

Discover the Power of Web Design in 5 Easy Steps



If your website's purpose is to help you make money, you already know that website design can make or break your business.

The problem is, what do you do when you don't speak CSS as a native tongue and do not want to hire a professional designer to optimize your design for conversion?

You can fiddle around with a shot in the dark approach, or you can talk to someone who's had success in effectively tweaking website to increase conversion rates.

Let's dive in.

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Authors

Derek Halpern, <http://socialtriggers.com>

Pamela Wilson, <http://bigbrandsystem.com>

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Striking Design Gold

When I started looking for ways to generate more income from my websites, I started with a website that used CPM-based ads as the primary income generator.

If you aren't familiar with CPM-based ads, they pay you for every 1,000 impressions you generate, so the big question was, “How do I get people to click around more on my website?”

The answer was simple — design tweaks.

More specifically, I remember testing accent colors—a design tactic you learn about later in this report—and they helped me persuade people to click around my site by calling their attention to new pieces of content.

If I remember right, one accent color helped me increase the ad impressions of one specific page by about 33%, which essentially put around 33% more money in my pocket.

Are these design tweaks hard?

Nope, anyone can do them.

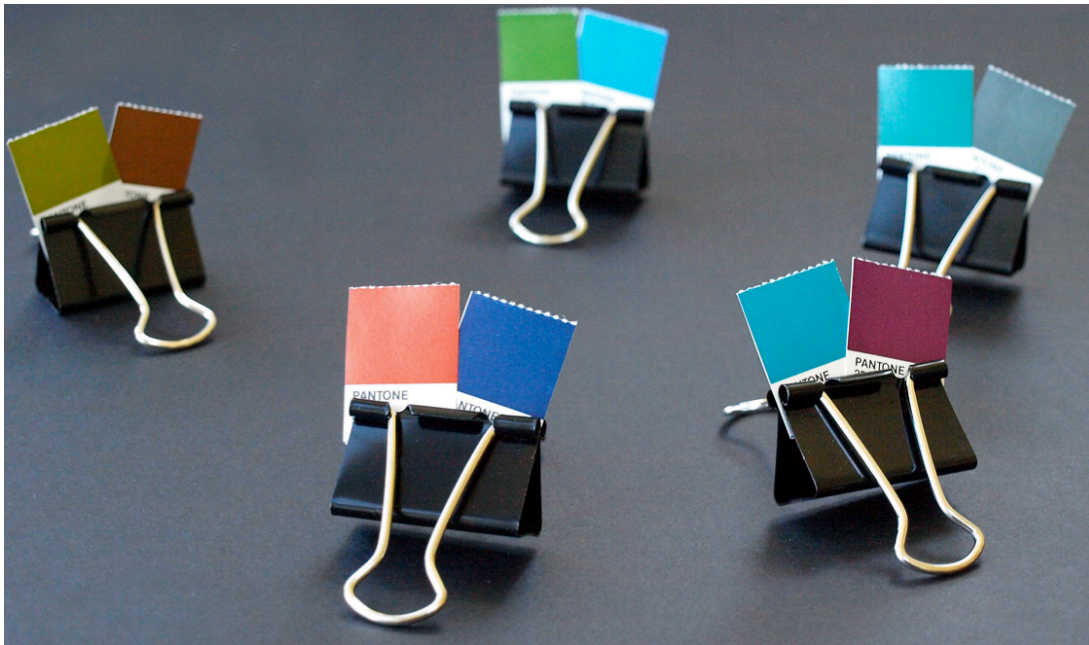
Keep reading.

