold - a few private messages asking for my project availability. Yup, it was that simple. 3 or 4 leads from posting a simple screen recording of my personal site.

I was able to close one of these first few Facebook leads, and it was an 8-page website for a mindblowing \$5000. She (the client) didn't even negotiate the price down. **I was shocked.**

The site took me two months to design and build. The website was successful, and my client was very happy with the result. My first successful international project brought me not only my biggest pay day till that day, but most importantly, it brought me much-needed confidence. I knew I could definitely close more leads like this one!

I continued to post my work on that group which every time I did, got me two or three new leads. And these leads were steaming hot 🔥, much easier to close.

I finally struck gold and found a contact that had over 40 websites in their company portfolio, all ready to be redesigned by me! I designed over 30 websites the following year and a half.

All of them came from a single Facebook group.

It was a crazy time.

Is Facebook still relevant in 2022/23?

Absolutely! It was my secret (and my first) way of getting international, quality leads, that each paid between \$1500-5000. It was good money back then. It still is.

So, yeah, Facebook really sped it up for me, big time.

It got me a ton of portfolio-worthy projects. The idea was stupidly simple - design a website, post it online for feedback, close at least 1 lead, design, post, close, rinse and repeat.

After a while, referrals started kicking in. I was occupied with constant work for the next 2 years before I started my design subscription services.

Facebook was definitely worth it



A word of advice

There are a few things you need to know before you go and conquer similar Facebook groups.

You need to follow the Community Guidelines of each group, meaning you can't directly sell your services.

What you should do instead is post your work with a caption like:

 “Hey guys! I just recently finished a new project, and I’m looking for feedback” then add a description of whatever you’ve designed/developed, and finish it off with something along those lines, “I appreciate any comments, thank you!” 

You need to be ready for a lot of criticism, though. The better your work looks, the more people will criticize it. They won’t jump on beginner designers, rather encourage them to post more. However, they will point out mistakes (sometimes very subjectively) if they see you’re a bit more experienced than a newbie.

Don’t get discouraged by this, and don’t try to start fights with random people online. Some of them are waiting to troll someone.

Be helpful, answer their questions, and show your expertise. Clients will notice that and reach out to you. That was one of the reasons my first client reached out to me - I was actively helping others.

Pricing your services

Pricing your services

Pricing your services is one of the most difficult aspects of running a freelance business but one that could easily decide of its success.

You need fluid cash flow to run your business and have a soft pillow to land on when your sales that month aren't too high, and you're struggling to find new clients.

The biggest question lies in how should you price your services.

You don't want to aim too high to scare off your clients, and you don't want to aim too low to struggle with cash flow.

That's especially tricky when you're not in a position to say no to a client, and every potential lead is a godsend. No matter what you're thinking of yourself right now- **don't sell yourself too low.**

Imagine this - you're on a sales call

Suppose you spend 40 minutes on a call with your potential client. You listen to their problems, present solutions, talk about what you can do to help them, and then the time comes to say your price.

You're stressed and afraid of the outcome. "Am I going too high? I'm probably going too high. They'll find someone else if I say I want \$2000 for the job. Ahh, screw it. I'll say \$1500 before they turn away and take this project to someone else."

And then - you say it out loud - \$1500!

Even though speaking from experience, you could have probably closed them on twice as much, and you will never know if you would. That's the wrong way to do it.

There's more to pricing than throwing random numbers around.

Don't throw random numbers at people just because it feels right. And don't ever negotiate the price down without negotiating the scope of work. Period.

If a client negotiates the price by dropping your estimate by over 50% - don't bother working with them. These are trouble. Seriously, forget about them.

That's a red flag if you see a client pushing you for a much lower price. There are clients who, no matter how low the price is going to be, will still try to negotiate it down.

Stay away from them.



If you can't afford to lose a lead that tries to negotiate a huge discount, there are a few ways to go around it.

Client driving a hard bargain? Try this

When they try to throw you off your game and negotiate like this, here's what you should do:

You should tell them - "*I can bring the price down but that will come at the cost of a reduced scope of work. When pricing all projects I always give clients the most accurate project estimates I can give, and this price for that scope of work is final.*

If you can't afford this price I can reduce the scope of work. I'm also more than happy to refer you to my fellow designer who's a bit less experienced than I am but his work is much more affordable."

That's where they usually go into full defense mode and try to justify your budget one more time, and they might negotiate again but much less aggressively. That's why a good idea is always to give a price that's 30-50% over the minimum you're willing to work for.

Why minimum engagement fee (MEF) might be a good idea

Whenever I receive a new project inquiry, I always mention my **minimum engagement fee** to avoid getting involved in long calls that, in the end, lead to no work at all. After a few years in business I had to learn the hard way to respect my time as time is the only resource we can't recover.

Let's take a look at an example.

A simple equation to price your web design work

The price of a project should be a result of many different factors. If you're a solo freelancer and want to do everything yourself, it's actually pretty easy to estimate.

After working on over 100+ projects I developed my own pricing method that works great and allows me to have an effective hourly rate of **\$130 and above**. It wasn't easy to get there, though.

At first, I used to charge one fixed price for everything. This works great for larger projects or when you're confident in your skills and you can, from your own experience, accurately estimate the time needed to complete the project.

However, if you're a newbie and don't know these things (yet), you might also be digging your own grave.

Here's why.

Let's say you set a price of \$1500 for a 5-page website redesign and development on WordPress. Work goes smoothly; you're 20 hours in and think it couldn't be easier. Then you go into the development and realize that what you've just designed is not feasible with your current skill set.

What do you do now?

You can't replicate the design or functionality, and you can either tell your client you're not able to build it or you can look for a solution and spend another 20 hours on trying to fix the problem.

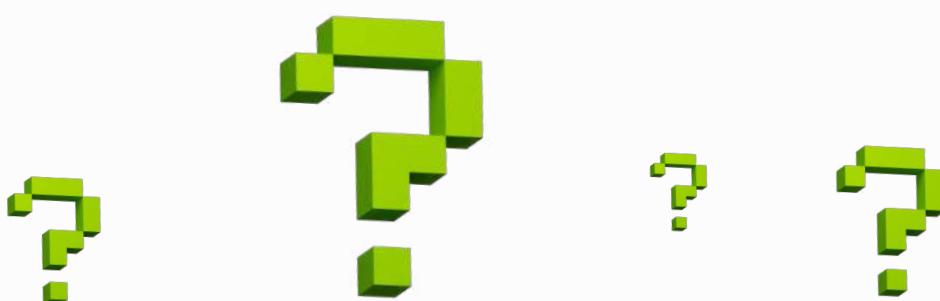
Your solution doesn't work, and your client is pushing you because your expected milestone delivery is late by a few days. You don't know what to do now. Things start to get complicated.

What are your options now?

Be honest with your client and offer him a discount because you can't deliver what you promised, lose the 20 hours of your time you didn't foresee, or spend extra money out of your pocket, hire help, deliver the project, and call it a day. Out of that \$1500, you had to outsource extra work for \$300, spend 30-50% on taxes, and ultimately, you're left with an effective hourly rate of \$12.

Not bad for a beginner, huh?

Seriously though, there's a better, beginner-friendly way to come up with an accurate price than just throwing random numbers around.



A simple equation to price your web design work

Ok, so let's go back to the drawing board and price it again.

We've got a **5-page website to redesign and develop** on Elementor.

I'd roughly estimate that, in order to do the UX research and design the 5-page website I'd **take me around 30 hours**.

(We're talking about a rather simple project here, priced anywhere between \$2000-8000, not a complex web app that requires hours of research, interviews, testing, iterating, validating, etc.)

I'd estimate the development to take around 25 hours.

That's 55 hours total, and this is the amount of time I think it'd take me to deliver the complete project without any hiccups.

Now, I'm not multiplying this by my hourly rate, not yet.

I take that total time and add 30% to the estimate to give myself some extra room if I ever need to spend more time researching something or hiring extra help. It's very important to outline your design work in the agreement, and it's best if it's sent in a written form, not agreed on verbally. Therefore when you go out of scope, you can charge accordingly for your extra time.

So, we're at 71 hours total now. Let's multiply that amount by our most recent hourly rate and see what we come up with.

When I was a beginner, **my hourly rate was in the \$25-35 range**, and I suggest you go for a similar number. Your work is definitely worth at least that much, even if you're a newbie.

We multiply $71 * 25-35 = \$1775 - \2485 .

That's our new estimated budget. We don't want to stop there yet!

We've got taxes to pay, remember?

I add additional 30% to the estimated quote to cover my taxes.

Let's see how it would look like on the lower end:

$1775 * 1,3 = \$2307,5$, rounded down to \$2300

I would round that up or down to the nearest full number, so for a 5-page redesign, if my rates are on the lower end, **I'd charge \$2300**.

If I'd be a little bit more experienced that would be:

$2485 * 1,3 = \$3230.5$, rounded up to \$3250.

Worth noting that these rates apply to most western markets. If you're actively working in a low PPP country, rates will go down appropriately depending on the client budgets you're dealing with.

We just re-evaluated the project price and brought it up from our initial, random \$1500 quote to a much more realistic \$2300.

Don't ever tell yourself your work is not worth whatever amount you want to work for.

Speaking from experience, I know I could have charged my clients at least 30-50% more, and they'd probably still accept it.

I didn't, though. And that's why I struggled with keeping a steady cash flow. That was one of the reasons my agency stagnated for a little over a year until I started charging how a business owner should, not a kid playing a monopoly game. **You have to step it up.**

Let's be real. Your clients are getting so much more from your work than you are from the money they pay you.

Here's a true story to explain it better

One of the companies I redesigned a website for doubled their revenue in 2 months. They went from earning \$100k/mo to over \$200k/mo because I increased their average conversion rates from 1,8% to 3,7% on an e-commerce store.

Do you know how much I got for that redesign?

I got paid \$5500, and I was ecstatic about that. But, while logging into that website to update a few things, I noticed these big, bold numbers on the dashboard - \$200,000 in a single month.

And then I realized their **yearly revenue increased by 1M+.** Insane!

After that, I never really felt bad about asking for higher prices. I ask the right questions at the discovery call to get a better estimate of the value I could bring that client.

I ask about budget, **MRR** (monthly recurring revenue), **LTV** of a client, **conversion rates, bounce rates, time spent on site**, and all the data I can get to come up with an accurate value-based price.

Don't get me wrong. I still use the pricing method I shared with you. I just do it for smaller websites in the \$5000-8000 range. I also apply the same logic to projects that don't have any of these data points available, like new product launches for example.

With larger projects I usually split the work into several milestones but apply the same logic. Here's how I priced one of my recent app redesigns (the website would be similar) - jump to the next page.



Pricing of a \$10,000+ project

For my latest app project I estimated:

- ❖ 5 milestones spaced out over the next 10 weeks.
- ❖ Each milestone taking anywhere between 10-30 hours
- ❖ Total time of work evaluated at 100 hours.
- ❖ With the 30% on top of my estimate that put me at 130 hours
- ❖ My hourly rate for that project was \$100
- ❖ I came at price estimate of a total of \$13000.
- ❖ Added 30% on top to cover taxes,
- ✓ ended up with \$17000.

And while it sounds like a lot of money, it's extended over 2 months with each milestone worth around \$3500. An agency would charge at least double the amount.

And the outcome would be the same. Except in an agency, a client would speak to a PM, a design lead, and a designer tasked with the design job. Some clients prefer to work with an agency for the added feeling of security and confidence. It's easier to trust someone knowing that more people are involved in your project and the responsibility lies on the entire team, not a single individual.

That's why as a freelancer, you need to build enough trust and experience to demand higher prices with confidence.

So, remember this pricing model when budgeting your new projects. Find the effective hourly rate (after expenses and taxes) you're willing to work for by applying all the factors I mentioned.

Your work is usually worth much more than what you give yourself credit for. To become the best designer you can be, you must demand higher prices. Higher prices will help you work less and invest that extra time into learning a new skill, finding a new client, or simply enjoying life.

If you're worried that you're pricing your services too high, you're probably pricing them too low.



Project prep

Starting a new project

Let's say you started posting your concepts online, you keep at it for a few days, weeks, a month, and then you log into your Dribbble or LinkedIn, and finally, you see a new notification. A new lead has reached out to you and he's considering to hire you as one of the designers for his new project!

What should you do next?

When every client is worth its weight in gold, you want to jump on a call as soon as possible. Don't prolong this part. Reply politely, say you're interested to hear more and suggest connecting at his/hers earliest convenience.

I'd also recommend you start a new Calendly account, optimize your profile, and send Calendly links to book calls with you.

The screenshot shows a Calendly booking page for 'ACME Inc'. On the left, there's a sidebar with the company name 'ACME Inc' and a 'Sales Consultation' section. It indicates a 30-minute duration and a Zoom link. Below this is a button to 'Open a professional Calendly account'. At the bottom of the sidebar, a call-to-action box says 'You need to be quick with setting up sales calls'. The main area is titled 'Select a Date & Time' and shows a calendar for August. The 15th, 16th, and 18th are highlighted with blue circles, while the 17th and 19th are greyed out. The days of the week are labeled from Sunday to Saturday. At the bottom right of the calendar, there's a note about Eastern time - US & Canada.

This way, you'll look much more professional, and besides, it's good to have a booking app ready whenever you need it. It syncs with your Google Calendar, so you can easily organize your schedule.

If you have the freedom to choose your clients and you're a busy individual, you might send a quick intro message to inform them what working with you looks like, and what's your minimum fee when starting a new project, etc.

I receive between 2-3 inquiries per day, and if I were to connect with every client, I would spend at least 40-50 hours each month chatting. And I have no guarantee that any of these prospects will become my paying clients.

Therefore, I politely thank them for reaching out and send a message saying something along those lines:

"Thank you for reaching out! Please, don't take it the wrong way, but before we jump on a call and decide we're a good fit, I'd like to, hopefully, save us both time and send you a quick info about my availability, rates and my design process."

"My minimum engagement fee is \$5000. I can invest 40-80 hours per month on an additional project. I track every hour through Clockify and send weekly reports for your review."

I communicate through Slack or a platform of your choice. I'm familiar with project management tools like Trello, Notion, Jira, Asana, and Monday.

Depending on the scope of work, I split the deliverables and payments into time-restricted milestones or two equal increments, 50% charged as a deposit and 50% upon project completion.

The scope of work needs to be specifically outlined in the agreement, and any work outside of scope will be charged separately.

If that sounds good to you, please, let me know about your availability for the following week, and I'll set up a new meeting.

Thank you!

*Best Regards,
Adrian”*

Yup, that's a lengthy reply. And one important thing to note - I would NEVER send this message as a beginner freelancer looking for work. I would try to schedule a call and handle these leads very carefully.

I'm in a different position now and I send such messages because I used to spend hours on calls only to find out the budget wasn't right.

Besides, no one has ever replied aggressively, and it says two things about me. I'm honest and transparent; I'm explaining my process and saying upfront what working with me looks like, what my rates are, and how much time I can invest into a project.

And two, it shows that I'm a busy person and I'm not trying to "win them over". If you're good and they want to work with you for your skills, they'll appreciate your honesty.

I always appreciate if someone's being transparent, as lost time is impossible to make up, and some clients can waste a lot of it.

If they reply back that it sounds great and they want to schedule a call, you're already in a different position.

You come to the meeting as equals.

Sure, they will be the ones paying you, but you're delivering them value. You're both business owners, and you both value and respect each other's time 🤝

If they reply saying they're not interested, you're good anyway since you don't necessarily need the extra work at this point.

But that's if you're already in this position. If you're not, then we'll need to do some more work. Let's skip to the next page :)

You scheduled a client call - what now?

Client calls can be very stressful. Especially so when you're new to freelancing and you've never had a successful client call before.

We tend to visualize ourselves in the most shameful situations. We stress how we'll look on a call. We're worried that clients will sense that we desperately need to close them and we're often afraid that we're just going to sound like an amateur not having a clue what the heck we're doing here.

I got you!



How should you prepare for a call?

Even though I'm a person that would rather have direct face-to-face communication over a video chat, online conversation has its benefits, closing leads is one of them. Let me explain.

When you're trying to close someone over a Zoom call, you can have as many windows and notepads open as you wish.

You could even read from a teleprompter if you wanted to, and they wouldn't even notice 😂

That's almost what I did myself with my first US-based client. I had written a 3-page document with every question I wanted to ask them and every potential answer they could ask me.

I had my notes



and a script I followed



I followed my script to a single word, added force stops, uhmms, and ahhms, and changed my intonation to make it look like I was thinking about the words I wanted to say. But I had it all written out anyway, and guess what, they couldn't tell.

I did record the conversation to play it back to myself, and I couldn't even tell I was reading from a script all along. That's a huge help if you're stressing out about what you're going to say and how you will say it. Control the conversation; you're there to ask questions, and they're there to answer

If you haven't yet, you'll soon find out that discovery calls **are all about the client**, not you.

You're contributing to about 20% of the entire conversation, and they're the ones talking most of the time.

I don't want to go into too much detail about closing leads as this is not a sales book but I did include the script I used to close my first few international clients.

Later, I got much more comfortable and could freestyle most of my calls, coming to a call only with a list of questions and a notepad.

You scheduled a client call - what now?

Once you follow the script, name your price, confirm a budget and briefly discuss the project needs, it's time to close the lead, request all the information you need, and send them a follow-up message.

Before you hang up the call and proceed to the next step:

- Try to get a verbal confirmation of the budget.
- Confirm the scope of work.
- And explain what the next steps are.

For a web design project, the next steps are to send a discovery questionnaire. You can send it prior to the conversation, but clients don't like to engage this early into a project. A typical questionnaire should ask about everything you might need to start working, i.e. the brand story, information about the company, direct and indirect competitors, style direction, etc.

I include all you need to ask your clients in a separate file called “Discovery questionnaire”. Get familiar with that file as soon as possible because this will help you get a better understanding of what kind of questions to ask before you start a new project.

Along with the discovery questionnaire, I send short information about the payments. I ask for the business information needed to create the invoice and then explain how the payments work.

For payments I use Wise (It’s the best banking app ever)

I talk about the deposit and how it’s required for me to start working. I reassure them that the second payment will be collected only after the project is completed, they’re 100% satisfied with the outcome, and website is ready to be transferred to their domain.

You don’t want to pressure clients to pay you as soon as possible not to scare them away, but you don’t want to start working without receiving a deposit either. I included a similar email in the documents folder, so make sure to read them all.

Make that clear that you will begin work as soon as they send you a confirmation of the transfer.

Apart from all that, you will also need a design contract.

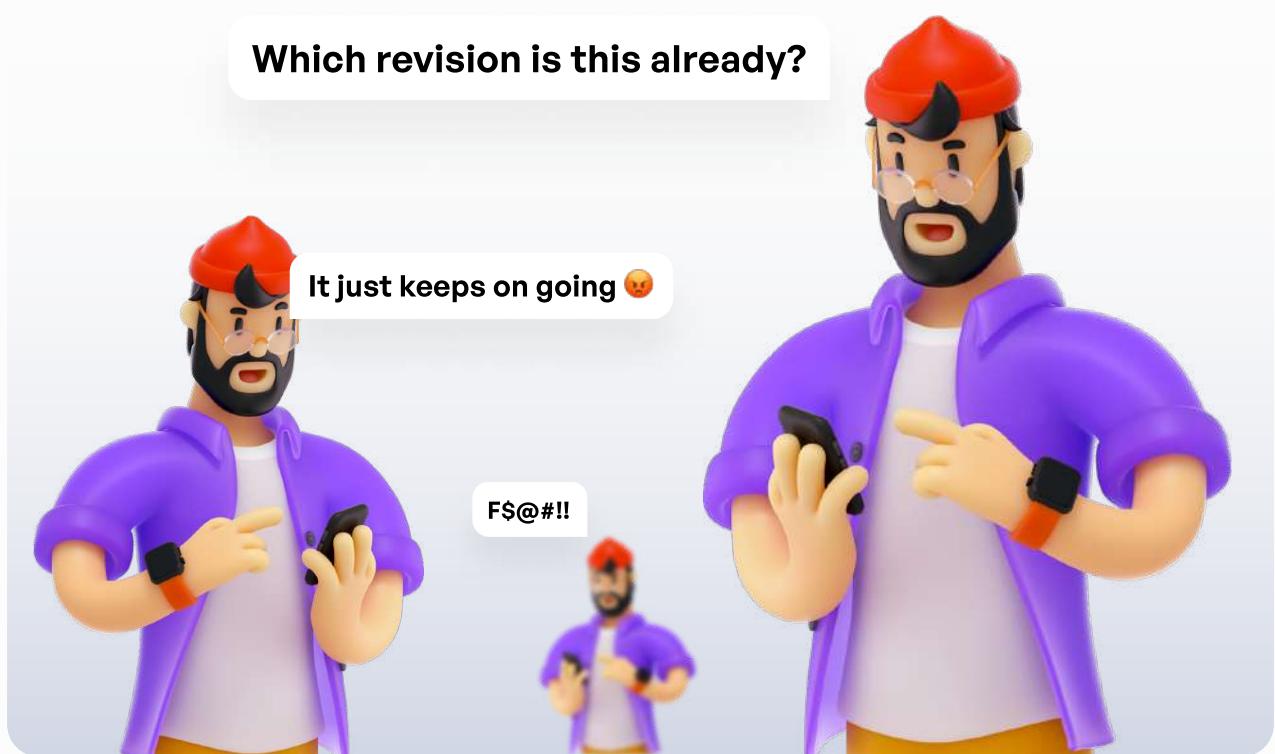
Let’s talk about that.

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.

A solid contract will help you set the right expectations and outline your work exactly as described.

Without one, you'll end up in a hell of constant design iterations, revisions, and updates, and that's not a nice place to be in.



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.

I once had a client who never directly agreed on anything. Email communication happened through his assistant, and all important agreements were verbally agreed upon on Zoom or through a Whatsapp call.

Back then, I didn't even realize how unprofessional that was but long story short, the same client was trying to abuse us by extending the scope all the time. Once we said we'll have to increase the budget to accommodate the new changes, he was avoiding any sort of confirmation, only to call me once on my Whatsapp and say we've got a green light. He'll transfer the additional funds over the next weekend once he's back from holidays. He didn't pay.

Out of a \$5000 project, we only received a \$1000 deposit since I've also agreed to split the bill in 3 parts - \$1000, \$2000, and \$2000. It wasn't a good move. With a contract in place, this wouldn't happen.

That's why I almost never start another project without a written contract and a 50% deposit. The only exception is when I've worked with someone a couple of times already, and I've built up enough trust with them. That's why sometimes we might skip the contract, but we'll never skip the deposit.

Even if your client is someone you know, it's worth securing your time investment and send a contract to sign before you start.

All the design contract essentials, timelines, milestones, pricing, payments, penalties, the scope of work details, and work conditions are included in the Design Contract file included in this ebook.

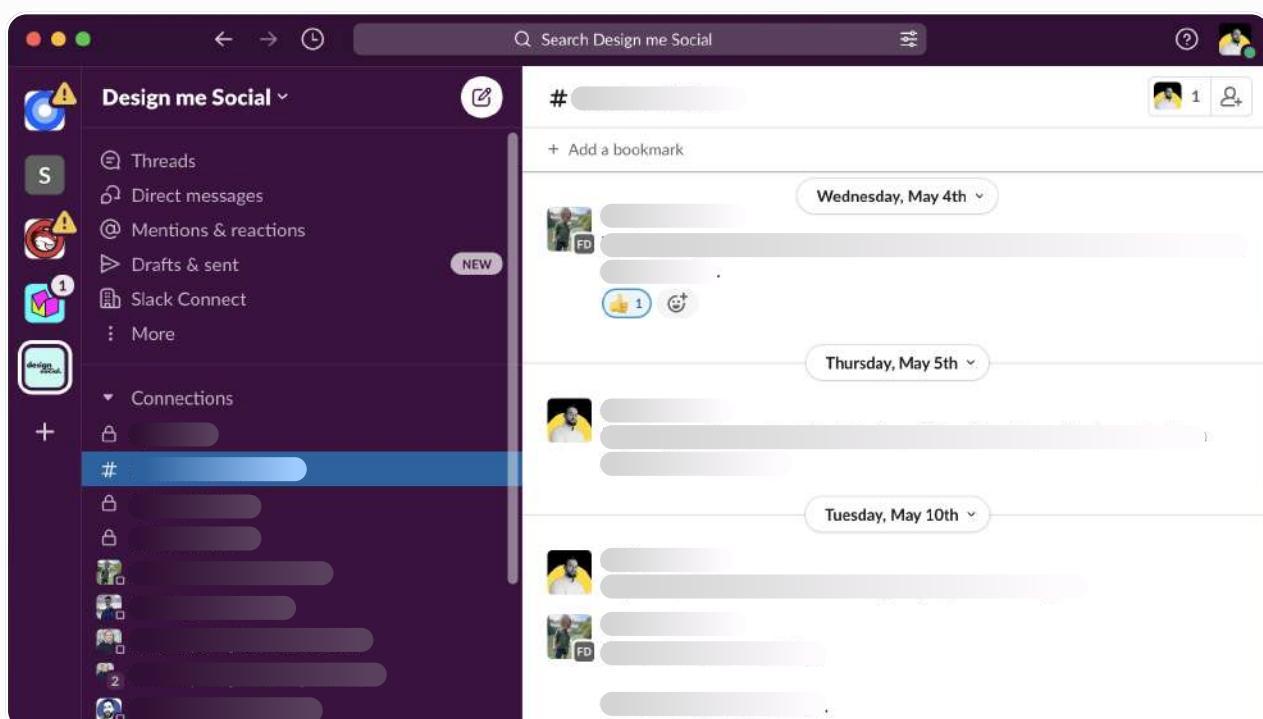
Read it, edit it, and use it for your own personal needs.

It's time for the project kickoff!

How to kick-off a new design project

Once the project is approved and you've got the money in your account, it's time to open up a new Slack channel.

Name it your #projectname-site, invite the team members on your client's side and let them know that you're officially starting the work on the first milestone/step of the process.



Open a new Slack channel as soon as you receive a deposit

Right after I open a new Slack channel I list out all the expected milestones and the time of their delivery. I also jump on a quick call to explain how the feedback will look on client's end, showing the Figma's commenting tool, version naming, etc.

You just kicked off a new project - what's next?

So, let's say you kick-off a 5-pager website. Your first order of priority is to create a style guide, suggest new fonts, colors, visuals. You start with an inspiration board, create 2-3 mood boards and have a review session to agree on a specific brand direction.

And you take it from there. Just make sure to follow the steps from the 3rd chapter of this ebook if you want to learn my exact approach.

You shouldn't overthink kicking off your projects too much. You shouldn't overthink any processes we'll follow in the later chapters.

If your approach is systemized and you follow the same steps every time you start a new project, you'll soon find yourself working very efficiently and it'll feel like a breeze.

The same website that used to take you 60 hours to deliver will take you 30 hours, not to mention your prices will go up as you get more experienced with each successful project.

It's extremely rewarding.

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!

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hand holding a paintbrush. The hand is positioned as if it has just finished painting a dark, curved shape on a light-colored surface, likely a canvas. The brush has a vibrant orange handle and a dark brown, curved bristle tip. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

The Design Basics

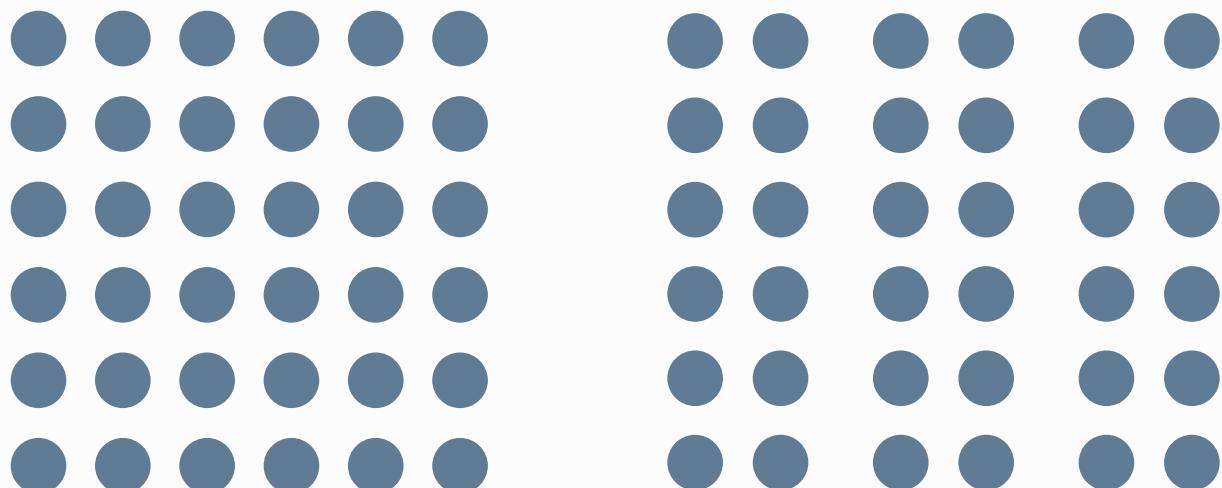
The principles of visual perception

Before we delve into color theory and typography, there is one more topic we need to cover: the Gestalt laws of visual perception - **proximity, similarity, continuation, symmetry, and closure.**

Gestalt principles (German for "shape") result from analyzing human visual perception and developing a set of principles to describe how we interpret what we see. They all have an important place in web design. Let's briefly go over these principles and explain how we may use them for our advantage.

Proximity

We perceive objects that are close to each other as similar - objects or shapes that are close to one another appear to form groups



Looks like one shape!

Looks like 3 groups!

This technique can be used to group related information, such as sections on the same page/web application or navigation buttons. Due to the proximity, the white space is essential in providing a relaxing experience for the eyes. When things are close together, they look like a group, even if they are very different in terms of shape, size, and composition.

When different interface components are maintained close together, a sense of 'harmony' and clarity is established between these elements.

The screenshot shows the Capchase website's landing page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Why capchase', 'Resources', 'About', 'Calculator', 'Log in', and 'Get started'. Below the navigation, a large heading reads 'Why should you raise with Capchase?'. Underneath this, there are two calls-to-action: 'Sign up in 5 min' and 'or talk to an expert'. The main content area features five cards arranged in a grid, each with a purple circular icon and a title. The cards are: 'Fast capital' (with a note about 48 hours), 'Flexible SaaS financing' (with a note about \$25k to \$10M), 'Transparent costs' (with a note about no hidden fees), 'SaaS experts' (with a photo of two people), and 'Non-dilutive' (with a note about reaching higher valuation). A large purple abstract graphic is positioned to the left of the cards.

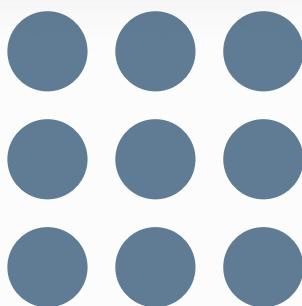
Capchase.com

Even though the cards on the Capchase website have a slightly different design, through color consistency and proximity of the cards, they all form one cohesive group.

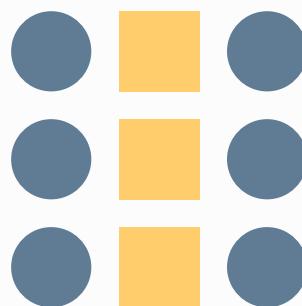
Similarity

We perceive objects with the same characteristics (color, shape, size, texture, and orientation) as part of a set, even when they are not adjacent or closed positions.

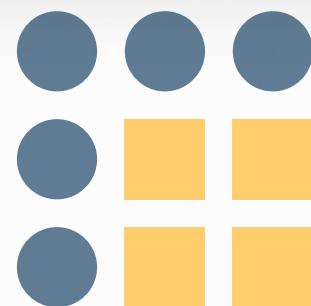
These are the same



I can see the pattern here



These are similar



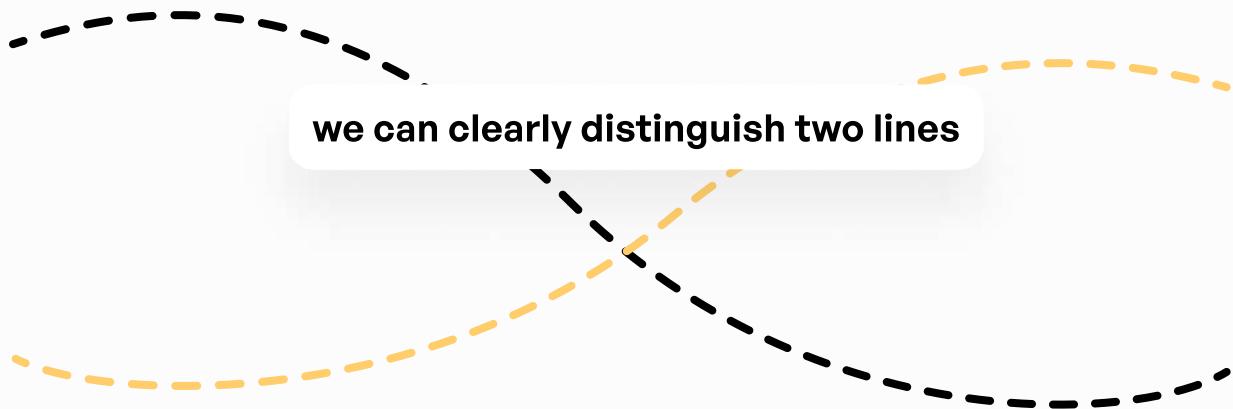
We can identify groups of elements by looking for elements with similar traits. The picture above demonstrates how this works.

Even though the forms in the middle are distinct from the shapes on the outside, the image still appears as a single entity because of the similarities among all of the shapes.

Because of their similarity in size, color, and proximity to one another, the squares and circles create uniformity.

Continuity

We perceive movement and direction according to some elements, even if this is not explicit.



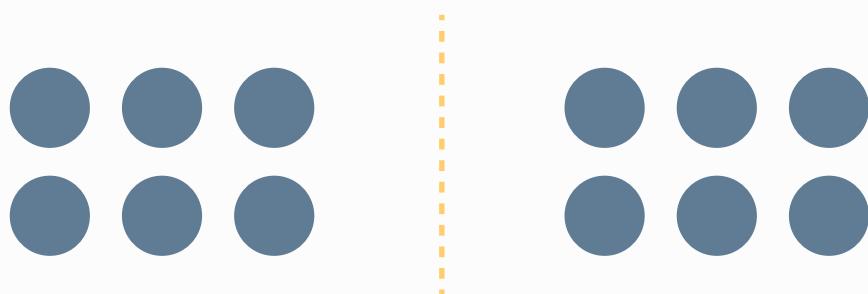
Continuity is used when there are hints that we should look in a certain place or in a certain direction.

This idea can be used in design by using lines, arrows, or image subjects to point at buttons, videos, and other content to direct the viewer's attention towards them.

A screenshot of the Gusto Wallet mobile application. The top navigation bar includes the 'gusto wallet' logo, 'Log in', and 'Go to Gusto.com'. The main content area features a dark background with white text. On the left, there is promotional text: 'Make your paycheck work harder with Gusto Wallet.' Below this is a descriptive paragraph about the app. At the bottom left, download links for the App Store and Google Play are shown, along with a link to log in via web browser. On the right side, there is a large, stylized illustration of a person wearing a cap and holding a dollar bill. A white callout bubble points to this illustration with the text 'look at how Gusto uses this principle'. In the bottom right corner of the app screen, there is a play button icon with the text 'WATCH THE VIDEO' and an arrow pointing towards it.

Symmetry

We tend to group objects that are symmetrically equal, which allows us to generate patterns based on that symmetry to easily structure the information.



When something is asymmetrical, the viewer spends time trying to solve the issue rather than focusing on the message or instruction.

Understanding how to properly integrate symmetry allows us to arrange graphic components in a way that is harmonious and simple, providing stability and structure to what we want to express.

Beacons.ai with their symmetrical hero

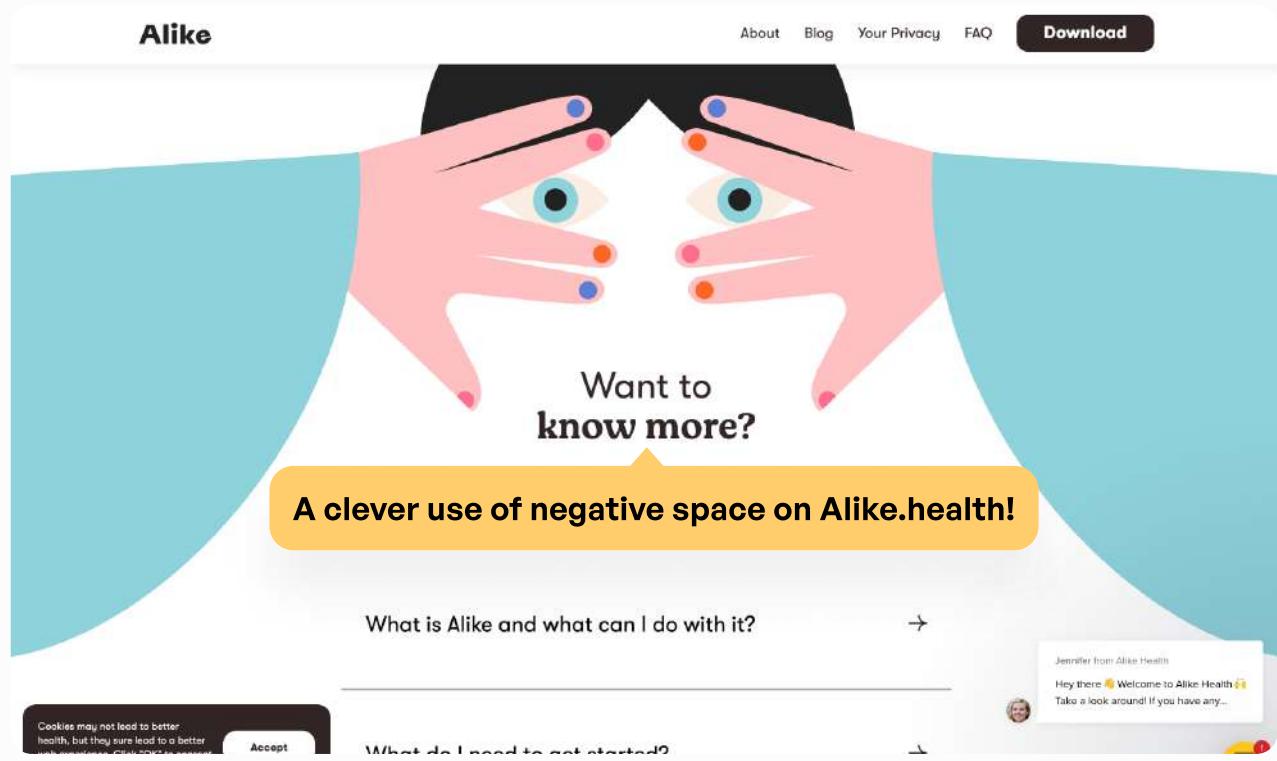
Closure

When we see a complex arrangement, we look for a single, recognizable pattern.

CLOSURE

Since the human brain strives for consistency, it will often "fill in the blanks" to create what it thinks is a whole picture. The illustration in the example below demonstrates how closure can be used to form a picture of a woman peeking through her hands.

Another clear example of that principle in action are icons. We view icons that, without being labeled, clearly express many types of actions, situations, or features in any website or app.



Foundations of visual design

Foundations of visual design

A good website should fulfill its function by sending the right message and, at the same time, engaging the visitors to achieve the business' end goal. Apart from its function, it should also have the right form so that those same visitors are not finding themselves lost and overwhelmed.

And while it sounds straightforward, there's actually a lot of different factors contributing to website's success.

These can be defined by applying the basic UX design laws and principles, following the UI design best practices, and of course, understanding the basics of visual design like imagery, typography, and color. Here are some numbers for you:

46.1% of individuals feel that a website's design is the most important factor in determining whether or not a business is legitimate, according to Stanford University research.

Therefore, it's crucial that your design appears refined.

According to Adobe, when given 15 minutes to read the material, **two-thirds of users prefer to read beautifully designed content** over simple text, thus your website should be visually appealing.

Let's talk about that.

“

Attractive UI will make your business stand out and attract potential customers, and good UX will keep you in business for longer.

”

To start with, here's a handful of important principles and guidelines that will help us define those key factors.

Don't forget to analyze the visual references to help you understand these principles applied in action.



Where do I start with all this theory??

Usability is crucial

Usability of a website determines its success. Your design should be centered around the user, and every design decision you take should support the goal of both the business and the user.

I'm not going to go into detail on how you should design components like cards, buttons, search boxes, etc. This will be covered in my How to design better UI components book.

In this chapter, we'll focus on the main design principles and show you their implementation in real-life scenarios.

First things first. To properly understand design principles, we need to understand the basic patterns of user behavior - we need to get in their shoes and walk a mile or two.

How do you do that?



Make it about the user

Nowadays, website browsing is fast-paced, and internet users are increasingly more and more attention-deficit. We look for something on Google, click on a few first results, glance at the hero section, scroll a little bit down, scan for anything useful, and click on something that catches a glimpse of our attention.

Then, we decide if it's worth investigating further, or if we just bounce out of the website and continue looking.

That's why first impressions are so important. You only get one chance to capture someone's attention, and to do that, you need to design your sites in a way that captivates and invites to explore more. Let's see what a regular user looks for on a website.

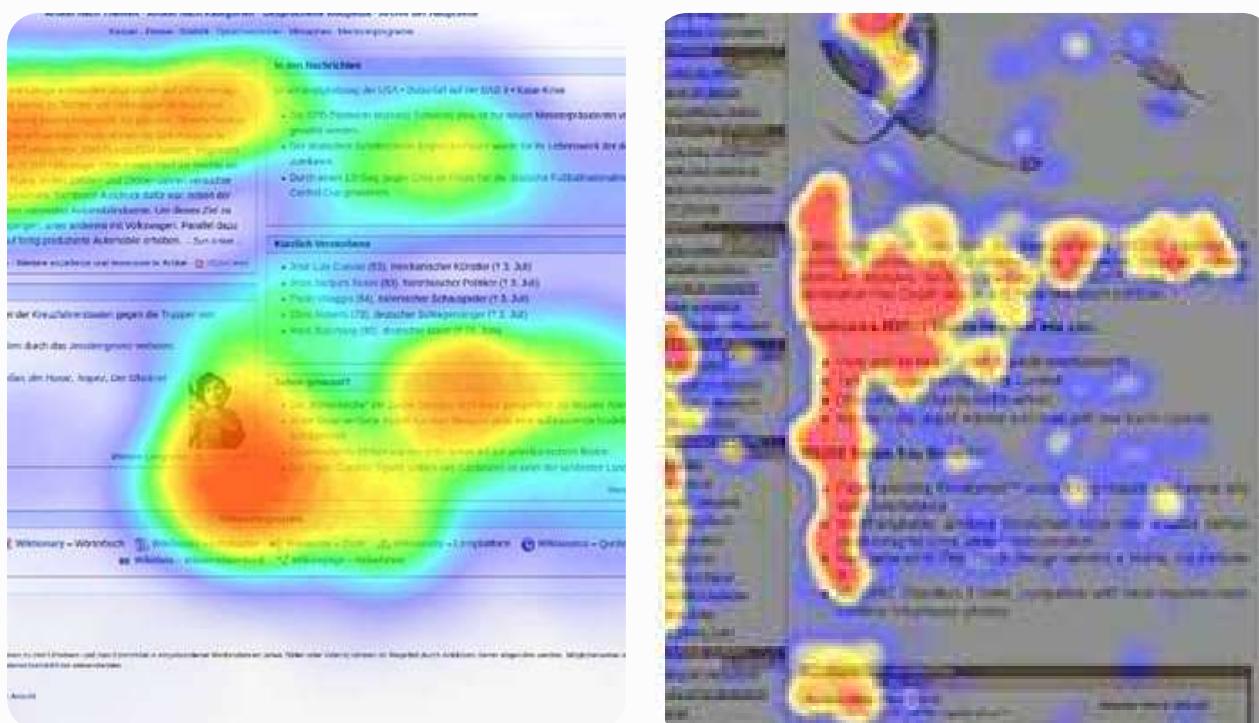
The image shows a website header with navigation links: For Businesses, For Suppliers, Use Cases, FAQ, About, and Login. Below the header, there is a large hero section with the headline "Grow Now Pay Later". A yellow callout bubble contains the text "I only have 1-5 seconds to capture your attention!" and "and usually that happens with the hero section". To the right of the text, there is a graphic of several stacked coins in blue and green colors. At the bottom left of the hero section is a green button labeled "Start Now".

Follow the patterns

When browsing through a site or reading an article, users tend to look for anchor points to guide their viewing experience. They will rarely read a new page, but rather scan it to determine if it's worth their longer focus.

One way to determine what parts of the website users are most interested in are by introducing heat maps.

Hot areas that are viewed the most appear in red, and the ones that are viewed much less are represented in blue.



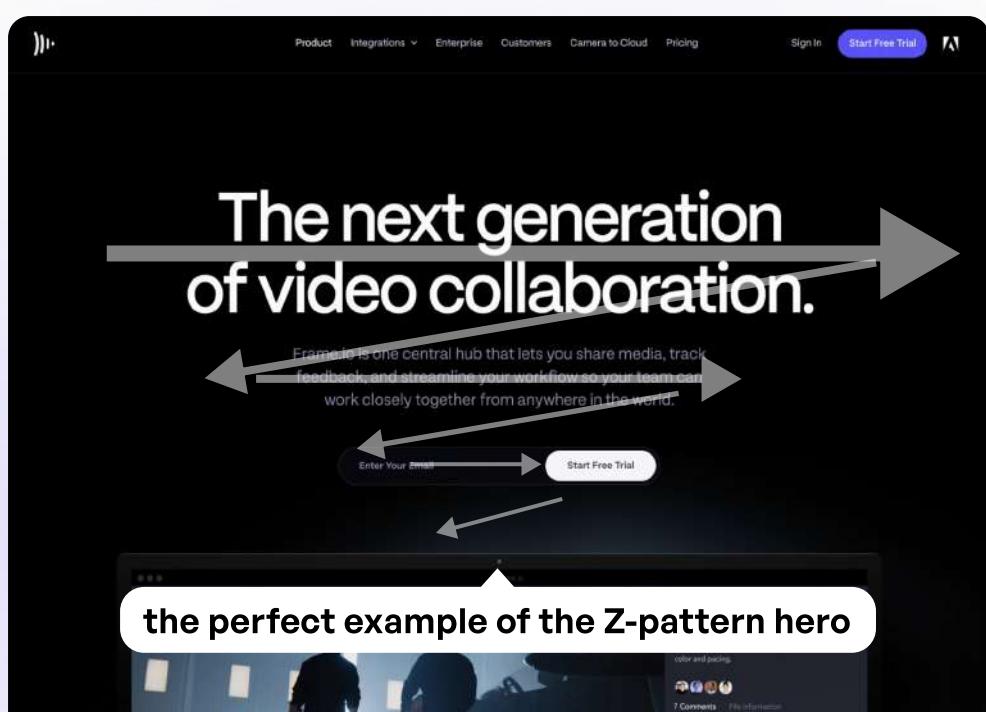
By looking at the example above, we can see two typical scanning patterns unfolding - “Z” and “F”. These show us exactly how an average user views the website, and it can help us define the structure of our website based on the outcome we want to achieve.

In the "F" pattern, users' eye movement begins in the upper left corner and moves across the page before searching down the page for an engaging feature. Placing elements in the F pattern allows the users to notice the essential content.

In the Z-pattern visitors begin scanning from top left to top right, creating an imaginary horizontal line. They then search down and to the left, forming an imaginary diagonal line. Finally, they return to the right, forming a second horizontal line.

To focus the user's attention first, you should place the main elements at the top. Information related to the CTA should be located on the diagonal line, and the bottom line should underline and highlight the secondary call to action.

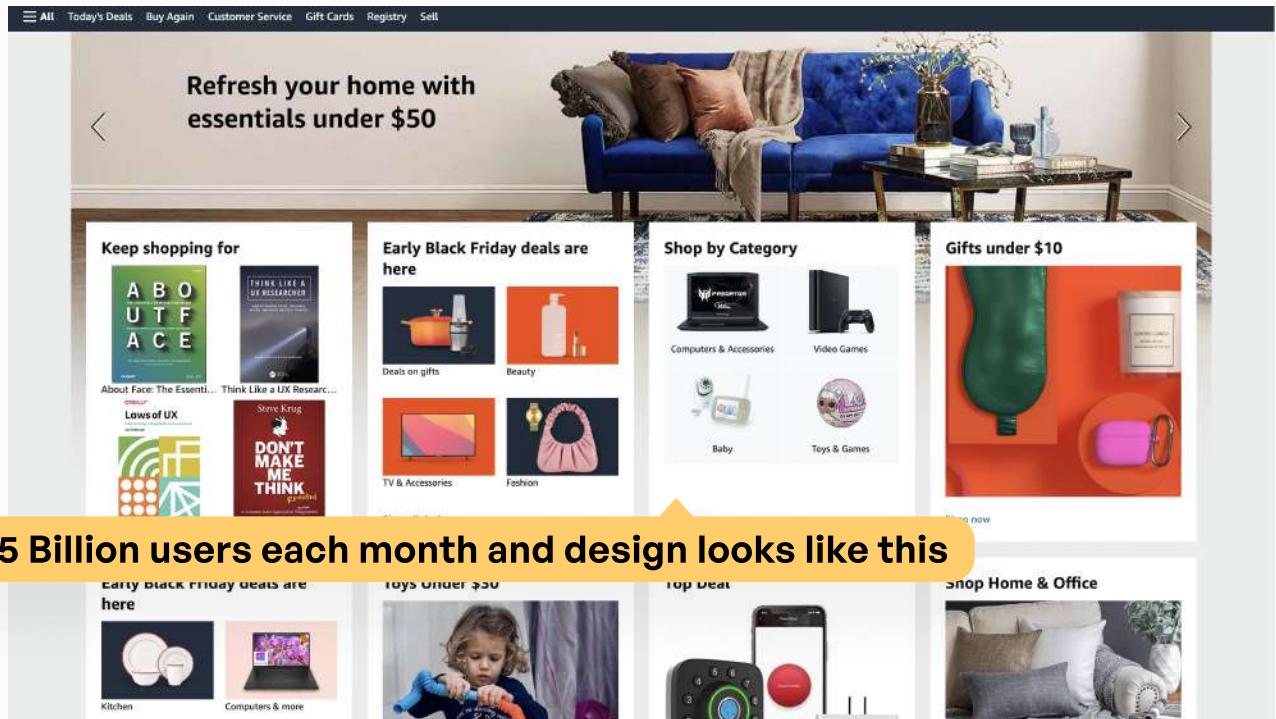
Look at Frame.io and how they structure their hero.



Meet your users needs

I'm not talking about the visuals here. You need to cater to users' needs by providing valuable content and solutions. How often have you landed on a forum brimming with life, where people are ready to compromise the received value with an outdated design?

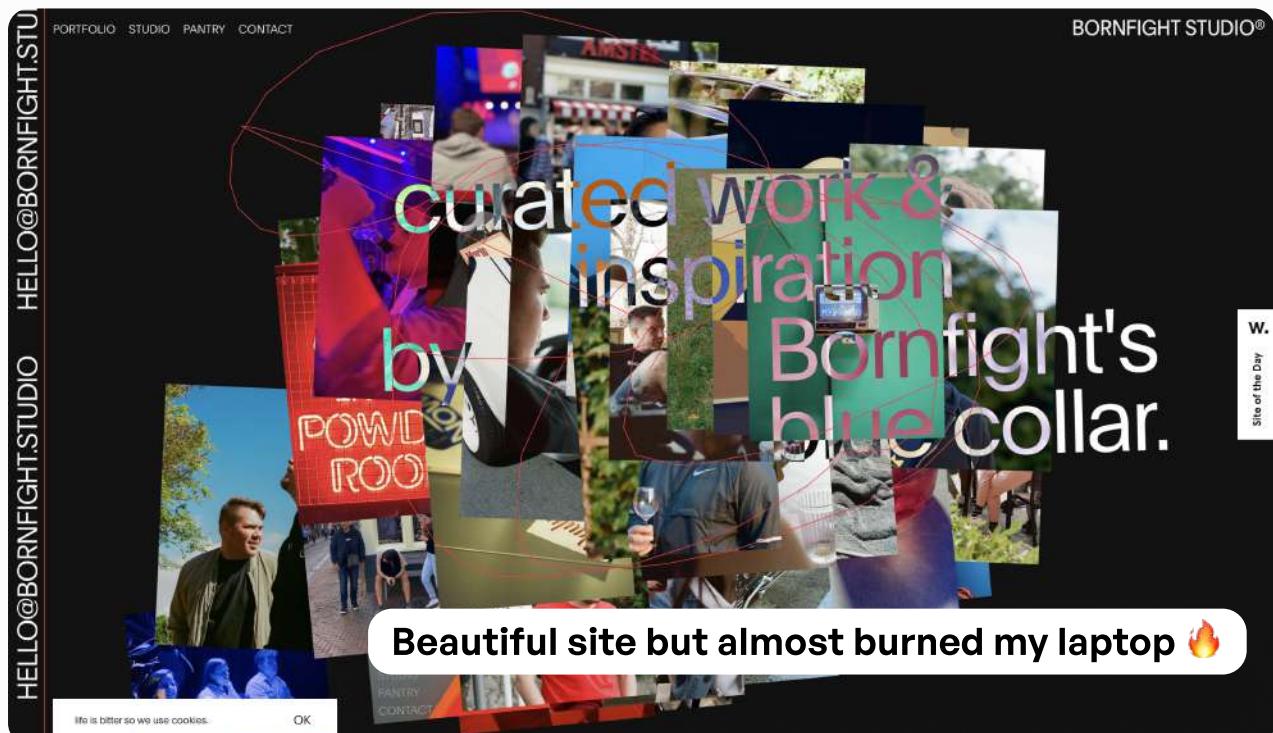
If your work centers around the users' experience, you might even get away with a few visual design flaws.



On the other end of the spectrum, we have super visual, full-of-motion website designs built on the most exquisite and complex design frameworks that forget about their function - to provide real-life users with good experience and are rather made to impress fellow website designers.

Valuable content > Beautiful design

While work like that is beautiful and truly impressive, I can't tell how often I've landed on a similar website and left with a dizzy head from all the rapid motion and fluid transitions.



Bornfight.studio

There's a reason why huge tech companies tend to go for more toned-down and universal designs.

While motion can enhance the experience, adding too much of it might distract users from taking action and even annoy some individuals, leaving them with a headache and an overheated laptop.

Find balance in your designs and focus primarily on your audience.

Simple is (always) better

As web users, we are extremely impatient, always looking for instant gratification, and if a website is not giving us what we need, we tend to lose interest.

That's the reason why Social Media platforms are so addicting.

They give us a quick shot of gratification whenever we log in - new like, new comment, new share, we're hooked on that model.

At the same time, the more information we throw at a user without giving him a clear structure to follow - we're bound to lose their interest. Simplify the navigation, make it intuitive, optimize your site for clicks, and most importantly, don't make users think.

A website should be self-explanatory. You make sure about it by using clear language, the layout structure, and navigation.

The screenshot shows the homepage of Relume Library. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Relume Library', 'Browse Components', 'Libraries', 'Pricing', 'Community', and 'Learn'. On the right side of the navigation bar are 'Log In' and 'Sign up' buttons. The main title 'The fastest way to build in Webflow' is prominently displayed in large, bold, black font. Below the title, a subtitle reads 'Access the world's largest library of Webflow components and build better websites in hours, not days.' Two calls-to-action buttons are visible: 'Try for free' and 'Watch Demo'. A testimonial below the buttons states '10,000+ Webflow developers have used Relume Library to build better websites.' A callout bubble highlights the hero section with the text 'Relume nailed it with their hero section!'. Below the bubble, two screenshots of the Relume Library interface are shown, illustrating the component library and search functionality.

Consistency is key

When designing a website, you should design each page with consistent elements and patterns to follow a clear brand identity.

- You should use the same font styles, sizes, and colors
- Your color palette should be defined by exact values
- You should keep the same amount of spacing between elements
- You should use the same layouts for dynamic pages
- You should use the same headers, footers, buttons, forms, etc.

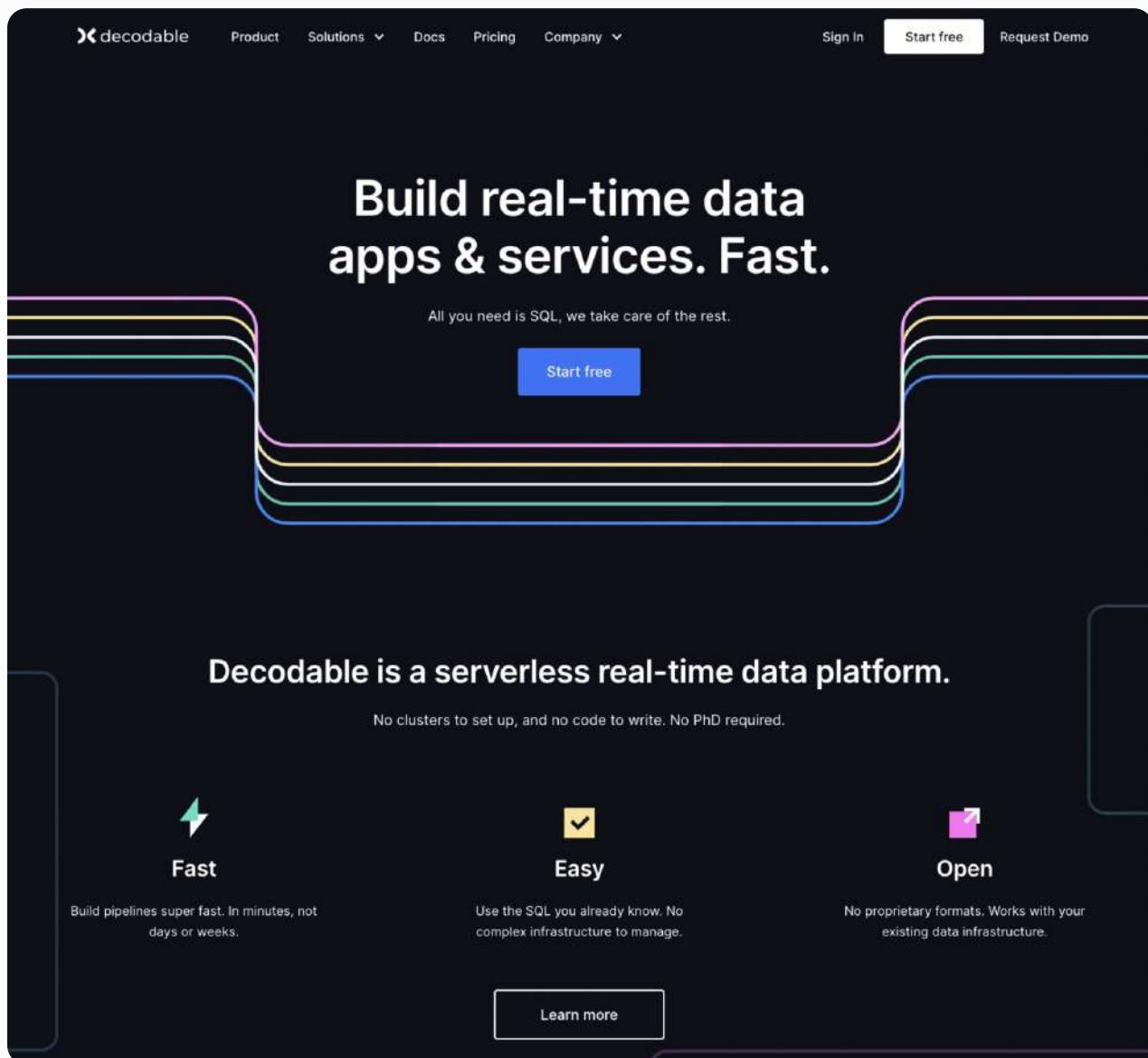
Consistency will help your site look well-balanced and professional.

The image shows the Acorns website. The main page features a whimsical illustration of a landscape with green hills, trees, and flowers. The central text reads "Acorns helps you save & invest". Below it, a subtext says "Invest spare change, invest while you bank, earn bonus investments, grow your knowledge and more." A "Get started" button is visible. In the top right corner, there's a "Log in" link and a "Get started" button. At the bottom right, there's a callout box with the Acorns logo and the text "Over 11 million sign ups" and another "Get started" button. Below the main page, three smaller sections are shown side-by-side: "Banking with Acorns", "Learn", and "Acorns Earn". Each section has its own unique illustration and text describing its features.

Acorns Website

Watch your Type

Typography plays a crucial role on every website. It's an extension of your brand voice and next to negative space, typography creates the content's visual hierarchy. The scale and color can really enhance the experience and create a design that seamlessly flows.



Some sites consist only of text and colored backgrounds and still command a lot of attention. That's the power of good typography.

Use the right imagery

Images create more visual impact than typography. They are often used together with typography to increase emphasis on a given content. Let's look at an example of a heat map showing how good imagery can influence users' action and decisions on a website.



Using an image of a baby that looks directly at a user directs all the attention towards it. However, when we use an image of a baby facing the text, users tend to look at the same direction.

This makes the text the focal point of the composition.

That's a little-known trick used by a few designers. There's a lot more happening behind the scenes, on a subconscious level, that we're not even aware of, and that's part of the reason why people with a background in psychology happen to be very good at UX design - they know a lot of this stuff already.

Remember this when designing your next hero section. Use images wisely and purposefully do not choose them by random.

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

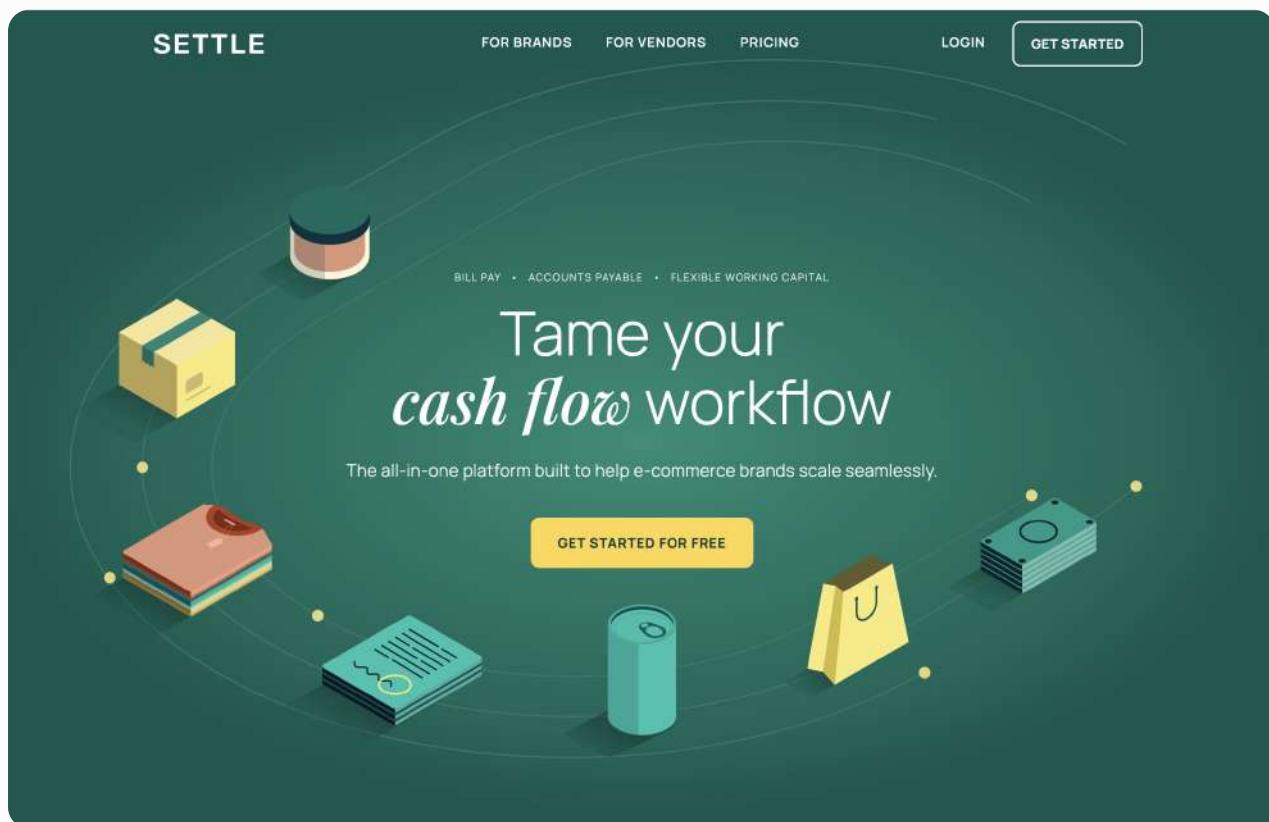
If you're like most viewers, you probably read all the text in the order of importance. Pretty cool, huh? That's how we designers can manipulate the order in which users read content.

Using purposeful placement

If your visitors have to play hide and seek to find your call-to-action, they will not be amused. Imagine visiting a movie website to book tickets and not being able to locate the “Book now” button anywhere. It would be very frustrating.

Placing your conversion Call-To-Actions and surrounding them with enough whitespace makes it easy to locate them.

Whitespace in itself is an important design element, but too much whitespace between the supporting content and your actionable area can create a sense of disconnect. That’s why purposeful placement ties it all down.

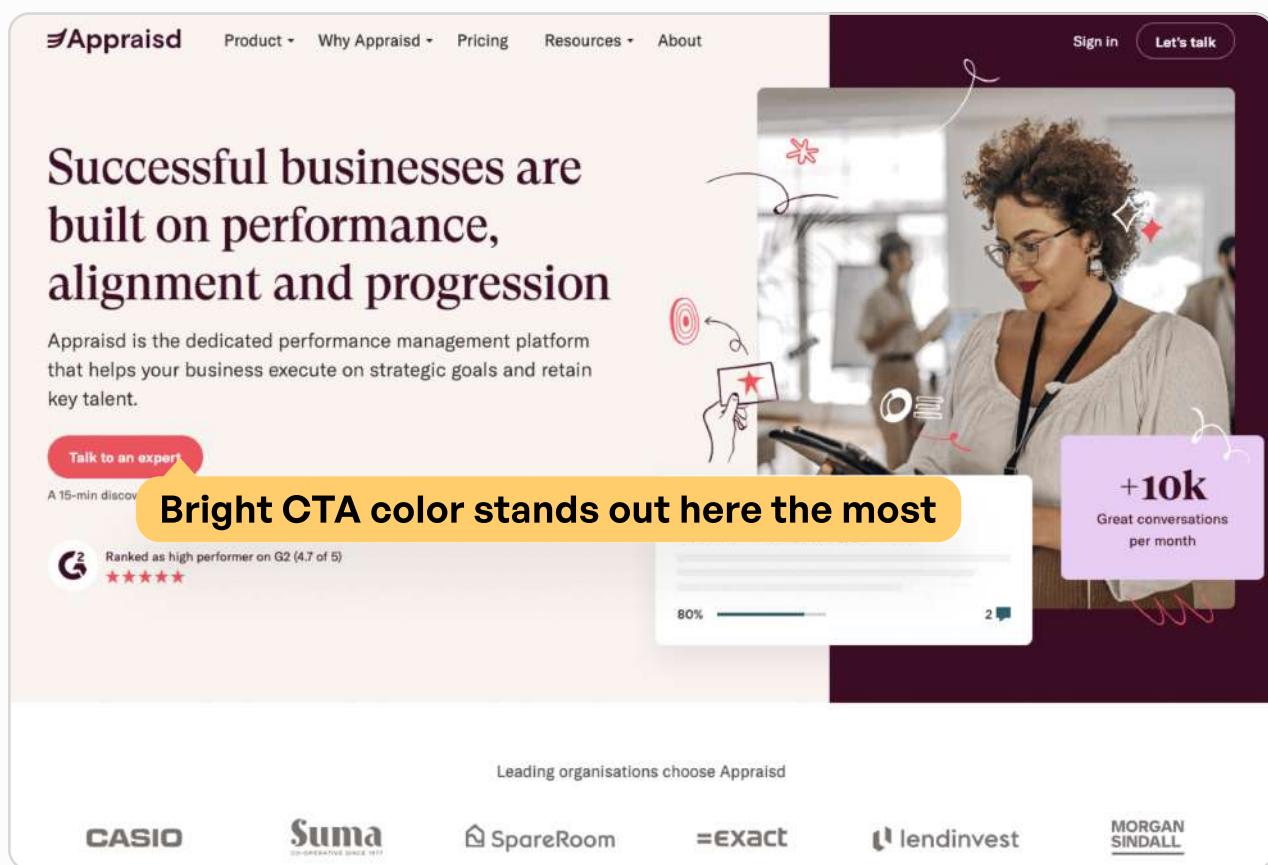


Settle.com

Using color and contrast

Stronger, brighter colors are more likely to grab attention than bland, non-saturated ones. Colors with higher contrast appear closer to the viewer, giving them a greater sense of value.

No matter the feature positioned in the design, using one accent color as a focal point will help attract attention to that element.



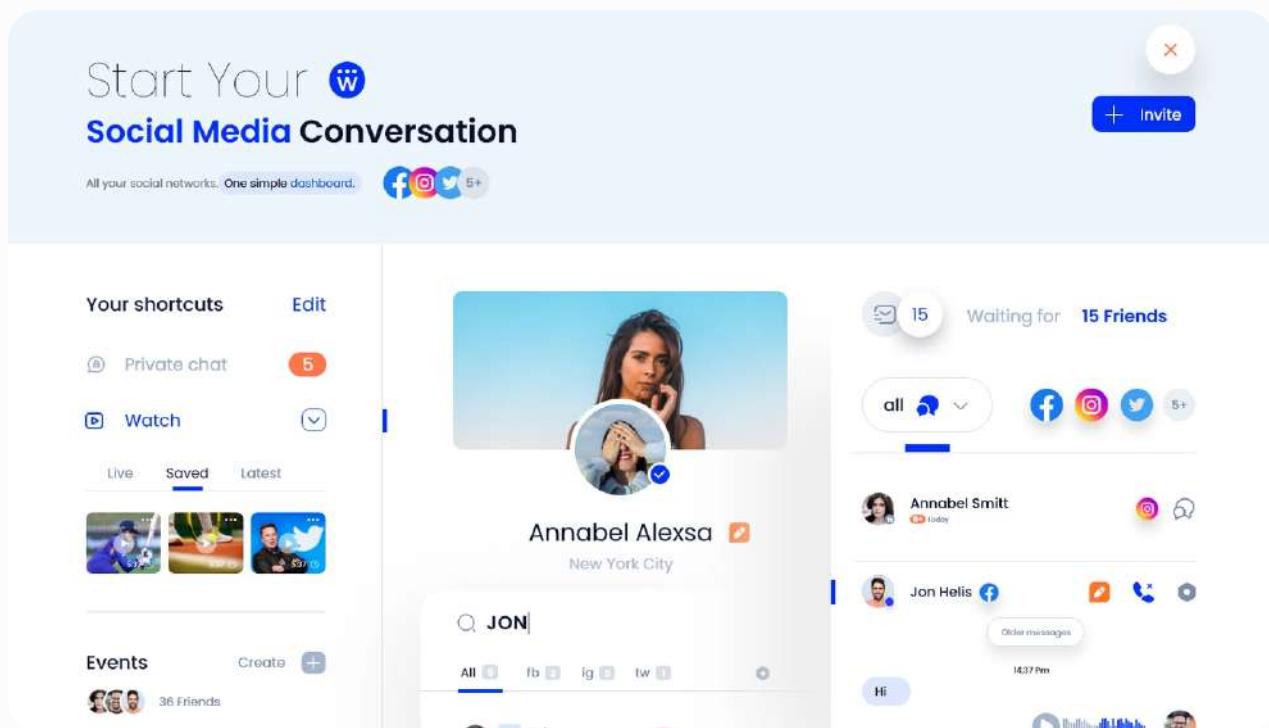
Appraisd

It doesn't mean you shouldn't use black or white as your CTA color. If you can make these colors stand out and make it clear that they are in fact, the highest in the hierarchy, by all means, use them. You have to remember that it's much harder, though.

Using (not so) negative space

Negative space, also known as “whitespace” refers to the areas of a design that don’t include any design elements. Many new designers feel the need to fill every pixel with visual elements, ignoring the importance of whitespace. Even worse, they garner huge attention from beginner designers on sites like Dribbble, giving unrealistic expectations of how a good design looks like. Beginners start copying “popular” designs and post them online without realizing that what they do is wrong.

And then the loop of unrealistic designs begins.

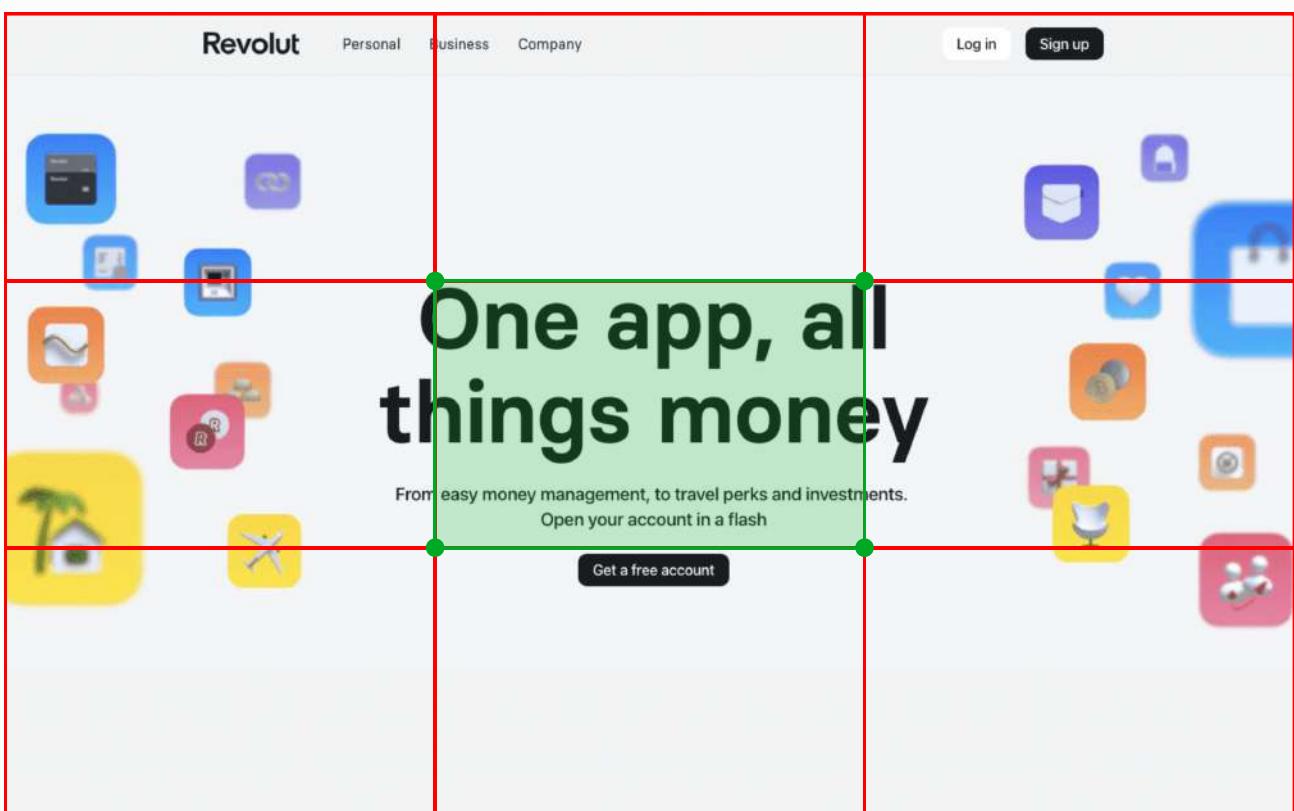


It results in an overwhelming experience and a lot of confusion. Content has no room to breathe, there's no focus on any particular design element, and the main functionality is lost.

