How to Create an
Amazing Website
that Actually Gets
Results

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Capturing Your Visitor's Attention

Practically everything there is to know about website design and creating a website that gets results can be boiled down to this single fact:

The success of your website ultimately depends on just one thing: your ability to grab and direct attention.

Let that sink in...

You can take any aspect of your website design and evaluate it against the above statement to find what's working and what's not.

I know... easier said than done, right? Well, let's dig in and take a look at exactly how this applies to your website.

First, let's look at the five general things that every business website needs to have to be successful and profitable:

1. Attractive overall appearance

Your website visitors form an opinion about whether they like your website in 50 milliseconds... or less. That's a split second decision.

If they don't instantly like the way your site looks, they'll leave and find another one they like better (your competition's). This means your website *must* create a great first impression, or you risk losing your visitors before they even have a chance to find out what your site is
all about.

Therefore you should never skimp on visual design just to try to save a few bucks. Hire a professional graphic designer who will make your website look *amazing* to your target audience. Otherwise you may be wasting everything you've invested in other areas of your website—because it may never be seen.

Not convinced? Read this excellent article from ConversionXL about the importance of great visual design.

Good visual design grabs and directs attention—rather than repelling it—making your visitor willing to give your website a chance.

Attractive overall apperance: Action steps

1. Create a spreadsheet titled "Website Visual Appearance Analysis". Create columns with these titles: Company, Web Address, What's Good, What Can Be Improved, Ideas For My Website

2. Find the website of one of your top competitors. Browse through their website, paying particular attention to how it looks visually (the overall look of each page, and the look of the various individual elements within the pages). Note how its appearance (colors, fonts, layout, amount of spacing between elements, etc.) makes you feel as you browse through it, and how the appearance grabs or repels your attention.

- Does it look inviting, attracting your attention and making you interested in reading the content?

- Does it look cluttered and confused, repelling your attention and making you want to leave to find a website that is easier to view?

- Is it difficult to read the content due to small font size, too high a density of text, poor color choices, etc.?

- Do the graphics, fonts, etc. grab your attention and make you want to stay on the website? Or is it just kinda blah and uninteresting? Are you repelled by any of the visual elements?

- How does the visual design make you feel about the company overall? Does it give you a good feeling and make you want to do business with them? Does it feel like an established and professional company that you can trust?

- Do the visuals in themselves (apart from the text) inspire you to use the company's products or services?

- What do you like about the visual design?

- What do you think can be improved?

3. Enter the company name and web address into your spreadsheet.

a. In the "What's Good" column, make notes about what you think works well about the visual design of the website.

b. In the "What Can Be Improved" column, write down some ideas about what you think could be improved to make it more inviting and engaging, and to present a better image for the company?

c. If you get any ideas from this about how to improve your own website, write these down in the "Ideas For My Website" column

4. Next, find and browse through the websites of several more of your competitors (at least 5-10 of them, but as many as possible—the more the better). For each one, insert a new row into your spreadsheet and fill in all the columns.

Keep the rows ranked in order from most visually appealing website at the top of the spreadsheet to least appealing at the bottom.

5. Now take a look at your own website. Evaluate it the same way you evaluated your competition's, and place it into the spreadsheet in its proper slot based on how visually attractive it is compared to the others

Is your website at the top of the list? If not, continue with the next steps...

6. Find some websites online (can be in any industry, not necessarily just your own) that you really like the look and feel of. Start a new section in your spreadsheet and add these websites to it.

    a. Make notes in the "What's Good" column about what you like about these websites.

    b. Note anything you don't like in the "What Can Be Improved" column.

    c. Jot down any ideas you may get about how to design your own website in the "Ideas for My Website" column.

7. Discuss your website with a professional website graphic designer and share your notes from your spreadsheet with them. If they understand your vision and are confident they can achieve it, hire them to create a mock-up of a new design to give your website a visual makeover.

8. Verify that the following elements in particular look great on your new website design:

    a. Your logo

    b. Your main navigation menu

    c. The search box (if you have one)

    d. The main image in the top section of each web page

    e. The written content on all pages

    f. The footer (bottom of each page on your website)

    g. The entire top fold (the part visible without scrolling) of each page on your website

9. Survey a mockup of your new website design with customers, prospects, business associates, or anyone who would fit into your target market. Let them look at your new website design for only a second or so (remember, you're looking for instant reaction, so give them just a quick look), and then ask them the following questions:

- **a.** Did this website grab your attention?