Winning Design Tweaks

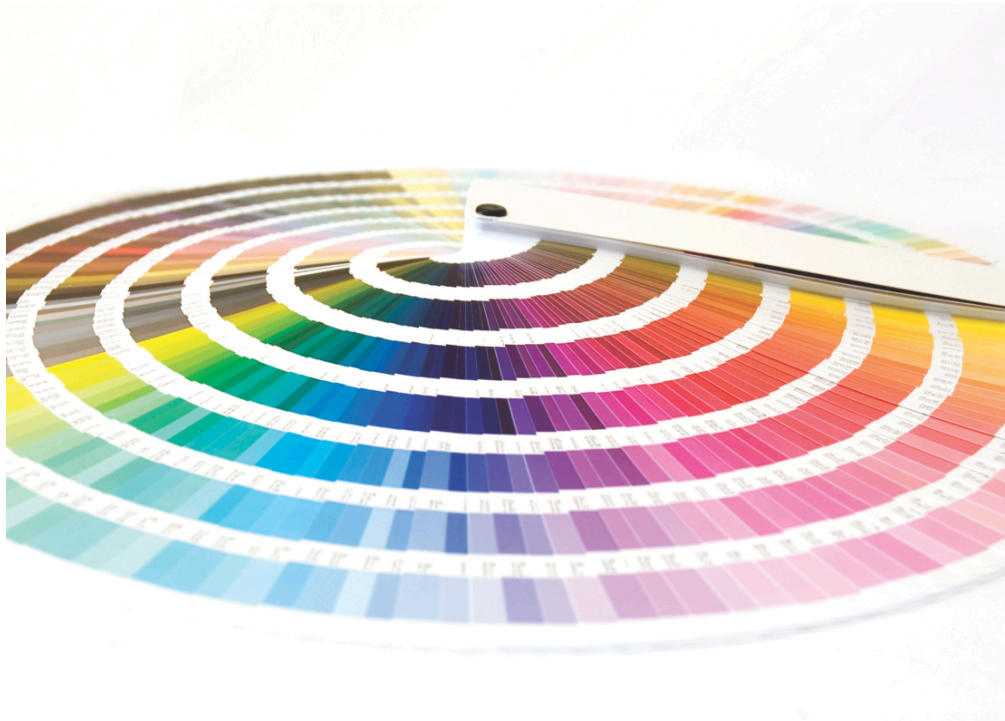
All business websites have a goal action they try to persuade readers to perform: “Contact me. Opt in to this offer. Buy this product.” Good website design helps make those actions happen. Areas to tweak are:

- Color
- Photographs or images
- White space
- Font selection
- Sidebars

Color and the Big Brand Color System



Having a limited palette of colors associated with your brand is best. Use those same chosen colors over and over consistently, creating a Big Brand Color System for your website.



Step One

Pick two main colors, and make them the basis of a color palette you create. (You can go to colourlovers.com and register for a color selection tool — it's free.)

When choosing colors, don't shy away from obvious associations, for example using green and brown for a gardening website). Our cultural ideas about color are deeply ingrained, and as business owners we can use this to our advantage.