Leverage the Rule of Thirds

Rule of Thirds is a well-known photographic rule that has found its use in web design. According to the Rule of Thirds, a picture (or web page) should be visually divided into three equal squares. (both vertically and horizontally).

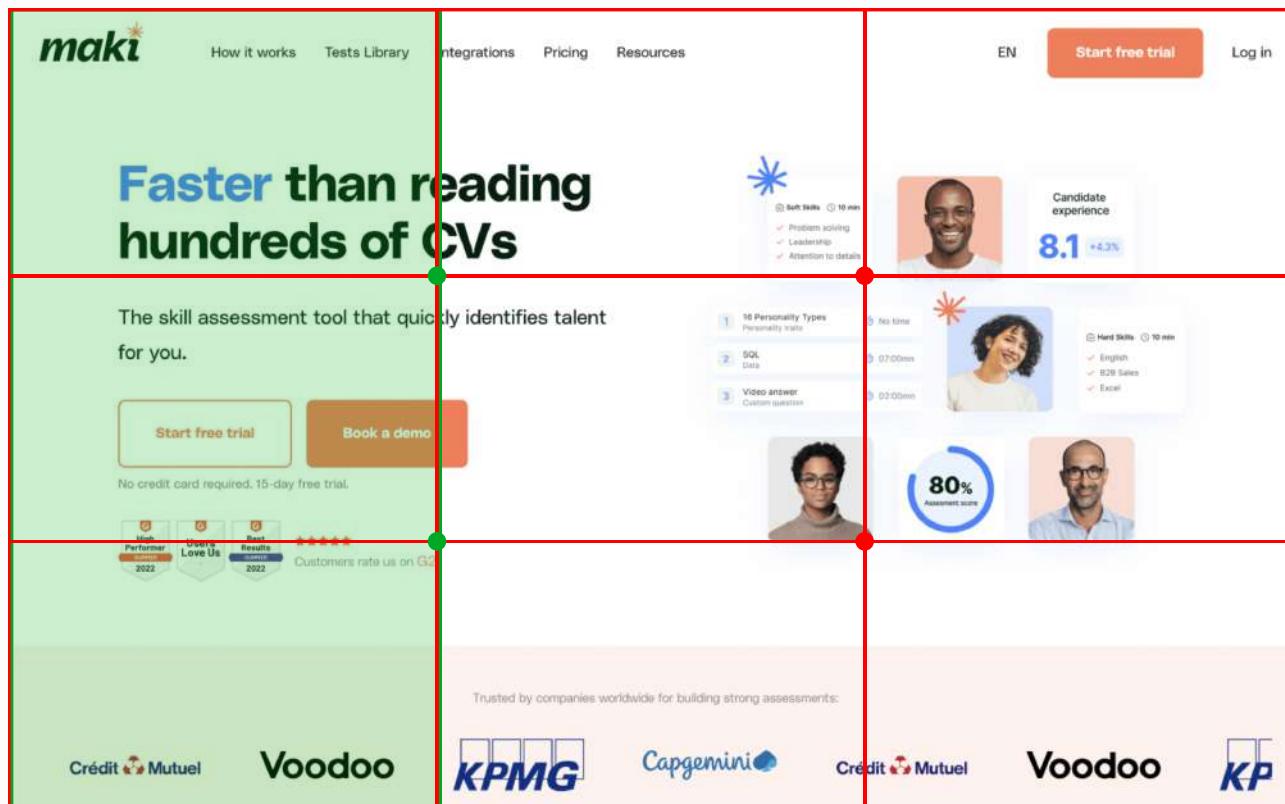
You end up with nine identical squares that look like this:



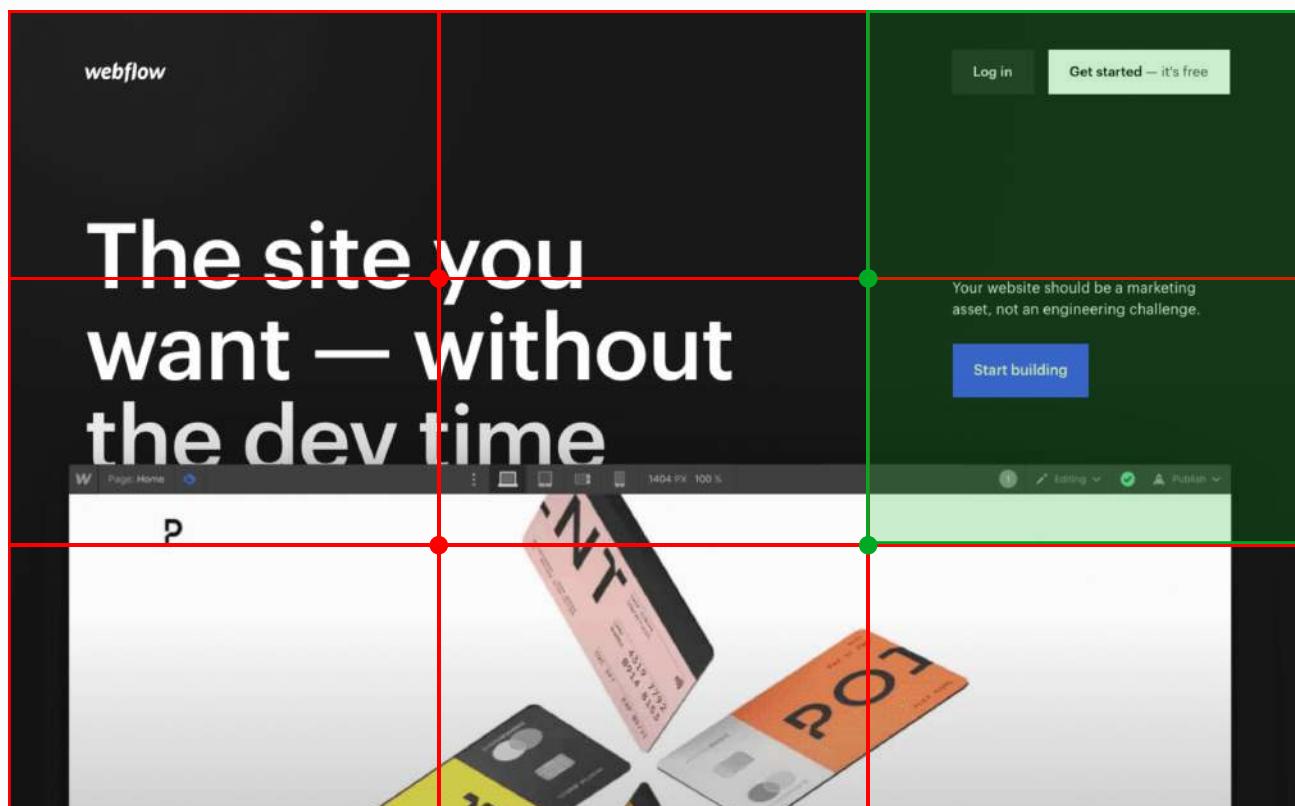
According to the rule, the four middle intersections are strategic points of interest. When objects are placed at, or near these points, they create the most impactful design composition. You can also use the rule of thirds to place your object(s) off-center by putting them into one of the thirds sections, either left or right.

Let's look at more examples on the next page.

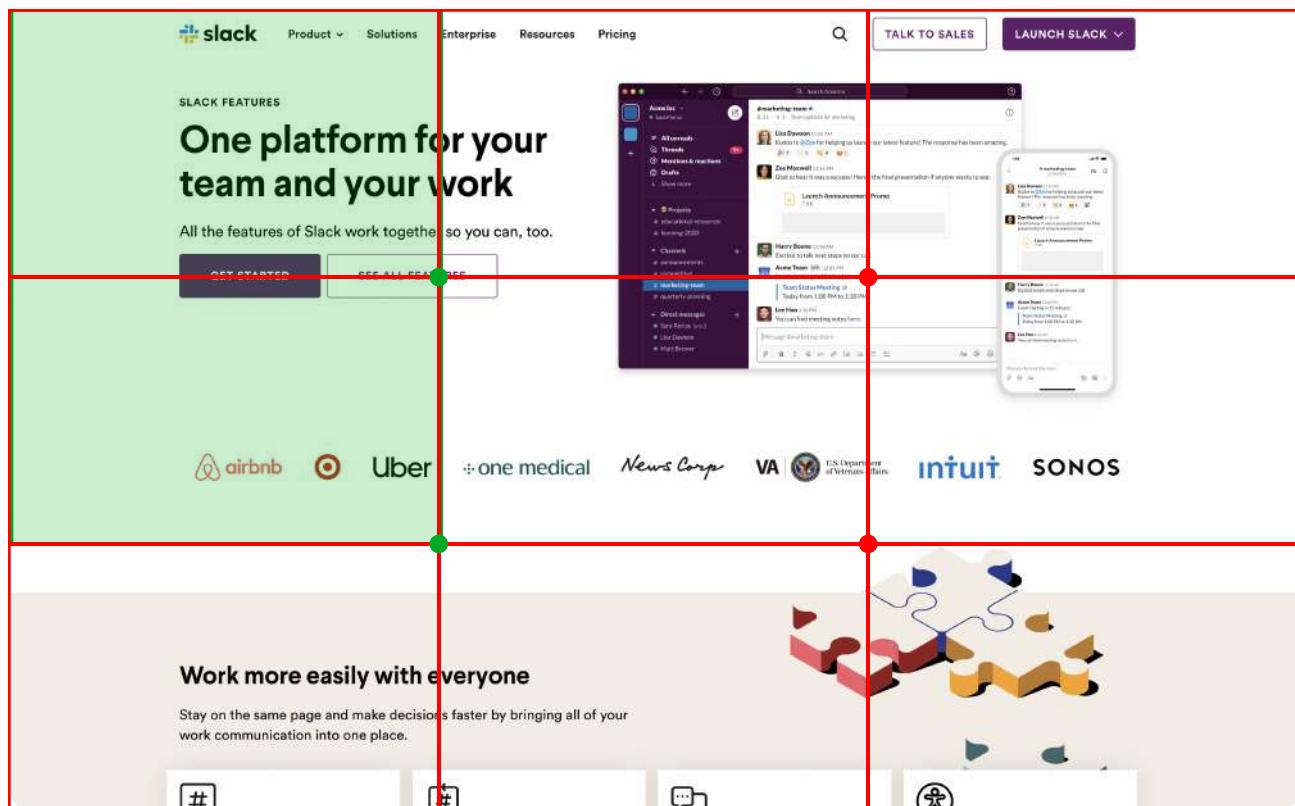
For example, on the Maki website, the main focal point is in the first 3 squares on the left, off-center, overlapping two intersection points.



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



Slack on the other hand, places their Call To Action button at the first top left intersection.



Notice how these websites never place their navigation bar near the intersections. This helps to keep visitors focused on the main call to action and heading.

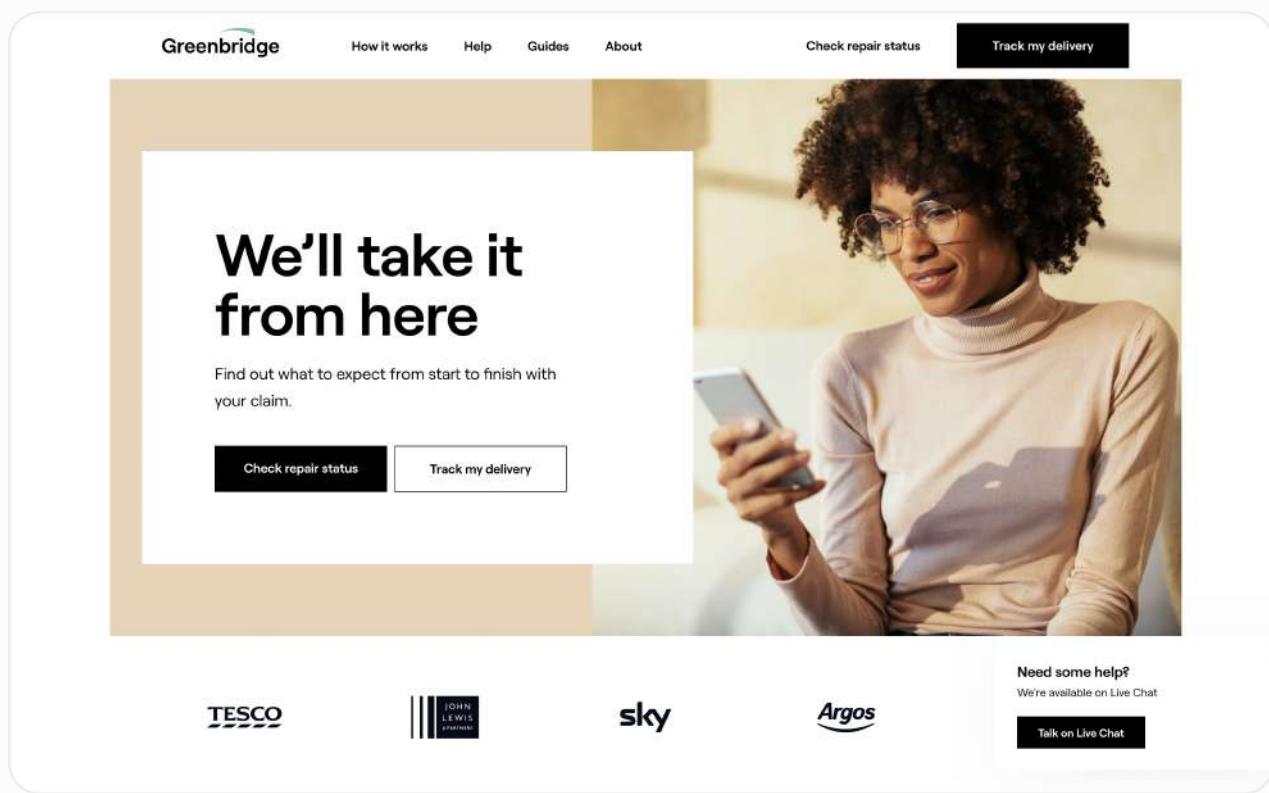
You don't need to design your entire website strictly by the rule of thirds. Use it to help you place your most important elements on a grid. It only takes 2 minutes to set up.

Try taking a screenshot of your website (just above the fold or just your header section, not the entire page length because nobody looks at a website that way), and divide it into nine equal squares. Then, you can decide if you want to make any tweaks.

Maintain the balance

Balance in design refers to the relationship between design elements and the harmony they bring out in a composition. We create balance through symmetry, shapes, colors, patterns, and space in relation to the visual weight of a given component.

Let's look at the Greenbridge website. Notice how they use rectangular shapes to create a well-balanced and harmonious look. The symmetry these shapes create draw your attention to the content that's inside the white container.



In practice, you achieve balance through the use of a grid-based layout. When you divide your content into columns and sections, it is much easier to create order and align your elements to create an aesthetically pleasing and well-balanced website.



Chapter summary

- Study the Gestalt laws of visual perception - **proximity, similarity, continuation, symmetry, and closure.** Analyze different websites on SaaSlandingpage.com and try to find these laws in use.
- If your work centers around the users' experience, you might even get away with a few visual design flaws. **Value > Looks.**
- While motion can enhance the experience, adding too much of it **might distract users from taking action**
- **A website should be self-explanatory.** You make sure about it by using clear language, the layout structure, and navigation.
- **Images create more visual impact than typography,** often used together to increase emphasis on a given content.
- Stronger, brighter colors **are more likely to grab attention** than bland, non-saturated ones.
- **Use Rule of Thirds** to create more impactful design compositions

Take some notes!



Typography in Web

Typography in Web Design

Simply put, typography is the art of arranging text for optimal legibility, readability, and accessibility.

It's one of the main factors contributing to how easy a website is to navigate since it ensures how comfortably we can read and understand all of its text-based content. Because of this, understanding its importance and using it according to best guidelines and practices will help your website stand out in any niche and give your customers a better online experience overall.

Why is typography important in web design

Good typography establishes an appropriate level of visual hierarchy, provides aesthetic harmony, and creates the atmosphere for the entire digital product. Besides being easy to read, digital text must be easy to understand. Users visit a website looking for something specific and want to find it quickly.

You'll lose their attention if you make it hard for them to read. The text needs to be accessible. You havet to remember that not every internet user views or uses text on the web in the same way.

Text should be readable on all digital platforms, regardless of device type or screen size.

Typography types

When there's a website there's a text, and wherever there is text, there is good and bad typography. We can all agree to that.

By paying close attention to how your words look and how easy they are to read, you make sure that your text will be easily understood.

By carefully and purposefully choosing fonts, sizes, colors, layouts, alignment, and other elements that influence the text style, we aim to create a deeper meaning.

Typography differentiates between two main types - serifs and sans serifs, and a number of secondary types like script, slab, display, etc.

There are various ways in which typographers classify typefaces; nevertheless, the following are the most common:

Serif – A serif is a small ornamental projection off the main stroke of a letter. Fonts with this styling are called serif fonts. Primary used in printed medium. Examples: Times New Roman, Sentient

Sans Serif – “Sans” is French for “without,” and fonts without these ornaments are labeled as sans serif fonts. Mainly use for digital mediums. Examples: Arial, Inter, Roboto, SF Pro

Monospaced – Every character in a monospaced font takes up the same width. Created at a time when typewriters were popular, these fonts have seen a revival due to their use in text editors (and some fancy oldschool-themed websites). Example: Space Mono

Cursive – Cursive fonts imitate handwriting. They are more appropriate for titles and headings than body text since they favor aesthetic attractiveness above readability. Example: Dancing Script

Display – Display fonts tend to be biggest and boldest of the type used for main headings. Because of the attention they draw, they work best as headlines. Example: Satoshi Variable

Typography terminology

Each piece of text you read on a screen uses a typeface that affects the mood, voice, and visual structure of a website.

Many people confuse typefaces and fonts, and there are certain misconceptions about the differences between the two.

To better understand how to introduce effective type to your website, let's first cover some fundamental terminology.



Typeface vs Font

A typeface is a group of alphabetic and numeric characters that have been given a particular appearance and feel. Inter, Arial, Roboto, SF Pro, are all examples of common typefaces.

Fonts are specific implementations of typefaces. A typeface may have multiple fonts, each of which may have a different weight (bolder or lighter), size, be italicized or non-italicized, capitalized, underlined, etc.

To give you a better example - Inter is one of the most flexible, variable typefaces with many available fonts like Light, Medium, SemiBold, Bold, etc.

Inter - typeface

Inter fonts

Inter Thin Inter Extra Light Inter Light Inter Regular

Inter Medium **Inter Semi Bold** **Inter Bold**

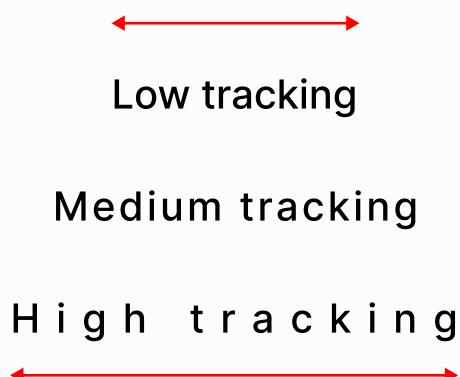
Inter Extra Bold **Inter Black**

Thin Italic *Extra Light Italic* *Light Italic* *Regular Italic*

Medium Italic *Semi Bold Italic* *Bold Italic*

Tracking

Tracking is simply the spacing between letters. It refers to the overall spacing between all characters in a line or block of text rather than just two specific letters (that's Kerning):



While slight adjustments are allowed, too much tracking may make the text harder to read. Designers typically adjust the tracking to match the typeface so that it matches a specific line length.

SHIP FAST. SHIP BETTER.

Higher tracking values are perfect for captions that makes teamwork flow

Deployment? Done — with best practices baked right in

- Built-in CI/CD
- Domains & DNS management
- Automated previews of every commit

It's designed to work together as part of a [seamless git-based developer workflow](#).

Light Roast

netlify BOT commented 3 hours ago

Deploy preview for www ready!

Built with commit [bb1147f](#)

Add to cart

Leading

Leading is the vertical spacing between lines of text. It's expressed in units of pixels or points.



Again, the right amount of leading helps readers navigate text — too much or too little can equally make it hard to read.

The screenshot shows the Netlify website with several examples of text layers:

- A large blue header section with the heading "Create profile" and a form input field.
- A code snippet in a dark box:

```
<h1>Create profile</h1>
<form name="profile"
      data-netlify="true">
```
- A "Slack integration" card with the text "Send new submissions to a Slack channel".
- A "Outgoing webhook" card with the text "Send new submissions as POST request".
- A "Email notification" card.
- A sidebar titled "Add dynamic functionality with built-in applications" listing "User identity", "Instant forms", "Analytics", "Serverless functions", "Split testing & rollouts", and "Large media".
- A yellow callout box at the bottom center containing the text "Each text layer has different leading for better hierarchy".
- A "Build plugins" section with cards for "Image optim plugin", "Subfont plugin", and "A11y plugin".
- A "Use build plugins from the community or create your own" section.

Annotations with red double-headed arrows highlight the vertical spacing between text layers in various sections of the interface.

Hierarchy

The majority of web pages divide content into topic-specific sections. Headings are used to designate and identify these sections. The hierarchy of the page is determined by order of text from most prominent to least prominent.

Making pages easily navigable and consumable requires good hierarchy. The titles alone should allow readers to navigate to the part that interests them the most.

How Pipedrive works

Get started in 3 easy steps

1. Set up your pipeline
Create the stages of your sales funnel or use an existing template. Add your deals or import them automatically from a spreadsheet or CRM.

2. Track progress
Get automatic alerts and reminders to keep deals on track. Sales forecasts update every time you move a deal down the funnel.

3. Automate growth
Review analytics and use AI technology to help you identify opportunities to close more sales. Automate routine tasks and admin work.

Pipedrive top features

Visual sales pipeline
See your entire sales process at a glance. Update deals by dragging and dropping them into place.

Customizable pipeline
Set up your pipeline to match your sales cycle. Add custom stages and fields.

Team collaboration
Collaborate on deals and activities with colleagues. Share updates on sales operations and wins.

Pipedrive.com

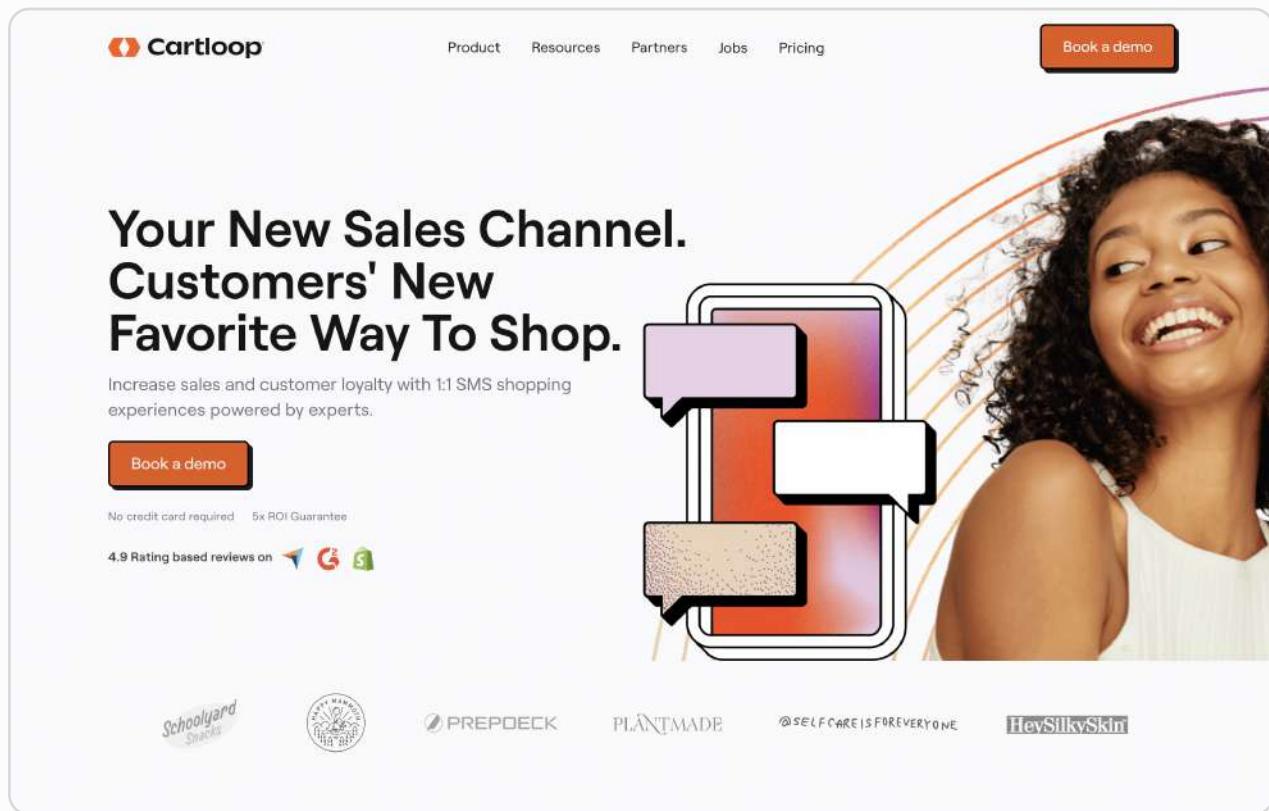
Look at how cleverly Pipedrive uses hierarchy to explain their product's core functionality and top features.

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.



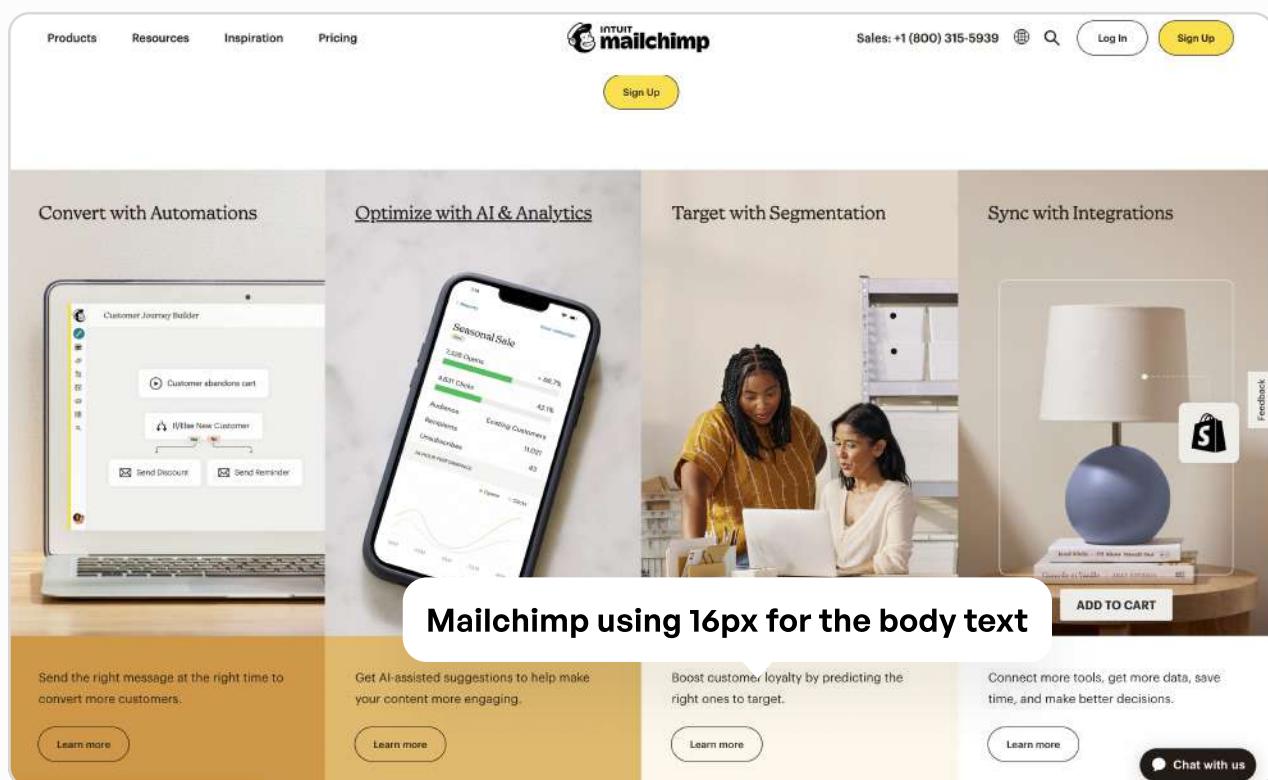
Cartloop.io

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.**

Fix your font sizes

A common practice is to set regular body text to a minimum size of 16px. This is roughly the size of body text in printed media, and is the smallest font that most people can read without needing to zoom in.

It also has its uses for responsive web development where **16px is the font's root (base) size**. We'll talk about that in later chapters.



Mailchimp.com

To further establish hierarchy, you can and should increase or decrease the size of your text, all depending on the context.

Don't go overboard with massive or too small fonts, though, it rarely looks good, and besides, you'll have a hard time designing a responsive experience with your font sizes all over the place.

Limit your paragraph length

You should keep your **paragraph length between 40 and 80**

characters long since that's about the most optimal setting.

Anything less requires users to look ahead too frequently, which is really distracting. And anything above that will make it too hard to read, and fatigue eyes much quicker. You will need to look for anchor points for each new line as it moves back to the left side of the text block.

These length constraints give some leeway when creating different web layouts. Remember to include **around 60–70 characters** in each line, and don't go over that. Your users' eyes will appreciate it.

The screenshot shows a landing page for 'WELCOME TO THE DITTO UNIVERSE'. It features two main service cards:

- Health Insurance**: Described as a comprehensive plan to cover health-related expenses. It includes a 'Book a call' button and a 'WhatsApp us' button.
- Term Life Insurance**: Described as a plan to protect loved ones. It also includes a 'Book a call' button and a 'WhatsApp us' button.

Below these cards, there is a testimonial from Avani Jha, an Associate Consultant, stating: "Simple, Easy and Reliable! Ditto helped me narrow down my choices effortlessly. The entire process was fuss free, what I needed was always kept on priority while giving me options without pushing anything. Absolutely love this platform." To the right of this testimonial are two statistics: 45 Top Insurance Advisors on standby and 50,000+ people who have sought Ditto's advice before making their insurance purchase.

Joinditto.in

Increase the leading space

Having adequate whitespace between lines of text and after line breaks makes it easier for readers to follow the text, which is very important. Accessibility standards usually allocate a specific amount of vertical space to text based on the font size.

For starters, set the spacing between lines of body text to 1.5.

This will result in leading that is half as tall as each line of text.

For headings, it's recommended to make this space a little bigger.

You should start with a spacing of 2.5 between heading paragraphs, then increase or decrease it as necessary.

If you don't want to edit this manually, look up Material 3 type scale guidelines. Don't worry, though, I'll show you how to do this later.

The screenshot shows the Material 3 Type Scale interface. On the left, there's a 'TYPE SCALE' section with a preview area containing four levels of headings: 'Headline 1', 'Headline 2', 'Headline 3', and 'Headline 4'. Below these are 'Headline 5', 'Headline 6', and 'Subtitle 1'. Each heading has its font (Roboto), weight (Light), size (96px), and letter spacing (-1.5px) listed. To the right of the preview is a 'CODE' section with the corresponding CSS code for each style. Further right is a 'Choose fonts' panel with 'Headlines & Subtitles' and 'Body & Captions' sections, both currently set to 'Roboto'. At the bottom right of the interface is a 'CONTENTS' sidebar with a 'Type scale' section and a link to 'Applying the type scale'. At the very bottom right is a 'Google Fonts' link with a note about exploring available fonts.

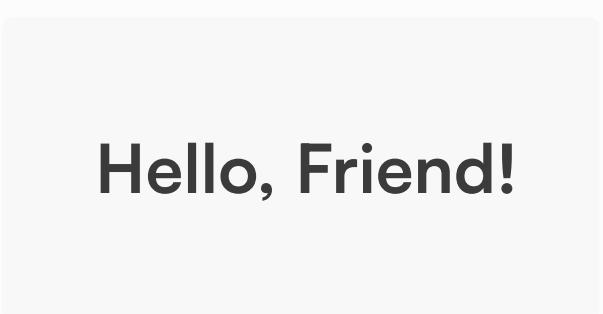
Joinditto.in

Text Contrast

The contrast between text and its background is essential for legibility.

The ideal color combination for legibility, however, is dark grey text on a light grey background, not pure black (#000) on pure white (#fff), contrary to popular belief.

The contrast these two colors create is very high and it's found to be tiring to look at after longer periods of time.



Hello, Friend!

Hello, Friend!

Dark gray on a very light gray background might be a bit easier on the eyes than pure black text on a pure white background



Hello, Friend!

Hello, Friend!

This also works the same in the opposite direction, with pure white text on a pure black background, and light gray text on a dark gray background. These differences are subtle but can make a difference when users spend longer time reading the content.

What units of measurements to use in web design?

The standard unit of measurement for online content is Pixel (1 px).

We use pixels to describe the base values of shapes, text, distances, etc. However, when creating responsive designs, it is preferable to set all size and spacing settings using relative units like ems and viewport width percentages rather than absolute, non-scalable units like pixels.

A relative unit of measurement called an em corresponds to the current font size of the HTML element that's set as a default size of 16px for paragraphs. Following that logic, 2em would therefore be twice this size = 32px and 2.5em would be = 40px.

When font sizes change, spacing requirements need to change too.

When the font size is set to 16px, a line height of 24px might work perfectly fine, but at 32px tall, that height would be far too small.

Root size = 16 px
Leading = 24px

Root size = 32 px
Leading = 24px

Designing responsively means using relative units. If you create your site so that everything is relative to the root font size, you can modify the root size without affecting the rest of the site.



Chapter summary

- Typography differentiates between two main types - **serifs and sans serifs**, among other secondary types like **script, slab, display**
- You should keep your **paragraph length between 40 and 80 characters** long
- **A typeface** is a group of alphabetic and numeric characters that have been given a particular appearance and feel.
- **Fonts** are specific implementations of typefaces.
- **Tracking** is simply the spacing between letters.
- **Leading** is the vertical spacing between lines of text.
- **The standard unit of measurement** for online content is Pixel (1 px).
- when **creating responsive designs**, it is preferable to set all size and spacing settings **using relative units like ems**

Take some notes!



Colors in Web

Importance of color for Web

Color is one of the most effective tools in website design. It can be used not only to get people's attention, make a point, and make them want something but also to drive conversions and earn their loyalty. The choice of color in website design is influenced by many more factors than just aesthetics.

Because color theory blends science, psychology, and emotion, color is a remarkably potent design element.

When color is used effectively in web design, it plays a significant role in branding and product messaging.

Colors are important in physical and digital contexts because they help users navigate your website and improve the overall experience. Because of this, every designer must have a really good grasp of color theory and all the intricacies associated with it.

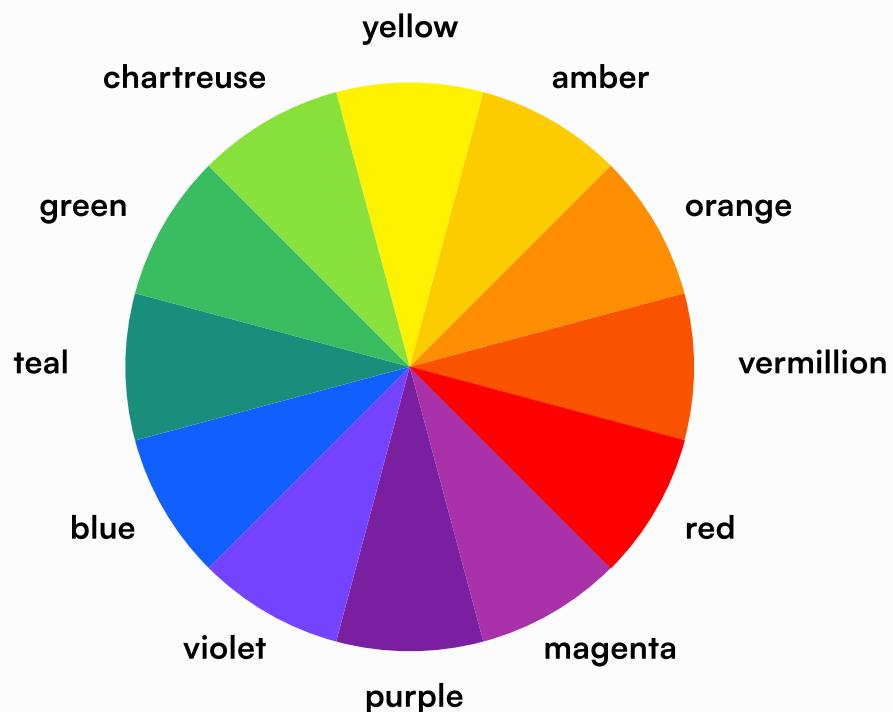
In the following chapter, we'll explore all there is to know about color theory and explain how to use color to create compelling, high-value websites for your clients.

We need to cover the foundational knowledge about color theory, color wheel, and psychology before we dive into the web design theory and show you the real-life examples in use.

Anatomy of colors in design

It's best to start by grasping fundamental color theory. While the level of detail and complexity may put some people off, it is essential to understand how it works and what it consists of.

Color wheel



The color wheel shows the relationship between colors and it's an excellent resource for learning the fundamentals of color theory.

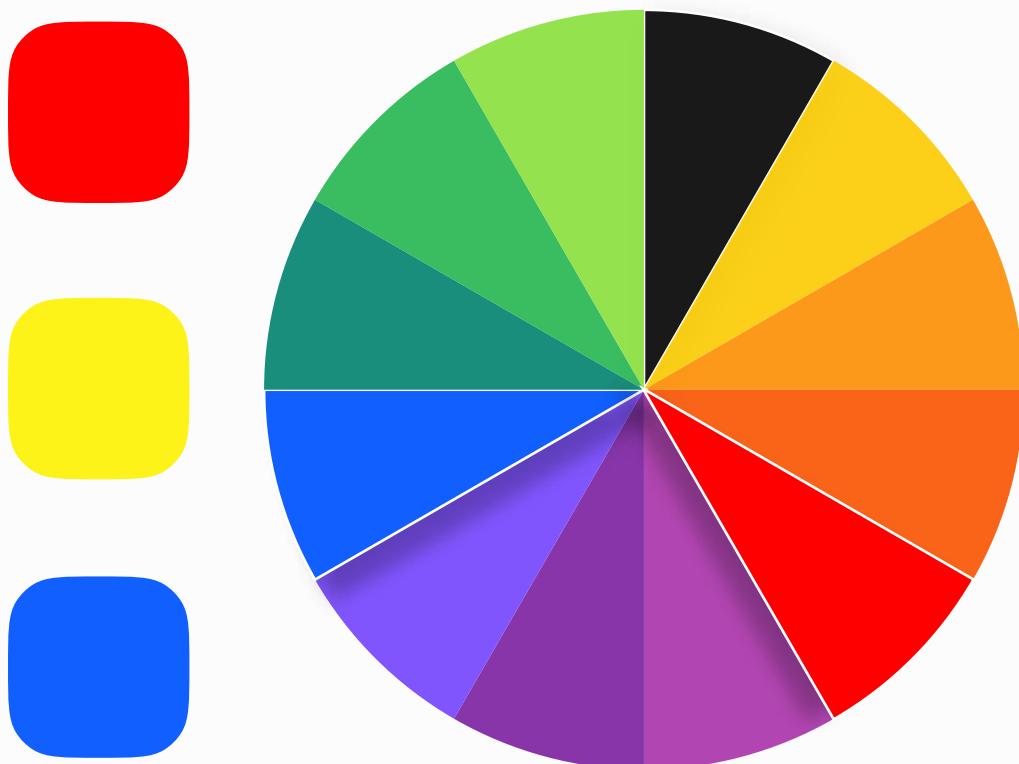
The basic color wheel consists of **12 primary colors**.

Secondary colors are made up of a combination of two primary colors. They **are green, orange, and purple**. **Tertiary colors** are created by combining the secondary colors with primary ones.

There are 6 tertiary colors.

Primary color

The spectrum of colors begins with the primary colors and these are red, yellow, and blue (RYB). They can't be mixed from other colors.



Secondary colors

We create secondary colors by combining two primary colors.

There are 3 secondary colors and these are purple (red + blue), green (blue + yellow), and orange (red + yellow).

Tertiary colors

The tertiary colors are combinations of primary and secondary colors (i.e. red-purple, yellow-orange, blue-green, etc.)

Tints and shades

Besides their pure form, primary, secondary, and tertiary colors also have their tints and shades. Tints are created by combining pure colors with white. This results in pastel shades with gradually reduced saturation. Shades, on the other hand, are generated by adding black to pure colors.

Last but not least, we also have tones. These are created by mixing black and white with pure colors. These create tonal palettes.

Tints



Created by adding white to pure colors

Shades



Created by adding black to pure colors

The relationship between colors

Color palettes are classified into four types: **analogous**, **monochromatic**, **triad**, and **complementary**.

Any of these can be used to develop a successful color scheme. We'll look at a few instances of these color palette types used in website designs on the following pages.

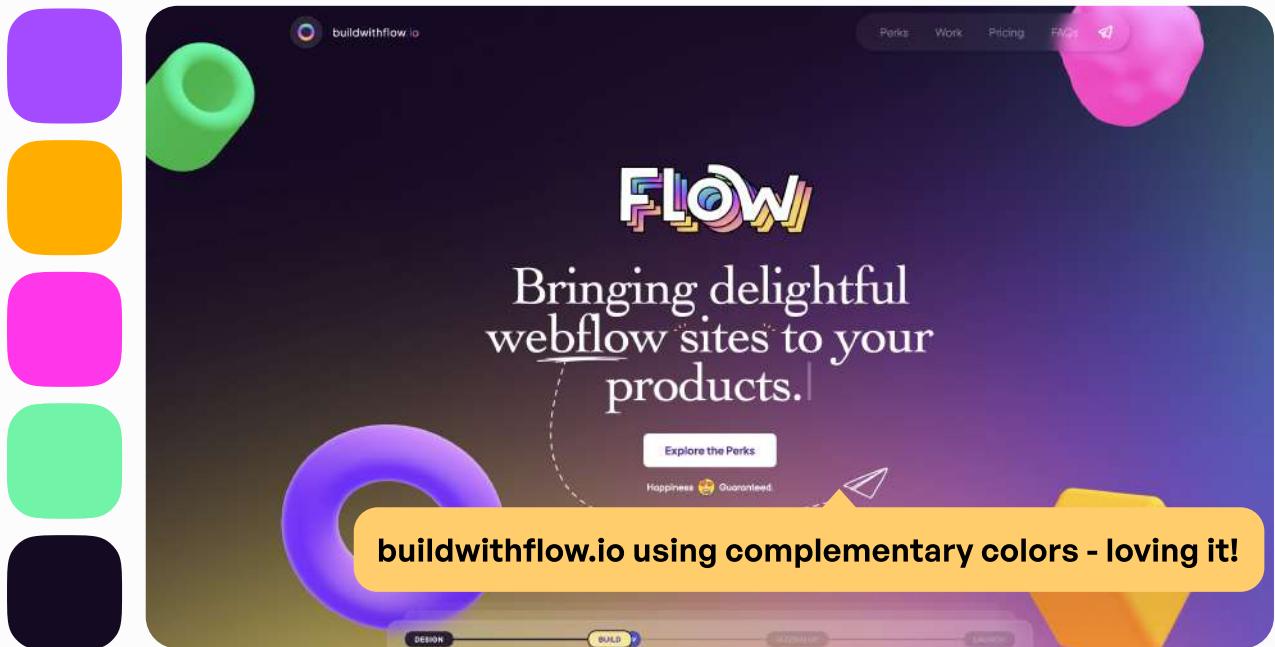
Analogous featuring three colors that are next to each other on the color wheel. Using colors close to each other creates vibrant, bold, and natural-looking compositions.

The screenshot shows the homepage of Appointlet.com. On the left, there is a vertical column of five rounded squares in green, blue, light blue, black, and white. The main content area has a light blue background with white clouds. It features a large green header bar with the Appointlet logo and navigation links for Teams, Features, Pricing, Use Cases, Login, and Start free. Below this is a section with the text "Flow through your meetings with ease" in blue, accompanied by a white dove carrying a envelope and a calendar icon. A green button labeled "Start your free trial →" and a note "No credit card required." are also present. At the bottom, there are logos for mixpanel, Capterra, ELEVATE, Optimizely, SoFi, and mendability, along with a blue mail icon. A yellow callout box in the center-right points to the text "Appointlet.com and their natural-looking color palette".

Monochromatic color palettes are based on a single color paired with various shades and tints. They appeal to the eye, producing interesting, appealing, and harmonious designs.

The screenshot shows the homepage of ditto.in. On the left, there is a vertical column of five rounded squares in different shades of blue. The main content area has a white background. It features a blue header bar with the ditto logo and navigation links for We're hiring!, Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Buy Insurance, and Ditto Hotline. Below this is a section with the text "Insurance made easy" and a note from LinkedIn: "Top Startup India 2022". A blue button labeled "Book a free call" is present. To the right, there is a 3D-style illustration of a blue character sitting on a blue sofa in a room with shelves and a potted plant. A yellow callout box in the center points to the text "Join ditto.in with their clever use of one color". At the bottom, there is a footer with the text "WELCOME TO THE DITTO UNIVERSE" and "What we do", followed by a note: "Choosing a health or life insurance policy can be extremely overwhelming. So we'll tell you what we would do if we were you. And you can take it from there. Ditto!!! Get it?"

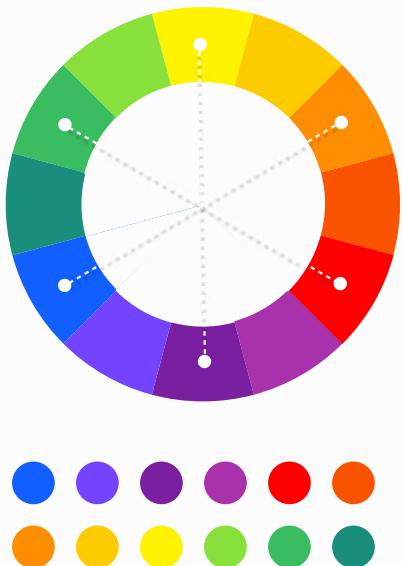
Complementary color palettes consist of colors located on opposing sides of the color wheel. These color schemes are fantastic for making websites look balanced and exciting..



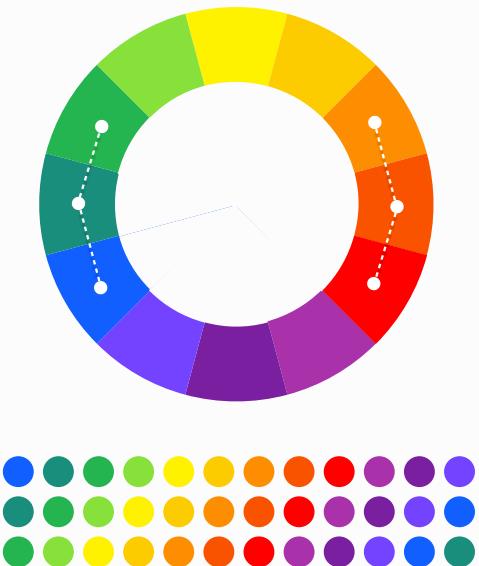
Triadic palettes consist of three colors evenly spaced apart on the color wheel, forming a triangle, like red, yellow, and blue. Typically one color will act as the primary, while the other two will act as accents.



Complementary color combinations

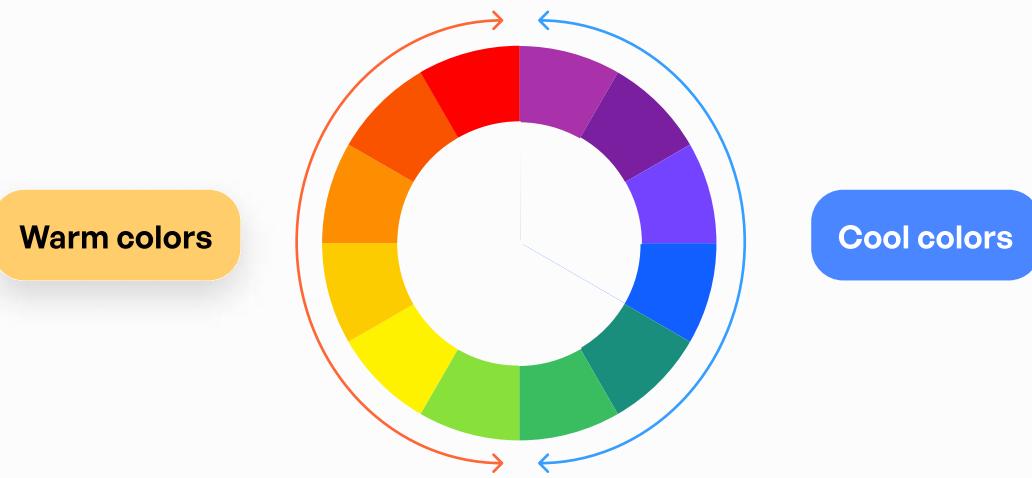


Analogous color combinations



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.

Warm colors



The screenshot shows a vibrant orange landing page for Elementor's birthday sale. At the top, there's a timer counting down from 02 days to 16 hours, 14 minutes, and 12 seconds. Below the timer, the text "Smashing Deals!" is followed by a large, bold headline: "Birthday Sale Up to 60% Off". A subtext explains the offer: "Enjoy the full power of Elementor's ultimate WordPress website builder with huge savings on select pro plans, all upgrades and the new Elementor Cloud Website!". A "Choose your Plan →" button is present. On the right side, a man with a beard is smiling and holding a white gift box. A circular badge next to him says "6 years". The overall design is festive and energetic.

elementor.com and their warm color palette

Don't Miss Out on the Fun! Get Up to 60% Off

Warm colors can also convey energy, sociability, and happiness.

Take, for example, the Elementor's Birthday Sale site. It speaks of youthfulness, energy, and happiness. Pretty powerful composition.

Cool colors



The screenshot shows a deep blue landing page for ChronicleHQ. At the top, there's a logo for "Chronicle" and a link "We Are Hiring →". In the center, the headline "The future of storytelling is beautiful" is displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the headline, a subtext reads: "Fast, interactive presentations that are effortlessly beautiful. For founders, modern teams and the world's best storytellers.". There are two buttons at the bottom: "Your email address" and "Apply for early access". To the right of the text, there's a 3D-style illustration of white blocks of varying sizes and some colorful speech bubbles with faces. A call-to-action button "Apply for early access" is located at the bottom right.

chroniclehq.com with their cool color palette

Cool colors contain higher amounts of blue and purple. These colors induce feelings of calm, stability and productivity.

Hue, Saturation, and Lightness

Hue



Saturation



Lightness/Brigtness



Hue is, in other words, color. It describes the degree of similarity between different colors. Primary colors such as red, green, and blue serve as a reference point. For example, when you describe a hue of turquoise, you're thinking of mixing green and blue hues.

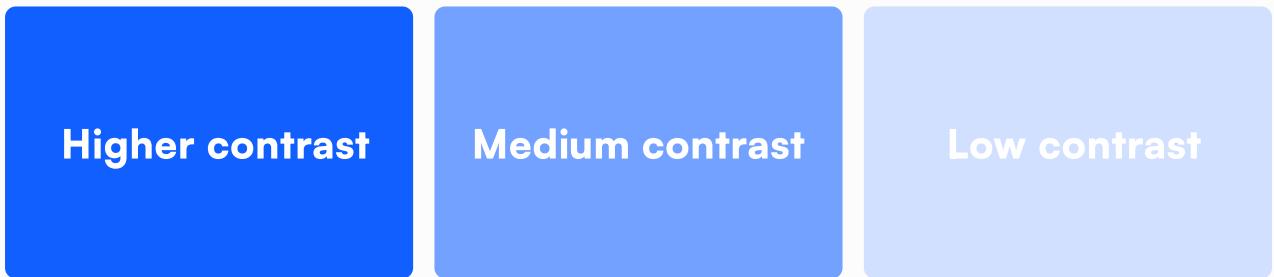
Saturation refers to the intensity of color. Colors with increased saturation will appear much more vibrant while decreasing it gradually will make the color fade away until it's gray and pale.



Lightness, also known as value or tone, defines the perceived brightness of a given color compared to pure white.

Proper use of contrast

Contrast is crucial for every website's readability. If the contrast between your foreground color and background is too low, users are more likely to have trouble reading your site.



Higher contrast

Medium contrast

Low contrast

When working on your site's contrast, you must look at the contrasting colors and their tone. If you need help deciding whether your site's contrast values are enough, you can use tools to help you estimate their legibility.

You can either type **WCAG contrast checker in Google**, open the WEBAim website and input the foreground and background values manually, or you can run a Figma plugin like **A11y Contrast Checker** which we'll cover in later chapters.

Ideally, you want to use higher contrast colors that pass the AA requirements for digital use for their improved legibility.

But too much contrast is no good, either. It strains our eyes much faster, and we don't want that either.

Higher contrast website example

The screenshot shows the Rideshur website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Insurance, How It Works, Claims, Partner With Us, FAQs, Log in, Get Started, and a search icon. A yellow callout box highlights the text "Black text on white background will give you the highest contrast values". The main headline reads "The future of fleet insurance is data, driven." Below it, a subtext says "Rideshur sets fair rates adjusted at every turn. Safety, risk level, and claims are all managed from a single dashboard. Evolve your fleet vehicle insurance." There are two "Get Started" buttons, one green and one blue. The background features a stylized globe and a car driving through a cityscape.

Rideshur.com

Lower contrast website example

The screenshot shows the Prevalent AI website. The main headline is "One Platform. Hundred Experts. Unlimited Analytics". A callout box highlights the purple text with the message "The purple text is not that easily readable". On the right side, a color contrast checker tool is open, showing "1 error(s) found in Frame 4864" and "We're listing them below". It provides contrast ratios for different font sizes and includes sliders for "Text lightness", "Background lightness", and "Contrast Ratio". The checker also indicates AA compliant status for large fonts and AAA compliant status for normal fonts. A "Done" button is at the bottom right of the tool.

Prevalent.ai

Psychology of color

Color psychology studies how color affects our moods, emotions, and behaviors. It can influence website visitors feelings and actions in significant ways.

All in all, color psychology is super important for marketing and brand design. Think of Coca-Cola and Twitter, and the first thing that'll come to your mind is probably red and blue, and the feelings associated with these brands and colors.

All colors have different associations with their feelings.



Here's a breakdown of all the primary colors' perceived meaning:

- **Red**: Love, danger, anger, rage, passion
- **Orange**: Energy, vitality, warmth
- **Green**: Nature, money, luck, growth
- **Yellow**: Fun, creativity, youth, wealth, optimism
- **Purple**: Royalty, luxury, creativity, spirituality, nobility
- **Blue**: Wisdom, calmness, reliability, trust, corporate
- **Black**: Elegance, power, strength
- **White**: Purity, elegance, calmness

Apart from understanding color psychology, we also need to know how to choose colors for a project and apply them to our interface so that everything looks cohesive and consistent.

To use color in website design to convey certain emotions, we need to use it consistently with all elements on the page, including typography, imagery, and interface elements.

How to choose colors for your project

Now that we know the basic terms and a general idea about color rules, we can choose a strategy and define our color palette for our website design. Remember, understanding the theory behind colors is one thing. Choosing a successful color palette is another.

Start with what you know.

Step 1: Start with your brand

If you have an established business, start with colors that are on brand and then try and introduce complementary colors (if needed).

Example: Organic shop websites might use green as a primary accent.

Step 2: Think about emotions

You should also think about what kind of emotional response you would want people to have when thinking about your brand.

Example: Luxury furniture might use black to convey emotions of elegance instead of, let's say, pink, red, or green.

Step 3: Mind the color balance

Think about how harmonious your color palette looks. Choose one dominant color and find your secondary and tertiary colors by following one of the four color harmony rules: analogous, monochromatic, triadic, or complementary.

Tip: Start with darker colors and make your way out to lighter ones since darker colors carry more visual weight.

Step 4: Know your audience

You need to know your target demographics and research what colors they best respond to.

Example: A military shop audience might react best to green and earthy tones rather than bright magenta accents.

Where to find color inspiration?

Choosing a primary brand color is a challenging task. Coming up with an entire color palette might be even more confusing. Apart from establishing your brand language and researching your audience, you can use tools to help you get there a bit faster.

Here are a few places to start looking for your new palette!

Colors.co – It's a neat color palette generator that automatically suggests the best color combinations.

Adobe Color Wheel – A little bit more advanced tool that requires more manual input. Commonly used among web designers.

Huemint – AI-generated color palette generator. Creates really impressive and cohesive combinations.

Dribbble – Used strictly as a color palette inspiration rather than a tool itself. Look up similar brands by keywords and take note of the color combinations they use.

Material 2 – A super useful color palette generator provided by the Google Material Design team.

Figma plugins – We'll cover the most popular ones in later chapters once discussing the web design process.

Create your color palette

Here are the best principles for finding the best color in web design:

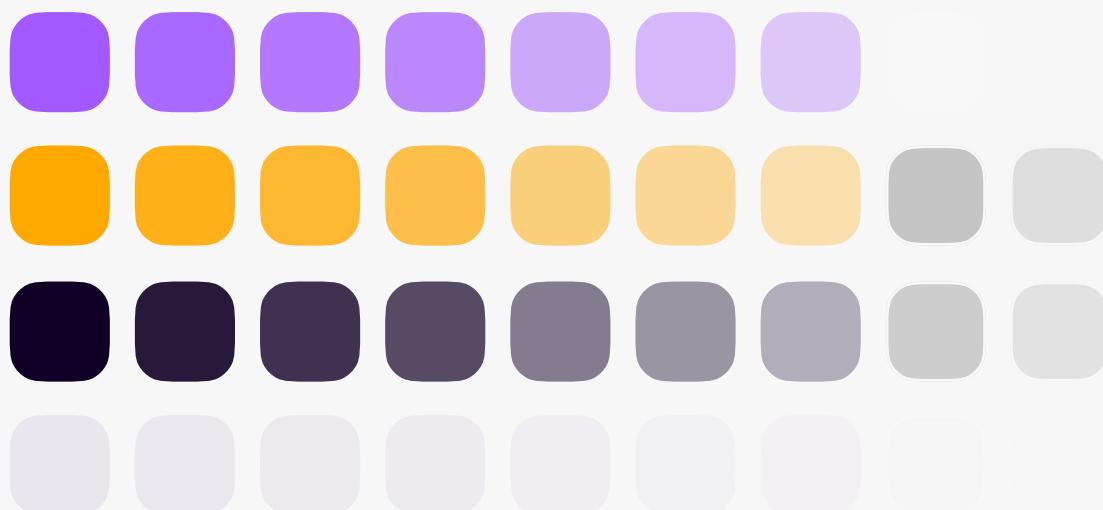
1. Find your primary color – The first step in choosing the right colors and pairing them correctly is choosing one dominant color.

Knowing the perceived meaning of each color is essential when selecting the dominant color for web design - study this.

2. Decide on the number of colors - using a three-color combination (60/30/10) is usually recommended for beginners.

3. Use secondary colors when needed – to underline a secondary call to action or add to the overall visuals. Use analogous, complementary, monochromatic, or triadic color harmonies.

4. Create tonal palettes - create tones, shades, and tints of your colors to add more flexibility to your design choices, and make grays and blacks cohesive with all your hues.

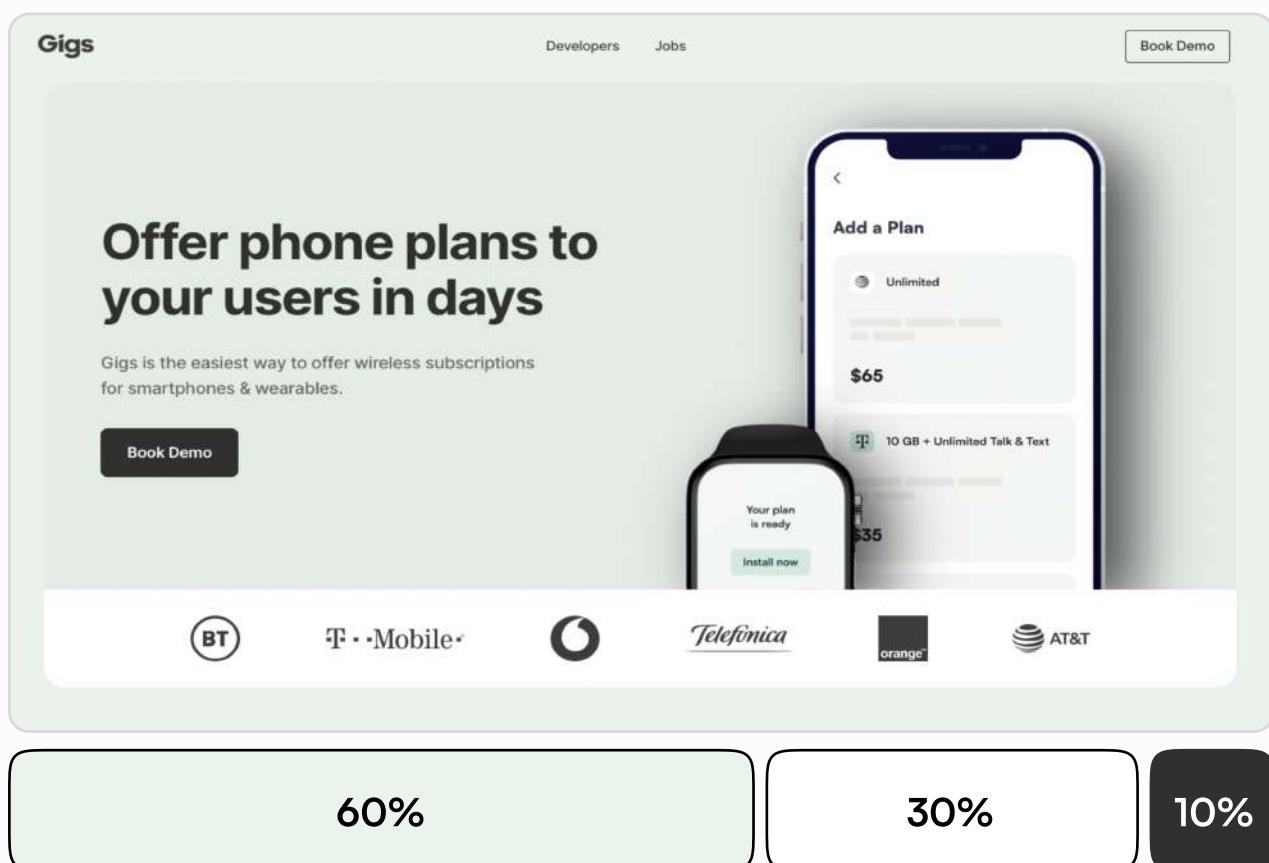


Applying the color palette

If you're confused about where to start, I'd recommend choosing three colors for your palette: a primary, secondary, and tertiary (accent) color. **Then, I'd go ahead and apply the 60/30/10 rule.**

This rule means that 60% of the colors should be used for the main color, 30% the secondary color, and 10% the accent color.

Now, let's see a few life examples so you can better understand what it looks like in practice. Here's several beautifully designed websites that implemented the 60/30/10 color rule.



Gigs.com uses Mint-like color as their main brand color, white as secondary to highlight different segments and black as accents.

Hellolanding.com using black and white as primary and secondary with green accents

Unlock life with your

60%

30%

10%

If you want to practice your eye for design - go to onepagelove.com and try to find more website examples using this rule. You'll be surprised at how many sites follow the same principle.

Gusto.com using green as primary, beige as secondary with white accents

60%

30%

10%



Chapter summary

- The basic color wheel consists of **12 primary colors**.
- **Secondary colors** are created by mixing two primary colors.
- **Tertiary colors** are created by combining secondary colors with primary ones. **There are 6 tertiary colors**.
- Color palettes are classified into four types: **analogous, monochromatic, triad, and complementary**.
- Ideally, you want to **use higher contrast colors that pass the AA requirements** for digital use for their improved legibility.
- **When choosing colors for your brand** think about what kind of emotional response you would want people to have with your brand.
- If you're confused about how to create your color palette, **go ahead and apply the 60/30/10 rule**.
- **Create tones, shades, and tints** of your colors (tonal palettes) to add more flexibility to your design choice

Take some notes!





Designing for the Web



Designing for the web in Figma

Designing for the web is different than designing for any other medium. There are several constraints and best practices you'll need to know to design development-ready, responsive websites in Figma. Before we discuss the web design process in detail - we'll have to go through the Figma basic setup first.

Designers and developers need to consider both visual appearance (how the website looks) and functional design (how the website works). With so many things that you need to take into account, the process of designing a website might be tricky and overwhelming.

Questions like - “what resolution should I design for?”, “how do I make sure my designs are mobile-optimized?”, “how do I name my files, pages, frames, and layers?” - they’re all very confusing for many designers.

Worry not, we'll answer them all in this chapter

Let's start from the beginning.

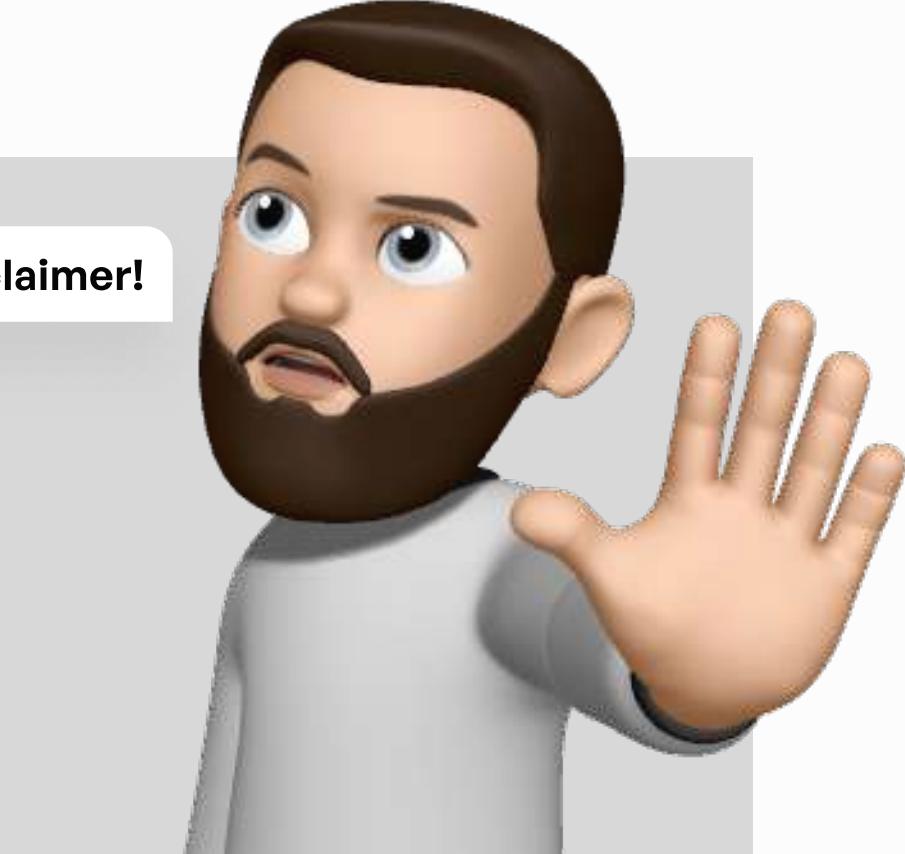
One disclaimer before we start

One thing to mention before you continue reading. This is my personal approach to website design in Figma that worked for me very well and continues to work.

Some designers might use different settings for their Figma setup, and that's perfectly fine.

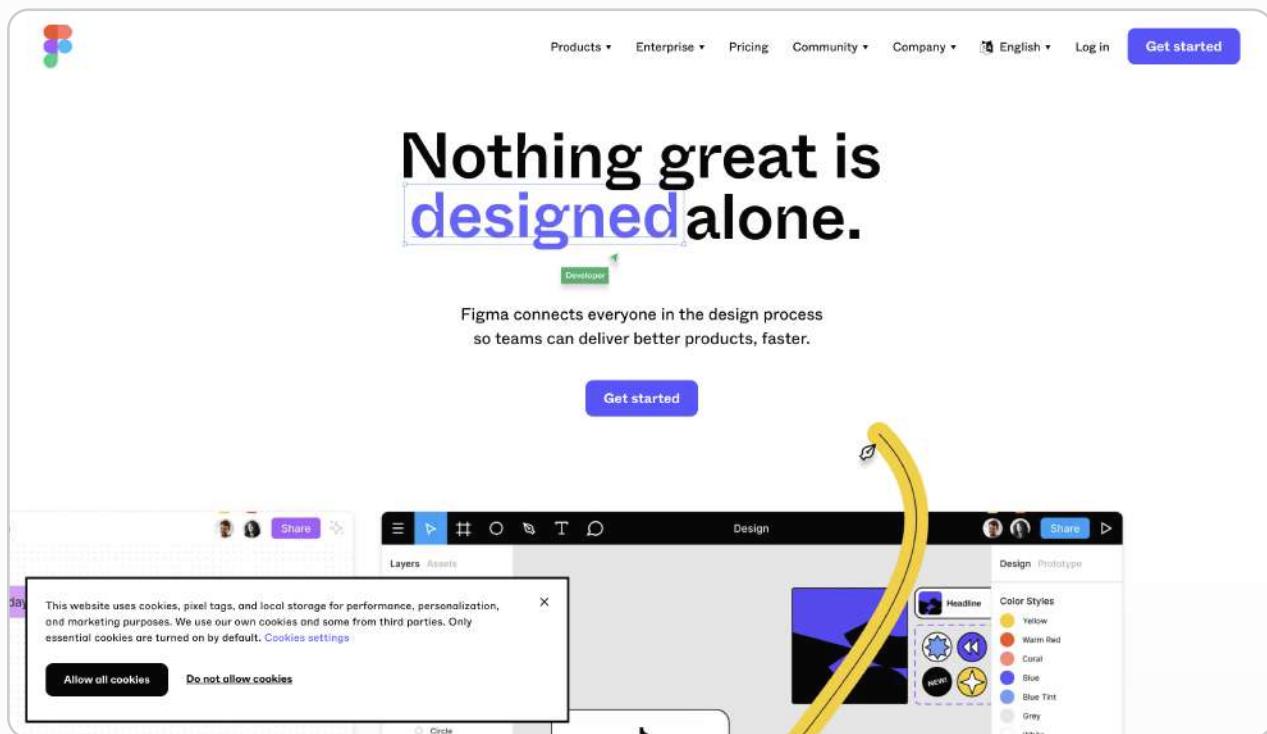
As long as the designs they produce are readable and make sense on a logical level, developers will be able to interpret them and develop them without going back and forth too much.

The setup I'm about to share works for myself and the developers I worked with.



Read the disclaimer!

Figma - the designer's superweapon



Figma.com

This tool needs no introduction, which is so for a good reason.

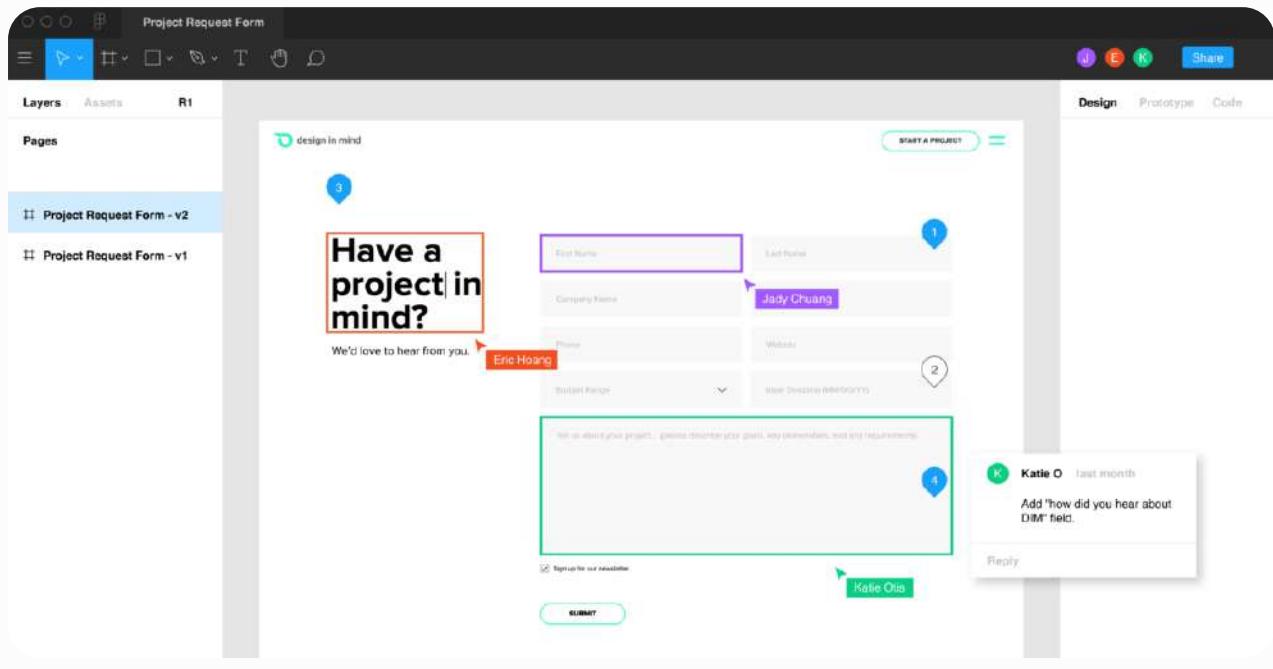
Figma is a collaborative interface design powerhouse that has changed the game of design forever.

