THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING A BUSINESS-BUILDING B2B TECH WEBSITE

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GOLDEN SPIRAL

GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

B2B buyers conduct an average of

12

web searches before you even know they're shopping.

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Build it and they will come.

B2B tech companies have been using the Field of Dreams philosophy of website building for years. Does it work?

Well, that depends.

Who will come?   *What will they want to do?*

What will they do?   *How do you keep it working?*

Every B2B marketer knows that your company website matters more than any other marketing initiative. Design matters. Experience, content, and speed matter. The mobile experience matters.

Today's customer has higher standards and less patience — meaning your site needs to load quickly, the content should be relevant and resonating, and the design should be a scientific balance of aesthetic appeal and logical user experience (UX).

In Golden Spiral's "The Complete Guide to Creating a Business-Building B2B Tech Website," you will learn:

- What a solid website can do for you
- How to build a website that works
- How to integrate content and design from the start
- How your user interface and user experience set you apart
- How to build marketing into your website
- Optimizing tips to increase conversion rates
- What to do to keep your website in line with your company goals.

Achieving all of the above isn't easy, though. It's a lot more than purchasing a cool template and plugging in your logo. Building a website that's a marketing engine is time-consuming and expensive. And whether you work at a lean start-up selling a single life-changing app, or at a multi-million-dollar tech company with a history of innovation, the need is acute. **Let your solution meet the challenge.**

01

WHY A (NEW) WEBSITE?

You're an innovative, tech-savvy company and your website has to prove it.

Your website is the cornerstone of your digital marketing efforts — where all emails, social media, paid ads, and organic searches lead. It has to look great. It has to work even better.

For SaaS companies, your website is the hub of your marketing engine. It is the key to help establish a market presence and gain traction at any stage. When built well, maintained daily, and optimized with the skill of sculptor, your website will nurture visitors, capture leads, and empower you to turn them into customers.

But it can't do those things if you only tack on strategy to an existing design.

Strategy must be at the core of website creation from the beginning.

If you are starting the conversation with, "We need a new website," you're leading with a tactic and not strategy. You probably feel the bigger problem but can't articulate it yet.

Before approaching a redesign, conduct a branding and marketing audit. Review your existing site — along with every other marketing collateral — to pinpoint areas for improvement. This can and should include things like SEO/analytics review, user journey mapping, stakeholder interviews, and customer feedback. Examining past performance is key to determining your priorities and strategy moving forward.

Think long and hard about how you will incorporate value messages into your site. In their annual survey, the MHI Research Institute reports the "inability to communicate value messages" is consistently proven to be the biggest inhibitor to sales success. The number of companies struggling with communicating their brand has grown from 22% in 2013 to 29.8% in 2018.

Every B2B marketer knows that your company website matters more than any other marketing initiative.

Many companies who approach Golden Spiral for website help feel like they're in a fire drill.

Our answer? "Maybe you need a new website. Maybe you don't. But we don't have enough information yet." We then dive into a series of questions to uncover their business goals for the future.

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KNOWING WHEN IT'S TIME TO REDESIGN

You've heard: websites need to be overhauled every two years.

Myth or best practice?

Many companies who approach Golden Spiral for website help feel like they're in a fire drill. Their website isn't active and it's been a couple of years since they've updated it. They need a new website and they need it now.

Our answer? "Maybe you need a new website. Maybe you don't. But we don't have enough information yet." We then dive into a series of questions designed to uncover their business and goals for the future.

Here are three big ideas to help you self-diagnose your true website need.

1. YOUR COMPANY'S FOCUS HAS SHIFTED

In our industry, we often see that companies narrow their focus over time. The shift can cause an identity crisis that pushes a company to rebrand. If you need to rebrand or have recently done so, it is imperative to build a new website. In all cases, it is essential that the collateral you're using across all media — printed materials, trade show booths, presentations, social media, and your website — should have the same look and feel to increase brand awareness and brand loyalty.

2. THE DATA SAYS SO

As long as your website is connected to Google Analytics, you can learn a lot about how it is performing. If you've set some KPIs from the genesis of your project — perhaps the number of form submissions or total website traffic — you'll likely have a good baseline to understand "is our website working for us?" If you haven't, the following data points are good indicators to whether or not your website needs work:

- **Overall website traffic is down:** In a year-over-year comparison, determine what your traffic trends look like. If they're on the decline, it might be time to re-think your website design.
- **You have high bounce rates on key landing page:** If you're driving individuals to landing pages from social ads and search ads, and those bounce rates are high (greater than 60-70%), you should at least take a second look at least at those landing pages — and maybe hire someone to help

it is best to keep an eye on your own website's bounce rate through Google Analytics, figure out what is normal for your website, and strategize ways to improve from there.

- **You have a high exit rate on your home page:** 100% of users will exit your website at some point, so a general high exit rate isn't inherently bad. Its importance is dependent on the page. Customers should be exiting your website after they've found the content they were looking for and, ideally, after clicking a call to action and completing a form. A home page with a high exit rate indicates that you aren't correctly funneling to the right place on your website. They are leaving your website frustrated. High exit rates can tangibly lead to lost sales and conversions.

  While these benchmarks are industry-wide, it is best to keep an eye on your own website's bounce rate through Google Analytics, figure out what is normal for your website, and strategize ways to improve from there.

- **The time spent on your site is short:** Even if your website traffic looks good, how high is engagement? If individuals are getting to your site but not spending an adequate amount of time or not visiting more than one page, this is likely a key indicator that your website is not performing to your expectations.

Make sure you have developed your plan for tracking essential website data points.

3. IT'S BEEN MORE THAN THREE YEARS

In general, a good rule of thumb is to redesign your website every three to five years. Social media platforms and Google change their algorithms hundreds of times each year. Web design trends change. New mobile screen sizes emerge. And in general, each year your buyers' expectations get higher.

If it's been longer than three years, you probably aren't optimized for today's mobile devices. In the last four years, mobile searches have surpassed desktop, even in technology searches. If you aren't convinced that we're living in a mobile-first culture and that your marketing needs to be mobile-first, too, consider these statistics:

- American adults are expected to spend on average 3 hours and 23 minutes on non-voice mobile media every day. That's an hour more than American adults spent on their phones in 2015.
- Mobile drives, or influences, an average of more than 40% of revenue in leading B2B organizations.
- 50% of B2B search queries today are made on smart phones. That figure will grow to 70% by 2020.

And don't forget voice search. Devices like Google Home, Apple HomePod, and Amazon Echo are revolutionizing search.

- 50% of all searches will be voice searches by 2020.
- About 30% of all searches will be done without a screen by 2020.
- 13% of all households in the United States owned a smart speaker in 2017. That number is predicted to rise to 55% by 2022.

Will your website show up in the results spoken by these devices to those searching for the solution to their problem?

THE NUMBERS SAY IT ALL

As you consider building or redesigning your own B2B tech website, here are some important statistics to consider:

DESIGN MATTERS

38% of web users will stop engaging with a website if the content or layout is unattractive.

75% of consumers admit to making judgements about a company's credibility based on its website design.

SPEED MATTERS

Slow-loading websites cost retailers $2.6 billion in sales each year.

Google reported in 2018, "The average time it takes to fully load a mobile landing page is 22 seconds, according to a new analysis. Yet 53% of mobile site visitors leave a page that takes longer than three seconds to load." Technology firms average a load time of a whopping 11.3 seconds on desktop.
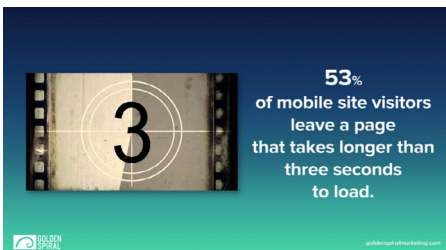
CONTENT MATTERS

86% of website visitors want information about your products and services to be accessible from your homepage.

27% want to see testimonials on your homepage.

Most B2B tech companies shy away from pricing pages. (This is a decision to be made carefully depending on your product and the length of your sales cycle.)

MOBILE EXPERIENCE REALLY MATTERS NOW

85% of website visitors think that the mobile experience should be just as good, if not better, than the desktop experience.

Mobile traffic as a share of total global online traffic in 2017 was 52.64% — accounting for more than half of all Internet traffic — and that number is on the rise.

THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER ONE

Ask your SEO team to run an analytics report on traffic over the last 18 months, exit rates, bounce rates, and site speed. Then re-evaluate your need for a new website.

If you don't have an SEO team or need help of any kind, we are happy to conduct a free website audit for you. Schedule a strategic consultation today to look over your numbers.

GUIDE

THE COMPLETE SEO GUIDE FOR B2B TECH MARKETING

READ OR DOWNLOAD TODAY

02

SETTING SMART WEBSITE GOALS

Do you want to make it to the next round in your buyer's journey to acquire a solution to their problem? Your website will make — and leave — an impression. Build your website so that it successfully positions your company as authoritative, credible, and forward-thinking. Work to win your buyer's trust. And you'll find yourself among your buyer's finalists.
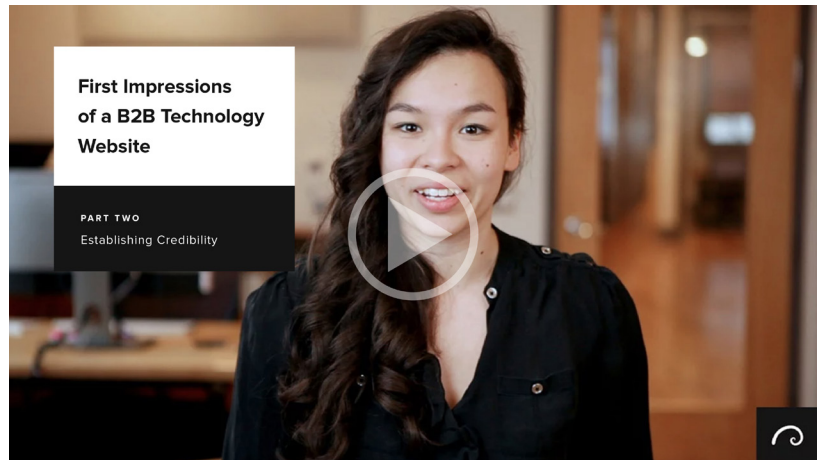
The goal of your marketing efforts, including your website strategy, is to generate qualified leads. But if you don't have meaningful key performance indicators, then you won't know how to measure success — or how to improve things that aren't working. For example, if your goal is to fill the funnel, then you must identify which metrics are key indicators of success (bounce rates, resource downloads, form submissions) and track them on a regular basis. This allows you to identify what success looks like, set goals, and test and re-adjust your tactics to figure out what is working and what's not.

Great first impressions in B2B technology occur when you have a laser focus on your buyer's problem.

Remember: buyers came to your site looking to solve their problems, not to learn about the technical capabilities of your product.

Great first impressions in B2B technology occur when you have a laser focus on your buyer's problem. Remember: buyers came to your site looking to solve their problems, not to learn about the technical capabilities of your product.

Before you launched your website, you likely had some goals in mind related to your sales and marketing performance. You want more inbound leads, more sales qualified leads, and of course, more sales.

We recommend setting three types of strategic website redesign goals:

- **Traffic goals**, such as increasing traffic to a particular web page
- **Conversion goals**, such as increasing the number of form submissions on a particular page or pages
- **Optimization goals**, such as increasing your organic search rank for particular keywords

It is important to quantify these goals to make the data you gather in Google Analytics more meaningful. Set critical benchmarks for measurement against these goals If you're a new start-up and don't have year-over-year data, research industry averages. If you do have year-over-year data, use it to drive your goals.

For example, some strategic goals might sound like:

- Increase inbound leads by 10%
- Improve ranking in Google for our top 10 keywords by at least three spots
- Increase conversion rates on our "demo" page by 15%
- Increase overall website traffic by 20%

Accomplishing your website goals doesn't happen by chance. A good website runs on the rails of a strategy and passes the landmarks of your goals as it roars down the tracks.