- **b.** On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most, how interested would you be in viewing more of the website based on what you saw?

- **c.** On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best, how much did you like the look of the website?

- **d.** [If they answered anything less than 5] What about it didn't you like as much?

- **e.** Does it look like a company you would want to do business with?

- **f.** What does this company do (what products or services do they offer)?

10. Work with your graphic designer to adjust the design until the people you are surveying are very impressed with it and would feel good about doing business with your company based solely on how your website looks and feels. Try to survey fresh people with each iteration of the design. Don't keep showing the same few people the modified designs over and over again—you won't be getting instant first impressions from them if they've seen the earlier versions.

11. Have your web developer execute and deploy the new visual design on your live website.

2. Interesting and engaging headlines and images

Once you've created a great first impression to get your visitor willing to stick around, the next step is to immediately engage them and capture their interest.

"Interest" is the glue that keeps visitors on your site—as soon as they lose interest, they're gone.

Visitors tend to look at images and headlines first before they read any text. So it's imperative to put some effort into crafting headlines and images that are intriguing to your target audience and capture their interest.

Here are some tips on using engaging images and writing powerful headlines to pull your visitors into reading your text.

Well-crafted headlines and images grab and direct attention toward the website content you want visitors to read.

Headlines and images: Action steps

Web page

1. Title:

2. Web address:

Purpose & Message

1. What is the purpose of this page? What result should it accomplish?

2. What is the main overall message you want to communicate to your readers on this page?

Headline

1. What is the main headline on this page?

2. Does the headline meet visitor expectations — does the wording match what people expect to see when they've navigated to your page? Write down any notes about what can be improved.

3. Does the headline grab visitor attention by using interesting language or phrasing and being focused on pulling the reader into the content on the page? Write down any notes about what can be improved.

4. Does the headline communicate clearly in easy-to-understand language? Write down any notes about what can be improved.

5. Does the headline get immediately to the point of what the visitor wants? Write down any notes about what can be improved.

6. Does the headline highlight something beneficial or valuable for your prospect? Write down any notes about what can be improved.

7. Edit your headline to improve it based on the above criteria. Write your revised headline here:

8. What is the Coschedule Headline Score (https://coschedule.com/headline-analyzer) for your headline?

9. Experiment with tweaking the wording of your headline in the Coschedule Headline Analyzer and see if you can come up with a stronger headline. Use the Headline Analyzer as a tool to guide you, but make sure the headline itself communicates and doesn't feel awkward. In other words, don't force the headline into something awkward just to get a better score in the tool. Shoot for as high a score as possible while keeping the headline clear and easily readable. Write down the best version of the headline you came up with here:

Images

1. What emotions and feelings do the images on this page evoke in the reader?

2. Are these appropriate emotions and feelings that align with your message and your brand? If not, what emotions and feelings would be more appropriate?

3. If your company has a mascot, is that mascot shown on this page? If not, can the mascot be incorporated in some appropriate way?

4. Can any images be replaced (or new images added) to contain human faces that relate to the purpose and message of this page? What might those images be?

5. Are your images unique or noteworthy in some way to make them stand out and be memorable? What are some ideas for images that might better achieve this on this page? Try thinking outside the box and brainstorm some ideas.

6. If this page is discussing some aspect of your products/ services, do the images on the page show in some way the positive outcome people can expect from using your products and services? If not, write down some ideas on what sort of images can be used to show this.

7. Are your images all about the visitor (your prospect or customer) rather than about you? Do the images contain the "me" factor that helps your visitors identify with their own needs and wants? Is each image meaningful to your visitor instead of being mere decoration to make the page look good? If not, write down some ideas on what types of images would better achieve this.

8. Do your images look cheesy and fake? In other words, are they obvious stock photos? If so, it's worth the effort and expense to find better quality images that look natural and more "real" — something your readers can really connect with, as if it's something out of the photo album of their life instead of some staged meaningless photo. Make notes about which photos look like staged stock photos instead of meaningful real life photos.

9. If, based on the above analysis, you feel your images on this page could be improved, do a search through stock photo websites to find better images (or do your own photo shoot if you have access to a skilled photographer). Get your web developer to place these improved images on your web page.

3. Valuable content

Now that you've piqued their interest, it's time to deliver on the goods.

Your images and headlines have built up an expectation in your visitor—you've essentially promised that you will engage them with valuable and useful information. If you don't deliver on that promise, you will lose your visitor... and their trust in your ability to provide what they need and want.