One of its main benefits is the collaborative functionality, which you, as a freelance or an agency designer, will use a lot.

There's also the responsive resizing part, constraints, easy design library syncing, fluid implementation of vectors, dynamic components, prototyping capabilities, inspect tools, and most importantly, huge support of community plugins, UI kits, icons, 3d models, and graphics.

Team work makes the dream work

It's a collaborative machine that makes the team work extremely efficient and super streamlined. You have the ability to leave comments, voice memos, and work on one file simultaneously.



Vectors, styles, components, and the community

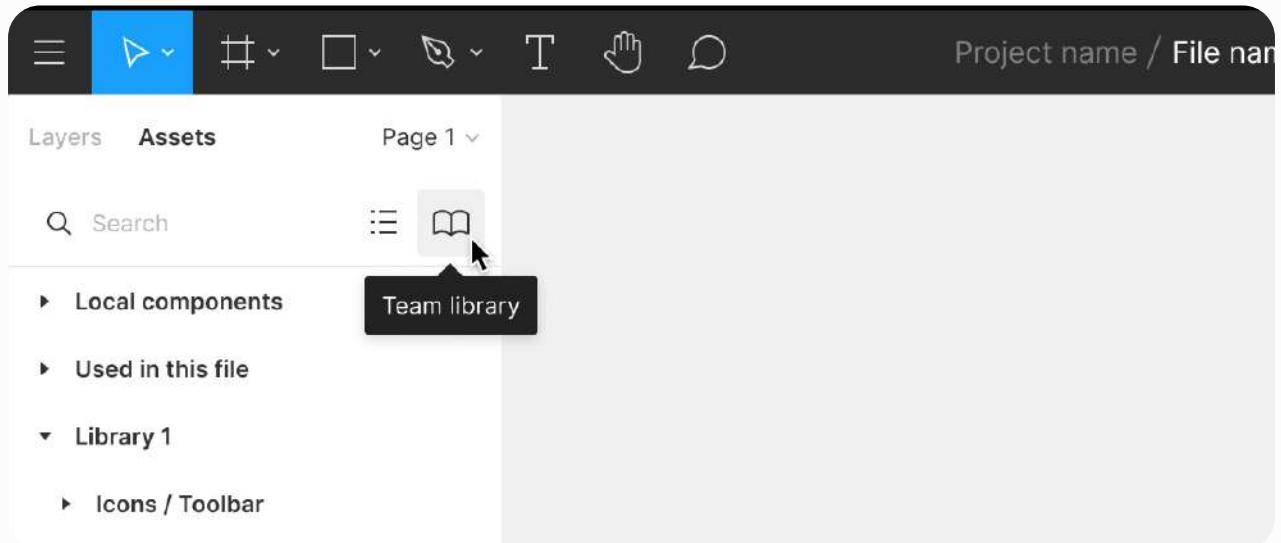
There's also the responsive resizing part, constraints, easy design library syncing, fluid implementation of vectors, dynamic components, prototyping capabilities, and most importantly, huge support of plugins, UI kits, icons, 3d models, graphics, and so on.

Version control

In Figma, everything you do is automatically saved in history for free. You can also manually commit (Command + Option + S) versions to keep things in a neat timeline.

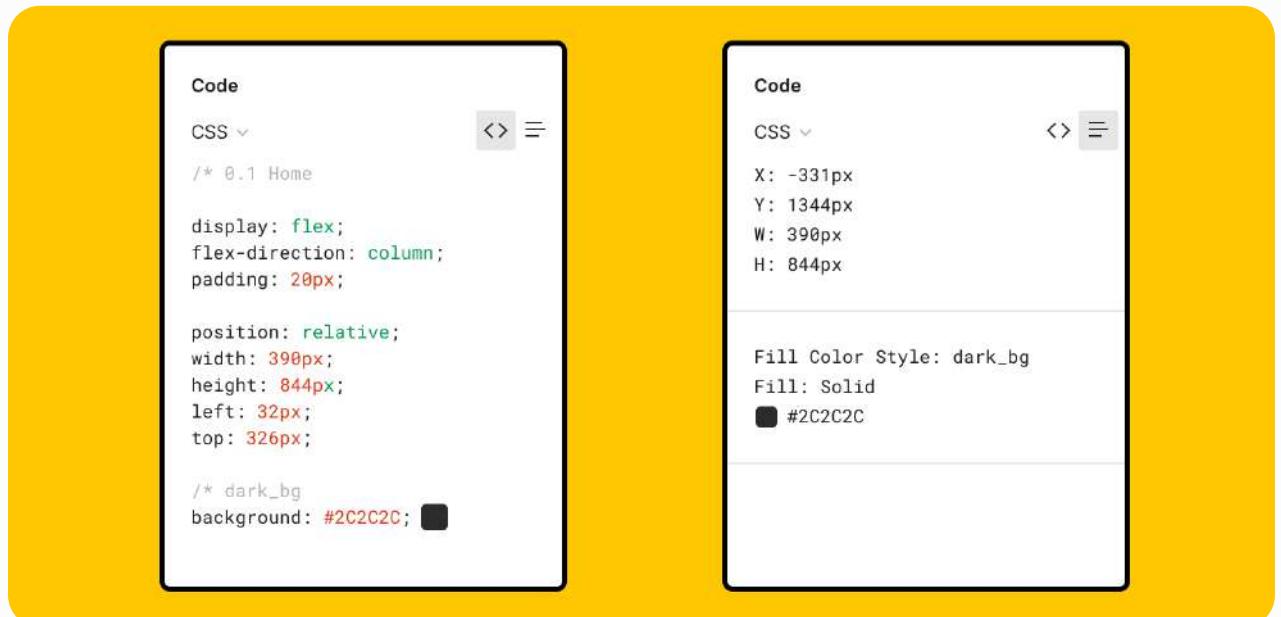
Team library

Team Libraries allow you to share your components, styles, and assets across your whole team. You can enable and disable these libraries by clicking the ON/OFF toggle anytime.



File sharing & inspect tool

All Figma files can be shared. What's even better is that developers can come in and inspect design elements, select any asset and export them to PNG, SVG, or in code using Swift, Java, or CSS.



Figma vs Adobe Xd vs Sketch

Nowadays, design tools are similar to each other. The layout is similar, and you'll find the same essential features such as components, libraries, and developer handoff in all of them.

While Sketch is rich in plugins like Craft, Abstract, and Zeplin, Figma has all those tools embedded by default.

On top of that, while Sketch requires macOS, Figma works seamlessly with Mac, Windows, and Linux devices.

Also, you can run the Figma editor directly in your browser.

As for Adobe Xd, it's a decent design tool, especially paired with other CC programs like Photoshop and Illustrator, but it lacks where Figma excels, and that is the collaborative features, plugin support, and dynamic libraries.

For our needs, Figma is filling in all blanks.



our ultimate weapon ➡

The perfect resolution

Resolution plays an important role in web design. Choosing the right frame to design on is essentially your first step in Figma.

My go-to resolution is 1440x1080. Let me explain why.

One of the smallest desktop resolutions in use albeit still very popular (8% of the web users) is **1280x720 (or 1280x1080)**.

Whenever you're designing you should aim to design for the lowest resolutions first. You want to ensure that your layout is contained in the smallest frame and that all the design elements fit nicely without feeling cramped. If you go lower than 1280, you'll get into resolutions that resemble the latest tablets. We'll use constraints to show our developers how the designs should behave and at which desktop-tablet breakpoint the layouts should adapt to.

The users expect a great user experience, regardless of the device they're using, and our job is to provide them with that.

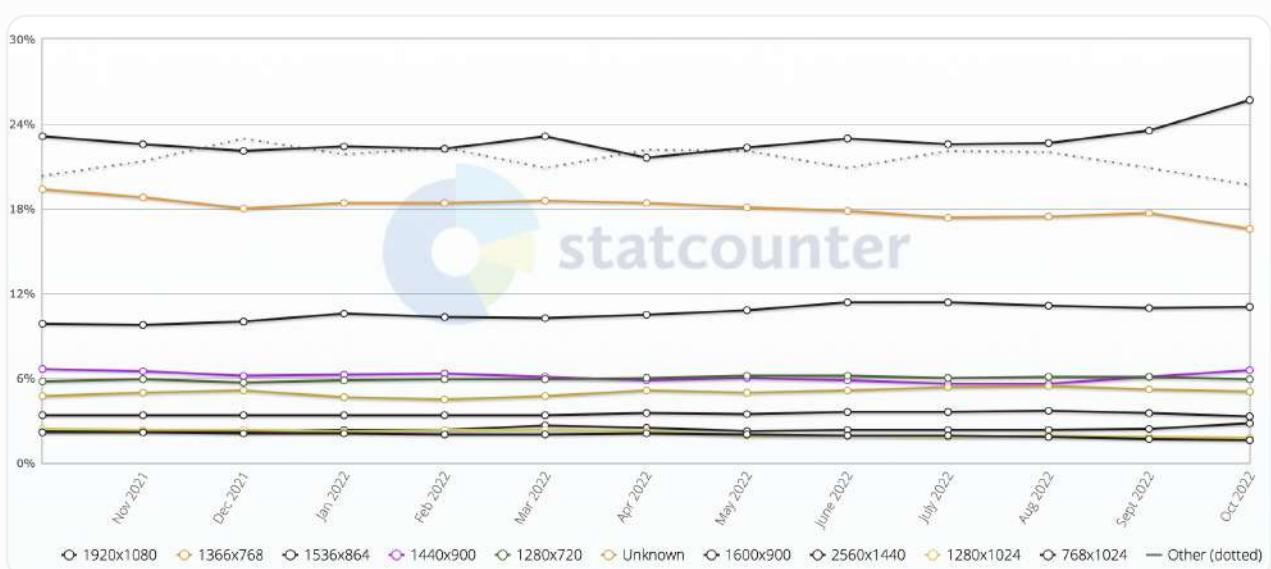
What happens when your design is not responsive?

The interface will be distorted, spanning from end to end, looking super wonky, buttons will be too small to use, and the necessary elements, such as headings, links, and contact forms, will all look super small and out of place.

This leads to a negative impression and may significantly impact the website's conversions and, as a result, the business' income and reputation. That is why we can't let that happen.

To avoid situations like these, we must design with responsiveness in mind. Responsive design is a design that adapts to whatever screen resolution we're using. You don't have to design for every single resolution there is. You just need to design for each main breakpoint and set layout constraints in between.

Here are the most used resolutions as of 2022.



gs.statcounter.com

It doesn't mean that you should design for all screens. We should try to design for the most common resolution to see if our designs are scalable between all major breakpoints.



Scaling up

It's always easier to scale the designs up than scale them down.

That's why we design for the smallest screens in the first place.

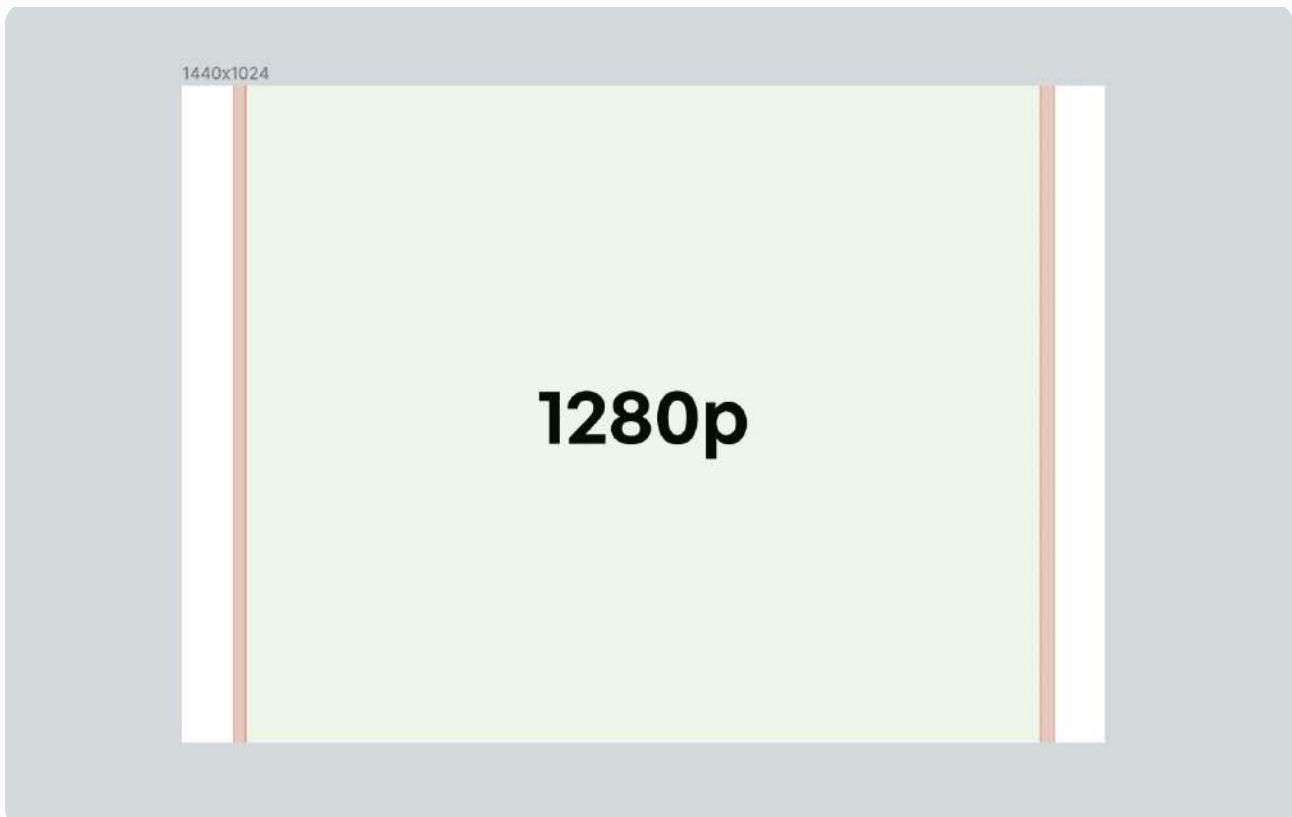
Now, let's take our 1440x1024 resolution as an example.

Knowing that 1280 width is the smallest resolution I should be designing for, I'll set up my safe design area to reflect that.



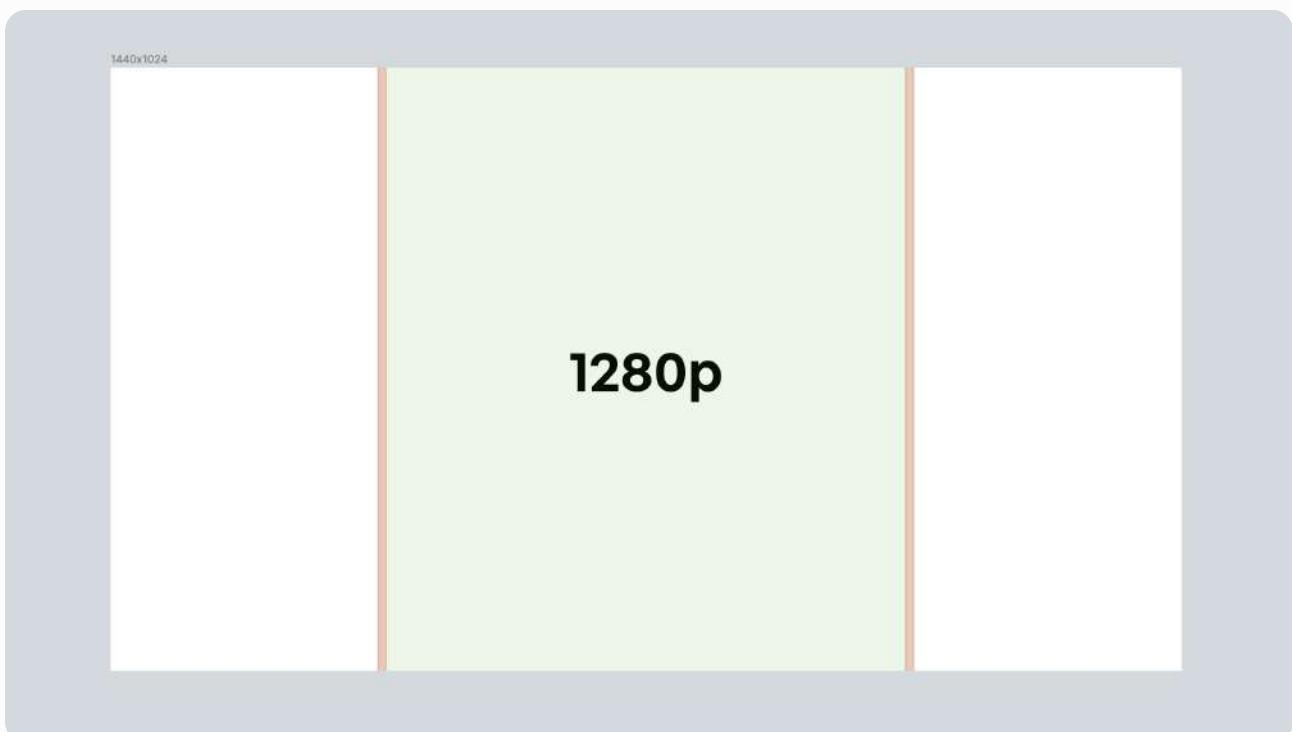
I want to have at least 20-40px of margin set between my interface elements and the edge of the screen. If I subtract 40 from 1280. I'll be left with a 1240px box width to work with.

This will be much clearer when we set up our column grid layout. In the meantime, let's see how it looks like so far.



I can't stop there, though. I have to think about larger screens too.
How would my 1240px design look on a 2k or a 4k monitor?

Let's see an example of that below:

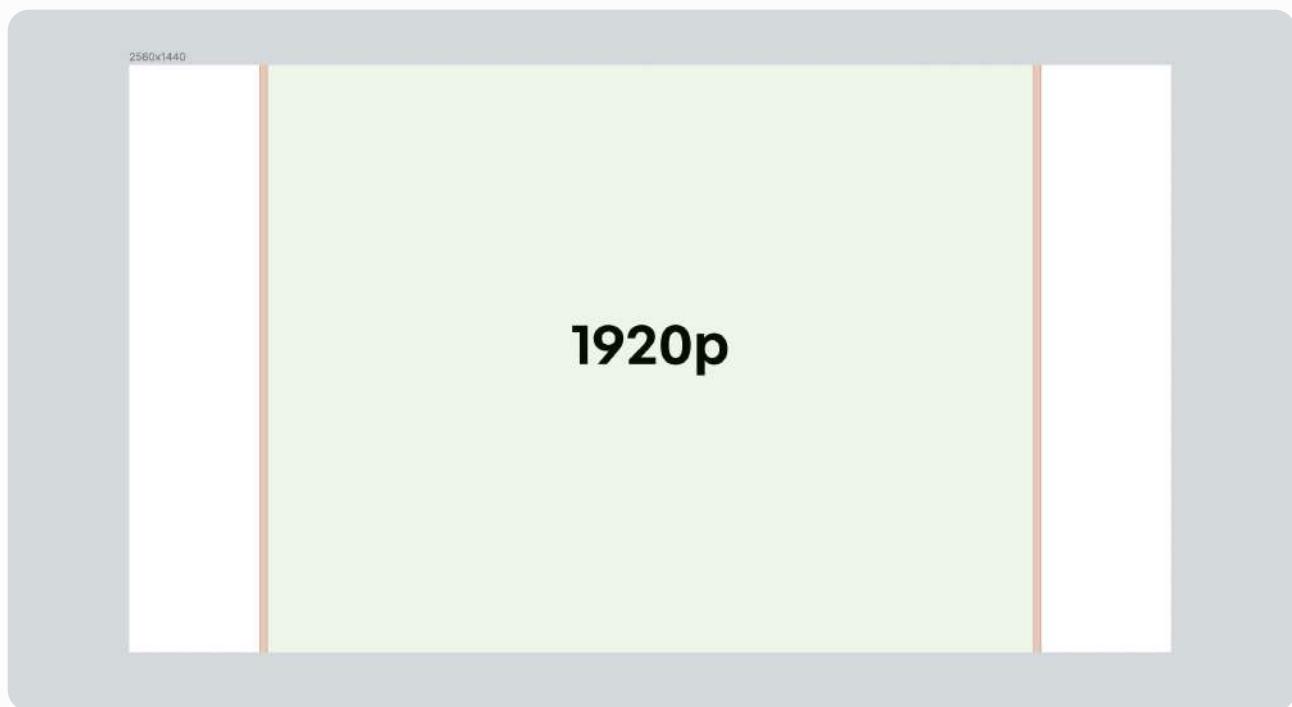


You'll have to add one more breakpoint for 2k resolutions to combat that. I design (and develop) for a maximum width of 1920px.

The idea remains similar.

I'll make the 1920px my maximum box width. The margins on larger screens need to be a little bit bigger for the design to be easily readable.

Unless you're designing for a full-width experience (which I don't recommend), having a maximum box width will help you contain your designs and make your site look neat and much more organized, even on the largest of screens.



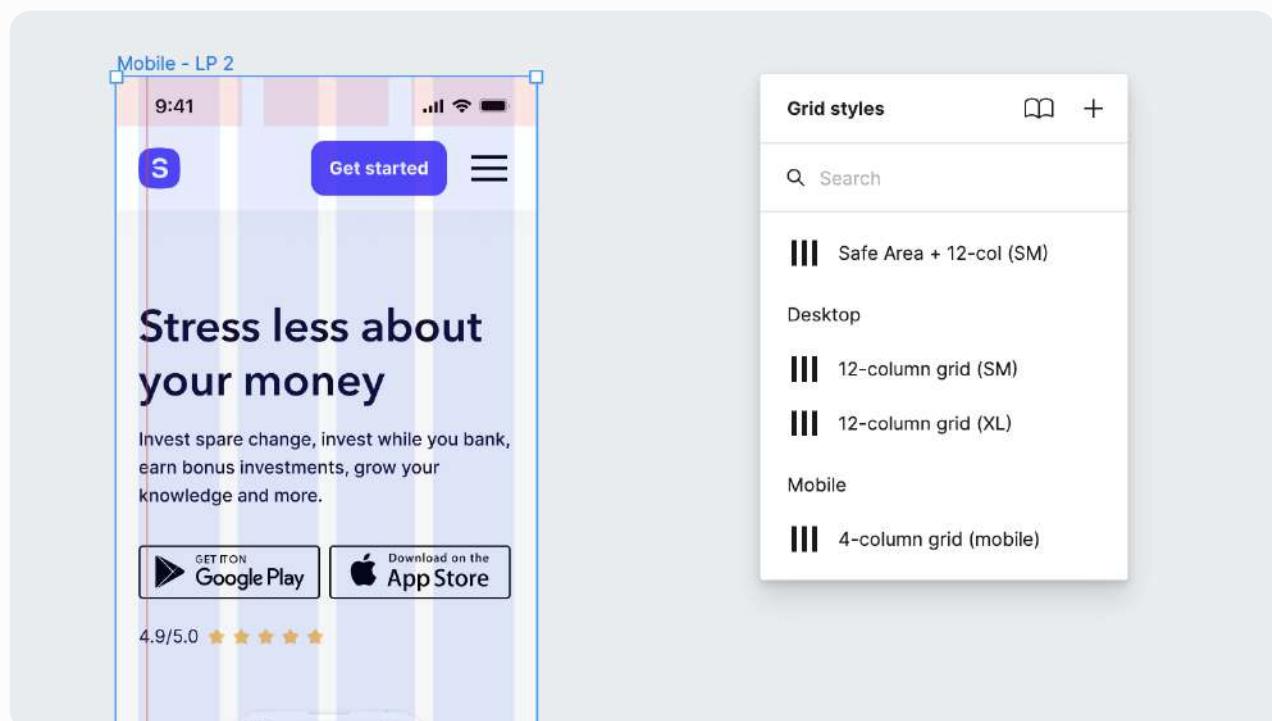
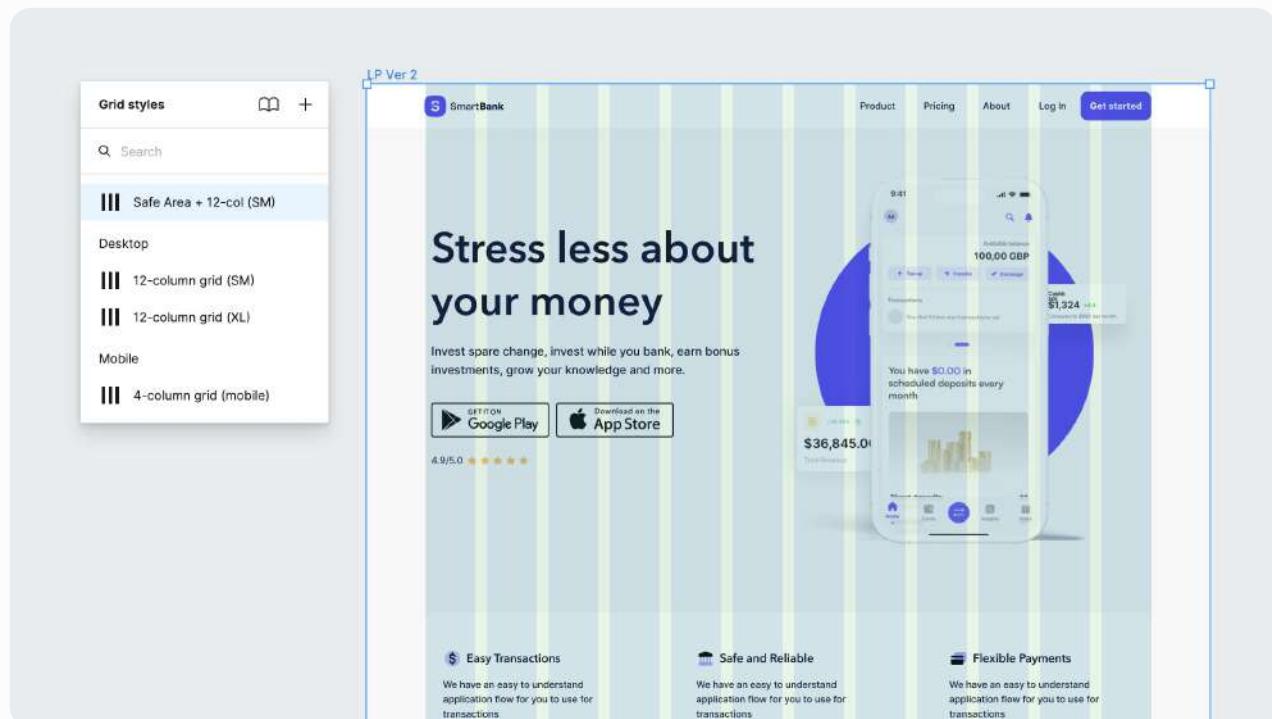
This is our starting point when setting up frames for web design. We'll talk about layouts and grids in the next chapter.

Let's jump to the next page, shall we?

Layouts & Grids

Layouts & Grid systems

To help you design clean and organized websites, you'll need to set up a solid **Grid System**. It's good practice to set up your grid systems both for desktop and mobile devices.

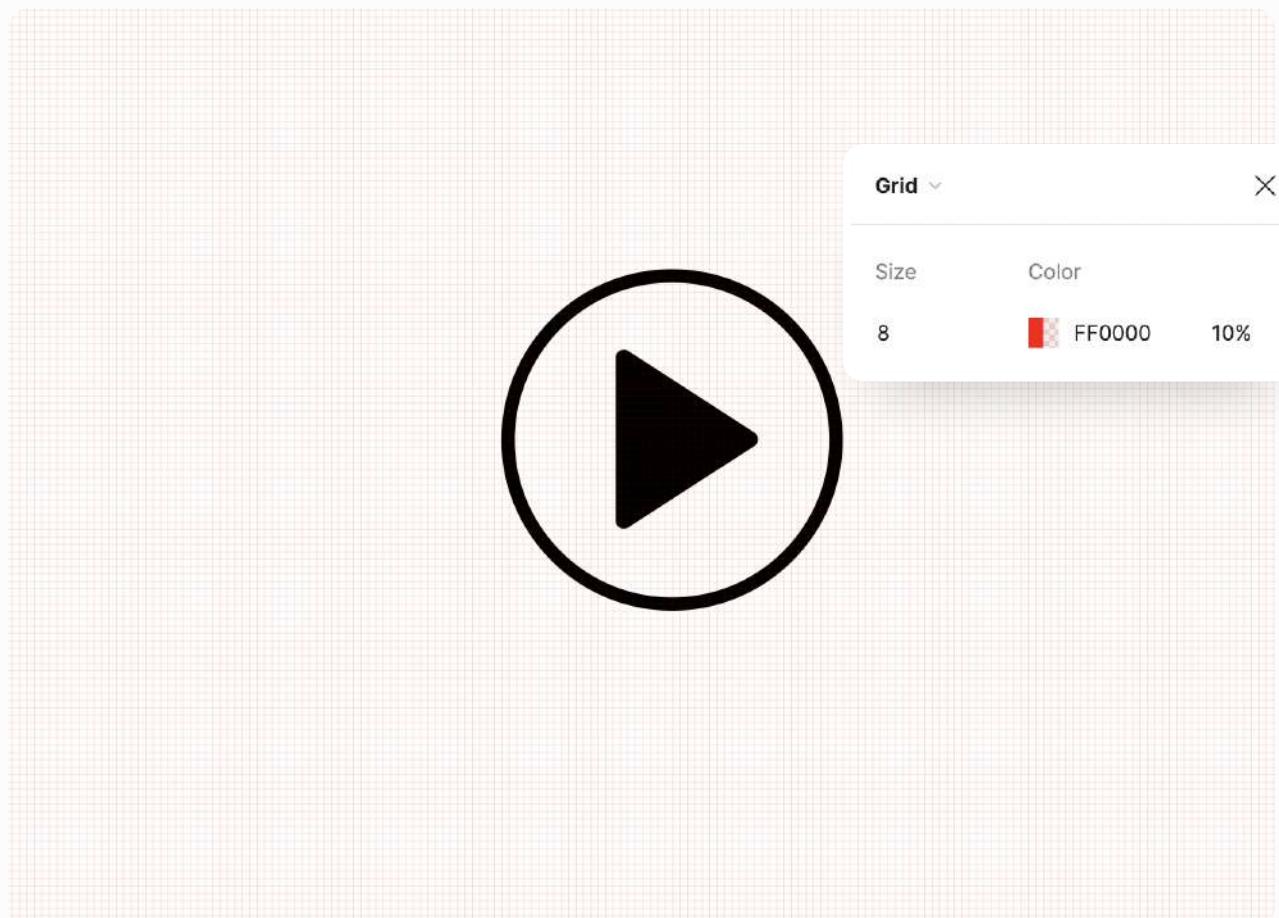


Before we discuss our grid system of choice for desktop and mobile designs, let's cover the terms and explain what they mean.

Uniform grid

A standard and default grid in Figma is the uniform grid. An evenly spaced set of rows and columns that span across the entire frame. You can freely change the grid size by changing the “Size” value. I rarely use this grid as it's too detailed for web development and might cause more issues than benefits.

However, it's very useful when creating icons or designing logos.



8-pt grid in Figma

Column grid

Column grids consist of any number of columns evenly spaced out on a frame. The number of columns depends on the design's complexity and the screen's size.

For website resolutions, you'll most likely choose 8 to 12-column grid, while for mobile designs, you'll probably go with 2 to 6.

Grids can stretch and resize responsively based on the frame same (that's what we'll use) or be centered and take up the same amount of space regardless of the frame size.

The image shows two screenshots of a mobile application interface, illustrating the use of a column grid layout.

Top Screenshot: This screenshot shows a landing page with a large headline "New adventure" and a sub-headline "responsive grid its!". Below the headline is a button labeled "Get started". The background features a landscape image of a person holding a large orange sleeping bag against a backdrop of mountains. A play button icon with the text "play me!" is overlaid on the image. The entire layout is contained within a white rounded rectangle, which is itself centered within a larger light gray frame. The background of the frame has vertical grid lines indicating the column structure.

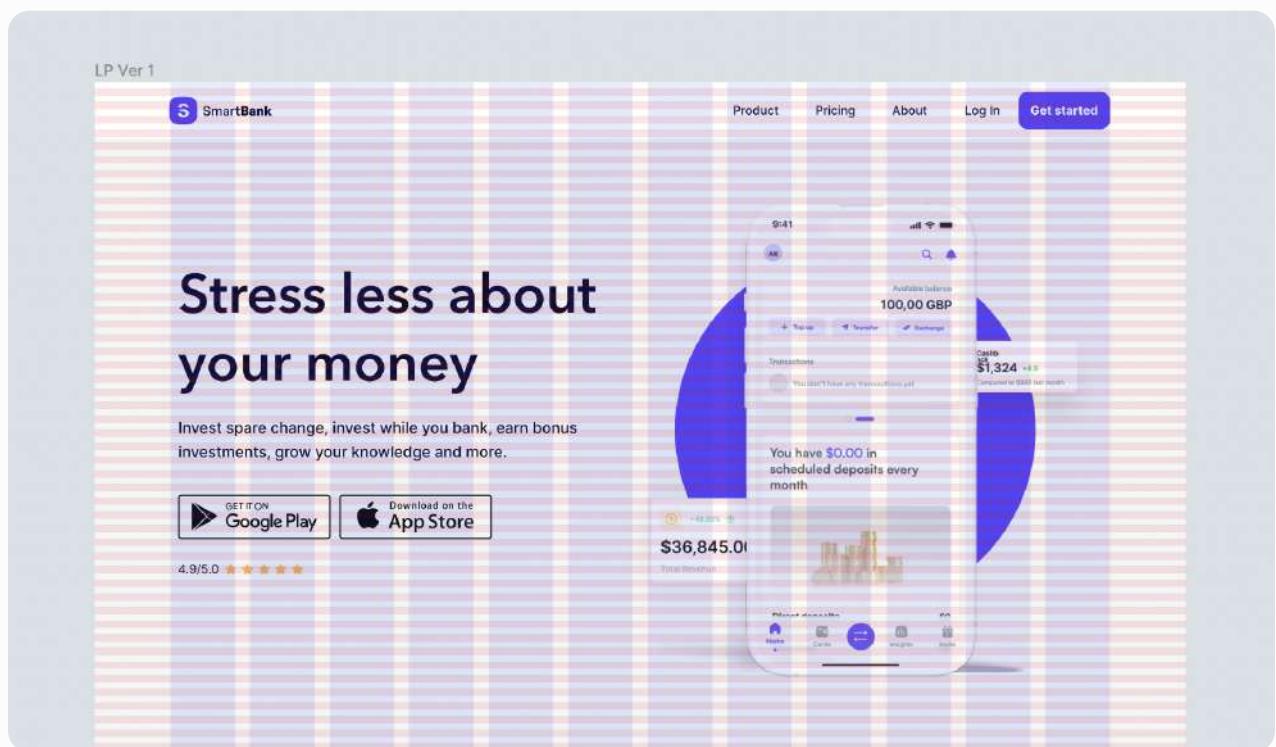
Bottom Screenshot: This screenshot shows a similar landing page layout. It includes the "SmartBank" logo, the same headline "New adventure awaits!", a "Get started" button, and the same landscape image with the "play me!" button. The layout is identical in structure to the top one, with a white rounded rectangle centered in a light gray frame with visible vertical grid lines.

Row (baseline) grid

A row/baseline grid is a type of horizontal grid that lets you space out your elements on a vertical axis.

This type of grid finds its use for dashboard designs, tables, and elements with multiple sets of rows. As far as the number of rows goes, you're free to use as many as your design requires but usually, these are based on an 8pt grid, meaning that each row takes up 8px of height, with 8px of space between each row.

I rarely use this type of grid as, when it comes to development, these values will differ depending on the size of the screen, and it's easier just to space out your elements in 8px increments instead of aligning them exactly on one baseline.



Responsive grid layout

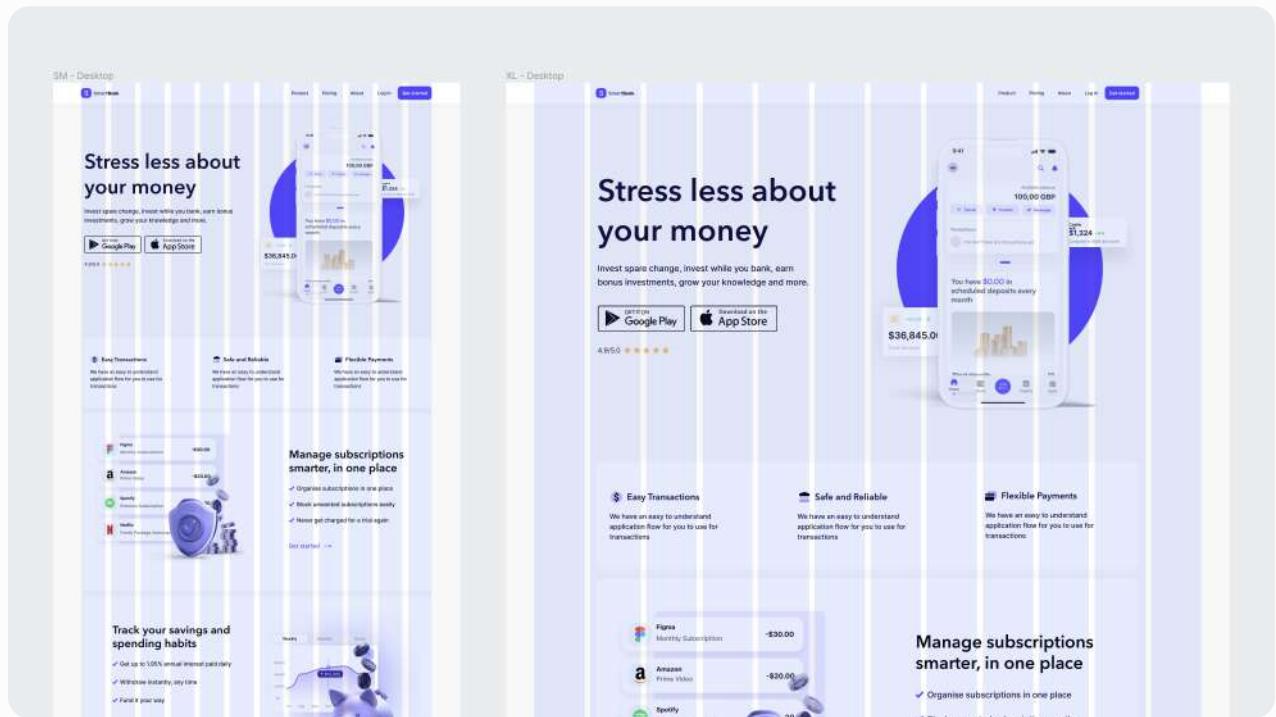
Responsive (fluid) layouts adapt to the width of the screen.

Let's look at the example below.

I'll set up my grid for 12 columns, 100px margins, and 20px gutters.

The design on the left shows a screen width of 1440x1024, while the design on the right shows a screen with of 2560x1440.

The margins and gutters remain the same. The thing that changes is the size of the columns. You can't really set % values for margins in Figma. Therefore this type of grid is not ideal for responsive website development. It serves as a good reference point, though.

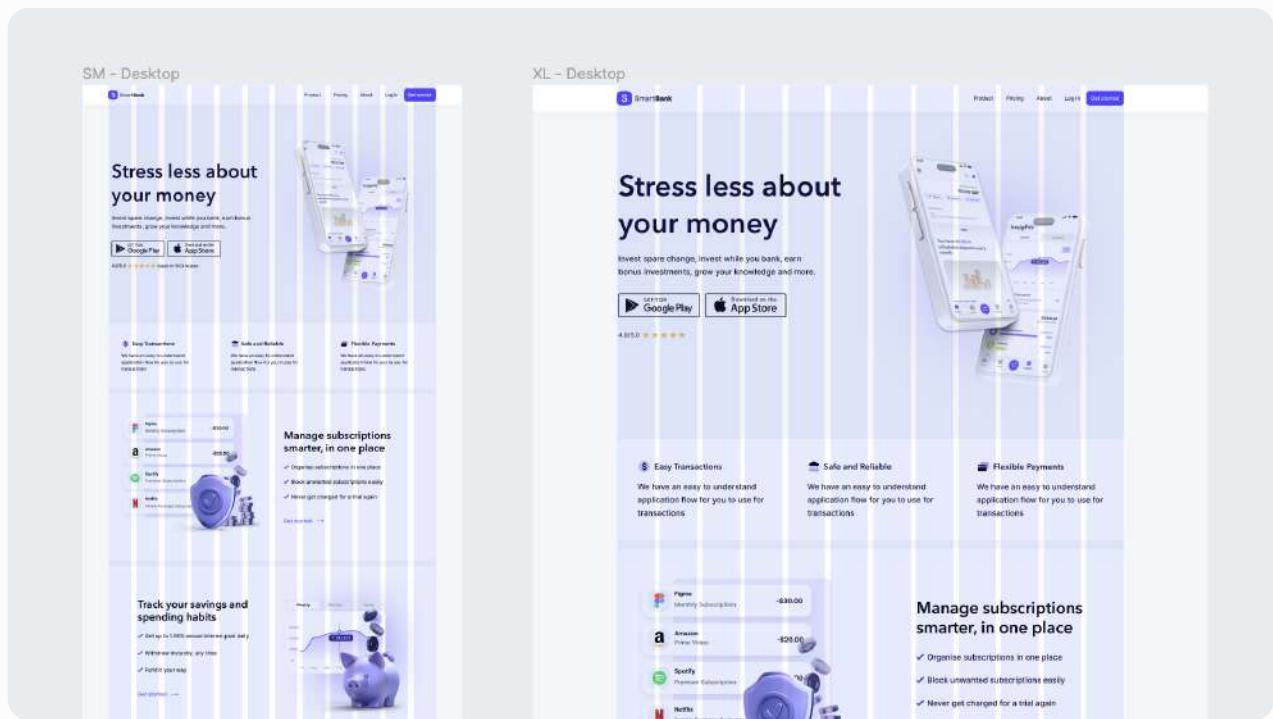


If you can manually set the margins for the bigger breakpoints or if you intend to design a full-width website - it will still work great.

Fixed grid layout

Fixed layouts retain the same width and position regardless of the screen size changes. The interface elements are contained in one set width, making it easier for development where our box widths are also fixed for each major device breakpoint.

Let's look at the example below.



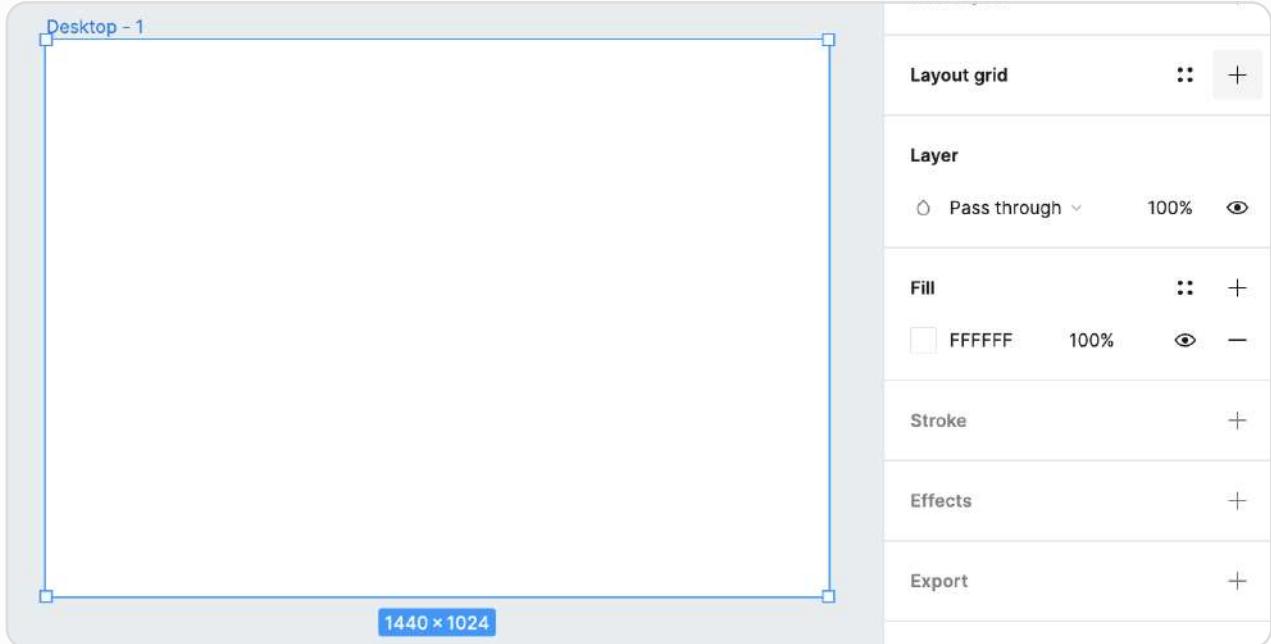
We've set up our **1440x1024 grid** for **12 columns**, **85px width**, and **20px gutters**. We'd be able to use the same grid for resolutions up to 2k+, at which point we'd switch to a more appropriate box width of 1920px. To achieve that, we've set our gutters at 20px and redacted their total width ($11 \times 20 = 220$) from 1920. That gave us 1700px of space, and we divided that by 12 columns = 142.

If this sounds complicated - jump to the next page!

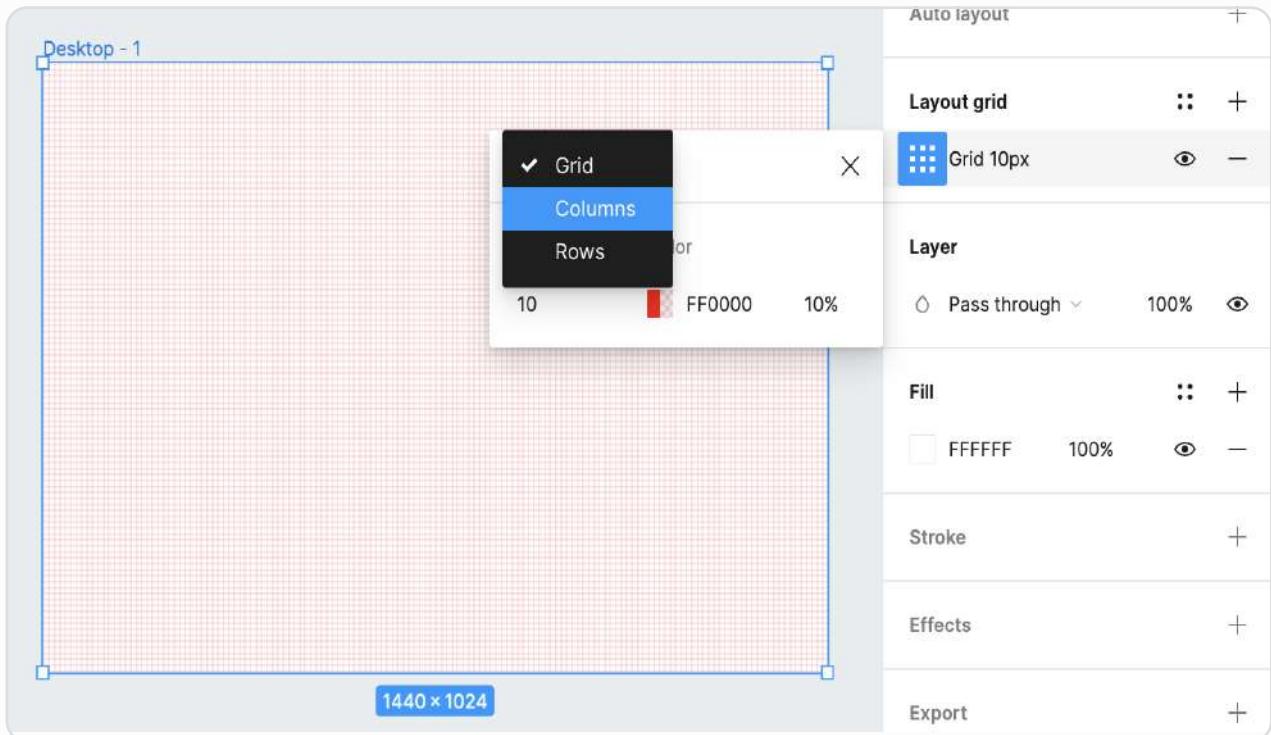
Let's set up our website grid

Open Figma, add a 1440x1024 frame (Click “F” to open frame menu)

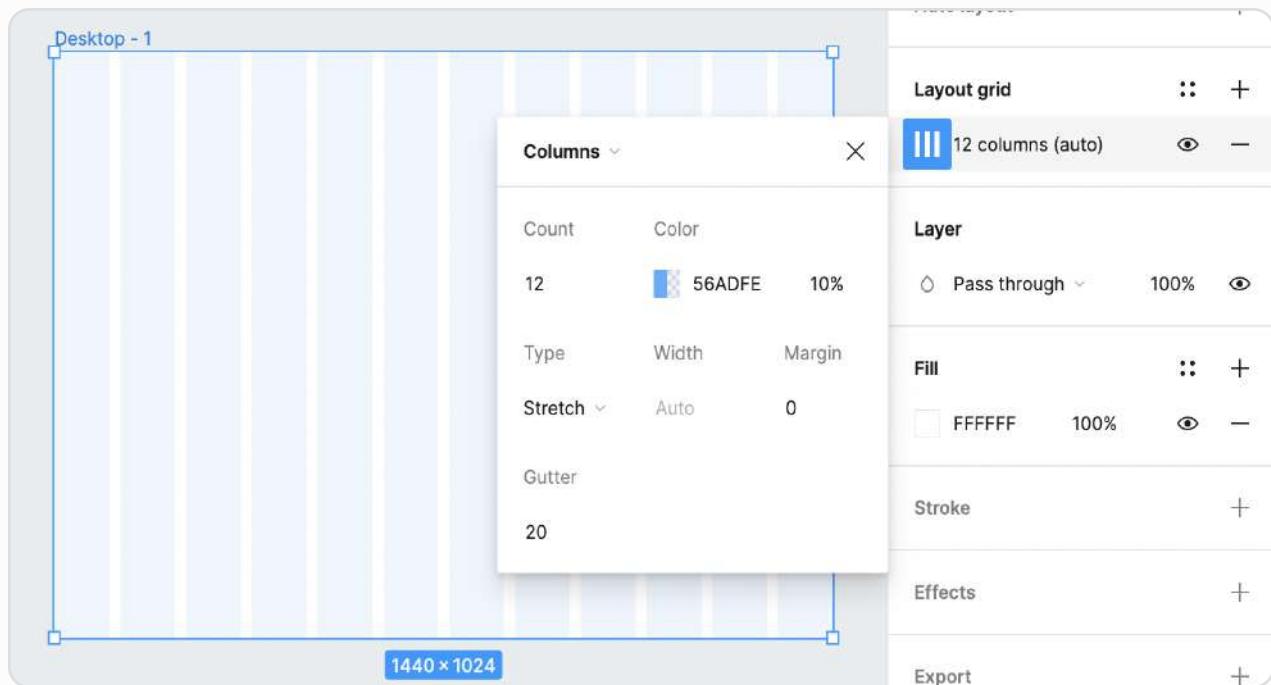
Step 1: Go to the Properties Panel on the right and click on the “+” icon next to the “Layout Grids” (1)



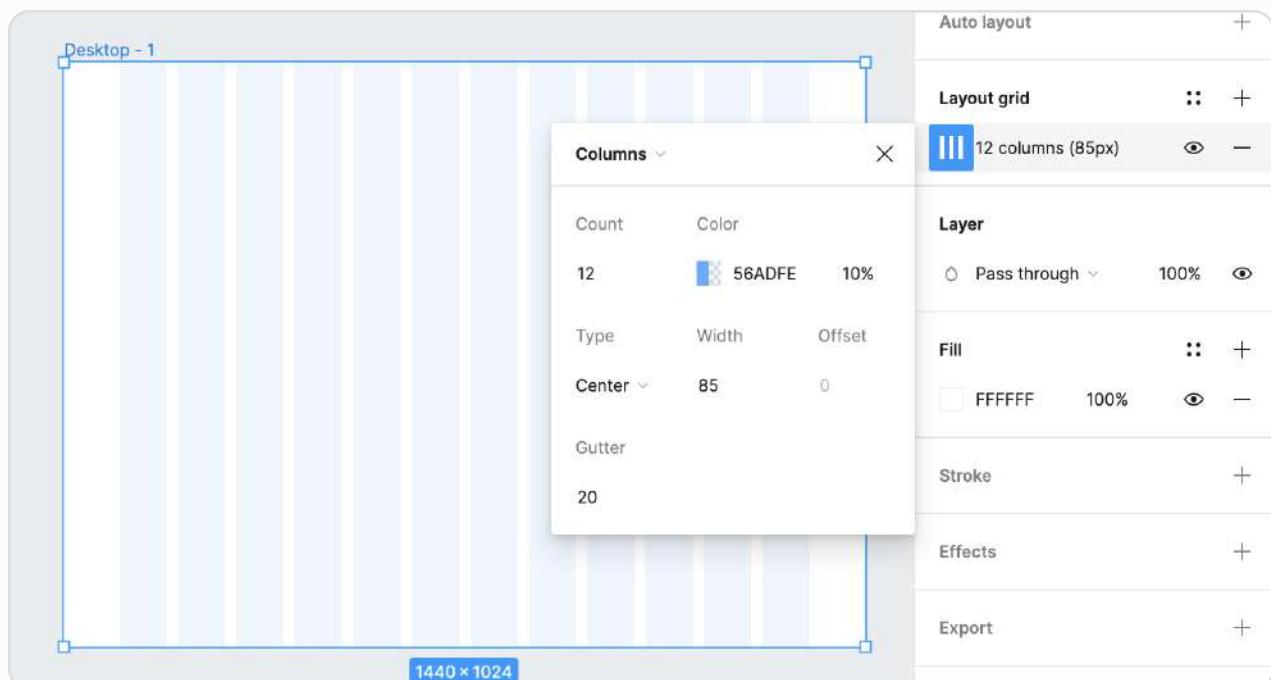
Step 2. Switch from the default “Grid” type to the “Columns” (2)



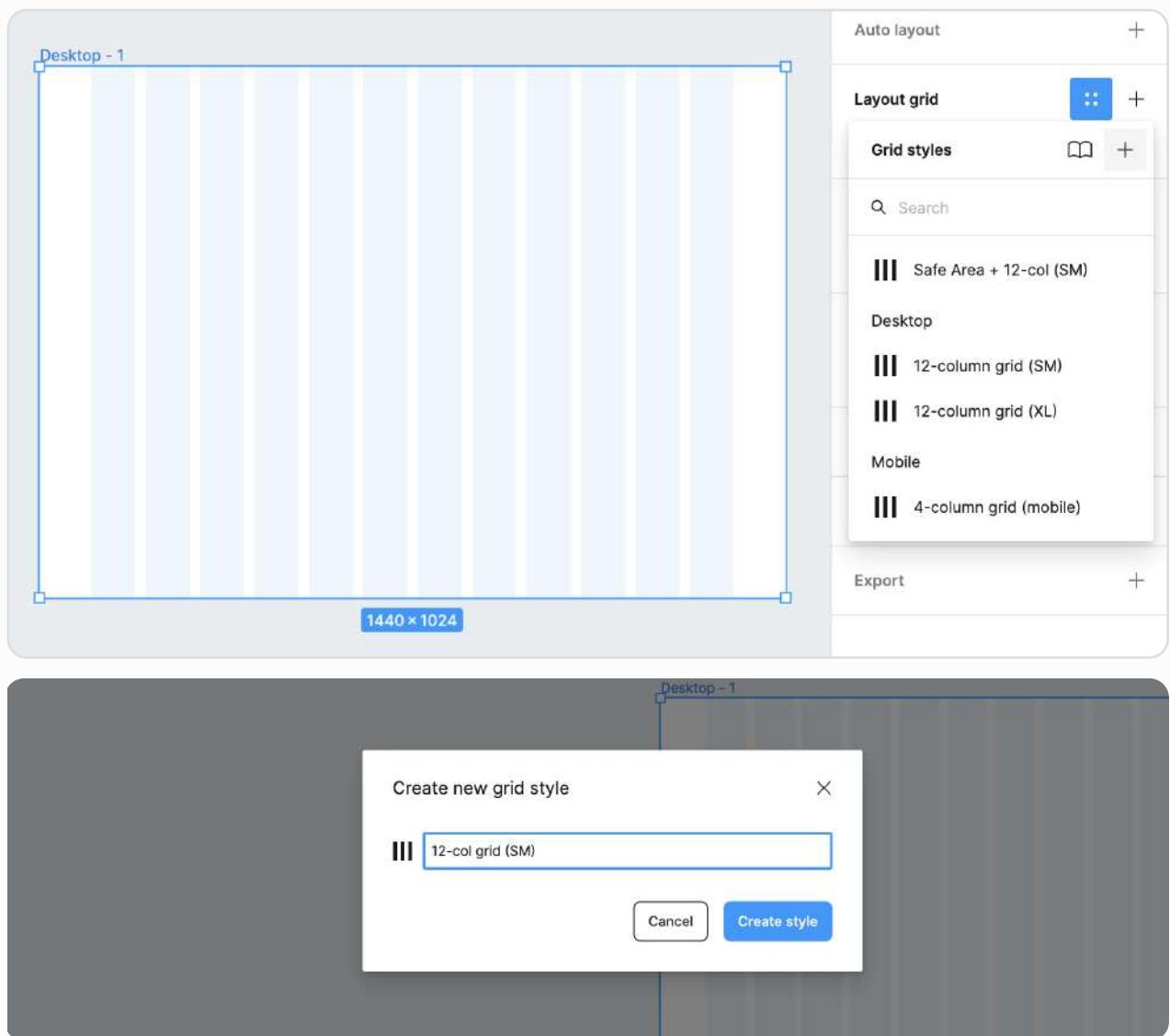
Step 3: Change the Count to a value (ideally) between 8 and 12



Step 4: Change the type to **Center**, column **width** to 85 and gutters to 20.



Step 5: Click on the “::” icon and save the grid style to your global styles and re-use it later on if needed.



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.



Chapter summary

- My go-to resolution when designing website is **1440x1080**.
- I design layouts (and develop) for a maximum **width of 1920px**.
- **A uniform grid** is an evenly spaced set of rows and columns that span across the entire frame.
- Column grids are simply columns evenly spaced out on a frame.

The number of columns depends on the design's complexity and the screen's size. **I design on a 12 column grid myself.**

- **A row/baseline grid** is a type of horizontal grid that lets you space out your elements on a vertical axis.
- **For responsive grids** I use 12 columns, 100px margins, and 20px gutters.
- **For fixed grids** I use 12 columns, 85px width, and 20px gutters.
- Click on the “::” icon and save the grid style to your global styles and re-use it later on if needed.

Take some notes!



Responsive Design

Responsive vs Adaptive design

Since the invention of mobile devices, the web has gradually become more mobile-focused. It is said that nowadays, 50-60% of website traffic comes from mobile phones.

Especially now that the majority of commercial content is being advertised on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Twitter that direct the traffic to marketed websites.

Browsing the Internet on your phone is much more convenient because you can do it anywhere, on your daily commute to work, waiting in line for a pretzel, walking your dog, washing your teeth, or lying in your bed.

What does it all mean for us, designing website experiences?

It means that we need to meet our users' needs and design the best possible experience regardless of the device people use. We can even go further and say that some websites that rely heavily on mobile traffic ought to be designed mobile-first and adapted to desktop later in the design process.

It's not an easy task, by no means.

But with Figma, it's possible.

Adaptive design

Adaptive web design (AWD) is simply designs adapted to a certain screen resolution. In practice, you design your main screen (1440x1080 for example) and replicate this design for each major (and minor) breakpoint manually.

This offers a lot more design flexibility since every screen is custom designed, but, at the same time, it results in more manual work.

Main advantages

- More flexible designs
- Better performance since web experience is tailored to a device
- Designs are optimized for all devices

Main disadvantages

- Much more manual work
- Each device needs a separate design (it could mean 100+ designs)
- Necessary to design new experiences for new devices

How to approach adaptive design?

The number of devices you choose to design is entirely up to your needs, budget, and project requirements.

The best practice for designing adaptive layouts is to start from the smallest breakpoint and scale the design up, ensuring it's contained within a certain breakpoint and the usability isn't lost.

Responsive design

On the other hand, responsive web design (RWD) uses relative measurement values like % of the viewport width, ems, or rem to ensure designs automatically adapt to the device's size.

The content is being reorganized and resized to offer a better experience based on the device's resolution that's being used.

RWD is a very time-efficient way to design websites as you pretty much design one layout for your site and adjust it for different screen sizes, mobile included. All content and functionality of a desktop website is adjusted for the mobile experience.

Main advantages

- Consistent experience across all devices
- Easy to design and maintain
- Easily scalable
- Requires less time to design

Main disadvantages

- It might be a bit less customized than the adaptive design
- Lacks optimization for specific devices
- Might be harder to design in Figma

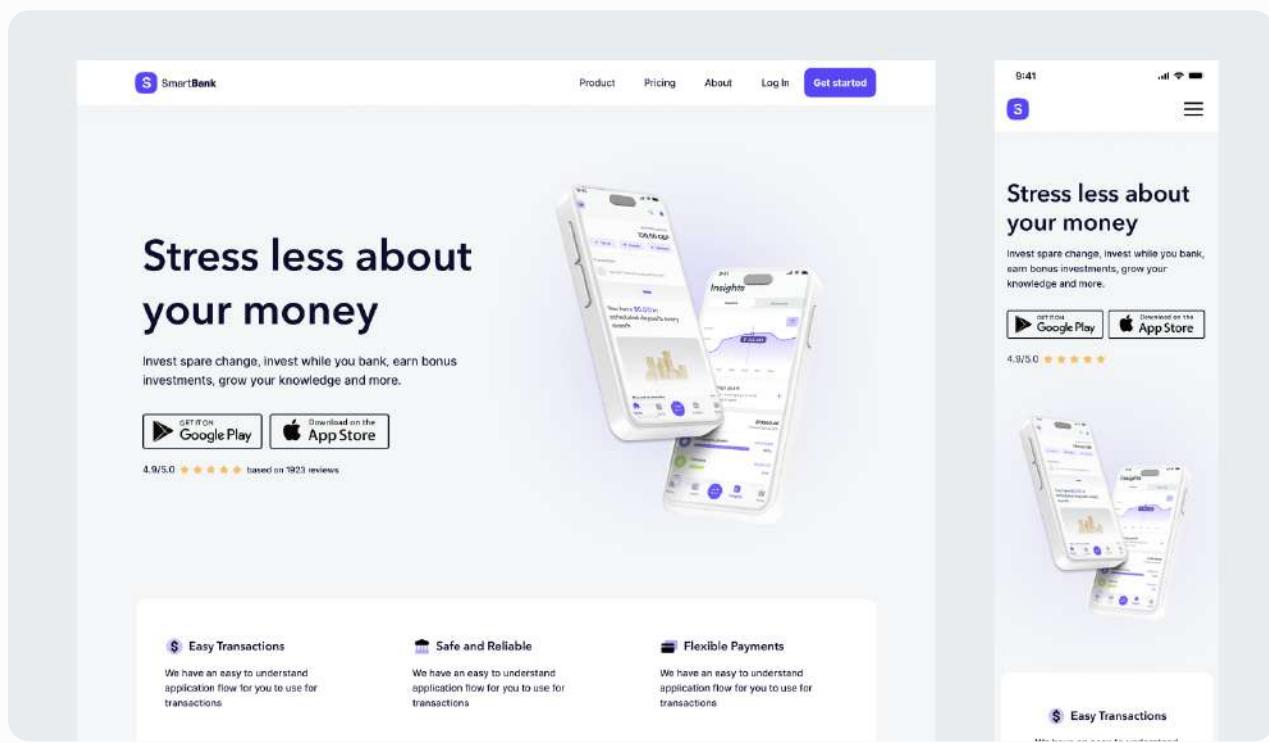
Which one should you choose?

We'll go for a bit of both. We'll design our experience responsively for mobile breakpoints, going from the lowest to highest resolution, jump to a tablet breakpoint, design responsively for all tablet resolutions and then jump up to a desktop breakpoint, design up to 1920x1080, and finally finish it off at 2k+ resolution.

An existing site can be optimized for mobile devices with the help of adaptive design. You can then take charge of the site development and design for certain different viewports.

Naturally, the user experience should also be taken into account.

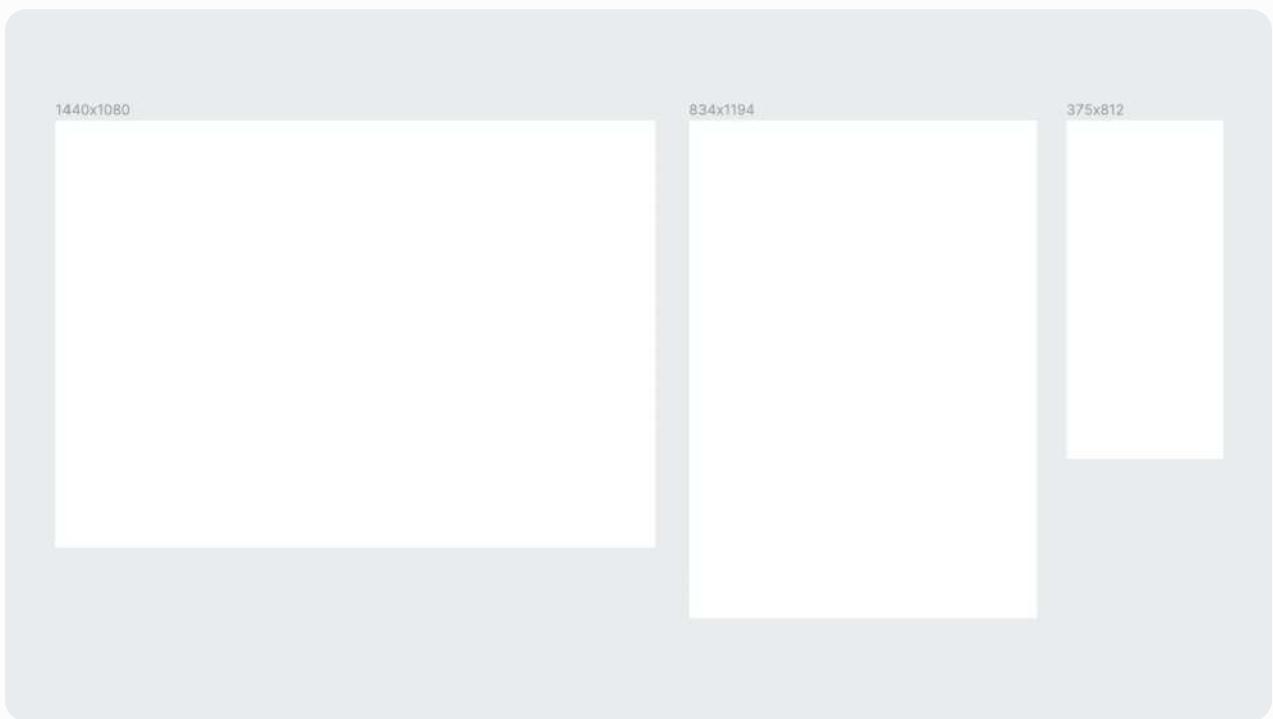
Pay close attention to the visual hierarchy of the design as it transforms, as responsive design rearranges the content to fluidly match the device window.



Main device breakpoints

Defining the right breakpoints will help us plan the layout much better. I start designing for three major breakpoints, and these are:

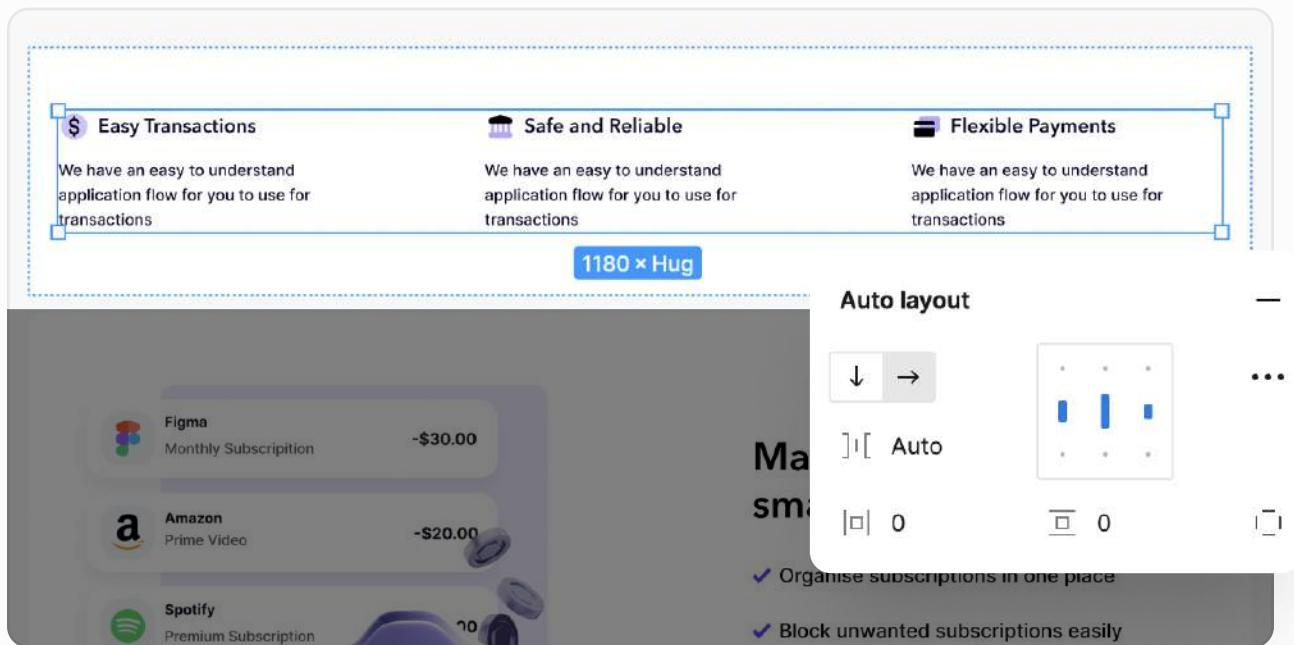
- 1440+ for desktop (sometimes also 1920+)
- 768+ for tablets
- 360+ for mobile devices



Responsive design in practice

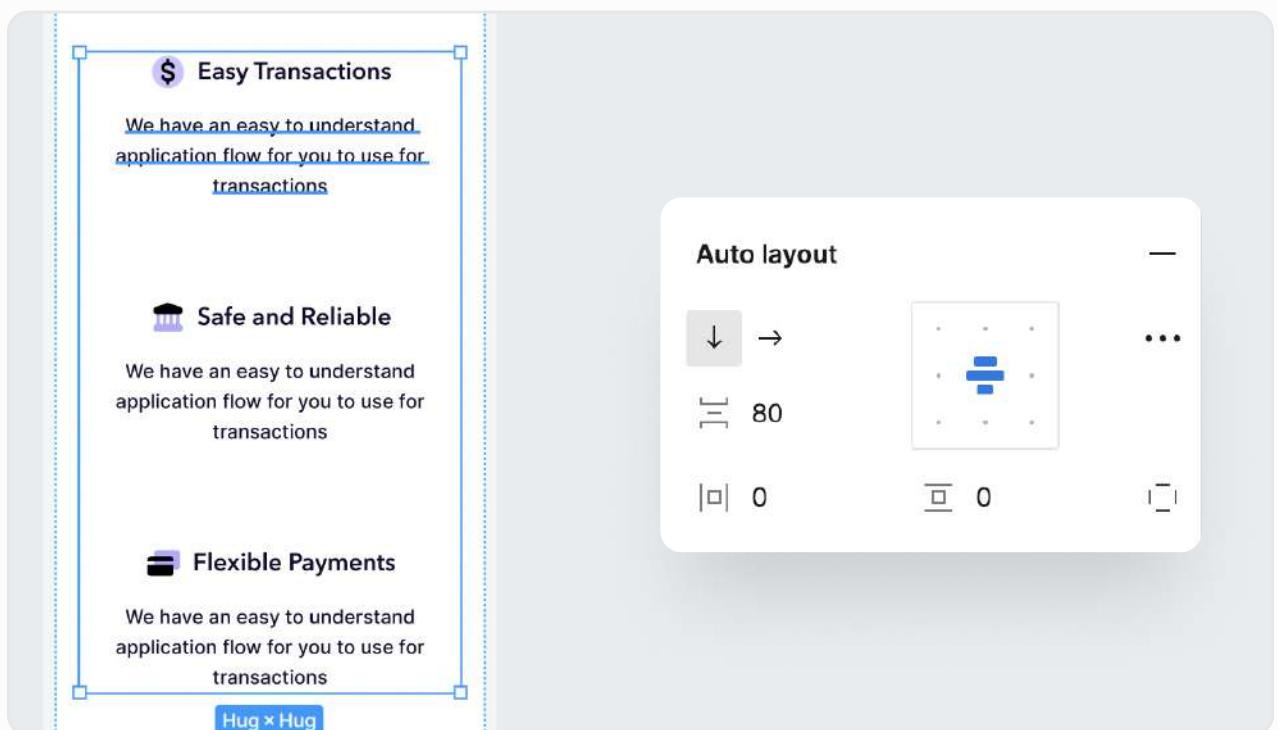
As we mentioned, when designing for web, we need to design for several devices. Our design must adapt to screen size changes to contain all the important information.

What that means in practice is that the horizontal desktop layouts will need to be switched to a vertical layout. You can do that easily by changing the direction of the auto layout group.



I always repeat that auto layout is one of the first things you should master when learning design. You will save hours of manual work by switching the layout direction and positions.

Look at the example below. I was able to adjust the desktop design to a mobile view in just a few clicks.