Your mission critical task, should you choose to accept it, is to build a website that fills the funnel, makes your company more attractive to potential clients and investors, and converts visitors to customers. As we said in chapter 1, you can't tack on strategy to an existing design. It must be included from the beginning.

When marketing a B2B technology solution, good website design highlights the sophistication of your solution, the expertise of your team, and your ability to solve their problem.

Your website needs to change and grow on an ongoing basis.

Set website design parameters in these areas:

- Analytics
- Marketplace Position
- User Experience
- Visual Aesthetic
- Integration

We go into greater detail about each one of these issues throughout the rest of the guide. We take an integrated approach to these items.

What constitutes a good website for you? One that meets your goals.

THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER TWO

Determine 4 - 7 goals in each of the three types based on your strategy, define your KPIs, and create a scorecard to track them.

GUIDE

ARE YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS PRODUCING THE RESULTS YOU NEED?

CREATE KPIs THAT PERFORM »
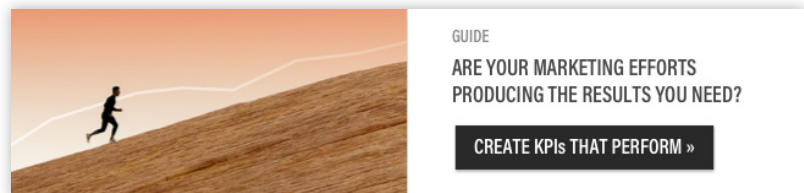
03

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF A GOOD WEBSITE?

Design and message must be in balance. Neither works without the other.

Many times in the process of creating a website, the design and the copy are created separately from each other. However, for a visitor to your site, copy and design are experienced at the same time. Those sites that convey a cohesive story resonate with your potential customer.

If you can create an integrated experience where your visitors can easily digest the information you present — no matter the format — you've won. Design should enhance copy and vice versa. Visitors to your site should walk away with a clear view of how you propose to solve their problem.

We worked with Talon, a cybersecurity placement agency, to make sure that the homepage story quickly established Talon's ability to meet buyers' specific needs. The statements made on the homepage speak clearly to the buyers' problems. Look at the animation above (or visit the site). The words in the animated gradient point users to Talon's unique value proposition, rather than distracting from it. The result is a first impression that balances problem statements with a visually sophisticated, credible brand.

As you build out your website as a showcase for your brand, constantly ask yourselves if the buyers and their problems are front and center. If not, adjust so they are.

The impression that your website creates with the buyer will determine whether you make it into their consideration set. Remember: your buyers are 68% of the way to their final decision before you even know they exist. If the first six seconds of a visit to your website successfully position your company, you will win the trust of those who need you— and you're on to the next round in their decision-making process.

THE INTEGRATION OF CONTENT & DESIGN

Think about these statistics from the vantage point of the confluence of words and images.

CONTENT

- 86% of website visitors want information about your products and services to be accessible from your homepage.
- 27% want to see testimonials on your homepage.
- Most B2B tech companies shy away from pricing pages.

DESIGN

- 38% of people will stop engaging with a website if the content or layout is unattractive.
- 75% of consumers admit to making judgements about a company's credibility based on its website design.

Your redesign should address all of these issues. Where will each concept be displayed? Which will take precedence for you and your product?

As you build out your website as a showcase for your brand, constantly ask yourselves if the buyers and their problems are front and center. If not, adjust so they are. We often say at Golden Spiral, "Your opinion, while interesting, is irrelevant." In meetings or around the coffee pot, we, too, are prone to offer our own opinions about our work. We use this phrase to remind ourselves to always look at our work — content, design, and UX — from the perspective of the persona only.

Are my buyers and their problems front and center in our thinking about our website?

You're going to have many voices and opinions weigh in on your redesign — the C-Suite, friends, other designers, investors, peers. Make sure the only opinions you care about are those of your customers. They are the ones you must win. They are the ones you must woo.

Demonstrate your team's ability to understand and solve the buyer's problem through rich content pieces or other helpful resources you have created. Things like white papers, blog posts, and webinars show your visitor you have expertise when it comes to their biggest business concerns.

There are two major advantages to this method.

1. Your visitors receive a reason to come back to your site again and again, which gives you the chance to develop a dialog with them.

2. By being more transparent about your company's competencies and best practices, you attract an audience that feels connected to your company, converting prospects and clients into brand advocates.

A great example of this method in action is IBM's banking landing page. The hero section of the page — the large, attention getting graphic that should make your visitor a hero — boldly states IBM's promise to you as its audience. Next it invites the visitor to explore their areas of expertise in the banking world. IBM's first impression not only shows that they are confident in their solutions, but that they understand the nuances of those problems and are active participants in the industry their product serves.
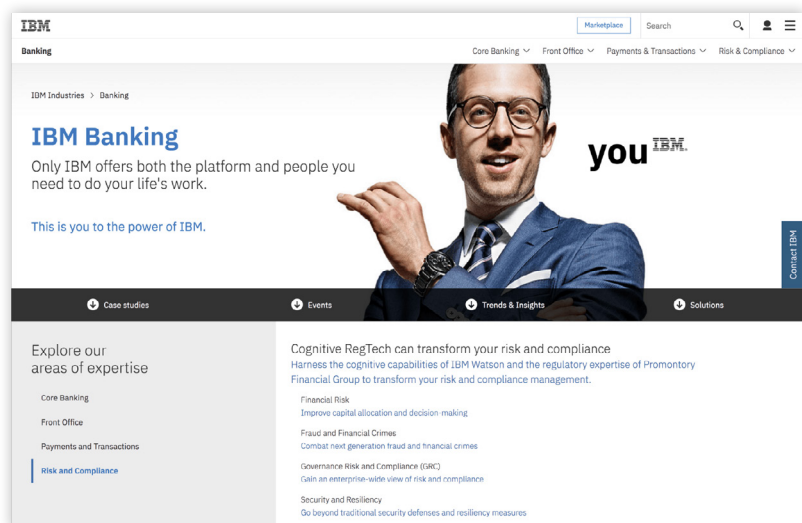
KNOW YOUR COMPETITION

Before you begin a website project, you have to know your competition. Not just things like size of market, market share, share of voice but marketing-related aspects as well. We call this a competitive marketing analysis, the goal of which is to inform your own marketing and website strategy.

This process should include analyzing your competitors' top organic keywords (SEO), monthly ad spend, ad copy, and metadata. This will allow you to identify where you have opportunities to:

- Rank in Google results
- Adjust your ad spend
- Focus your efforts on other keywords

A solid competitive marketing analysis also gives you insight into overall branding issues:

- Your unique value proposition(s)
- Selling features and benefits
- Tone and voice from a messaging standpoint
- What actually makes you different

Insight into these differentiating factors will drive your brand foundation and marketing activities.

IDENTIFY CUSTOMER PROBLEMS-SOLUTIONS

B2B technology companies often fall into the trap of leading with the technical features and competencies of their product rather than creating a customer-centric marketing strategy. One way to combat this is through the Buyer MatrixSM. This philosophy and framework guide you to aligning product features directly to the needs of your customers. Your Buyer Matrix is created by mapping your product's features to your target market's problems. It keeps your messaging from getting bogged down in the technical aspects of your product and instead refocuses on how the product helps buyers become the "hero" at their organization. Learn how to create your own in our how-to article on the subject.

SHOW REAL RESULTS

Use case studies, testimonials, and featured client stories to showcase the success that prospects can expect from working with you. This can be done though a prominently displayed list of client logos, stats on your product's success, or measurable ROI that others have reached using your product. This is also a time for you to highlight news, accomplishments, awards, or successful initiatives. By featuring real results, you demonstrate to your visitor that your team holds itself accountable for outcomes.

TEMPLATE

HOW TO CREATE YOUR COMPETITIVE MARKETING ANALYSIS

DOWNLOAD THE TEMPLATE
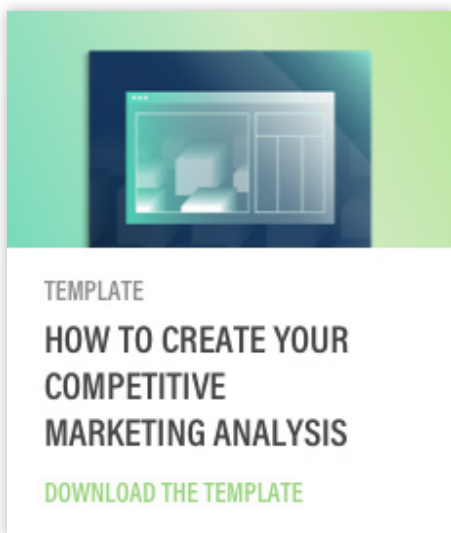
Digital Reasoning, a leader in cognitive computing, directs website visitors straight to their solution's impact. It's not about what the product does, it's about what it can do for their customers. Each slide on their homepage features a headshot of someone they have helped and a headline around the idea of "We Found a Way" and the story of how Digital Reasoning was able to transform their organization.

You can use all of these methods, mix them, or experiment with other ways to showcase your solution. Just remember that the goal here is to convey to your viewer an overview of your expertise and why they should trust your team to solve their problem.

If the core message is intact, let me challenge you: choose clarity over creativity. Sure, you want to convey your message in an eloquent and memorable way, but clarity should win in every discussion.

THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER THREE

Pull out your list of top competitors. (If you don't have one, stop this exercise and download our Competitive Analysis tool and figure out who is competing for your customers.) Go to each of their site and look at how they structure their websites according to the four points outlined here. Make a few notes. Then, take a deep breath and look at yours. Try to do all of this in one sitting to get a true feel for how well — or how poorly — you are doing.

04

THE USER EXPERIENCE

You see it: It's sleek and shiny, with promises of high performance and upgrades galore. Full of expectation and ready to be delighted, you lean in to the promise of a perfect purchase. You try it out; some parts didn't work as you expected, but you figured it out. And now you're headed to exactly where you need to go. Your customers have the same expectations when seeing, testing, and using your website. Do you deliver? It should be visually appealing, making them want to try it. It should be intuitive and do everything they need it to, quickly and completely. And it doesn't happen by accident.

The user experience of your website is all about guiding your user through an intentional experience that delivers the content they want to find (solving their problem), in a manner consistent with your sales cycle. Easy, right?

You want those who find you from a Google search, an internet ad, a social media post, or a recommendation of a friend to navigate their way around your site easily and do so with an increasing sense of "they can help me solve my problem." Does your homepage clearly tell visitors who you are and what you do in the first few seconds? It should.

User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) designers work together to focus on the user, delivering solutions that look good and perform effectively. This goal is accomplished with intentional strategy, cohesive planning, and top-notch skills.

UI and UX as terms often get confused with one another. The definitions remain somewhat fluid, but there are important distinctions. In the dynamic SaaS environment, this ambiguity can lead to confusion around how each of role contributes to the user experience and who handles identified issues. It's critical to address every aspect of your user's experience. This article describes how we meet those needs at Golden Spiral. First, we'll define the terms as we use them and explain the differences; then we'll cover where these roles overlap before highlighting some great examples of UI and UX.
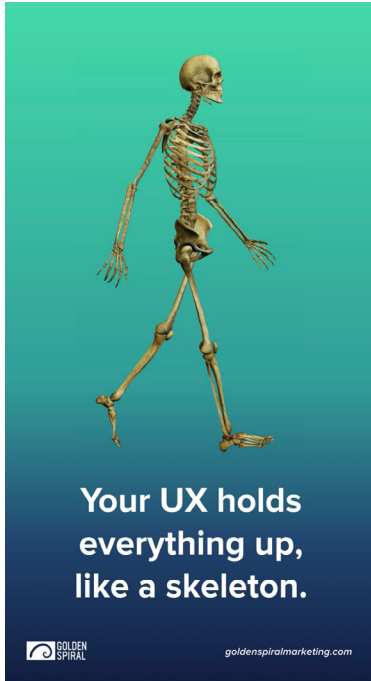
Not quite there? This chapter can help by explaining the differences between UI and UX and where they come together. These two discrete roles have distinct goals and using them both can result in the optimal situation for your website users. By clearly defining the roles each plays in your design, you ensure a great experience for your users in the most efficient way possible.