Don't pull a bait-and-switch on your website visitors with your content. Deliver exactly what your images and headlines have promised—and exceed expectations.

Blow your reader away with the information you provide (and the way you provide it), and you'll have a very satisfied reader who will want to share your content and bring you more visitors. How do you blow them away? Your content needs to meet these criteria:

- **Valuable** (the reader must feel they have gotten something valuable in return for the time they've spent reading it)

- **Aligned** (each part must be fully aligned with the whole, and with what the headline and images promise)

- **Lively** (should be written in an engaging manner—not dull and dry)

- **Useful** (should be immediately useful to the reader... something they can actually—and easily—use to gain some benefit)

- **Easy to Consume** (must be well-written, easy to read and, ideally, supported with graphics and illustrations to make it easier to grasp)

(Notice that taking the first letter of each of the above criteria spells V-A-L-U-E. You can keep these points in mind by remembering that all the content on your website should provide VALUE.)

Also, don't forget you're writing for the visitor and their needs and wants, not about yourself for your own gratification. In other words, don't just brag about yourself (e.g. "We're a great company and you should love us"); write about what your reader is actually interested in... something useful and valuable to *them*.

Skillfully written content grabs and directs attention, guiding the reader through the message you want them to get.

Valuable content: Action steps

Web page

1. Title:

2. Web address:

Value to the reader

1. What is the purpose of this page? What result should it accomplish?

2. What is the main overall message you want to communicate to your readers on this page?

3. Is this something that the reader will find valuable? If not, how can it be tweaked to make it more valuable to the reader?

4. Does the content deliver on the promised value to the reader? In other words, does the reader feel like they've gotten something sufficiently valuable in return for the time they've spend reading it? If not, what can you add to make it more valuable to the reader?

Alignment

1. What is the main headline on this page?

2. Does the headline align with the intended purpose and message of the page? If not, how can it be better aligned?

3. Does the written content align with the headline? In other words, does the reader feel like they are reading about what the headline suggested they would find there? If not, how can you edit the content (or headline) so it aligns better?

4. Does the content on the page align with the images on the page? If not, what can be done to get it more aligned?

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Liveliness

1. Is the content written in an interesting, entertaining and engaging manner, rather than being just a dry and dull dissertation of facts? If not, what can be done to liven it up a bit?

Usefulness

1. Is the content of this web page immediately useful to your reader? Does it contain something they can use right away — something practical, or at least something informative that helps them understand things better and be able to make better decisions as a result? If not, what can you add to make it more immediately useful to the reader, so they walk away feeling they have benefitted in some way from reading it?

Ease of Consumption

1. Is the content written with good grammar, making it easy for your reader to understand? Are any deviations from standard grammar intentional — done with a specific purpose rather than just an ignorance of proper grammar? If you're not sure, have someone skilled in grammar proofread it for you, or use digital tools like Grammarly (https://www.grammarly.com/) and Hemmingway (http://www.hemingwayapp.com/desktop.html). Write down any steps you need to take to improve the grammar of your content.

2. Is all the text written at an 8th grade level or lower? As a general rule, it should be — to ensure it is easy to read for the average reader. You can check the reading level and other readability factors using tools like Readable.io (https://readable.io/text/). Write down any notes about what can be improved about the readability of the content on your web page.

3. Are there graphics and illustrations on the page that make the words easier to grasp quickly and understand more easily? If not, what could you add to help illustrate the ideas you are communicating in your writing?

4. Is your text written in a font that is easy to read (a simple easy-to-read font that is 16px or bigger)? Is there plenty of space between lines, and especially between paragraphs, to make it look more accessible and less intimidating? Is there sufficient contrast between the color of your text and the color of the background so that the text is easy to view? Is there anything else about your text that could potentially make it difficult to read? Write down any ideas you have on how to improve the readability of the text on the page.

5. Based on your analysis above, have your copywriter, graphic designer and/or web developer make any needed improvements to the content of your web page.

4. Calls to action

You've put all this effort into attracting your visitor, getting them engaged and interested, and communicating your message to them... After all that, don't make the mistake of letting them wander off without taking their next step.

You should *always tell them what you want them to do next.*

A "call to action" (often abbreviated as CTA) is an instruction to the reader to immediately take some action, such as "order now," "sign up for our mailing list today," "pick up your phone right now and call us," etc.

