

HOW TO:



BUILD A BETTER HOMEPAGE

A GUIDE TO OPTIMIZING
YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

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WHAT'S IN A HOMEPAGE?

A homepage is the introductory page of a website. Think of it as the face of your company. It contains the most relevant information about your business. When designing a website it is important to follow best practices. Some things to focus on are your company's messaging, navigation, and call-to-actions. In this ebook we will walk through the steps towards building a better homepage.



1. Determine Your Goals

Take the time to really analyze your business on paper before you begin the design process. After all, what good is a beautiful design if your site doesn't accomplish what you need it to?

Determine who your visitors are, who you're trying to reach, where you need your visitor to go, how you want to be remembered, and most importantly, what your company does. Who, What and How: your homepage should describe who you are, what you do, and how you can help your visitors in a simple and effective way.

At Brand Builder Solutions we call that the "three second test." This means a new visitor to your website should be able to determine what your company does with just a three second glance.

DID YOU KNOW...

40% of people will abandon a web page if it takes more than three seconds to load.

(<http://loadstorm.com/2014/04/infographic-web-performance-impacts-conversion-rates/blog>) (<https://blog.kissmetrics.com/loading-time/>)

2. Create Your Wireframe

A wireframe is a **skeletal framework or blueprint of how you want your website to be laid out**. Typically this is one or two quick sketches to get your ideas on paper.



When creating a wireframe the most important things to keep in mind are:

Where your visitors will want to go

If you were the customer coming to your site for the first time, what would you be looking for? Where would you need to go?

How your visitor will navigate through your site

Is your top navigation clear and easy to use? Can your visitor get to your most important pages quickly?

Create Your Wireframe

Whitespace is your friend

Keep your site free of clutter, don't overwhelm your visitor with too much information. Ask yourself if certain elements are relevant to your visitor's needs.

This is your brainstorming session, don't be afraid to create a few versions of a wireframe for one page. This helps you to see what is most important and what works for your site.



3. Draft Your Design

Now that you've determined what you want your homepage to accomplish, what's next? Now it's time to let the designer get to work. This is when your wireframe transforms into a creative mockup of your site's final design. The most important elements to include when designing your homepage are:

Your company's brand guide

This includes your logo, color scheme, font families, images, and illustration.

Consistency is key

Your homepage sets the stage for how the rest of your site will look.

Think about your design elements

Make sure that your design components are suitable for every page on the site

Keep it clean

It's important to keep your page clear and to the point. Utilize white space, bullets points, and clearly defined sections effectively.

This is the face of your business this is how people will remember you. Don't be afraid to go back to the whiteboard and review.

4. Building Phase

There are plenty of best practices for modern web development.

When creating your company's homepage:

Optimize your site for multiple devices

80% of internet users own a smartphone. (<http://www.smartinsights.com/mobile-marketing/mobile-marketing-analytics/mobile-marketing-statistics/>)

Your website needs to look just as good on a mobile device as it does on your desktop. Be sure to develop for responsive designs that function properly and look great across all devices.

Clean code

As any coder will tell you, organized and consistent code makes for a happy developer and great website.

Don't forget about your meta descriptions

SEO rankings depend on your keywords and meta descriptions.

These are used on search engine result pages to attract a visitor to your website.

Image optimization

Larger image files tend to slow down the load times of your webpage.

This is a common cause of why some websites have high bounce rates. Check out this tool for easy image compression.

<https://tinypng.com/>

5. Test it

Test your homepage! Test different looks, different calls, different landing pages. Test your new design with your friends, family, and coworkers. Ask for honest feedback and adjust accordingly.

Remember the 'Three Second Rule'. You want your visitors to know who you are and what you do immediately. Can they tell you this information in three seconds? If so, congratulations! You have accomplished the hardest part of creating a website.



FIVE EXAMPLES OF GREAT HOMEPAGE DESIGN



BE GOOD WITH YOUR MONEY FROM THE BIG PICTURE TO THE DETAILS THAT MATTER

Effortlessly manage your cash flow, budgets and bills from one place.

[SIGN UP FREE](#)

All-in-one? Done

From money and budgeting to customized tips and more—get a clear view of your total financial life.



Bills? Paid

Don't miss a bill again. See and pay your bills in one place.



Credit? Checked

Find out yours and learn how you can improve it. It's totally free.



Personalized for you

- Create budgets that make sense today and set you up for success tomorrow.
- Receive alerts for unusual account charges, and get custom tips for reducing fees and saving money.
- Get your free credit score and learn how you can improve it now to get the things you want later.¹

[Sign up free](#)

Get started simply & securely

- It's easy to set up your free account in seconds, and help's available if you should ever need it.
- We're obsessed about security and protect your data with the



Mint
www.Mint.com

Mint.com keeps their website looking clean and modern by utilizing a very simple design and easy to understand messaging. Their Calls-to-Actions stand out and are clear and concise. The use of bullet points help present the most important information in a way that does not overwhelm the reader. Their color scheme pops off of the white background. They show the visitor exactly what their product is on the homepage, leaving no room for guessing. All the text on the page is black, except for the CTAs, which stand out in blue, making for easy navigation



Your life's work

For everything you'll do, Evernote is the workspace to get it done.

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ONE WORKSPACE

WRITE

From short lists to lengthy research, no matter what form your writing takes, Evernote keeps you focused on moving those ideas from inspiration to completion.



COLLECT

Easily gather everything that matters. Clip web articles, capture handwritten notes, and snap photos to keep the physical and digital details of your projects with you at all times.

