# MAKING YOUR MARK

DESIGNING A WEBSITE THAT
GROWS BRAND VALUE & BUILDS BRAND EQUITY

Erik Gagnon
Founding Partner - Chi Rho Consulting

#### SEMINAR OVERVIEW

A high-quality website increases your brand's value and also builds brand equity. In this seminar, we present 12 simple design rules to squeeze the most out of your website.

#### BACKGROUND

Chi Rho Consulting has helped a good number of startup companies and non-profit organizations develop and implement long-term growth strategies over the years. Without question, one of biggest challenges we typically face when working with their leadership teams is convincing them to invest aggressively in their brands.

Entrepreneurs and executives often place branding on the lower end of the priority scale because it's difficult for them to see the tangible benefits. Oftentimes, they assume that money spent on branding diminishes their operational capacity. Such thinking tends to be a penny-wise but pound-foolish approach.

This is particularly true when it comes to web design. In today's world, your website is typically one of the first points of contact between your organization and your target audience. Strong web design often propels your organization to success. Conversely, poor web design can completely subvert your mission.

In other words, quality web design is crucial to your success. A high-quality website greatly increases the value of your brand in the minds of your target audience. Furthermore, wise investments in your digital assets ultimately build brand equity for your organization.

# A BRAND IS NOT A PRODUCT OR A PROMISE OR A FEELING. IT'S THE SUM OF ALL THE EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE WITH A COMPANY.

— AMIR KASSAEI
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER – DDB WORLDWIDE

#### SEMINAR AGENDA

- 1. INTRODUCTION
- 2. 12 WEB DESIGN RULES THAT GROW BRAND VALUE & BUILD BRAND EQUITY
- 3. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS
- 4. ABOUT CHI RHO CONSULTING

# INTRODUCTION

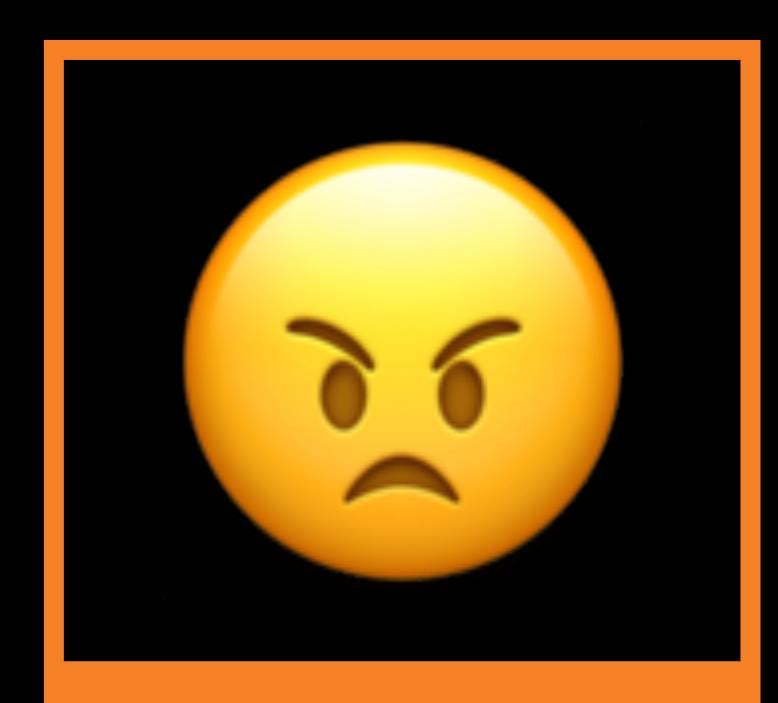
# YOU ARE YOUR WEBSITE

#### YOUR WEBSITE IS YOUR PUBLIC PERSONA

- Drives public perception
- Affects your reputation
- ✓ Influences calls-to-action
- ✓ Impacts your ability to scale

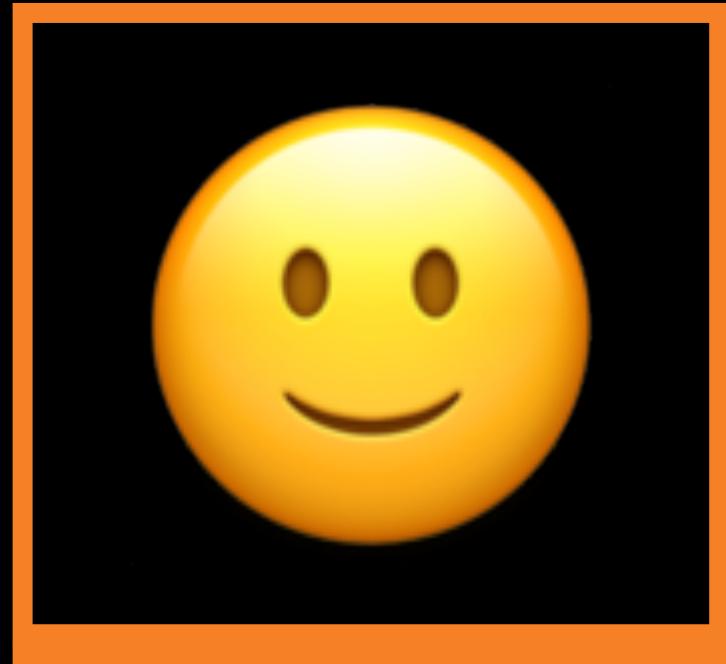
The image that you show to fans, followers, consumers, etc. affects your marketability, your influence and your overall appeal.

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER



#### **BAD IMPRESSIONS**

Kill conversions and bounce visitors to your competitors.



#### **GOOD IMPRESSIONS**

Acquire new customers and drive positive outcomes.



#### **GREAT IMPRESSIONS**

Create customers for life and generate brand advocates.

#### INTRODUCTION

#### DIGITAL INVESTMENT PAYS DIVIDENDS



#### Name Recognition

Improves wordof-mouth traffic, fuels SEM and increases conversion %.

# Customer Loyalty

An air of polish & legitimacy establishes trust. Leads to repeat visits & referrals.

#### Advertising Effectiveness

Higher conversion % offers opportunities to lower marketing spend.

#### Market Value

Creates
negotiating
leverage for loans,
investments &
IPO's.

# Corporate Culture

Improves
employee morale
& retention.
Helps with talent
acquisition.

# Competitive Advantage

Correlation
between brand
value / brand
equity &
profitability.

# "GOOD DESIGN accelerates the adoption of new ideas."

#### YVES BEHAR

Swiss designer, entrepreneur and an educator

# VISUAL DESIGN MATTERS

#### VISUAL DESIGN INVESTMENTS PAY DIVIDENDS

- ✓ Visual branding is transcendent
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Impressions: the 7-second rule
- ✓ Effective visuals create an air of credibility, legitimacy & authority
- ✓ Visual appeal: Bounce Rate & Conversion rate correlations
- ✓ Visual appeal builds brand affinity