Not explicitly telling your visitor what to do after they've read the content on a webpage is a costly mistake—it's like a saleperson forgetting to ask for the close after convincing their prospect to buy.

Remember you're grabbing and *directing* your visitor's attention. You need to guide them through the series of steps you want them to take as they move through your website.

Don't let your visitor wander aimlessly through your website. Each time they finish an action you wanted them to take, explicitly direct them to their next action.

For example, when your reader is done reading a blog article, you may want them to explore the services you sell that are related to the blog article. In this case, your CTA would be something along the lines of: "Check out our _____ services to help you implement what you just read about" (which would, of course, link to your Services page).

A word of caution: don't provide too many choices when using CTAs. Ideally, you will have only one CTA on each page of your website. You don't want your visitor to have to choose between two actions—because if they have to decide, they'll often choose neither. Giving them just one choice makes it easy for them to make that choice.

A call to action grabs your visitor's attention and directs it toward their next action.

Calls to action: Action steps

☐ **1.** Go through each page of your website and verify that there is an explicit call-to-action at the end of each page, directing the reader to take their next step in their journey on your website. These call-to-actions should be linked to the next step, so the reader simply clicks a button or text link to take their next step.

☐ **2.** There should be only *one* main call-to-action on each page of your website. If you give the visitor too many options for them to decide from, you risk losing them. Give them just one main call-to-action and direct them to take that one action. Go through each page of your website and verify that there is only one main call-to-action on each page. (Note that in some cases a secondary, less prominent, call-to-action is appropriate — but try to avoid this unless you are certain that it will not confuse the visitor and will help people continue on their appropriate journeys through your website.)

☐ **3.** Check all the calls-to-action on your website to make sure they are relevant, appropriate and appealing to the reader who has just consumed the content on that page. For example, if you have a page describing a product, an appropriate action might be something like "Click here for more details" or "Add to cart". On your home page, you may have a call to action such as "Sign up for our mailing list for more information" or "Click here to read more about our products". The call-to-action should align with what the reader would likely be interested in next after they finish reading whatever is on the page.

5. Response mechanisms

It's not enough to just tell your visitor to take some action; you also need to make it possible for them to actually do it—and as effortlessly as possible.

A response mechanism is anything your visitor can interact with to respond to your call to action—such as signing up for your mailing list, requesting a quote, or submitting an order. It can be a button, contact form, email sign-up pop-up, shopping cart checkout, buy-now order page, etc.

The simpler, faster and easier you make the response mechanism, the more responses you'll get. Website visitors expect *quick* and *easy*, and have low tolerance for anything that is arduous, confusing or time-consuming.

This means for each response mechanism on your website you need to:

- Make it **visually appealing**, clean and uncluttered

- Make the **text clear**, concise and easy-to-understand

- Ask for **only as much information as you really need** in any online form they need to fill out (you can always collect more information later after they've taken the initial action)

- **Streamline it**—reduce to the bare minimum the number of steps required for them to successfully take the action.

Well-designed response mechanisms grab and direct attention, and get your website visitors to take real action.

Response Mechanisms: Action steps

☐ **1.** Go through your website and make a list of all the *response mechanisms* you have on each page. A response mechanism is anything that the visitor can interact with to respond to your call-to-actions. These can be links, buttons, online forms, add-to-cart buttons, etc.

☐ **2.** For each response mechanism on your list, make sure it meets all the following criteria:

    a. It's visually appealing — clean, uncluttered, and grabs the visitors attention.

    b. The wording used in the mechanism is clear, concise, and easy-to-understand.

    c. If the mechanism includes an online form of any sort, the form asks only for as much information as is absolutely necessary for the particular action that taking place. Every additional piece of information you ask for reduces the likelihood of the user completing the action, so keep it to a minimum. You can also gather more information later after this initial action is completed.

    d. The response mechanism is streamlined as much as possible, making it quick and easy for the user to take the needed action. In other words, the action is kept as simple as possible, making it smooth and uncomplicated. This especially applies to email opt-ins and order check-outs.

Structuring Your Website For Success

So... how do you put this all together into an effective website design?

You're excited about all the great things your new website will do for your business, and you want to get it online as quickly as possible... but, woooaaah—hold your horses. Whether you're building a new website or revamping an existing one, it's important to do some basic planning and lay the groundwork first.

Approaching the building of your new website in a disciplined manner, with adequate planning and strategizing, can make the difference between a costly waste of resources that produces few results and a highly profitable business-boosting website.