UX: HOLDING IT ALL UP

What is the foundational goal for your website?

Every company is trying to build business or convert customers. How are you doing it?

What does your sales process look like? What does your sales team look like? Are you doing a lot of cold **outbound** sales driving 90% of your revenue? Do you really just need a brochure, where your team can send people for more information? Do you need landing pages because your sales team is setting up catered experiences for that prospect?

Or are you increasing your **inbound** leads? Do you rely on ads, social, or organic traffic to bring visitors to your landing pages? Do you use lead scoring of return visitors to qualify leads?

Your unique combination of these two strategies — and any other ways you build your business — dictates how you walk your visitors through your site and what you want them to do.

We live and work in more of a self-service culture than ever. The self-service sale is growing in B2B circles as well. You must pay attention to user flows, deeper level pages, and organic traffic. You want your visitors to be free to browse through a guided conversation.

UX designers work behind the scenes to anticipate what the user wants to do and make sure each next step executes quickly and cleanly.

UX designers work behind the scenes to anticipate what the user wants to do and make sure each next step executes quickly and cleanly. They do this by focusing on the design and architecture behind the screen, beyond what the user sees. UX designers gather data and requirements, evaluate possible answers, decide on the best solution, and survey users to get feedback. They work on optimization to make user interaction with the website feel efficient, intuitive, and meaningful.

Your UX holds everything up, like a skeleton.

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The answers to these questions provide input for a UX designer to create site maps, content maps, user flows, and competitive analysis reports.

Your UX holds everything up, like a skeleton. UX answers the basic questions of:

- Who are the users?
- What information are they trying to find?
- What are we offering?
- Based on priorities, what pathways should and should not be made for users?

The answers to these questions provide input for a UX designer to create site maps, content maps, user flows, and competitive analysis reports. The UX designer ensures nothing is missed by actively investigating ways to improve the experience through user testing, surveys, interviews, and field studies,

Developing user personas is critical to defining what pages are needed and how that content should flow. User personas are also used for gathering feedback on the back side; was this person able to fulfill the job requirements without problems? You can only know the design was successful if it met the needs of the targeted user.

THE THREE ESSENTIAL MAPS OF YOUR WEBSITE

UX designers create maps to determine page locations, order of information, and user flows.

These maps are considered game plans that are continually modified based on feedback and analysis.

SITE MAP

A site map is a list of your website pages and a layout of where the pages are architecturally. Site maps can make it easier for search engines to crawl your site so that people can find and access your content from search. This is yet another way that SEO and content integrate with each another.
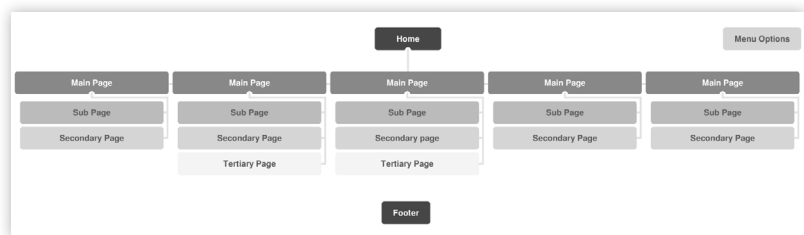
CONTENT MAP

A content map is the order of information and the location of information blocks. A content map contains the top-line messaging which leads to the Call to Action (CTA), which might lead to an article.
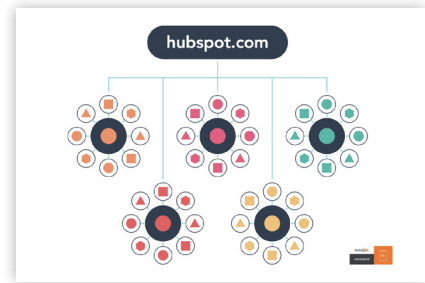
Your CRM may utilize topic clusters, such as those used in HubSpot, instead of content maps. The important thing is to know where the pieces of information are located and how they're connected from a user standpoint.

USER FLOW

A user flow is an even top-level version, which combines the site map and the content map. What do you want your user to do? A user flow might go from home to article to fill out form, tracking that path for the different user personas.

To make the user experience even more personal, you could ask website visitors to identify with a particular persona or end-market, as Gather, a B2B event management platform in Atlanta, does on their resources page.

The main advantage to defining user flow is it allows you to visually see and share the website goals and where the triggers should be. If the goal is to get returning users to click into thought leadership and then to fill out a form, then the user flow should essentially be home page, landing page, and thank you page (because thank you page means that they filled out the form). Without a defined user flow, we have a goal for sign-ups but no way to monitor the traffic and trigger points.

With defined User Flows, which GA calls Behaviors, you can see the general pathways of users for defined segments. If the actual path doesn't match your defined User Flow, it's a strong indication that something isn't working the way you expected.

FEEDBACK AND ANALYSIS

When prospects interact with you online, what problems do they encounter?

Your goal, is to guide the visitor through your site to their answers while building trust along the way. How does your site:

- Create a feedback look allowing your guests to begin a dialogue with you
- Include third-party partners for support and integration
- Give prospects an opportunity to buy (or request a demo of) your product or service digitally?

User feedback is a critical part of the UX role. How will you know if you're meeting your website's goals?

See what new and returning users are doing by using Google Analytics (GA). Look for the pages where they spend the most time, the places where they leave your website, and pages that are often viewed during the same session.

With defined User Flows, which GA calls Behaviors, you can see the general pathways of users for defined segments. If the actual path doesn't match your defined User Flow, it's a strong indication that something isn't working the way you expected. Whereas a site map shows all of the pages on your website, defining user flows and then analyzing them can show you the sequence of pages your users are actually following.

A site map shows all of the pages on your website User flows show you the sequence of pages your users visit.

Crazy Egg, analyzes page hotspots and tracking what users are actually doing on your site. Take care not to take everything at face value. It's easy to see a higher bounce rate and assume the whole page is terrible and the design doesn't work — but that might not be the case. Consider other possible contributors before redoing the entire page. GA and other tools are only monitoring what is happening on that site or page and not everything in the ecosystem.

APPEARANCE MATTERS

Alan Cooper, considered the father of Visual Basic, defined the goal of UI as "Don't make the user look stupid." UI focuses on the skin of the user experience — feel, look and visual appeal. UI designers want to set the users up for success by ensuring they are either familiar with how the site will work or are intuitively able to figure it out with little effort.

UI designers ask questions such as:

- Are users able to find and walk through each door on that pathway?
- What are they expecting?
- What on and outside the site has set precedents?
- Are these precedents helpful or challenging to the user?

Based on the answers to these questions, a UI designer creates design mockups, prototypes, front-end code, and sticker sheets. UI is also a continuous process of collecting user feedback and tweaking the interface to meet user expectations.

Front-end code is how the cursor interacts with the screen, how the visuals actually look to the users, and the response when a user interacts with the site. Sticker sheets are compilations of all the type styles, colors, and buttons used on the website.

The average person can only keep 7 (+/- 2) items in their working memory.

UI DESIGN BASICS

Research shows that humans perceive relationships based on how items are represented, such as position, size, and shading. To engage users and encourage them to like what they see, draw their attention using the following gestalt principles:

FITT'S LAW

The time it takes a user to select their target is a function of the distance to the object and the object's size.

THE LAW OF PRÄGNANZ

People will perceive and interpret ambiguity or complex images as the simplest form possible because it is the interpretation requiring the least cognitive function.

THE LAW OF PROXIMITY

Objects that are near or proximate to each other tend to be grouped together.

HICK'S LAW

Decision time increases with the number and complexity of choices.

MILLER'S LAW

The average person can only keep 7 (+/- 2) items in their working memory.

**1.0
UX Design Basics**

Obviously not every website can have a navigation that's fewer than seven items, but your navigation design can show less than seven on the top of the screen and group items in columns so that people don't have to see all 15 things at one time.

Typography is also an important factor in reader comprehension and retention. The general rule for website typography is a body copy size of 16 pixels. Using a font size smaller than 16 can be difficult for people to read on a screen. Avoid using too much capitalization, reserving it for headers. Be sure to test your site by actually reading through it. If you have trouble reading it, your user's going to have trouble reading it. Usability is more important than visual appeal.

Consider the platforms your users will be using to access your site. Visual presentation differs on a desktop, laptop, and mobile device. Clearly defining your users in the design phase ensures a better experience with your website on the job.

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BEST PRACTICES

It's easy to get confused between UX and UI, so keep the focus on these three simple things:

- Goals for your website
- Measuring success
- Knowing your users

What are the goals for your website? How does it help your users? Who are your users? And how will you know if you're helping your users?

UX & UI work together to meet objectives, forming the muscles to accomplish your website goals. There is some overlap of responsibilities, so be sure to define roles clearly for your team. For example, both UX and UI designers work on wireframes and prototyping.

For example, UI may notice there's an area that needs help. UX will investigate the problem, conduct user testing, surveys, interviews, and field studies. UX will notice similar triggers in other areas and the solutions that work best in those circumstances. After considering possible fixes, UX identifies the preferred solution, taking into account the constraints and restrictions. UI then steps in again to discern how the user will interact with and feel about the solution, and the best way to trigger that step.

PRIORITIZE NEW FEATURES

Even when you start with a strong design team that includes UX and UI designers, it's easy for user-focused strategy to get lost over time with fixes, changes, and add ons. To avoid unintentional consequences, focus on your priorities.

Fixes happen and it's tempting to fix something and continue on. Yes, the priority is to get your site up and functional quickly, but then the UX designer needs to get involved.

CONSIDER USING A RED ROUTE MATRIX

Map the features and actions of your site onto two axes for anticipated frequency of use and number of users. Actions that are going to be used by all users most of the time will surface as high priority, whereas those that will be used infrequently by a few users will fall to the bottom. When you re-chart to add a new feature, you can determine if that feature is high priority.

CONSIDER A GPS NAVIGATION SYSTEM

Voice command is a feature used by few people some of the time. Setting a route, however is something every user will do all of the time. What about setting planning preferences? Almost every user will do it, but not very often. Which one ranks as a higher priority?

BE MINDFUL OF ALL THE PLAYERS

Do you know everyone who has access to update your website? What about content creators who plug into the blog? Sales teams on the demo page? While your development teams understand your website goals, everyone with website update access needs to understand that actions have consequences.

Making the decision resources readily available to everyone is important. Red routes and priorities, buyer matrices, goals, KPIs — providing these guidelines means you can avoid micromanaging while ensuring everyone understands the end game. Websites are dynamic and will be tweaked, so have a living document to support your goals and a structure in place for making sure you're staying on track.

IF IT BREAKS, DON'T JUST FIX IT

Fixes happen and it's tempting to fix something and continue on. Yes, the priority is to get your site up and functional quickly, but then the UX designer needs to get involved. UX researches the root cause of a malfunction and determines if other changes need to be made to avoid such a problem in the future. The cause can be just as important as the fix.

A PICTURE LASTS LONGER

Considering a huge rebrand or a major change to your site? Capture current data for several months before implementing the changes. Before and after statistics can tell you how well one did versus another, but switching without taking that before picture can leave you guessing about the real reasons.

Outside influencers can lead to erroneous conclusions. For example, if you had a huge trade show with a heavy marketing push to lead people to your website, you expect a huge boost in visitor traffic. Comparing that traffic with another time period could lead you to believe your site is now failing, when the reality is that you just haven't worked momentum up again.

Good user experience design is like a great navigation app on your phone. You trust it to get you where you need to go quickly and stress-free.

UX/UI: WHEN ONE IS THE SAME AS TWO

Sometimes the UX designer is also the UI designer, a one-person show charged with creating a website and getting it running. If you're in this situation, focus on the basics and keep it simple. Define the goals for the site and the goals of your users. Map out how your website will help the users. Then decide how you will know if you're meeting those goals.

By following the basic gestalt design principles for UI, focusing on groups of 5-9, plenty of white space, and general typography rules, you'll avoid alienating users before they find your content.

EXAMPLES

Good user experience design is like a great navigation app on your phone. You trust it to get you where you need to go quickly and stress-free.

