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The ultimate guide for
redesigning your website.



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Introduction

As a business leader you have a wide array of marketing strategies in your arsenal. Perhaps you are masterful at creating an engaged community of raving fans. Maybe your online advertising campaigns are generating great foot traffic for your product or service. You have successfully achieved brand awareness in your vertical and you have a steady stream of revenue coming in. Perhaps not as much as you'd like, but you are happy that you're in the black. But have you looked at your online statistics lately? How is your website performing? Have you intentionally sought out any usability feedback on your website? When was the last time you even thought about the design of your website?

If the last few questions leave you scratching your head, it may be time to take a more in- depth look at the state of your website.

There are many good reasons for a website redesign, whether you're moving to a new Content Management System (CMS), adding new website features, or you haven't made any changes to the site since 1999 and it is time to modernize it's look.

REDESIGNING A WEBSITE CAN BE OVERWHELMING

It can be a long, and tedious process that can fail to meet your business objectives if you don't have a solid strategy backed by business objectives, both coupled with strong project management that informs your website design process.

This eBook is intended to give you a closer look at website redesign, and the rules you need to follow to build a site that not only looks great, but also generates meaningful results.



CHAPTER I

Define Your Goals & Strategy





A website redesign aligned with your organization's strategic objectives has a much greater chance of success, whereas a site that is designed without a strategy is destined for failure. Be clear about what you want to achieve with a new website and tie those objectives to measurable deliverables.

Consider the following objectives for your site:

OBJECTIVE 1: GENERATE LEADS

Do you want to attract and secure more leads? Look at great lead generation sites or page such as the example to the left. What functionality or design do they use that you aren't using on your site? Look for elements such as: great use of negative or whitespace, relevant industry keywords, or content customized to your visitors.

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE ONLINE/E-COMMERCE SALES

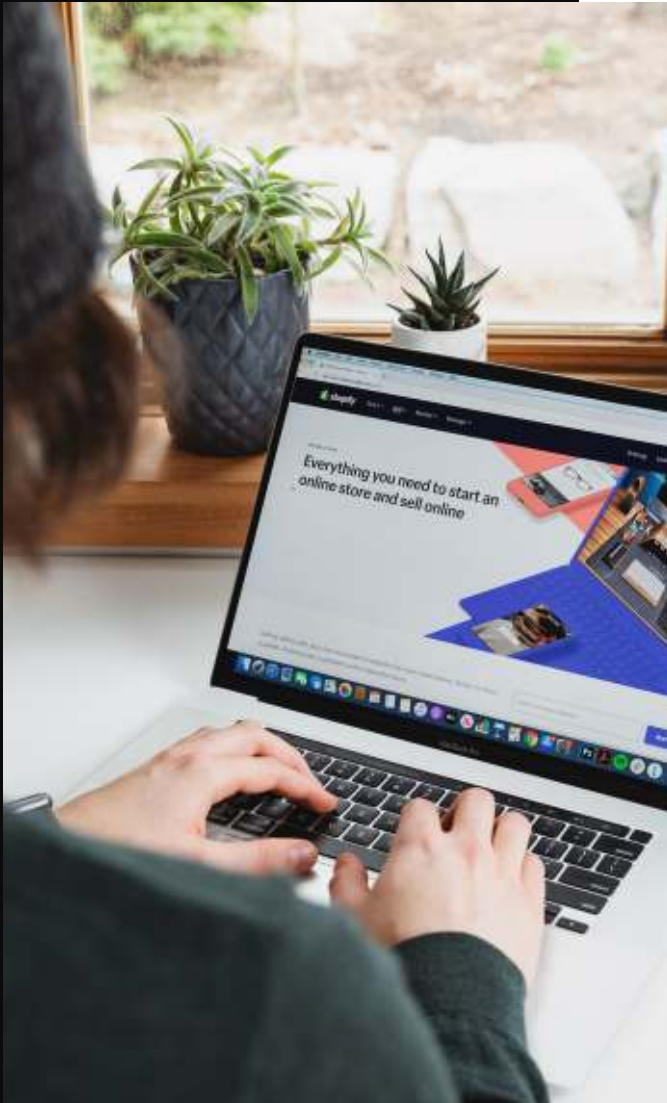
Do you want to increase your online sales revenue? Then focus on improving site search, optimizing exit pages, offering live chat, and gamifying your web store.

OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASE AWARENESS OF YOUR COMPANY

Are you looking to boost awareness of your organization's brand? Customers define your brand by your digital presence. Use your homepage to make a great first impression. Use your blog to create content that your audience is interested in and will engage with.

OBJECTIVE 4: GET MORE TRAFFIC

Is your website keeping up with the increased mobility of today's workforce? With nearly 60% of searches now coming from mobile devices, your website must be responsive. Responsive websites have more targeted traffic and improved page rankings in search engines.





Now it's your turn

Use this space to work through the exercise.

Chapter 1 Exercise

INTRODUCTION

Write down three business objectives and prioritize them based on their importance within your organization. Analyze your current website data to see how it is currently performing. This exercise will help you visualize where you are, where you would like to be and develop a roadmap to achieve your objectives.

EXAMPLE

Goal #1: By optimizing my web store's exit page, I will increase the conversion rate by 9% in the next six months.

Current conversion rate: 4.3%

Goal #2: I want to generate 25% more leads with my new website.

Current lead generation rate: ???



CHAPTER 2

Identify Your Audience



Trying to redesign your website without a clear understanding of your audience is like entering a dance contest without knowing how to dance. You may think you are a great dancer, but you probably won't get a trophy.

Every website redesign should start with an in-depth understanding of who your audience is. This includes basic information - such as age, gender, and location - to deeper psychological traits such as buying motivations or needs. Identifying your target audience also includes the emotions your audience is feeling about making a buying decision.

The best way to really understand who is using your website and what they are trying to accomplish is by creating a detailed buyer persona. In this article, Hubspot states that:

“a buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers.”

71% of the companies who exceeded revenue and lead goals use detailed buyer personas. Additionally, using personas can increase click-through rates by 14%.





Now it's your turn

Use this space to work through the exercise.

Chapter 2 Exercise

INTRODUCTION

Write down the different types of people who are most likely to use your website. Provide a brief description of each and note what they are trying to accomplish when visiting your site.

EXAMPLE

Let's imagine your website tells people about the best fares and flight deals. A persona would look something like this:

Jennifer, freelance web designer

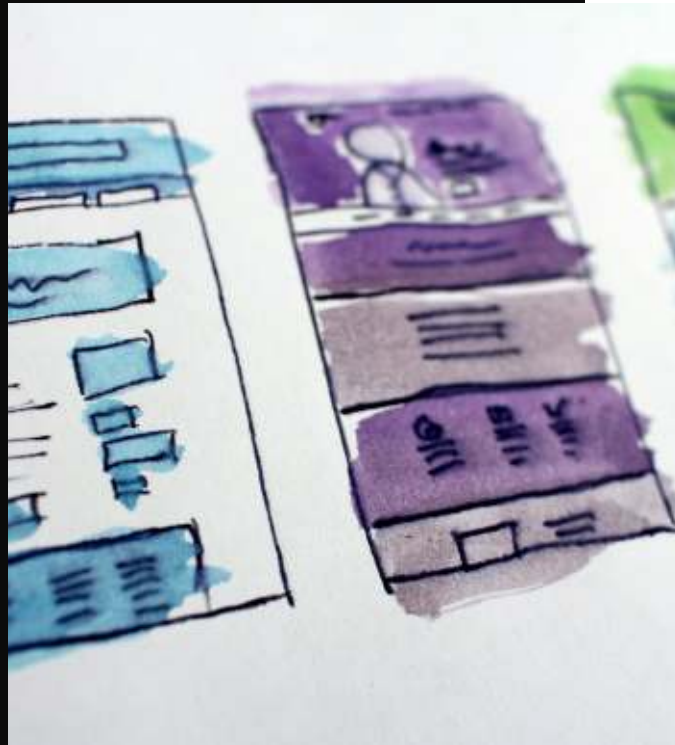
Personal information: Jennifer is 27 years old and lives in Portland. She has a BA degree in Multimedia Design and Development from NC State University. She is a freelance web designer. She has enough money to live a decent life but would like to earn more. She likes reading, watching TV & movies and photographing. She loves to travel and is always on the lookout for flight deals. She spends most of her weekends on the road, exploring nearby cities.