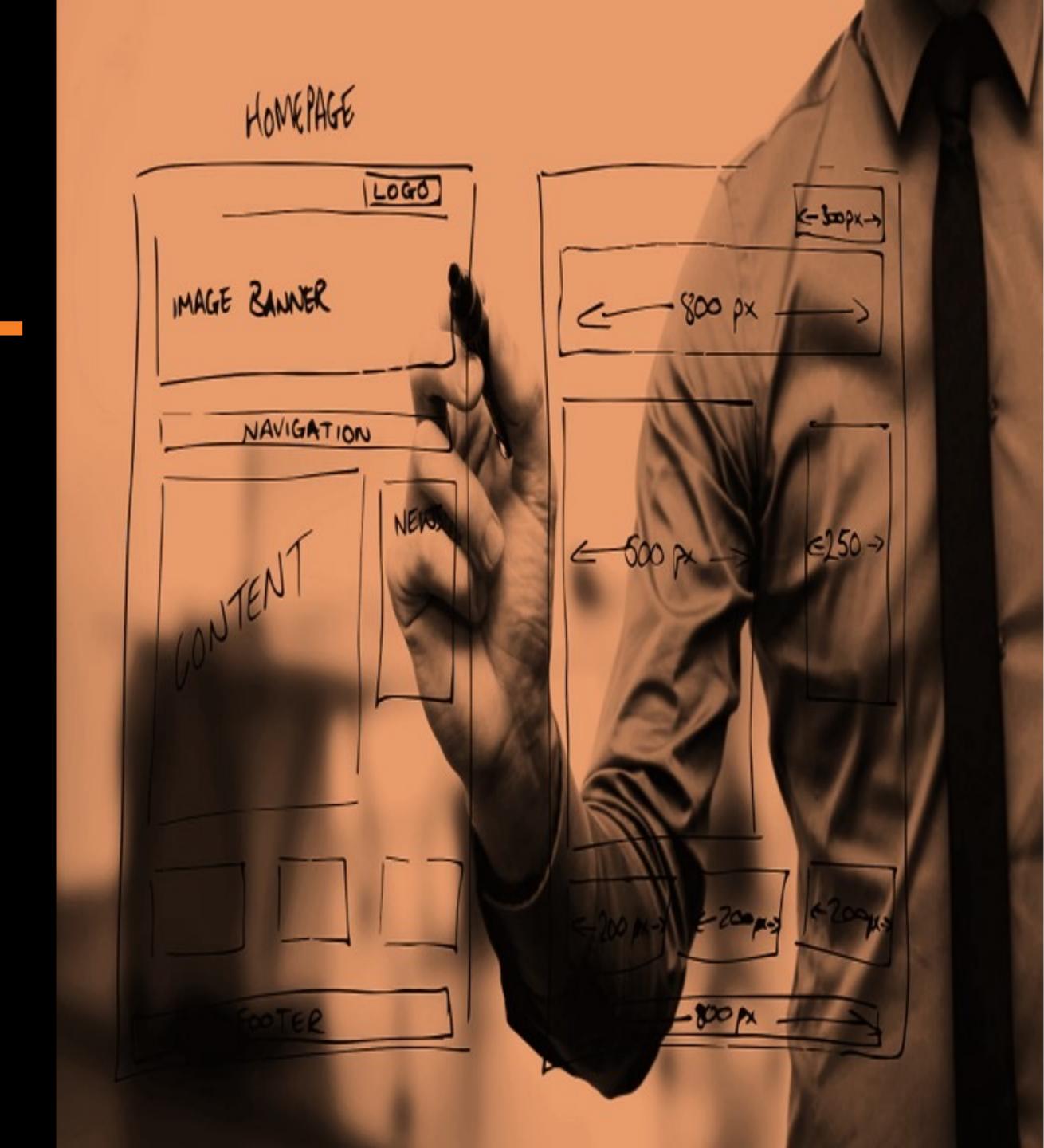
#### ELEMENTS THAT ATTRACT THE MOST ATTENTION

Visitors will associate the experience they have on your website with the experience they believe they're likely to have in real life, so pay close attention to detail!

- **Images & Graphics**
- Navigation Menus

Fonts & Colors

**Footers & Contact Info** 



# GET TO KNOW SEO

#### WHAT IS SEO?

The art and science of ranking in search is commonly known as Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

#### Your content is a crucial SEO factor:

- An effective content strategy accounts for the search terms your target audience uses on a day-to-day basis
- ✓ An effective strategy also incorporates customized content (e.g. videos, blog articles, podcasts, e-books, etc.) based on your audience's demands and preferences



# SUCCESSFUL WEB DESIGN REQUIRES A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF SEO

To make the most of your Internet real estate, you need to design and build a website that will be found on the major search engines (Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, etc.).

#### FUNDAMENTALS FOR SUCCESSFUL SEO

- ✓ Successful SEO requires patience and attention to detail
- ✓ An extensive knowledge of how search engines work is helpful
- ✓ Begin by mastering the basics
- ✓ Time & practice to are generally required to achieve sustainable success

#### MASTER THE BASICS

#### These five areas are a good starting point for SEO:



#### Links

The quantity and quality of inbound links to your website



#### Content

Fresh and regular keyword-rich content updates



#### Tags

Optimized meta descriptions and title tags



#### UX

Create an efficient and effective User Experience



#### Mobile

Mobile
friendliness/mobile
optimization

# RESPONSIVE SITES RANK BETTER

#### RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN EXPLAINED

- ✓ RWD describes advanced coding techniques that automatically resize, hide, shrink, or enlarge a website to make it look good on all devices
- ✓ With RWD, a designer creates a site that "responds to" or automatically resizes based on the dimensions of the viewing device
- ✓ The look and feel of responsive sites is generally consistent across all devices



#### RWD IS NECESSARY TO COMPETE

#### EFFECTIVELY

Today, every website should be responsive. If you don't have the time or budget develop a mobile application, then responsive web design is the preferred solution.

#### THE CASE FOR RWD

- ✓ 80% of internet users own a mobile device
- ✓ Mobile search now accounts for over 60% of total search volume
- ✓ Mobile volume is only expected to increase over the next few years
- ✓ 61% of users are unlikely to return to a mobile site they have trouble accessing
- ✓ 40% of those who experience trouble abandon the site & move on to a competitor's site

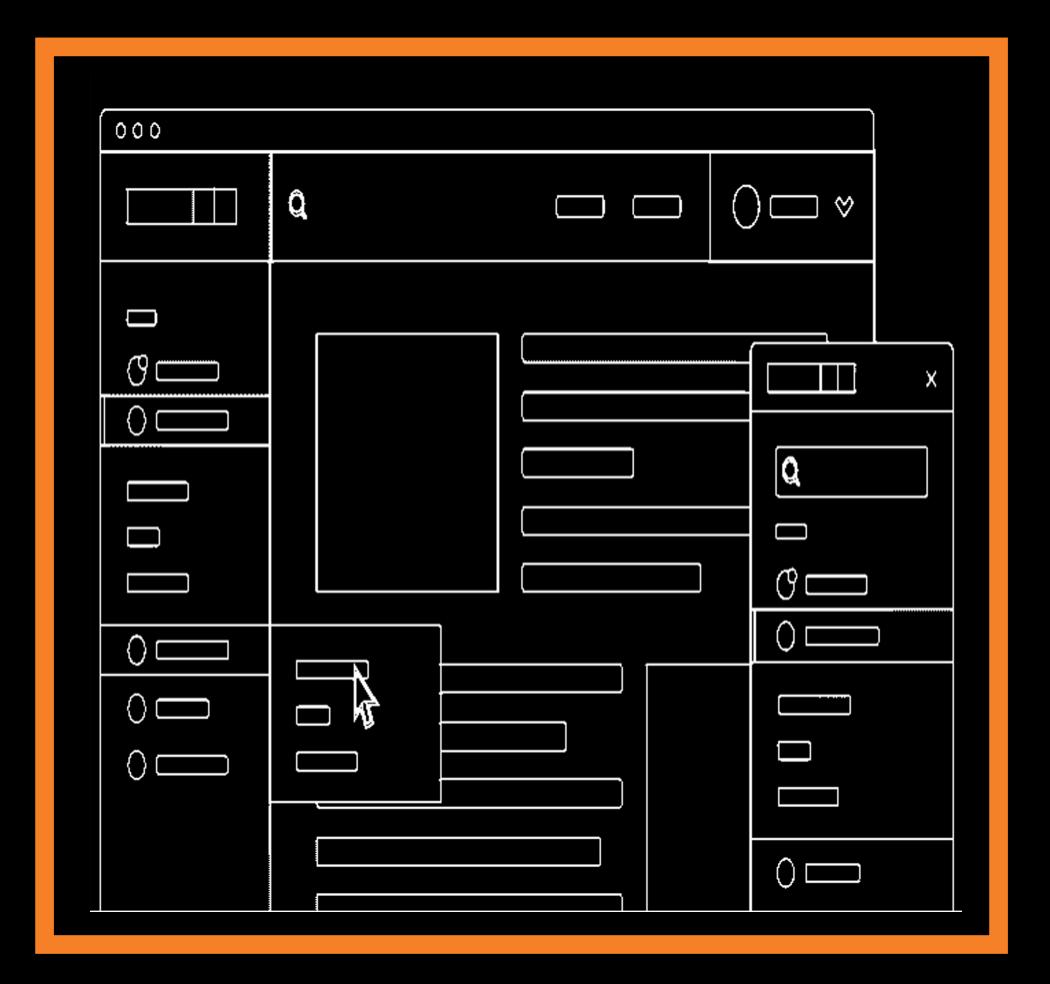
#### THE COST IMPACT OF RWD

- ✓ Websites that require advanced database or eCommerce capabilities cost much more to build than brochure sites and information portals
- RWD costs vary depending on site complexity
- RWD typically runs an additional 30% to 50% above the base build cost
- ✓ For simpler sites, most of the major drag-and-drop website builders (Weebly, Wix, Squarespace, etc.) now include RWD with their standard product offerings