Think about a website known for good UX. The design is mesmerizing. The navigation is seamless. The visual and text content flow like water. Calls-to-action are helpful guides, pointing you to the next place you should visit. Information architecture makes content easy to scan. It's all just effortless — on desktop, and on mobile.

The world of B2B tech in particular is a place where user experience matters... a lot. Whether you believe it or not, as a tech company, your website's experience is a reflection of your product's experience and your company's digital savviness.

So how do you blend innovation with a solid user experience? It is a bit of a science and an art. And because it is one of those things where "you know it when you see it," let's take a look at some B2B tech companies that know exactly what they're doing to showcase innovation and offer a killer user experience.

360 VIEW

Remember the days where a good user experience meant cramming as much content as you could "above the fold" on your website? Those days are long gone. Thanks to social media, today's user is conditioned to scroll to the point that the user equates learning and discovery with scrolling.

Maximize the scrolling experience as 360 View does.
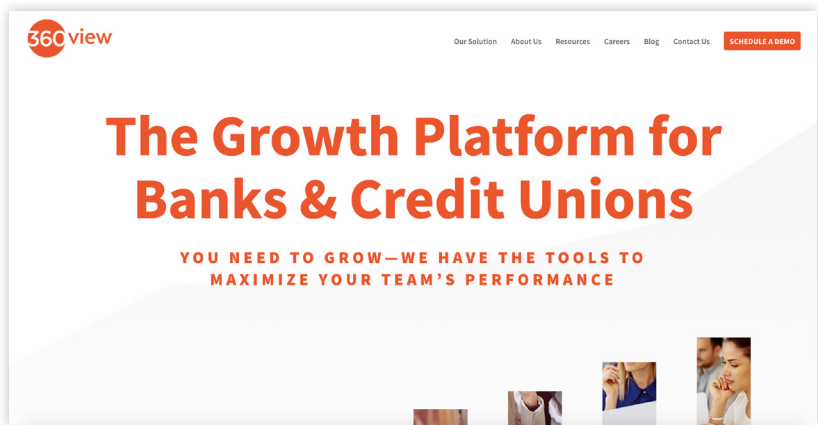
360 View greets website visitors with a bold problem-solution statement that drives users to learn more. With lots of white space, you can't help but focus on reading what 360 View has to say about its products.

As you scroll down the homepage, you read information about the products one by one.

With short descriptions and large calls-to-action, 360 View makes it easy for website visitors to learn more about each of its product offerings. And, if you're not sure which 360 View product is right for your business, the company includes a catch-all CTA at the end of the scrolling experience.

Of course, the site is sprinkled with subtle animations and bold colors within a sea of white space that makes it as visually compelling as it is easy to navigate.

The 360 View website is a terrific example of UX and UI working together to deliver a user-focused solution that meets the company's goals. The navigation as a whole is humongous, but the groupings of two and three options make it digestible. It would be overwhelming for users to see all of the options displayed simultaneously.

360 View is a Nashville-based B2B technology company. 360 View created the growth platform for banks and credit unions, providing all the tools necessary to maximize team performance. 360 View's website was developed by Golden Spiral. Read more about our work.

PINDROP

If you find subtle animations mesmerizing, you're probably going to spend a lot of time admiring pindrop's website. Visualizing what sound looks like, pindrop's homepage is compelling to see and read.
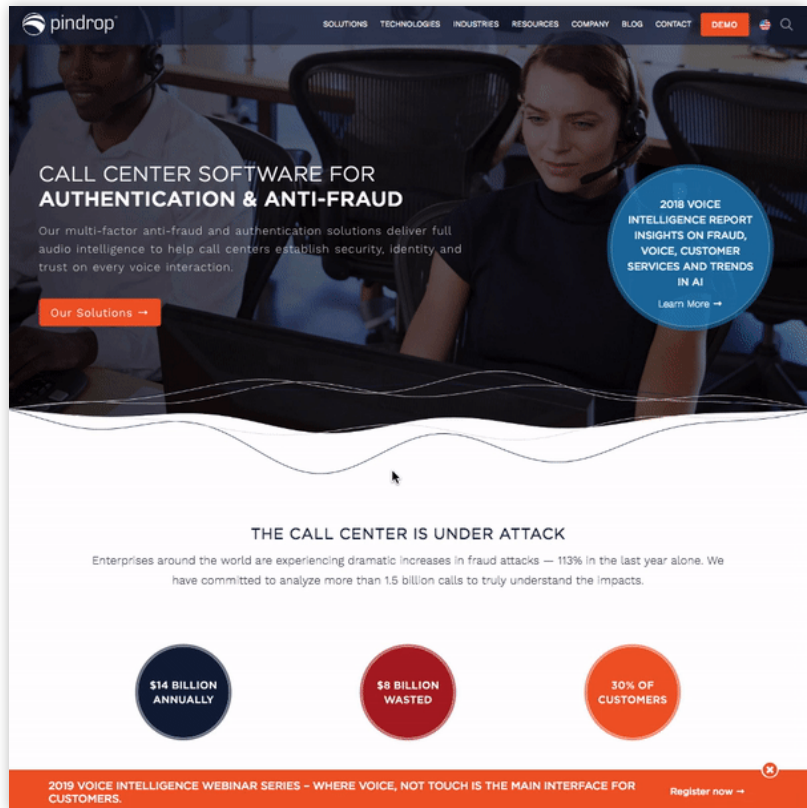
Taking a problem-solution approach to the content experience, pindrop does an excellent job explaining why the company exists, and how it can help call centers around the world.

And while the homepage design and content is clear and compelling, what we love most about this site's user experience is its mega-navigation, which guides website visitors to find exactly what they're looking for in just a couple of clicks.

Located in Atlanta, Ga., pindrop offers multi-factor anti-fraud and authentication solutions that deliver full audio intelligence to help call centers establish security, identity, and trust on every voice interaction.

The calm atmosphere created by plenty of white space, large and clear font choices, and lack of cluttered graphics appeals to professionals as well as drawing in families potentially making difficult choices.

LHC GROUP

The UI involvement on the LHC Group homepage results in a straightforward page for medical professionals, caregivers, and concerned family members alike.
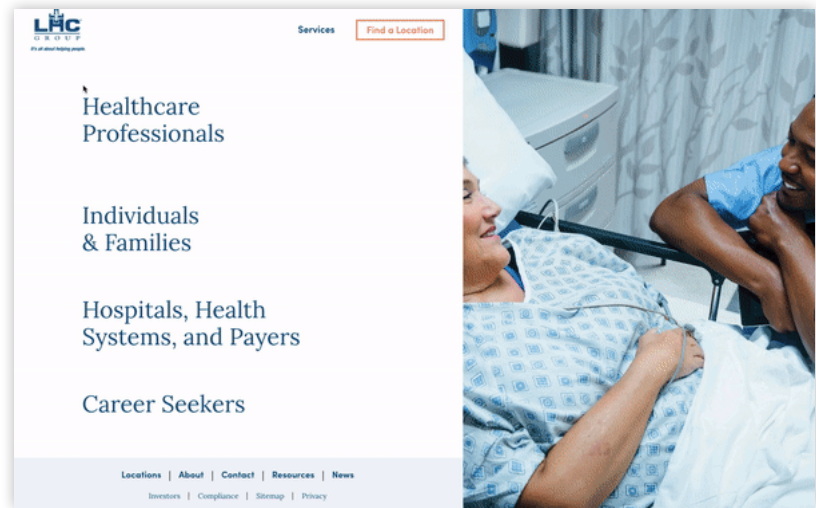
The calm atmosphere created by plenty of white space, large and clear font choices, and lack of cluttered graphics appeals to professionals as well as drawing in families potentially making difficult choices.

The design star of this website is really UX. The designers created templates to be used and customized by each separate location, all while maintaining brand identity.

This design allows different users to visit their specific parts of the site quickly.

Based in Lafayette, Louisiana, LHC Group is a leading national provider of in-home healthcare services in 35 states and the District of Columbia. With a focus on moving their industry forward, LHC Group encourages a culture of innovation. Check out the customizable location templates Golden Spiral designed and implemented for LHC Group.

If the UX designer creates the strategy and structure in a vacuum, there's a risk of over-planning and lack of flexibility. It's difficult to implement a masterpiece, especially when it must be integrated.

AVOID PITFALLS

A combination of bad user experience and design can certainly send visitors running. Whether it is a non-responsive website, a poor design, a confusing navigation, or an obnoxious amount of pop ups, how your website is built may be contributing to whether or not people stay or go.

Knowing when each designer will get involved and what the priorities are avoids conflict and ensures that every area is covered.

If the UX designer creates the strategy and structure in a vacuum, there's a risk of over-planning and lack of flexibility. It's difficult to implement a masterpiece, especially when it must be integrated. But you don't have UX at the beginning, it gets expensive and difficult to be flexible. Not only are you not getting insights from analytics, your site just isn't built to grow with you.

FUNCTION SHOULD COME BEFORE FORM

You want your website to look good, which is great in the short term. UI makes that happen by inviting the users, engaging them, and setting them up to have successful interactions with your product right from the start. But it's a mistake to prioritize UI over UX. Yes, you need your website to look good but without strong UX involvement, you're really just creating an online brochure. A website can be a powerful tool — if it's built with a solid structure, optimized to bring your users the information and tools they need at the right times. **Moving forward without UX limits the functionality of your site.**

## THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER FOUR

Can you put your eyes on your website's site map, content map, wireframe, and/or other website philosophy documents? If not compile them. When was the last time they were updated? How closely do they reflect what's really going on online today?

05

USING DESIGN TO SHOWCASE YOUR SOLUTION

Your priority should be to assure people they are in the right place when they get to your site. How? Make the aesthetic fit the industry that your technology serves. Have product screenshots displayed up front, and make sure copy specifically states the problem being solved. Sounds simple, but it's surprisingly rare.
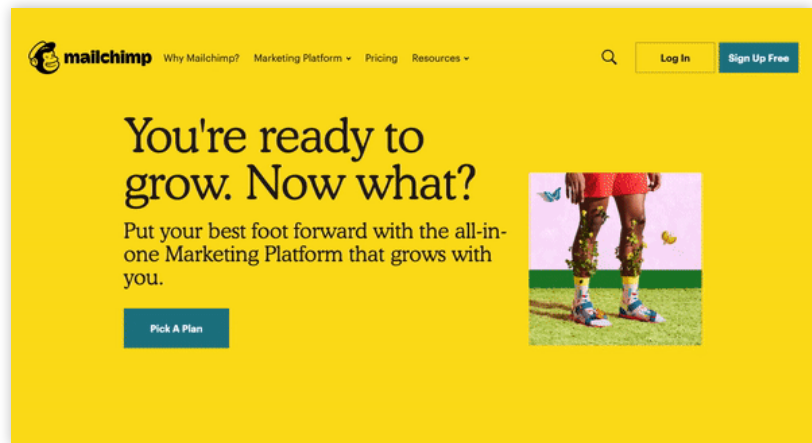
A great way to address these questions is to have the initial impression showcase the unique qualities of your solution. Here, you can demonstrate what the prospect can expect from your product and how your solution can work for them. There are a number of ways to do this, but here's some common examples.

1. SCREENSHOTS

The advantage to using screenshots is that showing a tangible product gains credibility with your viewer. Mailchimp does a great job of employing this method. Their homepage makes a splash with bold colors and interesting shapes to catch the visitor's eye. They then utilize these shapes to lead the viewer's eyes to screenshot videos where the visitor can see their application in action.

To avoid leaving the impression that your solution is too complex to handle, another method is to show a graphic or animation that gives an overview of your solution in action.

This method should strive to make your copy and screenshots answer a "what" and "how" framework. What does it do or what can I do with it? How does it enable me to do that? When the visual information is broken into digestible parts it helps your visitor feel that your solution is simple and manageable. If you try to claim too much within one screenshot, it can make your solution feel too complex. Screenshots become visual proof of the claims the copy makes. Then presto! Credibility.