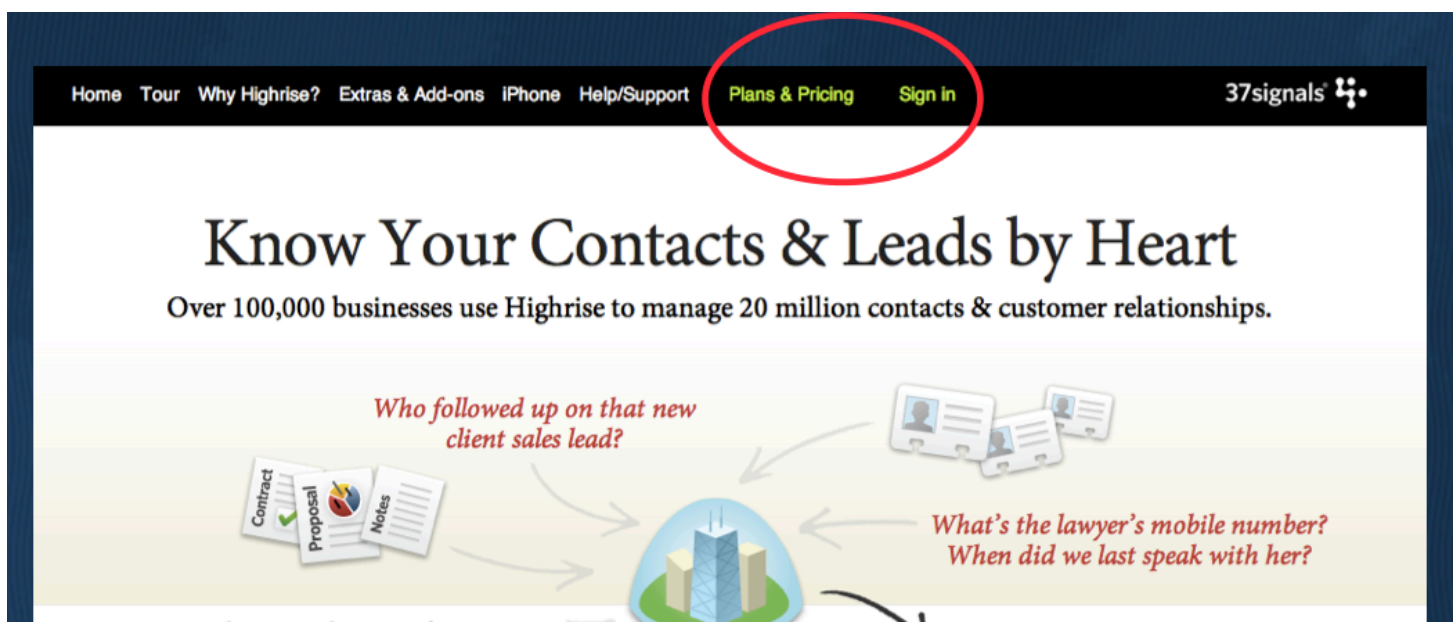
Step Two:

Add two colors to your palette to serve as background colors on either side of your content area. They can be applied to your navigation buttons and your sidebar background, too. Your two background colors should be very light, neutral tints that complement the main colors. (The ColourLovers site will generate "similar colors" if you are having trouble choosing colors.)

Step Three:

The last color to add to your palette is your **accent** color. Your accent color is a great tool to have in your design toolbox to draw attention to specific items on the page you want to highlight. You can use the same accent color to get people to click from a popular page to another page.

Accent Colors and the Von Restorff Effect



There's a psychological principle called the Von Restorff effect, which explains why people notice and remember things that stand out from their surroundings. Here's how it works.

Hedwig Von Restorff conducted a memory experiment. She gave people a list of similar, but distinct, items. All but one of the items on the list were written in the same color. When she asked people which item they remembered, they recalled the uniquely colored item the most.

Online it's no different. If you have a web design geared around two main colors, and two background colors, your accent color will stand out just like the oddball color did in that list of items.

Your accent color becomes your "take action" color. Use it to draw attention to products you are selling or the contact or opt-in links.

Remember, your accent color is saved for your most important information. You want to use it sparingly, and only after you've decided which item you want to highlight.

Dynamic, Intentional Photographs and Images



Photos are a perfect addition to draw people into a website. The right photo or image used the right way will help grab the reader's attention and draw your visitor right into the first paragraph of your text.



Boring

Better

Best

A blog without photos often looks about as appealing as the instruction book that came with the last toaster you bought. Does this bland approach make you want to take the time to read what's offered from cover to cover? Neither will your visitors.

Photos make the text appear much more appealing. Embrace the power of photos as a website design tweak that can significantly increase your conversion.

Choose Your Photo Wisely.

You want to use photos that communicate your message; not just random decorative photos that fill the space. Pick photos that *illustrate your words*, or *add a different nuance* to what you're saying with your words.

Play with Your Photos.