# YOUR NAVIGATION MENU MATTERS

#### NAVIGATION AND UX

- ✓ Navigation is a crucial component of effective website design
- ✓ Your Nav Menu is a map that displays the key places you want your visitors to explore on your site
- ✓ If your website's Nav Menu isn't effective, visitors will overlook important content
- ✓ Worse still, they may become frustrated and abandon your site altogether



# EFFECTIVE NAV MENUS HAVE THESE 5 THINGS IN COMMON

#### Ensure your Nav Menu is clear, concise and relatively simple:



#### Easy to Find

Either across the top
horizontally or on the
left as a vertical sidebar



#### Consistency

Visitors will find it in the same location on every page



#### Specificity

Avoid generic phrases & buzzwords and use descriptive names



#### Minimalistic

Limit the # of links Seven main items is the
best-practice standard



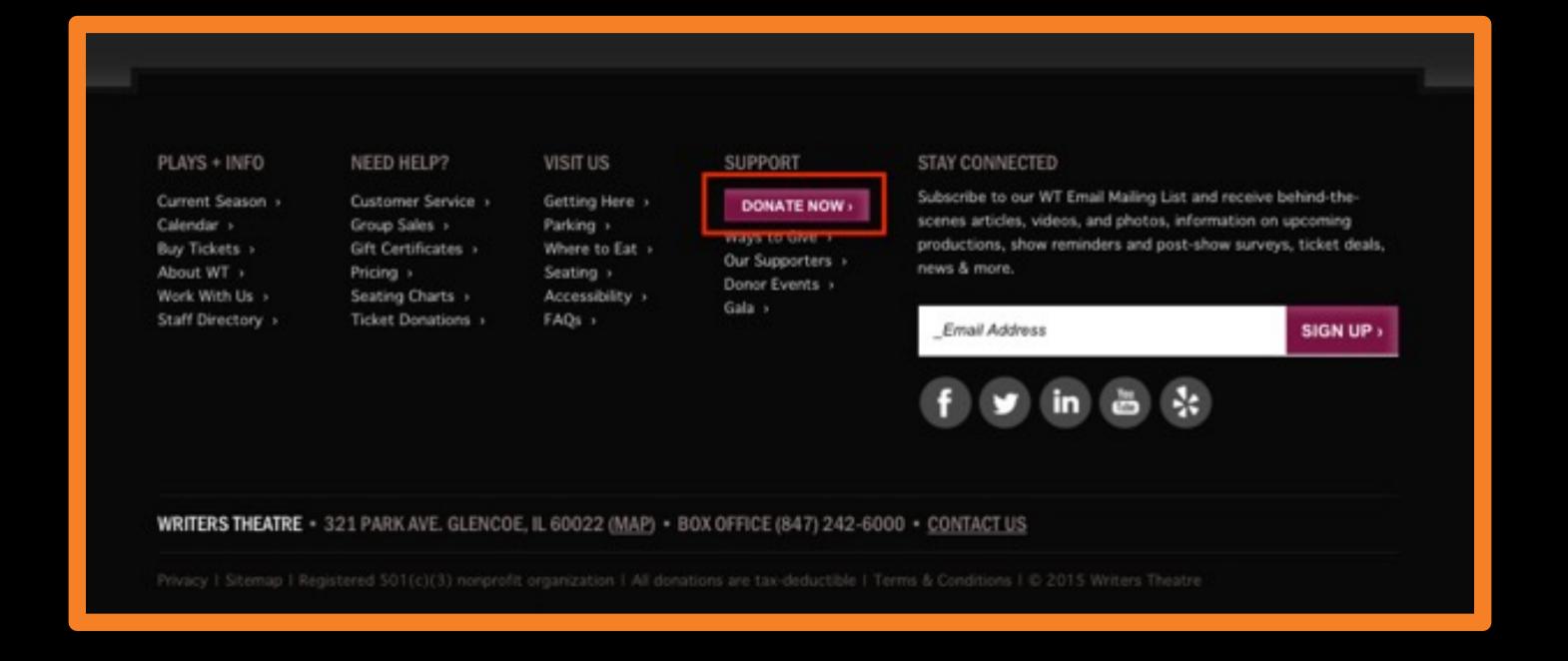
#### Place Marker

Highlight location after visitors navigate away from your home page

#### INCLUDE A SECOND NAV MENU IN YOUR

#### FUUTER

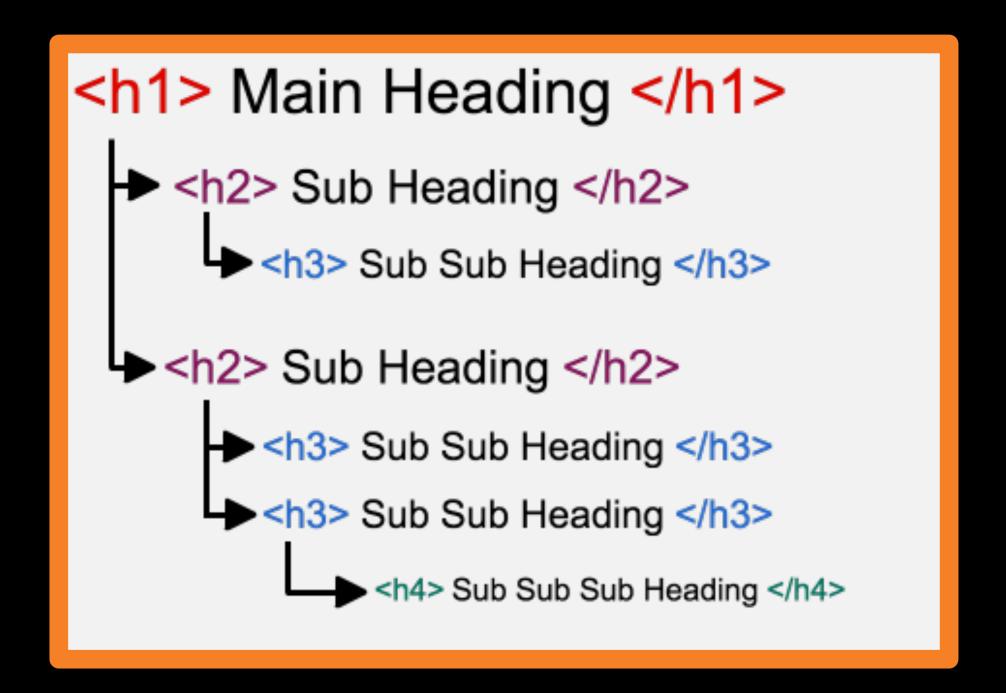
- The bottom of your page isn't necessarily the end of your site & the space for your copyright notice
- An effective footer also allows visitors dig deeper into your site
- As an added benefit, the additional internal links positively influence your page search rankings



# CAREFULLY CRAFT YOUR HEADERS

#### HEADERS & TITLE TAGS INFLUENCE SEO

- ✓ Header tags are a critical on-page SEO factor because search engines use them to categorize your site's content
- ✓ Search engines prioritize the copy in your header tags ahead of your text paragraph sections
- ✓ The hierarchy begins with your h1 tag and moves down in importance to the h2, h3, etc.
- ✓ In other words, your header tags supplement the mission or purpose of your web pages



#### STRUCTURE YOUR HEADERS

#### APPKUPKIATELY

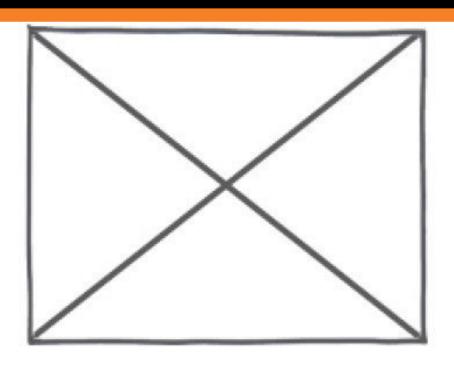
- ✓ Designers often miss the mark when creating the header tags for their web pages
- ✓ You can greatly improve your website's search rankings If you effectively optimize/utilize your h1, h2 and h3 headers
- ✓ It's important to include short-tail & long-tail keywords in your header tags
- ✓ Search engines read your header tags and recognize the keywords you've incorporated when they crawl your site
- ✓ Header weighting is factored in to the algorithms that search engines use to prioritize and rank your pages