Before you start anything, you really should have these three things worked out for your business:

1. **Business Marketing Plan**

2. **Buyer Persona(s)**

3. **Branding (logo, brand personality, visual style guide, etc.)**

Your website needs to be aligned with these three things, and if you don't have them worked out, you're shooting in the dark.

The time and money you invest into creating a strategic marketing plan, developing and understanding your buyer personas, and establishing your branding is well-spent and will repay itself many times over.

Skimp in these areas, and you're leaving things up to chance... with the odds stacked against you.

Once you have a good understanding of who your target audience is (your buyer personas) and know what your website objectives are (your marketing plan), you are ready to start planning and building your new website.

Here are the key components that are found in successful business websites:

Customer journey

The first step in designing a website is to map out your intended customer journey for each type of visitor you're targeting with your website.

A "customer journey" is the series of web pages, pop-ups, online forms, etc. that your visitor will move through on your website as they progress toward achieving their goal (to obtain the information or products/services they are seeking) and your goal (to get repeat visitors, generate leads, and produce sales). Each of these points along the journey is called a "touch point."
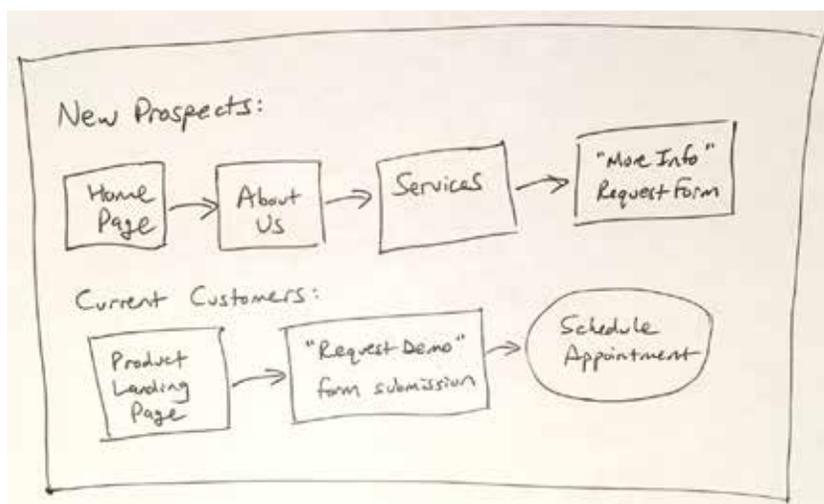
Sketch out how you want visitors to move through your website.

Start by determining what the end goal is for each type of visitor. Then work backwards from there to determine what series of steps they need to move through on your website to get to that goal.

To work out engaging journeys that draw in your visitors, you need to have a deep understanding of your customer personas, including how they think and what their motivations are. The better you understand your customer personas, the better you will be at creating customer journeys.

Once you have your customer journeys mapped out, you can then start planning the content of each of your web pages (designing each page to strategically move the visitor to the next step in the customer journey).
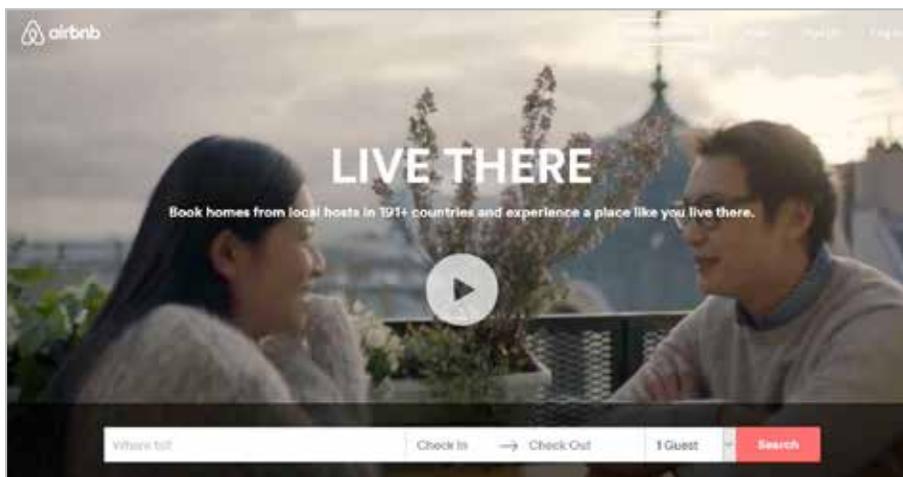
Home page

The home page is usually the most challenging of all your web pages to design well.