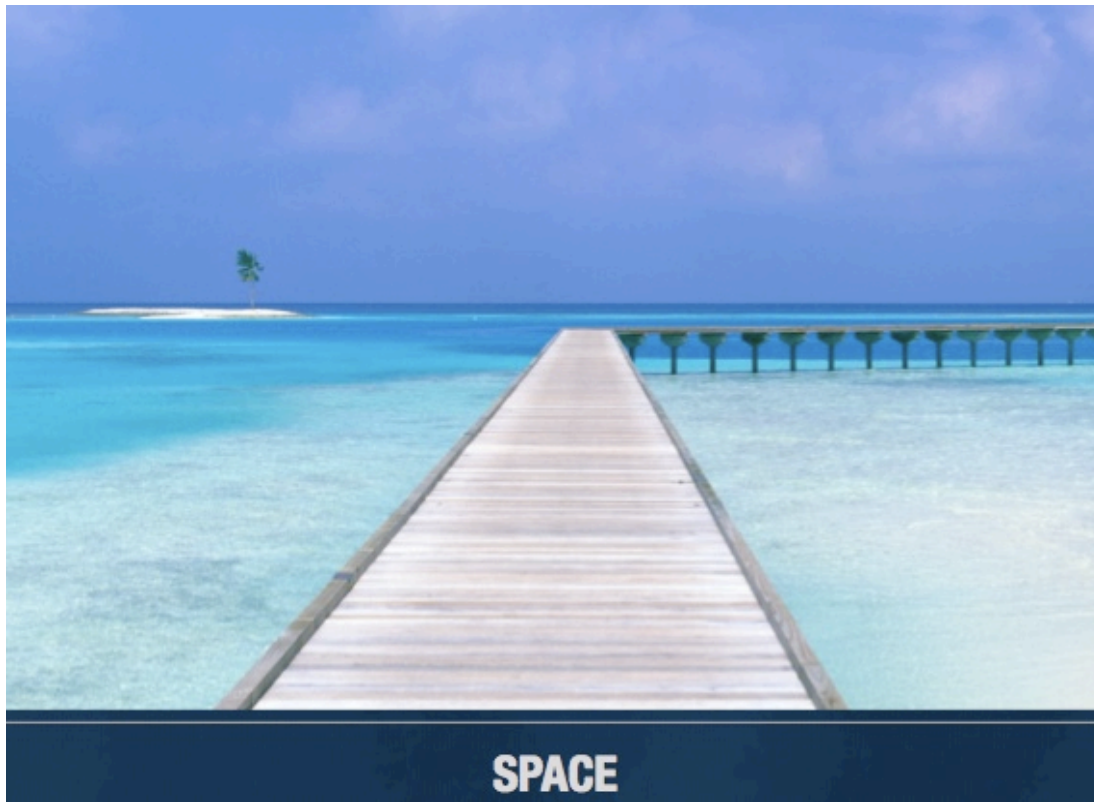
Sometimes simply cropping a photo can make it look more dynamic. It helps direct your reader's eye to the parts of the photo that convey your message.

Use the Line of Sight to Your Advantage.



This principal also works when placing photos of people on your website. Position the photo so that people in the picture are looking at important text. Your readers will naturally follow the picture's *line of sight* and look to that area as well. You can also flip the photos to create the maximum effect or help change a line of sight. Picnik.com provides free and premium versions of a simple-to-use online photo editor with a minimal learning curve.

White Space Offers Rest for the Weary Customer



People pay extra for space. First-class airline tickets can cost 3 to 10 times as much as coach seats. What are people really paying for? Space. Space to spread out, space to think. Space to rest.

The same thing happens on a webpage. When your page is crowded with words, it becomes overwhelming to the eye and the reader gets tired before they even begin to read — if they even attempt to read anything at all before leaving.

Remember, you only have a few seconds to grab your visitor's attention, and if you present them with a bunch of crowded content, you lose them. No one will see what you've spent your time writing.