#### H1 TAGS - YOUR MAIN HEADINGS

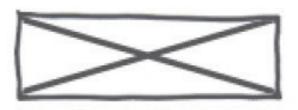
- ✓ Your h1 tag should contain keywords targeted toward your audience
- ✓ Your keywords should relate directly to your page title as well as your body content
- ✓ As a general rule, you should only use one h1 tag on each page

#### H1 Header Title

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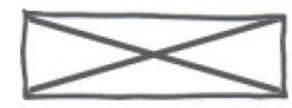


#### **H2** Header Title



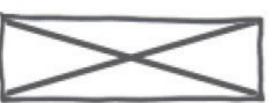
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#### H2 Header Title



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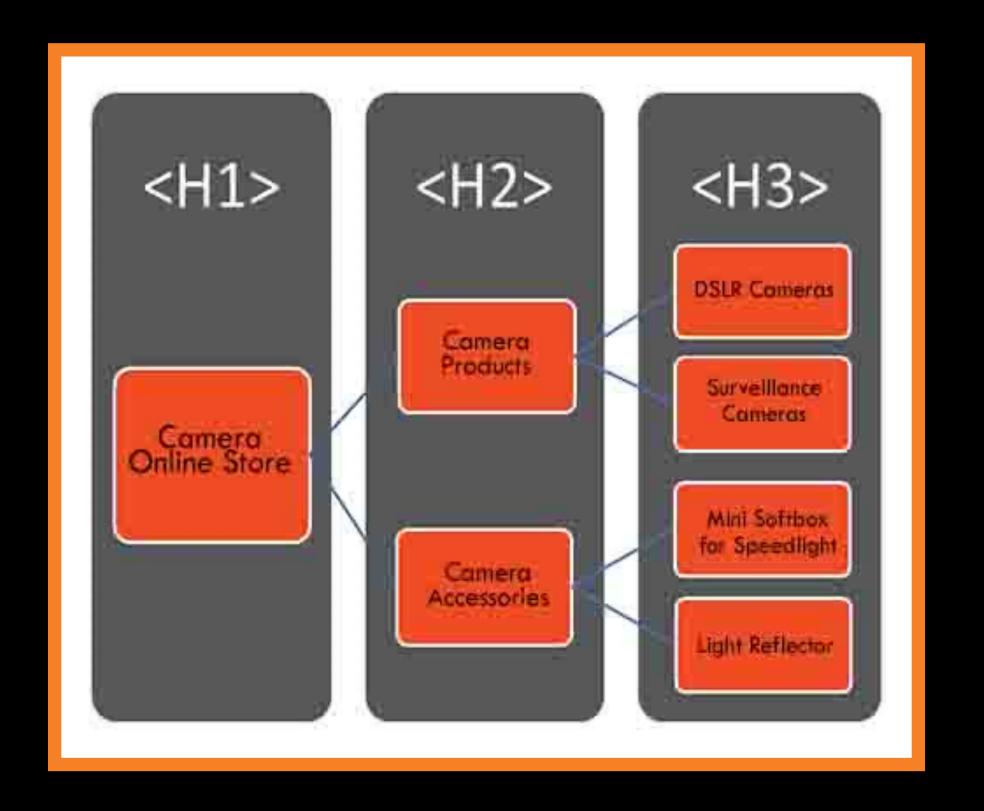
#### H2 Header Title



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#### H2 & H3 TAGS – YOUR SUBHEADERS

- ✓ Your h2 tags are subheadings
- ✓ They should contain keywords related to your h1 tag & your body content
- Your h3 tags are subheadings for your h2 tags, etc.
- ✓ Order your header tags in a hierarchy based on importance



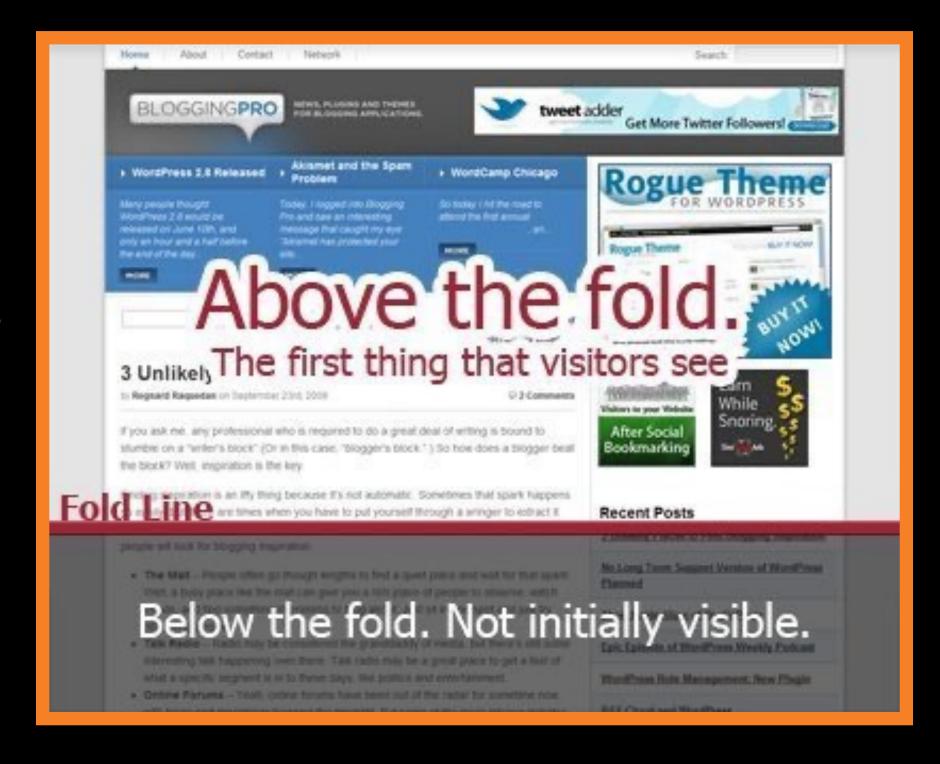
#### TIPS FOR CRAFTING EFFECTIVE HEADERS

- Ensure that your header tags are grammatically correct and coherent
- Packing your header tags with keywords may in-fact hurt your search rankings
- ✓ Google and Bing's algorithms are sophisticated attempts to manipulate search rankings generally do more harm than good

# FORGET THE FOLD

#### ABOVE THE FOLD IS OLD

- ✓ "Above the Fold" refers to the portion of a page that's visible in a browser window when the page first loads.
- ✓ The remaining portion that requires scrolling to view is termed "Below the Fold"
- ✓ Keeping important content above the fold was a design standard for many years
- Rules have changed in recent years



#### NEW DESIGN STANDARDS FOR HOME PAGES

- Most visitors are comfortable scrolling a web page these days
- Design emphasis has shifted toward optimizing aesthetics & styling
- ✓ A longer home page is now acceptable and offers some strategic advantages as well
- ✓ Including 3-5 sections on your home page helps point visitors to key areas of your site

# SCROLLABLE LANDING PAGES CREATE A SEAMLESS UX EFFECT

# Consider including the following elements on your home page:

- ✓ An elevator pitch (brief about us)
- ✓ Compelling value propositions
- ✓ An introductory video
- ✓ An overview of your products / services
- **✓** A list of features and benefits
- ✓ Leadership/key team members
- **✓**Testimonials or press mentions
- ✓ Case studies/success stories

LONG-FORM
LANDING PAGES
ARE IN THESE

DAYS



# USE YOUR WHITE SPACE EFFETIVELY

#### WHITE SPACE IS A CRITICAL DESIGN

#### ELEIVIEINI

- ✓ Refers to the areas around your page elements that are empty & lack content or visual items
- ✓ Improves readability & helps you compartmentalize your content
- ✓ Tends to decrease visitor apprehension levels
  - A page stuffed full of text and/or graphics with minimal white space generally appears busy or cluttered.
  - This diminishes your user experience (UX) and typically leads to a high bounce rate



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#### WHITE SPACE: THE SUBCONSCIOUS EFFECT

- ✓ Nearly 90% of all purchase decisions are made subconsciously
- ✓ This means that your customers are driven by emotional processes, rather than intellectual ones
- Comforting aesthetics, high-quality visual branding & a positive UX drive behavior



Lorem Ipsum is simply dummy text of the printing and typesetting industry. Lorem Ipsum has been the industry's standard dummy text ever since the 1500s, when an unknown printer took a galley of type and scrambled it to make a type specimen book. It has survived not only five centuries, but also the leap into electronic typesetting, remaining essentially unchanged. It was popularised in the 1960s with the release of Letraset sheets containing Lorem Ipsum passages, and more recently with desktop publishing software like Aldus PageMaker including versions of Lorem Ipsum