2. ANIMATIONS

But sometimes, screenshots aren't the answer. If you have a product that is visually complex or is a disruptor to the market, it might be difficult for viewers to understand your solution through a screenshot. To avoid leaving the impression that your solution is too complex to handle, another method is to show a graphic or animation that gives an overview of your solution in action. To see what your solution does and how it can be implemented goes a long way to put a prospect's mind at ease. Concert Genetics' homepage is a great example of this method.

A screenshot of what Concert Genetics is doing to impact the world of genetic testing would hardly do their search engine justice. Our solution was to make the abstract more tangible. When visitors arrive on the Concert Genetics homepage, they are guided through a quick interactive story to provide visual metaphors for each of the three principles: connect, unify and simplify. This gives visitors a first impression that was enjoyable, informative, and simple to understand.
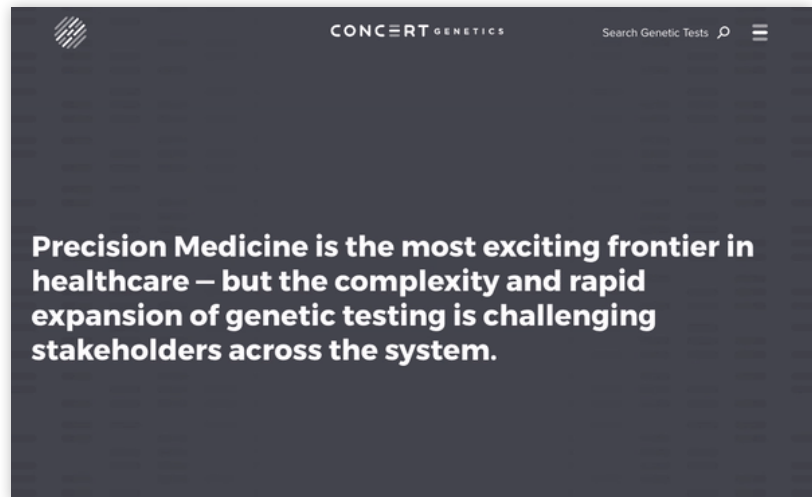
By showing you know where the prospect wants to go, you are able to form a bond with them that goes beyond being credibility; it is the first step in creating a brand advocate.

3. YOUR PROCESS

If your solution is too complex to showcase in a graphic or animation — or if you need to keep aspects of how your solution works close to chest — you can change your approach and instead address how it will affect the prospect's life after adoption. Videos, graphics, photos or testimonials that show where prospects could be after using your product can all be leveraged. By showing you know where the prospect wants to go, you are able to form a bond with them that goes beyond being credibility; it is the first step in creating a brand advocate.

For our client, Built, the process graphic carries the weight of the magic of their technology. Built created a Fintech SaaS solution for construction lending. There are so many hands involved — the owner or corporation building the project, the lender, the inspectors, municipalities, and others. How can one software solution connect them all, reduce friction, speed up the flow of money, and simplify the entire industry?
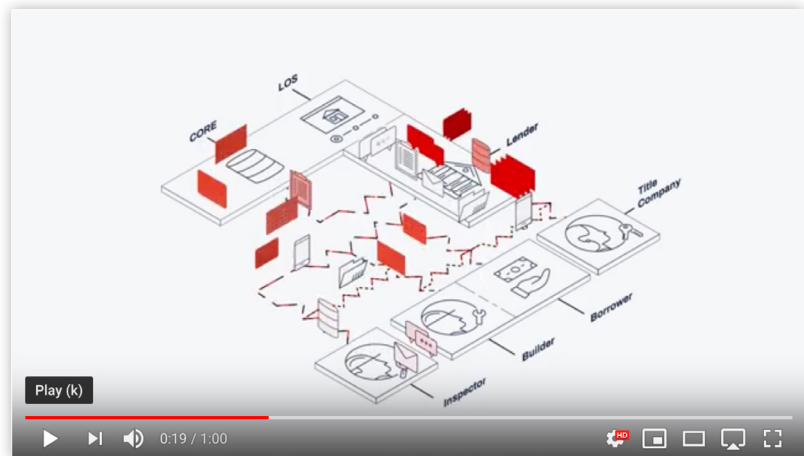
You can use these methods, mix them, or choose other methods to showcase your solution. Just remember that the goal here is to convey to your viewer an overview of what you do and how your solution works.

GOLDEN SPIRAL

Design continues to evolve. The flat design of the last few years has been combined with gradients to bring back some of the missing depth and delight circa 2007. It is important your site represents your product as a modern solution.

THE VISUAL AESTHETIC

When companies approach us for a new website we discover one of five observations about their aesthetic:

A. THE SITE DOESN'T MATCH YOUR BRAND

Has your visual identity changed since your last website overhaul? We've seen websites where companies have changed the logo on their site but left everything else in place. The complete visual identity system of your brand communicates on multiple levels. Our Vice President of Creative, Bennett Farkas, spoke in detail about the when and the how of transforming your brand.

B. THE SITE HAS A GOOD AESTHETIC THAT MAKES SENSE.

The brand has a good understanding of visuals and has developed and deployed a strong visual identity system.

C. THE SITE HAS AN OUTDATED AESTHETIC.

It holds together, but it just doesn't meet the trends and tendencies of current web design.

For example, skeuomorphism was the top UX aesthetic years ago when the first iPhone and iPad were designed. This design approach basically consists of taking real-world objects and transposing them into the digital landscape in a real-world way. Shortly after, there was a steep transition to the flat design you so often today.
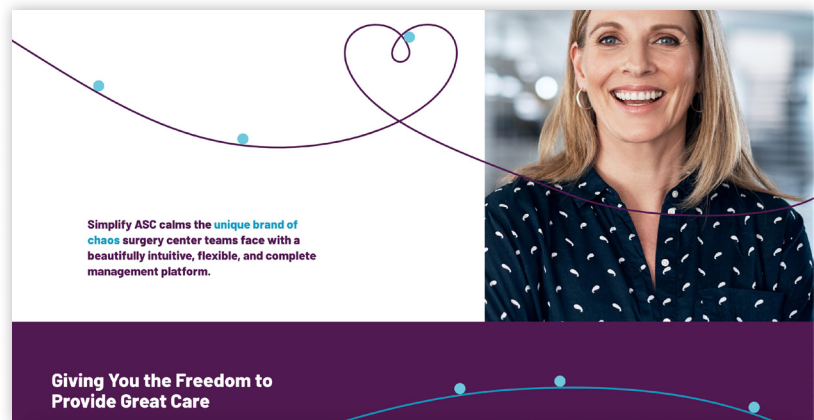
Design continues to evolve. The flat design of the last few years has been combined with gradients to bring back some of the missing depth and delight circa 2007. It is important your site represents your product as a modern solution.

D. THE WEBSITE IS JUST PLAIN UGLY.

We see the fewest number in this category, but it happens.

E. THE WEBSITE LOOKS JUST LIKE EVERYONE IN YOUR COMPETITIVE NICHE.

If your site doesn't differentiate your company from your competitors, it just blends into the landscape. We recently worked with Simplify ASC to amplify their brand, turbocharge their content, and overhaul their website. Through our analysis of the competitive landscape, we noticed is that their website was blue and white — just like their top competitors. The entire niche was blue and white.

Simplify ASC calms the unique brand of chaos surgery center teams face with a beautifully intuitive, flexible, and complete management platform.

Giving You the Freedom to Provide Great Care

So we intentionally removed blue as the primary color from their aesthetic as a way to differentiate them visually from their competitors because if you see three other companies and they have these similar colors, you're going to group them together in your mind. You will treat them as "same." But, if there is a clear standout, that company is memorable. For now, Simplify ASC is that standout.

Psychology comes into play when we talk colors. There's a lot of subjectivity in what is good or bad, but these decisions go back to: What are your goals for your website? What are you trying to do?

Graphics need to support your sophisticated brand, not make your company look generic, cheesy, and amateur. There should be a visual style to your company in addition to a color palette. For your original graphics, is your attitude more pen and ink sketches or technical?

THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER FIVE

Host an off-site lunch and learn meeting with representatives from design, sales, and support. Set boundaries for the discussion by reminding everyone of the goals of your website. Then, talk open and honestly about the design of the website. Take notes and make a punchlist for what needs to happen now and a wishlist for what needs to happen in the next 12 months.

06

## ESSENTIAL PAGES TO INCLUDE IN YOUR WEBSITE PLAN

HOME PAGE

Great first impressions in B2B technology will have a laser focus on two key messages. First, that you understand the buyer's problem. Remember: buyers came to your site looking to solve a problem, not to learn about the technical capabilities of your product.

Secondly, your homepage impression must speak to your ability to solve that problem: present the problem and solution statements as a one-two punch.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. BEGIN WITH A PROBLEM STATEMENT

Your buyer won't trust you if they don't believe you grasp their problem. When redesigning our own website, we found that most of our buyers had similar problems: a lack of sales leads, trouble articulating what they and their product do, or difficulty attracting investors. Our homepage first impression speaks directly to the concerns of B2B tech leaders: "Own your market." By using our online real estate to speak to the buyers' problems, rather than just to our capabilities, we show them that we really understand them — while still pointing them to the solution we provide.
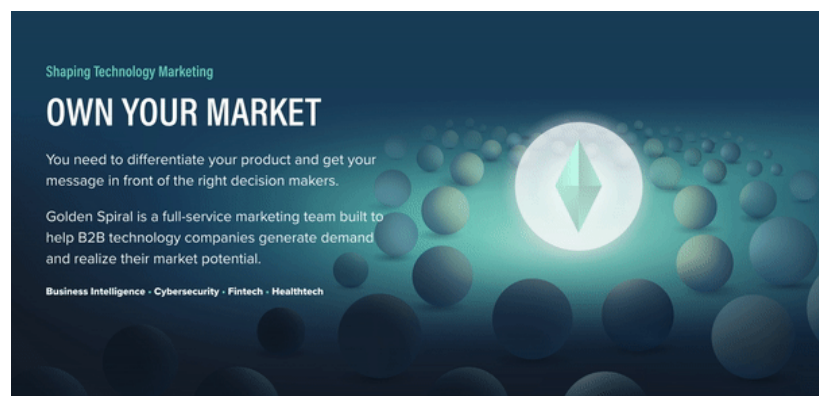
By tying their aesthetic decisions to the core problem they solved, Prescribe Wellness created a first impression that still belonged in the healthtech space but in a way that was unique to them and memorable to their visitors.

2. TIE VISUALS TO VALUE

Prescribe Wellness is a healthtech company that bridges "a gap in the health community." They might have felt compelled to choose between a very tech-oriented aesthetic or one that focused more on photos of a clinical healthcare environment — but those visuals are already flooding the healthtech market. What would make their website different than their competitors?
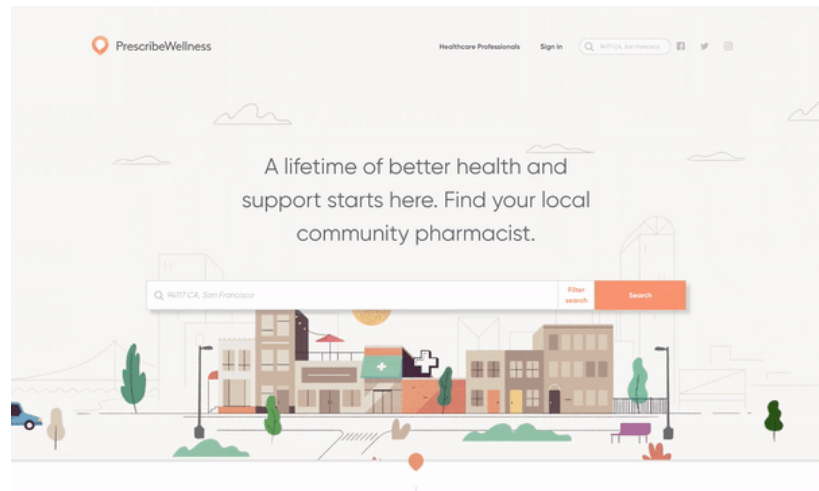
Choosing illustrations, as opposed to photos, gave them the flexibility to depict scenes of how their tech could be used, tying the visuals into the overarching sense of community. By tying their aesthetic decisions to the core problem they solved, Prescribe Wellness created a first impression that still belonged in the healthtech space but in a way that was unique to them and memorable to their visitors.