It's the page that tends to get the most traffic, and there's a tendency for businesses to try to reach every single one of those visitors.

The problem is that this isn't targeted traffic—it's a hodgepodge of random people each with their own unique reason for being there. And if you try to cater to them all, you turn your home page into a cluttered, confusing, overwhelming assault of content that becomes altogether ineffective.

By trying to connect with everyone, you end up connecting with no one.

The key to an effective home page is to simplify and to focus on just your key buyer personas.

Example of a Homepage

Keep your home page design clean and simple, and focused on your key buyer personas.

There are three main objectives for your home page:

- Make visitors feel they've arrived on the right website for what they need
- Make them feel good about your brand
- Get them off the home page and onto their appropriate customer journey

Think of your home page as a sort of receptionist. A receptionist's job is to let people know they've arrived at the right place, create a great first impression of your company, and route people to the exact place within your business they need to go to find what they're needing.

Now imagine you walk into an office and there are 20 receptionists crowded into the reception room, and each one is simultaneously yelling at you to come with them to their part of the company. You would probably feel a bit overwhelmed and your first impulse would be to run away.

The same is true with your home page.

Keep it clean... simple... uncluttered.

And keep it focused on the needs of your core buyer personas—ignore the rest. Direct their attention to a single primary call to action to get them started on their customer journey... and don't introduce unnecessary distractions.

About Us page

The About Us page—sometimes called the Our Story page—is not a place for merely bragging about yourself and your company. (Nor is it for boring your visitors to death with a dull lifeless description of your business.)

Remember that every page of your website is designed to meet the needs of your visitors; it's not for getting wrapped up in talking about yourself and boring your reader with information they don't care about.

The About Us page actually has an important strategic purpose. It helps your visitors connect with you and feel affinity for you... making them more willing to do business with you.

Right: Example of an About page

The About Us page should help your visitor get to know your company so they feel comfortable doing business with you.
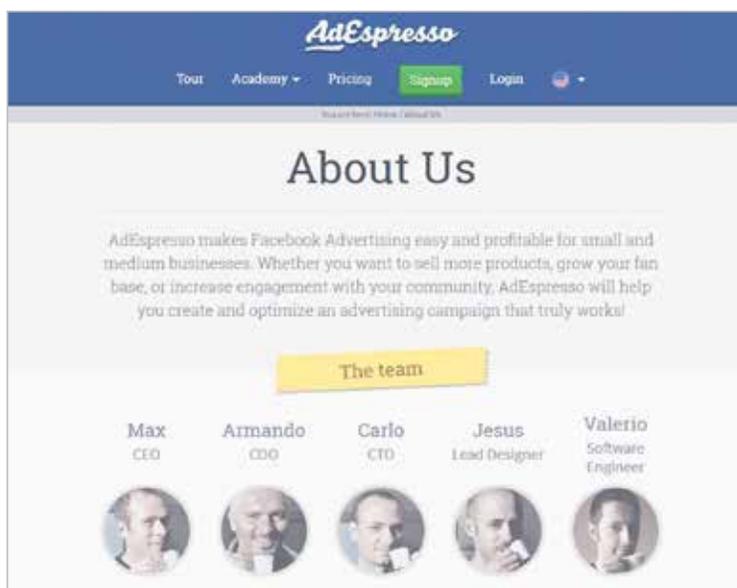
Specifically, this page aims to get visitors to:

- **KNOW you**
- **LIKE you**
- **TRUST you**

This is achieved by various means. Some ideas of things you may want to consider including are:

- A relevant personal story about the company founder

- The history of your company and its roots

- Photos of the founder and the key staff that make them look genuine and approachable

- Mentions of reputable clients, to show that these clients trust your products/services

- Positive reviews/testimonials from your customer

Whatever you decide to put on this page, make sure it is there for a purpose:

to get people to KNOW, LIKE and TRUST you.

Have fun with it. Make it unique, and let your company's personality shine through!

Product pages

One of the main reasons most businesses have a website is to put their products and services on display for potential customers to view (and buy!).

This is, after all, the ultimate reason you are in business—to sell valuable things to customers who will benefit from them—and to make some money while you're at it. All the other pages on your website are there to support your product pages.

If you have only a handful of products or services, it makes sense to have a separate product page for each one. Design each product page to appeal to the target audience—i.e. your customer persona—for that particular product or service (each usually has its own customer persona that it's geared toward).