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# WHITE SPACE DRIVES CALLS TO ACTION WHEN DONE PROPERLY

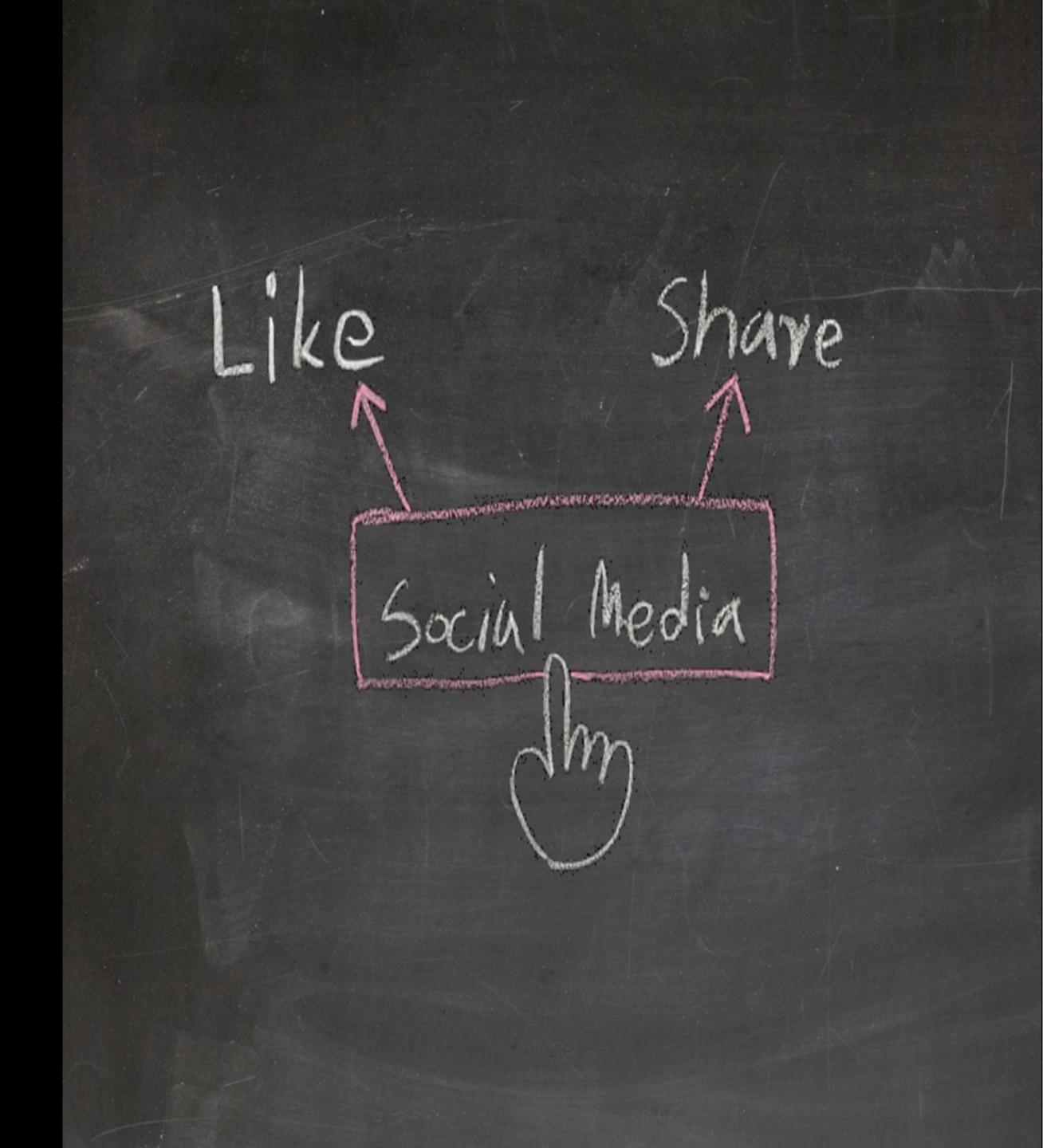
If your web page lacks white space, review the page and strip elements or content that aren't necessary to the purpose of the page. Also, make sure your content is properly grouped so users can easily distinguish correlations on the page.



# MAKE THE MOST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

#### SOCIAL MEDIA DRIVES TRAFFIC

- You can't afford to be silent on social media if you wish to remain relevant
- ✓ Over 26% of all traffic now comes from social media sites vs. 35% from search
- ✓ 62% of people list social media as a primary news source



# TOP TEN BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



Increases Brand Recognition



Improves Brand Loyalty



More Traffic /
Conversion
Opporunities



Higher Conversion Rates





Increases Brand Reach



Reduces
Marketing Costs



Better Search Engine Rankings



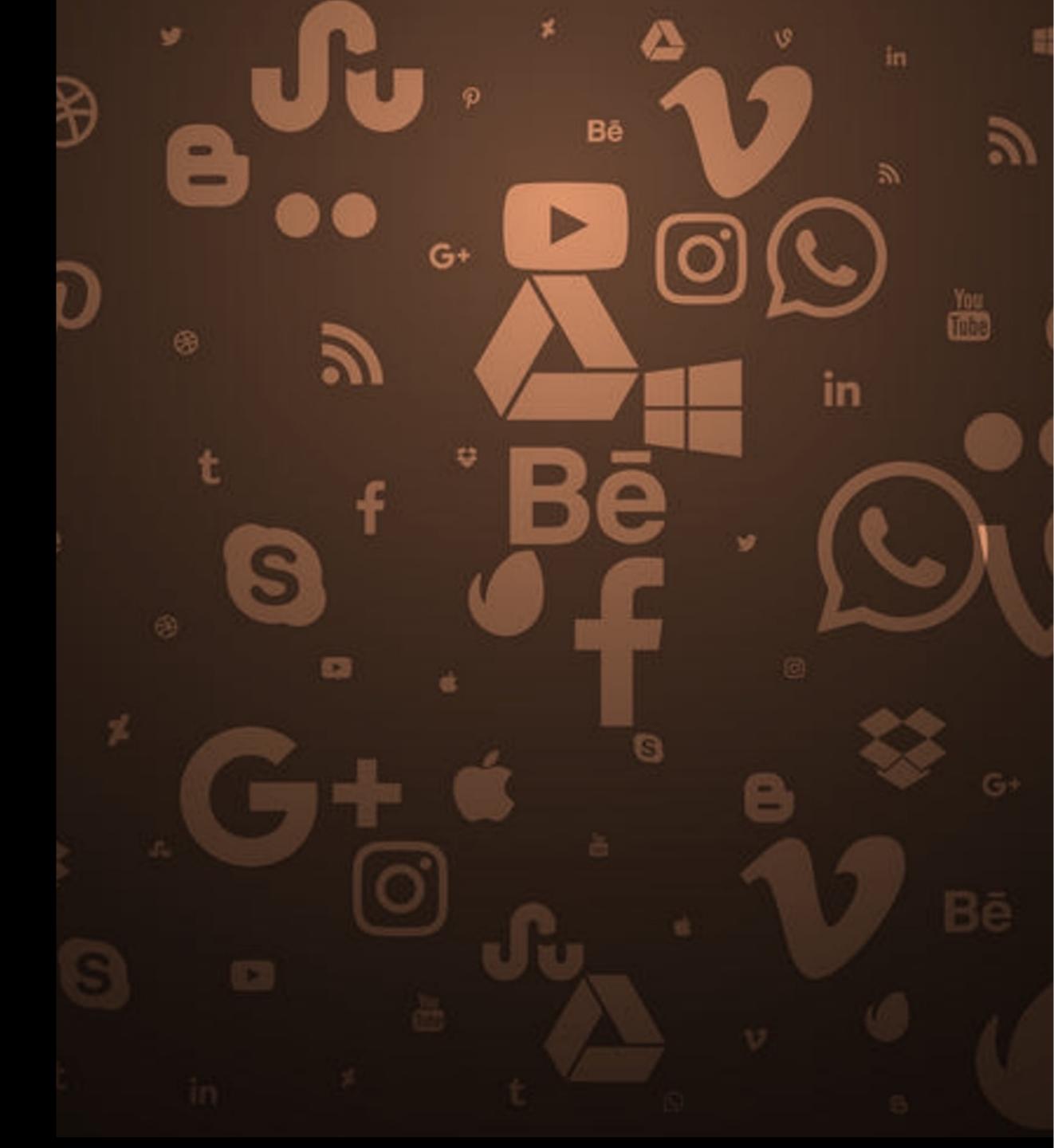
Richer Customer Experiences



Improved Customer Insights

#### ADD SOCIAL TO YOUR SITE

- ✓ Start by setting up branded SM accounts
- Embed social sharing buttons on your key pages
  - These buttons contain icons from your preferred SM sites
  - Allow your visitors to share your content directly on their SM feeds
- Engaged visitors will amplify your brand within their social circles & help drive new traffic to your website
- Consider adding social feeds to your site



#### ADD SOCIAL TO YOUR SITE

Social media is rapidly evolving today. Several "free speech" startups offer unique opportunities to quickly make a name for yourself. We suggest you check out these up-and-coming players who seem to be operating under the radar of most major brands.