ABOUT US PAGE

The number one mistake you can make when creating a website is not having an "About" page.

In B2B technology marketing, your website needs to convince users that you are experts. A great way to address this is to showcase your team and their credentials, your organization's hard-won insights, and the results that others have seen from working with you. These tactics establish credibility and build trust with your buyer in the initial stages of their decision-making process.
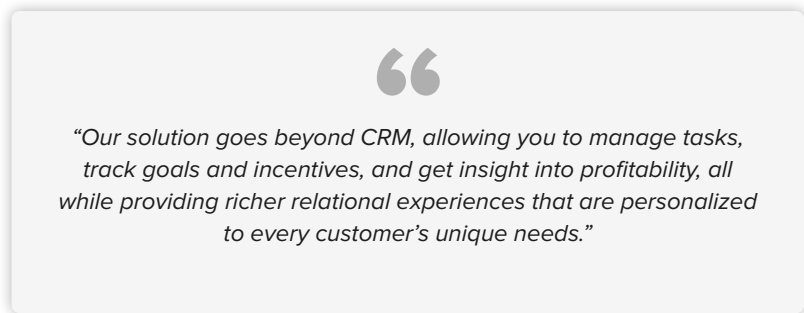
1. YOUR POSITIONING

Concert Genetics uses a bold contrast in colors to set off their positioning on their About Us page.

2. YOUR COMPANY'S MISSION AND YOUR "WHY"

360 View took a storyteller's approach to their About Us page. This stance allows them to repeat their understanding of the pain points of their marketplace and create a strong foundation on which to build their why.

> "Our solution goes beyond CRM, allowing you to manage tasks, track goals and incentives, and get insight into profitability, all while providing richer relational experiences that are personalized to every customer's unique needs."

3. THE VALUES YOU LIVE BY

Simplify ASC presents their About Us information on a page entitled "Why Simplify?" They build their case toward a climactic moment including a call to action and a form. They express their values in the penultimate idea.
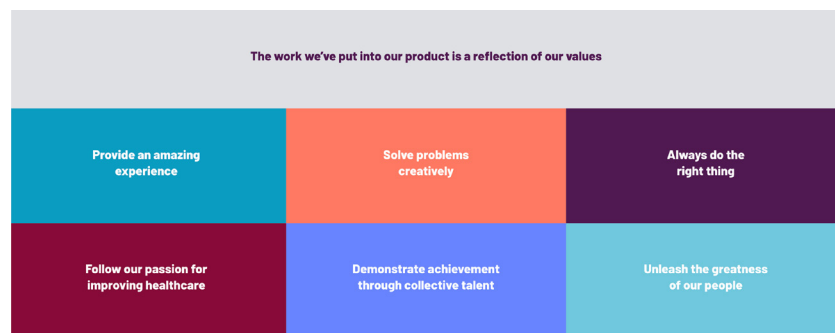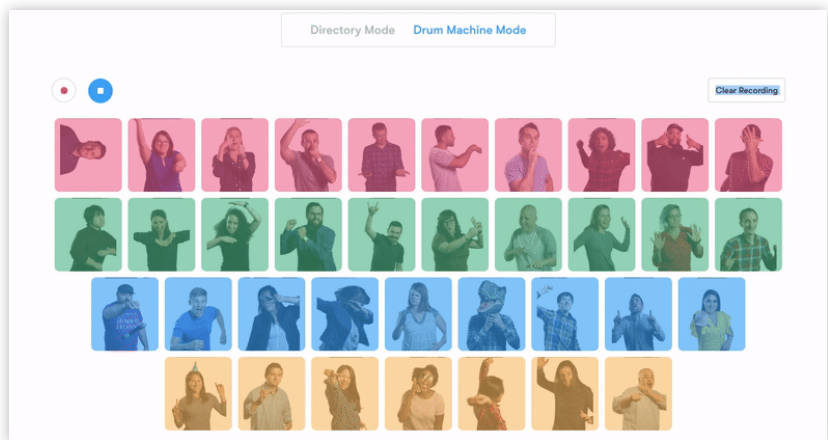
From a UX perspective, your visitors are looking for career information in the About space.

4. THE LEADERSHIP TEAM AND/OR ALL EMPLOYEES

Video company Wistia wins the prize for the most fun employee page in B2B tech. It's "About" section features an interactive "yearbook," with two options for engaging with the page's content.

- "Directory Mode" shows standard headshots of all 105 employees. (But, surprise — when you hover over each individual, the series of photos changes to employees dancing, making funny faces, and showcasing their personalities.)

- "Drum Machine Mode" and you can make all of the employees dance in unison.

5. CAREERS

Digital Reasoning's About page includes large blocks of photos, text, and backgrounds to discuss five key facets of the machine learning company. They chose, like many, to break out their careers page. From a UX perspective, your visitors are looking for career information in the About space. Digital Reasoning makes it easy to find.
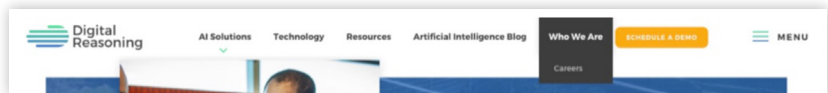
6. CONTACT INFORMATION

Santa Rosa Consulting builds in subtle opportunities to contact their staff through email, Linkedin, or a full complement of methods throughout the About page. They desire a direct approach with their customers so, in the footer throughout their site — including the About page — they a personal invitation to call.

Humanize your About Us page through the ideas presented in this article.

LANDING PAGES

B2B decision-makers don't wait (or even want) to hear from a salesperson any more. Instead, they are researching purchase decisions — and vetting your specific company — online. When a prospect lands on your website, what do they see?

The first impression is the most important 8-10 seconds in your marketing cycle.

Your landing page's call-to-action (CTA) will be one of the biggest determiners for whether your user converts or not. Make your CTA button as eye-catching as possible and experiment with your CTA messaging to see what works best.

The first impression is the most important 8-10 seconds in your marketing cycle. You only have a few heartbeats to capture your buyers' attention and win their trust. At this stage, buyers are asking questions like:

- Are they experts in the space?
- Do they understand me?
- Do they truly grasp the problem?

They will answer those questions based on your frontline messaging and design sensibility.

In B2B technology, good design is design that clearly showcases Why, How, and What you do to solve your buyer's problem.

START WITH A PROBLEM STATEMENT

Like a solid homepage, a landing page begins with a problem statement. For our own website re-design, the narratives we created for resource landing pages revolve around these needs:

Do you know your competition?

Are you ready for your next product launch?

How do you rank higher on Google?

Do you need more marketing power with less investment?

We use our online real estate to speak to the buyers' problems, rather than just to our capabilities. We build trust while still pointing them to the solution we provide.

Learn how to boost the conversion rate of your landing pages through this article.

A WORD ABOUT CALLS TO ACTION

Your landing page's call-to-action (CTA) will be one of the biggest determiners for whether your user converts or not. Make your CTA button as eye-catching as possible and experiment with your CTA messaging to see what works best. Do more people respond to a short and sweet CTA, like Sign Up? Or does a more value-specific message, like "Sign Up for Our 2-Week Email Series" get more submissions? Research, test, measure, and adjust accordingly.

When the user clearly understands its value and it answers questions that they already have, they are much more likely to share their information in exchange for a download.

Consider creating a Thank You page that supports brand awareness, engagement, your overall inbound marketing effort, and the ultimate— the sales funnel.

THANK YOU PAGES

Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, sent an iconic thank you letter to the team that built his space suit 25 years after Apollo XI.

Don't make your prospects or customers wait 25 years—or even 25 seconds—for you to say "thank you."

Think about it: How much time do you spend crafting content to foster a website conversion from a lead? How much time do you spend crafting your "thank you" message?

Too many companies just throw together a short "thank you" message as an afterthought. Is that any way to treat that lead you've worked so hard to acquire?

Consider creating a Thank You page that supports brand awareness, engagement, your overall inbound marketing effort, and the ultimate—the sales funnel.

Here are four tactics for building a Thank You Page that capitalizes on the energy you have already expended and increases future and deeper engagement.

1. DON'T FORGET TO ACTUALLY SAY "THANK YOU"... AND MEAN IT

We can get so tied up in messaging, we forget to actually say "thank you."

Saying thank you:

- Tells your users that the click actually worked
- Reinforces that they made a good decision
- Humanizes you. Remember, there are human beings on both sides of the click.
- Builds the relationship

2. BE PERSONAL

TD Bank conducted primary research on saying "thank you" and discovered that, "more than three out of four consumers like when brands demonstrate their appreciation (77 percent)." The study also notes that:

- 60% of respondents believe that saying thanks should be directed to an individual
- 44% believe saying thanks should be personal

3. DISPLAY YOUR REGULAR NAVIGATION

Website best practices teach us to remove website navigation from Landing Pages. You don't want visitors to leave that page before finishing filling out the form. However, on most Thank You Pages, giving your visitors more opportunity to visit your website is a good idea.

Create another Call to Action on the Thank You Page that points them to an answer for one of them. If you have an email newsletter, consider a Call to Action that pushes people to sign up for it from your Thank You Page.

4. MANAGE VISITOR EXPECTATIONS

If website visitors are new to your company, they don't know what to expect. Your company is on stage. Visitors are asking:

- How quick will they follow up?
- Where and how do I get my downloaded resource?
- What happens to my email address?
- Make a brief statement about your follow-up process to set their minds at ease.

5. HIT THEM WITH ANOTHER CALL TO ACTION

As you've worked with your customers, you've identified the top four or five questions they ask when they first interact with you. Create another Call to Action on the Thank You Page that points them to an answer for one of them. If you have an email newsletter, consider a Call to Action that pushes people to sign up for it from your Thank You Page.
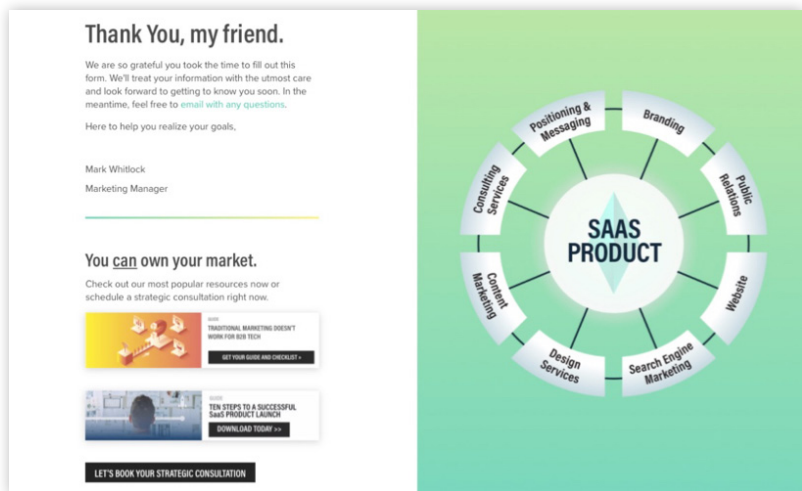
Make sure the secondary Call to Action requires less commitment and is a lower priority than the website conversion that got them to the page. The secondary Call to Action is essentially the equivalent of "Do you want fries with that?"

Discover more on how to improve your conversion rates with these tips for your Thank You pages

Let's also assume that if a user has found their way on to your pricing page, they have an understanding of your product and see some value in moving forward. Now that you have them here, you want to address their concerns right away.

PRICING PAGE

A Pricing page that informs and converts is key to scaling your enterprise. While every pricing page varies, the purpose is ultimately the same: eliminate any concerns a prospect might have, and then convert them into a paying customer.

Let's assume the main purpose is to convert prospects into paying customers. Let's also assume that if a user has found their way on to your pricing page, they have an understanding of your product and see some value in moving forward. Now that you have them here, you want to address their concerns right away.