Head Room.

Try adding space above your site name and content area to give it some air.

Wider Borders.

You can also add space on either side of your content edge. Give it a nice, wide border so it doesn't look crammed. Popular frameworks will allow you to add padding around your content area, so that's the setting you want to look for.

Text.

The other place to add space is between lines of text. You can go too extreme with it, but space here will open up the look of the page and make it more appealing.



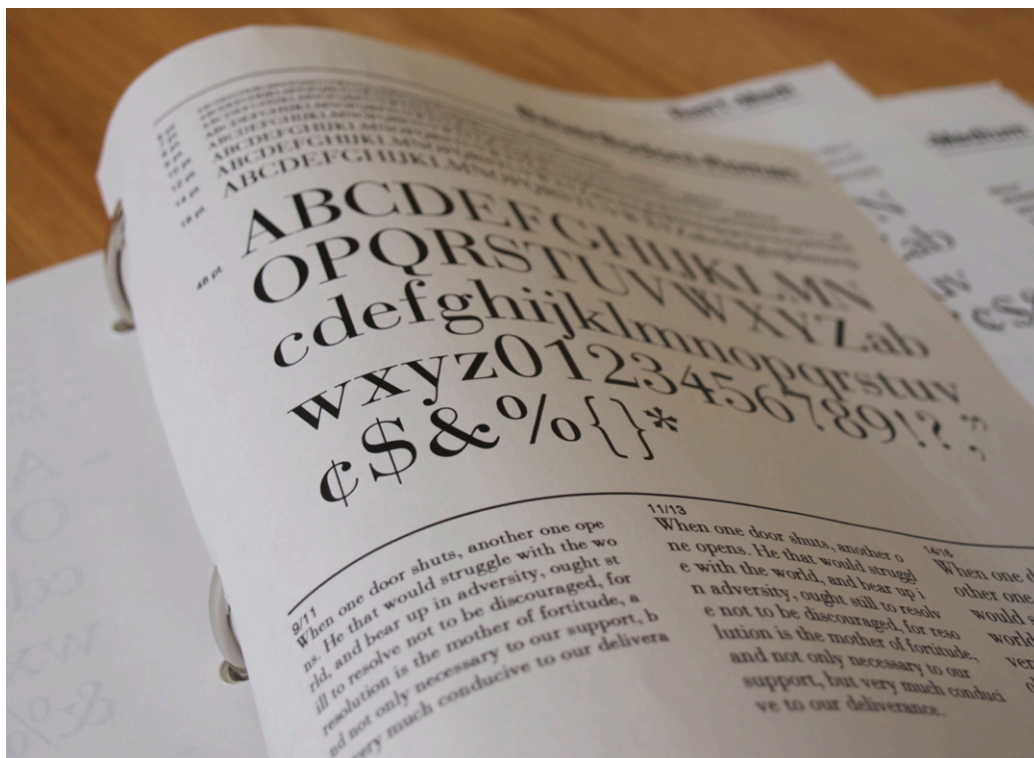
Clutter: the Anti-Space

From a design perspective, clutter can be obnoxious. And from a sales perspective, it's a conversion killer.

Yes, you might have heard that cluttered websites convert higher, and that's true when you're trying to trick people into clicking ads. But if you're trying to sell products and services, clutter and distractions will tank your conversion rates.

If you want people to notice a specific part of your website, surround it with a ton of white space, use an accent color, and your visitors practically **CAN'T MISS IT**.