#### InfinitySN

"A social network built on the ideals of Trust, Honor, Respect & Integrity."

#### Gab

"Defends individual liberty, free expression, and the free flow of information."

#### Minds

"The crypto social network. An open source and decentralized platform for Internet freedom."

#### Free Talk

"No ShadowBanning or blocking! Feel free to share your true honest opinion we won't knock you."

# LEVERAGE & GROW YOUR BRAND ASSETS

#### PERFECT YOUR BRAND PERSONA

- Start by profiling your target market
- Create a customer-centric communications strategy based on the profiles
- Craft an image that your preferred customers can identify and relate to
- Develop a voice that commands attention and respect from your target audience
- Manage your messaging
  - Your history
  - Your products & services
  - Your culture
- Monitor the reception and adjust your communications strategy as necessary



# YOUR BRAND IS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN THE ROOM.

Jeff Bezos, Founder & CEO of Amazon



#### PROFILING PAINTS A PICTURE

- Customer profiling creates a portrait of your customers
- Helps you make design decisions
- ✓ Identifies similar segments
  - Groups of customers sharing similar goals and characteristics
  - Give each group an identity (a photo, a name, and a description, etc.)
- Once you've profiled your target market, create content tailored to your ideal segments
- Use language and imagery relevant to your target audiences and relate on their terms



#### **BRANDING BASICS**

#### PUT YOUR CUSTOMER 1st

Typically, the purpose of a website is to drive sales or generally influence behavior. Ensure that all your content elements are crafted with your target audience in mind.

#### **DEVELOP YOUR "VOICE"**

Incorporate your voice all your marcom materials \*& your tone into your visual elements? Are you casual? Then, be conversational & fun. Are you upscale? Then be more formal.

#### **CREATE A LOGO**

Consistently use your logo in all your digital communications materials so your target market begins to associate the image with your mission, vision and values.

#### **CRAFT A TAGLINE**

Write a clear and concise statement that captures the essence of your brand and seeds your vision in the minds of your target audience.

#### **EXECUTE WITH CONSISTENCY**

Ensure that you're using the same color scheme, logo placement, look and feel throughout all your marketing communications materials.

#### BE TRUE TO YOUR PERSONA

It's all for naught if you fail to consistently deliver on your brand promises.

#### ATTRIBUTES OF A WELL-BRANDED WEBSITE

- ✓ Stimulates and engages your audience; but still conveys critical information in an obvious way
- Allows you tell your brand story in a memorable fashion
- ✓ Contains content and images that resonate with your target audience and still affirm your vision, mission and values
- ✓ Images & text come together seamlessly and reflect the attitude and tone of your organization

# FONT & COLOR PALETTES REALLY MATTER

#### FONT SELECTION

- ✓ One of the keys to effective web design is to remember that digital marketing is principally text communication
- The fundamental truths of type design have been proven out over the centuries
- Therefore, adhere to proven rules and principles when selecting fonts for your website

# I ENCOURAGE ALL BUDDING WEB DESIGNERS TO EMBRACE THAT THE WEB IS FUNDAMENTALLY ABOUT TYPOGRAPHY DESIGN.

RYAN SHAFER (LEAD DIGITAL DESIGNER AT MTV AND VH1)

#### BASIC GROUND RULES FOR WEB FONTS

#### For Headlines

- ✓ Make your titles bold and easy to scan
- ✓ San serif typefaces are ideal for headlines because of their starkness
- ✓ San serif fonts are also easier to read at larger sizes than serif fonts

#### For Body Text

- ✓ Solve for maximum legibility
- ✓ Incorporate white space into your paragraphs don't pack text
- ✓ Larger font sizes work better 16px should be the minimum you consider
- ✓ Limit your line sizes. a good rule of thumb is to avoid lines of text > 80 characters

#### BASIC GROUND RULES FOR WEB FONTS

- ✓ Strictly adhere to a uniform color palette
- ✓ All your marketing communications materials should maintain the same color palette
- ✓ Consistency is extremely important both within your site and across all of your marcom materials
- A three-color palette is a good rule of thumb
- Adhere to basic best practices in color theory no matter what color scheme you choose

#### COLOR THEORY

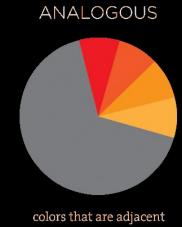


a designer's reference to some of the basics



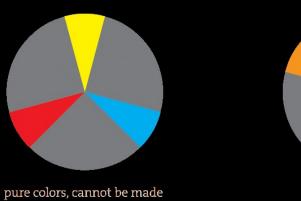
# PALETTE TYPES commonly used strategies for

from mixing other colors





ARY SECONDARY







#### BASIC GROUND RULES FOR WEB COLORS & FONTS

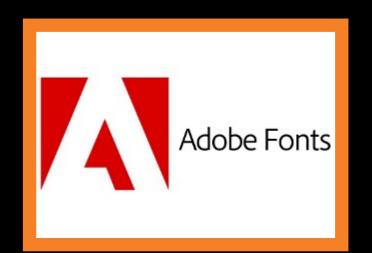
A number of free online tools and resources are available to point you in the right direction. For color palates we recommend:





For font type selection we suggest:







# MAINTAIN FRESH CONTENT

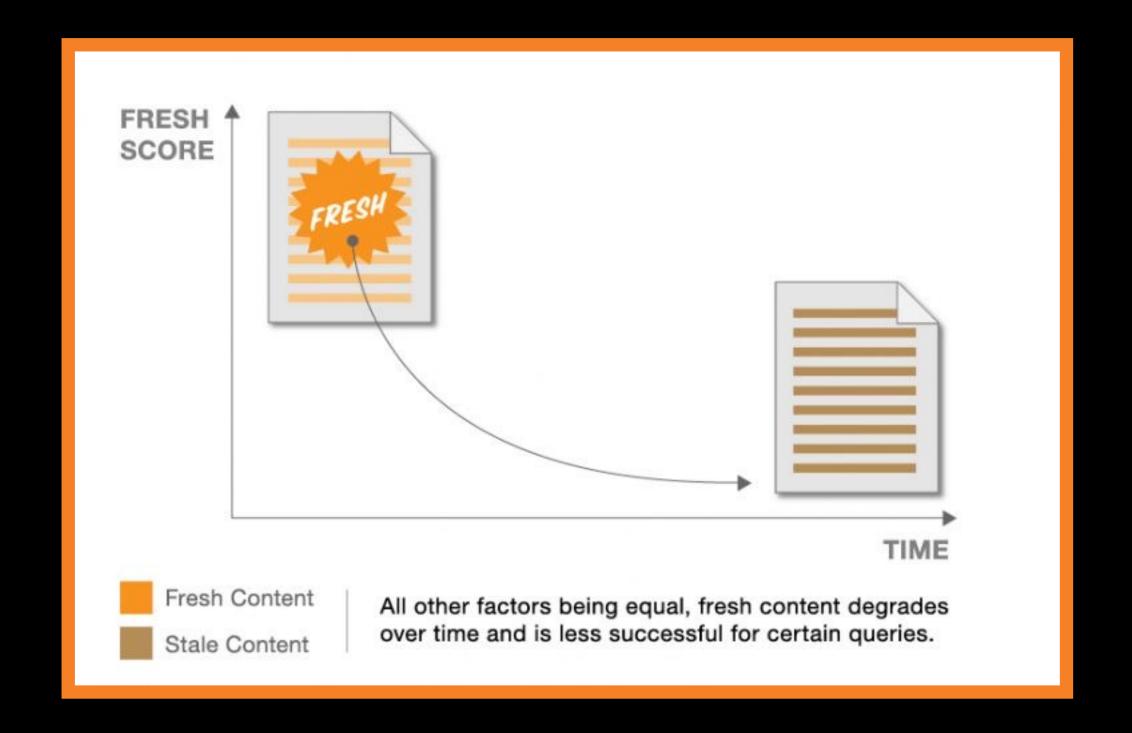
#### CONTENT REALLY IS KING

- ✓ Today Bill Gate's 1996 quote is synonymous with search marketing
- ✓ Oftentimes refers to the fact that Google & Bing place a premium on relevant new content
- Drives SERP rankings
- ✓ The "freshness factor"
  - Quality
  - Relevancy
  - Authority / SME