Keep these in mind to build a pricing page that converts:

1. PRICING OPTIONS

Options fundamentally change how the prospect evaluates your product. In a single-choice option, their decision is binary; a yes or a no. However, by providing options, you nurture your prospect into analyzing how they might work with you, not just whether or not they will work with you.

Options also provide relativity. As humans, we don't have an innate sense of what something should cost. We rely on comparison. When you bought your car, did you know exactly what you should pay, or did you compare it to the relative value of other cars?

Carefully name your options. Work to align the names with the persona of the buyer rather than using generic names like Bronze, Silver, or Gold.

Showcasing customer testimonials right on the page alleviates concern and establishes credibility. Remember, your prospects are real people who value the opinions of others.

2. CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

Showcasing customer testimonials right on the page alleviates concern and establishes credibility. Remember, your prospects are real people who value the opinions of others.

3. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs remove barriers. They're often the most succinct copy on your website. For the pragmatic buyer, this is a nice place to cut through the fluff of feature-talk and front-line messaging and address the concerns you hear in the sales process.

THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER SIX

Open your website in a new incognito window. Try to look through each of the major pages of your navigation through fresh eyes. Which page needs the most work to address your customers' needs? Which needs you to assert your expertise with more strength? Start the process for updating those pages.

07

HOW DO YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR WEBSITE?

The launch of your website is not the end of the race; it's the beginning.

Many B2B tech companies make the mistake of investing a hefty sum, hundreds of human hours, and a dump truck full of other resources to launch their website, but nothing to maintain it.

Would you purchase a house and never update anything to make the house more enjoyable or livable? The same is true for your website.

Website optimization is the process by which you analyze data to improve your website's design, structure, and content based on your overarching goals and relevant data. This process is absolutely critical to the overall success of digital marketing campaigns. Optimization ensures your website transforms as the needs of your audience and the goals of your company evolve.

Website optimization is an ongoing process that begins about 30-60 days after your website launches. After this point, you should determine the frequency at which your marketing team (or your agency) will analyze your website, determine optimization recommendations, and make improvements.

THE WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION PROCESS

There are many moving pieces of your website, so start small and go from there.

1. Refer to website KPIs and data: Did you set measurable goals at the beginning of your website redesign process? If you don't have exact KPIs, now would be a good time to make some. (You can use this guide to do so.) Your goals could be something like: "increase form conversions by 20%," or "increase product video views to 150 views per day." You will want to use these KPIs to determine which aspects of your website aren't helping you reach your goals.

2. Select what to optimize based on data: Based on the data you review, select one to three website components. If you try to optimize everything, you'll overwhelm yourself with data points and work.

3. Strategize for optimization: Now is the time to brainstorm. For example, if your goal is 150 product video views per day, and you're currently only receiving 75, start to strategize: how can we double viewership each day? Maybe you change the video's location, length, freeze frame, or even the color of the "play" button.

4. Execute: Once you decide what you want to optimize, and your desired course of action, it's time to implement your strategy. Record your baseline measurements and your goals for the newly optimized content.

5. Analyze: Analyze your optimization efforts at least 60 days after a change has been made to allow ample time and data to accrue. If you are happy with the results, it's time to start over with a different aspect of your website. If you're not happy with the results, repeat steps one through five. (And don't feel discouraged.)

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR WEBSITE?

Website optimization is an ongoing process that begins about 30-60 days after your website launches. After this point, you should determine the frequency at which your marketing team (or your agency) will analyze your website, determine optimization recommendations, and make improvements. We recommend repeating this process every 60-90 days per optimization.

OPTIMIZING DESIGN, STRUCTURE, AND CONTENT

Based on our experience, we've outlined some of the most common pieces of the website optimization process — most of which you should be able to do on your own. Be careful not to optimize too many content pieces at once, because you won't know what worked and what didn't. Tweak one thing at a time and measure carefully for clear results.

VISUAL CONTENT

Location: Changing the location of an important photo or video on a page can increase its chances of being viewed.

Length: For video specifically, you can try different lengths to see if a particular length results in more views and conversions.

Content: Sometimes something as simple as changing an image can increase conversions.

CALLS-TO-ACTION
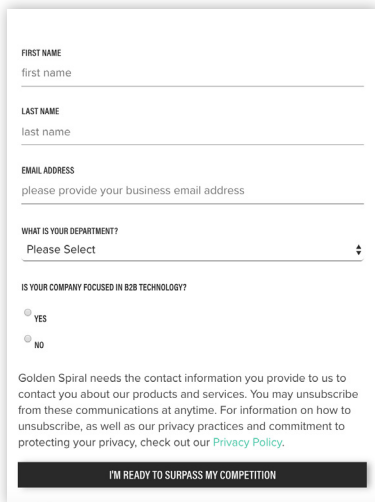
Location: Maybe no one is clicking your calls-to-action because they're buried at the bottom of a page. Switching up the location of your CTAs is a simple optimization that goes a long way. If your CTA was previously at the bottom of a page, try moving it up — or add an additional button closer to the top of the page.

Color: CTA buttons should stand out from the rest of the content on a page. Use a bright accent color to draw attention to the button (or buttons) you want visitors to click.

Content: Sometimes you think you're giving great directions, but if your CTAs aren't getting clicked, the "next step" might not be clear enough. Experiment with different CTA button language to earn more clicks.

For some tips and inspiration on optimizing your calls-to-action, check out: The "Bump, Set, Spike" Approach to Creating Calls-to-Action that Convert.

**FORMS**

Are few people—or zero—filling out your forms? If a landing page is getting a lot of traffic but very few conversions, it might be a problem with your form — which means it is time to optimize! **With forms, you will want to optimize the following qualities:**

Length: While short forms normally get more conversions than long forms, they both have their place. For example, your shortest form (1-2 form fields) is likely for your blog subscription or newsletter, while your longest form (6+ form fields) is likely your lead qualifying form. Content downloads and other resources fall somewhere in between. In most cases, B2B tech companies struggle with getting conversions on their longer forms because of the perceived larger commitment. If you're not happy with your number of submissions, try shortening these longer-length forms.

Location: If a form is buried at the bottom of a long scrolling page, it might not even be seen. Heat map technology — software that shows the most and least popular areas of your site — can help you determine how far website visitors go on a given page. If they're not even reaching the form, you need to move it up.

NAVIGATION

Navigation is the most important part of your website, and should be analyzed and optimized over time. With navigation, it isn't as easy as saying "change the color for the next 60 days." Rather, a navigation's ease of use should be closely analyzed using heat map technology and videos of how individuals use your site. From there, you will want to work closely with your design team to make the necessary changes.
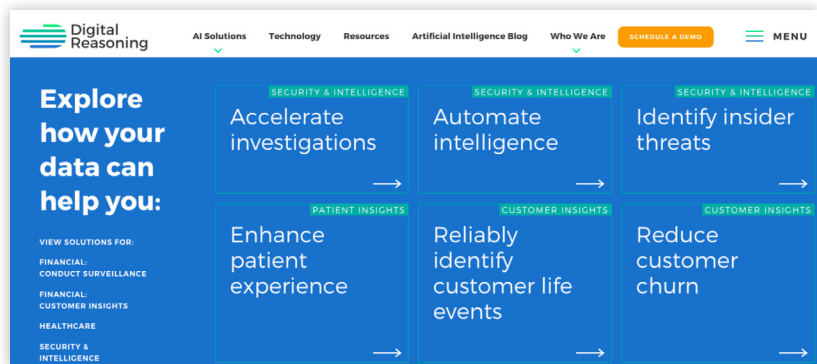
For example, maybe your company opted for a modern "hamburger" navigation (the type of off-canvas navigation accessible by toggling three little bars that look like a hamburger). Due to growing mobile use, these menus are becoming more popular on desktop to offer a seamless user experience. However, depending on your audience, you may realize that you need to return to a standard bar navigation based on your own research.
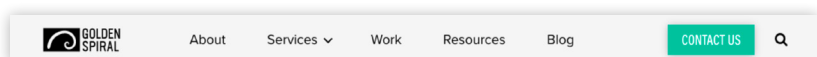
Website optimization is an essential part of your marketing strategy. It ensures your website is working in a way that helps your B2B tech company meet your goals. When you continually optimize your website to meet your user's needs, you are investing in your business.

PAGE LAYOUTS

Optimizing a page layout happens when you're simply not happy with the results of a particular page, or category of pages on your website. For example, pages with high bounce rates or low time spent on the page may be an indication that website visitors aren't satisfied with the page content and experience. In this case, it is likely a combination of text content, visual content, calls-to-action and form position that need to be carefully analyzed and optimized.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

When you launched your website, you (hopefully!) took the time to optimize your URLs, title tags and meta descriptions for the keywords you wish to rank for. However, with Google changing its algorithms hundreds of times per year, keeping an eye on your organic rank for top keywords is important. We recommend revisiting your website's title tags and meta descriptions on an annual basis to determine if they need to be optimized based on Google's changes and your organic rank.

```
8    <meta charset="UTF-8">
9    <title>Golden Spiral, Shaping Technology Marketing | B2B Tech Marketing</title>
```

TOOLS FOR WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

In order to optimize your website, you're going to need data. Lots of data. Here's our suite of recommended tools that can give you all the information you need to know to make smart decisions about optimizing your B2B tech website.

Website optimization is an essential part of your marketing strategy. It ensures your website is working in a way that helps your B2B tech company meet your goals. When you continually optimize your website to meet your user's needs, you are investing in your business.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

While this is the only completely free tool on the list, it is arguably the most important. Google Analytics provides excellent insight into the overall performance of your website, and can even track key events (like watching a video) and conversions (like requesting a demo). To help, we've already written this article on essential data points you should be tracking in order to optimize your site.
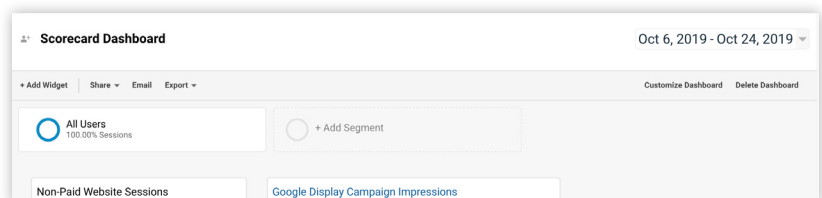
WISTIA

If you're using video to showcase your products, you should also be using Wistia. This video marketing software tracks video engagement, including total views, and even the average amount (e.g., 37%) of the video that is watched. The tool also allows you to embed forms to collect data, and add calls-to-action to drive conversions. It also integrates with HubSpot.

HOTJAR

Wondering which aspects of your website are "hot" and which are not? Hotjar provides heat maps to help you understand how website visitors are using your website. This would be helpful when analyzing how page layout affects website bounce rates and form conversions.
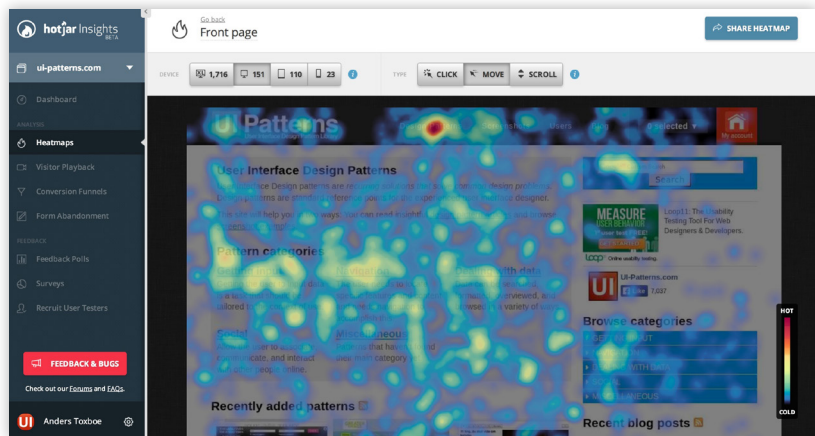
SMARTLOOK

Probably the coolest tool on the list, Smartlook provides videos of individuals using your website — and is truly an eye-opening experience. Like Hotjar, SmartLook is extremely helpful when you're optimizing page layouts, or even your website's navigation.