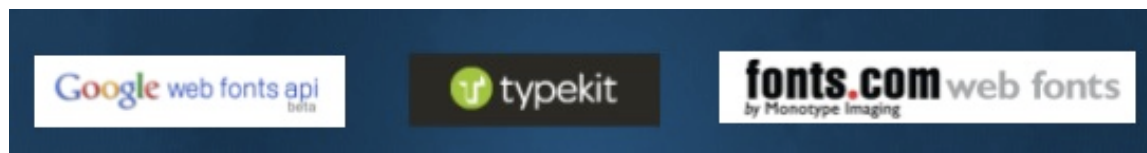
Typography



Typography, or fonts, is another design tool where there are so many choices it can be overwhelming, so stick to two choices and keep it simple. Please note: your two choices do not include the typefaces in your header art, that's an artistic freebie.

Embrace Font Technology

Type on the web has now changed and we are able to use custom typefaces that are served up from services like typekit.com, fonts.com and the Google Font API. You choose the fonts you want to use on your site. They serve those fonts up to the computer of anyone who visits your site. You don't need the font on your computer, and they don't either.



To Sans or Not to Sans, That is the Question



There are two kinds of typefaces: serif, and sans serif.

Serif typefaces have little details that hang off the strokes: they look like little feet. Sans serif fonts, go bare (sans means without) and they are a cleaner, plainer set of fonts.

I'll Take the Combo Meal for Maximum Effect

When you're combining typefaces, you can get maximum impact from combining serif and sans serif typefaces together. It's not easy, though, and if you don't do it right, it looks really bad. Here's how to do it right.

Look at the forms of the lower case letters. Try to disregard the little "feet," and look to see if the serif and sans serif are drawn with similar shapes.

Choose the font that's easiest to read... ALWAYS. That means, no script, no fancy lettering, nothing! Heck, the more boring you think the font looks, the better. If it's easier to read, it's a big win. Remember, people want to read your content. They don't want to decipher it.

Remember, the font you choose will directly impact how people perceive your content, directions, and sales page. Simple combination fonts that are easy on the eyes are best.

Sidebars that Sell

Sidebars are that universal area where all website owners place the vital info like what to read, where to go, how to contact them, or what to buy. This crucial area is often rundown, neglected, and poorly functioning. Some common mistakes in sidebars are:

- Not extending basic design concepts to the sidebar
- The sidebar is *extremely* dull and fails to catch the reader's eye
- The area is full of so many items it becomes distracting or confusing
- The business fills up one sidebar, then adds a second sidebar and crams it full as well, making the site look cluttered

Think. What's the number one action you want people to do when they come to your site? Of course you want them to read your content, but what *action* do you want them to take? To opt in so you get their email address? To purchase a product that you're advertising in your sidebar? To request a quote?

*Decide on the **one** action you want visitors to take. Then redesign your sidebar so that one action sticks out the most.*

Make that one action brighter, bolder and more prominent than all the rest. (One way to make it more prominent is to position it at the top of your sidebar. This is also a perfect place to apply that **accent color** you picked out, too.)

Popular Posts in the Sidebar

From a conversion standpoint, popular posts are advantageous for two main reasons. First, when you say something is popular, it implies that other people like it. And remember, if people think other people like it, they're willing to give it a shot because they don't want to miss out on anything.

Second, when you show several popular posts, you also communicate, in an under-the-radar way, that there's a lot happening on your site, meaning you have more than one big-hit article. This is important because it creates a mindset for your website viewers that goes something like this:

"Well, this site has a lot going on, and I can't read it all now. Let me sign up for email updates so I don't miss out on anything."

That type of mindset gets you another opt-in, another lead, another regular viewer or loyal customer.

MY RECIPE BOX

FRESH NOW RECIPE ARCHIVE SUBMIT A RECIPE

Cooking with Winter Citrus



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POPULAR POSTS

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Be sure to include your call to action in your sidebar, at the top, to make the most of your design tweaks.

Now What's Next?

Did you like this webinar recap?

If so, feel free to share it with anyone who you think will find it helpful.

Both Pamela Wilson and I spent nearly 3 weeks preparing this webinar and we want it to help as many people as possible.

Also, if you have any questions, feel free to:

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Additionally, you should check out both of our websites, which you can find here:

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