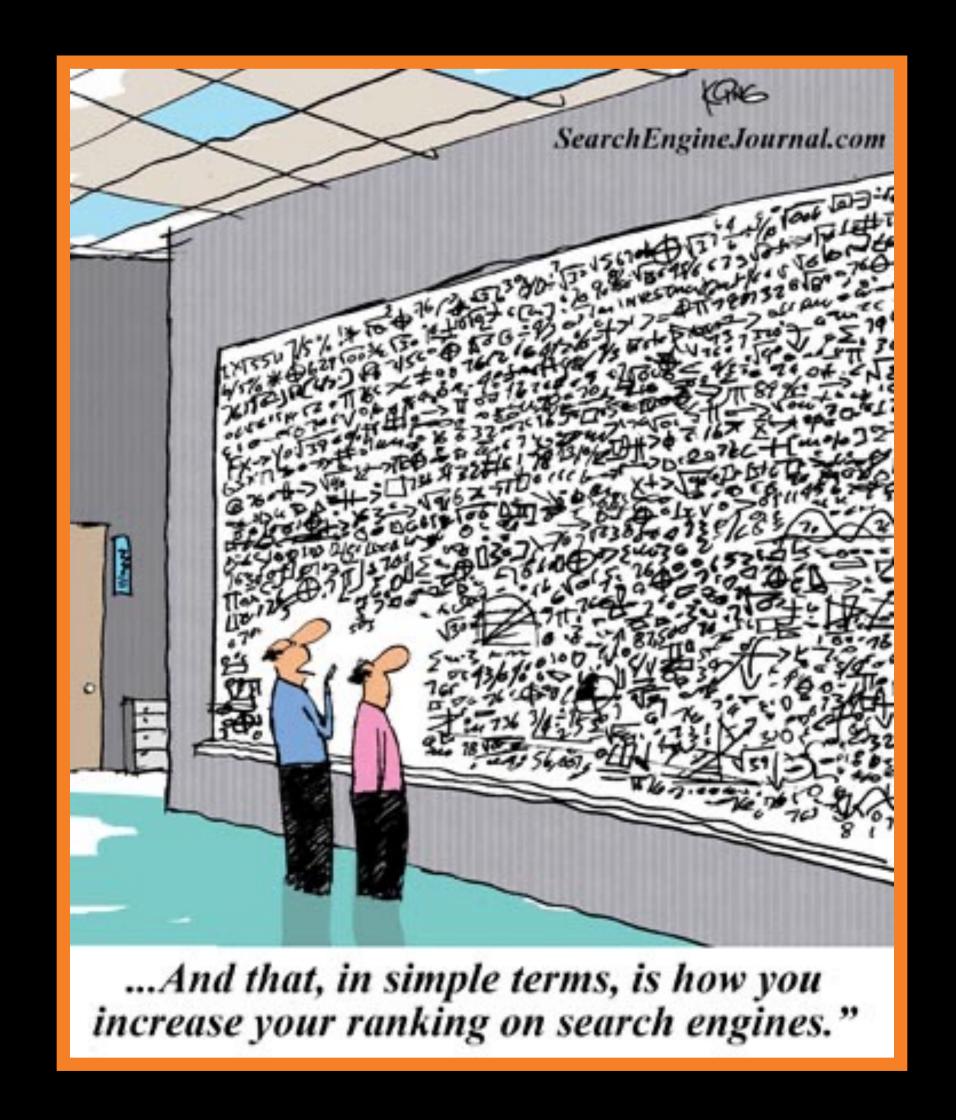
#### QDF – QUALITY DESERVES FRESHNESS

- "Query Deserves Freshness"(QDF) is Google ranking algorithm
- ✓ QDF values & prioritizes content
  - QDF identifies trending topics that stand out from normal activity
  - ✓ Google checks for new content on trending topics & gives the freshest content a ranking boost
  - ✓ The QDF boost degrades over time & your pages generally shuffle back to their original position



#### FACTORS AFFECTING FRESHNESS

- Newsworthiness drives QDF
  - ✓ Simply updating or re-publishing your content doesn't make your site "fresh"
  - Adding new pages just to increase the size of your footprint doesn't necessarily boost freshness
- ✓ Google monitors 3 main sources for fresh hot topics:
  - ✓ Blogs and magazines
  - News portals
  - Search requests
- ✓ Triggered if all 3 sources show new activity
- ✓ QDF ranks new content higher in search results if links/mentions + search requests are > average
- Authority / SME carries weight



#### HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT IS KEY

- Relevant & authoritative long-form content that is well-written/well-scripted drives SERP results today
- ✓ High-quality content is about creating value for your audience
  - Increases time on page
  - Lowers bounce rate
  - Provides helpful content
  - Offers timely information
- ✓ Can gain significant competitive advantages through QDF with high-quality content
- Quickly establish yourself as an industry thought leader if you regularly create high-quality content in pulse with the hottest trends in your market
- Conversely, thin content and/or stale content adversely affects your search rankings



#### CONSISTENTLY PUBLISH HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT

#### Here are five suggestions to get your content engine up and running:



#### Get Involved

Social media platforms
and discussion groups
are great for keeping a
pulse on trending topics
in your industry.



#### Monitor Competition

Get an idea of what your competition does.

Take the things that work for them one step further. Beat them at their own game.



# Build an Archive

Expand beyond your industry category.Identify best practices from other industries & adopt them. Archive materials for inspiration.



#### Leverage Online Tools

Several sites kick-start content creation (e.g. BuzzSumo - analyzes content across industries & identifies popular trends.



# Hire a Copywriter

A good copywriter will identify fresh content opportunities & keep your organization on the cutting edge of your industry.

# UTILIZE HIGH-QUALITY GRAPHICS & IMAGES

#### HIGH-QUALITY ARTWORK PAYS DIVIDENDS

- Eye-catching visual elements that complement your brand persona are worth the investment
- ✓ Improves traffic and conversion %
- Maintain a consistent look and feel to the graphic elements throughout your site
- Consider the following when selecting graphics & images for your website:
  - Use thematic images representative of brand
  - > Select photos that elicit desired emotional responses
  - Use proprietary/custom photos whenever possible high-quality images of your location, your team members, your products, etc.
  - Always use images and graphics that meet your brand standards color palates, theme, etc.