The goal of this page is to walk your visitor through the sales cycle, as a live sales person would, to get them to understand what they will gain by buying from you and to create a strong desire in them to make that purchase right away.

How exactly do you do that?

Right: Example of a Product page:

Product pages showcase your products to get your visitors interested in purchasing them.
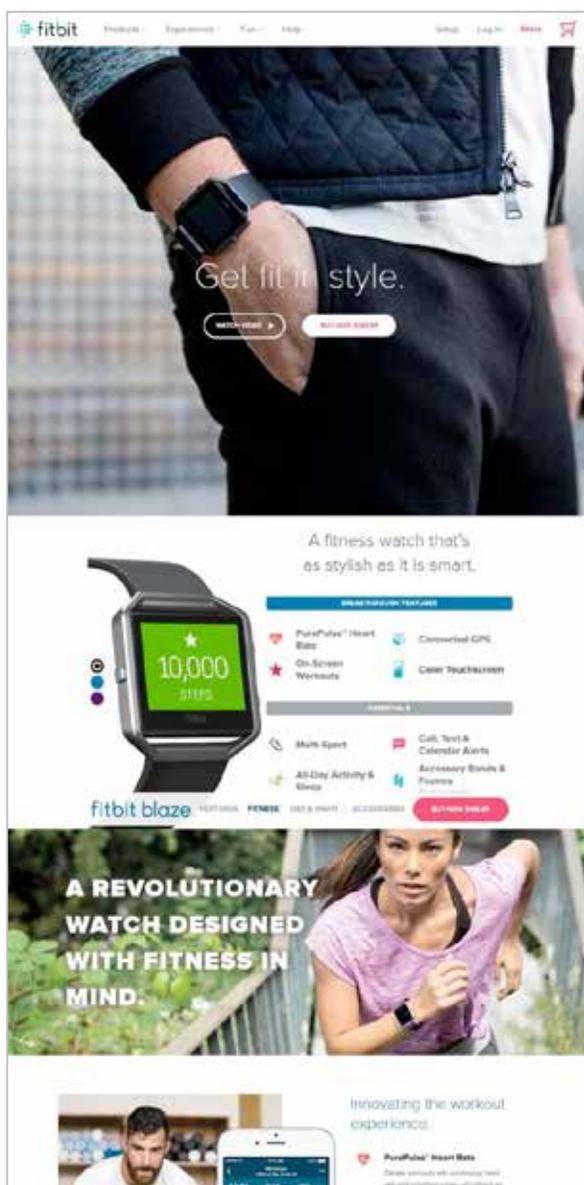
Well, you use all your usual sales techniques and combine them with skillful writing.

One approach that tends to be very successful is to think about how you would discuss your product or service with a close friend to convince them to give it a try. Then pretend your customer persona is your close friend, and write to that friend about why they should try your product or service.

Don't just talk about the various features; talk about the benefits and the appealing outcome your prospect can expect from making the purchase. Get them to understand how it will transform their life for the better when they use your product or service.

And don't forget to always include a call to action ("buy now", "reserve today", "add to cart", etc.) and response mechanism (ordering/payment page, reservation page, shopping cart, etc.) on each product page.
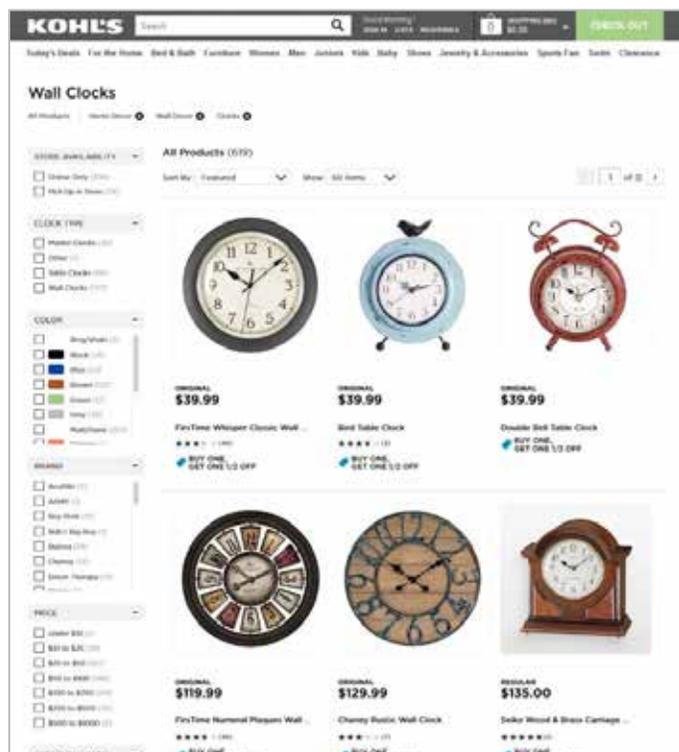
Shopping cart system

A business with just a few products or services will typically have a "buy now" button on every product page. This button takes the buyer to an order/payment page where they make their purchase. If they want to buy more than one type of product or service, they need to do a separate transaction for each one.