MARKETING AUTOMATION SYSTEM AND CRM

Whether you're using HubSpot, Pardot/Salesforce, Eloqua, Marketo, SharpSpring, Mailchimp or any of a dozen other tools, make sure every page plugs in well and doesn't conflict with others. Sometimes our developers will look into the code of a site only to find three or four tracking codes that do essentially the same function, but since all are active at the same time, the site slows down dramatically.

We found ways to take the lessons we've learned from creating 50+ client websites and applied them to our own (and now our traffic is up).

ONGOING OPTIMIZATION

Your website is not static. It needs to grow and change with you. Naturally, you will be adding content — blog posts and gated resources — on an ongoing basis, but many other features will be added as well:

- Calls to action
- New copy
- New logos or information about new clients
- Landing pages to support events
- Your next new product
- Career information (i.e., job descriptions and culture feature)

Is your website able to take all of these new features or will you be in a constant cycle of breaking and fixing your website?

Ongoing optimization should be a part of your website process each month. What's working? What's not? How can we improve load speed? Have we missed any opportunities to improve our SEO?

If you've visited our website before, you won't even notice that we've overhauled our site in the recent past. It looks the same — same aesthetic and same content — but we realized we had added on many features and they were slowing us down. We found ways to take the lessons we've learned from creating 50+ client websites and applied them to our own (and now our traffic is up).

MEASURING PAGE POPULARITY

Question: Which pages get the most and least traffic?

Popular (and unpopular) pages are one of the most important (and easy-to-understand) components of your website strategy. These are indicators of which pages visitors find the most helpful or which pages they might be stumbling across from organic search. Of course, you have some control over pageviews and unique pageviews if you're investing in paid ads.

While this is helpful to identify which website pages are working, it is also a great indicator of content popularity. For example, blog posts with more pageviews can provide insight into which topics are engaging for your audience.

MEASURABLE DATA POINT: PAGEVIEWS AND UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS

Here are a few things to consider as you analyze these data points.

We all know that websites don't rank, pages do. Therefore, pages with a lot of website traffic are a key indicator that you're doing something right.

Often, visitors on the "Contact Us" page are just looking for information like an address, phone number, or email, and won't engage with anything on the page. This sometimes results in a high bounce rate, but may just indicate that the user came to that page, found what they needed, and left.

On the flip-side, low website traffic means you're not quite hitting the nail on the head. This might simply mean that the topic an individual page or article covers doesn't totally resonate with your audience, or you're not optimizing it effectively to rank for its intended term. Your top-ranking pages will usually be your home page, About page, and product page(s). If one of these isn't seeing much traffic, you should take a closer look to make sure there is appropriate navigation in place to guide visitors to each page.

How to Find Pageviews in Google Analytics

Under the "Behavior" tab, toggle to "Site Content," and then "All Pages." Within this view, you can find your pages that get the most traffic and the least traffic.

Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit
	41,334 % of Total: 100.00% (41,334)	26,116 % of Total: 100.00% (26,116)	00:01:06 Avg for View: 00:01:06 (0.00%)	17,919 % of Total: 100.00% (17,919)	33.90% Avg for View: 33.90% (0.00%)	43.35% Avg for View: 43.35% (0.00%)

MEASURING PAGE PERFORMANCE

Question: How are our pages performing?

At Golden Spiral, we work with a variety of B2B tech companies on improving their websites. And of course, one question everyone wants answered within 3-6 months of a new site launching is: how are our pages performing? That's a pretty loaded question and it isn't always easy to answer.

For example, a **high bounce rate** is typically associated with poor page performance. However, sometimes pages like "Contact Us" or "Pricing" have high bounce rates. This doesn't necessarily mean the page isn't performing well. Often, visitors on the "Contact Us" page are just looking for information like an address, phone number, or email, and won't engage with anything on the page. This sometimes results in a high bounce rate, but may just indicate that the user came to that page, found what they needed, and left.

MEASURABLE DATA POINTS: VISITOR BEHAVIOR STATS

To answer this question, we'll need a few data points: Average time spent on page, entrances, bounce rate, and exit rate. The **average time spent on page** is an average of how long individuals digest content before leaving. **Entrances** identify the number of users who entered your site through that page. **Bounce rate** indicates the rate at which someone visits your site and leaves without engaging with any content or visiting a second page. **Exit rate** indicates the percent of individuals who exited your site via that page. While these data points can be analyzed separately, together, they answer the question: are our pages performing up to par?

Pages with high bounce rates and high average time spent on page likely indicate that visitors found the content they were looking for and left, maybe because you didn't provide a next step. The same may be true if a page has a high exit rate.

Here are a few things to consider as you analyze these data points:

If a page has a **high bounce rate** and **low average of time spent on page,** or has a **high number of entrances** and a **high bounce rate**, this likely indicates that the content does not meet user expectations in one form or another. This is especially true for blog and resource content. Read the content yourself and determine how long it takes to digest it as your own benchmark.

Pages with **high bounce rates** and **high average time spent on page** likely indicate that visitors found the content they were looking for and left, maybe because you didn't provide a next step. The same may be true if a page has a high exit rate. Pages with this quality are "low-hanging fruit" that you can optimize to further nurture users down the funnel by adding a call-to-action or additional content for them to engage with.

Pages with **low bounce rates** and **high entrances** are a good thing, indicating the page is doing great! Take a look and ask yourself: what is this page doing correctly? How can I copy this success?

MEASURING OVERALL WEBSITE SUCCESS

Question: Are we meeting our original website goals?

MEASURABLE DATA POINT: CUSTOM

If you've set measurable goals in relation to your website performance, you can easily tie those goals back to Google Analytics using the Goals tool. Within Google Analytics you can set up to 20 goals per domain. These "goals" should tie directly to the goals of your website.

THE FIRST THING TO DO AFTER READING CHAPTER SEVEN

Don't try to optimize everything. Take a look at your three highest converting or most often visited pages. How can you optimize those pages? Set up an A/B test with the existing pages and new optimized versions. Put an appointment on your calendar to evaluate the results of the A/B test of the three pages in 60 days.

08

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE HIRING AN AGENCY TO CREATE A NEW WEBSITE

SELECTING AN AGENCY IS DIFFICULT DECISION

Selecting an agency is difficult decision for a B2B tech company — and the Chief Marketing Officer — to make. It's an investment and a long-term commitment.

Making the right choice can make you feel like you won the lottery.

Choosing poorly can drain energy — and funds — from your company.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

DO I HAVE THE CAPACITY INSIDE?

Perform some internal analysis to ensure you're filling the right gaps with the right team. An internal analysis will help you pinpoint what to look for in your agency's expertise and offerings.

WHAT IS MY VISION FOR SUCCESS?

Before shopping for tactics, you need to define your goals and identify measurable KPIs to ensure you meet the goals for your website (see chapter 2). You can't hire the right team if you don't know what you're attempting.

WHAT IS OUR INTERNAL PROCESS FOR APPROVAL AND DAY-TO-DAY COMMUNICATIONS AND HOW WILL IT WORK WITH AN OUTSIDE AGENCY?

Be honest about who makes the decisions and how your decision process works. If you don't have a formal process, now is the time to author one. Once you add an agency to your mix, you'll need a process for internal and external team members to run on.

WHAT IS MY BUDGET?

Be sure to decide on a project budget before you begin the process. You have probably heard a dozen or more pricetags for websites. No two websites are alike. Once you decided what you want your website to DO, you can begin to scope a website build.

WHAT SKILLS AND/OR EXPERTISE DOES MY TEAM LACK?

Identify the areas of expertise that your marketing team doesn't have.

WHAT DO YOU WANT THE AGENCY RELATIONSHIP TO LOOK LIKE?

Define the "rules of engagement." Some companies want a very hands-off approach with their marketing agency, while others want daily communication.

DOES THE AGENCY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

You are looking for matches in these areas:

Industry

There are vast differences between an agency that markets sneakers and one that markets a SaaS solution. Agencies with an B2B tech focus are already immersed in the intricacies and complexities of that world, rather than having to learn them.

Expertise

Find the expert in what you want your website to accomplish, not just in building the structure and pages of a site. You want and need your website to perform and convert customers, not just look cool.

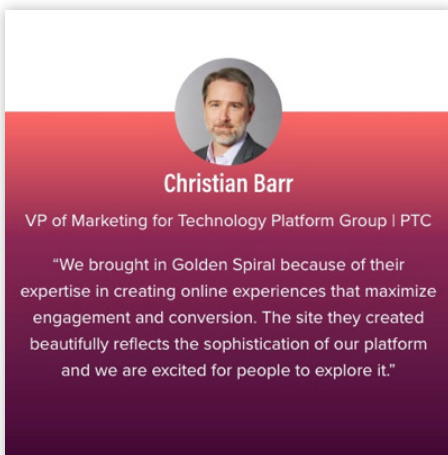Seek an agency with a proven track record of creating business engines.

Also, ask the hard questions about scoping the project, delivering the website on time, and staying on budget.

Culture

Spend time researching the people, mission, and values of the agencies you're considering. When you hire an employee, you make sure the new team member will fit your company culture. Make sure the agency you hire does the same.

Partnership

How does the agency you're considering handle account management? Will you only have access to your rep, or will you have open communication lines to executives plus the artisans and writers who are serving your account? What levels of involvement, partnership, and communication do you want and need? Ask these questions in the hiring process so you know you will have the kind of partner you want most.

Christian Barr

VP of Marketing for Technology Platform Group | PTC

"We brought in Golden Spiral because of their expertise in creating online experiences that maximize engagement and conversion. The site they created beautifully reflects the sophistication of our platform and we are excited for people to explore it."

Transparency

Most agencies will use some type of project management software to keep clients in the loop. At the beginning of the process, you should expect a timeline of deliverables (or activities) so that both teams are held accountable. We recommend working with a KPI document with weekly monthly, and quarterly reporting. Don't get too caught up on things like hours; You aren't buying time; you're buying results.

12 KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SCREENING AGENCIES

1. What services do you offer?
2. What is your process? How do you determine what services will be most effective?
3. What does your agency do best?
4. What types of project management and communication software do you use?
5. What does your reporting structure look like?
6. How do you handle communication and collaboration?
7. How big is the team that will be managing and executing our work? What is their experience?
8. How do you structure the project timeline?
9. On a monthly basis, what KPIs does your team focus on?
10. Do you have any references we can speak with?
11. What is your employee retention rate?
12. What is your client retention rate?

THE GOLDEN SPIRAL ADVANTAGE

Golden Spiral provides strategic marketing services exclusively for B2B technology companies. We understand what it takes to bring complex solutions to the B2B market and – we thrive on it.

We start by clearly understanding your business goals, then develop the strategies, tactics, and agreed upon KPIs that ensure our efforts drive the desired results. A strong, data-driven plan is key to success in the market. It is the cornerstone of our work and relationships with our clients.

Our proprietary Buyer Matrix process ensures your solutions are strategically positioned to address real market needs and speed traction. Knowing and understanding the real problems buyers face is the key to customer-centric engagement. Our process ensures our efforts are pointed in the right direction.

We excel at bringing out the soul of the organizations we work with. Communicating the "why" is the intangible essence that creates affinity with buyers and is often is a key difference maker. We will help you express who you are, what you uniquely bring — and why it matters.

Our integrated nature also gives us flexibility. Some clients hire us to be their marketing department. We help them with strategy and provide all of their services. Others come to us because their team is missing a specialty, like automation. We plug in right where they need us. Plus, these clients also benefit from our integrated nature and our industrywide knowledge.

Our clients appreciate that we are very focused as a company, concentrating our efforts on the B2B technology space. We don't take every potential opportunity that walks in our digital door. Website development — and marketing as a whole — isn't a short game. It's a commitment. We're ready to help you accomplish your goals. Discover the Golden Spiral advantage for yourself.

Click the button to introduce yourself to us.

One of our team members will be in touch with you soon.

I'M READY TO SEE THE TYPE OF WEBSITE GOLDEN SPIRAL CAN BUILD FOR ME

GOLDEN SPIRAL

Shaping Technology Marketing