Adjusting the text size

The type scale you will use for your desktop devices will differ greatly from your tablet and mobile counterparts. You need to scale the text sizes down accordingly to make it more legible and readable on smaller devices.

An H1 heading might have a size of 62px on a desktop resolution but at the same time - 32 or 34px on a mobile screen. Paragraph text might look good as 20 px on a desktop, but on mobile, using 16 or 17px might look much more suitable.

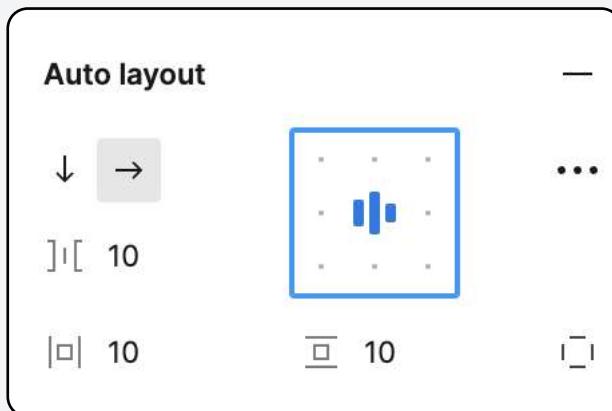
Libre Franklin Light 60	<h2>H2 Headline</h2>
Merriweather BlackItalic 48	<h3>H3 Headline</h3>
Libre Franklin Regular 34	<h4>H4 Headline</h4>
Libre Franklin Regular 24	<h5>H5 Headline</h5>
Merriweather Bold Italic 20	<h6>H6 Headline</h6>
Libre Franklin Medium 16	Subtitle 1
Merriweather Medium	

To find the suggested font sizes for desktop and mobile devices go to [**Material 2 website**](#) and look up the text properties. You can also use [**Tailwind CSS**](#) as your reference point.



Auto layout 1:1

Auto layout is a dynamic property you can add to your static frames and components. It lets you create designs that grow or shrink to fit your container and readjust their size as their contents change. This is helpful when you need to add layers, make room for longer text strings, or maintain one alignment as your designs evolve.



The importance of auto layout in design

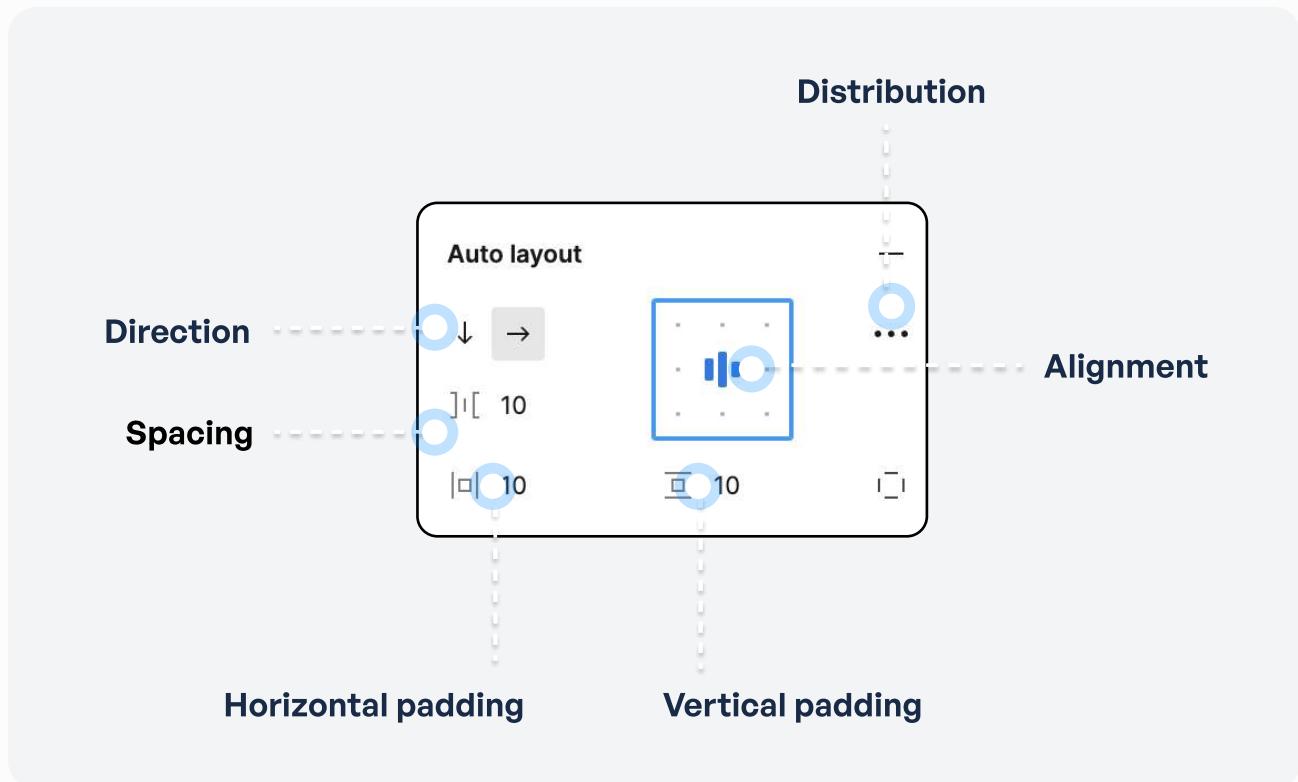
If you use auto layout properly, you won't have to keep resizing the elements every time a change has been made, or new items have been added. Turning your designs responsive is now a breeze as the layout changes based on the direction you choose.

Let's cover the basic terms and settings to help you get familiar with auto layout in Figma.

Jump to the next page!

Auto layout terms

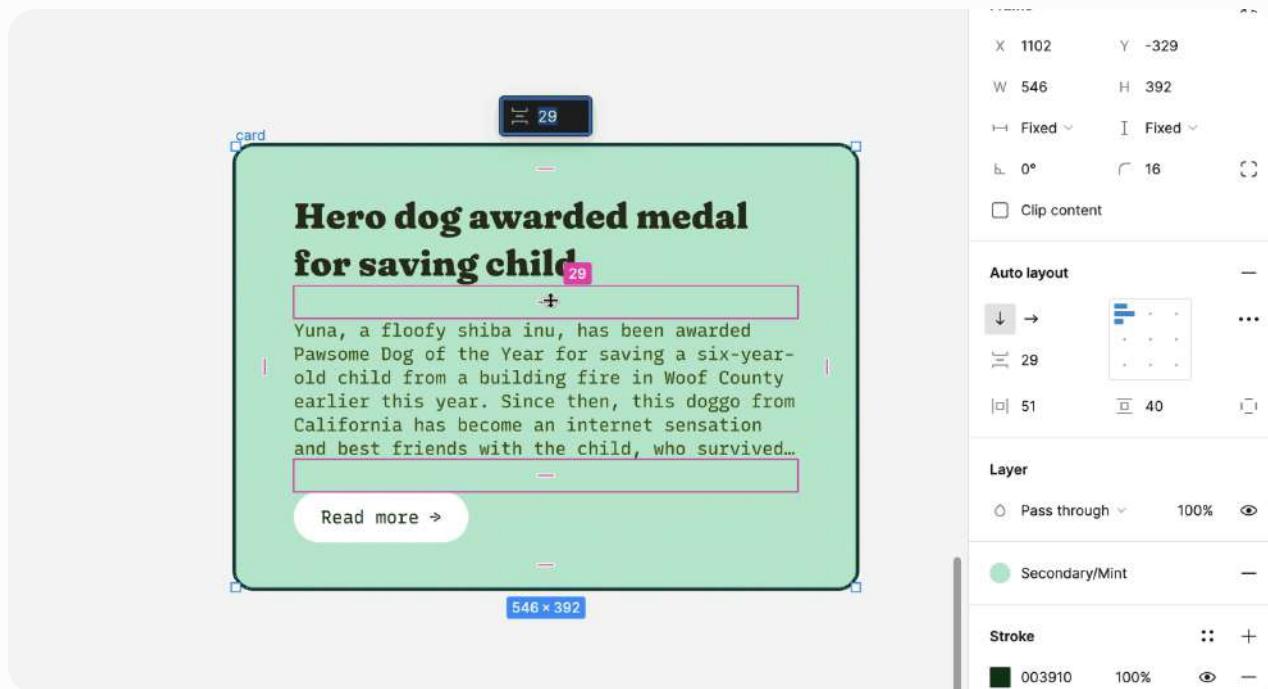
Frames with auto layouts have entirely different properties than regular frames. Changes appear in the right sidebar panel when you apply an auto layout. Let's see what these properties mean.



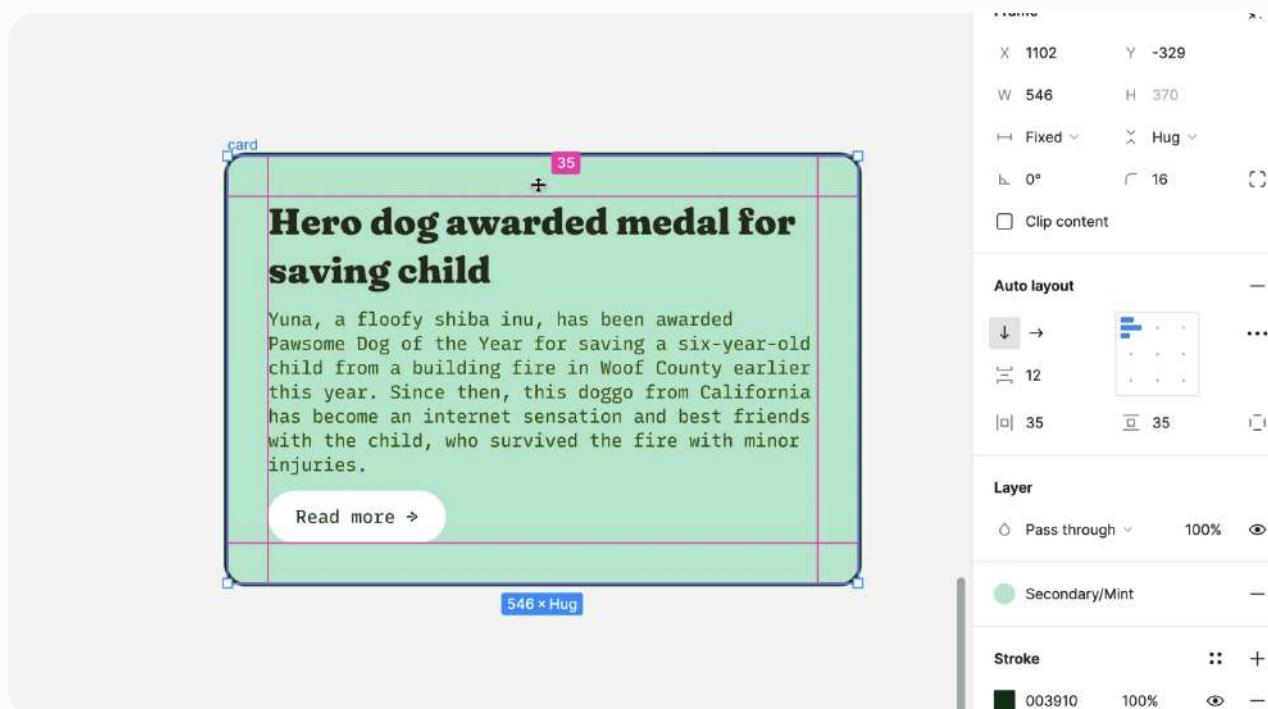
Direction describes the way auto layout elements align within the dynamic container:

- **Choose a vertical direction** to align your objects within an auto-layout container along the y-axis. We'll be using this for mobile mainly.
- **Choose a horizontal direction** to align your objects within an auto-layout container along the x-axis. We'll use this a lot for card groups, navigation items, and desktop devices.

Spacing between elements dictates the amount of margin left between two elements within the auto-layout container.

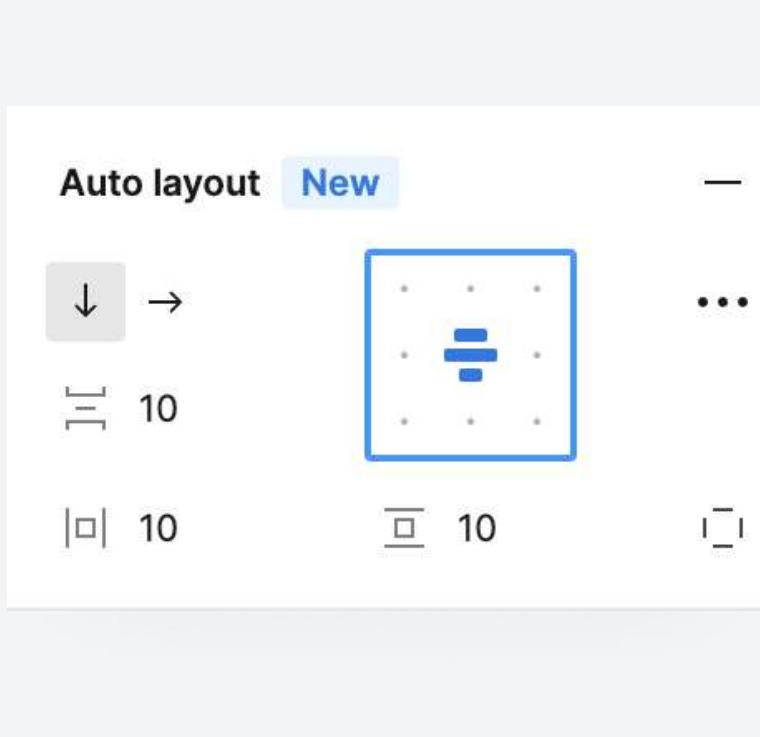


Padding controls the space between the boundary of the auto layout frame and its child containers. You can set padding values all at once or edit them on each axis, horizontally or vertically.



Alignment lets you choose how to align child objects within an auto layout frame. When you want to align your auto layout selection group to the bottom, top, left, or correct, look at the alignment and padding property on your properties' panel on the right.

Unlike objects in a regular frame, you can't control the alignment of the objects individually. For that reason, you set the alignment of the child objects on the parent auto layout frame, similar to how it works in web development. Children inherit their parent's properties.



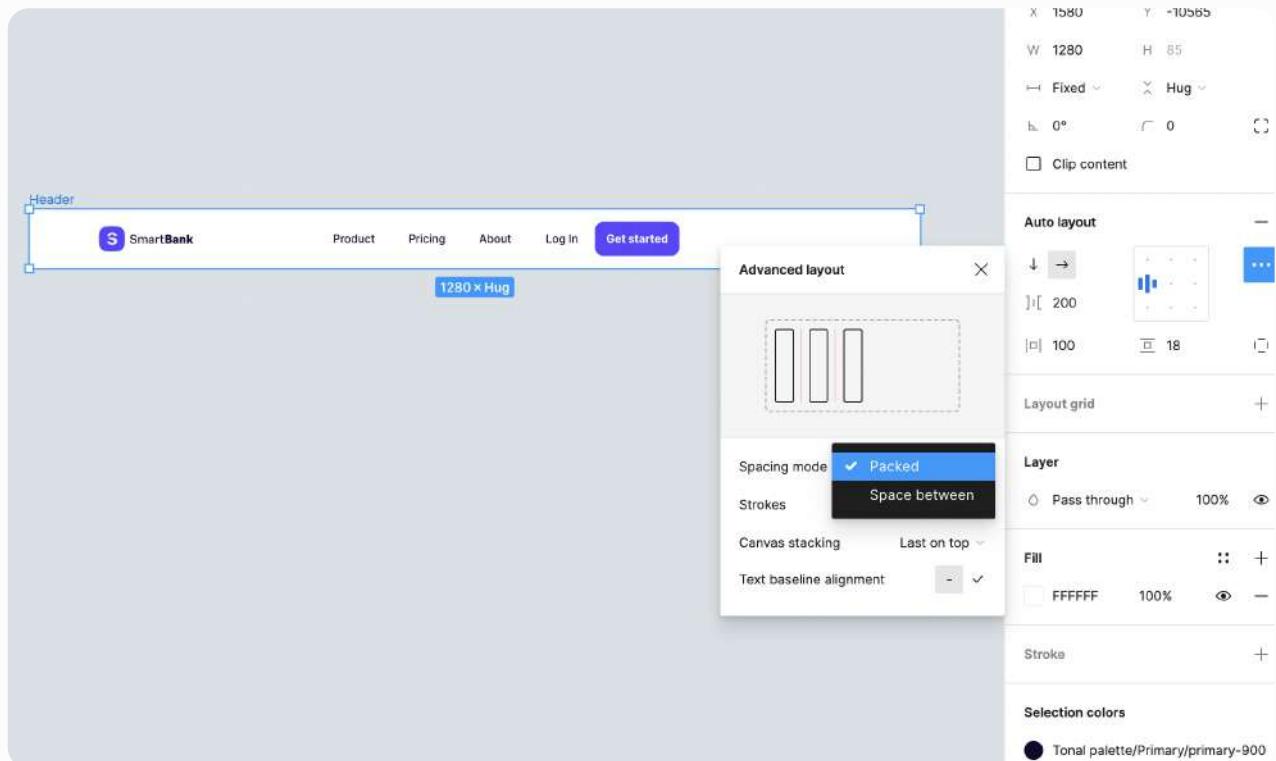
Use the interactive grid to select nine layout options for the children in a frame. **Align your children elements** to left, middle, right, top, center, and bottom, depending on your needs.

Distribution property let's you set how objects in an auto layout frame will be distributed within that frame.

Click the three dots  to open advanced layout settings. Next, go to Spacing mode, use the dropdown to choose:

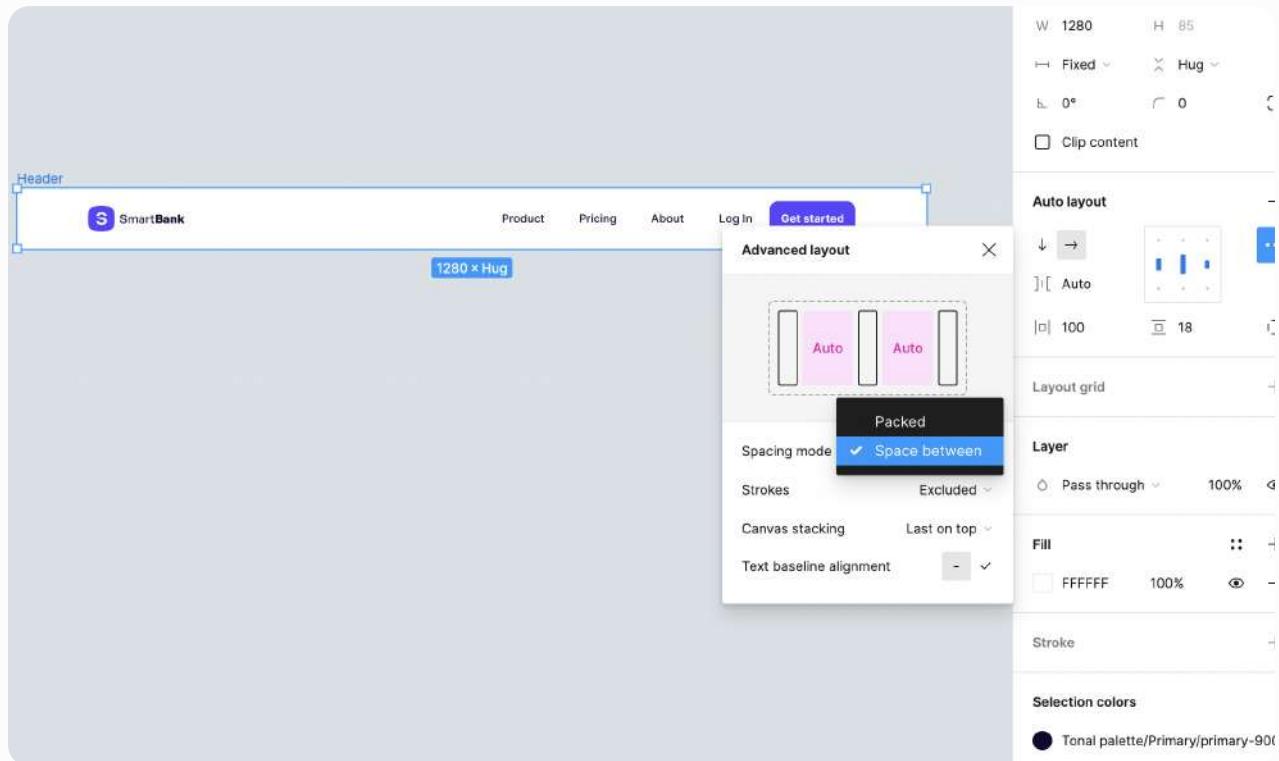
Packed: Objects in a frame will be grouped together. Use this option to keep objects in a frame as close as possible and aligned together.

You can also switch between Distribution modes by clicking “**X**” with the interactive grid being selected.



Packed distribution is best used for items that need to align to either side of the container like web navigation items.

Space between: Objects in a frame have the space between them equally distributed along the direction and alignment set for the frame. Use this option to stretch objects across a frame.



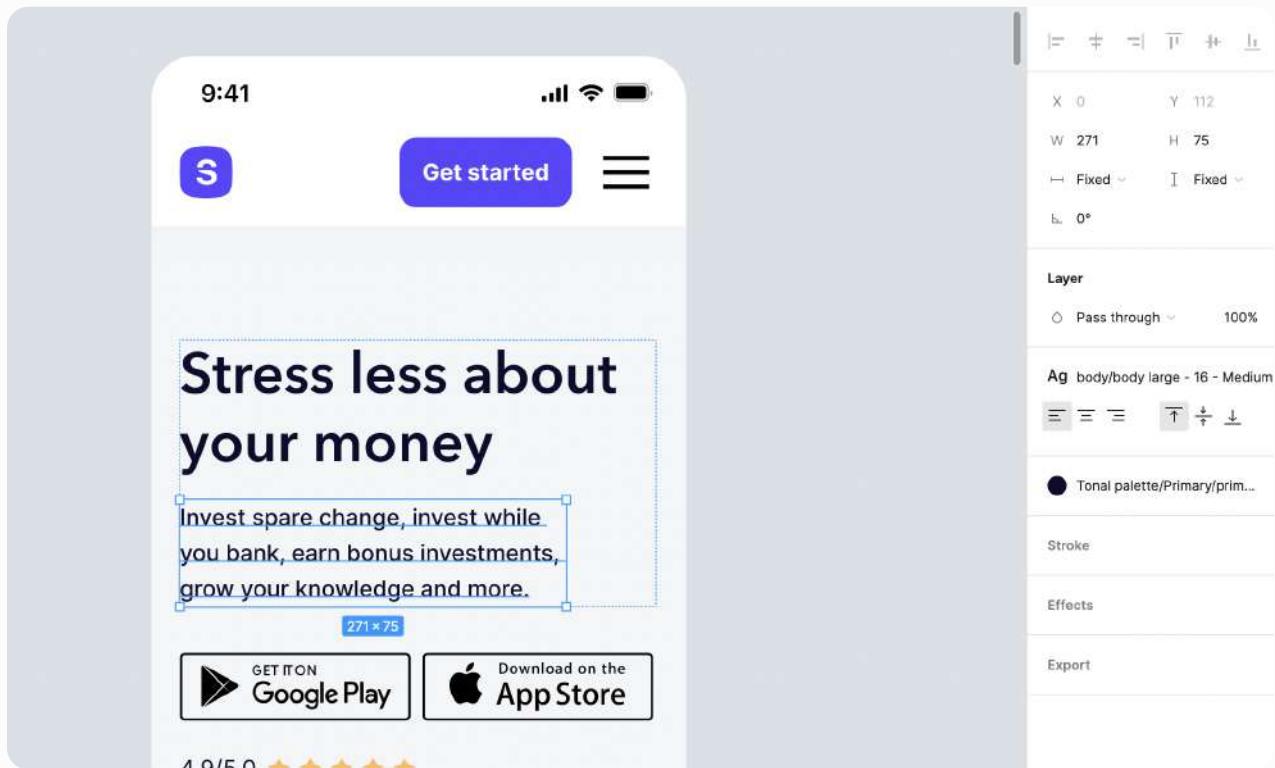
Auto layout and responsive resizing

One of the biggest strengths of auto layout is its ability to adjust the dimensions of the objects in an Auto layout frame, depending on their resizing properties set for each child element and parent container.

You can choose the resizing behavior for parent auto-layout frames to adapt to changes to their children's elements.

Resizing settings can be applied individually for objects on both axes using the dropdown menus in the right sidebar.

Fixed width and height

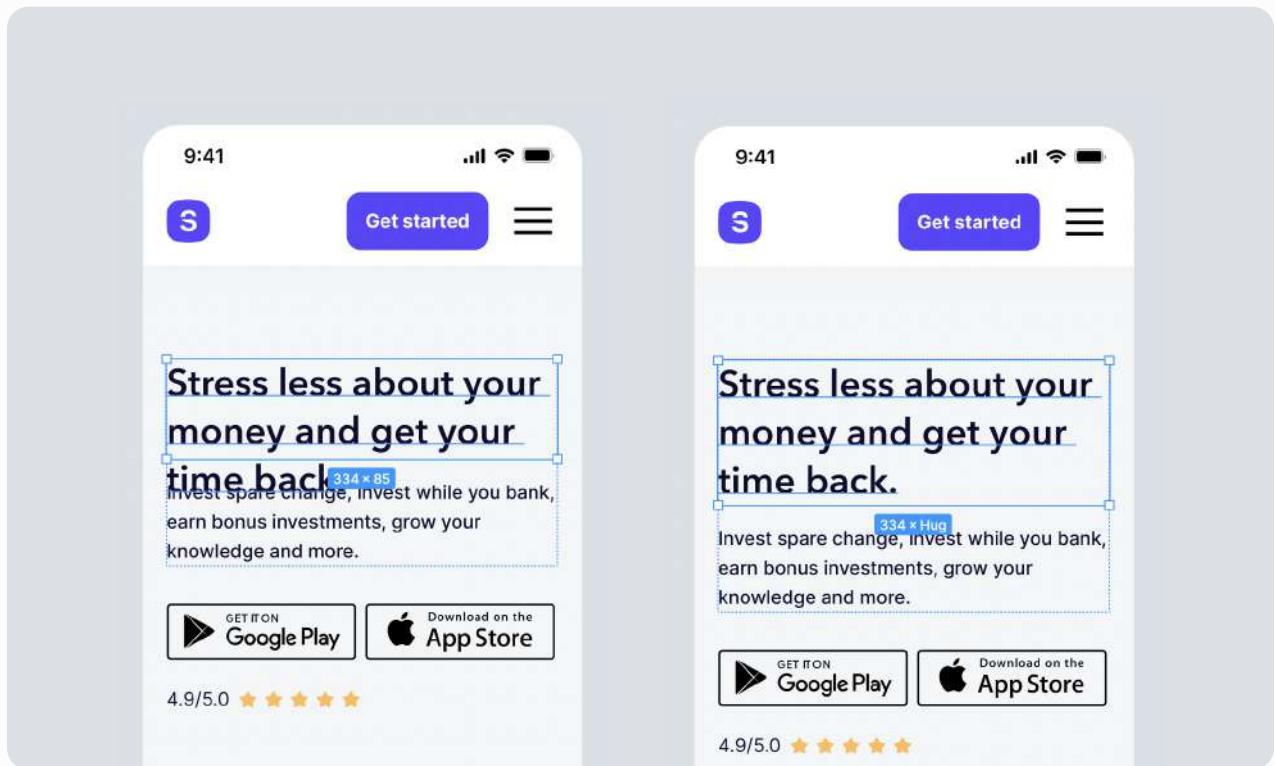


If we set our auto layout frame to Fixed width or height, the frame's dimensions will remain the same no matter the size of the content we place within them. The frame size won't react to changes in the objects within them.

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.

Hug content

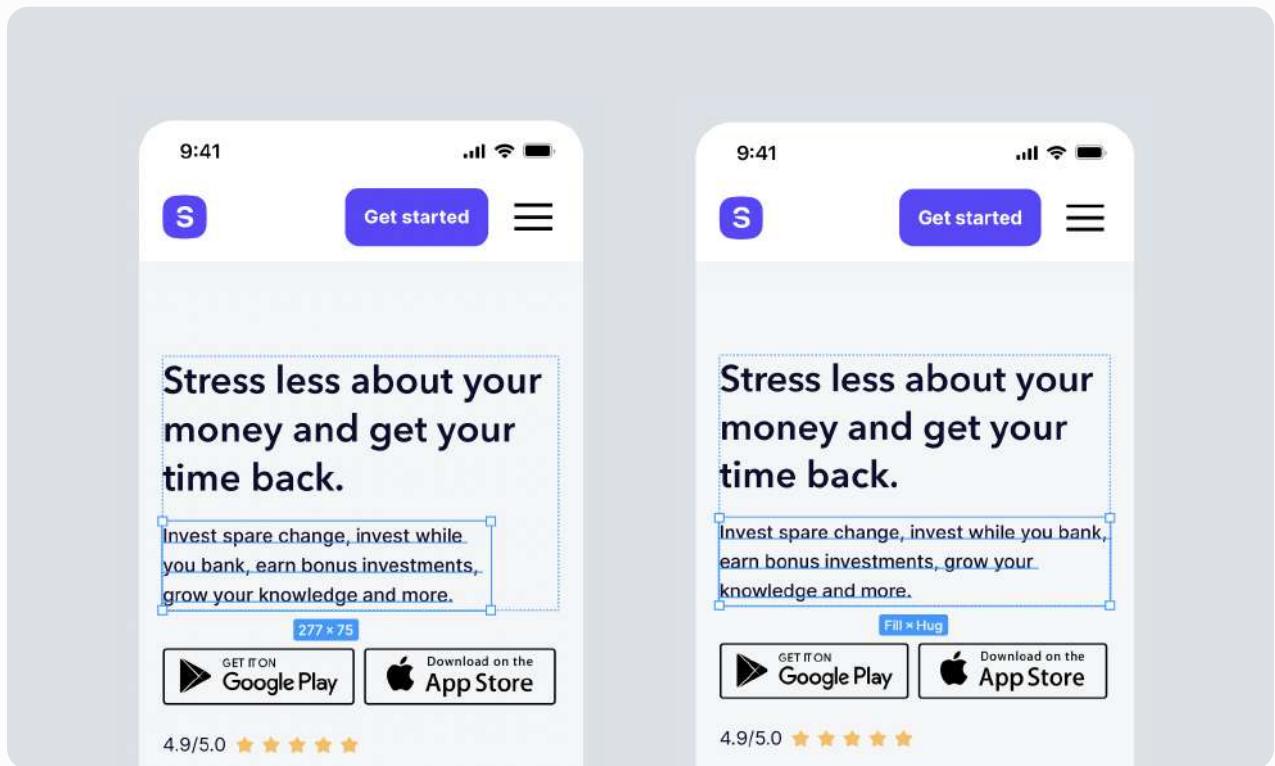


Set it to hug contents if you want your auto layout frame to resize itself according to its child objects.

Hug container will keep the smallest possible dimensions surrounding the objects while respecting the padding values set simultaneously.

Best to use Hug properties for groups of text layers within an auto-layout container. This will ensure that your text containers adjust to each other's heights and align themselves within a container.

Fill container



Every object in an auto layout container set to fill container adjusts to its parent container's maximum width and/or height.

You should always try to set either fill or hug container properties on your auto layout elements.

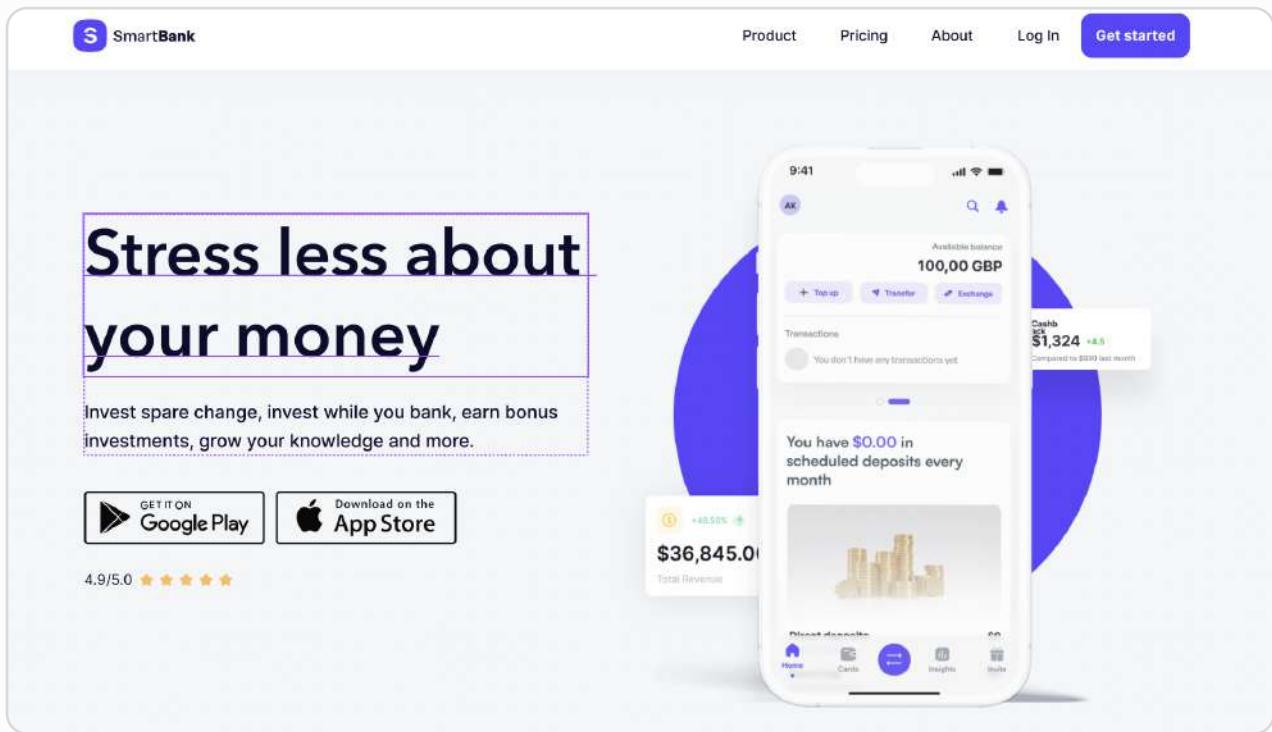
Why not fixed values?

Because we need all elements to be responsively adjusting to the changes in size of the frame. We'll have to set constraints for all our design elements later on, and setting the containers to fill and/or hug will make sure our elements automatically resize.

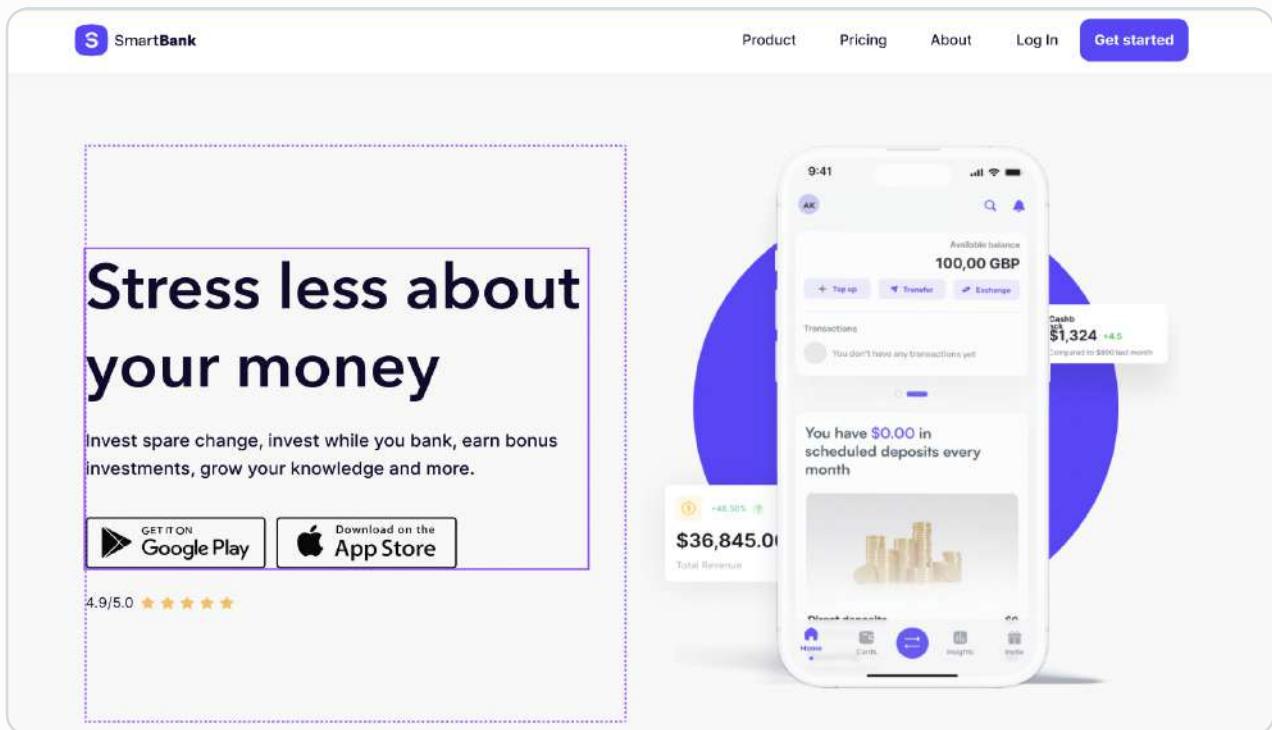
Learn more about auto layout here. (it's a link to official Figma file)

Auto layout and website development

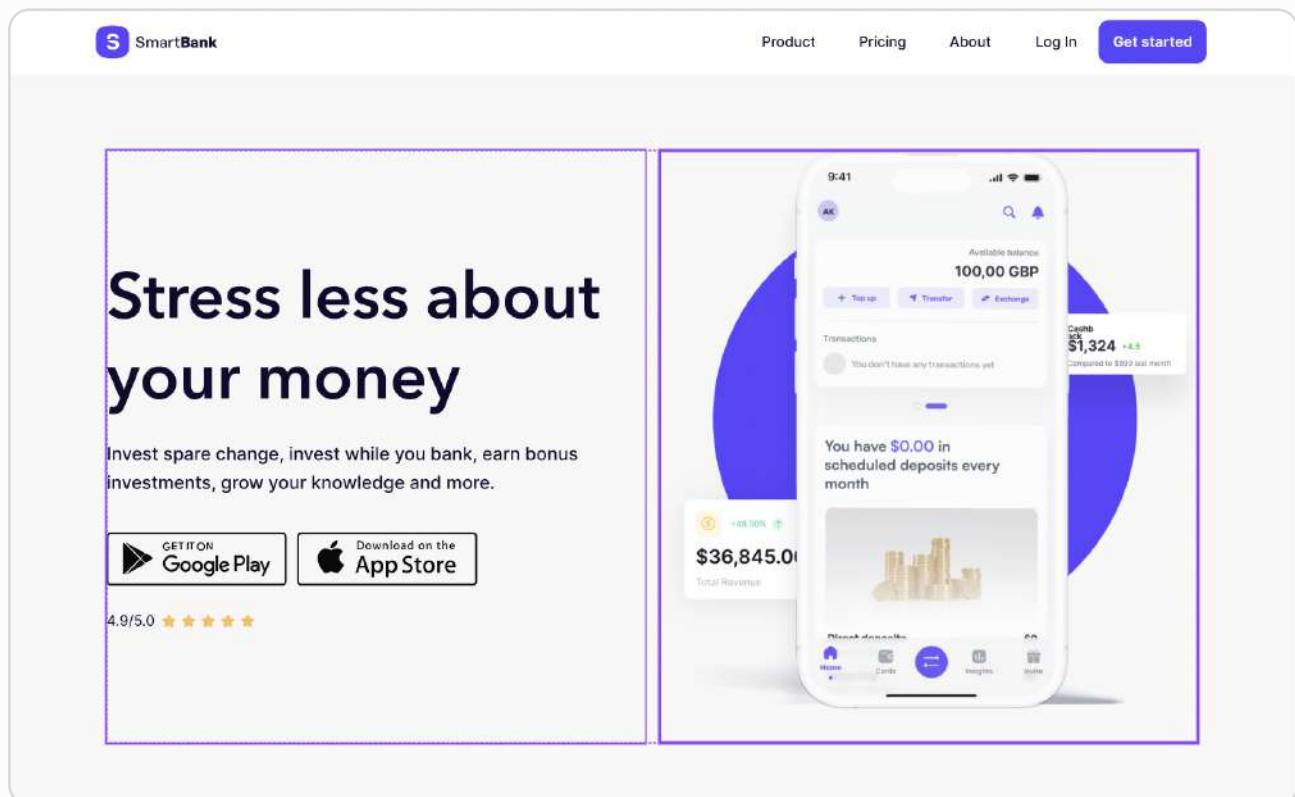
Master the proper use of auto layout, and you'll understand the structure of the flexible website grid layouts. Here's an example:



You put a text layer into a container and that container is nested into a column div along with the description, a button, and a few icons.



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 with a purple border. On the left side of the hero section, there's a title 'Stress less about your money' and a subtitle 'Invest spare change, invest while you bank, earn bonus investments, grow your knowledge and more.' Below the subtitle are download links for 'GET IT ON Google Play' and 'Download on the App Store', each accompanied by its respective logo. To the right of the hero section is a screenshot of the app's main dashboard. The dashboard shows a balance of '100,00 GBP', a transaction history stating 'You don't have any transactions yet', and a summary of '\$0.00 in scheduled deposits every month'. It also features a 'Total Revenue' section showing '\$36,845.0' and a graphic of coins. At the bottom of the dashboard are icons for Home, Cards, Insights, and Help. The overall design is clean and modern, using a white background with blue and purple accents.

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 and other developer's work.



Chapter summary

- **Adaptive web design (AWD)** is simply designs adapted to a certain screen resolution.
- **Responsive web design (RWD)** uses relative properties to ensure designs automatically adapt to the device's size.
- The type scale you will use for your desktop devices **will differ greatly from** your tablet and mobile counterparts.
- **Auto layout** lets you create designs that grow or shrink to fit your container and readjust their size as their contents change.
- **Fixed dimensions** are helpful in setting constraints for content like images, avatars, and vectors.
- **Hug container** will keep the smallest possible dimensions surrounding the objects while respecting the padding values set simultaneously.
- Every object in an auto layout container set to **fill container adjusts to its parent container's maximum width and/or height.**

Take some notes!



Designing for mobile

Designing for mobile - best practices

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

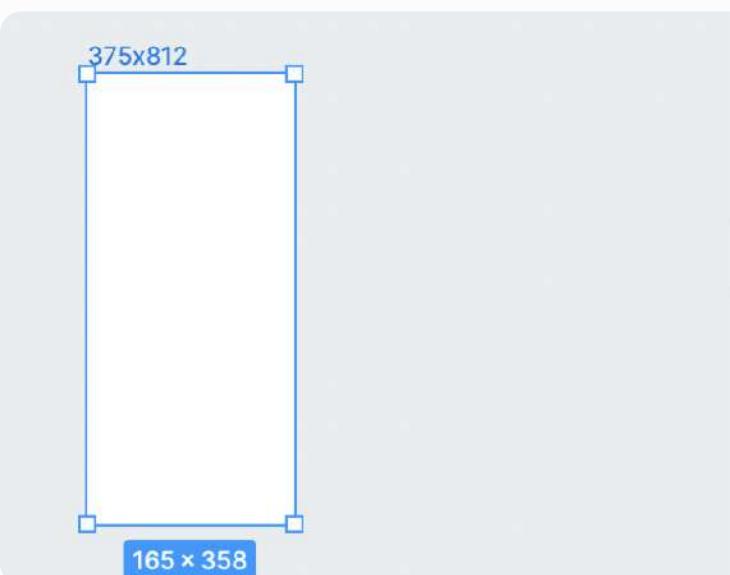
Mobile means not only phone devices but also tablets. For both versions, you'll need to properly rearrange the layout of each desktop page and make sure it fits right in the contained space.

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).

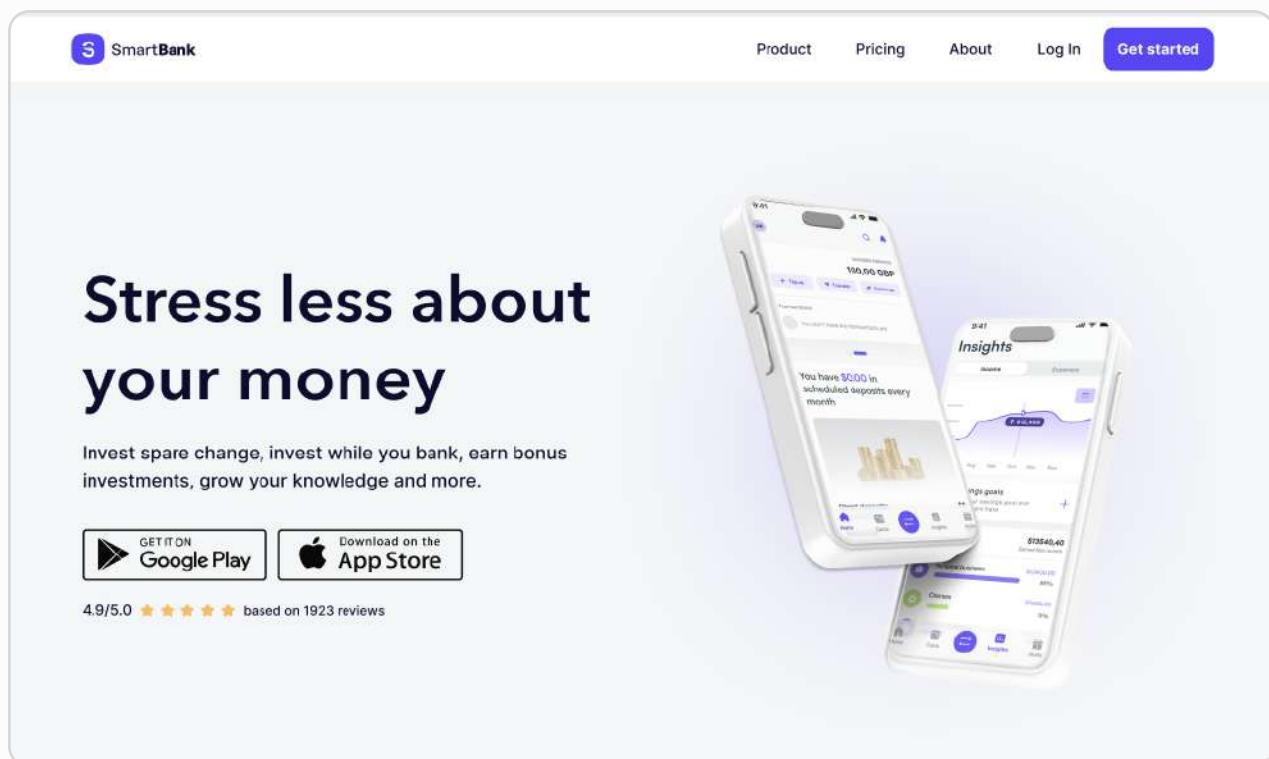


iPhone 14 Pro Max	430×932
iPhone 13 Pro Max	428×926
iPhone 13 / 13 Pro	390×844
iPhone 13 mini	375×812
iPhone SE	320×568
iPhone 8 Plus	414×736
iPhone 8	375×667
Android Small	360×640

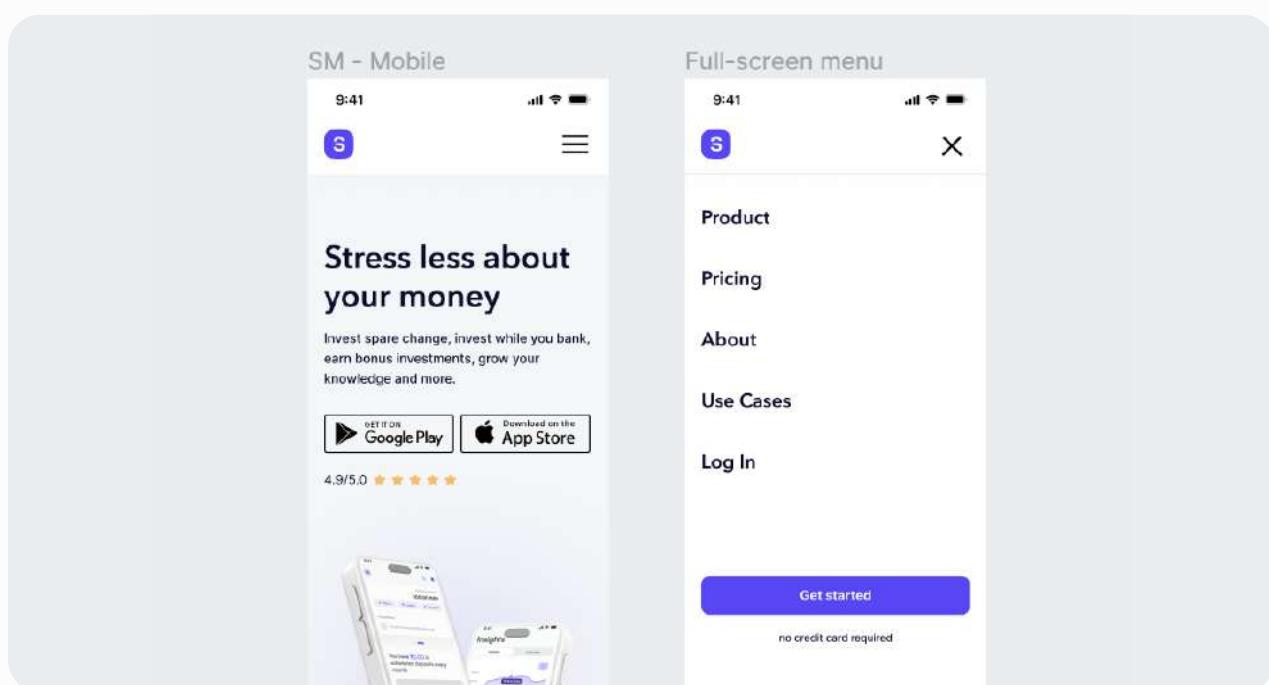
From there on, we scale the design up.

Keeping a simple navigation

Navigation on mobile devices is quite tricky as you don't have much space to implement a tailored solution. **You need to go simple.**

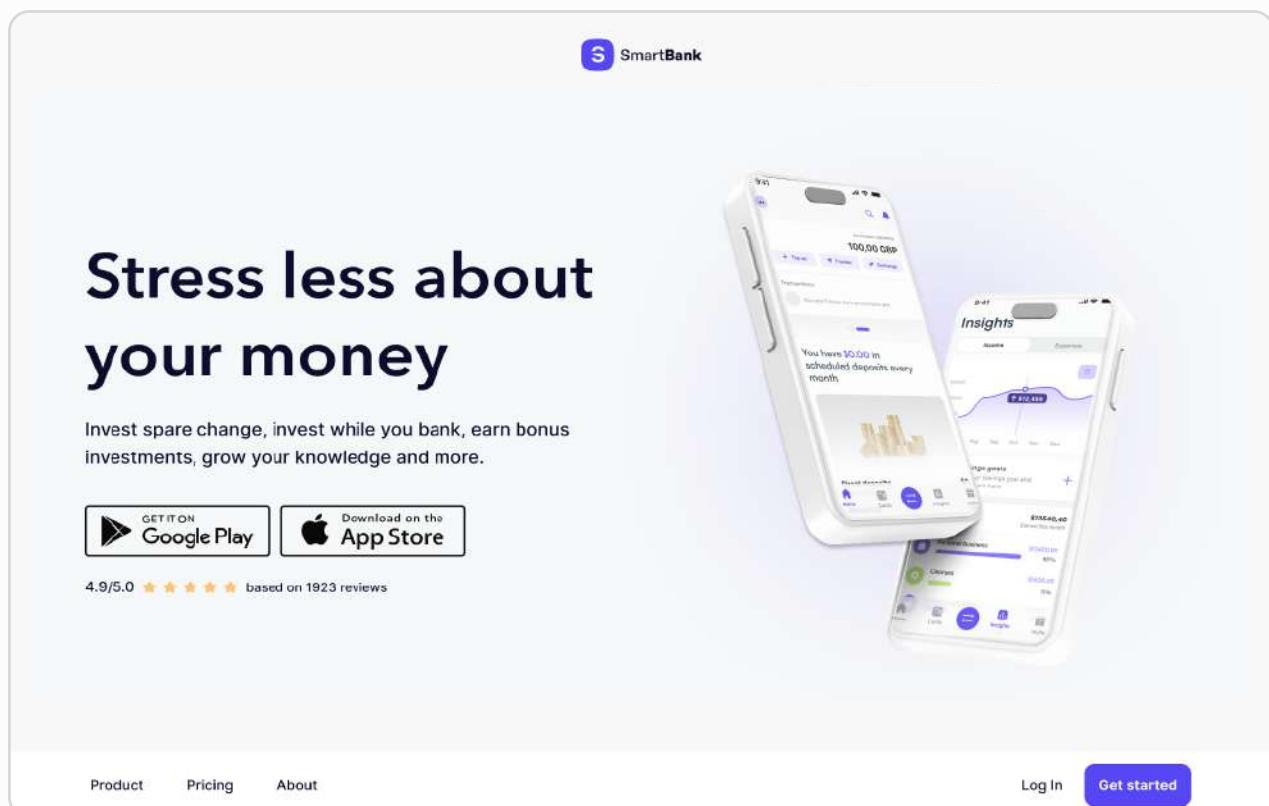


One way to do it is to hide the additional menus behind hamburger icons that sit atop of the page next to the business' logo.



Try not to overcomplicate it

I've seen a few sites adding a navigation menu resembling the tab bar in mobile applications.



I'm not 100% convinced about its functionality since I think it might get in the way of scrolling, and if you're using an iPhone, you already have the Safari search bar at the bottom.

While this might work for simple one-pager websites, I can't see it working well for e-commerce stores or more content-heavy sites.

A better way to simplify the navigation would be to offer the main areas of a site in the nav menu and add search fields for more specific keywords.

Don't change the content - adapt it

While designing a desktop experience, you always need to have a general idea of how your content will look on mobile devices.

responsiveness first!

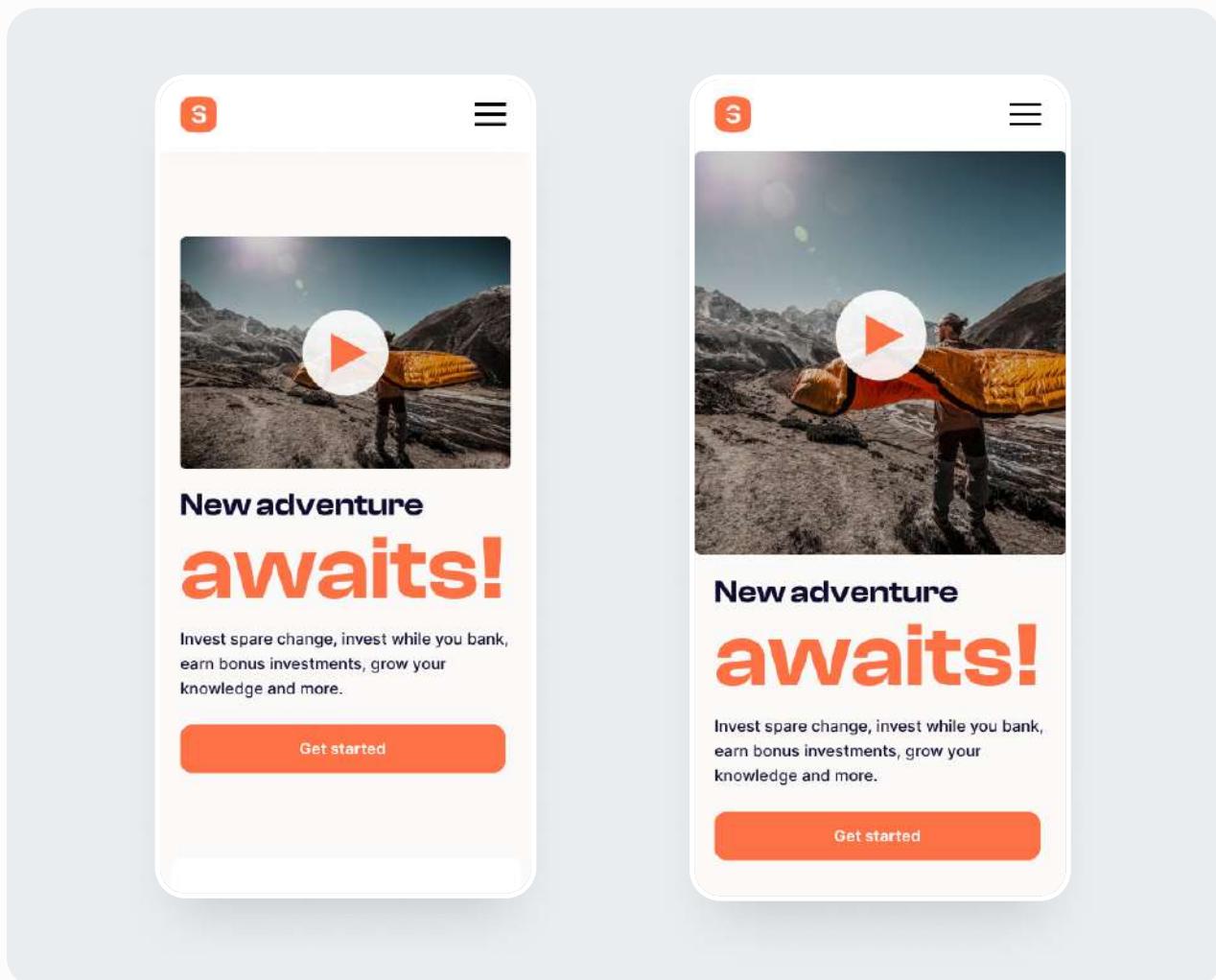


Imagine you design a portfolio website masterpiece, where everything animates and changes position, and flows from left to right, and then you try to adapt the same design to mobile devices. Yup, your content is not accessible and doesn't make much sense.

Ok, that was a little bit of an abstract example. Seriously though, you shouldn't worry that your content is stretched out to infinity when you lay it out below another. It's normal, and users are used to reading long-form content on their mobile phones.

Just try to make the scrolling experience enjoyable, and don't take too long to explain an idea or a feature. Keep it concise for your own good and remember about the attention spans!

Remember about the ratios

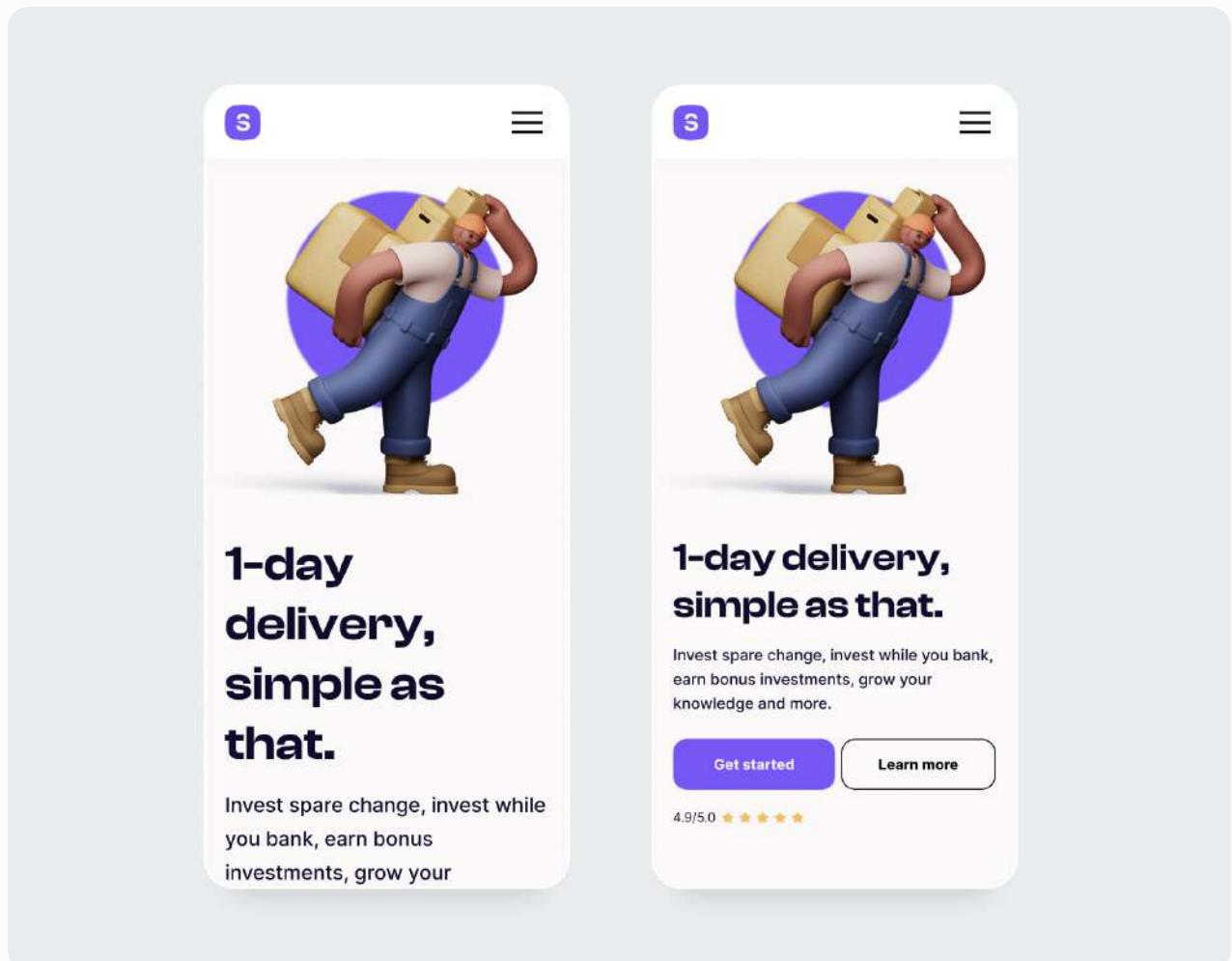


Whenever you include videos or images in your designs, you might need to consider adjusting the ratio on mobile devices.

While 16:9 on desktops looks great, it will look crunched down and really small on the phone. Therefore you might need to edit your videos to adjust to a more fitting ratio like 9:16 or at least 4:3.

The same goes for all images. It's not necessary, but it's a good practice to change the ratios so that everything fits nicely into a frame and is not squished or obscured by other elements.

Scale the text down



This is a big one. When creating a type scale for your website, don't forget to add one for your mobile.

You'll quickly get the hang of what size your headings should be on phone devices and tablets but if you're ever in doubt about what size to use, refer to [**Material 3**](#) or a popular library like [**Tailwind CSS**](#).

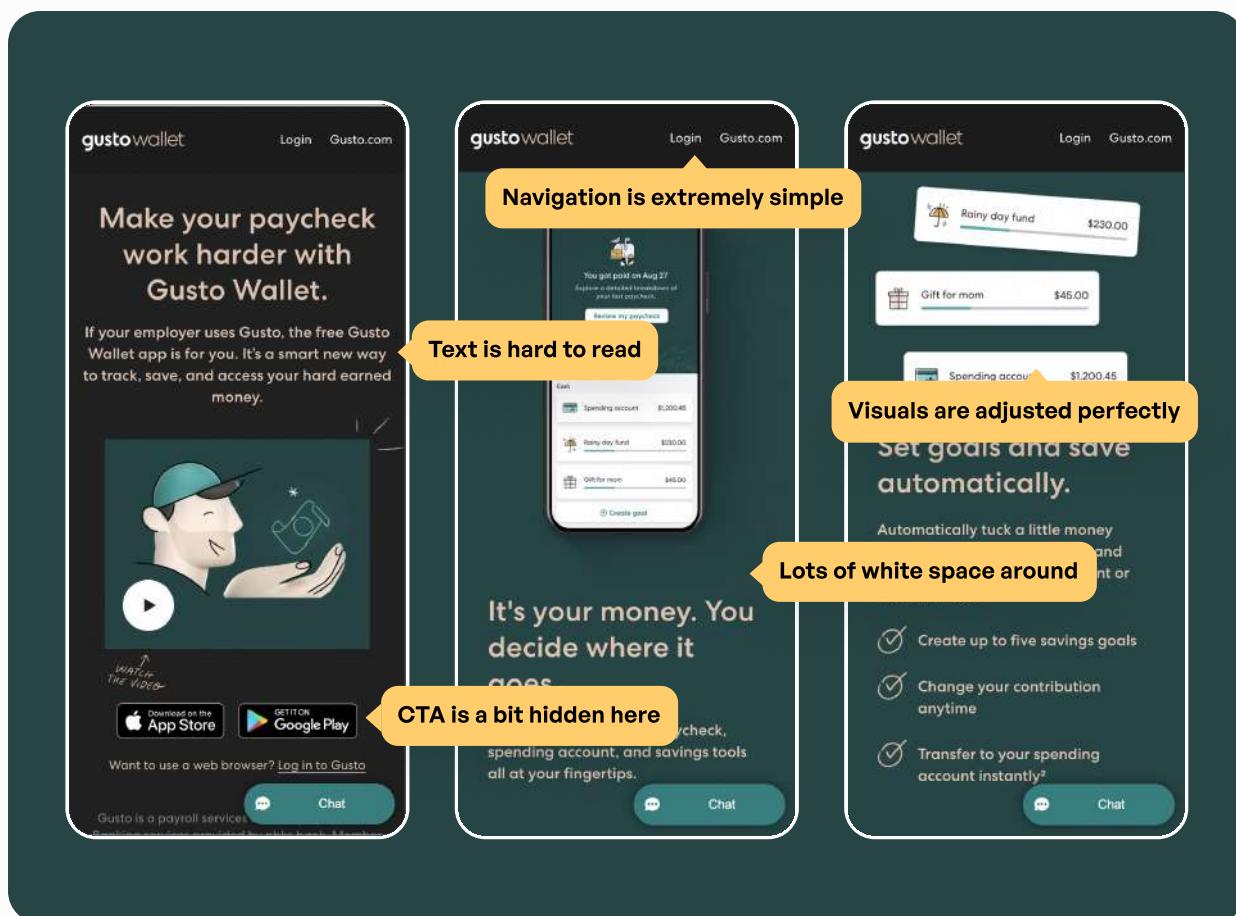
Remember to scale the line height and letter spacing along with the size of your text.

You should be aiming for maximum legibility at all times.

A few good mobile design examples

Before we move forward and start another chapter, I'd like to show you a couple of perfect mobile design examples to get you more familiar with different design patterns and solutions.

I will add several comments about each of these screens, but I encourage you to grab your phone and start viewing these websites yourself. We learn the fastest by replicating and analyzing the work of others. Whenever you're browsing an app or a website you should always think about what you're looking at. Look at the fonts they use, the spacing, the visuals, how menus look, where's the CTA, is there any motion, etc. **Always be exploring.**



Gigs

Offer phone plans to your users in days

Gigs is the easiest way to offer wireless subscriptions for smartphones & wearables.

Book Demo **Very clear CTA**

Big and bold social proof

Branded subscriptions your customers will love

Set up a plan for your use case. Instantly embed subscriptions with our hosted checkout optimised for conversion.

Simple font, extremely readable

80% Conversion rate

Grid layout used perfectly

3m Avg. check-out time

Gigs Dashboard

Full transparency in one simple interface

Have full control of subscriptions, see payments, manage refunds, and view metrics – all from within the powerful Gigs Dashboard.

Payments

Analytics

See payments & history, manage refunds, discounts and promotions. All in one place

Activations, revenue, conversion, usage, churn, cohorts, and more. All visualized beautifully

Beautiful animations!

Clear benefit section

Cover pictures

Quick previews

Clever use of tabs

Simple Header with a big CTA

Connect

Effortlessly store, link, enrich, assign, and treat all your customer feedback in one neat collaborative space

Manage your feedback inbox

Get to inbox zero by connecting each customer insight to the right product initiatives, whether they are bugs, snacks, or bigger projects

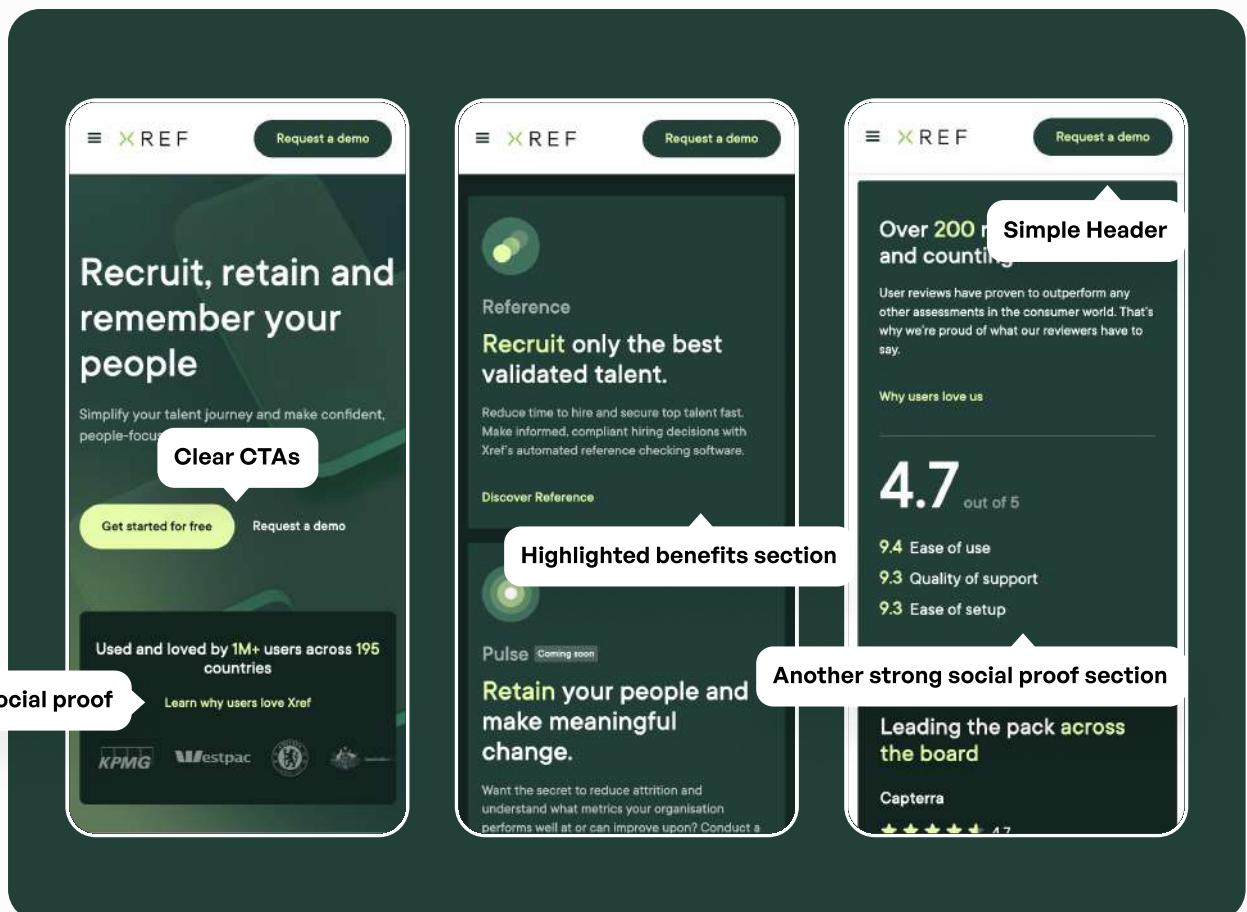
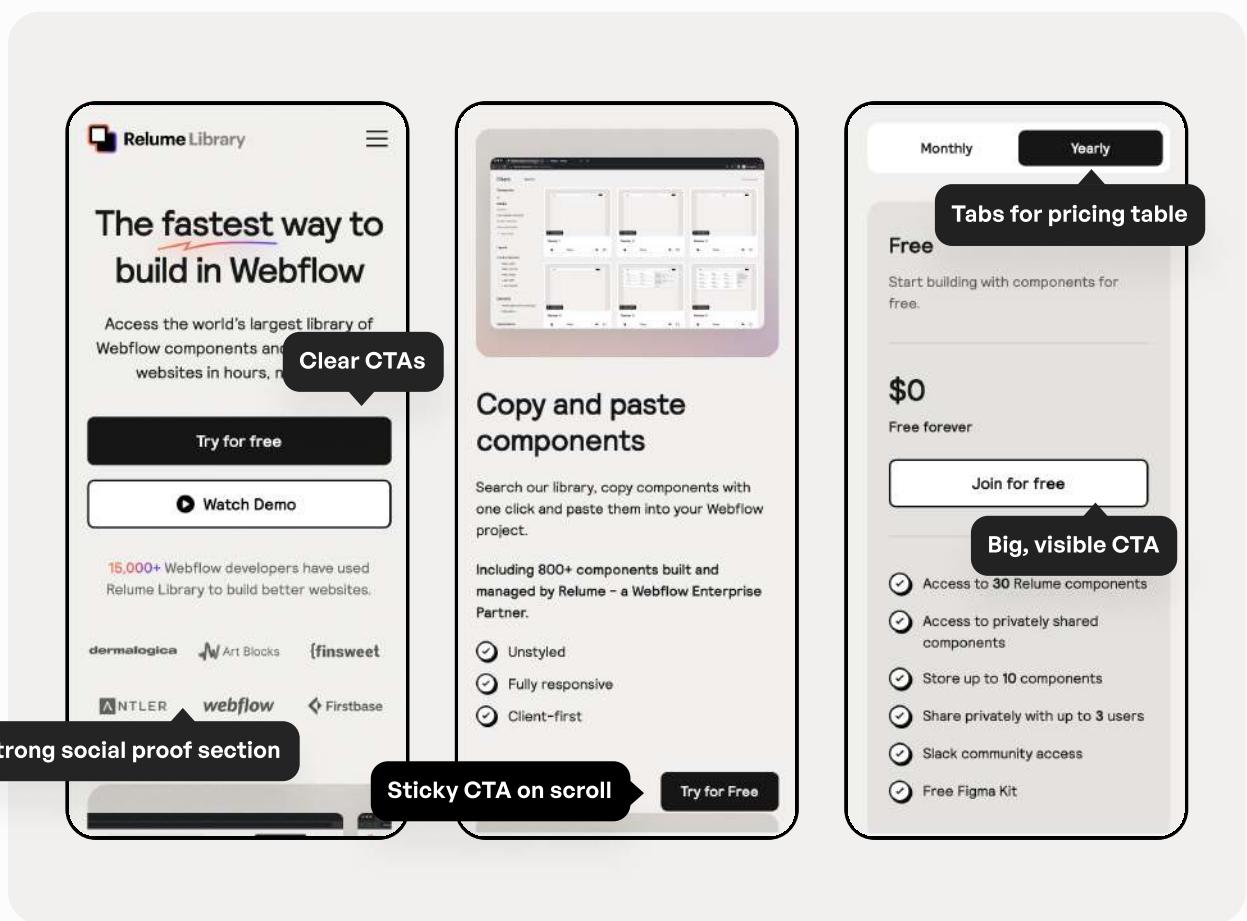
Collaborate

The ultimate product management hub

Cycle helps you collect, unify, and connect all your customer feedback in one central location.