User goals: Jennifer uses the website to discover cheap flight deals. She wants to visit as many countries as possible, so the site makes the process of finding the best deals easier.



CHAPTER 3

How Can A Website Make You Look Good?



Visitors decide within a few seconds how your site makes them feel.

As soon as they land on your site, they notice things that can help or hinder their user experience. Features such as good navigation, relevant content, and working links play a vital role on how visitors engage with your site. Because first impressions are so important, make sure that your site looks professional and feels modern.

Make sure your new website is professional. It must work – no broken links, no error pages and, most importantly, pages need to load quickly on every device and screen. Visitors become frustrated if a website takes more than three seconds to load and that lack of responsiveness reflects on the “responsiveness” of your brand.

Your brand will be perceived to be more relevant if its design is up to date.

DESIGN WITH USABILITY IN MIND

There are many moving pieces web developers consider when designing your website. They will look at site aesthetics, optimizing code to ensure ranking on search engines, and best practices. However, the most important consideration is a site’s usability which includes the following factors:

Efficiency of Use – How fast can a visitor to your website accomplish their objective (e.g., the reason they came to your site in the first place)?

Intuitive Design – How easy it is to understand the organization and layout of the site?

Ease of Use – How fast can a visitor who has never seen your site before learn how to accomplish a simple task?

Memorability – Will a user remember enough to use your site efficiently during future visits?

Satisfaction – Do visitors enjoy your website?

Your web design should be clean and coherent with a color scheme and content that is relevant to your business’ brand.



Now it's your turn

Use this space to list the websites you like, as well as what you dislike:

Chapter 3 Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

Preview other websites and note below what you like and what you don't like. Review your competitors' sites as well as the sites of other well known organizations (Amazon, Nike, IBM, HubSpot, Apple, Etsy, etc.).

How have they structured their navigation?

How do their mobile versions look like?

How many Calls To Action (CTAs) do they have?

Do you like the pictures they use?

Were the sites easy to navigate?

Here are two sites to help you in your research. Each of these highlights a variety of websites from around the world that are well designed:

thebestdesigns.com

awwwards.com/websites



CHAPTER 4

What Does Your Website Say?





Good content is essential for your website to be a success.

Simply posting well-written content no longer works. Content will only attract and retain readers if it is relevant and meaningful to your audience. This is why defining buyer personas (Chapter 2) is so critical to your online marketing efforts as it helps you tailor content to the right people. If you know who you are marketing to, you can develop content that matters to them.

Good content is key. Personalized content, however, will attract and keep your visitors on your site. Content personalization must become an integral part of your redesign strategy.

Including a buyer testimonial or recommendation makes content even more effective. A MyBuys study showed that a personalized recommendation can increase average order value or even generate sales when a visitor was just browsing with no definite plans to buy. In fact, about 35% of Amazon's revenue is driven by product recommendations.

TEACH, DON'T SELL

The point of your content should be to give your audience useful, relevant information, not to talk about your sales and promotions. Consumers crave value-added content that solves their problem and educates them, not more ads.

Make your customer the hero by addressing their individual pain points. Talk about the benefits your product or service brings and how it can uniquely help them improve their lives.

Consider these statistics:

According to a study from Janrain & Harris Interactive, 74% of users get frustrated when they see website content (ads, promotions, offers) that has nothing to do with their interests.

Another study by O2's The Rise of Me-tail showed that 56% of consumers say they would be more inclined to shop from a retailer that provides a good personalized experience.



Now it's your turn

Use this space to work through the exercise.

Chapter 4 Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

Review the content on your current website (and in your marketing materials) and make a note of the following problems:

- Industry jargon
- You're a "me-former" not an informer
- Claims unsubstantiated with proof points
- Content that isn't personalized



CHAPTER 5

Build It & They Won't Come



Strategy, site aesthetics, and functionality are key.

When redesigning a website, strategy, site aesthetics, and functionality are key. So, when do you start considering things like Search Engine Optimization (SEO) or paid advertising?