Evernote
www.Evernote.com

Their new website design is consistent with their brand's identity, but they've added some background colors and simple images to really help separate each section. The responsive layout is just as easy to read as the desktop view, which makes for a very clean navigation layout. The mobile buttons and menu are clear and easy to use. For visitors already knowing what they want, the download button is immediately available in the top right corner.

There is more to love
with Surface Pro 3

Compare to MacBook Air
Buy now



Try Office 365 free for one month.



Share life as it happens with the Lumia 830.



Limited time: Xbox One of your choice, starting at
\$349.

Discover

- Windows
- Office
- Surface
- Windows Phone
- Mobile devices
- Xbox
- Skype
- MSN
- Bing

For home For work



Get closer to the ones you love with Skype.
Download now.



\$99 for an HP 7" tablet with Office 365
Personal.



See what's possible with the new MSN.

Downloads

- Windows
- Office
- Internet Explorer

Security & updates

- Windows Update: Service packs & fixes
- Microsoft Security Essentials
- Microsoft account security info

Support

- Windows XP end of support
- Windows help & how-to
- Office
- Find more support

Microsoft
www.Microsoft.com

This is another great example of responsive design. With the company's push towards the use of tablets and mobile devices, it makes sense that they would have an easy to use responsive design. Great use of bright colors against a white background. They showcase the three most important sections right below the banner utilizing vivid imagery of their products. Each banner has a brightly colored call out in the left corner encouraging visitors to learn more.

Find Out Why Forbes Magazine Calls FreshBooks “Incredibly User Friendly”

FreshBooks makes your accounting tasks easy, fast, and secure.
Start sending invoices, tracking time, and capturing expenses in minutes.

Try it Free for 30 Days

No credit card required. No Contracts. Cancel anytime.



Invoices



Expenses



Time Tracking



Reports

Save Time Billing

FreshBooks customers spend less time on paperwork, freeing up 2 days per month to focus on the work they love. What would you do with that extra time?

Get Paid Faster

With FreshBooks, you can easily invoice clients from your desk or on the go. In fact, FreshBooks customers are paid an average of 5 days faster.

Grow Your Business

FreshBooks is built to support the needs of growing businesses. On average, FreshBooks customers double their revenue in the first 24 months. Woot!

“FreshBooks is the best”



“Incredibly user friendly”



“Refreshingly straight forward”



94% of customers highly recommend FreshBooks

[Learn more](#) about why you should use FreshBooks

Freshbooks
www.freshbooks.com

They have a clear banner design with a form for visitors who are ready to get started. Freshbooks uses the “three second rule” perfectly by stating what they do and how they can help in the top banner. Freshbooks makes good use of fluid illustration, images, and icons throughout the homepage. They list companies they work with and showcase their support team to make their services and products relatable.

Develop Experiences

UI frameworks and app development tools that 1.4 million developers love

.NET

DevCraft™

.NET UI controls, reporting and developer productivity tools

[Learn more](#)

MOBILE

Telerik Platform™

Build mobile apps using JavaScript for iOS, Android and Windows Phone

[Learn more](#)

HTML5

Kendo UI®

JavaScript, HTML5 UI widgets for responsive web and data visualization

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CMS

Sitefinity™

Web Content Management and Customer Analytics for managing and optimizing digital experiences

[Learn more](#)

DEBUGGING

Fiddler™

Free web debugging proxy for any browser, system or platform

[Learn more](#)

TESTING

Test Studio®

Intuitive and easy to use GUI test automation solution

[Learn more](#)



1.4M+

developers



130K+

customers



300+

awards

Telerik
www.Telerik.com

Telerik grabs the visitor right off the bat with their video banner. They use an illustrated pattern across the entire banner (to fade the video image and make the text pop off the page.) They make good use of their company products by showcasing them right below the banner in clean individual boxes. The entire site is full of bright colors that gets the attention of the visitor and ties their brand all together.

TIPS & TRICKS

1.

Follow the Three Second Rule rigorously. Unless you're a very well known company, you need to tell your audience what you do immediately.

2.

Take advantage of Calls-to-Action. Nothing moves a visitor through your site quite like an attention-grabbing button. Make sure to test your CTAs for effectiveness!

3.

Keep your navigation simple. Your visitors want to know where they can go from your new homepage. Don't confuse them with cluttered headers and too many options. Simplicity is key.

4.

Show your credibility. If you have client testimonials, include quotes on the homepage. If you have impressive case studies, feature them. Visitors want to know that you are a legitimate company and one of the best ways to do that is to show them that you've already worked with clients just like them.

5.

Give them something for free. An ebook or a free consultation are always good ways to go.

CONCLUSION & OVERVIEW:

We truly hope that this guide has been helpful and informative as you consider the redesign of your new homepage.

Remember that your homepage is your best salesperson and should be actively selling your product on the web. Be sure to follow website best practices for your design. Take the time to really understand who your company is and what you need to say. If you find that you could use a little extra help designing and building your new homepage, feel free to contact the Brand Builder Solutions team. We will be happy to walk you through your exciting new project.



BRAND BUILDER SOLUTIONS

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brandbuildersolutions.com

BrandBuilder
Solutions

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

12 Critical Elements Every Homepage Must Have

<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/31097/12-Critical-Elements-Every-Homepage-Must-Have-Infographic.aspx>

17 Compelling Stats That Make the Case for Smarter Site Design

<http://blog.hubspot.com/compelling-stats-website-design-optimization-list>

10-Step Checklist for Your Next Website Redesign

<https://app.hubspot.com/library/10-step-checklist-for-your-next-website-redesign>