Interactive component

Without Cycle With Cycle



Motion and interactions

Motion and interactions

As the name implies, motion design refers to visual effects and/or graphics that appear in motion or movement.

In design, their primary goal is to assist people by making interface elements easier to read and adding additional visual cues to certain actions so that they carry more weight and meaning.

What's the purpose of motion in web design?



Minh Pham on Dribbble

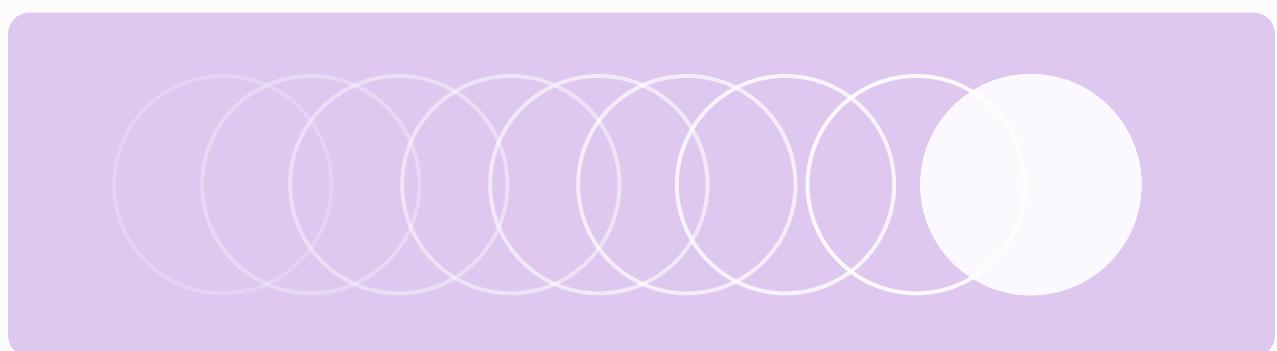
Motion provides more information in a simpler and usually more impressive manner. Take Apple, for example. Look at any of their landing pages promoting new products. Websites with motion are much more immersive and exciting than endless walls of text.

However, not every website needs this amount of motion.

Some sites will work great with only simple hover states and page transitions. It depends on the site's context, the budget, and the target audience. Just because you can animate everything doesn't mean you should.

The purpose of motion in web design is to offer a more dynamic, memorable experience, improve storytelling, draw more attention, and make interacting with web interface more engaging

What should we use motion for in design?



1. Status change - This is the most common use of motion, and it reflects the users' interaction with the website's interactive elements, like a button, an image, or a link.

2. Emphasis - This type of motion should draw attention to a specific piece of information like a call-to-action, a video, or an important interface element we want to highlight.

3. Reveal - This type of animation is implemented in elements that appear from outside of the canvas, like video overlays, menus, or popups.

Effective use of animation in web design

The kind of websites you see on Awwwards are beautiful, true, but some of them have animations so intense that they almost set your laptop on fire.



RLY Network - Awwwards.com

They are, of course made that way purposefully - to awe fellow designers and showcase their impressive skills.

With regular users and most businesses, you'll be working with, using animation like this would be overkill.

Users land on a website, find what they need, take action (or not), and get out. And our job is to make it easier for them. Not make them stop and stare at endless animations that look great, sure, but don't add anything beneficial to the experience.

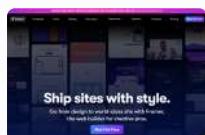
To make an effective use of an animation in web design you should make all interactions:

- **Feel natural and subtle.** Animations should enhance the experience, not overwhelm the users.
- **Good animations should also be meaningful.** Use motion to provide additional visual cues and add context to the users' actions. If a user hovers over a button or a set of menu links, add a subtle hover state, maybe even change the color to make it more prominent.
- **They should also be swift.** Don't make your animations a few seconds long. They should be quick and brief, just enough to direct the attention.
- **They should match the overall tone of your brand.** If you're building a website for a luxury marble furniture brand, your animations should be slick and minimalist. If your project is about pet toys, you can get away with introducing more playful interactions.
- **Lastly, they should be used in moderation.** If all the interface elements are floating around where should I look at? If an interaction doesn't add to the overall experience, don't add it.

A couple of sites with interesting motion effects.

I know it's hard to wrap all that theory around your head without seeing practical examples.

To ease the transition into the world of good motion design, here's a list of websites that do it really well. Open each one of them, notice how they behave, what kind of interactions they use, and think about what emotions they bring in you.



Framer.com

<https://www.framer.com/>



Wealthsimple

<https://www.wealthsimple.com/>



Elemental

<https://sendelemental.com/>



Glide Apps

<https://www.glideapps.com/>



Aapply

<https://aapply.app/>



Createwithplay

<https://www.createwithplay.com/>



Setpoint

<https://www.setpoint.io/>



Chapter summary

- **Hide the additional menus behind hamburger icons** that sit atop of the page next to the business' logo.
- While designing a desktop experience, you always need to have a general idea of **how your content will look on mobile devices**.
- If possible, **change the ratios of images and videos for mobile screens**, so that everything fits nicely into a frame.
- **Remember to scale the line height and letter spacing** along with scaling down the size of your text for mobile devices.
- **The purpose of motion in web design** is to offer a more dynamic, memorable experience, improve storytelling, draw more attention, and make interacting with web interface more engaging
- Motion design provides more information **in a simpler and usually more impressive manner**.

Take some notes!



Optimizing for conversions

Optimizing for conversions

Websites should serve one purpose - to convert. Conversion rate optimization is an important step every web designer should know about and do. It does not only allow you to lower your customer acquisition costs but also increase the average revenue per visitor.

More customers = more revenue. More revenue = faster growth.

Let's take an example of a landing page with a conversion rate of 3% and around 20000 visitors a month. This would mean that this landing page would generate around 600 conversions per month.

If by following the optimization protocol, we'd be able to increase the conversion rates to 4.5%, then our conversions per month would jump up to 900 - a 33% jump in revenue.

Let's say the AOV (average order value) is \$50, this would mean that by optimizing the site's conversion rate, we increased the monthly recurring revenue (MRR) by:

300 (increase in conversions) * \$50 = \$15,000

That's an increase of \$180,000 per year. Imagine how much you could charge someone for that service. Probably a lot, right?

Let's talk about what you need to do to increase the conversions.

Know your customer journey

While a landing page may be the final destination of a campaign or online experience, users still need to get there somehow. The customer journey is not a straight line. Viewers drop off, come back, bounce around from page to page, and often look for help (reviews, testimonials, forums) outside before taking the next step.

You should focus specifically on applying design elements that reduce friction and guide users along the way, step by step. When the customer is ready to take action to learn more, take the next step or join a newsletter list, the landing page should facilitate their action with the least possible friction and difficulty. It should be immediately apparent how to do so.

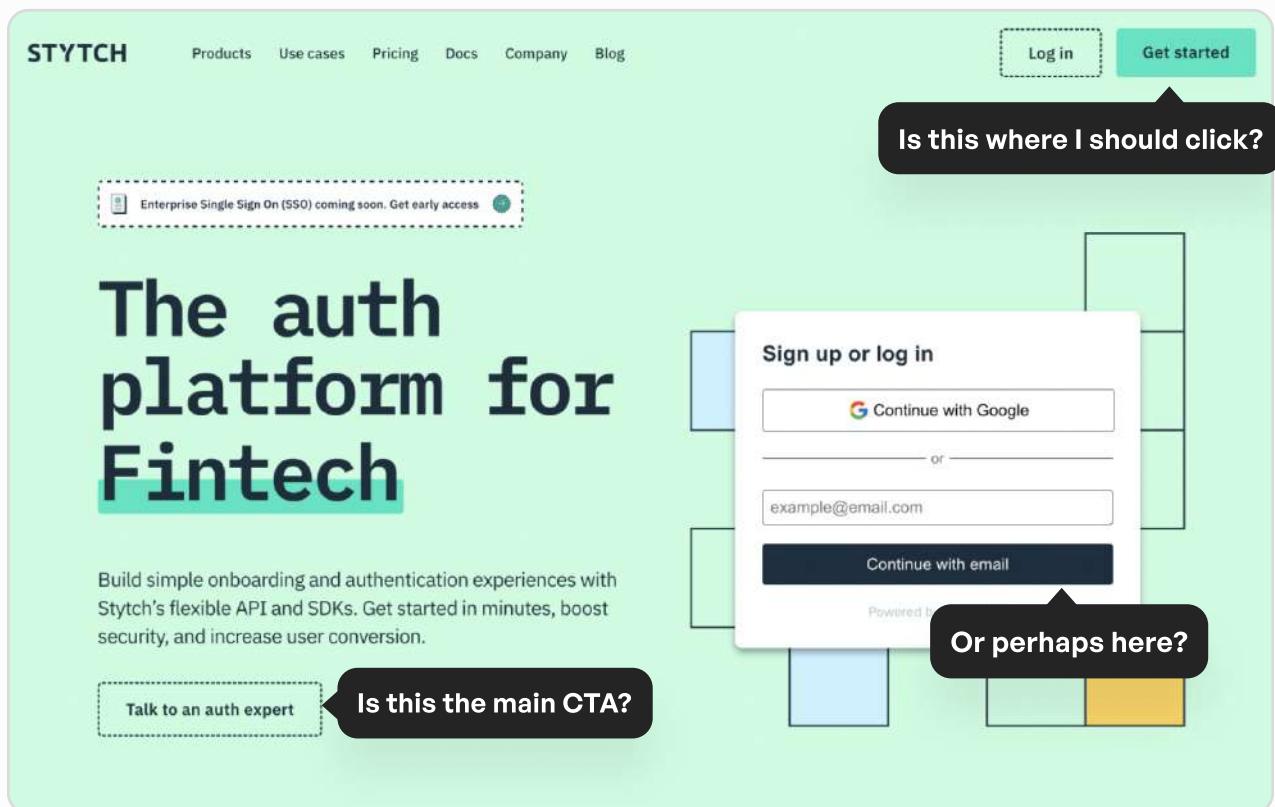
The screenshot shows the Notion homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Notion, Product, Download, Solutions, Resources, Pricing, Contact sales, Log in, and Try Notion free. The main headline reads "One workspace. Every team." Below it, a sub-headline says "We're more than a doc. Or a table. Customize Notion to work the way you do." A "Try Notion free" button is prominent. To the right, there's an illustration of three people holding up cards with icons like a document, a checkmark, and letters. Below the headline, it says "Used by 1,000,000+ teams including Figma, mixpanel, PIXAR, MatchGroup, monzo". The bottom section shows a screenshot of the Notion interface with a sidebar menu for Acme Inc., a central workspace area with the ACME logo, and a footer with the "Acme home" button.

The more effective your website visuals and copy are, the less they will need assurance from online reviews, friends, and relatives.

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.

Include social proof

People want to know that a product they're considering purchasing has made other customers happy. Social proof is one of the best ways to provide that reassurance.

Pipedrive using extremely powerful social proof in their hero section

Trusted by 100,000+ companies in 179 countries

Capterra: 4.5/5

Gartner: 4.2/5

GetApp: 4.3/5

Software Advice: 4.5/5

SOURCEFORGE: 4.5/5

There are a few ways to provide social proof.

One is to include testimonials or reviews prominently on the landing page. Another one is to include logos of companies you worked or partnered with. You can also add videos and press releases.

If you can't use any of these - include logos of the software you're using. Any industry-relevant and recognizable company logo will help with social proof. It's a common trick new brands use to promote their products. If you put a watch next to a Porsche logo, you'll make it appear more luxurious simply by association.

Simplify your for email forms

An excellent landing page must have a specific and quantifiable aim. Asking for too much information can be a quick way to make visitors lose interest and click away. Don't ask about too many things before you qualify a lead - I personally like to go simple - with name, business name, email, budget (or any relevant question to filter out the leads), and an optional message field.

If you ask for too many details and the value you provide in exchange for all that information is hard to justify - they will leave. Ask for the bare minimum and qualify them later in the funnel.

The screenshot shows a landing page for Barva. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "How it works", "Pricing", "FAQ", and a yellow "Get Started" button. Below the navigation, there is a large heading: "We turn your design into a live Webflow project." Underneath this heading, there is a paragraph of text: "You've invested time and money into your design files. Now you can extend your investment by taking advantage of our turnkey webflow development services, without the hassle." To the right of this text is a form titled "Get started with a free quotation." The form includes fields for "Your Name*", "Full Name", "Company Name*", "Company inc", "Design file link", "e.g. your Figma file", "Email Address*", "Email Address", and a text area for "Tell us about your project*" with placeholder text "Deadline, functionalities and scope". A large yellow "Submit Your Request" button is at the bottom of the form.

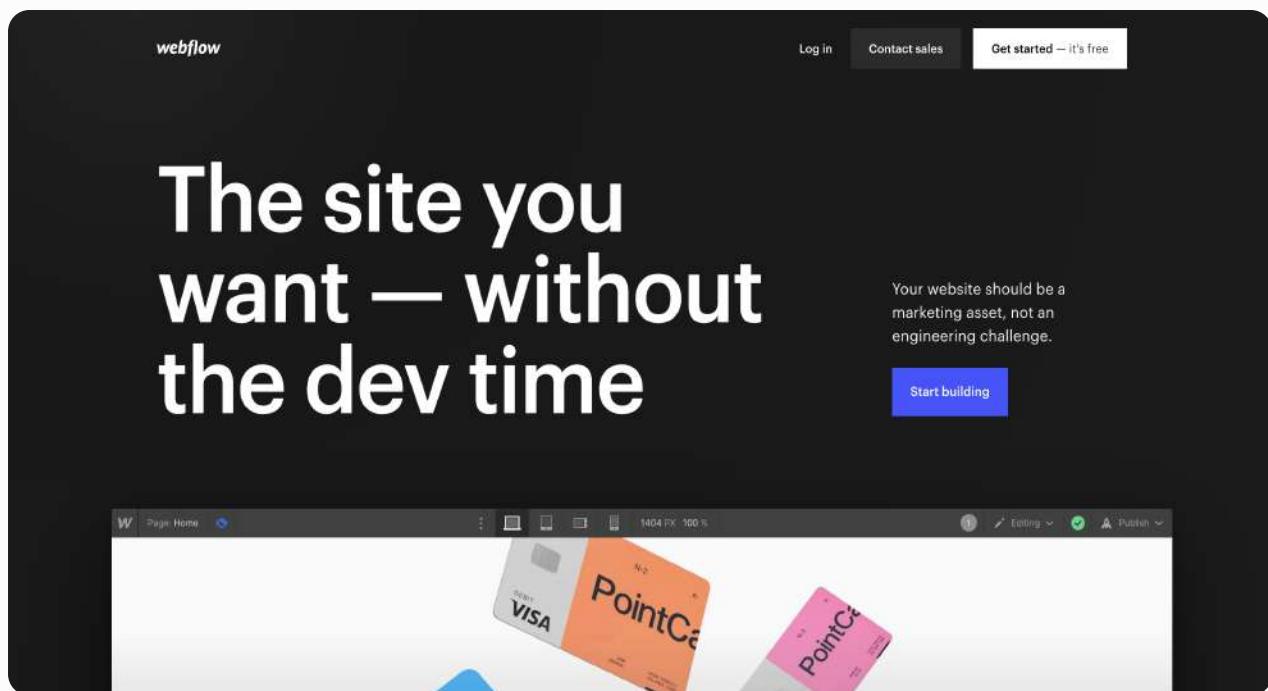
Barva (this site is no longer live)

This form on Barva's website requires just the right amount of information from anyone wanting to get a free quotation.

Use the Gestalt similarity principle

People have certain expectations when visiting websites. They want to read about the benefits, the features and results, and they want clear, easy-to-understand call-to-actions. They expect to find certain elements in places they are used to seeing them - the navigation bar at the top, the CTA at the top right, the footer at the bottom, and so on.

When designers stray too much from the established design patterns, they risk alienating the user and interfering with the completion of the task at hand. Experimental designs are great, but they must be thoughtfully created by experienced designers.



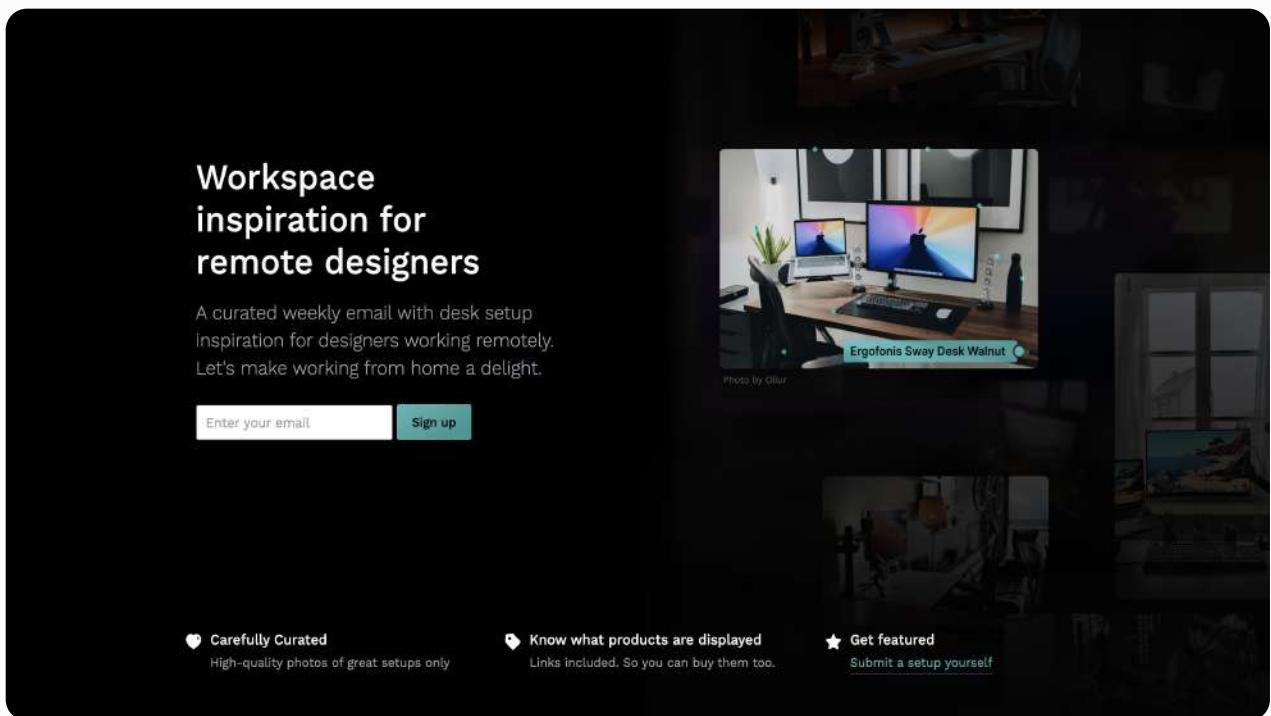
For example, Webflow went with a more experimental hero design with a big bold heading that demands most attention, description that's disconnected, and a smaller but vibrant CTA. It oddly works!

Avoid clutter!

Landing pages should only include the information necessary for the person who landed on that page to complete the desired task. The more investment is needed on the part of the visitor, in most cases, the more information will be required.

A newsletter that doesn't ask for payment information is a low-risk offer and wouldn't require as much information to be presented.

However, a page requesting a user to make a purchase will generally need to provide more information to the user. That amount of information only goes up as the price point increases.



Newsletters or waitlist sites are the best examples of that. Low-effort and low-risk offers with a potentially valuable return.

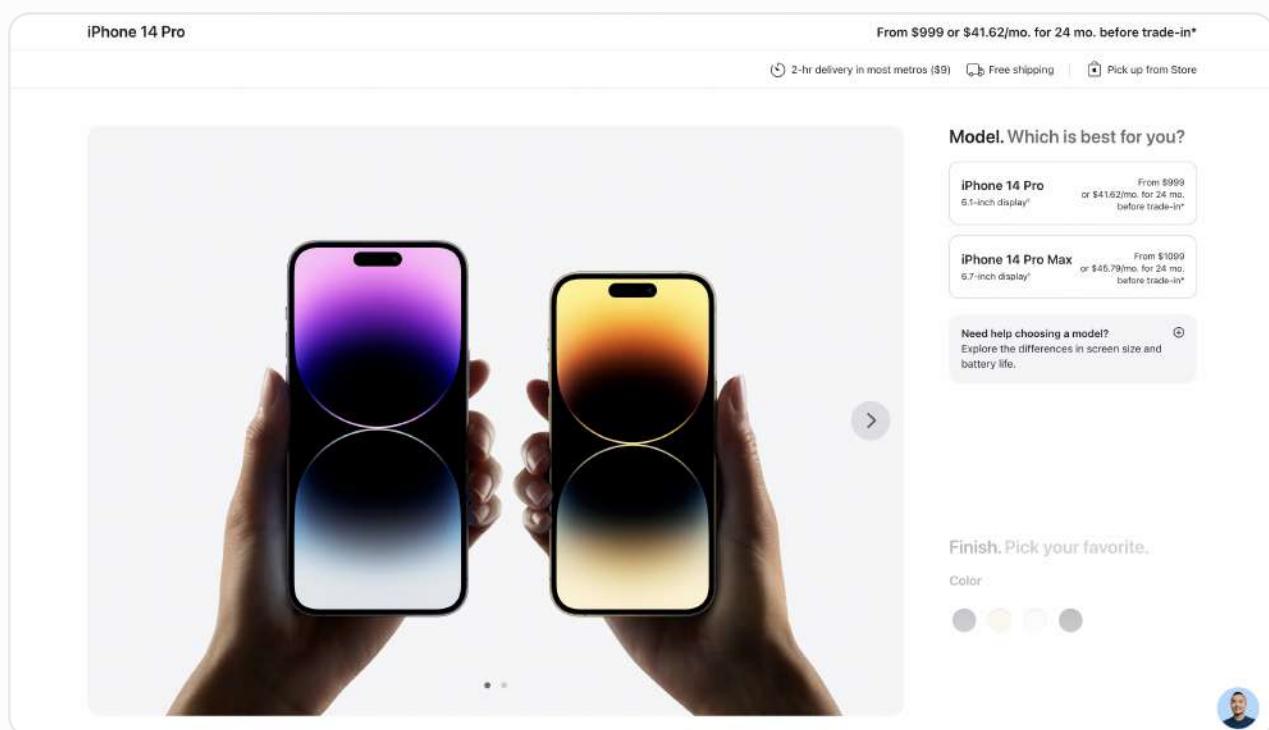
Go even further, remember to K.I.S.S.

“Keep it Simple, Stupid” – a design principle coined in 1960 by the U.S. Navy that’s very much applicable to web design.

Simplicity is super important when it comes to driving conversions.

Whenever you’re creating a page, ask yourself whether there’s a way to make it simpler and more aesthetically pleasing.

Simplicity is more than just limiting the options. It’s about creating a clean, uncluttered design that minimizes distractions. Creating a great user experience on your website means removing anything that isn’t absolutely necessary to the design.



Apple Store - iPhone 14 Pro page

Apple is one of the greatest examples of simplicity in web design, and it is so effective that countless other brands have followed suit.

You only have seconds, yes, seconds.

A general rule of thumb is that you have between 1-5 seconds to get a visitor's attention. That's roughly the length of a human attention span. Yes, it's shorter than the attention span of a goldfish!

You only have a very tiny window of opportunity to engage a user when they first land on your site, so make those seconds count!

Here are a few quick tips to keep your users engaged:

- **Use large, benefit-driven headlines** that are easy to understand
- **Use eye-catching visuals** that add context to your landing page and draw attention toward the CTA (images and videos)
- **Add hover effects** to your interactive elements (buttons, links)
- Make sure your **CTAs are prominent and easily clickable**
- Try to include the **main value proposition in the hero section**

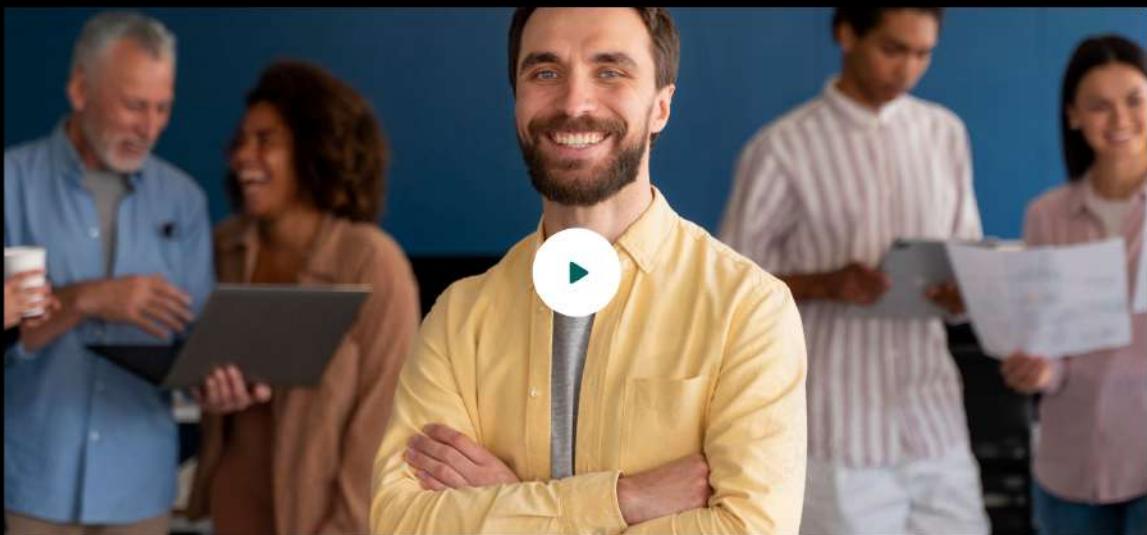
Use high-quality images

Instead of boring images, you should source high-quality photos that develop positive associations with the content and that feel more personal than random.

Remember: people tend to connect with brands that they feel are similar to themselves. If your imagery is too “stock-like” and “corporate”, you’ll turn your visitors away.

Creative & experienced digital design studio

We are creative design studios who make human experience with your business meaningful. We create brands with brands that affect the lives of millions of people and brands.



Which image do you relate with more? The top or the bottom one?

Ask yourself this question when choosing images for your site.

Creative & experienced digital design studio

We are creative design studios who make human experience with your business meaningful. We create brands with brands that affect the lives of millions of people and brands.



If you can, show faces of people

This brings me to another point - people like to see human faces.

Connecting with a product or service is easier if you see other people happily using or recommending it. That's why we started putting more trust into influencer recommendations than celebrity ads with the rise of social media. Connecting with people who feel much closer to us is much easier.

Incorporate faces into all sections, case studies, testimonials, opt-in pages, and forms to boost conversions. Point happy faces towards your CTAs to direct extra attention.

The screenshot shows the Juno website homepage. At the top, there are navigation links: 'Platform', 'About', 'Pricing', the 'juno' logo, 'Login', and a 'Get Juno' button. Below the navigation, a yellow button reads 'The life company'. The main headline is 'Making everybody feel valued at work'. A call-to-action button says 'Get Juno for my team →'. To the right of the headline is a large circular inset featuring a woman with curly hair, smiling, sitting at a desk with a fan and dumbbells. At the bottom of the page, there are logos for 'dawn.', 'Koto', 'paddle', 'Teads', 'Oyster', 'RIGHTS', 'BornSocial.', and 'Bolt'.

Withjuno.com uses this trick in almost every section of their landing page. The subject is always directed toward the copy or CTA.//f///

Where to find good quality images and illustrations?

Here are some of our favorite places for finding free stock photos that are high quality and free for commercial and personal use:

- **Pexels**
- **Unsplash**
- **StockSnap**
- **Picjumbo**

If your budget allows for that and you're looking for a little bit more premium and custom images, visit the Adobe Stock.

If you need to look for illustrations - check out the sites below:

- **Ls.Graphics**
- **Icons8**
- **Freepik Premium**
- **UI8.net**

That's about it for this chapter! Let's move on to the next one.

The web design process is coming in 3, 2, 1...



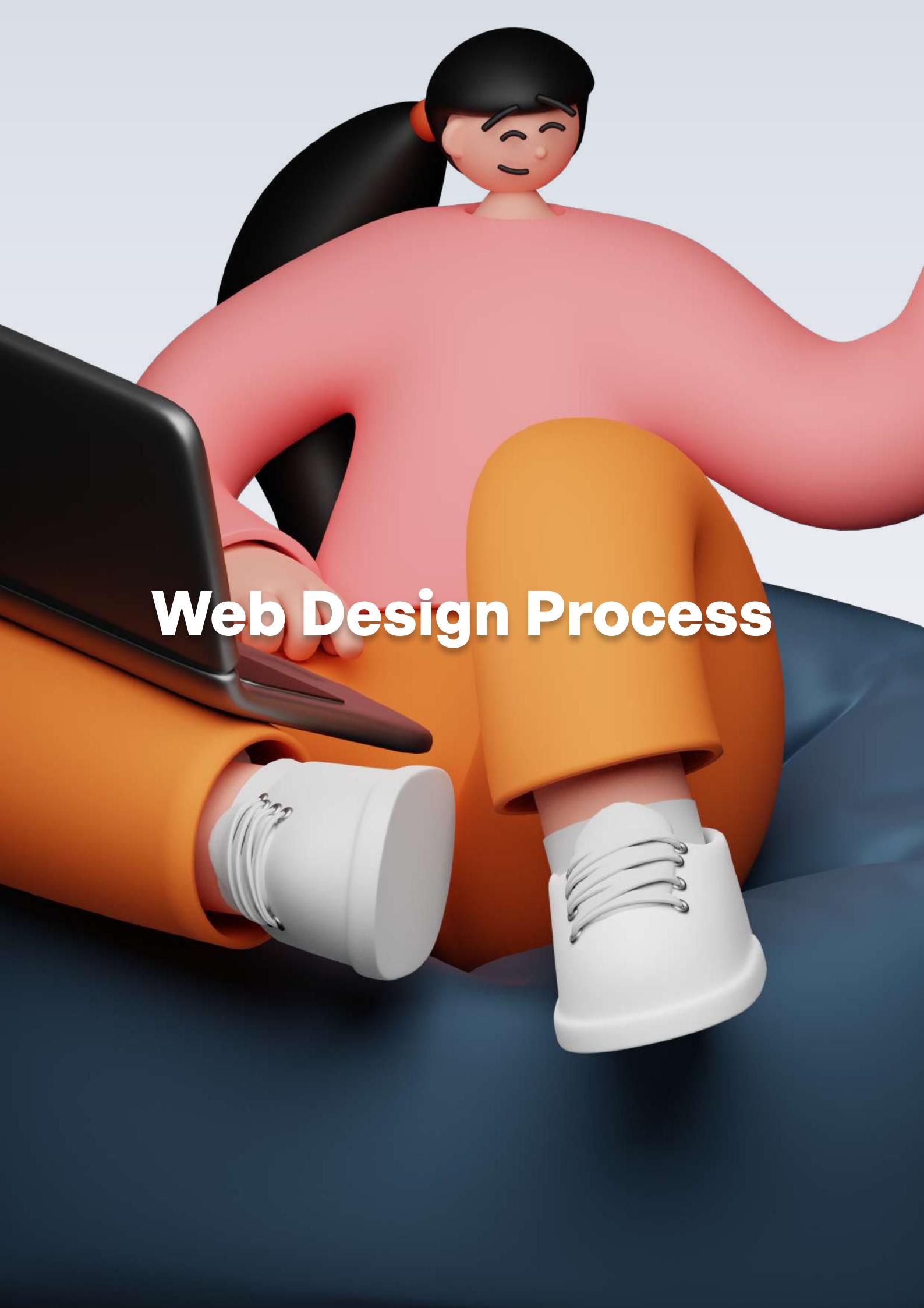


Chapter summary

- You should focus specifically on **applying design elements that reduce friction and guide users along the way**, step by step.
- **You don't want to have too many links to click on**; users might leave your site and get distracted by something else.
- People want to know that a product they're considering purchasing has made other customers happy. **Social proof is one of the best ways to provide that reassurance**.
- **Asking for too much information** can be a quick way to make visitors lose interest and click away.
- Landing pages should only **include the information necessary to complete the desired task**.
- People tend to connect with brands that they feel are similar to themselves. **If your imagery is too “stock-like” and “corporate”, you’ll turn your visitors away**.
- If you can - **show faces of people**

Take some notes!





Web Design Process

SmartBank Landing Page UI

Before we dive into the next chapter and explain the entire design process of the landing page, I wanted to spend a minute and tell you how I would approach studying this chapter.

I designed this landing page to show you first-hand what my standard website design looks like. There are a few stages that I've given less attention to because it would be impossible to explain the entire UX and UI process in one book and describe it in an easy-to-learn manner.

I will release a series of video guides to talk about each stage of the UX process in more detail.

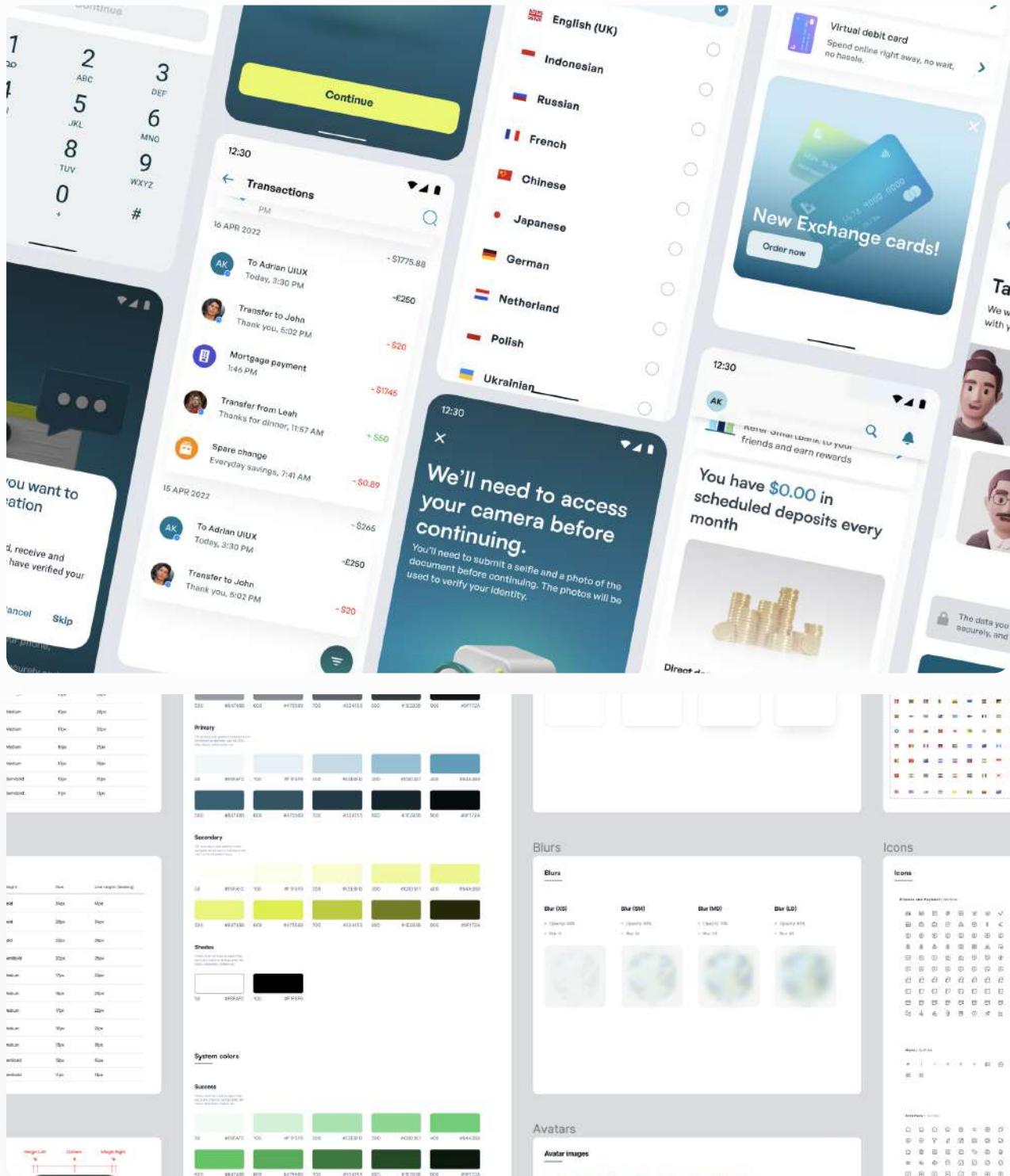
In this chapter I'll explain my personal web design process that let me design over 100 websites in the past 3 years, all successfully received and launched live.

As with the Design Manual, while designing this LP I assumed many things. Normally, I'd spend much more time on researching and analyzing the market, have a few stakeholder interviews, maybe run a UX workshop and get more context about the product.

I will show you all the UX stages I follow when working on a new site and share with you the templates I use for each of them.

It's the same app we created in the Design Manual ebook.

If you haven't purchased the Manual yet and are also interested in mastering mobile design - [click this link to get 50%](#) off the regular price. Cheers!

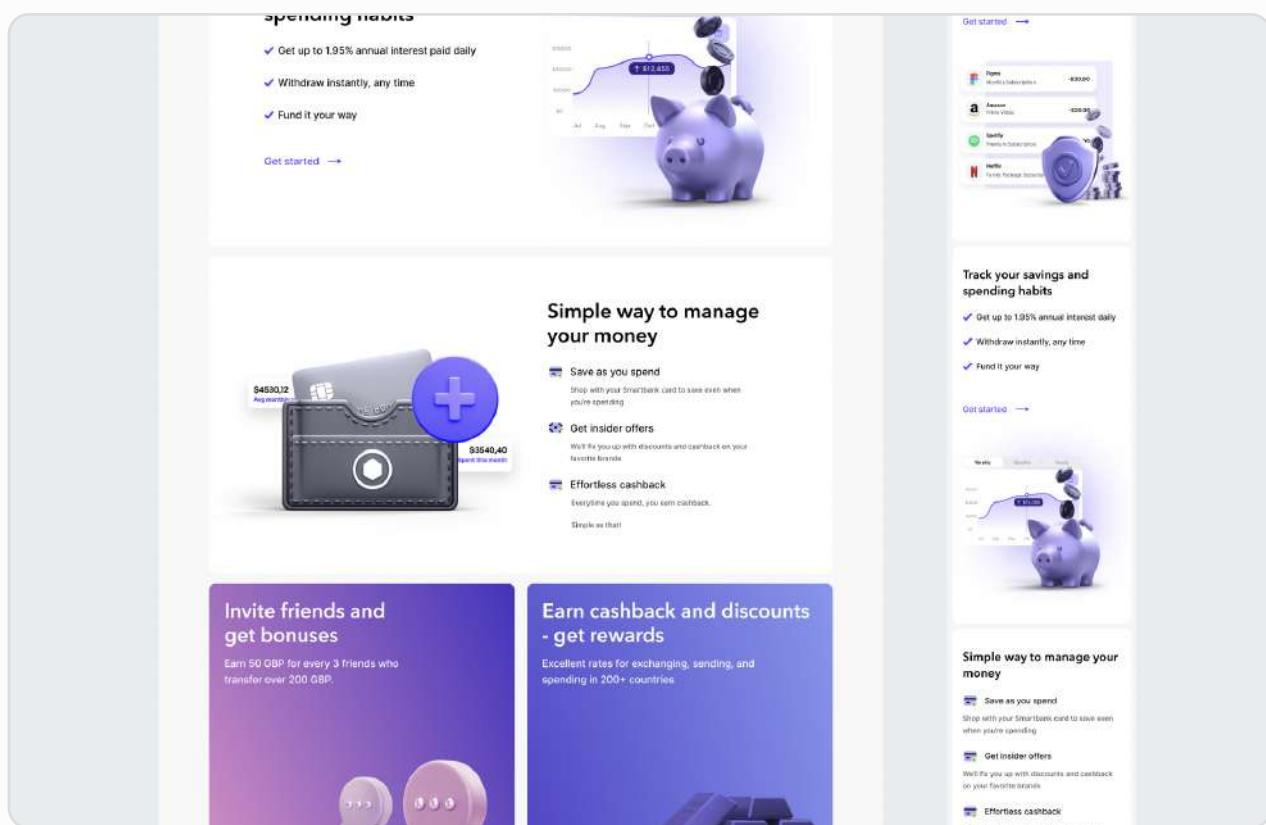


A few words before we start

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.



Intro to the project

Intro to the project

In this part, we'll design a landing page for a Fintech startup. You will find the Project Requirements document in the official SmartBank Landing Page figma file on the "Project Overview" page.

I wanted to give you an example of a landing page that includes all the important segments every successful LP should have.

Unfortunately, due to limited resources and time allocated for this project (it was a spontaneous decision to include a UI kit in this ebook and we only spent a couple days on it) it's not the direct equivalent of a \$10,000 website that I'd normally spent around 80-100 hours working on. Please, treat it as your reference and a framework as far as the landing page structure goes.

We will design a number of most commonly used segments - a hero section, problem-solution segments, social proof, testimonials, CTA, newsletter, and a few more. Designs will be broken down into small and extra-large viewports for desktop and mobile views.

We've also used dynamic components and created global styles so that, if need be, you're free to modify and edit every single segment of the landing page and create your own concept. Kind of like your dynamic mini-UI system kit.

That's it for the intro! Let's discuss our design process now!

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 covers 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.

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, as well as many of the client's expectations for the final product's functionality, aesthetic, and project deliverables. Deliverables include documents, branding and marketing material, sketches, wireframes, style guides, and anything else that a client expects you to 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 for it 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

Discovery Questionnaire

Discovery Questionnaire [Template] <p><small>This questionnaire will provide us with useful and necessary information to best serve you, so take your time. Open up a bottle of wine, chill on the couch, and get to thinking!</small></p> <p>The Essential Questions</p> <p>What is your business name?</p> <p>What's the meaning behind your business name?</p> <p>How long have you been in business?</p> <p>Why did you get into this business?</p> <p>What's your story?</p> <p>Describe what your business does in two sentences.</p> <p>What is your business purpose?</p> <p>What services or products does your business provide?</p> <p>What makes your business unique?</p> <p>Why do your clients trust you?</p> <p>What are a few big goals you have for your business? Where do you see your business in 2-3 years?</p> <p>The Brand</p> <p>Would you be willing to keep your existing branding to some extent or rework it completely (i.e. keep fonts and feed layout on Instagram)?</p>	
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A designer will, in turn, analyze the project brief and either come up with a discovery questionnaire to cover areas of the project that are not well defined or create a project backlog to agree on specific deliverables, the scope of work, and the milestone deadlines.

Design is often a lengthy and complicated process and needs a lot of attention in the initial stage - the project preparation.

Once you and your client have a good overview of the project's requirements, you define the SOW (scope of work) and agree on milestones - you create a contract, and you both sign it. Then, you send the deposit invoice, collect the payment, run a kick-off session on Zoom (not necessary), and you begin your research. Good job!

Project research - what do you start with

Good research will determine if your project is successful or not. A designer should know everything there is to know about the business they're designing the website for.

There are many techniques to conduct research, many of which I'll discuss later in this chapter. The following research's findings provide many important deliverables for the design process:

- **Insights** to generate the ideas (audit and competitor's research)
- **Market analysis** (interviews, SWOT analysis)
- **User problems** applied in a real-life context (user persona, use cases, user journeys, and user flows)

Although it's not mandatory for designers to participate in the research itself, they need access to the research findings.

If you're working in an agency for a bigger project, it often happens that another research-focused agency performs the market research and compiles all findings in a document for you to read and analyze. If you're a solo designer working on a lower-ticket project (\$5k-15k) you might be required to conduct the research yourself.

In this chapter, you'll find my personal suggestions on what you might want to consider when carrying out project research.

Ask questions

Your design should solve the problems of your clients and their users. And to do that you need to define a good solution.

There's no way of defining a good solution without first understanding the company behind the product or the website for which you are providing a service for.

You must fully understand the business of the organization that hired you as a designer. You may obtain this information from various sources, including reading briefs and company documents and speaking with important stakeholders.

The real term for these conversations is a "stakeholder interview," but it may seem slightly too formal. These conversations have a more casual tone. Stakeholder interviews are one of the best ways to create trust and build rapport with your new client.

Competitor's audit

The first thing I do before I start creating my site's architecture is I start by auditing the competition. This will help me do two things - one, I will be able to find common design patterns used by the competitors and analyze things I like and dislike about each site.

Two, it will serve me as a foundation for the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis in the next step.

For a successful audit, I will need to analyze at least 2-3 direct competitors (same product, same niche) and 1-3 indirect competitors (same niche, different product).

I note things like copy, visuals, CTAs, sitemap, etc. I also like to get immersed and look at everything from a user's point of view.

That's also why creating a couple of user journeys might also be a good idea since you'll be able to track all the steps needed to accomplish a goal from a users' perspective. I also track the time needed to complete each goal to identify the weak spots and find ways to improve the time-to-completion and overall experience.

How do you choose a goal? With some products, there might be several different actions a user could take.

Which one should you consider? Well, most, if not all of them.

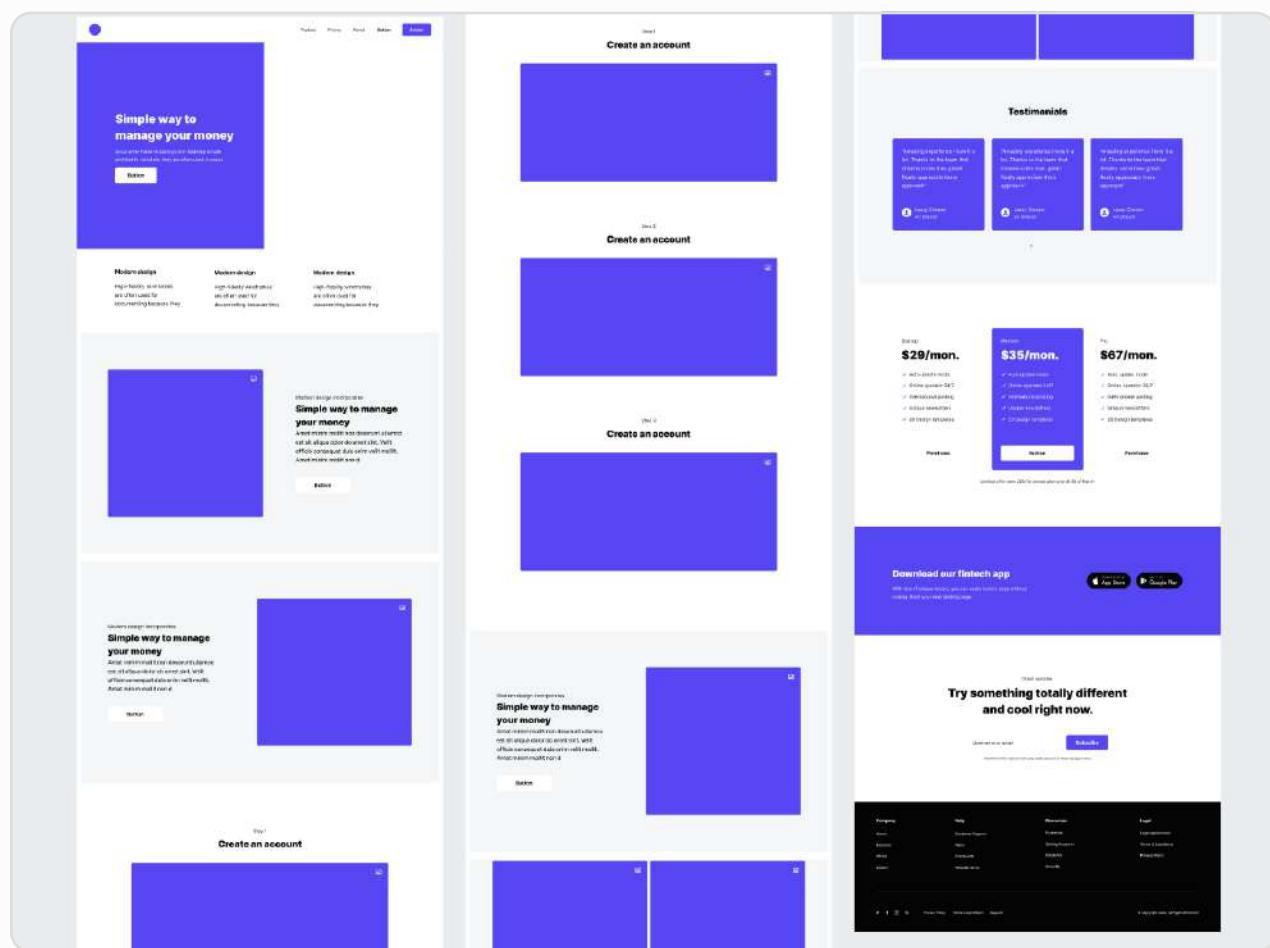
You will need to come up with different use cases for your product. And to come up with use cases, you will need to conduct a number of interviews with stakeholders and users of the product. It requires a lot of back-and-forth communication to do it right.

Do you now see how the entire UX phase is connected? In the perfect environment, you go from one step to another to create an entire backbone of your product before you even start visual design.

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.





Chapter summary

- 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.
- Once you and your client have a good overview of the project's requirements, you define the **SOW (scope of work)** and agree on milestones
- Good research will determine if your project is successful or not.
A designer should know everything there is to know about the business they're designing the website for.
- **Stakeholder interviews** are one of the best ways to create trust and build rapport with your new client.
- **Competitor audits** will help you find common design patterns used by the competitors and analyze them. They should also **serve you as a foundation for the SWOT analysis.**

Take some notes!



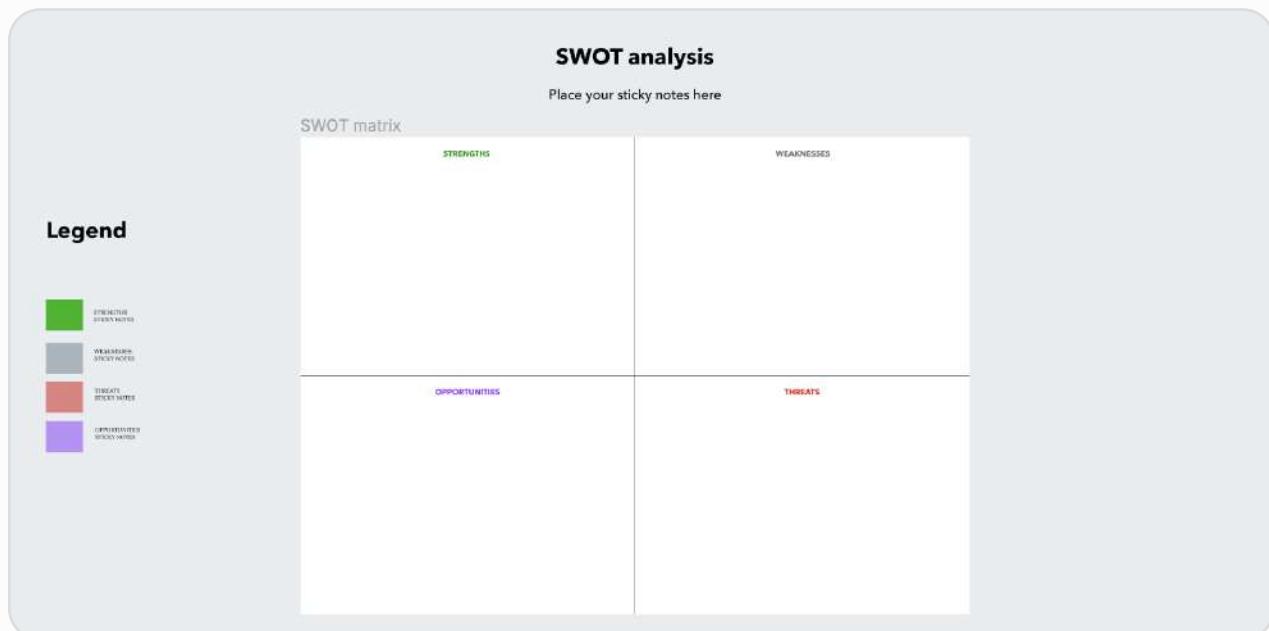
The UX process

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a traditional marketing method used in strategic business planning to specify internal and external factors that could influence the company's goals.

SWOT is divided into four main categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

They allow the company to develop the strengths and alleviate the weaknesses. For example, the strengths can refer to an easy to navigate website, weaknesses to a design that is not responsive. Finding a weak spot of a competitor gives an opportunity to improve it and turn it into the biggest strength of the business.



Traditional competitor analysis in the marketing field concentrates on adjusting the marketing strategy to the vision of business development by defining the scope and the character of the industry, pointing out the direct and indirect competitors.

The UX analysis

The UX analysis is not just about comparing websites and assessing the diversity of a design but rather about how the site is used and whether the user enjoys the interaction or not. Participation in the flow of information, filling out forms, subscribing to newsletters, and using chatbots, all these components contribute to the usability of the website and the impressions associated with using it.

When analyzing a competitor, it may be tempting to directly copy the design and the functionality of a competitor's website or strategy. It is important for you to strive for a unique UX, as not every solution that is advantageous for the competition will also serve a different brand.

A typical UX analysis of a competition should include 2-4 competitors. A number that's higher than that may complicate the entire analytical process and lead to unreliable results.

- **Direct competitors:** with the same products, services, or users.
- **Indirect competitors:** with similar products, services but targeting different users.

The criteria used in the UX competitor analysis vary depending on the brand and information needed. Below is a list of criteria that serves as the basis for any competition.

A typical UX analysis consists of:

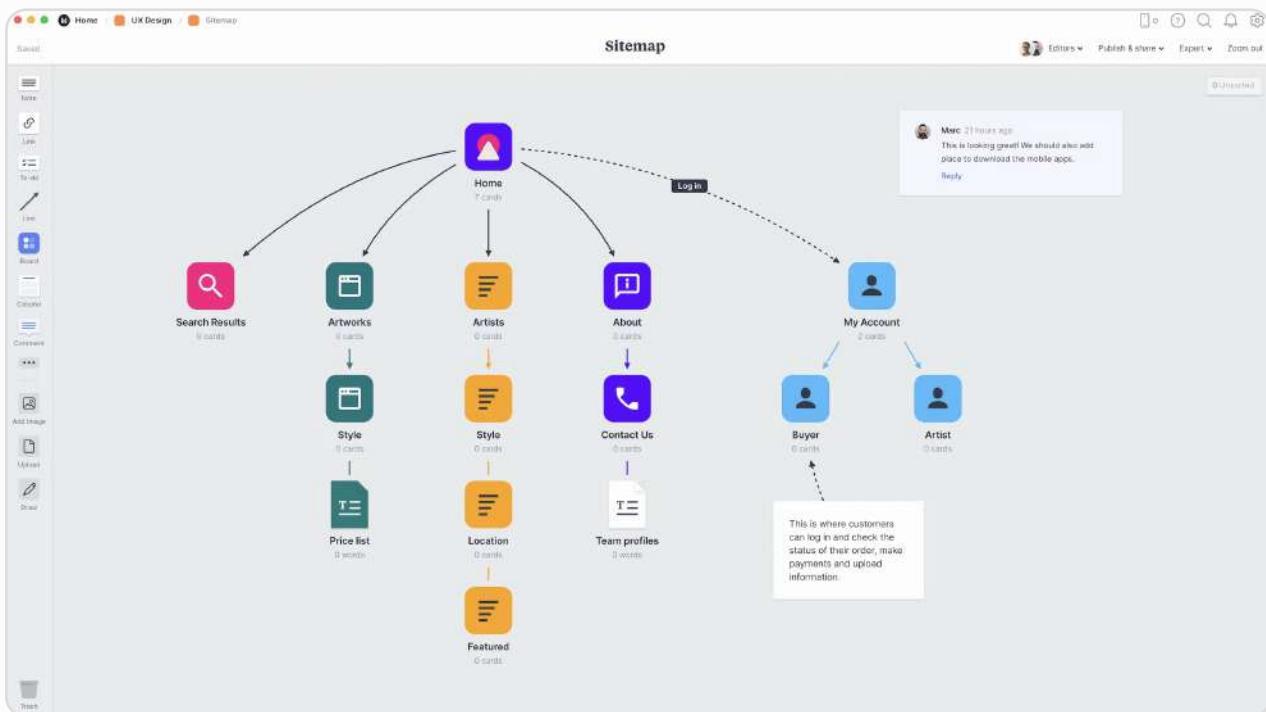
- **Content** – The site must be useful and structured to allow the user to find all the essential information in an easy to comprehend way. It applies to arranging pages within the website, layout of the navigation menus, header naming.
- **Aesthetics** – The aesthetics must be consistent with the brand identity and, at the same time, be innovative and eye-catching.
- **Heuristics** – it refers to the key aspects of usability (Usability Heuristics for UI by Norman and Nielsen Group) that need to be included and completed during web design.

One of the factors that may disrupt the results of UX analysis is delegating it to an inexperienced person that does not know the brand or market.

Therefore, I repeat, it's crucial for you to understand the product before you start the analysis. Take the time to learn all there is to know about the brand you're working with.

Competitor UX analysis should be conducted on a regular basis to gather the most up to date information.

Creating a clear sitemap/Information architecture



Milanote.com

A sitemap serves as a foundation for every new website. In the web development world, sitemaps are used to let search engines know about your website's page structure and the relationship between pages on your site. As web designers, we'll refer to UX sitemaps which will serve as a reference for building our XML (HTML) sitemaps.

UX sitemaps are created to understand users better and offer them a much better experience on the site while bringing companies closer to their business goals. Treat it as your starting point before any visual work can be initiated.

In the context of UX, the sitemap has transformed into a key component of the website's design process, so we'll start from that.

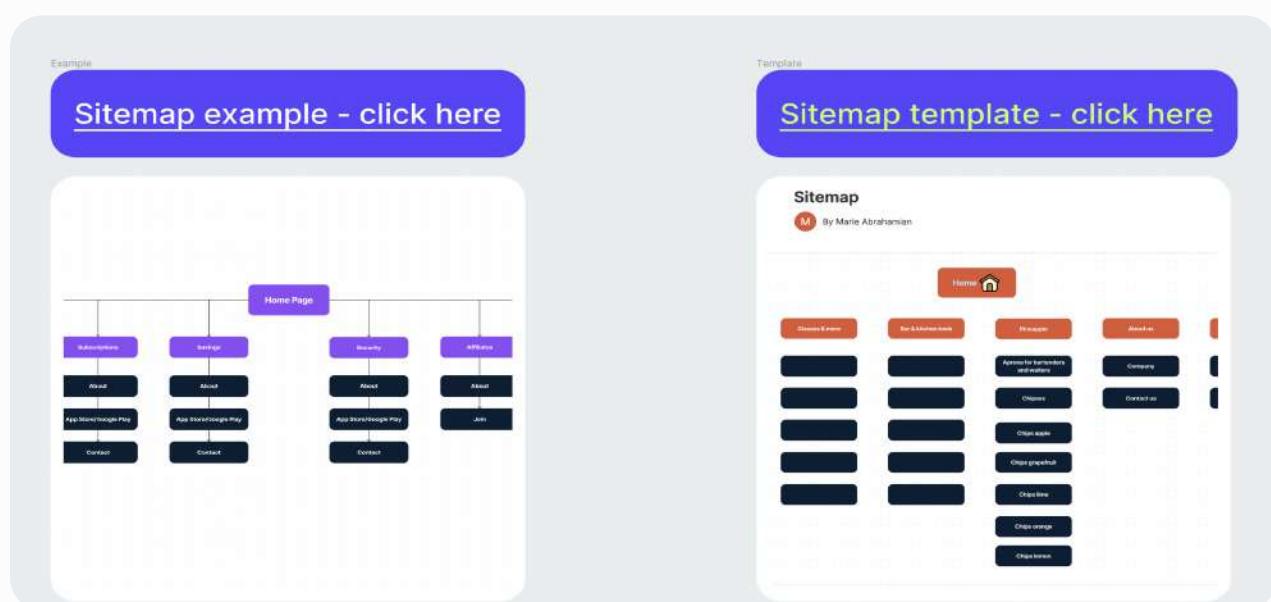
With every sitemap, I simplify the navigation as much as possible.

Include the main pages at the top level, branching out to mid-level pages from there. These are usually placed in the header.

I put all the lower-level pages (that don't carry as much importance) in the footer navigation. I try not to hide any pages and offer a way to browse them all either through a header menu or the footer.

Not knowing where to find information about a page is one of the most common UX mistakes one can make. It's annoying and leaves users frustrated. If your site has a lot of pages - add a search input field and let your users search your site's depository by typing keywords or browsing through a category page.

I don't overcomplicate this part. One branch of a sitemap covers one page and shows the top-level navigation, with lower-level navigation being segmented that redirects to a dedicated page.



How should you create a sitemap?

1. Define the purpose of the website - you start by defining the website's main goal - the unique value proposition (UVP). You create the UVP together with the stakeholders by running several internal interviews, carrying out a UX workshop, or proposing it yourself after the competitor's research and analysis. It will clearly indicate what the website should focus on.

2. Conducting the necessary research - collecting user data based on target markets and what information your potential customers will look for on the website. They should be directly related to the purpose of the website.

3. Specifying types of content - after indicating what content the user needs to see on the website, one must specify in what form it should be provided to him. Depending on their nature, contents may take the form of videos, podcasts, questions, answers, etc..

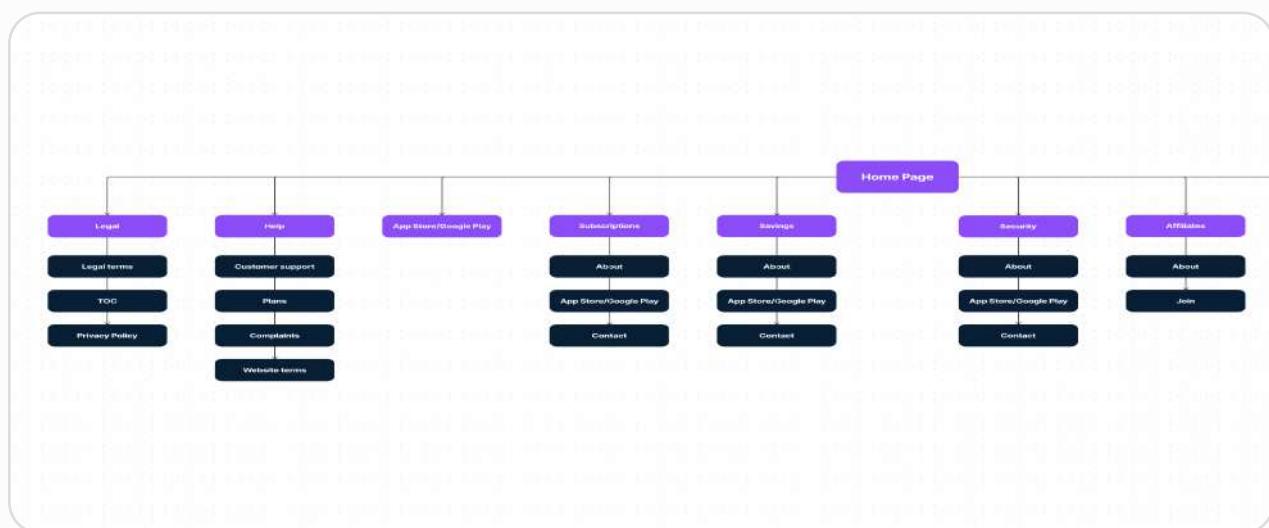
4. Creating global navigation - the sitemap is a hierarchical structure, so navigation should be presented as its first level. All pages on the site should be logically related to the main navigation.

5. Creating content sections based on global navigation - content should be structured on the second and third levels so that all material is organized in a logical sequence and available at all times.

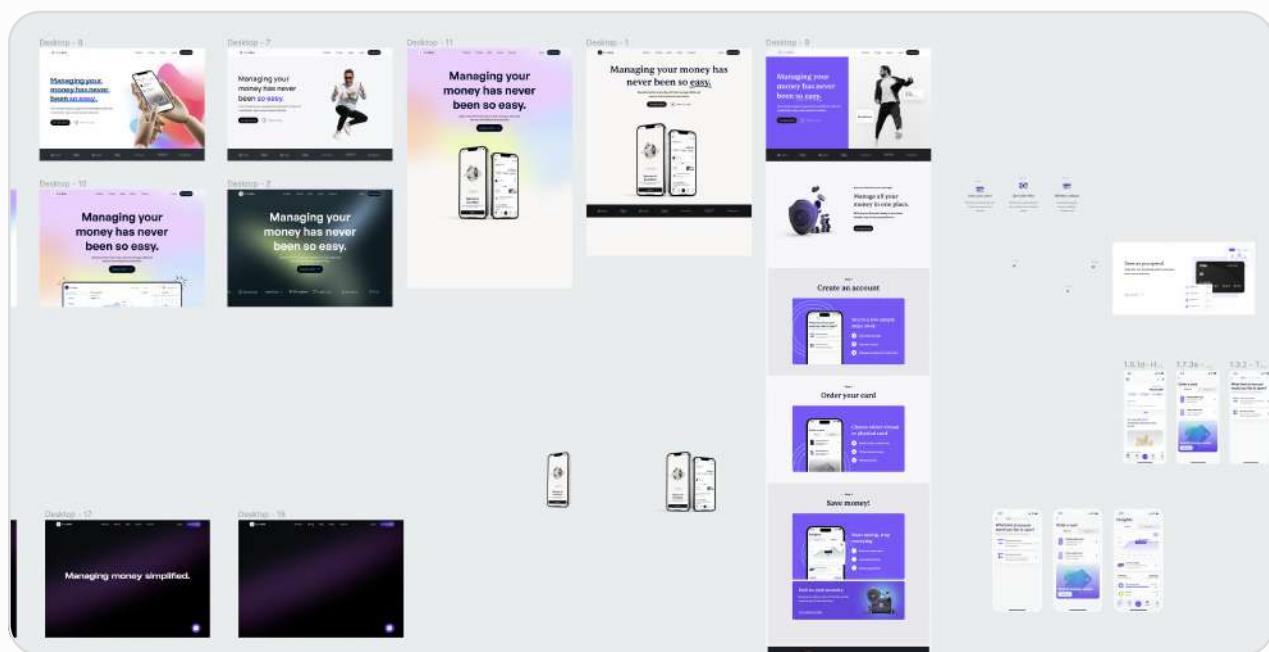
How to visualize the sitemap

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.



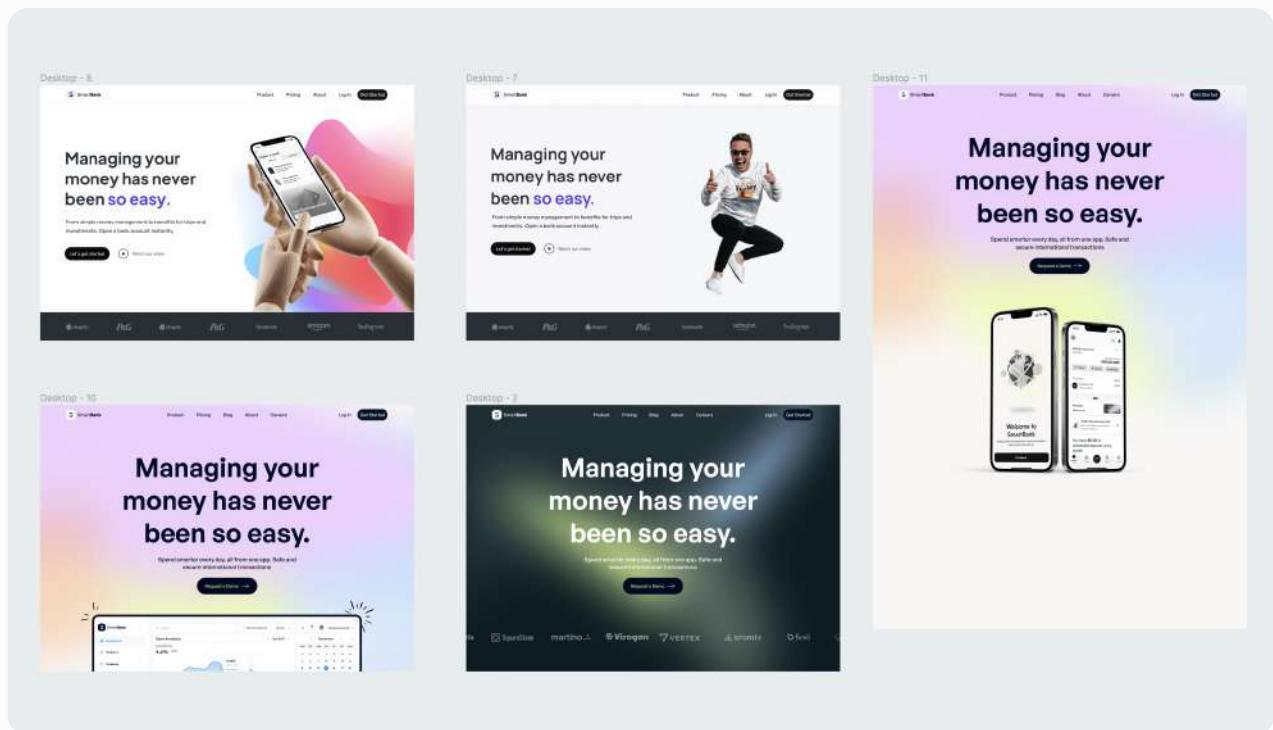
Now that we have our sitemap let's move on to discuss our initial sketches and the importance of having a “Sandbox” page.



Sketches/Sandbox

Once I have the competitor's research carried out, got my notes about what I like and dislike about my competitor's site, I have my SWOT analysis and know exactly what needs to be improved, and I know how my site's architecture will look like - it's time to brainstorm ideas, grab a pen, and transfer all of my initial thoughts onto a paper.

I either create a new Sandbox page in my project file and start designing a few quick hero mockups, maybe create a section or two and see how I feel about them.

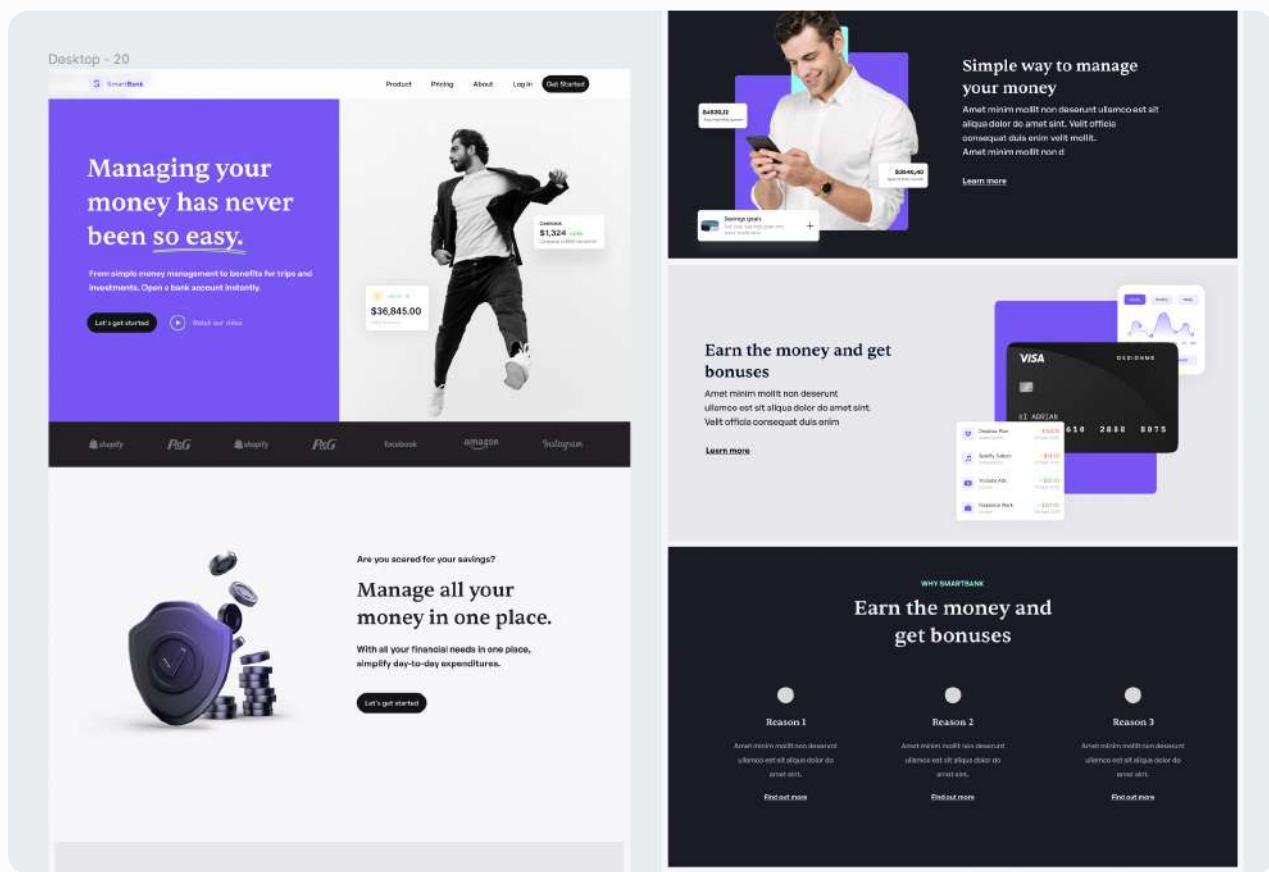


At the same time, I grab a piece of paper and a pen, and I start drawing boxes and lines that resemble my site's sections - a header, a hero image, headline, description, CTA, and progressively move down the page, roughly outlining each section.