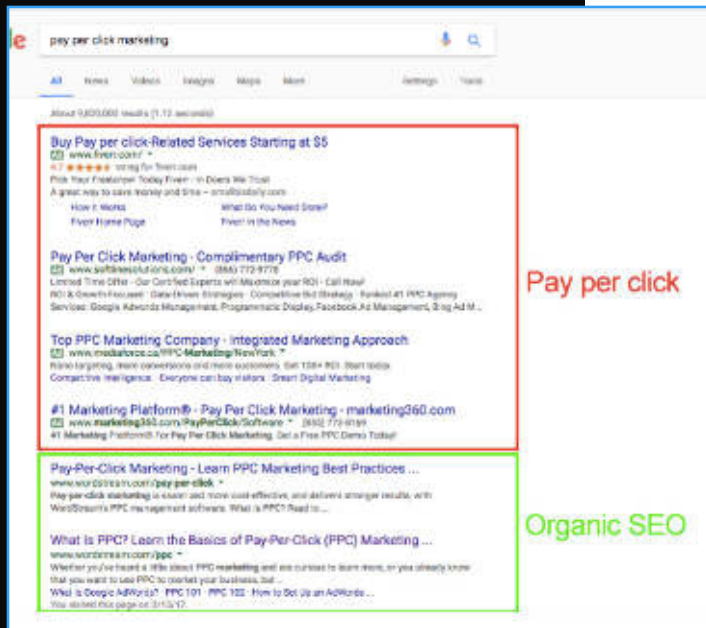
SEO

SEO is the practice of helping your website show up in search engines when someone is searching using words or phrases related to your product or service. This is organic, meaning, someone types in your product or service in Google and lands on your page. Organic SEO takes a long time to build and is not based on paid ads. According to HubSpot, 80% of a website's traffic begins with a search query. The better your SEO, the higher you rank in the search results. Good SEO results from: great content, optimized landing pages, relevant keywords, headers, and external links. There are over one billion websites in the world today. With so much noise, it is difficult to find your site without intentional SEO.

PAY PER CLICK ADS

Pay-Per-Click advertising (PPC) also known as cost per click (CPC), is used to direct traffic to websites. An advertiser pays a publisher (typically a website owner or a network of websites) when the ad is clicked. PPC helps you get more customers at less cost than traditional marketing. The graphic to the left shows organic vs. PPC search results.

Search engine advertising is the most popular forms of PPC. It shows immediate results, but the costs to maintain it can add up fast. PPC is believed to be less effective than peer-to-peer marketing, but it still has a place in your overall marketing strategy.





Now it's your turn

Use this space to work through the exercise.