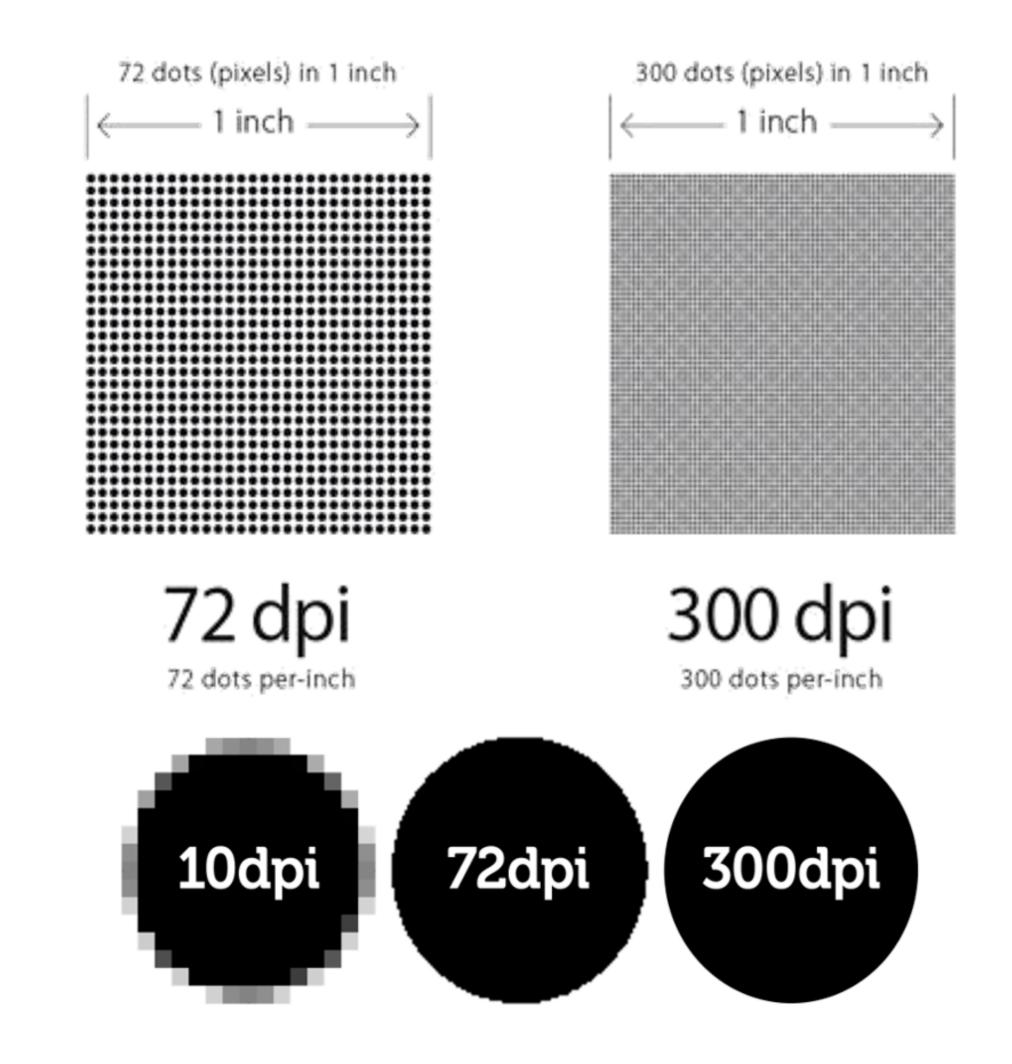


#### SELECTING THE RIGHT ARTWORK

- Proprietary photos from a professional photographer & customized graphics from a professional designer are preferred
- ✓ Plenty of affordable stock image sites offer high-quality artwork if you have tight resource constraints
  - iStock
  - Adobe Stock
  - Wikimedia Commons
- Ensure every image matches your brand persona & flows with your brand voice
- Establish a unique brand identity
  - Avoid highly popular/frequently purchased images when you can
  - Protect your site from having a generic look and feel

#### OPTIMIZE YOUR IMAGES

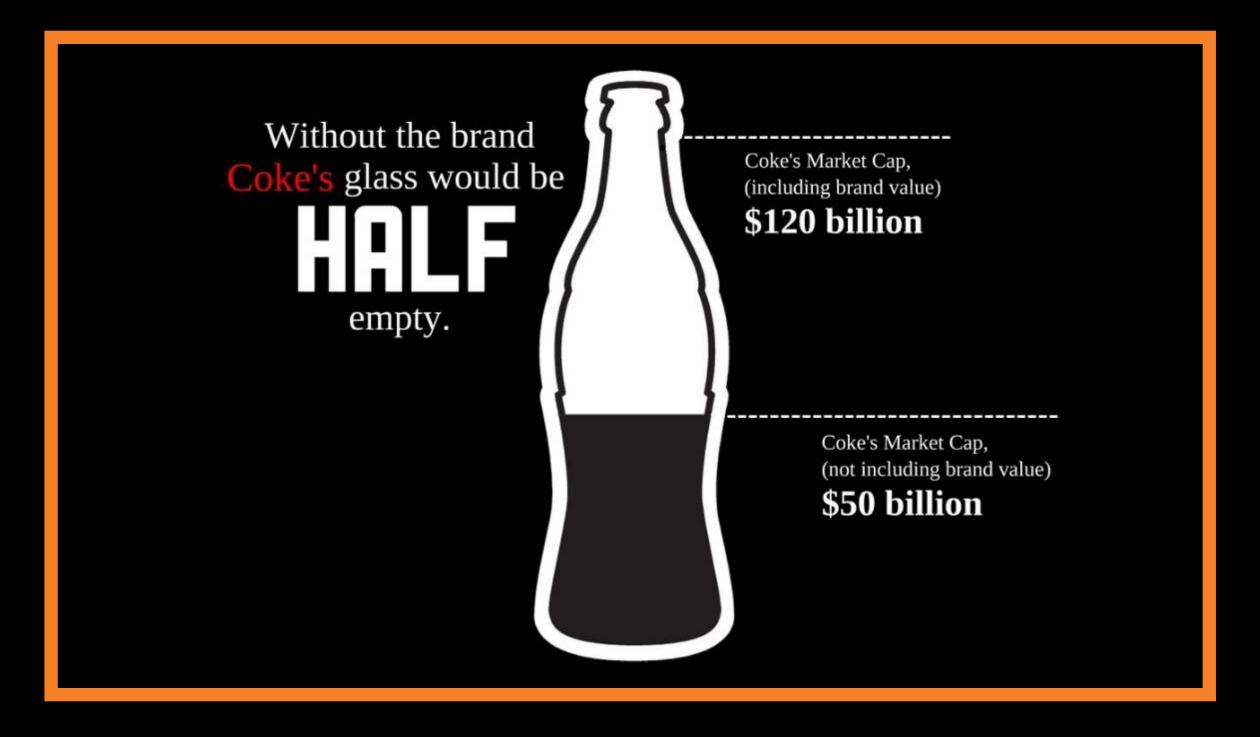
- Always use high-quality files
- ✓ Otherwise, your audience may develop false/negative perceptions
  - ✓ A belief that your products and/or services are low-quality
  - ✓ A feeling that you're unlikely to deliver on your brand promises
- Page load time factors in to your site's search rankings
  - ✓ This is especially true for mobile
  - ✓ Pay attention to the size of your image files
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with Google's "Image Optimization" guidelines



# SUMMARY KEYTAKEAWAYS

#### THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

- 1. Your website is often your organization's primary public persona
- 2. Your website holds enormous influence over your target market's perception of your products and/or services
- 3. There's a strong correlation between visual appeal, traffic and conversion %
- 4. Great execution grows brand value & builds brand equity
  - A. Healthy and flourishing organizations tend to have effective websites
  - B. Struggling organizations often have ineffective websites



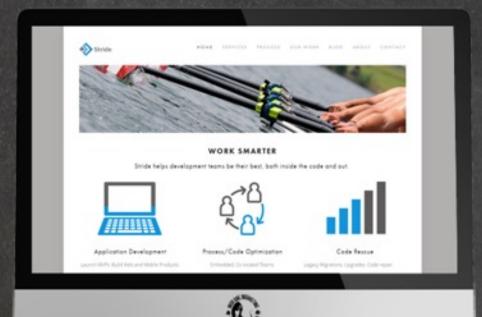
**SUMMARY** 

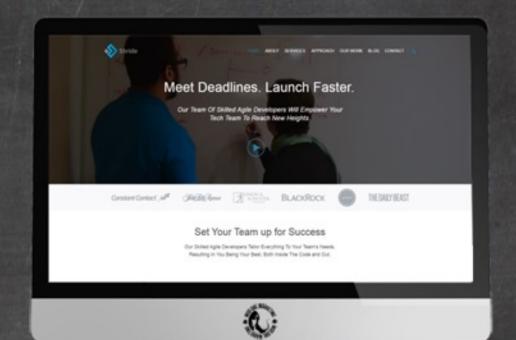
# INVESTMENTS OFTEN PRODUCE RAPID RETURNS

- 1. Improves brand recognition
- 2. Builds trust & establishes authority
- 3. Improves advertising effectiveness / reduces marketing costs
- 4. Attracts investments
- 5. Contributes to a successful corporate culture
- 6. Generates competitive / first mover advantage













# "If you think GOOD DESIGN is expensive, you should look at the cost of BAD DESIGN."

#### DR. RALF SPETH

CEO - Jaguar Land Rover



## ABOUT US

# CHI RHO CONSULTING

Chi Rho Consulting is a strategic business consultancy dedicated to helping entrepreneurs launch successful startups and expand their business ventures. We assist idea stage, funding stage and expansion stage startups with Strategic Planning, Growth Strategy and Risk Avoidance. We are based in suburban Atlanta, Georgia (USA) and engage with a select clientele throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia. Our solutions speed market entry, create new scaling opportunities & contain costs.





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