The recipe for the perfect “Landing Page”

How do I know how many sections to include in my landing page design? I had to come up with and follow a SaaS Landing Page template framework. I modified it slightly over the years by analyzing how other successful product sites are structured nowadays, and I took inspiration from that.

After many years of designing websites, I developed a theory on what every successful website should include.



The number of sections depend on how much information I have available for a given product but usually, I try to include the following:

- **Header**
 - A standard header with a logo, a menu, and a CTA
- **Hero section with:**
 - a strong visual (video or a product image)
 - actionable CTA
 - SEO-optimized heading and description
- **Social proof/Benefits section:**
 - Client/partner logo(s) or key benefits of a product.
- **Problem - Solution statement:**
 - To highlight an important user problem and offer an immediate solution - this should be their biggest concern.
- **Either “How it works” or another Problem-solution statement**
 - To explain the process and reinforce the positive emotions associated with solving the issues a user is faced with.
- **Benefit-driven section(s)**
 - To show more benefits coming from the use of the product.
- **Incentive section**
 - Any sort of gamification to incentivize the potential customer.
This could be a freebie, a trial, a gift in return for a simple action like leaving an email or inviting a friend.
- **Testimonials/Social proof**
 - To reinforce the sense of trust and build social proof.

- **Pricing section**
 - Be as transparent with the customer as possible. Hiding prices behind a login wall feels cheap; don't do that.
- **Main CTA**
 - Put CTAs next to each problem-solution and benefit-driven sections of the landing page to add more context.
 - And offer one main CTA segment at the bottom of the page.
- **Secondary CTA**
 - Add a secondary CTA, either to learn more about the product or offer some high-value/low-effort freebie like a free guide or an ebook in order to capture emails.
 - If your customers are not ready to take action yet, they need more convincing, and you can't do anything if you don't have any point of contact with them - try to capture their email.
- **Footer**
 - Lastly, you need a footer to host the remaining pages, add important quick links for easier access. You also need to include legal pages, terms, and privacy policies - all must be present as they are required and regulated by authorities.

You will also find this template in the “🚧 Landing Page framework” page located in the main Figma file “01. SmartBank Landing Page”. Check it out and feel free to use for your own needs!



Chapter summary

- **SWOT analysis** is a traditional marketing method used in strategic business planning to specify company's goals.
- The criteria used in the **UX competitor analysis** vary depending on the brand and information needed.
- In the web development world, **Sitemaps** are used to let search engines know about your website's page structure and the relationship between pages on your site.
- **Sitemap**, in its simplest form consists of blocks with names representing pages and showing relationships between them.
- **The number of sections on a Landing Page** depend on how much information you have available for a given product
- **A typical Landing Page** would consist of sections like header, hero, social proof, problem-solution statements, benefits, incentives, testimonials, main CTA, secondary CTA, and a footer.

Take some notes!



The UI process

Inspiration boards and moodboard

A default definition of an inspiration board is “a collage of various items, as photographs, drawings, words, fabric swatches, paint chips, and textures, used to visualize specifics in the design of a project or an event.” What it’s usually is for us, in the UI design space, is a collage of app screens and website shots used for visual inspiration, and the creation of mood boards.

What I always do after I get the initial direction from a stakeholder’s discovery questionnaire is go over to Dribbble and spend a good 30 minutes browsing different designs for visual inspiration.

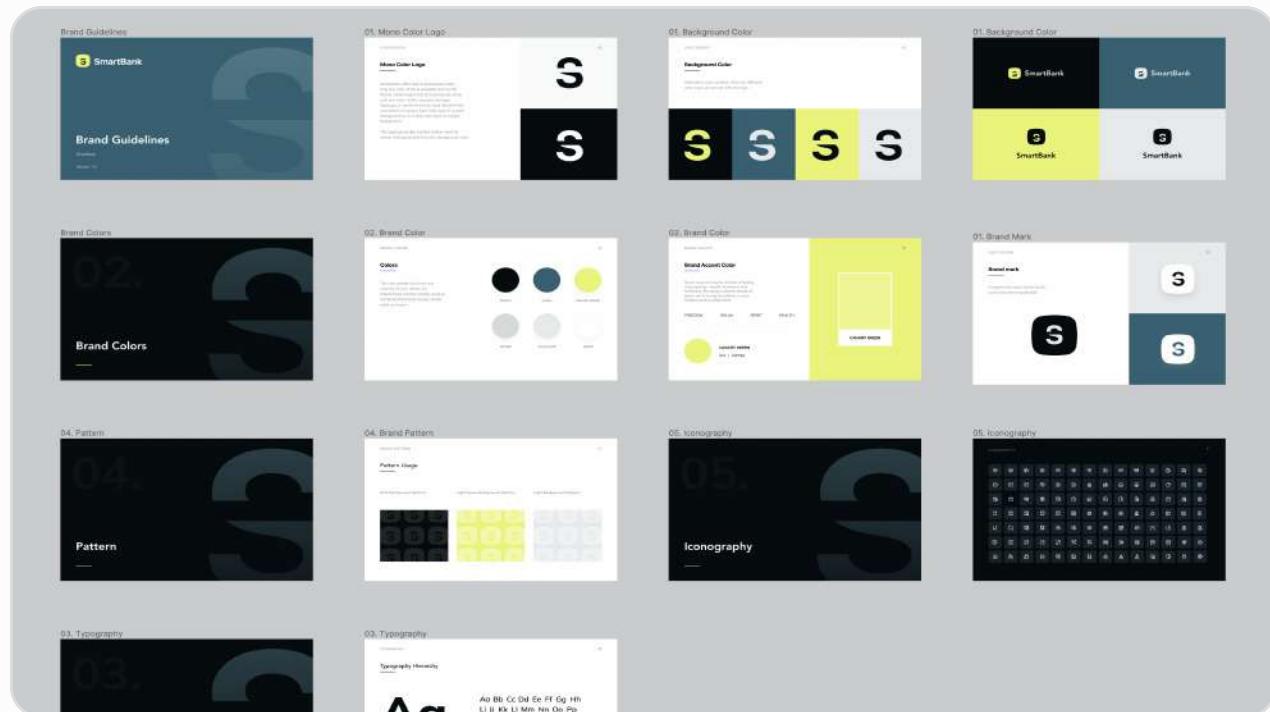
How do I decide which designs to consider when creating my inspiration board?

I collect the initial feedback and project specification from stakeholders. The discovery questionnaire I send out goes over the visual expectations for the brand’s appeal, asking questions like website inspiration, the brand’s perceived look and feel, the main keywords that should describe the brand in question, and things my clients dislike about their competitor’s brands.

This gives me an overall understanding of what I should look for. My client’s preference lies more in neo-brutalist designs? I try to find sites that resemble that look and feel.

If they want something more professional and minimalist - I turn to that direction and begin my search for these kinds of visuals.

If they have brand identity guidelines, the work is different - I move on to create the style guide for digital use.

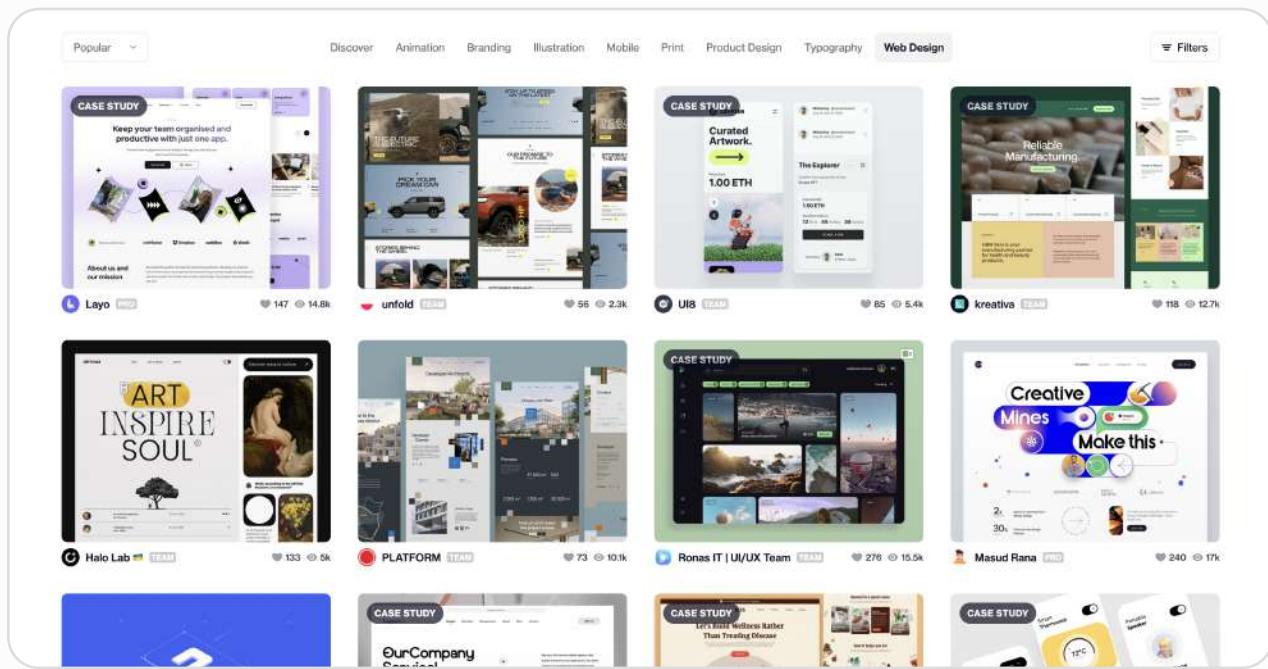


Design Manual - SmartBank Brand Guidelines

Where to find inspiration

My main visual inspiration source is Dribbble. A site that gets a lot of hate from the UX community for indirectly promoting bad “good” design examples and non-commercial ready work.

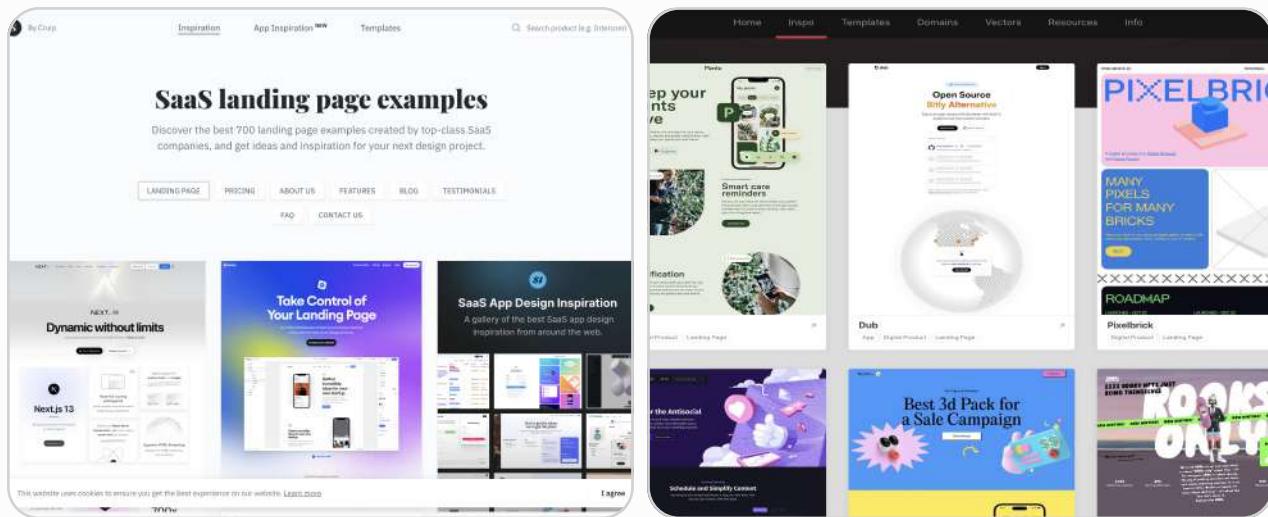
For visual inspiration, though, it's perfect. You won't find this many examples anywhere. And remember, we don't need the user-centered masterpieces here, we just need as many colorful designs as possible to come up with the visual direction for our new project.



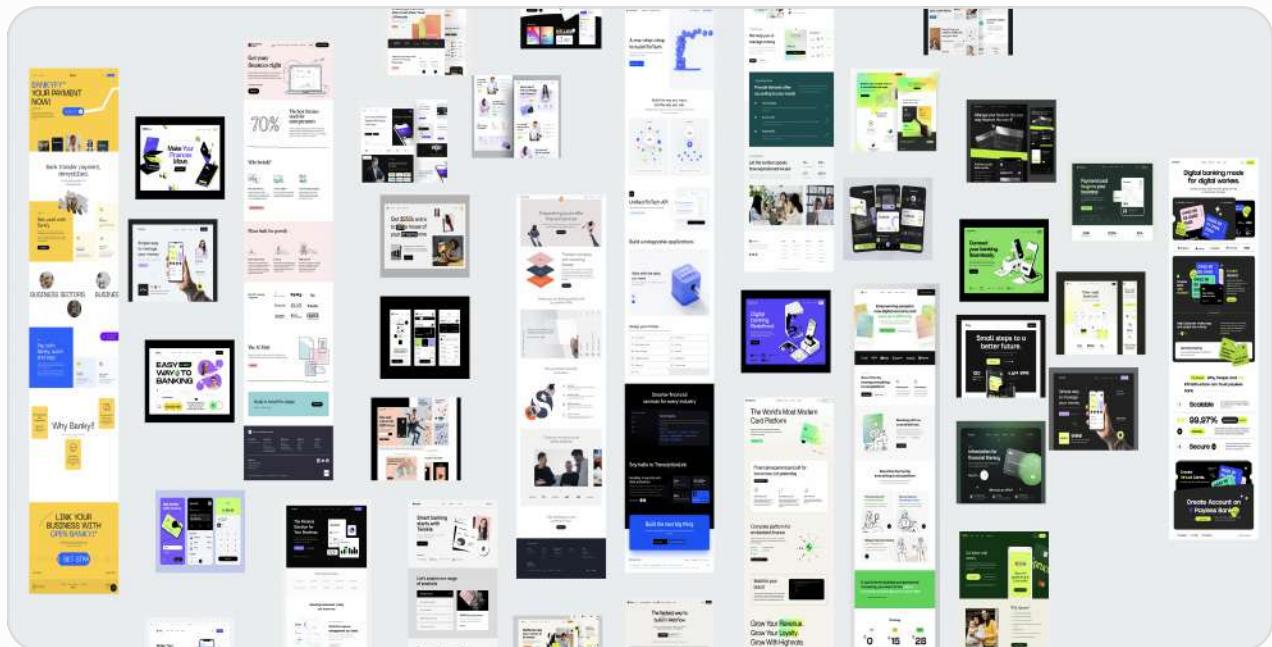
Dribbble

Dribbble is the first place I start my search, but it's not where I end it. The two other sites that are as inspiring as Dribbble are saaslandingpage.com and onepagelove.com.

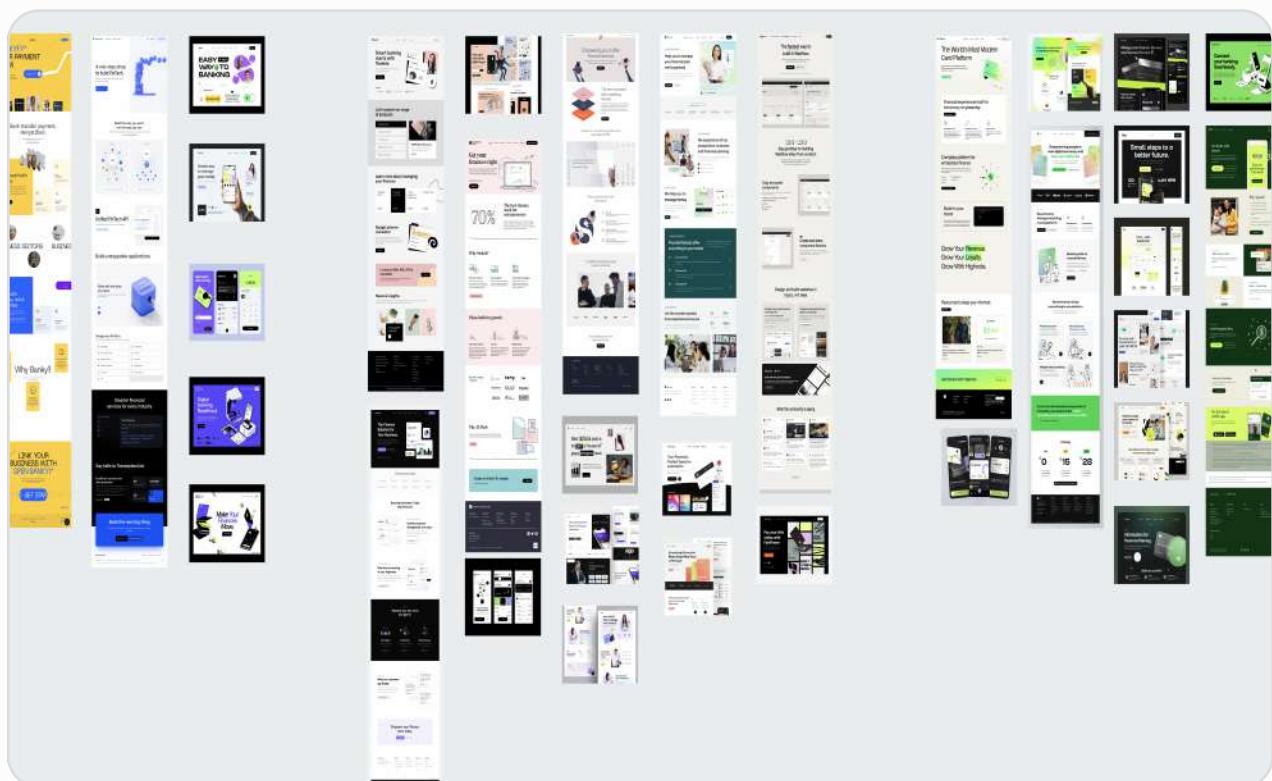
They are much higher quality as the sites being published on these sites are commercially approved sites developed by professional design teams. Similar to Dribbble, I open each site I like, screenshot it and drop it into my file.



I spend no more than 30 minutes on this part. Once I have a good number of visual inspiration collected, I end up with an artboard that looks similar to this 🖌

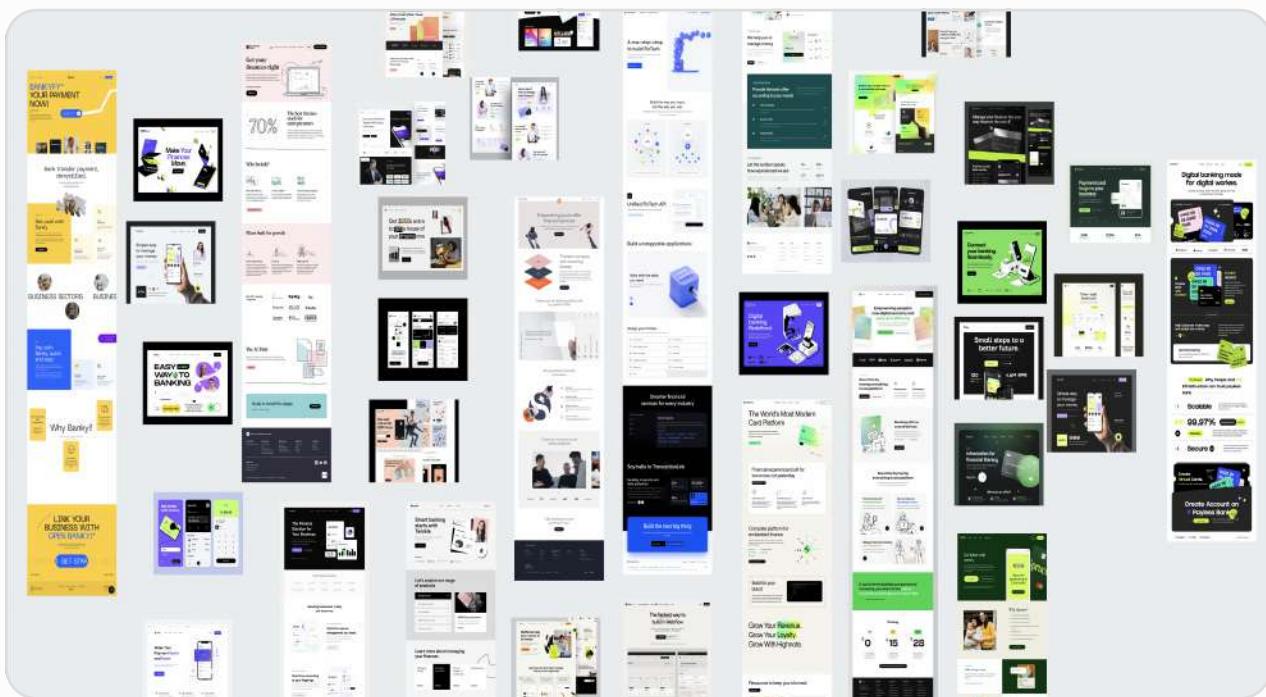


The next step I take is I give my visual inspiration a high-level overview and group all the similar designs into visually similar groups.



Mood boards

Mood boards are an invaluable tool for designers to develop a visual language. They are an important step in the design process that helps guarantee the project will produce the brand appeal and visuals our stakeholders are looking for.



Some people consider mood boards as a waste of time or pure entertainment. But here's the thing - they take very little time to create and are an amazingly useful resource.

How are mood boards created

I normally begin by creating the inspiration board and organizing all the sources of inspiration into distinct groups that share a common color palette and design pattern.

That's the first step we explained on the previous pages.

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

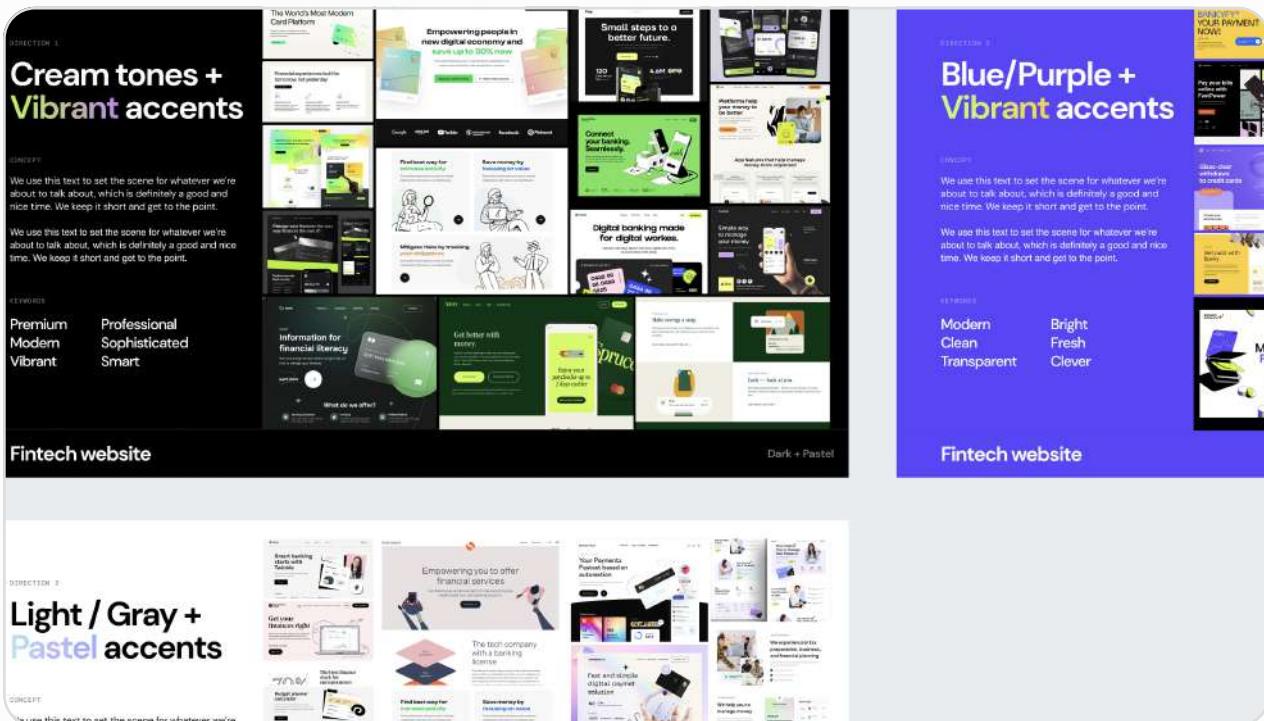
Light / Gray + Pastel accents

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

How many mood boards should you create?

I'd say don't create more than three. The more options you give your clients the harder it is to decide. Especially when dealing with many decision makers. It's just not a good idea.

Try to keep the number of visual directions to 2-3 at most.



Once you have all mood boards created, prepare for a presentation.

Show your findings to the client, and share your thoughts.

Remember, you're the person they came for guidance, and they should trust your judgment. If your client decides he wants to "mix" different styles instead and create a frankenstein-like, tasteless blend of a brand, you should be the one to put a stop to this.

You need to "push" them towards making better choices.

You've got a winner - what now?

Let's make a few assumptions now and theorize the outcome - looking at our brief, we see that our brand should be modern and clean, with a fresh design that attracts younger audiences.

After sharing our results with stakeholders, we decided that mood board number 3 captures these feelings the best. So, we go with that option.

DIRECTION: 3

Blue/Purple + Vibrant 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.

KEYWORD

Modern	Bright
Clean	Fresh
Transparent	Clever

Fintech website

Blue/Purple + Vibrant accents

What should we do now?

We say our goodbyes, end the call, and jump straight back into our beloved Figma. It's time to create the Style Guide 🎨.

Style guide

A style guide is an organized collection of design elements like fonts, colors, imagery, and icons, along with their usage guidelines. It ensures that each website page will have a consistent appearance, look and feel. Style guides are the main information source when designing web or mobile applications.

Styles guides typically cover the use of fonts, colors, grids, and spacing. It helps ensure people adhere to a very rigid and precise design style that is coherent across all platforms and media rather than just making things up as they go.

Imagine a company or a design team not using a shared file that details a product's desired feel and look.

What would happen then? Users would be left confused and irritated by all the visual inconsistencies. We all like consistency, and we're drawn to aesthetic and harmonious things.



Note: Most website style guides include guidelines for typography, iconography, layouts and grids, color palette, and main components like buttons, input fields, and selectors. **More detailed documentation of all your components in all their states falls under a design system definition.**



Color palette

By choosing colors from our mood board and showing our stakeholders a presentation of the color choices, you should both come to a conclusion about choosing the primary color.

Now, you need to continue developing the full-color palette.

There are many ways to do it, some fully automated, and some requiring a little bit more work. If we're limited by time and/or budget, we should opt for the easiest, most time-efficient way, i.e. using a software or a Figma plugin.

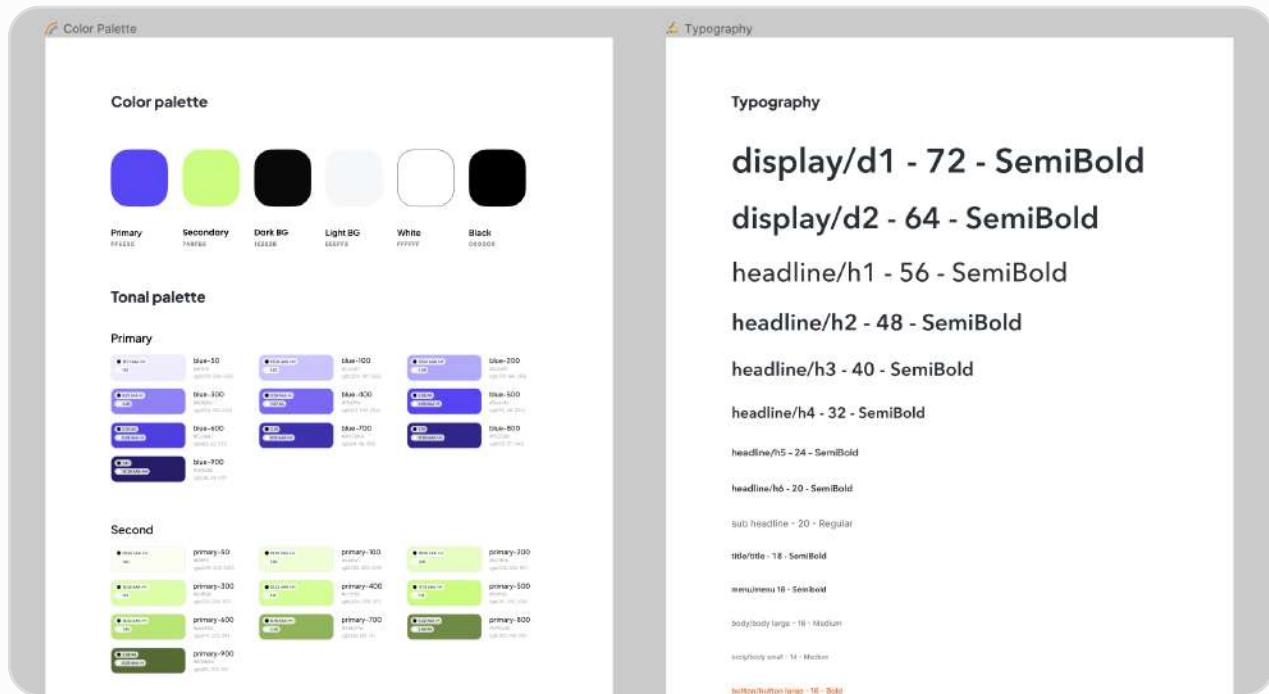
Let's start with option number 1 - Material Theme Builder

The screenshot shows two side-by-side applications. On the left is a 'Tonal palette' generator with three sections: Primary, Second, and Dark. Each section displays a grid of color swatches with names like 'blue-50', 'blue-100', etc., and their corresponding hex codes. On the right is the 'Material Theme Builder' application, which includes a 'Current Theme' dropdown set to 'Color Palette', a 'Dynamic' button, a 'Custom' button, and a large preview area with a 'CHOOSE IMAGE' button and a note about file size.

This is by far the easiest and most automated way to create color palettes that align with Material UI guidelines.

You can create a color system by either uploading an image (of your mood board, for example) or manually selecting primary and secondary colors. **The rest of the palette will be created for you.**

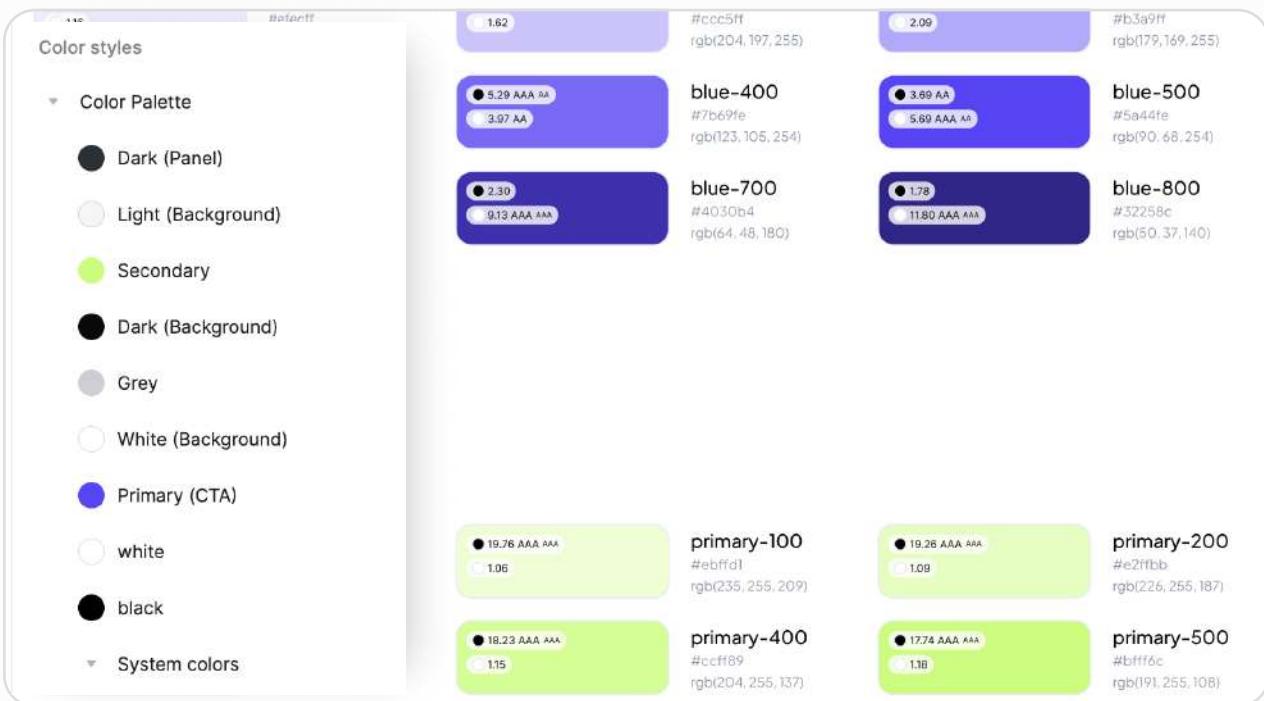
What's good about this plugin is that you'll have global styles auto-generated that are WCAG-compliant. You'll also generate a default typography system. **This plugin really is amazing!**



Your color palettes will be generated in multiple tones (tints and shades), and that's what the 50-100-200 next to the typography style means. 500 is the main color value you should use for your primary, secondary, and tertiary default colors.

50 is the lightest tone you get before turning to pure white. 900 is the darkest before turning to pure black. You'll most likely be using 50, 100, 500, and 700-900 tones. Rest is there for added flexibility.

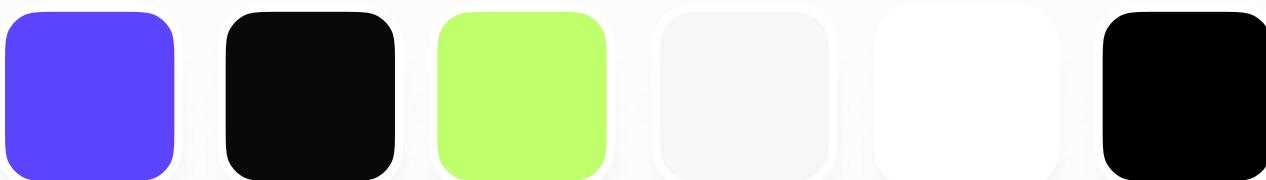
I like to take all the X-500 values and create the main “Color palette” style group that hosts all my main colors.



You most likely won't need all of your tonal palette colors to design.

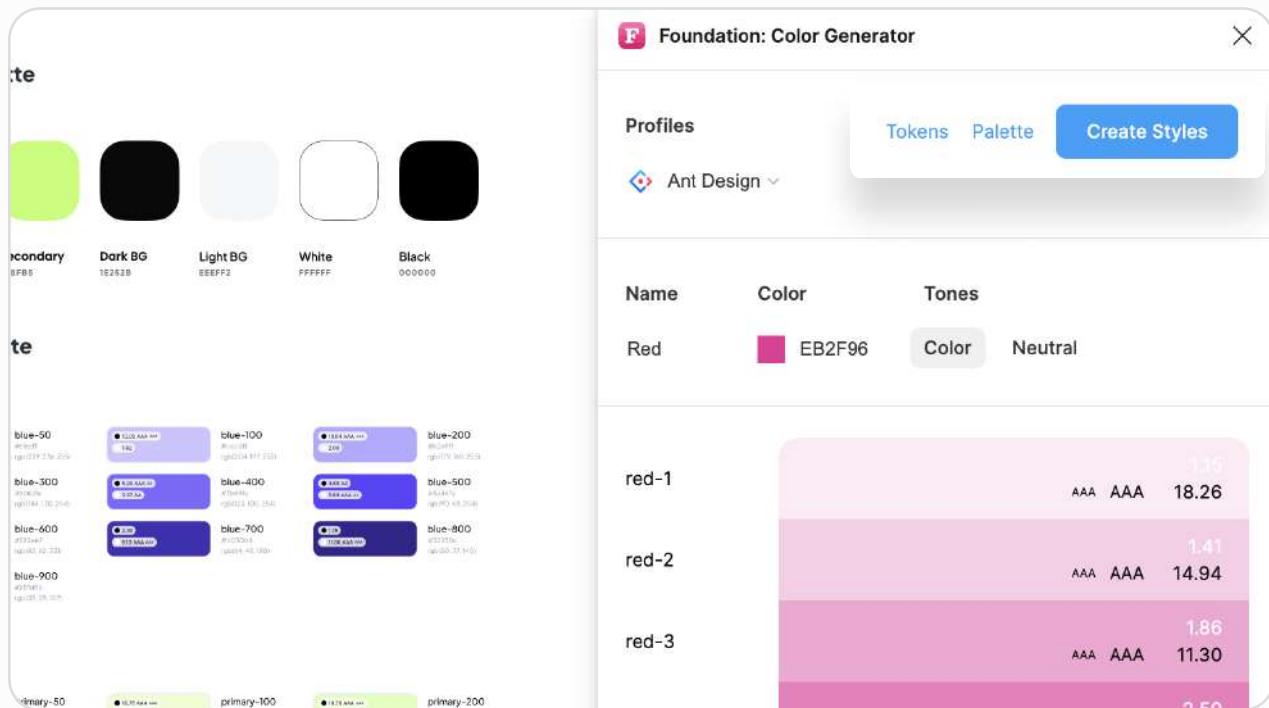
That's why i try to keep it simple and design with around 6-8 colors total, including light and dark backgrounds.

Let's take a look at what colors were generated for us by uploading the mood board image to the Material Theme Builder plugin:



If you're ok with the suggested colors - roll with it. If you want to change the tint of your primary or secondary color, do it now and then generate the tonal palette again. It will update the values.

Apart from the Material color palette generated by the Theme Builder plugin, I might also use Ant Design or Atlassian color profiles. To do that, I use the **“Foundation: Color Generator”** plugin, choose a pre-made profile, click on “Create Styles” and “Palette”, and add the generated frames to my “Style Guide” page.



This approach requires more manual work, especially when selecting your secondary and tertiary colors.

I usually want to aim for a pretty vibrant primary color but with enough contrast between its background and text foreground that it's perfectly accessible across all digital platforms. I might go for blue, purple, orange, pink, or whatever matches the brand's language.

I like to use the psychology of color to determine what colors my client should go for.

Typography

In terms of typography, I usually suggest and present 1-3 fonts that I feel work best with my client's brand. However, I'm not too stressed on this part. Changing fonts is as easy as using a simple plugin (Batch Styler) and updating them in the global styles.

We can always update our fonts later on with little to no effort.

As my top choice, I went with the Avenir Next for the headings and Inter for body-styled text. I wanted to have beautiful geometric fonts that are readable on all sorts of devices and perfectly legible in different font sizes, both very big and very small.

Let's say that the client agreed on the first try, and we were able to move on to create the type scale.

headings

Avenir Next

body

Inter



Here's what a standard type scale would look like for a web project:

Typography	
display/d1 - 72 - SemiBold	headline/h6 - 20 - SemiBold
display/d2 - 64 - SemiBold	sub headline - 20 - Regular
headline/h1 - 56 - SemiBold	title/title - 18 - SemiBold
headline/h2 - 48 - SemiBold	menu/menu 16 - Semibold
headline/h3 - 40 - SemiBold	body/body large - 16 - Medium
headline/h4 - 32 - SemiBold	body/body small - 14 - Medium
headline/h5 - 24 - SemiBold	button/button large - 16 - Bold
	button/button small - 14 - Bold
	caption/caption 13 - SemiBold
headline/h5 - 24 - SemiBold	CHIP/CHIP - 12 - EXTRA BOLD

Display 1 and 2 sizes are the highest in the hierarchy which means that for web development purposes, I would tag them as my H1s.

What's the difference between display 1 and headline 1? Depending on the layout, I might use 72px display style for my main “Hero” heading, but on the “About us” page, the same style could not work the same, and I might need to reduce the size to - let's say 56px and use the headline 1 style instead.

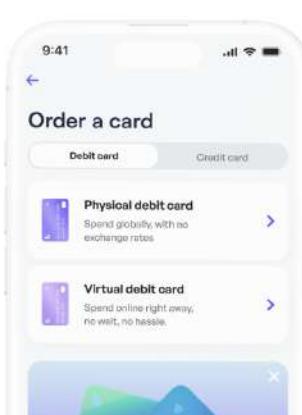
Apart from the display, h1-h6 tags, you will also need a subheading type of text, a button text, caption, chip, and different types of body text. You will also need more flexibility on mobile devices and scale down desktop styles from h1 to h3 or h4 when designing the mobile views. You will need to be more thoughtful and precise on smaller devices.

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

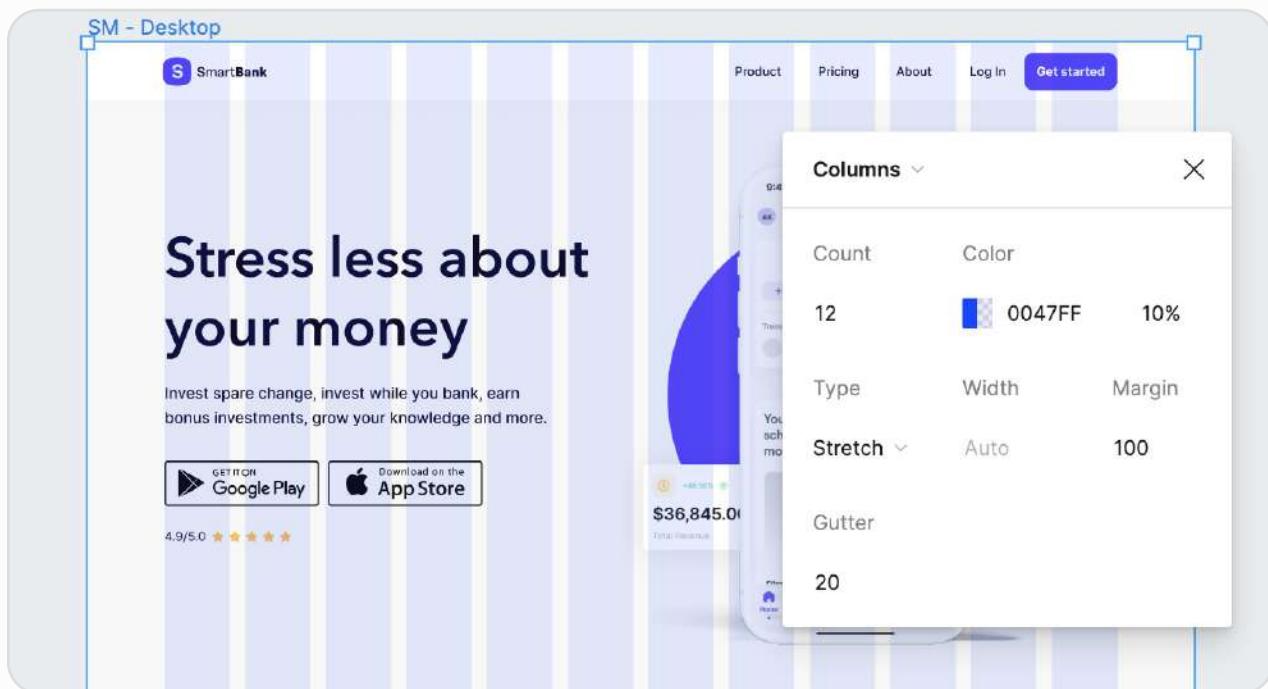
Choose either virtual H3 or physical card H4

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

A standard H2-H4 text hierarchy

Layout grid - desktop

We already covered this, but to reiterate - I build websites on a standard 12-column grid. I start designing on a 1440x1024 frame and left around 100 px of margin on the sides. I leave gutters at 20px, and that's pretty much it.



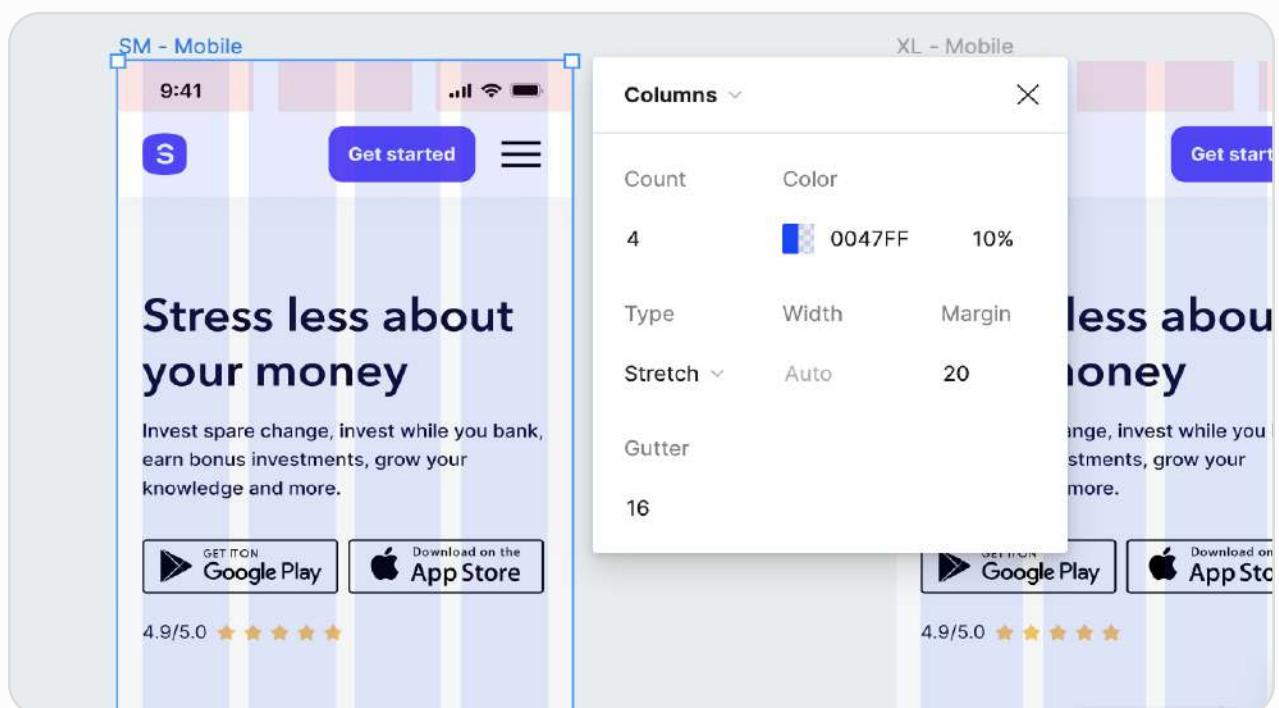
When I build my site on Webflow or Elementor, I use a 1240 px box width as my website's container and increase it to a max width of 1920 px. I design both resolutions in Figma to see how my design would scale up with responsive sizing on Webflow/Elementor.

When you go into development, you might want to switch to a more responsive-friendly way of setting up your margins using percentages, EMs, or viewport width values.

We'll cover that in a video series on Youtube in the following months.

Layout grid - mobile

For mobile website views, I start designing on an iPhone 13 Mini frame (375 x 812) and use a standard 8 px grid with 16-20 px side margins. I set up a grid of 4 columns with 8-16 px gutters. Then I simply toggle it on and off if I need a quick reference and realign elements (“Control + G” on Mac and “Control + Shift + 4” on Win).



I also design one mobile view on a larger device - iPhone 13 Pro Max and depending on the needs, I also design a tablet view.

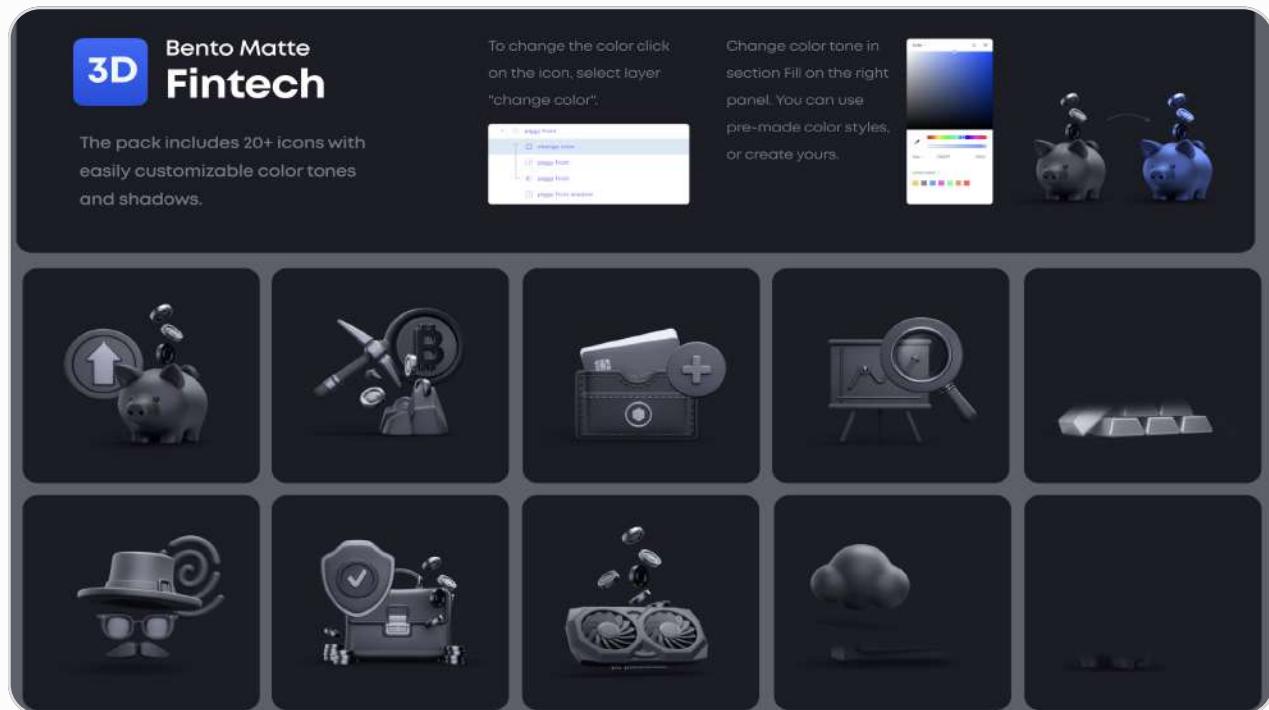
I generally don't start designing mobile-first unless my project is designed to be used on mobile devices primarily.

Usually, what I do is I start designing for desktop, design my dynamic components and adjust them to a mobile screen. I use dynamic sections to, if needed, make changes across the entire website.

Imagery and visuals

When choosing my project imagery I always aim to use one style or a library. I don't like mixing different illustration styles. It just doesn't look good. I find one library (ideally the bigger the better) to create consistent visuals. It's best if they're in a vector format. This gives me more flexibility as I can easily edit all colors, and mix and match them with each other to create new compositions.

For our web project I chose the Bento 3d models from ui8's library.



Bento Matte Fintech

Their 3D renders look cartoonish with a nice clay-like texture, with visible roundness and playfulness matching our choice of fonts and colors for the project. At the same time, they're not going overboard - just the right amount of playful I'm looking for.



Chapter summary

- **For visual inspiration** I use Dribbble, saaslandingpage.com and onepagelove.com.
- **Styles guides** typically cover the use of fonts, colors, grids, and spacing.
- I try to keep my color choices simple and **design with around 6-8 colors total, including light and dark backgrounds.**
- **In terms of typography for a style guide**, I usually suggest and present 1-3 fonts that I feel work best with my client's brand.
- For type scales use the styles generated by the **Material Theme Builder plugin** or refer to **Tailwind CSS guidelines**.
- **I structure my headings with web development in mind.** That means I want to **follow a semantic structure going from h1-h6**.
- When choosing my project imagery **I always aim to use one style or a library.** I don't mix different illustrations styles.

Take some notes!



Wireframes

Wireframes

Once we've got the base for our visual style established and our research completed, it's time to sketch up some wireframes. How much fidelity is enough for this stage? It all depends on your preference, the client's budget, and the time allocated for the project. Some designers skip low fidelity altogether and jump straight into mid or (not recommended!) high fidelity.

Which one should you choose? **Let's talk about that.**

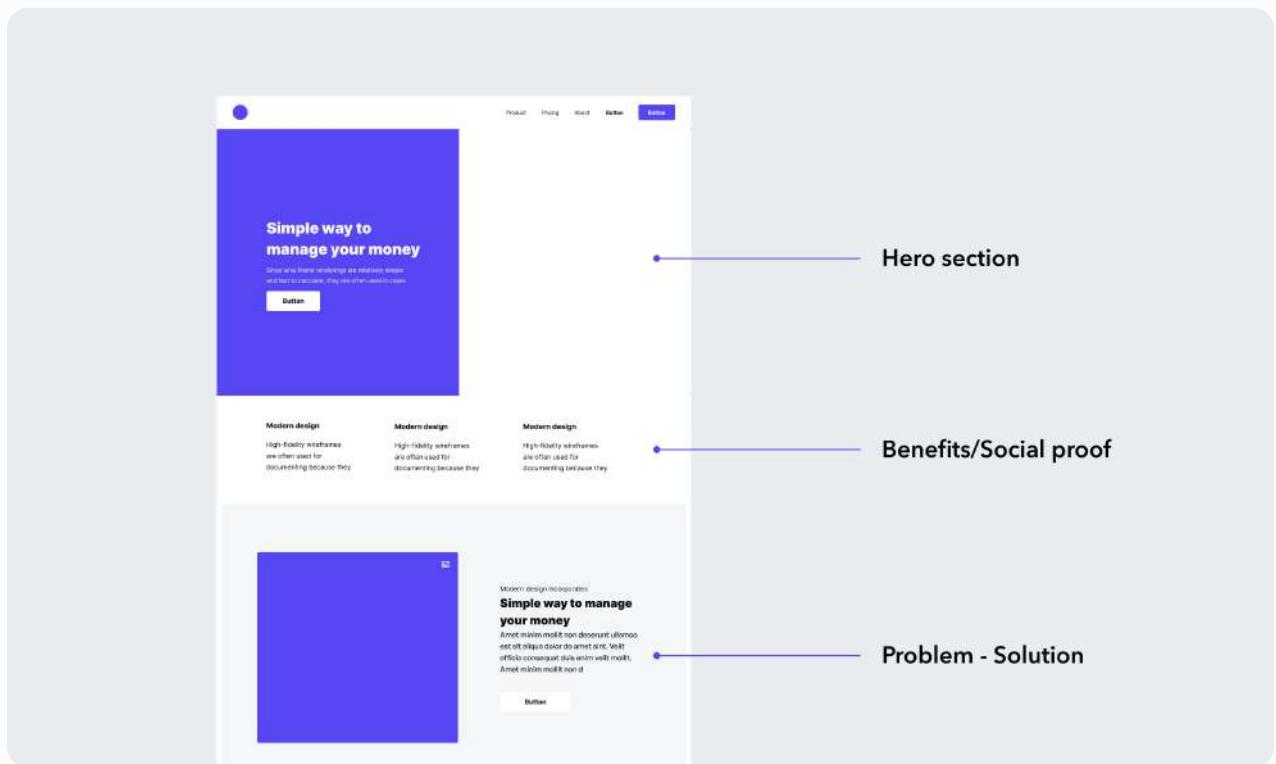
Low-fidelity wireframe

I'm not the biggest fan of low fidelity. It's not that I don't find it valuable. A general overview of what needs to be included on a site or a page is crucial and will save you a lot of time.

You shouldn't freestyle this stage.

What I like to do is create a rough sketch, either on paper or by using a ready-made wireframe kit and add sections that would resemble my high-fidelity design. This is different from the copy and the type of visuals I will use in my end design. It's an overview of the sections I want to include, and that's it. I'll play more with the concept in later stages. Right now, this is all created for my future reference.

Here's how I like to do that (next page)



Such wireframes represent a general idea of what I'd like to include in each section. How I'm going to display that will be shown on my mid-fidelity and high-fidelity designs. I treat my low-fidelity wireframe as a blueprint to lay the foundation for my project visuals.

This wireframe should also **serve you as a framework for building product-oriented landing pages**. I wanted to include every section that potentially increases the conversion rates and offers the most complete browsing experience.

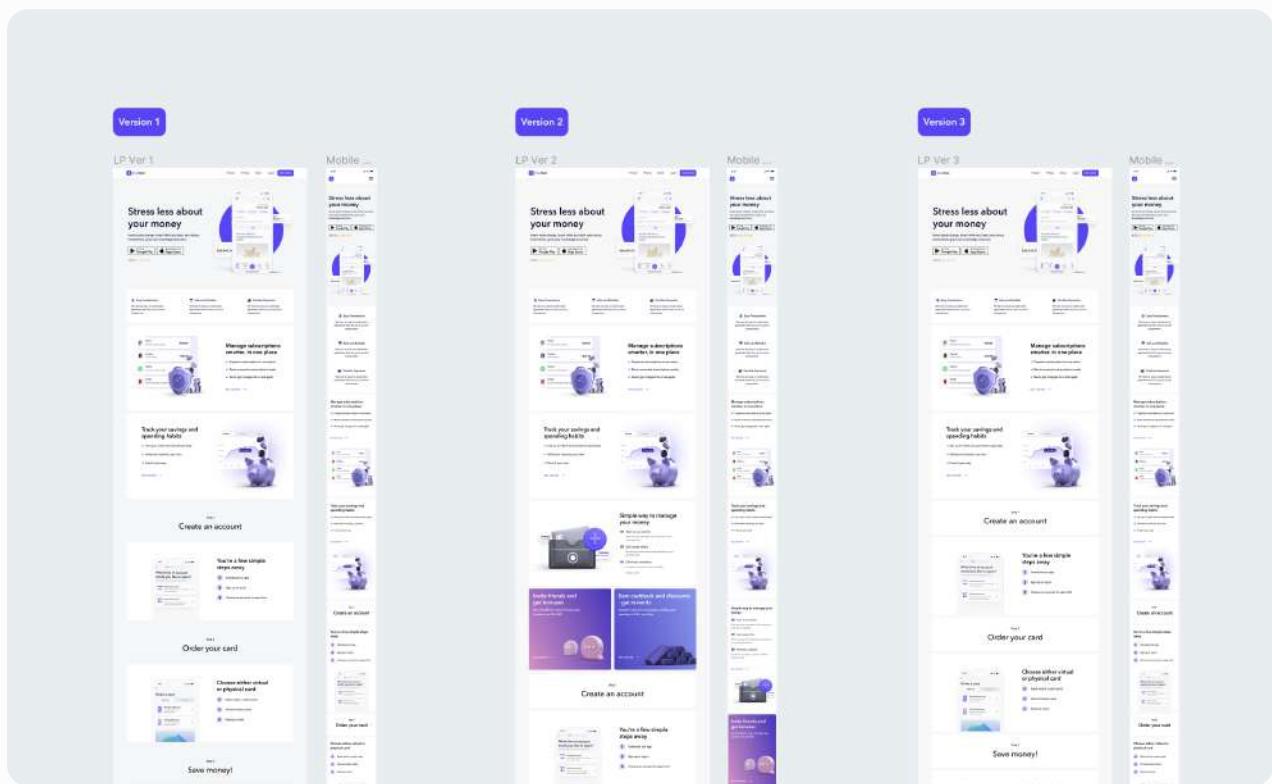
You'll see me include a hero, social proof sections, problem-solution segments, benefits, testimonials, pricing, CTAs., newsletters, etc.

Anyway, I steer away from the main topic. Let's take our designs up a notch and go into mid-fidelity. Next page!

Mid-fidelity wireframe

They depict the layout much more accurately and detail individual components like buttons, text, and links.

Depending on the approach and client requirements, it usually includes the correct spacing and font sizes. Colors are either in grayscale or by the style guide's color scheme.

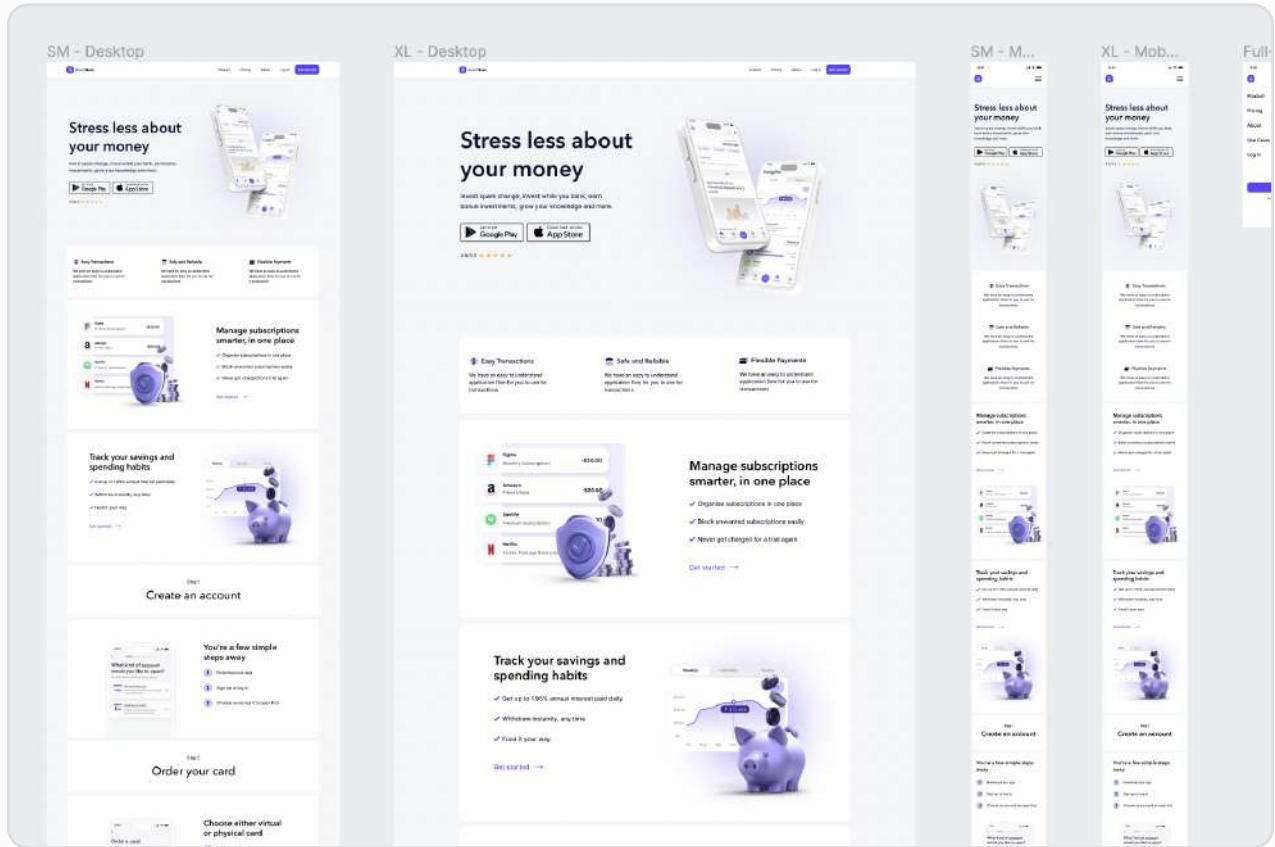


This version is the closest to a high-fidelity prototype; it may or may not strictly follow the exact font styles and colors as the prototype, which typically excludes final photos, illustrations, and other visuals.

They are fantastic if you want to develop and showcase an idea before getting buried in the details. While designing in mid-fidelity, I create dynamic components to modify them later.

High-fidelity wireframes

These represent the closest iteration to the final product. All layers are named appropriately, and all spacing values are fixed, colors as well as all visuals are finalized. Copy is replaced with the final text.



Once I have the high-fidelity wireframe, I create 4-6 designs:

- small and large phone (**375x812 and 430x932**)
- small and large desktop (**1440x1024 and 2560x1440**)
- and sometimes, a tablet view (**744x1133**).

With these frames ready, I create a very simple clickable prototype and use “Breakpoints” plugin to show how the designs should look when resized depending on different screen resolutions.

Design Iterations - how many is too many?

Creating a high-fidelity design is technically the end of the visual design process. Well, maybe apart from creating a prototype.

You shouldn't be doing design iterations at this point. Clients like to take their time, sometimes an eternity, to make you make design changes that have little to no impact on the visuals or the UX at all.

I can't say how many hours I wasted on making design changes due to misunderstandings that occurred earlier on in the process because the requirements hadn't been properly addressed.

Problems most frequently result from improper expectations management on the part of one or both parties. That's why having a contract and/or SOW (scope of work) document is so important.

What if they want to make constant changes to a design?

First, if you have to run design iterations, do them in the low or mid-fidelity stage and limit them to a certain number, 2-3 at most.

If you sign an agreement for ongoing design work, a monthly retainer, for example, have as many design iterations as your client wishes to. Otherwise, offer 2-3 rounds of iterations and that's it.

Be vigilant about the amount of feedback you receive, and always try to collect as much information from your clients as possible. This will make the design process much more fluid.

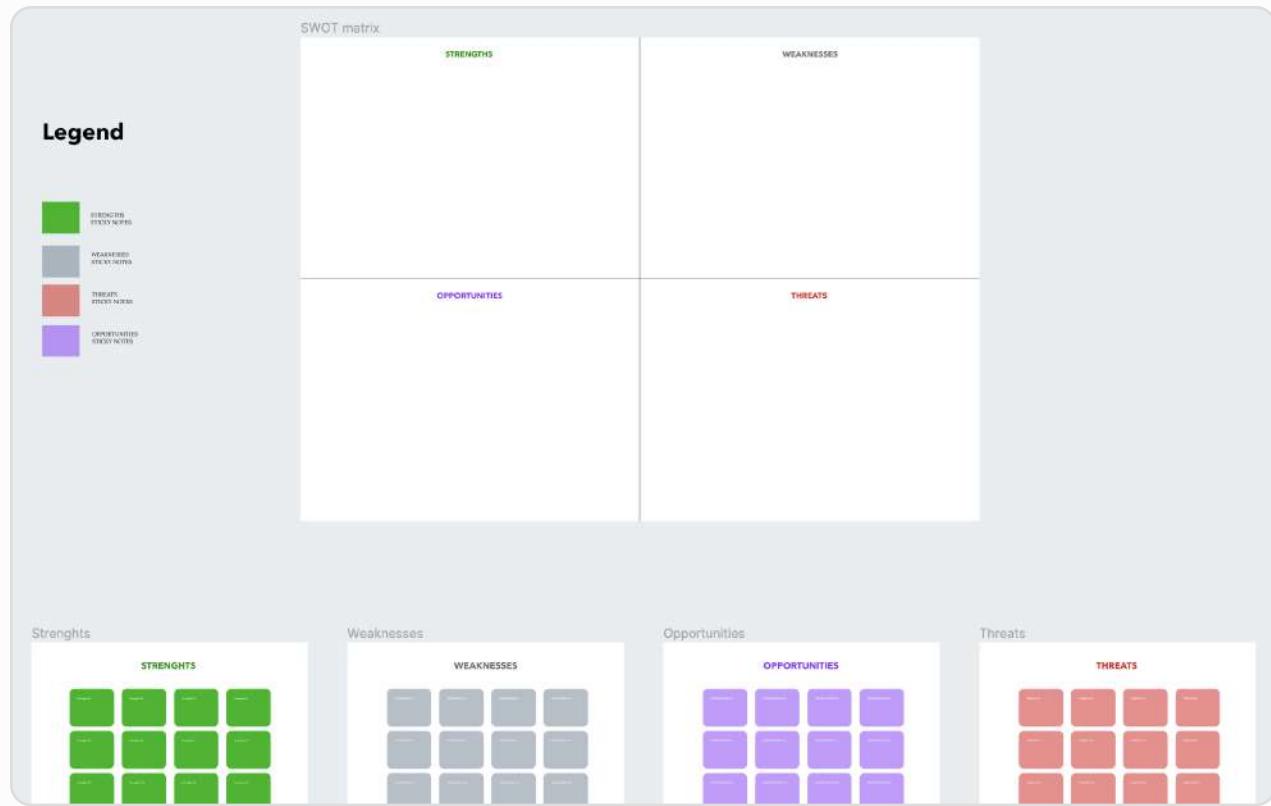
Putting it all together

A client has come to us with a proposal to design a landing page for their upcoming fintech app. The website should show the main advantages of using the mobile application, showcase its benefits, show how it works, and what problems it solves for the user.

The brief, project requirements, SOW, contracts

We already received the client brief, sent the questionnaire, established the project requirements, suggested a timeline, outlined the scope of work (SOW), and signed the contract.

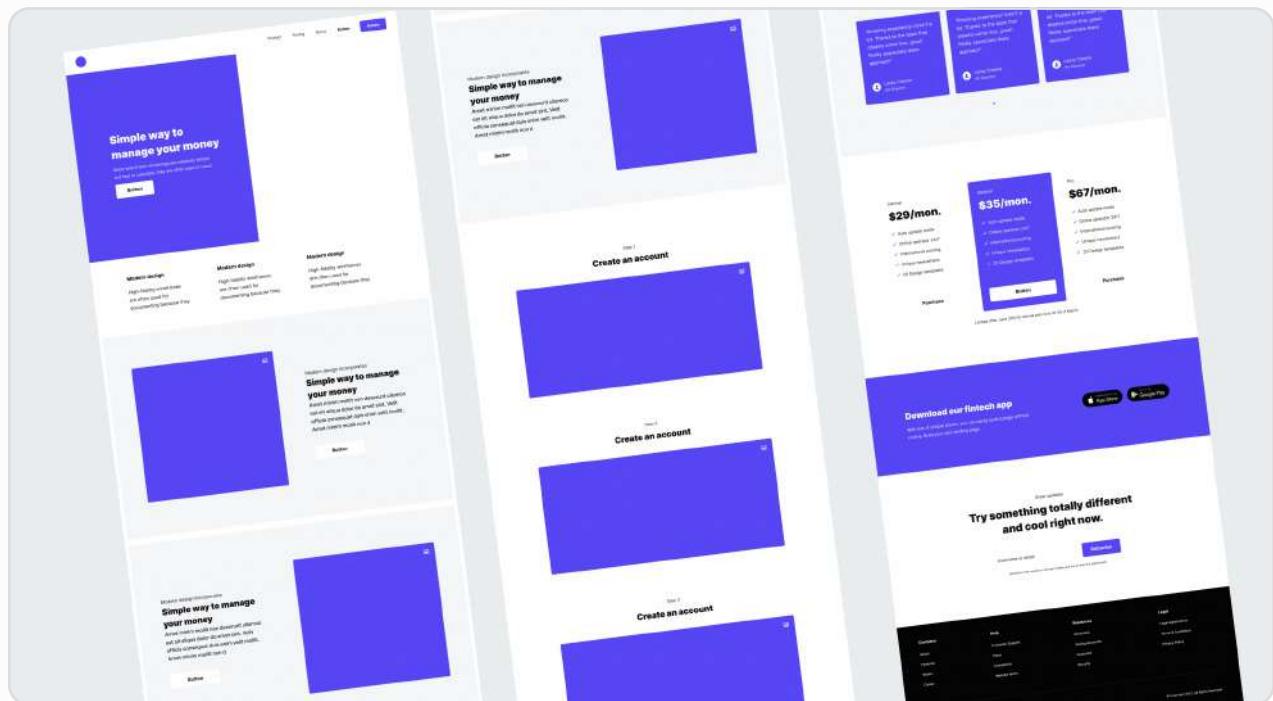
We ran a few stakeholder interviews, a competitor's audit, and a market analysis. Using these insights, we created the SWOT analysis and designed our sitemap/Information architecture.



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.



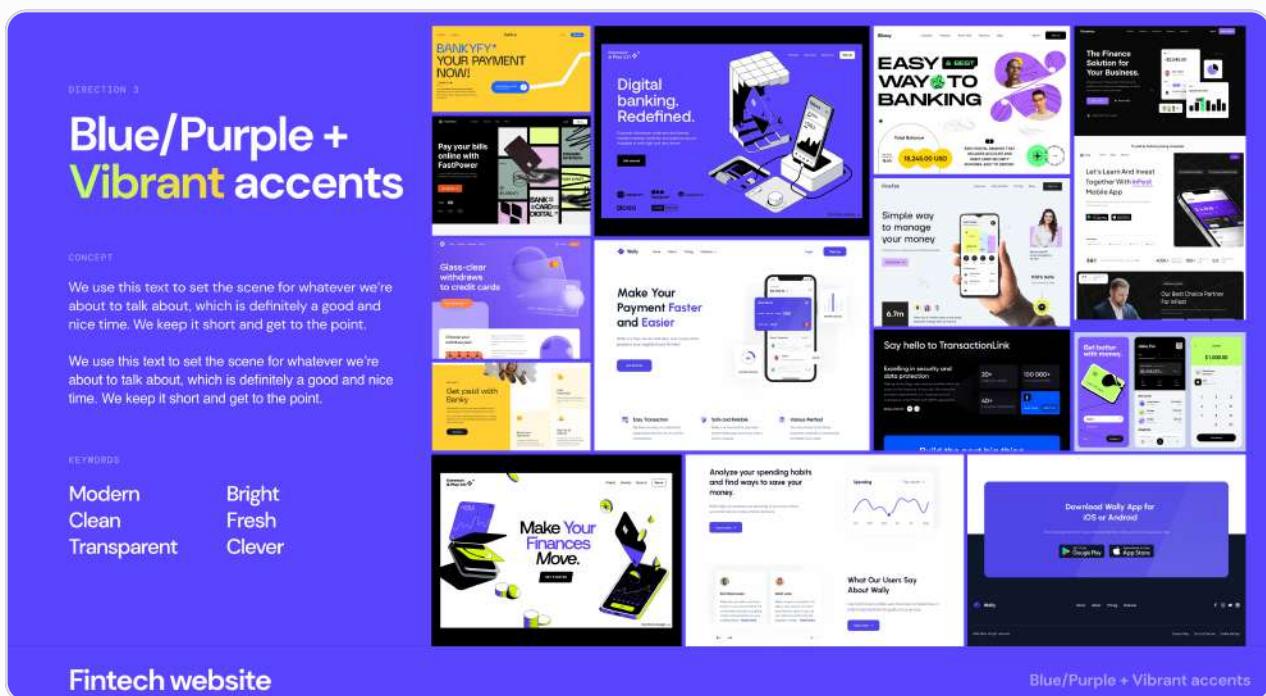
Low-fidelity wireframe - LP Framework

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.



Style guide for web use

Using our mood board as a reference, we were able to create the color palette and using the existing project documentation, we suggested the best typography, iconography, and imagery to use.

We also created our color and type system, grid layouts, and guidelines and updated the global styles in Figma.