Chapter 5 Exercise

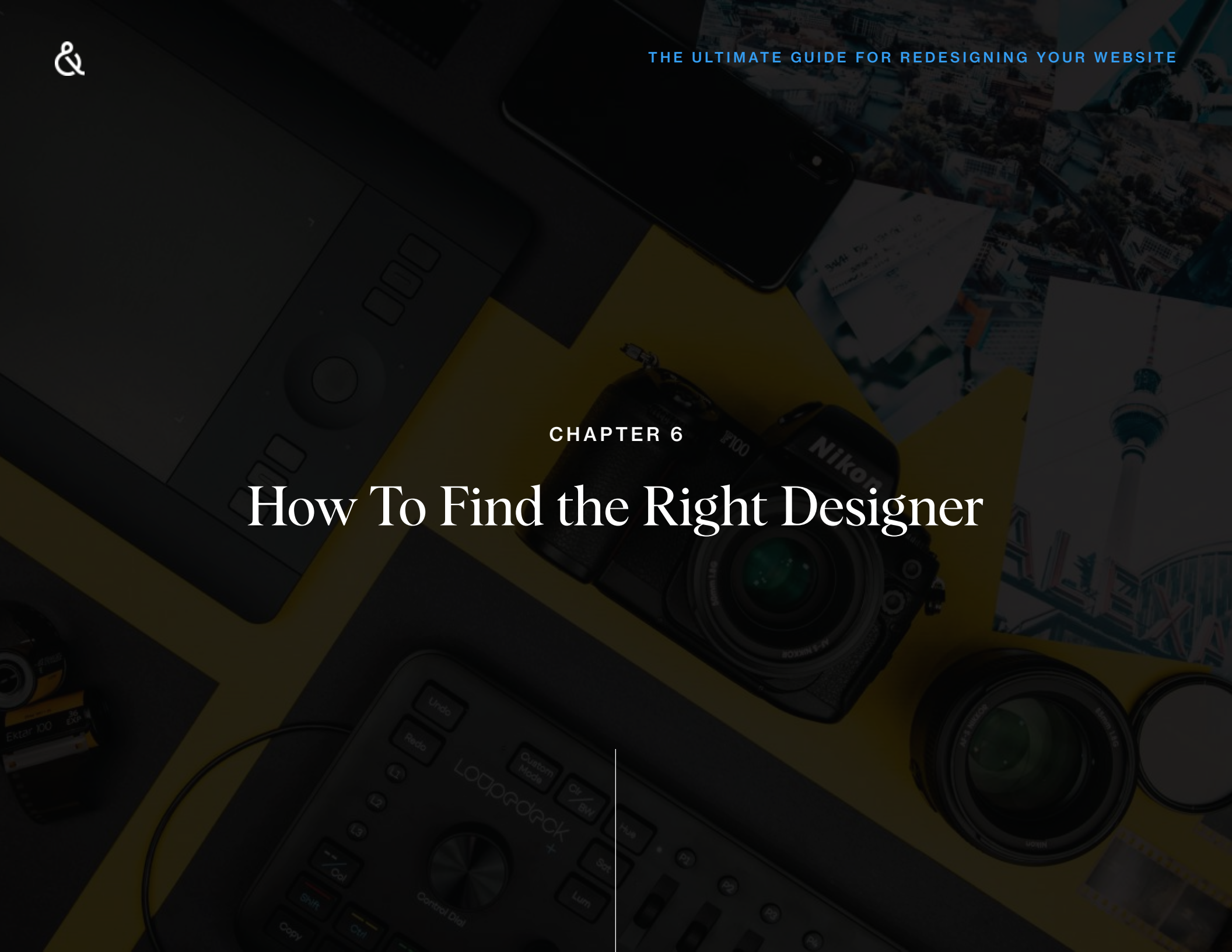
INSTRUCTIONS

Do a search on Google and Bing for key phrases related to your product or service. Note where your website ranks, both the page number and the location on the page. List your competitors and their rankings too.



CHAPTER 6

How To Find the Right Designer





How do you find the right web designer?

You've decided that a website redesign is the best way to move your business forward. The only problem? You can't tell the difference between CSS, EPS, and javascript; and all of the designers you have met with keep speaking in jargon.

How can you make a good decision when you're not sure about the criteria that makes web design considered "good"?

Here are some tips to help you find the right web designer:

KNOW THE SCOPE OF YOUR PROJECT

Who you will hire will largely depend on how complex your design is.

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS

When the designer knows what you want you will have a better working relationship.

REMEMBER THAT DESIGN PREFERENCES ARE SUBJECTIVE

You can bring your design preferences to the table, but be open to suggestions.



Now it's your turn

Use this space to work through the exercise.

Chapter 6 Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

Do some research, whether through your network or freelancer platforms such as Upwork, and reach out to two or three web designers who seem like the right fit. Ask them questions about the types of projects they've worked on, previous clients, and what their processes look like. Ask for samples of their work that might be relevant to what you want.



Final Word

A successful website redesign starts with defining your goals and identifying your audience needs. Often, people get caught up in how the website should look and lose focus of what matters the most: user experience. The reality is that a site should look good and be easy to use.

Remember, your website doesn't exist in a vacuum. It integrates with other functions, such as content, SEO, social media, and your brand. This is your chance to transform your site into a lead generating machine.

Don't miss the opportunity to help grow your organization.

We hope that after reading this guide, you will be well-prepared for any website redesign. If you would like to ask us questions about a website, we'd love to chat. You can reach us through our website, by phone (717.261.0111), email, or even a carrier pigeon if you happen to have one.

Thanks for reading!

ABOUT CROSS & CROWN

Cross & Crown is a team of creatives who are passionate about solving problems through design and technology, taking what is there and making it better. Based in Chambersburg, PA, we strive to help educate, advocate, and thrive in a digital world.

Contact us today to see how we can help!

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