Color Palette

Typography

Layout & Grids

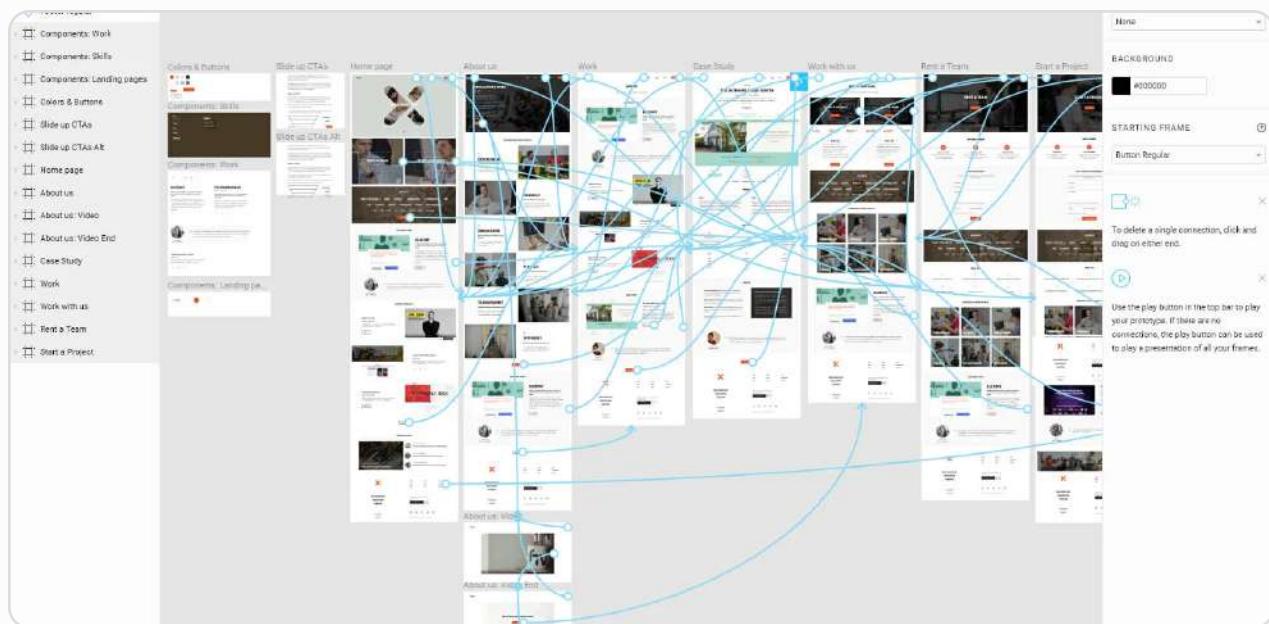
Wireframes

After all the research and visual work we were finally able to create the mid-fidelity designs. After a couple of rounds of revisions and receiving verbal confirmation on the structure, flow, and overall feel of the designs, we updated them to high fidelity using the right visuals, fixed spacing values, and applied global styles.

Presentation

The next and last order of business (if needed) would be to create a prototype and show the interactions between the website's pages. In our example, we only created a landing page so we didn't really have to show any interactions. However, for regular projects I'd connect each link, button, and anchor to the respective flow.

To better explain the entrance animations, I'd definitely annotate all visual references, example sites or codepens.



xFive website redesign



Chapter summary

- **Wireframes fidelity** depends on the project, the client's budget, and the time allocated for each milestone.
- **Low fidelity wireframes** represent a general idea of what I'd like to include in each section.
- **Mid-fidelity wireframes** depict the layout much more accurately and detail individual components like buttons, text, and links.
- **High-fidelity wireframes** represent the closest iteration to the final product. Spacing values are fixed, colors as well as all visuals are finalized. Copy is replaced with the final text.
- **If you have to run design iterations**, do them in the low or mid-fidelity stage and limit them to a certain number, 2-3 at most.
- **Be vigilant about the amount of feedback you receive**, and always try to collect as much information from your clients as possible.

Take some notes!



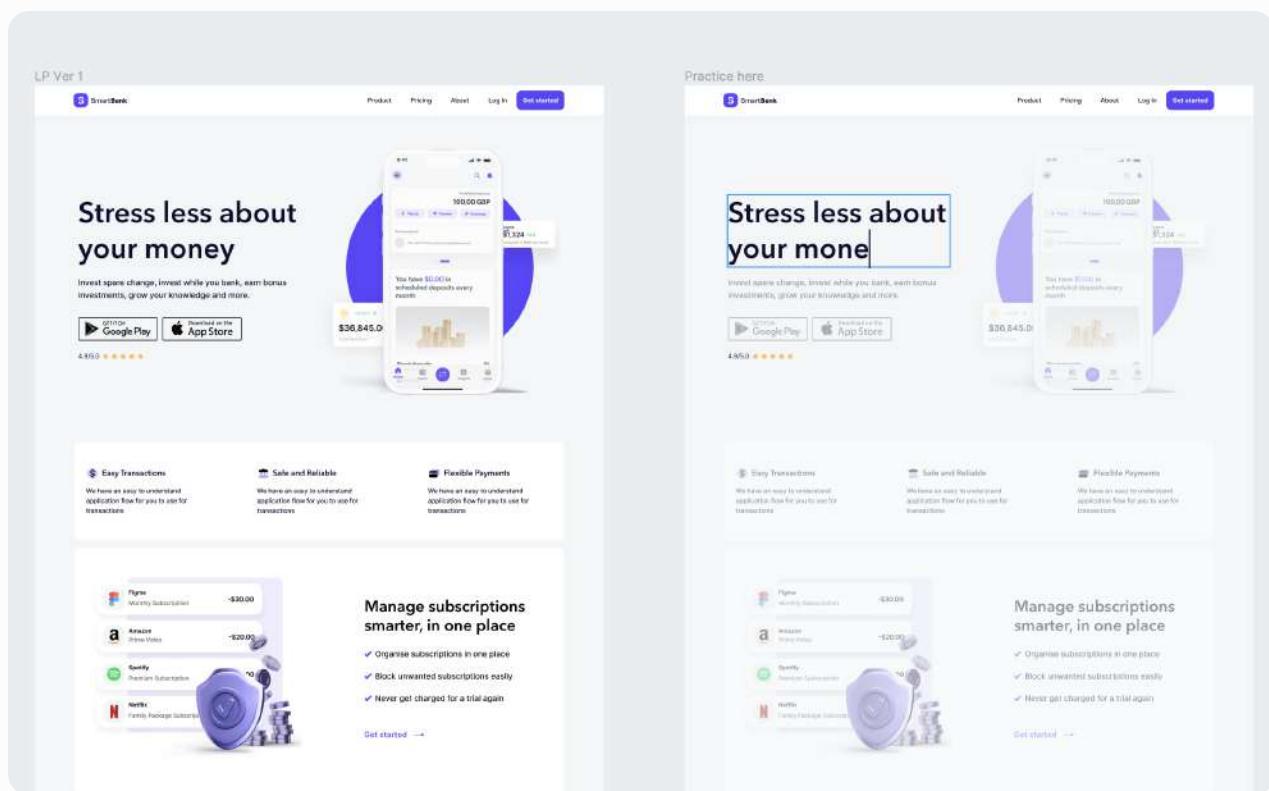
The “Perfect” Landing Page Framework

“Perfect” Landing Page framework

The landing page we will be taking as an example in the following chapters will be a landing page for a Fintech app. It doesn’t mean that the framework we’ll be using couldn’t be applied to local businesses or personal brands. The idea behind it is rather universal.

My job will be to show you how I structure a “Perfect” Product Landing Page, and you can apply it in whatever context you need for your own product/service (in any industry).

To see how these sections translate to a live example, refer back to the Landing Page UI Kit Figma file and analyze it. I’ve also included the practice file for you to try and replicate my design or modify it if you feel confident enough and create your own version.



If you continue reading this chapter, you'll see how I structure my typical product landing page, broken down into separate segments. I'll include both sections of popular sites, as well as our landing page kit, to give you a better reference.

As mentioned previously, the following design shouldn't serve you as a 1:1 equivalent of a \$5-10k+ website as it's not as polished as a \$10k project would be in terms of visuals, documentation, research, and copywriting accuracy.

If you're designing and developing websites yourself, you won't need to be as detailed in terms of layer or file naming since you'll be the only one doing all the work. And while this is true, and a lot of full-stack designers don't bother being super detailed with their application of global styles, pixel perfect designs, or naming for that matter, it's still a good practice to follow.

Regardless, everything you read about the design process up until this point, from research to mood boards, style guides, and wireframes, is the exact order in which I approach my web projects.

Please, take all the teachings you've learned from this ebook, and re-read the chapters if you're feeling lost. Try to apply these principles and guidelines when creating your future projects, and stick to my design process if you're unsure what the next steps should be.

The Typical Landing Page Structure

The structure is important when building pages focused on conversion rates as it allows you to have a clear and repeatable process to present anything you want to sell in the best way possible.

We've already covered this on the previous pages, but to reiterate one more time - the structure of a conversion driven Landing page should contain the following (in this particular order):

- **The Hero** with CTA and a **social proof segment** right below
- **Problem statements & context** - main problem users are facing
- **Features/Solutions**
- **How it works/How to start** segment
- **More benefits**
- **Additional Social Proof** (Testimonials/reviews)
- **Final CTA** (main action)
- **Alternative CTA** (ideally freebie to capture emails)

The number of these segments may differ from site to site, depending on the amount of information I'm working with and the project requirements. A simple brochure landing page might only need 4 segments, while the sales page funnel might need over 30 to deliver the final message.

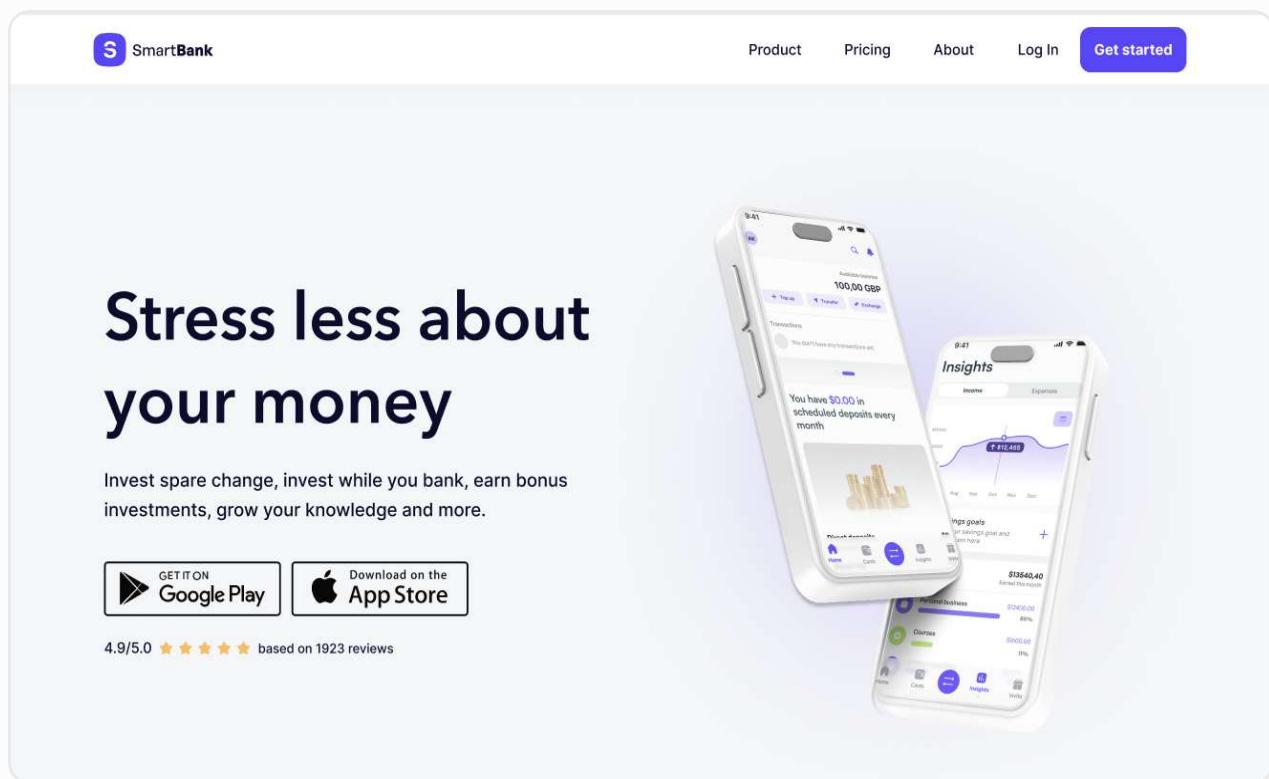
With our example, we went for something in between the two.

The Hero section

Your hero is your best chance to leave the best first impression.

In a world of super short attention spans, you need to summarize your value proposition and in a bold and visual way, explain the problem you're solving with the product.

That usually happens through big, bold, and catchy headings, a small paragraph describing the solution, and hopefully a matching image to show what the solution might look like.



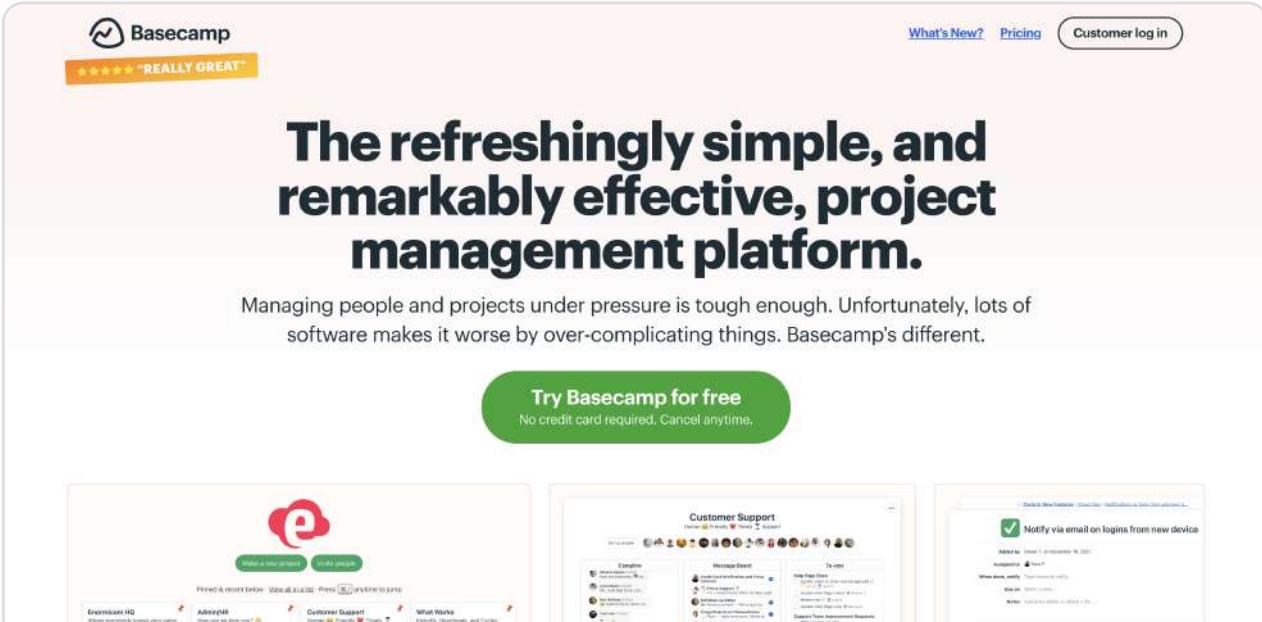
What should you include in a hero section?

There are a couple of things you can't really miss on your hero. Jump to the next page to learn about them.

Main Headline – this title needs to be clear and catchy, answering the first question that comes up “What is this website about?”.

Descriptive text – use this paragraph to support your main headline explaining how the solution works or what problem it solves for the user.

CTA's (main and alternative) – you should always include the main call to action. Ideally, a vibrant button that stands out with a clear, actionable text. Alternative CTA invites users to learn more about the product or capture users' details.

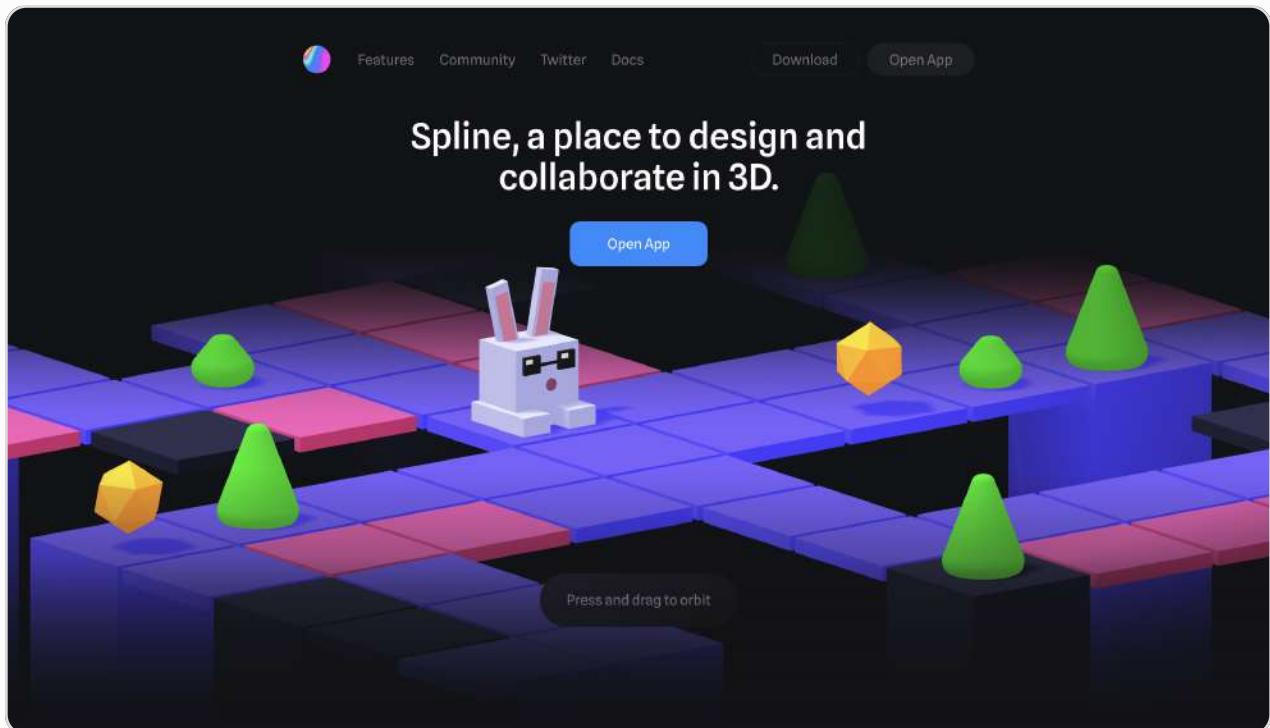


The screenshot shows the Basecamp landing page. At the top left is the Basecamp logo with a stylized 'B'. To its right are links for "What's New?", "Pricing", and "Customer log in". Below the logo is a yellow banner with five stars and the text "REALLY GREAT". The main headline reads: "The refreshingly simple, and remarkably effective, project management platform." A subtext below it says: "Managing people and projects under pressure is tough enough. Unfortunately, lots of software makes it worse by over-complicating things. Basecamp's different." A green button with white text says "Try Basecamp for free". Below the hero section are three screenshots of the Basecamp software interface: "Ensemble HQ" (a dashboard with a red 'e' icon), "Customer Support" (a message board), and "Notify via email on logins from new device" (an alert settings screen).

Basecamp.com

Basecamp is known for notoriously A/B testing its hero sections. From the shape of their buttons to copy and social proof, if you visit this site every few weeks, you might see a completely rearranged view of their hero. Apparently, their conversion rates are also ridiculously high - that's the power of constantly improving your designs.

Main Visual – a video, screenshot of your product, or a visual to add more context to the entire messaging.



Spline.design

Requirements for a good hero section:

- Explain the product/service and show the main benefit
- Have clear benefit-driven CTA's that have a lot of contrast and stand out from the rest of the composition
- Add an alternative CTA to explore more or download a freebie
- Emphasize benefits over features. This is a great strategy if your product is difficult to visualize or too nuanced to condense into a few catchy words
- Consider videos for the main hero visual if your product or service is hard to explain with static images and text

Social proof segment

The goal of the social proof section is to establish credibility early on in the page. Visitors need to trust not only the solution you are proposing but also see that there are established companies or regular folks backing up your product, not just your words.



Don't just throw in the logos without any context. It's best to explain why these logos are here. It's easier to make the social proof sound more powerful if you say "trusted by 1,000+ companies".

Usually, the logos of the biggest companies in your niche using the product or the best press releases are the best options to create that quick boost in authority you need. If you can't use logos, try reviews, or the (recognizable) software you're using, expertise in numbers (clients, team size, years in business), Google reviews, etc. Look for any social proof you can provide.

Just don't try to squeeze testimonials in at this point. Avoid big blocky segments early on. Show only a sneak peek of your results and build up the social proof as they scroll further down the page until they find testimonials and CTAs close by.

Problem statement & context

The problem statements should be universally applicable to the user target groups. If your product fails to deliver the solution to the main problem your potential customers are facing, they will lose interest in exploring more about it.

The problem needs to be addressed directly and if you can follow that with an immediate solution, that's ideal.

You have to be very good at capturing attention with your content as you might easily lose their interest if you carry on for too long.

Manage subscriptions smarter, in one place

- ✓ Organise subscriptions in one place
- ✓ Block unwanted subscriptions easily
- ✓ Never get charged for a trial again

[Get started →](#)

Track your savings and spending habits

- ✓ Get up to 1.95% annual interest paid daily
- ✓ Withdraw instantly, any time
- ✓ Fund it your way

[Get started →](#)

We're trying to address the problems by offering immediate solutions.

Features/Solutions

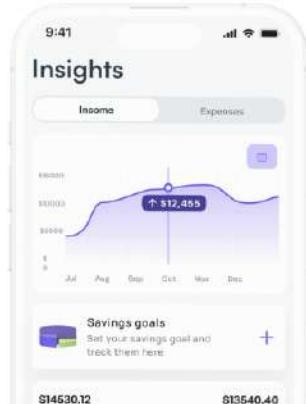
Usually, features and solutions are presented together with problem statements to create more impact.

We use these segments to show how our product can help users in different areas of their life/work.

With our product, we wanted to address concerns like security and problems with money management and savings.

Step 3

Save money!



Start saving, stop worrying

- Best currency rates
- Low transfer fees
- Secure payments

End-to-end security

Be at peace with our top of the line security systems and trusted partners.

[Get started →](#)



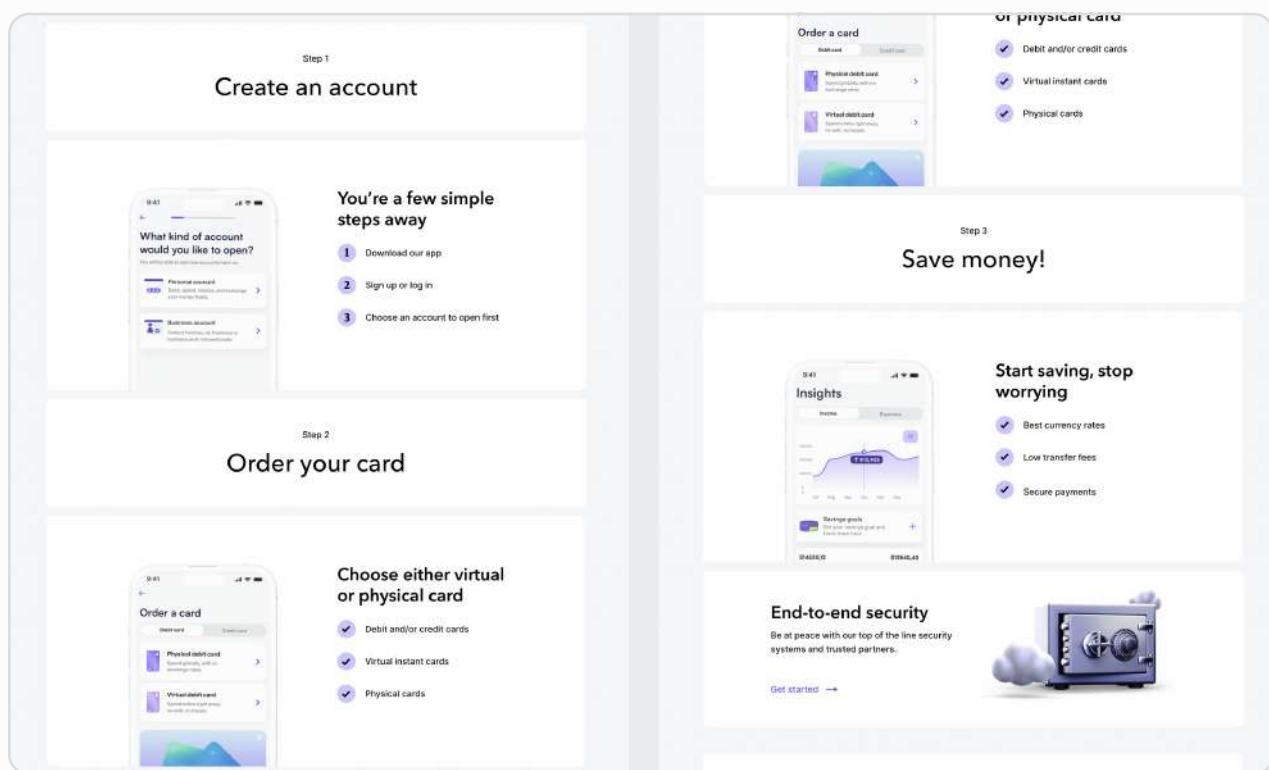
We're once again using the problem & solution format to talk about the features - we want to paint a positive picture of all the benefits coming from using our product

How it works/How to get started

This section should show how potentially easy it is to start using your product. The CRM for sales teams won't have to use the same structure and copy as a dating app, but remember, we're designing for specific audiences with different needs and expectations, and our website's design should reflect that.

We should use simple designs - columns, cards, and visuals that are easy to understand at first glance. I like to show the process of using a product in steps (if applicable). It's easy to follow and straightforward.

Let's look at how we built this segment on our landing page.



With finance apps, the account setup and management is usually the most complex process, and we wanted to highlight how simple it is with our “how it works” segment.

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.

Testimonials/Reviews

People seek emotional comfort and approval. We all like to feel safe, and we like to know what to expect before we take action.

Purchasing a new product or service is very often a tough decision, and we need external confirmation to make it easier for ourselves. Whether it's our friend's recommendation or someone whose expertise we trust (an influencer or a celebrity), even reading positive reviews of complete internet strangers might change how you feel about a product.

From a psychological standpoint, testimonials provide customers with a feeling of security, giving them the confidence to take risks. You NEED to use social proof. Period.

Our customers say it best.

“
They are able to help a startup like mine scale and are very responsive to all of our unique needs.”
”
Division of Labor’s creative ideas were great, and working with their team was truly easy they were very responsive.”
”
We were blown away when we saw. The combination of social, email, knowledge base, mobile, etc.”

 **Joe Harbert**
CEO, NoonBrew

 **Mila McSabbu**
Marketing & Office Coordinator

 **Robert Fox**
Owner, Beards of Brothers

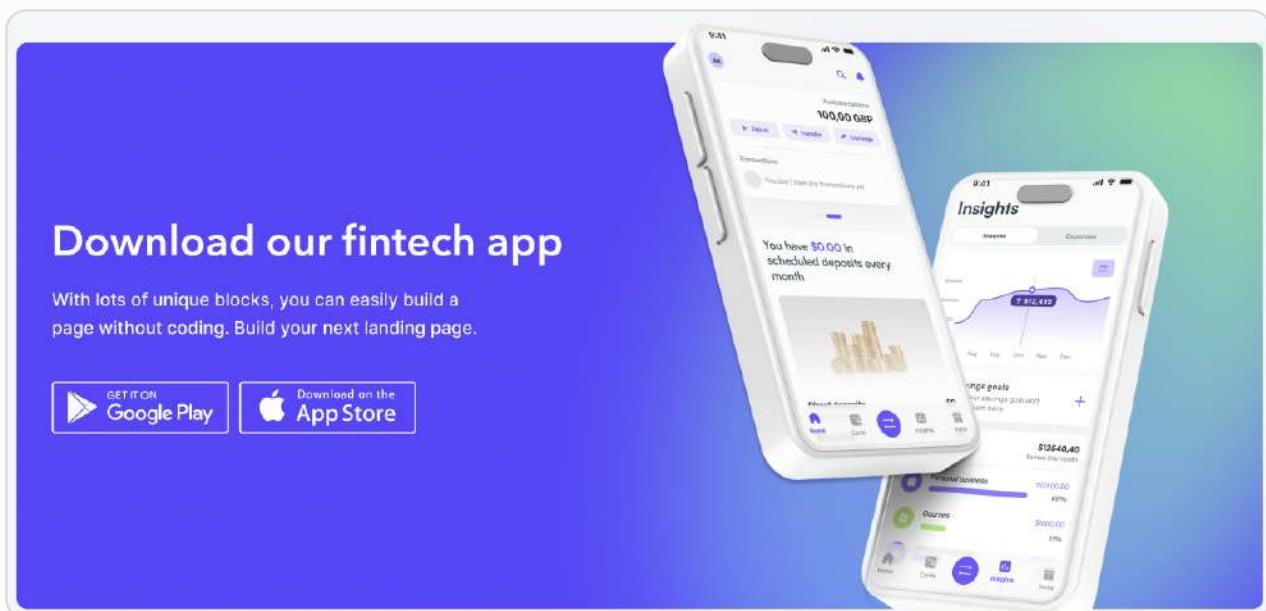
The more social proof you can show, the easier it is for your potential customers to trust you. Big tech companies know that, and they like to use social proof wherever possible.

Final CTA (main action)

The call-to-action (CTA) is one of the most important elements on your landing page. Be clear about what you want visitors to do and use action verbs like “get started,” “download,” or “send email”.

A good CTA links back to your main value proposition and directly communicates what your users should expect when taking action. Dedicating an entire segment to the main CTA near the bottom of the page might help you increase conversions.

You want to warm the leads up as they gradually scroll down the page and explore more about the product. That’s why following a landing page framework that first explains the solution to the main problem, showing many benefits, social proof, testimonials, and incentives before introducing a final CTA, is a good idea.



(Optionally) more social proof

If your product or service has many different forms of social proof that might steer the users' decision in a positive direction - use it.

The more social proof you can include, the better, just make sure not to exaggerate these sections.

A short full-width segment of bold, easy-to-read headings will do.



You want to include this segment somewhere near the main call to action. When users are about to make a decision, they often need a quick impulse, and another social proof section might do just that.

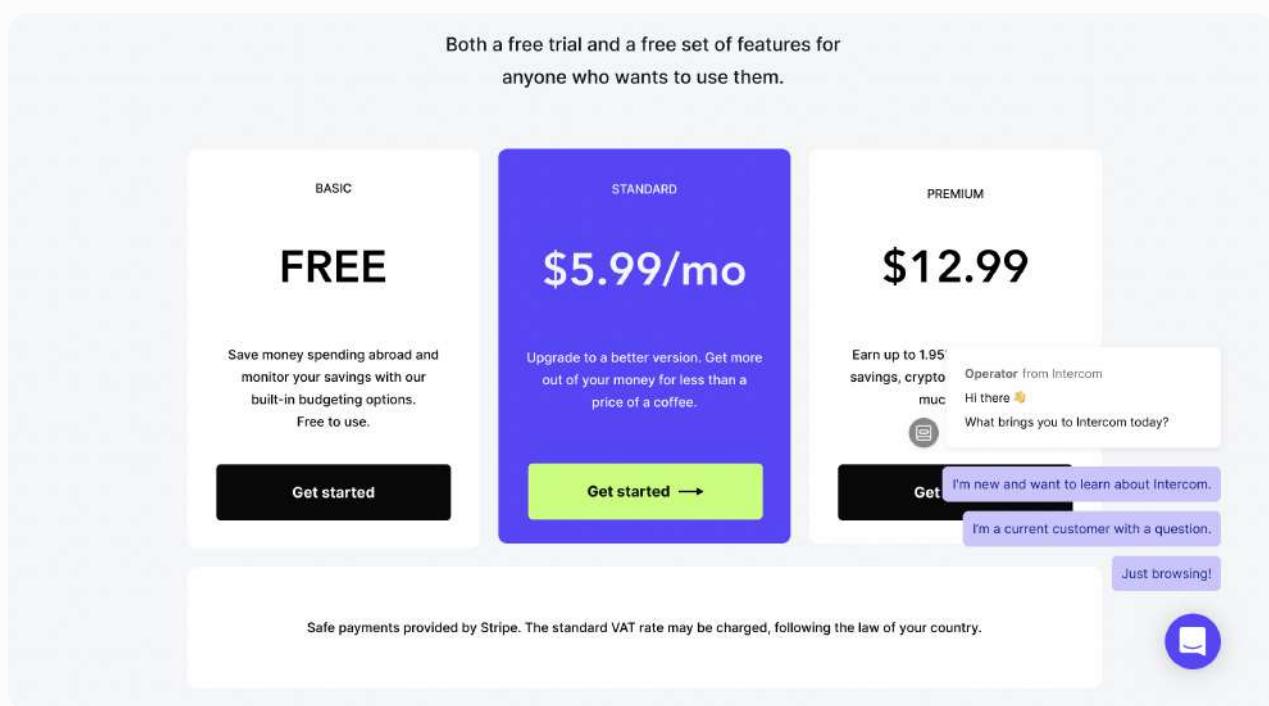
Alternative CTA (ideally freebie to capture emails)

Regardless of the industry you operate in, the visitor of your landing page should know a few things almost straight away: what the offer is, why should they use your service or a product, and what are the next steps to get started. We already covered that.

What if they are not ready to jump on board and purchase your top-of-the-line service? Do you just let them leave and forget?

If your main CTA isn't a free trial or a free consultation, you might want to introduce an alternative CTA. Whether that's a newsletter form or a freebie in exchange for their email; use an email magnet attractive enough to capture your users' data.

You can also use online chat bots to initiate another point of contact for your support team to pick up the conversation later on.



End on the Right Foot(er)

The purpose of a website footer is simple - to help visitors by adding information and navigation options at the bottom of web pages.

Your job as a designer is to know what to include, intending to help visitors and businesses meet their goals.

A good footer should include the following:

- Copyright notice to protect you from plagiarism (yes, it's a thing!)
- Sitemap (for those uncle G crawlers 🕸️)
- Legal links (Privacy, Terms, T&C)
- Quick links (to help with navigation)
- Contact information
- Social icons
- Your branding - logo and business description
- If you're feeling it - another CTA or a newsletter form 💬

Company	Help	Resources	Legal
About	Customer Support	Essentials	Legal agreements
Features	Plans	Saving Accounts	Terms & Conditions
Works	Complaints	Insurance	Privacy Policy
Career	Website terms	Security	

Twitter icon | Facebook icon | Instagram icon | LinkedIn icon

[Privacy Policy](#) [Terms & Conditions](#) [Support](#)

© Copyright 2022, All Rights Reserved

I tend to keep my footers simple - adding just the essentials, legal pages, copyrights and social media accounts.

Congrats! You're ready to start practicing!

Good job for making it here! You should have enough info to follow my design process and design your “perfect” Landing Page by looking at the reference Figma file I provided you.

If you read through all the previous chapters you’re now equipped with more knowledge than the majority of your web designer friends.

You know the Gestalt principles, basics of visual design, and main design laws and principles, and you’ve got the documents, briefs, contracts, and invoices to run a successful freelance business,

You also have the framework to design high-performing landing pages. Remember that I also included the complete Figma file with our site framework and multiple UX and UI design stages so that you can have a good reference for designing your pages.

Now, feel free to fire up that framework template or the practice files anytime! You can open up the SmartBank landing page, add your own twist, change fonts, and colors, replace the text, try out new visuals, switch around a few sections, columns, create new buttons.

If you read the remaining chapters, you’ll find one more called “Your Action Plan” and see my suggestions on what you should do next!

Either way, let’s continue.



Chapter summary

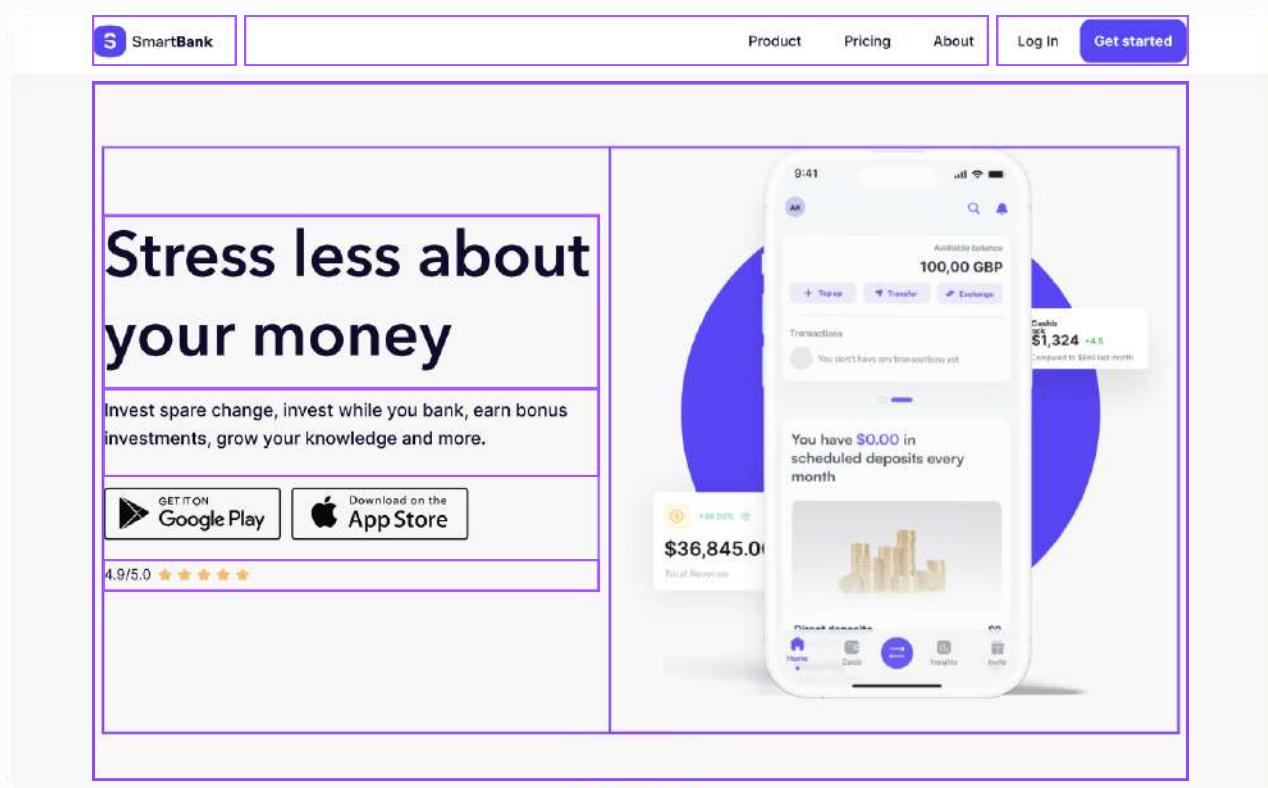
- Everything you read about the design process up until this point, from research to mood boards, style guides, and wireframes, **is the exact order in which I approach my web projects.**
- **Designing according to a landing page framework** is helpful as it allows you to have a clear and repeatable process to present anything you want to sell in the best way possible.
- **The number of landing page segments** may differ from site to site, depending on the amount of information you're working with and the project requirements.
- **Your hero should summarize your value proposition** and in a bold and visual way explain the problem you're solving with the product.
- **You should add social proof segments** is to establish credibility
- If your main CTA isn't a free trial or a free consultation, you might want to **introduce an alternative CTA to capture users' data.**
- The more social proof you can show, **the easier it is for your potential customers to trust you.**

Understanding the box model

Understanding the box model

The box model explains how layouts work when translated to web.

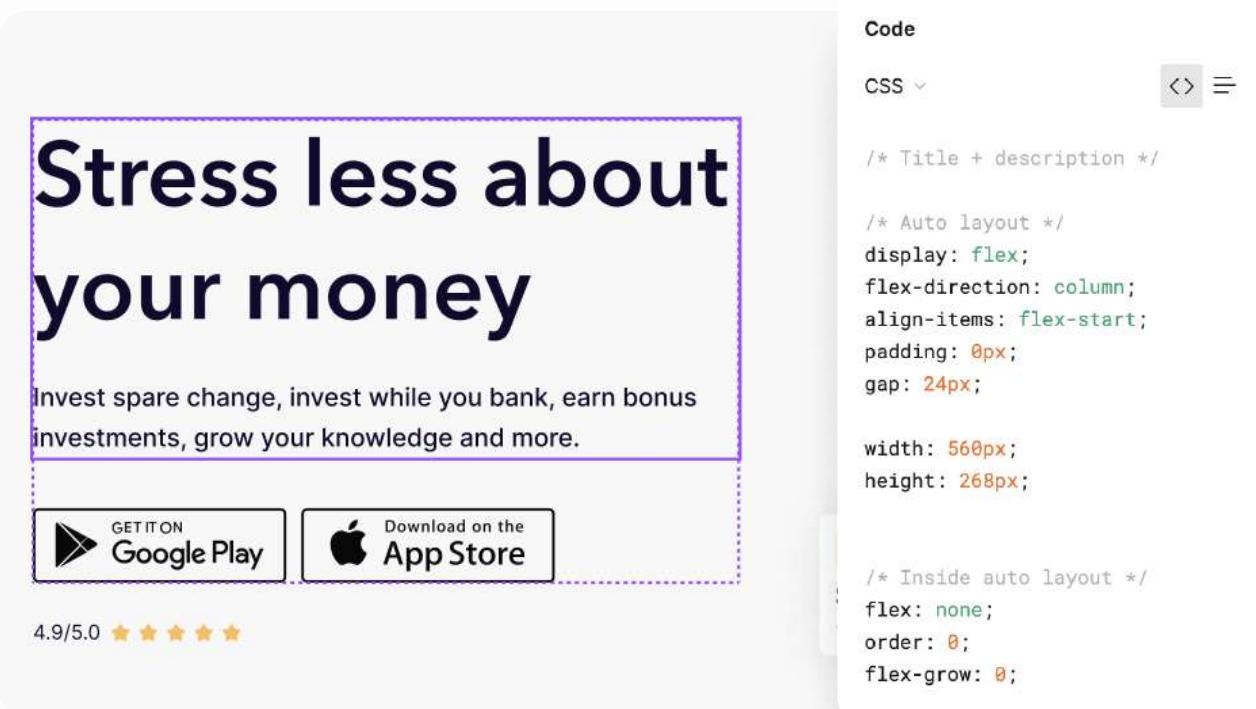
Web layout is based on content stacking vertically, like layers in a Figma file. Every element is contained a box, an invisible container with boundaries around it. These boxes are either spaced out next to each other horizontally or stack on top of each other, depending on the properties set on them. Here's what our hero section looks like:



Auto layout and box model

When designing, you should always remember this. That's one of the reasons why you need to master auto layout and name your layers. It's a good practice that will help your developers to understand the layout they need to build.

By switching to an “Inspect” view you’ll be able to look up the CSS settings of all the layers you created which should help you set up your Webflow and/or Elementor elements.



```
Code
CSS <> ⚙️

/* Title + description */

/* Auto layout */
display: flex;
flex-direction: column;
align-items: flex-start;
padding: 0px;
gap: 24px;

width: 560px;
height: 268px;

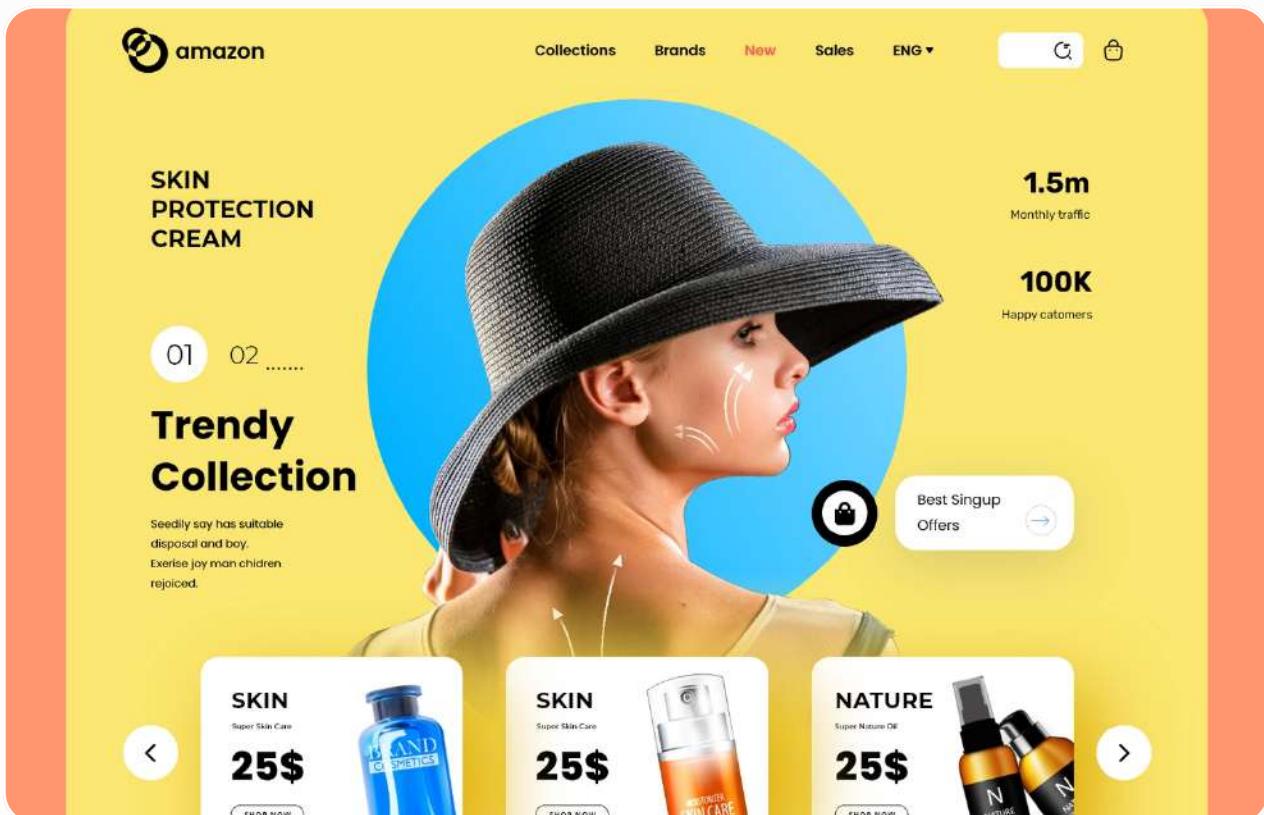
/* Inside auto layout */
flex: none;
order: 0;
flex-grow: 0;
```

You can use auto layout to group layers inside other layers and set properties on them. You can do the same in web development with each container. This practice is called nesting. All the web elements are boxes that can be nested inside each other.

Looking at our example above, we placed our heading, paragraph, buttons, and ratings inside a bigger container. This container groups all the elements together, and whenever you make changes to it, your nested layers will adjust. And that container is sitting next to an image container, and both of them are nested within even bigger container that’s nested in a section. Phew!

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 🤦".



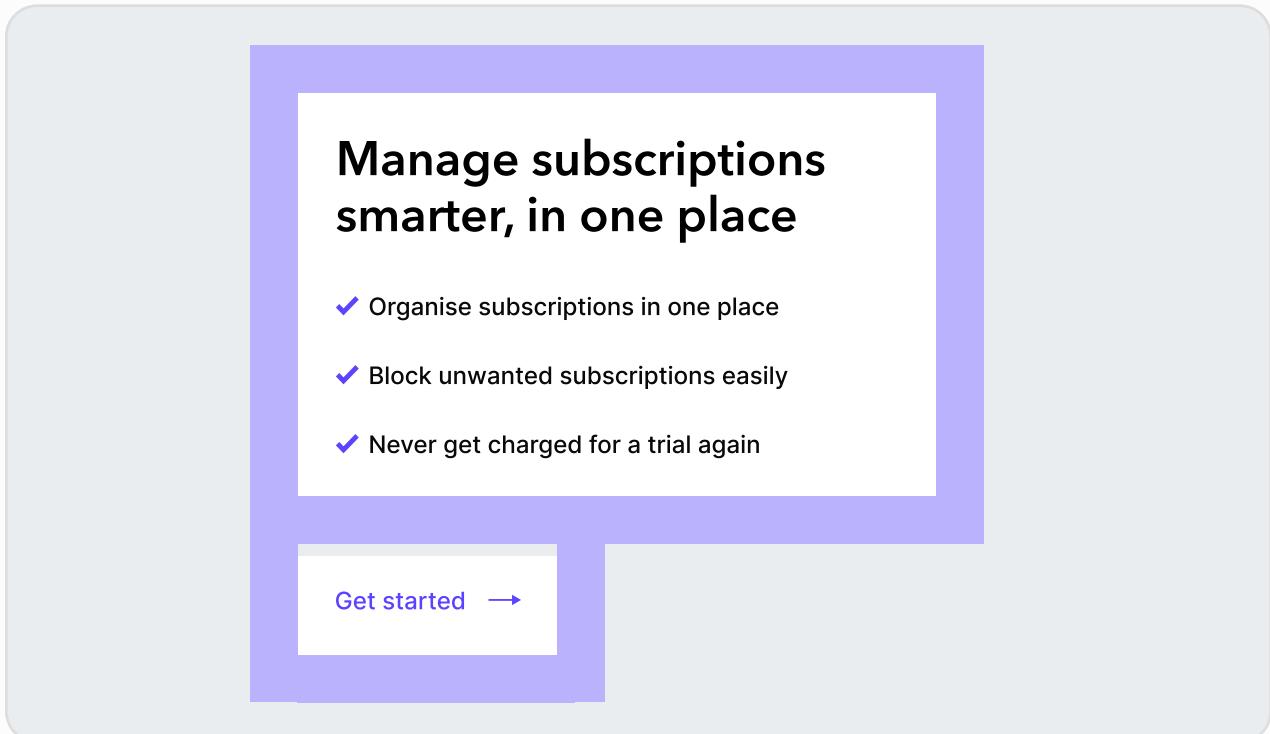
Masud Rana's work on dribbble

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.

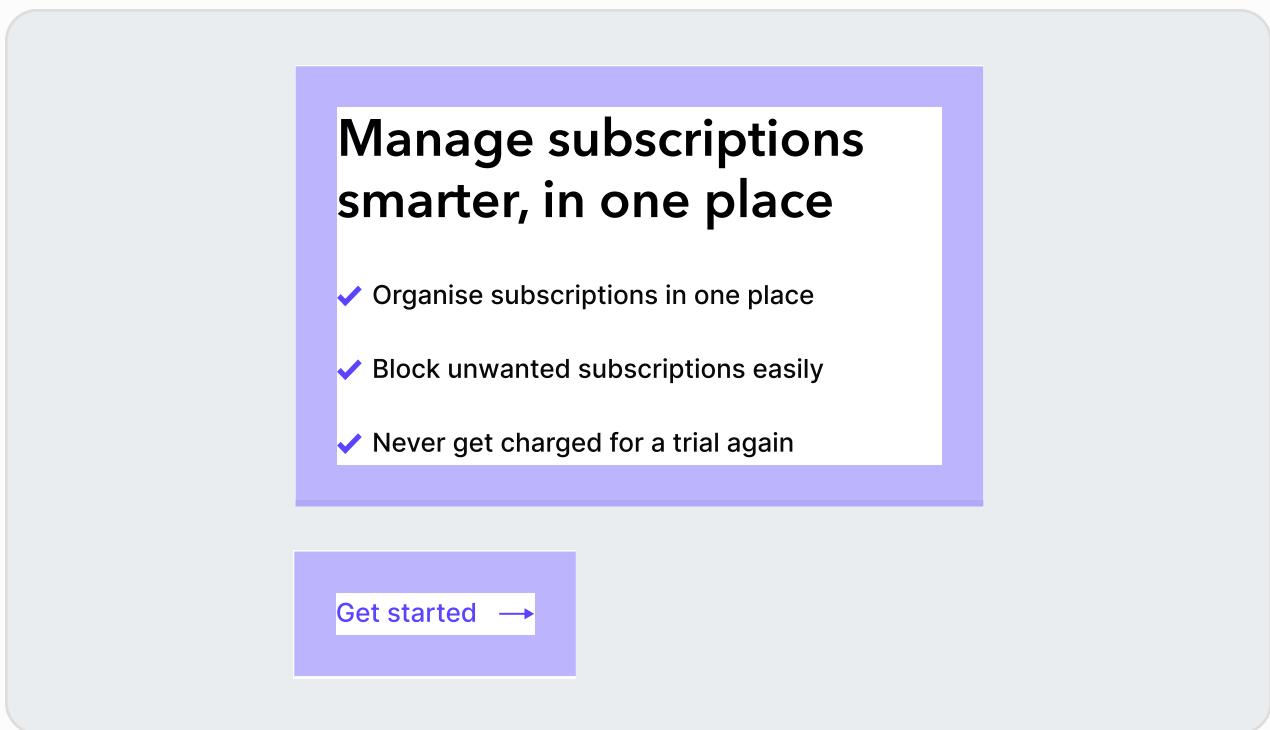
You need to build your layouts using logical structures. That's why mastering box model is crucial for your future web design work.

Margin vs padding in web development

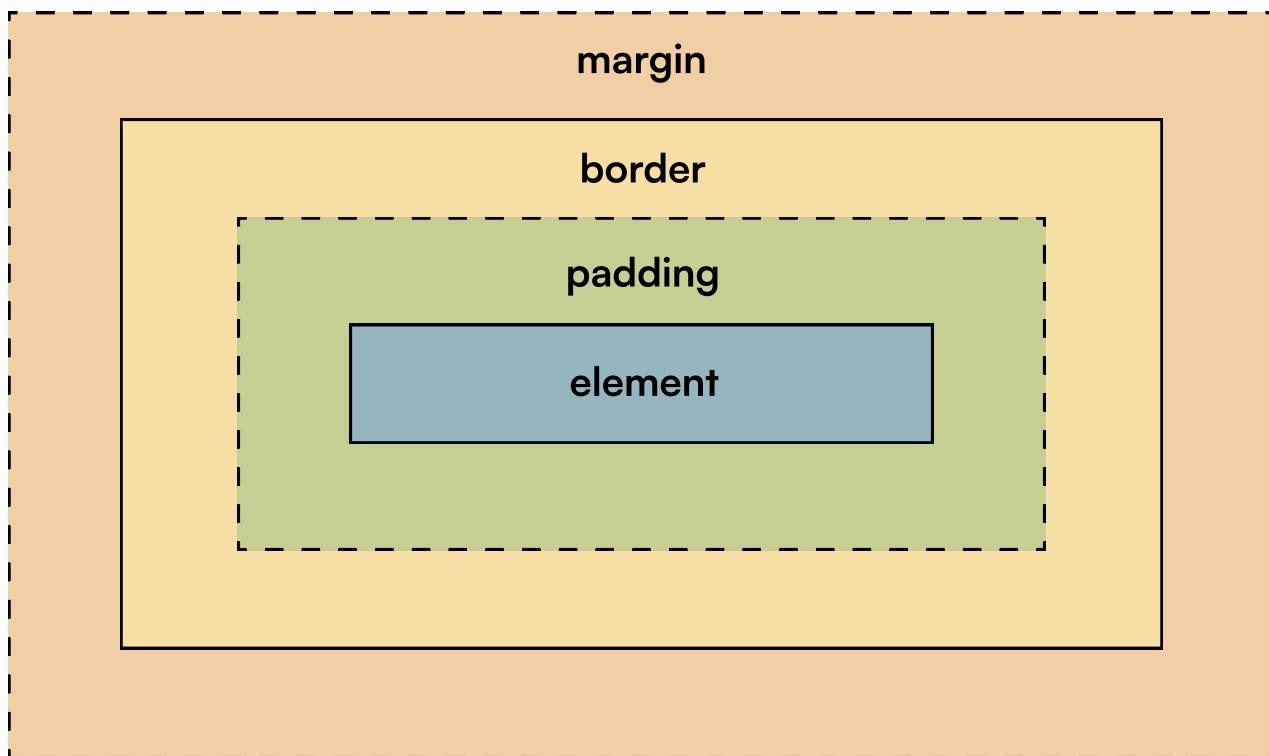
Margin means a space outside the box. It determines the distance between two elements that are next to each other.



Padding is the space defined inside of the box.



That's how the box model looks in web development:



That's pretty much how every website development starts.

From creating containers and nesting them inside each other. You style your content by changing its position, changing the properties, and adjusting padding and margin values.

Of course, there's so much more to building websites than just designing them, but that's not what we're doing here. We want to understand the basic principles of web development to create logical structures that developers will understand.

I'll create a separate video series on Youtube for a more in-depth look at website (no-code) development. Coming soon!



Chapter summary

- **The box model** explains how layouts work when translated to web.
- **Web layout** is based on content stacking vertically, like layers in a Figma file. **Every element is contained a box**, an invisible container with boundaries around it.
- **By switching to an “Inspect” view you’ll be able to look up the CSS settings** of all the layers you created which should help you set up your Webflow and/or Elementor elements.
- 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 realize all your ideas.
- **Margin** means a space outside the box. It determines the distance between two elements that are next to each other.
- **Padding** is the space defined inside of the box.

Take some notes!



Intro to no-code

No-code development

In this chapter we're going to talk a bit about website development. We're not going to cover the practical part of the (no-code) web development in this ebook because it would be really hard to explain all the technical intricacies in a written format.

For that, be on the lookout for my YT channel, Skillshare and/or video courses (depending on when you bought this ebook - this may or may not be available already).



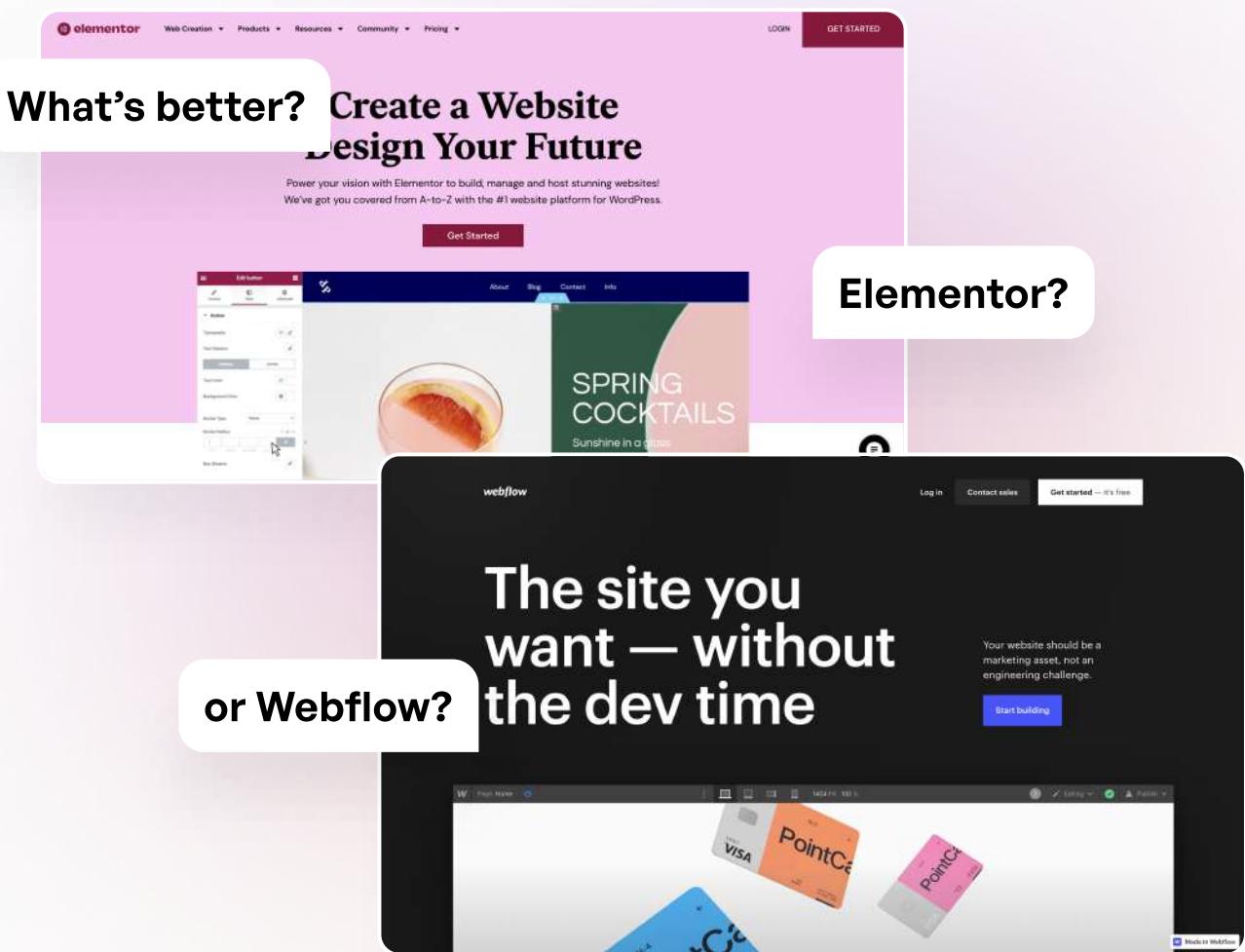
Of course, apart from no-code development, you can try hard coding your designs. This is the most time consuming option and requires a lot of front end development knowledge. You have to remember though, that not every company needs a custom-developed website.

Most will even want to have a website with a CMS that's familiar to them and easy to use, like WordPress for example.

I never hand-coded websites from scratch by myself. I'm good with making smaller visual edits and adding a few JS scripts that can't be designed in a builder like Elementor or Webflow. For more complex functionalities that go outside of my expertise, I hire a developer to create and implement the scripts for me.

As far as the no-code options go, I choose between Webflow and WordPress. I don't like Wix, never tried Editor X or Framer, so I can't say much about these.

I can, however give my 5 cents on Webflow vs. WordPress.



Elementor Pro - a great starting tool

Elementor is a visual website builder plugin for WordPress with a super user-friendly interface and a drag-and-drop functionality.

It comes with a number of features, including a robust templating system, interactive animation tools, and access to all WordPress and Woocommerce plugins and functions.

Why should you consider Elementor?

- ✓ It's relatively easy to learn and use (much easier than Webflow)
- ✓ It's compatible with all WordPress themes
- ✓ It's built on a WordPress CMS (easy blogging features)
- ✓ It supports a number of 3rd party dedicated Elementor plugins
- ✓ Allows to easily set up and configure e-commerce stores
- ✓ Supports an extensive version history
- ✓ Offers a lot of visual flexibility
- ✓ Simple pricing model

What are the disadvantages of Elementor?

- ✗ Requires external hosting (unless you choose the Cloud version)
 - ✗ Not as safe and secure as Webflow
 - ✗ Slightly more complicated handoff process (still relatively easy)
 - ✗ Can be pricey if you intend to build a lot of websites
 - ✗ Need more maintenance (plugin and theme updates)
 - ✗ Third-party integrations can cause many issues
-

Webflow - the ultimate no-builder tool

Webflow requires much more technical knowledge than Elementor. You need to understand how the box models work, what's CSS grid and flexbox, and how to use them to your advantage. And while it's also a drag-and-drop builder, it's more complicated than Elementor.

Why should you consider Webflow?

- ✓ It's an all-in-one website solution (hosting + CMS)
- ✓ Amazing learning resources (YT channel + Webflow University)
- ✓ It's much more secure than WordPress
- ✓ Produces clean and lightweight code
- ✓ Ability to export the CSS and JS code
- ✓ Very simple website handoff process
- ✓ Easily integrates with services like Zapier, Mailchimp, Lottie, etc.
- ✓ Webflow gives practically endless visual possibilities
- ✓ It's easy to use once you understand the basics

What are the disadvantages of Webflow?

- ⛔ Complicated pricing model (can get pretty pricey)
 - ⛔ Takes time to learn the user interface
 - ⛔ It's limited to 100 pages (you need a custom plan to add more)
 - ⛔ You can't switch templates. Different template = new website
 - ⛔ The e-commerce features are fairly limited
 - ⛔ It's more suited for experienced rather than web design novices
 - ⛔ Customer support is email-only
-

Beginner choice: WordPress + Elementor Pro

My personal favorite combo. Not only because I spent over 2000+ hours working with Elementor in 2021 alone but also because 90% of the agencies and clients I worked with preferred WordPress CMS, something they're more familiar with.

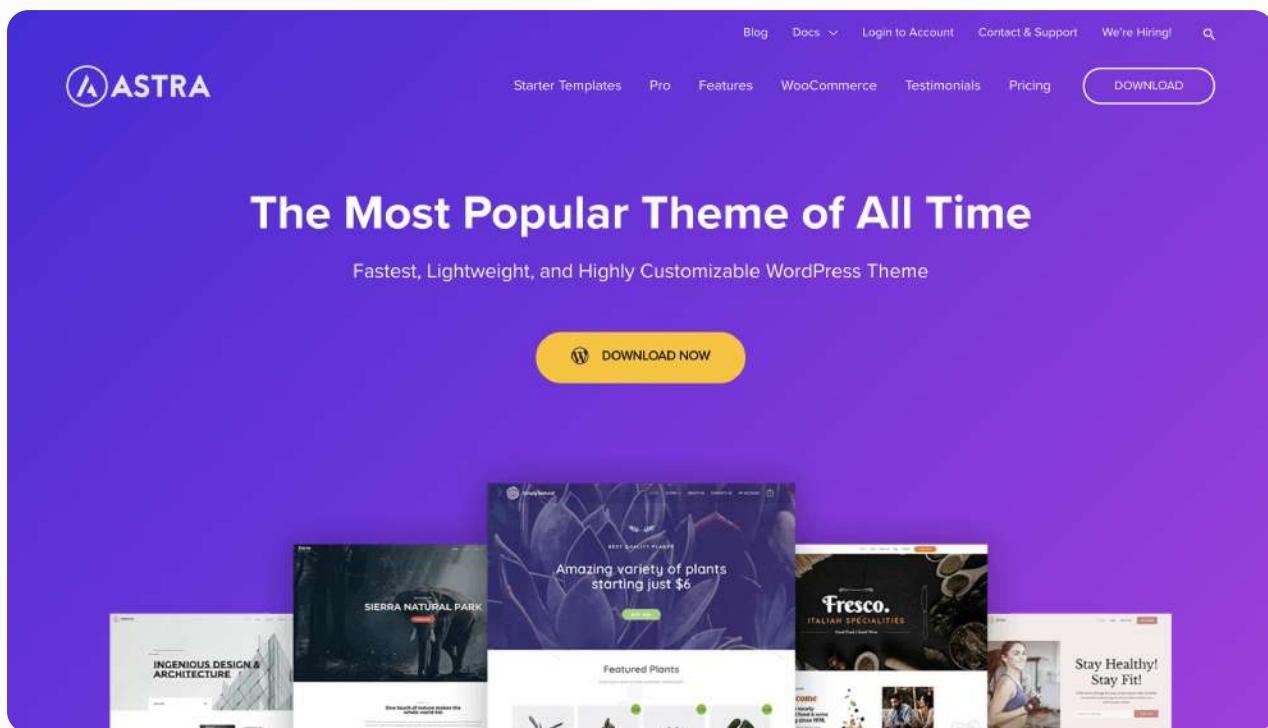


Elementor.com

It's the most beginner-friendly combination there is. You can create beautiful websites in mere hours. I increased my productive output by at least 60% by switching over to Elementor, and working with it seems like a breeze.

Also, you can use pre-made templates to edit them with global styles, setting up your entire site in just a few hours is really astonishing. I can't wait to share these tutorials with you!

My favorite WordPress themes



Wpastra.com

I like themes that are lightweight, clean, and simple. I tried working with more robust themes like Phlox and Ohio, but they tend to be bloated and limited in terms of how the components are designed. Usually, I switch between Astra Pro and Hello (for Elementor) and create all components, interactions, and animations myself.

Which plugins I use the most

I limit the number of plugins I use in a single project to an absolute minimum. It helps to keep the website running fast and reduces code bloat.

Besides, having too many plugins running simultaneously might cause a lot of trouble when maintaining and updating all of them.

Trying to cross-check them for plugin issues, which, by the way, are extremely common whenever Elementor decides to upgrade to a new version. You need to always be ready for some trouble!

Over the past 4 years working with Elementor, I tried almost every single premium (and free) Elementor plugin.

Here are the ones I can truly recommend:

- Essential Addons for Elementor
- Piotnet Addons for Elementor (PAFE)
- Ultimate Addons for Elementor
- OoohBoi Steroids for Elementor
- JetPlugins for Elementor by Crocoblock

I aim to use, at most, 2-3 plugins from this list, at the same time.

Apart from strictly Elementor plugins I also install the following:

- YoastSEO
- W3 Total Cache
- Dynamic Content for Elementor
- Elementor Custom Skin
- Advanced Custom Fields and Custom Post Types
- All in One WP migration

I've tested hundreds of plugins over the past few years, and these are my top choices for any fresh WordPress install.

My personal top hosting choices

Here are my top hosting choices, all for different budgets:

Low budget clients

- Hostinger (\$9.90/mo - \$60/mo) - My number one choice for lower ticket projects. Fast and inexpensive servers.

[Get up to 80% discount - click here](#)

Mid-budget clients

- Namehero (\$9.90/mo - \$60/mo) - I used Namehero for a couple of smaller client websites. It's doing a decent job. It's relatively cheap when combined with a discount but can get very expensive once your plan renews after 1-3 years.

Mid to higher budget clients

- Kinsta (\$30/mo - \$60/mo) - Kinsta is one of the fastest hostings I've ever tested and tried. Its cloud-based WP plans are one of the best on the market. A bit expensive but worth it nonetheless!

[Get 2 months free on a yearly plan - click here](#)

Disclaimer: These are all affiliate links, and if you purchase through them - you will receive a discount, while I will get a little kickback.

Website speed optimization

Website speed optimization refers to a series of strategies and best practices to make a website load as quickly as possible.

Optimizing a website's speed contributes to other important benefits, like increased conversion rates, a lower bounce rate, and a better user experience overall.

How to Optimize Your Website Speed

Images, JavaScript and CSS files, and web fonts are just a handful of the variables that can slow down your website. Follow the steps below to optimize all of these factors and make your website as fast as possible. This list is incomplete, but it will serve as the foundation of a very extensive optimization strategy.

Start with the Audit

It's important to evaluate your site's performance before making any changes that may affect how it loads and serves the contents.

You can use free tools like PageSpeed Insights and GTMetrix to get started and check your loading speeds.

As part of your evaluation, you should also view your website using various devices to understand how it performs.

How fast does your website load? Find out with GTmetrix

See how your site performs, reveal why it's slow and discover optimization opportunities.

Enter URL to Analyze...

Test your site

Analysis Options: Testing in Vancouver, Canada using Chrome (Desktop) with an Unthrottled Connection. [Change Options](#)

Latest News

[View Changes](#)

A high TBT is due to a "blocked" main-thread - your page can't respond to user inputs like screen taps, keyboard pr...
<https://l.co/BMNgVu1R>

November 8, 2022

The GTmetrix browser doesn't do anything drastically different from your local browser. Yet, GTmetrix may be seein...
<https://l.co/36Kz7HgPP>

November 7, 2022

Check out this page with a high TBT scripts with long execution times. TBT
<https://l.co/EstInO1pEu>

November 4, 2022



993,795,420 pages analyzed so far

GTmetrix.com

PageSpeed Insights

https://gumroad.com/

Analyze

Mobile Desktop

Discover what your real users are experiencing

Core Web Vitals Assessment: Failed

Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)	First Input Delay (FID)	Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)
1 s	2 ms	0.18

OTHER NOTABLE METRICS

First Contentful Paint (FCP)	Interaction to Next Paint (INP)	Time to First Byte (TTFB)
0.8 s	49 ms	0.3 s

Diagnose performance issues

Performance	Accessibility	Best Practices	SEO
86	91	92	83

PageSpeed Insights by Google

The more information you have regarding the functionality of your website, the easier it will be to find and apply important measures.

Optimize your images

Even though images can enhance the visuals and, to some extent, the usability of your website, they can also slow down the loading times, especially if they are high resolution. **Your job is to optimize them.** There are a couple free online options available for compressing popular image types like .JPG and .PNG. Compressing these images before adding them to your site can save weight and loading time. **Tiny PNG is one of them.**



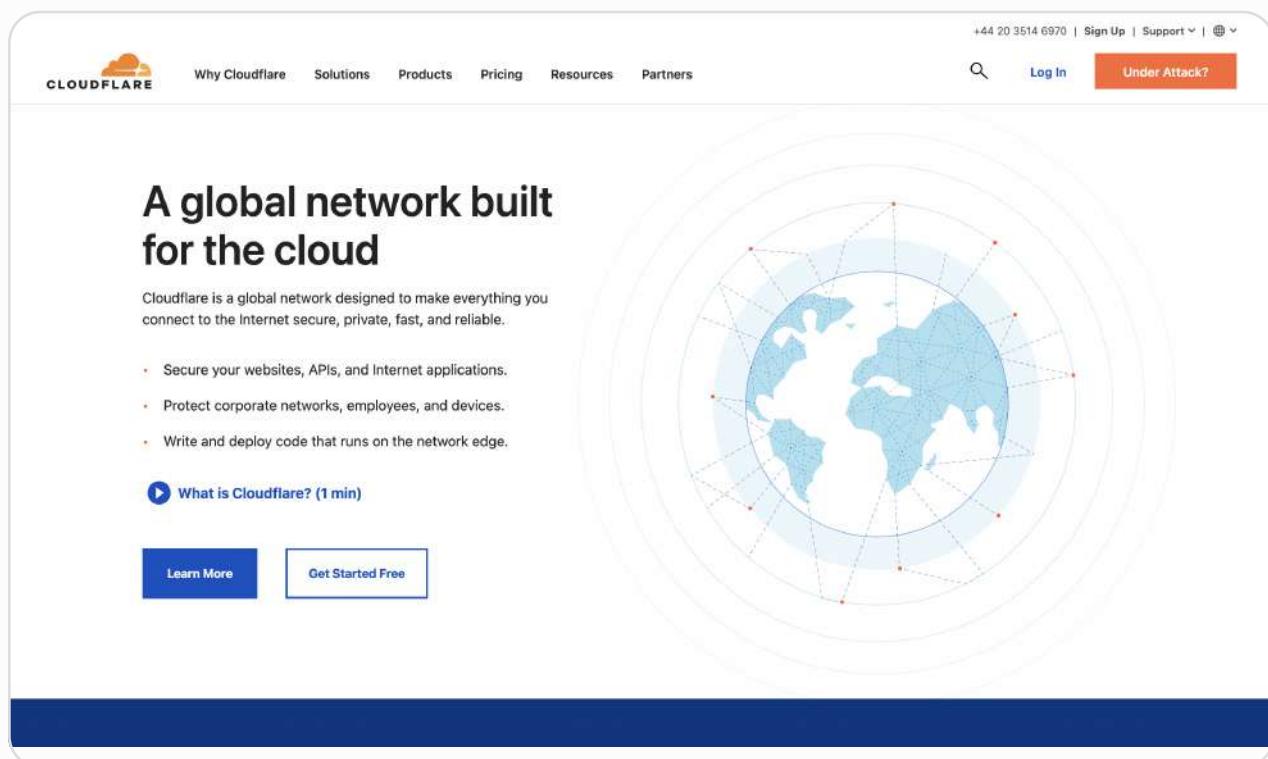
You should always compress your images, no matter how small they are. For images with transparent backgrounds - use .PNG. For the remaining images use .JPGs or .WEBP formats to save as much file weight as possible.

Consider using a CDN

Content delivery networks (CDNs) store copies of your content in different places on different servers. To maximize content delivery, the CDN selects the server (or servers) closest to the user's location when they visit your website.

For my web projects, I tend to use the CDN provided by Cloudflare. It's free to use and does its job perfectly fine. If I remember correctly, you can also apply for a free SSL certificate using a Cloudflare account.

You can find the [**link to this CDN here**](#). You need to create a free account before you can use it.



TinyPNG.com

Reevaluate your hosting provider

As we already mentioned briefly, hosting is crucial for a high-performing website. Bad hosting is one of the main causes of speed-related issues.

While several elements, such as your provider's physical infrastructure, location, and total network connection capacity, could affect speed, the kind of web hosting your website uses can also have an impact.

There are three types of hosting servers - shared, VPS, and dedicated.

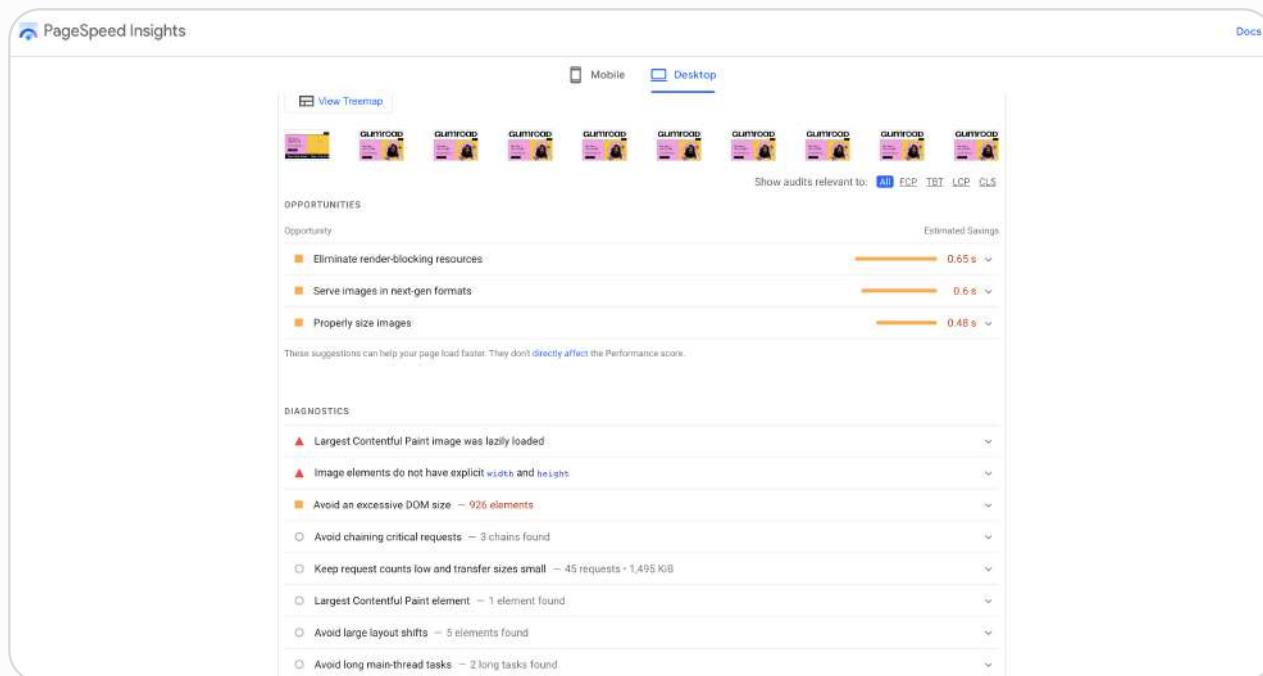
- **Shared:** Although shared hosting choices are the most economical, they degrade overall performance by dividing hosting resources across numerous sites. This will be a concern in particular if the traffic to your website fluctuates or is consistently high.
- **VPS:** Virtual private server options conceptually divide services on a common physical disk to boost performance, but they still experience speed problems when resource loads are high.
- **Dedicated:** Dedicated servers will dramatically increase your speed, regardless of resource demand, but they are more expensive than shared or VPS solutions.

Install caching plugins and run quick fixes

It's tempting to attempt to address every issue with website speed once you've recognized them. I wouldn't spend too much time on fixing them all. To help you prioritize your optimization efforts, use testing tools like PageSpeed Insights to receive recommendations on how to optimize your site.

The easiest way to do that is by installing caching plugins like W3 Total Cache and/or WP Optimize.

Use the default optimization settings or watch a quick video tutorial on youtube to get started faster.



PageSpeed Insights by Google

Follow these few simple suggestions and try to get your site loading speed under 3 seconds, ideally aim for 1.5-2s. **Good luck!**



Chapter summary

- **Elementor** is a visual website builder plugin for WordPress with a super user-friendly interface and a drag-and-drop functionality.
- **Webflow** is a drag-and-drop builder that requires a bit more of the technical web development knowledge and front-end understanding than Elementor.
- **WordPress + Elementor Pro is** (in my opinion) the most beginner-friendly introduction to no-code there is.
- **Limit the number of plugins** in a single project to an absolute minimum. It helps to keep the website running fast and reduces code bloat.
- **Optimizing a website's speed** contributes to other important benefits, like increased conversion rates, a lower bounce rate, and a better user experience overall.
- **You should always compress your images**, no matter how small they are.

Take some notes!



Pre-launch checklist

Pre-launch checklist

Every time you're about to launch a new site, you risk forgetting something important. How to make sure you've got everything you need for a successful launch? Keep reading.

Before becoming a design lead, I worked as a freelance web designer for 4 years, and during that time, I quickly realized that every website required a series of tasks to be completed before going live. And no matter how many websites I had designed, remembering all of them took time and effort.

Back then, I discovered that other designers follow design checklists to ensure their sites were ready for launch. It was extremely helpful!

Here's an awesome article by Elementor going over what you need to have before you push that website live!

- **Website Launch Checklist by Elementor**

And, if you need more - check out the Checklist figma file included in one of the ebook folders.

These are the type of checklists I'd follow myself before launching any new sites, saving me from having to try to remember all of the steps. There's always something missing!

A close-up photograph of a person's arm and hand. The person is wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt. They are holding a dark grey or black suitcase by its silver-colored metal handle. The background is plain white.

The project wrap-up

Design handoff

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. 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 😂



What's the design handoff

The design handoff happens when developers are given the design documents and, from that point onwards, are responsible for putting them into action and delivering a final product.

A successful handoff requires effective designer-developer teamwork, and there's no way around it. Let's talk about what you need to make it successful.

A recipe to a successful design handoff

In reality, this stage of the design process rarely goes off without any issues. On the contrary, it often causes misunderstandings between the developers and designers.

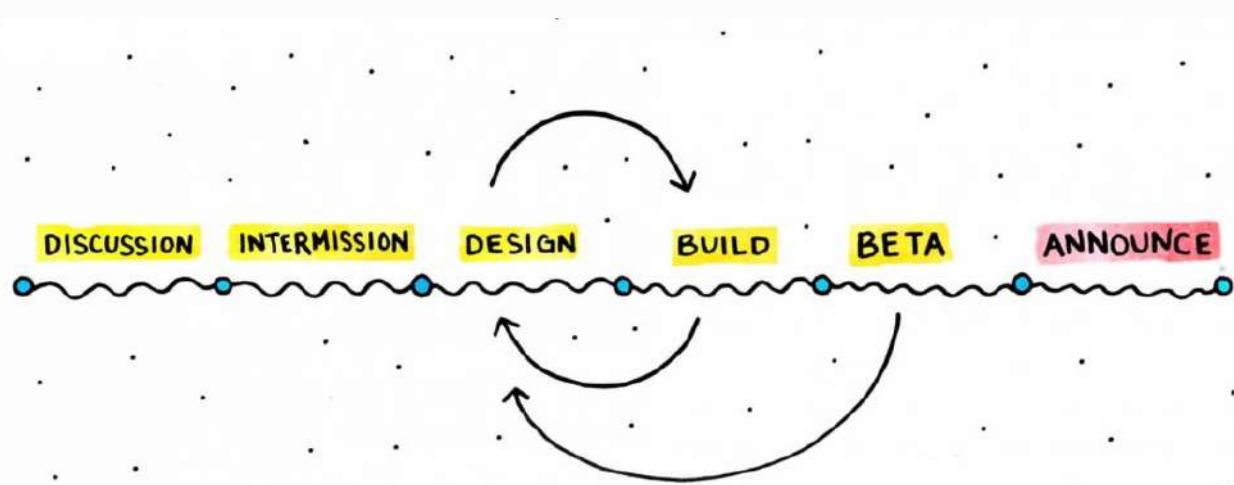
How to avoid handoff failure? Follow these steps:

Good communication - It makes sense that effective communication is necessary for a design-to-development handoff. Misunderstandings in communication can lead to several problems, and contributes to an efficient project time allocation.

Remember to schedule 1:1 calls with your developer(s) whenever needed. I'd suggest doing it before committing to specific design solutions, somewhere in the middle of the process, and by the end, before the official handoff. **Avoiding mistakes early is much easier than fixing them when your deadline is around the corner.**

Communicate frequently - Once you're on those calls, explain your ideas and solutions. It's not uncommon for designers and developers to approach the same problems from completely different perspectives due to their professional backgrounds. It's recommended to engage developers early and talk frequently.

Explain the solution - In addition to communicating frequently, designers and developers must communicate well. This entails staying on the same page throughout the process.



Intercom's article

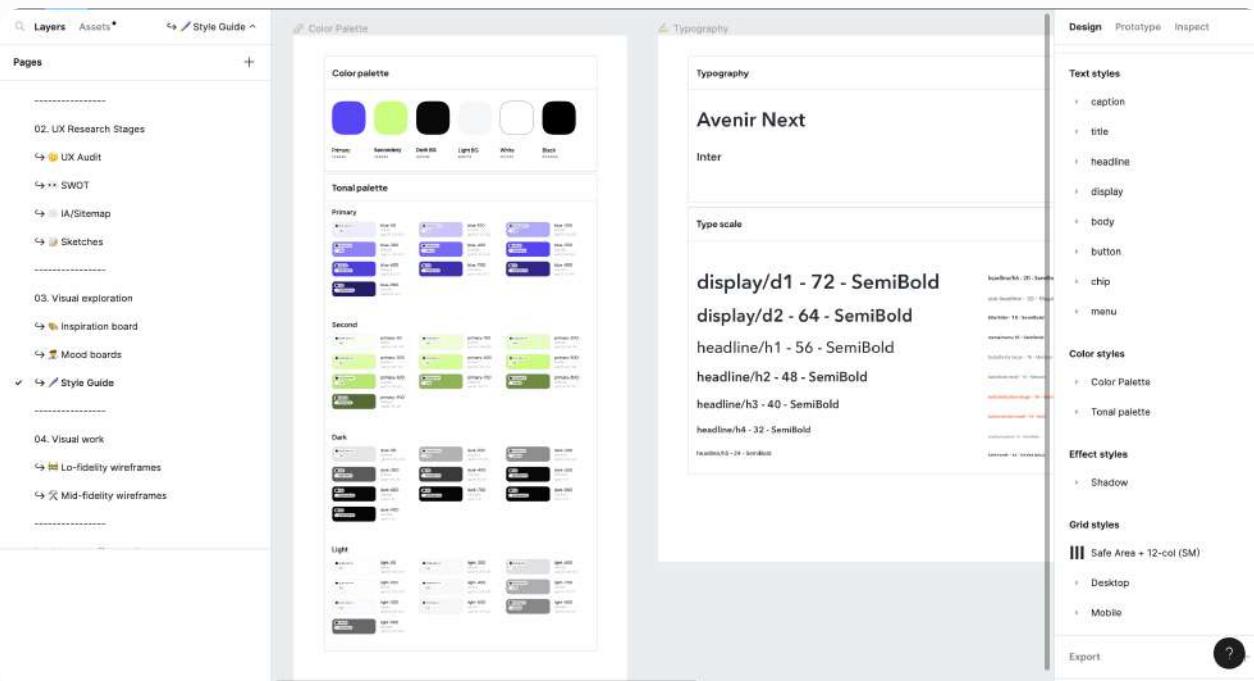
Apart from designer-to-developer communication, you also need to spend some time on organizing and setting up your file. Some would say it's the most important part of the design handoff process.

How to make sure you've got everything your developers need to proceed and they won't bombard you with questions afterward?

We'll let's talk about the technical part of it.

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:

Color system

You will need to create your color palette and explain the use of each color - primary, secondary, tertiary, neutral, and all their tones and shades. You do that by naming your styles appropriately.

Look at our Figma files to see how we've approached it.

Tonal palette

Primary

Color Name	Hex Code	Color Description
primary-50	#e0e0ff	Light blue-purple
primary-100	#cccfef	Medium light blue-purple
primary-200	#b5bfff	Dark light blue-purple
primary-300	#90a2ff	Medium blue-purple
primary-400	#7b9fe0	Dark blue-purple
primary-500	#59aaa0	Medium dark blue-purple
primary-600	#52a6ff	Dark dark blue-purple
primary-700	#4c99ff	Very dark blue-purple
primary-800	#3280ff	Very very dark blue-purple
primary-900	#201d80	Dark navy blue

Second

Color Name	Hex Code	Color Description
secondary-50	#f0f0ff	Light green
secondary-100	#e0e0ff	Medium light green
secondary-200	#d0d0ff	Dark light green
secondary-300	#c0c0ff	Medium light green
secondary-400	#b0b0ff	Dark light green
secondary-500	#a0a0ff	Medium light green
secondary-600	#9090ff	Dark light green
secondary-700	#8080ff	Medium light green
secondary-800	#7070ff	Dark light green
secondary-900	#6060ff	Medium light green

Color system - SmartBank Landing Page UI Kit

Consider including primary and secondary (buttons, inputs, fields, etc.) interface elements in different states - active, inactive, focused, etc. - and show how the color system applies to them all.

Typography and type scale

Typography

Avenir Next

Inter

Type scale

display/d1 - 72 - SemiBold

headline/h6 - 20 - SemiBold

display/d2 - 64 - SemiBold

sub headline - 20 - Regular

headline/h1 - 56 - SemiBold

menu/menu 16 - Semibold

headline/h2 - 48 - SemiBold

body/body large - 16 - Medium

headline/h3 - 40 - Sem

Section/Section Range - 10 - 80

headline/b4_32_SemiBold

button/button small - 14 - Bold

headline(h5, 24, *SemiBold*)

caption/caption 13 - SemiBold

CHIP/CHIP - 12 - EXTRA BOLD

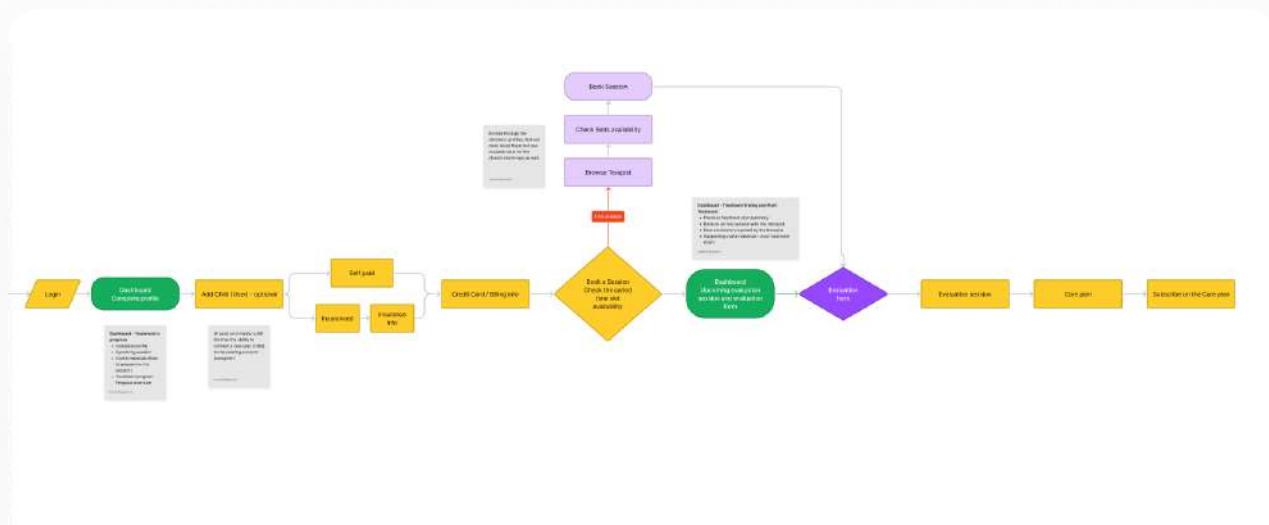
Typography system - SmartBank Landing Page UI Kit

Document your typography choices, fonts, weights, spacing values, and sizes, all depending on their specific purpose.

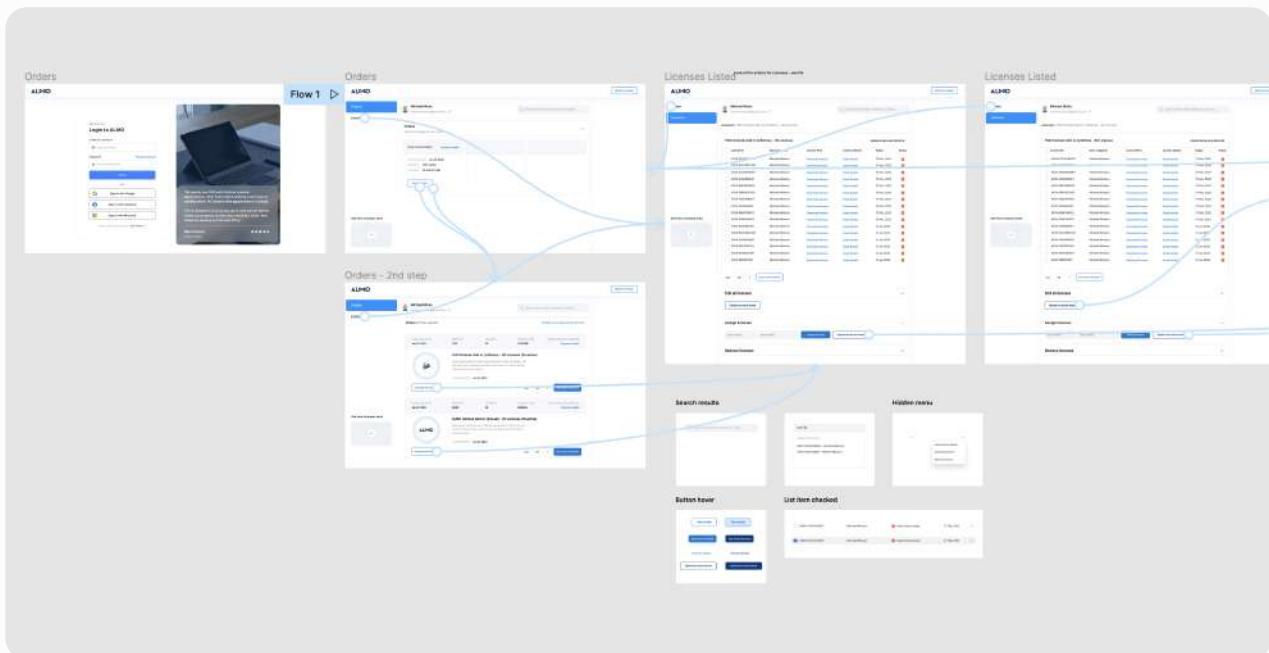
That includes the display, h1-h6 headings, buttons, subheadings, captions, paragraph texts, etc.

Flowchart or a prototype

You should link to a quick decision flowchart to better illustrate the user journey and interactions between each page.



Credit: Ivana Stojanovic



My client's licensing software dashboard wireframes

Or prototype all interactions and show them live. Neither of them would work, but I feel a prototype is more beneficial.

Global styles

Make sure your design decisions are well-documented in a style guide or design system. This comprises the previously mentioned elements of colors, typography, graphics, icons, and grid structure.

It is critical to update all of your file colors and font styles with dynamic global styles rather than using regular text attributes with static values.

This way, you can easily make global changes and have them mirrored throughout the entire design, all at once, if you want to.

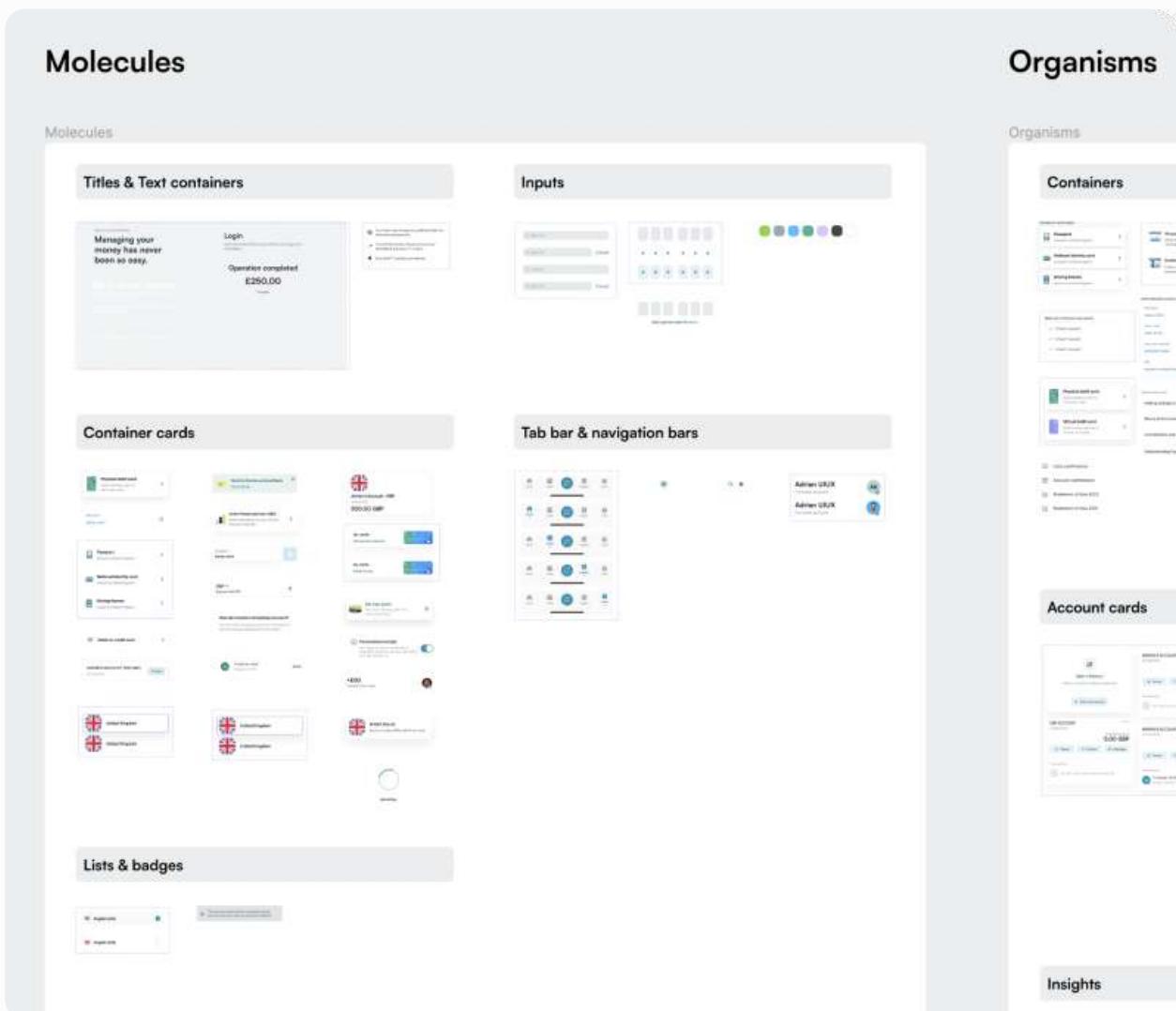
The image shows a user interface for managing global styles. On the left, there are two main sections: 'Grid styles' and 'Text styles'. Under 'Grid styles', there are three items: 'Safe Area + 12-col (SM)', 'Desktop' (with '12-column grid (SM)' and '12-column grid (XL)'), and 'Mobile' (with '4-column grid (mobile)'). Under 'Text styles', there is a list of items: 'caption', 'title', 'headline', 'display', 'body', 'button', 'chip', and 'menu'. In the center, there is a large panel titled 'Tonal palette' which is currently expanded to show the 'Primary' section. It contains color swatches for 'primary-50' through 'primary-900'. Below this is the 'Secondary' section with 'secondary-50' and 'secondary-100'. To the right of this central panel is a 'Color styles' sidebar, also titled 'Tonal palette', which lists various color names with corresponding colored circles: Dark (Panel), Light (Background), Secondary, Dark (Background), Grey, White (Background), Primary (CTA), white, and black.

SmartBank Global Styles

Design system

Since this project required only a landing page to be built, we didn't include a design system.

However, coming up with a well-documented design system might be your best bet for more complex projects.



Design Manual design system

Be on the lookout for my upcoming Skillshare classes and Youtube videos. I'll share more info about the design systems there.

Grid system

As part of your grid documentation, you should include an example screen that illustrates the margins, gutters and describes the nearest breakpoints to which your design should adjust to.

Usually, that's two desktop sizes, large and small, tablet breakpoint, and a mobile, landscape, and regular view.

Layout

SM desktop = 1440x1024

SM mobile = 375x812

Desktop Grid:

I used a **12-column grid** with **20 px gutters** and **10% side margins with a minimum of 100 px** of margin on both sides on the smallest resolution. I designed everything on the SM desktop and adjusted for 2k+ resolutions on the XL desktop frame.

The design safe space is 1240 px wide.

Mobile Grid:

I used a **4-column grid** with **16 pt gutters** and **20 pt of margin** on both sides on the smallest resolution.

The design safe space is 343 pt wide.

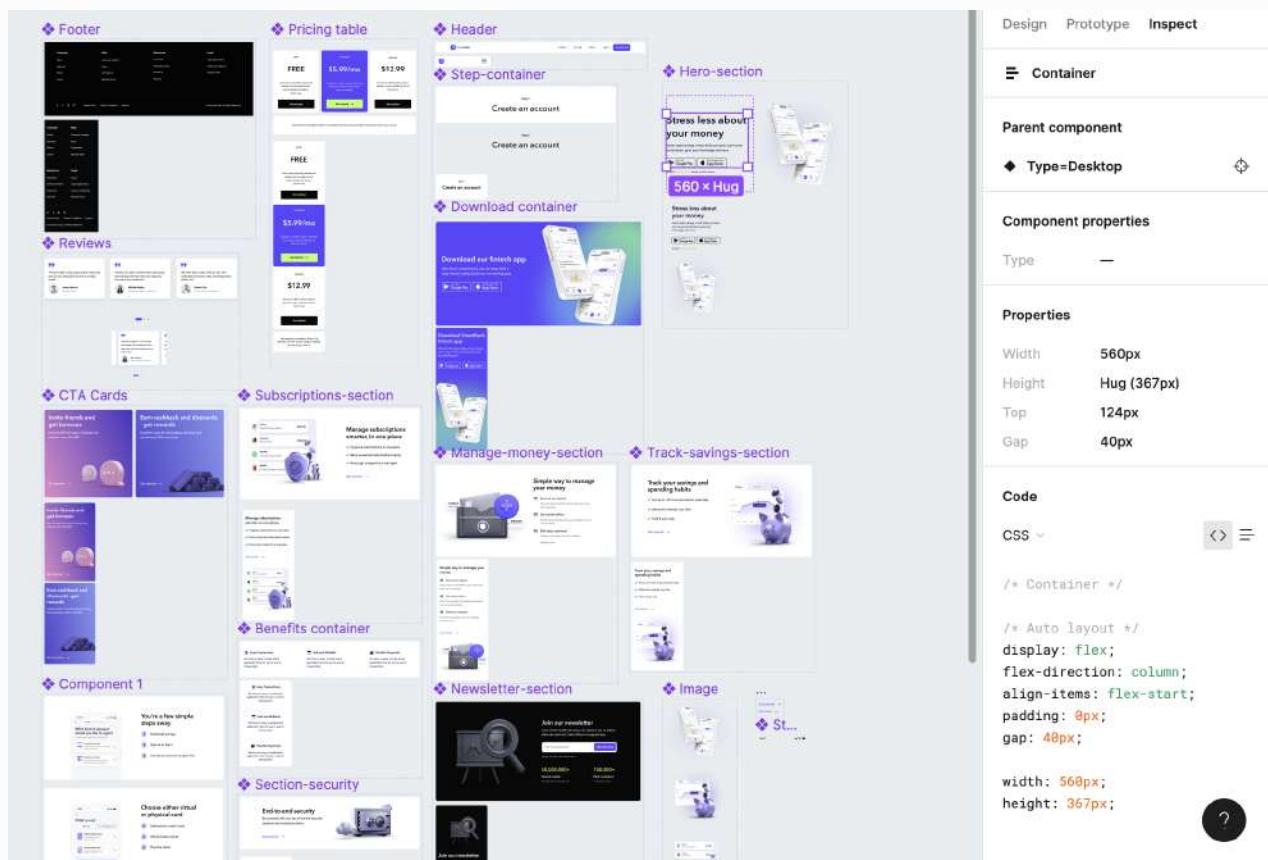
Grid System - SmartBank Landing Page UI Kit

Components library

Compiling components into a library helps programmers inspect individual parts and determine their specific properties.

To make it easy for developers to find all the files and materials, your components should be properly categorized and named.

In areas where Figma's capabilities are limited (like animations), annotations might be needed to provide more context to describe the expected functionality.

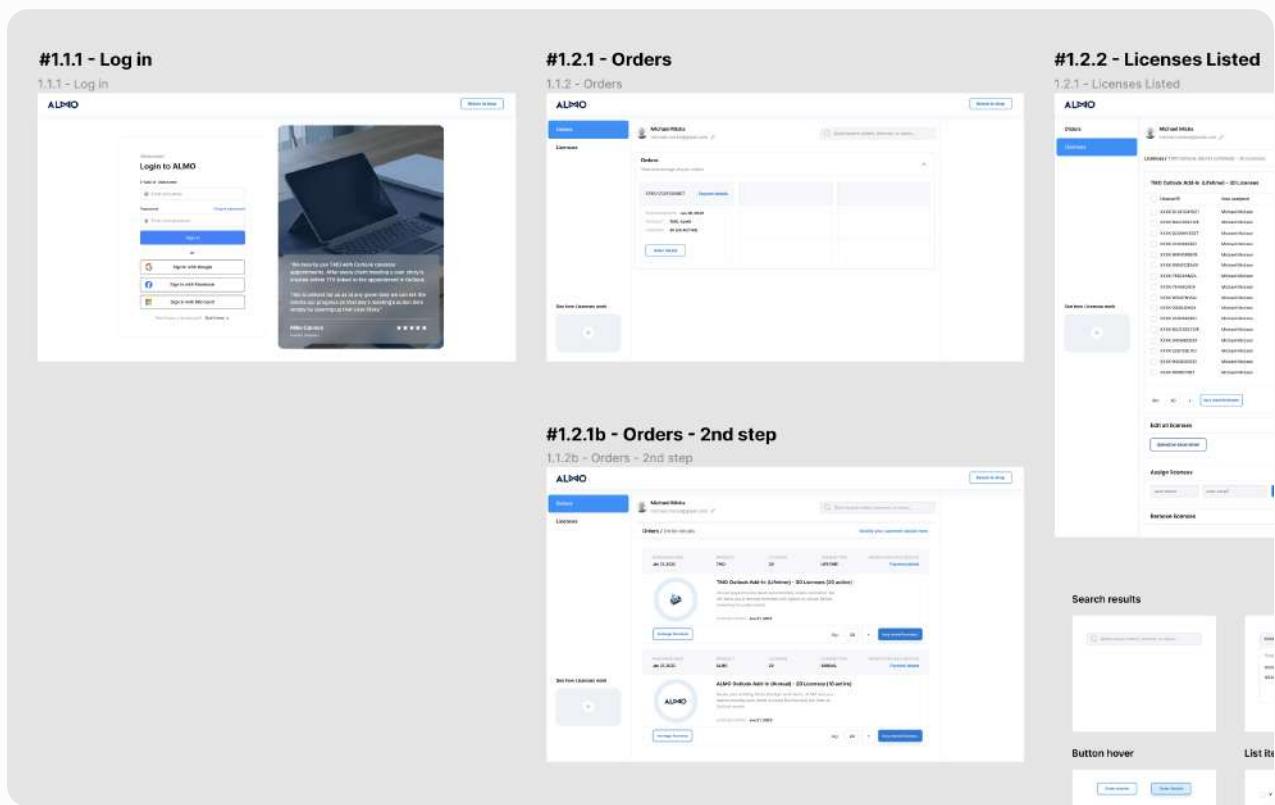


Additionally, we need to personally guide developers through the documentation so a couple of catch up calls between the designers and developers will definitely be needed; that's just how it is :)

Naming conventions

With website projects, the naming conventions are usually a bit easier as you don't have to prototype hundreds of screens as you do with apps. However, the general idea is the same as in my Design Manual ebook.

I follow a simple rule where I label my screens the following:



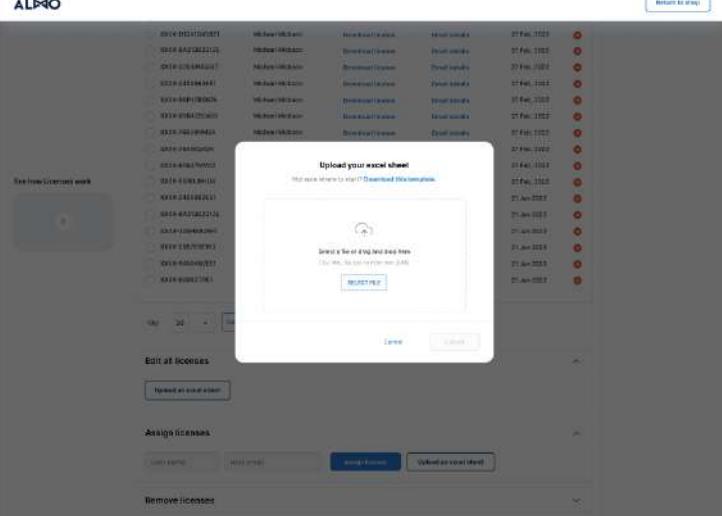
#1.1.1 - Log in - what do these numbers mean?

The first number is the iteration or the release version number - in our case, that's the first one; the second number is the number of the flow, which is our first flow - Log in. The third number is the step of the flow. These might be relevant when you need to prototype an exit popup or a page that's part of the main flow. It's all situational.

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

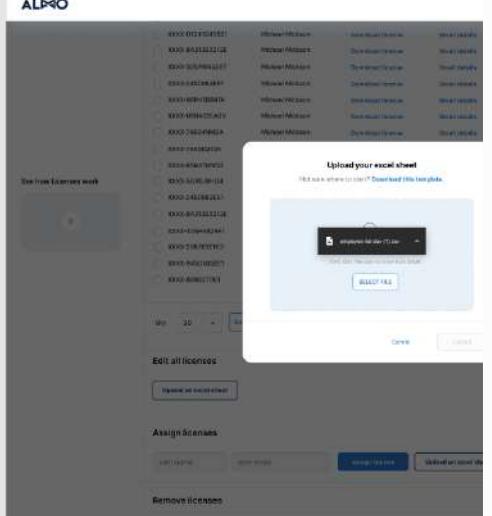
1.2.1.1a- Licenses Listed



This wireframe shows a list of licenses with columns for ID, Name, Status, and Valid until. A central modal window titled 'Upload your excel sheet' contains instructions: 'Not sure where to start? Download this template.', a file input field, and a 'READY FILE' button. Below the modal are 'Done' and 'Cancel' buttons.

1.2.1.1b- Upload document 2/3

1.2.1.1b- Licenses Listed



This wireframe shows a list of licenses with columns for ID, Name, Status, and Valid until. A central modal window titled 'Upload your excel sheet' contains instructions: 'Not sure where to start? Download this template.', a file input field, and a 'READY FILE' button. Below the modal are 'Done' and 'Cancel' buttons.

My client's licensing software dashboard wireframes

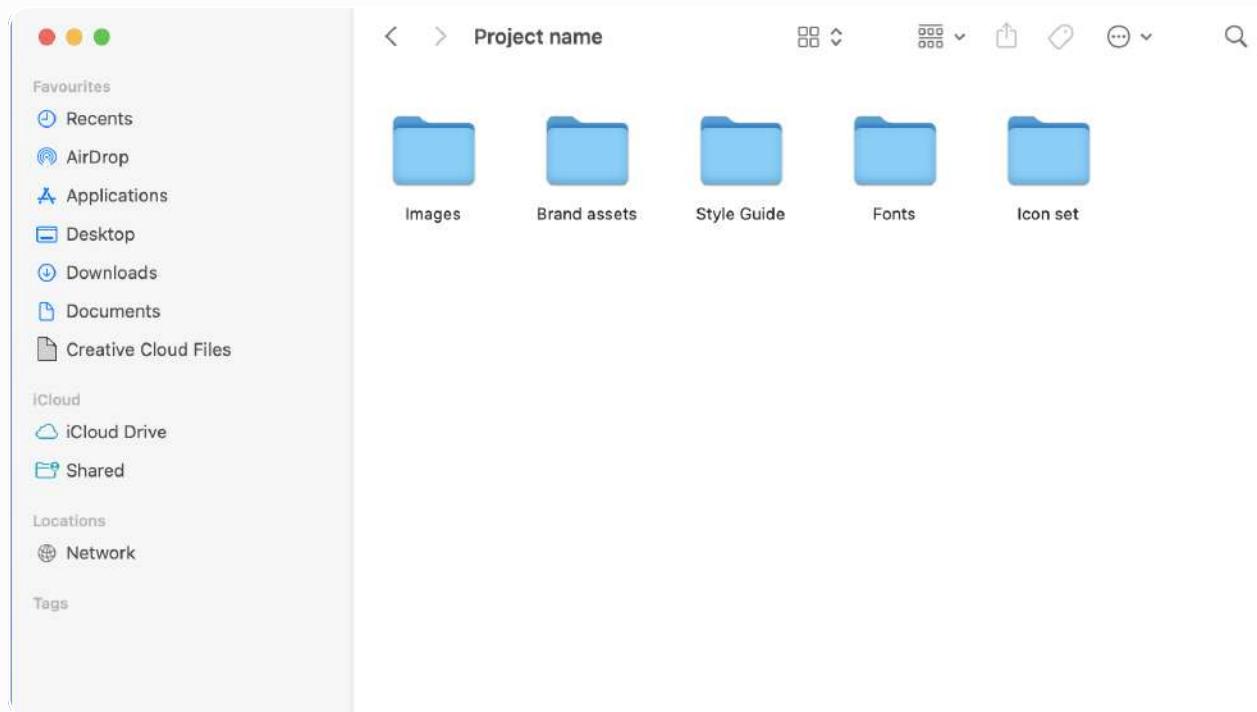
Establish explicit guidelines for the naming and labeling each component, asset, and file for designers and developers.

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

Prepare all design assets

Setting the developers up for success is every designer's responsibility. Giving the developers access to all the essential design files and assets should also be on your list.

Did you decide to use Google Drive, Dropbox, or another platform for everything? Keep the lines of communication open and share where those assets are located so that any missing pieces, queries, or worries may be addressed.



If you really want to make it easy for your developers, you should export all your (named!) visual assets, compress them, and group them into separate folders labeled by each website page (Home, About, Contact, etc.).

This will really make the asset prep much faster for your devs.

Make a checklist

Even if you design a really small project, messing something up with the handoff is bound to happen. Missing a text style, using a wrong color for one button, not adding a header, or not annotating an interaction; mistakes happen all the time, and it's normal.

You can avoid most of these mistakes by maintaining a list of all the requirements (a checklist) for all possible scenarios and product features. The checklist will indicate whether your design job is done or if you need to revisit the Figma file and add a thing or two.

Place the components logically	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use "/" in the name of the component	<input type="checkbox"/>
Draw all the states of elements (links, buttons, menu items, tooltips, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fonts	<input type="checkbox"/>

What should you include in a design handoff checklist?

Don't worry, my friend. I've included a very comprehensive design handoff checklist as one of the files in this ebook. Check it out and make sure to follow everything from the top of the list to the bottom before you move to cross off the next step.



Chapter summary

- **The design handoff** happens when developers are given the design documents and, from that point onwards, are responsible for putting them into action.
- **Avoid handoff failure** by communicating frequently, explaining the solutions, and documenting everything.
- **Create a color system and a type scale**
- **Create a grid system** and document it
- Set up a **components library**
- Remember about **logical naming conventions**
- Prepare all your **design assets**
- **Make a checklist** and cross everything off the list
- **Build and maintain design system** if applicable for your project.

Take some notes!



What's next?

What's next?

Whoa, you're here already. Great job!

By writing this ebook, I wanted to show you the basic principles of design, and practical tips when designing websites. And most importantly, show you the ropes of being a successful web designer.

But, for you to succeed, reading about theory is not enough. You need to use this knowledge and put it into practice.

It's just the start of your new journey.

I want you to succeed, seriously. I'm rooting for your success. And I know you got this, I'm sure, but there are a few steps left for you to do before you can truly use this knowledge and start applying it.

The sooner you realize that design work is based on observing, iterating, and improving, the quicker you'll improve as a designer.

Learning theory is one thing, being skillful at visual design is another. And you skill up the fastest by designing. The more concepts you design the faster you learn to recognize design patterns and the faster you start to develop your own design style.

All you need now is a plan. And I have it laid out for you.

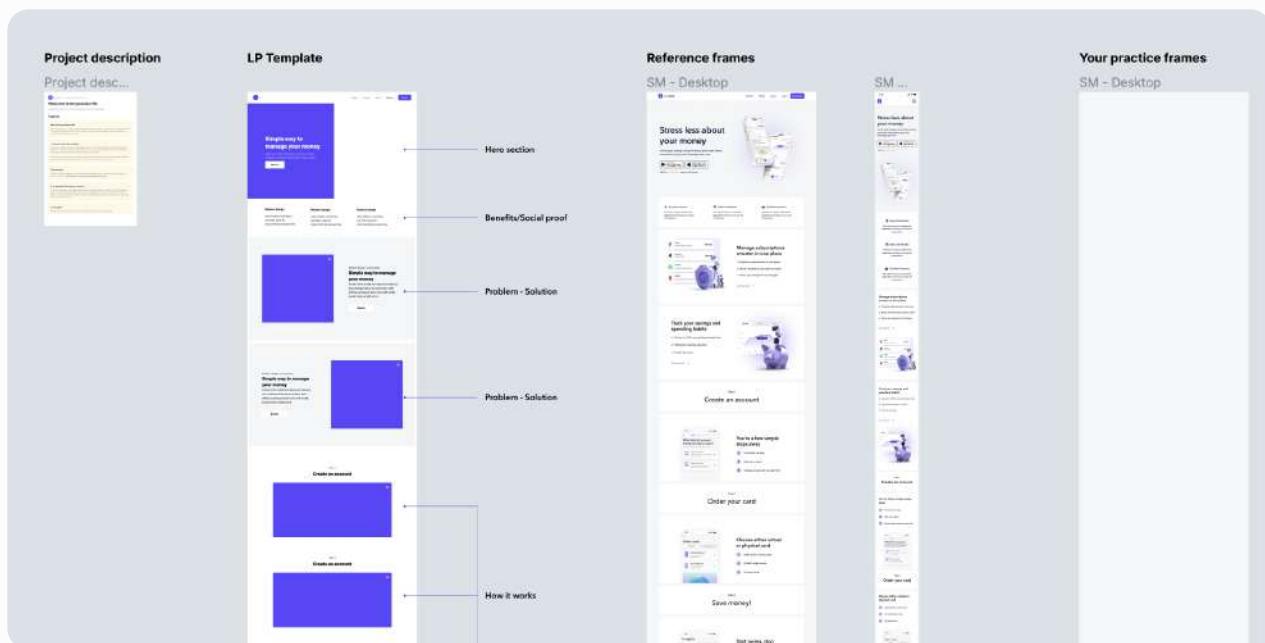
Your action plan

If you spent a good amount of time reading the theory and following the design process you're in for a good start.

What's left for you do to is finish the practice file.

Yes, if you haven't noticed, there's a practice file in one of the ebook folders. Read the instructions on the first page, and jump on to the next one. This is where you'll use all the knowledge from this ebook and create something new.

You can be as detailed as you want to, you can follow the UX stages and conceptualize the results, you can simplify the research, assume the results, and skip the UX phase altogether.

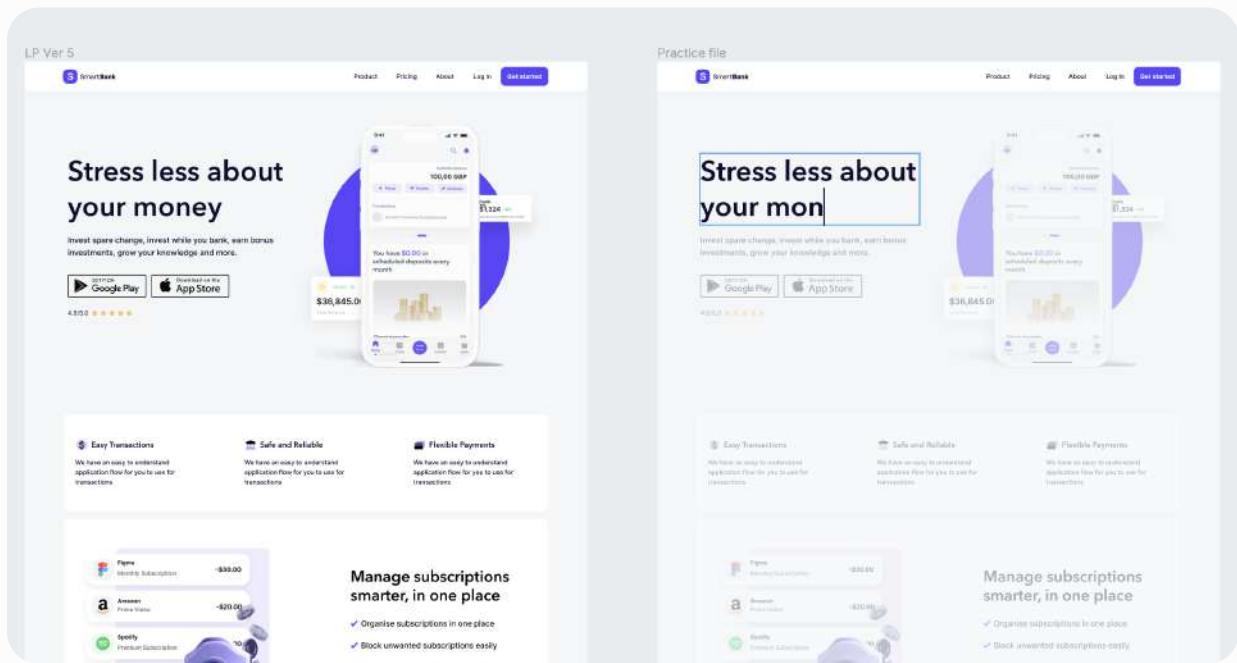


What you should do, is you should design a landing page yourself.

Depending on your experience, here's how you should approach this:

If you're a complete newbie - start here ⤵

If you're a complete newbie to web design, or if you're not feeling comfortable enough to go out there and create your own sites, fire up the Practice file, open the “Tracing” page and just start tracing the designs. Replicate the text, buttons, paste the images, look up the size values, the spacing between elements, look at how auto layout frames are built. Dig deep and analyze the design.



SmartBank Landing Page - Beginner practice file

This exercise aims to familiarize you with the design tool, recognize design patterns, understand the grid layout, spacing, etc.

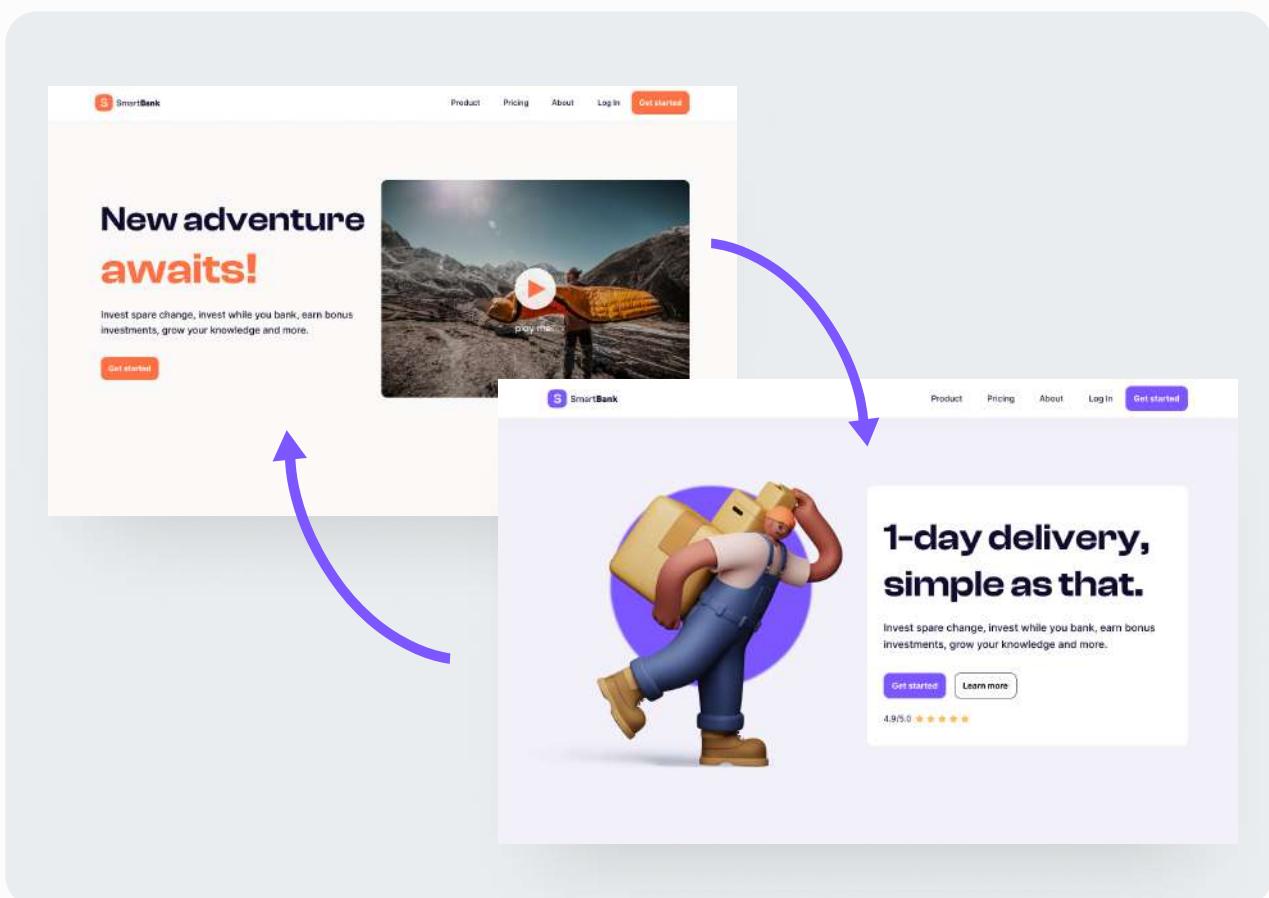
If you're feeling more comfortable, open the “Copying” page and start replicating the designs with the use of Rulers. Modify the colors, update the images, and see what you can create by simply playing around with the file properties. **Get creative! :)**

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.

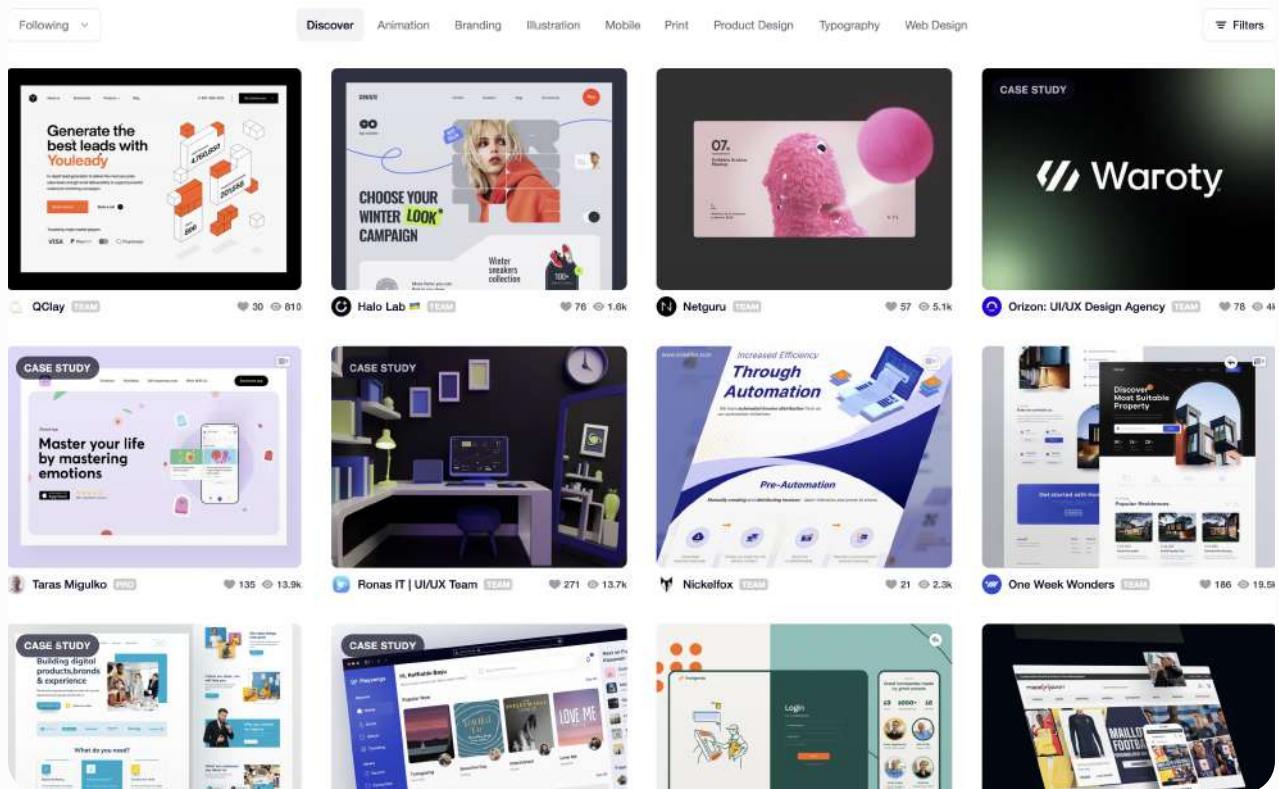


Follow the same approach for all sections of the landing page.

If you don't know where to get the inspiration from, open up the sites we mentioned previously, saaslandingpage, onepagelove, or simply, dribbble.

You'll find a tremendous amount of inspiration just from these three websites, no need to look anywhere else.

Immerse yourself in this practice and design as many concepts as possible. This way, you'll start recognizing different design patterns and styles, slowly coming up with your own style.



Dribbble is an amazing site for concept designs. Don't focus on having perfect UX just yet - work on your visual skills first.

Time to present!

Now that you have a few dozen concept works, you need to get noticed. You do this by really taking the time to create a beautiful presentation. Need help figuring out how to do it?

Once again, replicate whatever's working.

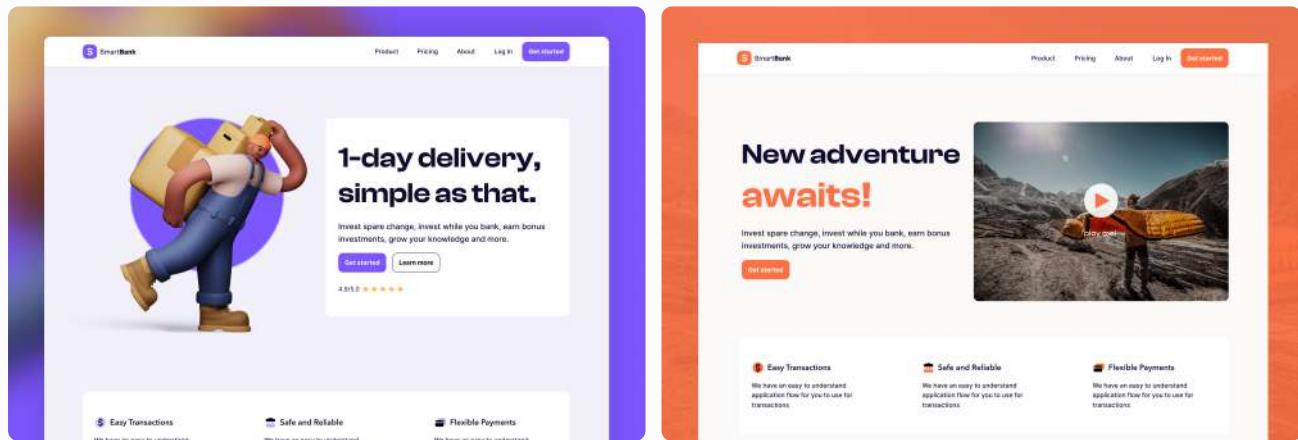
Open Dribbble again and find the most popular posts on the home page. See how they're being presented, download a few shots.

Use a similar presentation format like these popular guys on Dribbble. Once you have a few concepts ready - post them to Dribbble, Instagram, Behance, LinkedIn, everywhere you can!



Halo Lab's shots are always so carefully crafted and super balanced. Try to come up with patterns that are similar to grab more attention.

This is an example of how I would go and present the templates I created by modifying the Landing Page UI Kit 



This took me literally 10 minutes to prepare and just like that I could have created two concept shots for my social media. I would of course spend more time on it, polish the designs, make sure everything's looking neat and tidy. And you should do too, take your time with it.

Presentation really differentiates the beginners from pros.

Anyways, if you open up the Practice File and go to the Creating page, you'll find a landing page reference design and a number of frames for you to practice the designs on.

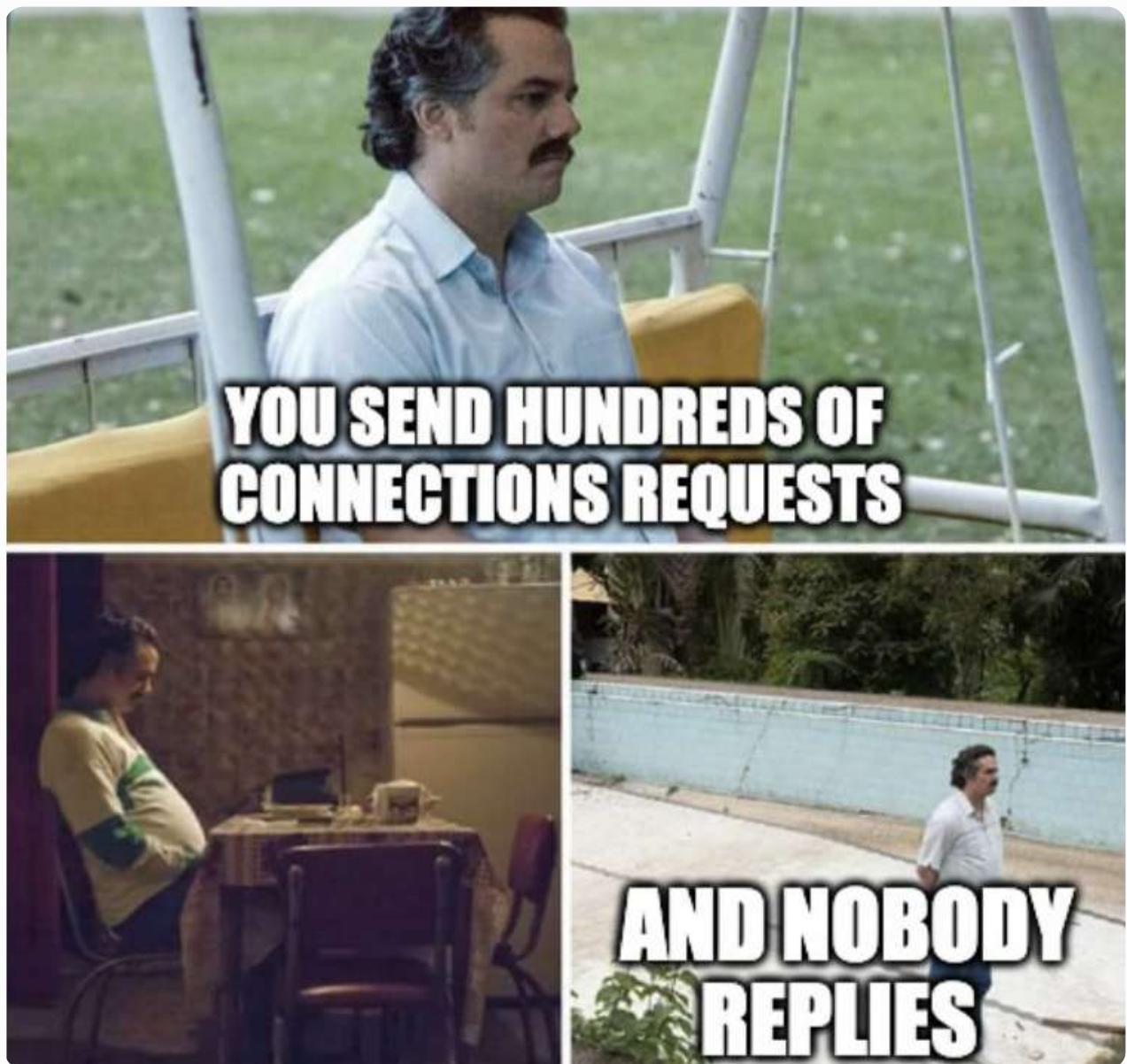
I'll also add another small bonus, the Dribbble and Instagram templates just so you can quickly take your new concepts, drop them onto the frames, and dynamically create a series of ready-to-post shots. **It's coming soon as the next update!** 😊

Next, you need to get noticed

You need to publish your work on Dribbble, Instagram, Behance, and LinkedIn. These are the top places your clients hang out.

The more often you post your work, the higher your chances are of getting noticed. Consistency is your best friend here.

Unless, you want to send countless of cold emails, calls, and pitches to people who have no clue about who you are and what you do



Like Natalie and I used to. We recorder about 30 free website audits and sent them to random blokes on Linkedin only to be left on read and ignored by the majority.

People just don't care. And convincing them to do something they didn't think about in the first place is hard. You're better off just practicing and posting your concepts. They will eventually find you!

Cast a wide net and start fishing

You need to attract clients that appreciate good design.

If you attract them by the quality of your work, you'll also be able to dictate higher prices. That's just the way it is. If you outreach first, you're in the lower position, you need to fight for their attention. If they reach out to you, they're already interested in YOU and your expertise. It's so much easier to close a lead like that.

Really, a night and day difference.

And the truth is, you don't need to rack in 1000's of likes and millions of reach on any of the aforementioned platforms.

You just need to be consistent. I know it might feel weird at first to post your work ready to be judged by random people online.

Don't worry, though. Words can't hurt you. If it's constructive feedback, take it and improve.

If it's just a sad troll trying to offend you and diminish your work, whatever, you're out here doing something that matters, and they're just letting go of their frustrations and bad emotions.

Block them and continue doing your thing.

Consistency is key

As with any platform, you just need to be consistent and post at least 3-4 times per week to get the right momentum. I just showed you how to become a concept machine.

Make it your habit to create at least one shot in the morning or evening, and post it on every platform.

You need exposure, and you need a community. However small or large it will be, you need friends in the industry. By posting online, you'll start to become recognized by your fellow designers, leaders, agency owners, software developers, the list goes on.

White labelling is an option too

Remember that there are other ways to get a steady influx of work apart from business clients. One of my favorite ways to earn good income was through whitelabelling design work for bigger agencies.

This business model is pretty simple and easily scalable.

So, how does white labelling look like?

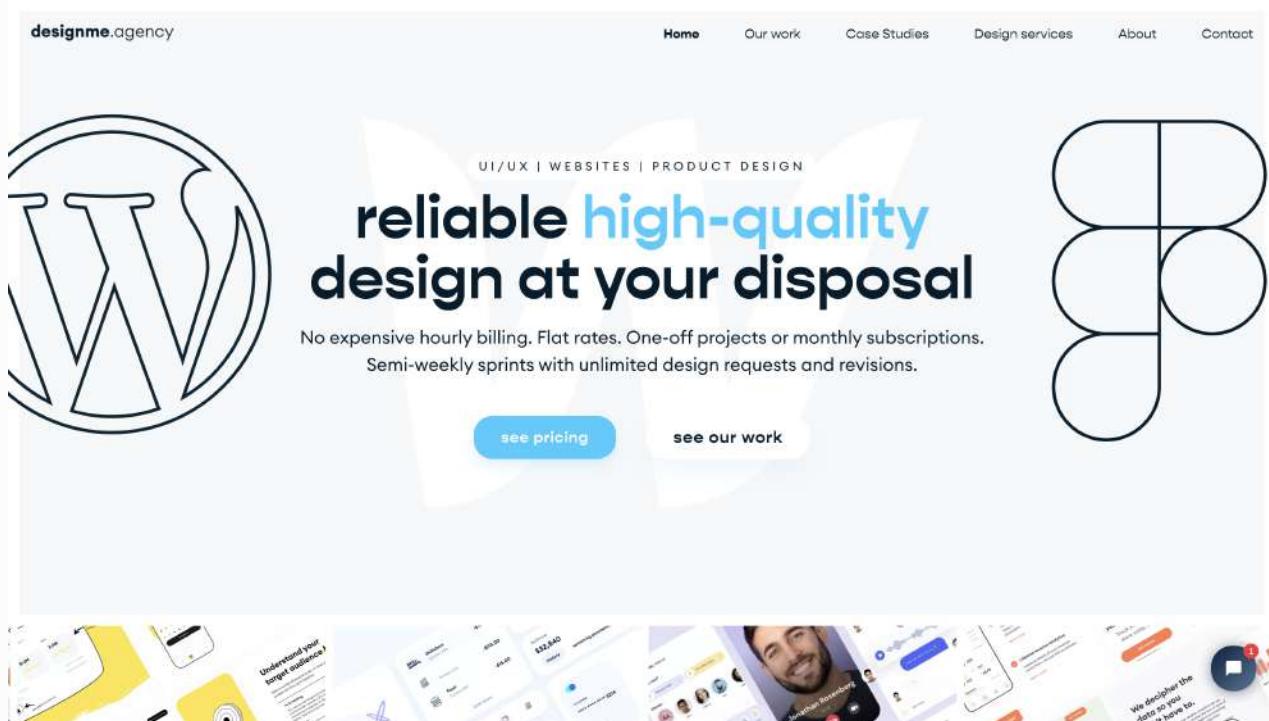
I simply agreed on fixed quotes (between \$2000-5000 for a project) and set specific deadlines and just focused on working.

I didn't have to look for and win clients.

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

\$10k/month was a breeze

Within 6 months of introducing the new design retainers I was having steady \$10,000 months with some of them going as high as \$20,000. Not to mention the immense amount of practical knowledge I gained during that time having worked with dozens of designers, developers, and corporate clients. It was a great time.

And I'm here to tell you, it's all possible. Anyone can do it. Really. All you're missing is a plan, and I just gave it to you.

Design, present, post online, rinse and repeat. When a client reaches out to you - use my email templates, send them the questionnaire I gave you, set up a meeting, use my Zoom call script, close them, send the contract, send the invoice (you can use my template), collect a deposit, send a confirmation email, hop on a kickoff call, and start designing!

Now, go out there and start earning \$\$\$



A word of advice: This framework is here to help you get started.

Once you close the first few higher-ticket clients you'll quickly start developing your own framework, like I did. Everyone has their own approach to certain things and you might find yourself going a different route at some point.

Know this, though, all that I'm sharing with you today, worked for me, and enabled me to live a life I never imagined I could live.

I hope that the contents of this e-book will help you achieve the same things I achieved.

If you need more professional guidance on any topic, design, running a freelance business, growing on social media, or releasing products, feel free to reach out to me and let's hop on a consultation call - **I'm opening up new spots for 1:1 consultations in 2023!**



send me a msg at [hello@uiadrian.com!](mailto:hello@uiadrian.com)

Final words

Final words

You made it! Congratulations on finishing this ebook. I sincerely hope you got a ton of value from the theory, the UI kit, templates, and all the bonuses. I'm also hoping that it will help you progress as a web designer and get you much closer to your dream life.

Initially, I wanted to make this book short and concise but it turned out to be quite lengthy and comprehensive. Therefore, after you first read it, don't pressure yourself to know everything. Revisit it whenever you need help with the design process, or want to learn more about the design principles, want to look up the tips, or check the landing page framework. It's all in there.

Consider this as your web design reference guide whenever you feel lost or confused about a certain process.

If you made it this far and you've enjoyed the reading, I would much appreciate it if you could rate this e-book (ideally 5-stars 🙏) on Gumroad. It'll take you 2-3 minutes, but it will help me greatly to create better products for you in the near future.

I really, really appreciate it. Thank you so much! 🙏

[**Go to Gumroad and leave a review**](#)

Videos are coming soon

Even though, this ebook is over, there's a lot more coming! As I'm writing this, I'm already working on a new video setup and I plan on storming YouTube the same way I stormed Instagram this year 🎉

And all I can say is that I want to completely change the YouTube design landscape and share valuable and free content that you can follow and understand easily.

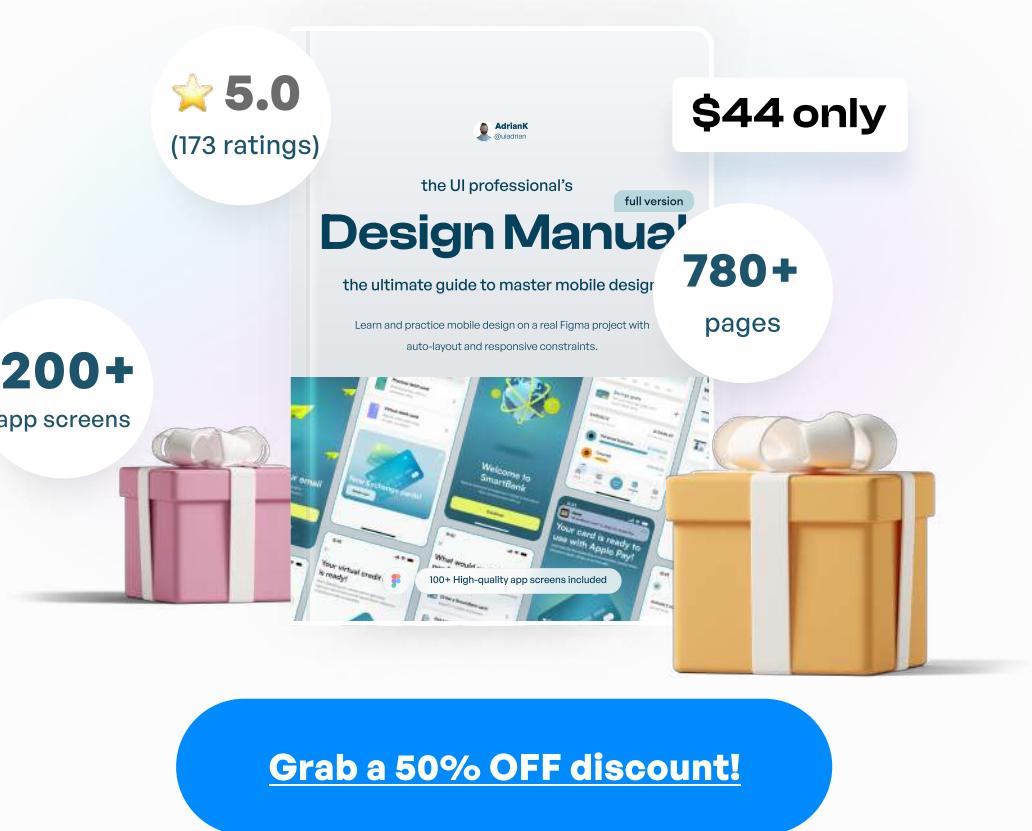
We'll cover web design and practice on real examples. I'll show you my approach to no-code tools like Elementor and Webflow, post longer format video tutorials you've seen on IG and Twitter, as well as share my personal story, tips, and take you behind the scenes of my life as a creator and design lead.



I'm so excited I can't wait to share all this new content with you!

Missed my Design Manual sale?

A quick word to everyone who got this ebook without having the chance to grab my Design Manual on promo. If you're interested in mobile design - click on link below, download the free sample and wait for my next email - I'll send you an exclusive coupon code as an "Ultimate Guide to Web Design" ebook owner 😊



One more time, thank you!

Thank you again for supporting my content. Even though I don't know your name (yet!) I really appreciate your support. Don't be a stranger. Say hi on my Instagram if you're reading this.

For now, take care, and I wish you a happy designing! 🙌

Best, Adrian

The End.



See you around, Friend!