If you have a business with many products or services, where the buyer typically orders multiple items at a time, you will still need to create separate product pages for every item (yes, that can be a LOT of work!).

Right: Example of a Shopping Cart System

Shopping cart systems help shoppers browse and search for products they want to buy from you..

But you would also need to implement some sort of shopping cart system that allows the shopper to easily browse through the entire selection to find specific items they want and to accumulate items in a cart while they shop.

If you look at the website of any major online retailer, such as Amazon or Target, you will see that they have various systems in place to help you find exactly what you're looking

for as quickly and easily as possible, and then they have a product detail page for every single item that contains product descriptions, detailed specs (color, size, price, etc.), customer reviews, upsell/cross-sell suggestions, etc.

Major online retailers have invested a LOT of time, money and effort into creating websites that are effective at selling products, so it's worth doing some research into the methods they are using—and incorporate some of those ideas into your own website.

Contact page

While browsing through your website, visitors who are interested may have questions…

…or the may just want to talk with a live person…

…or they may want to place an order but feel better doing it person-to-person rather than through their computer.

Whatever their reason may be, they want to contact you—and you need to make it as easy and painless as possible for them to get in touch… or risk losing them.

Most website users expect a "Contact" link to be in the upper-right corner of the screen. It's often the first place they look for it—so it's wise to put one there.

On the contact page itself, include every option that customers have for contacting you. Different customers have different preferred communication methods, so offer as many options as you can.

Consider including:

Example of a Contact page:

- **Online contact form**

- **Phone number**

- **Mailing address** (and billing address, if you have a separate address for billing)

- **Physical address** if you want walk-in traffic (embed a Google Map to make it easy for people to find you)

- **Links to your social media sites**

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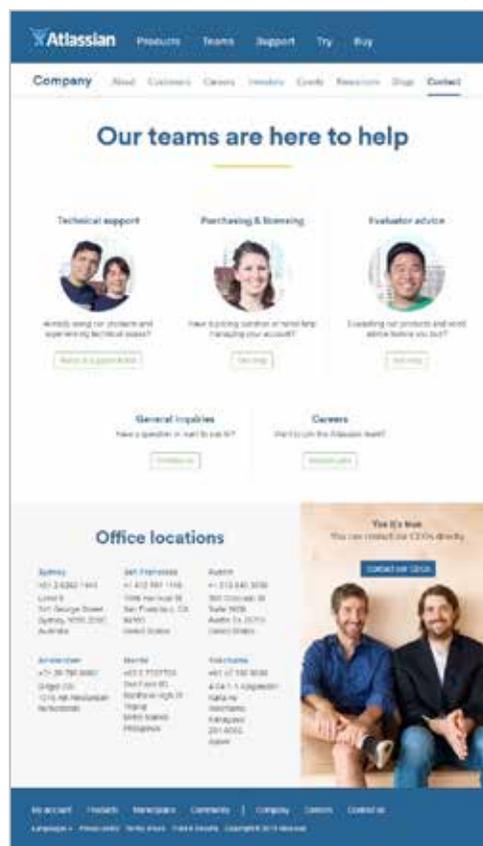
Blog

A company "blog" is a collection of articles you publish on your website about topics related to your business.

The idea is to provide interesting and useful information that your customers and prospects find valuable. If they like what they read, they will keep coming back for more—and will share it with others.

If the content you publish on your blog is excellent (unique, useful, engaging, well-presented), you can build up a large audience of people who are also your target prospects (they're interested in what you're writing, so there's a good chance they'll also be interested in what you're selling).

In other words, *your blog is used to accumulate a large pool of qualified prospects as a captive audience.*

You acquire leads from this captive audience by offering something valuable (called a "lead magnet"—because it pulls in leads) in exchange for their email address, and then walk these leads through your sales funnel to entice them to buy your products and services.

In addition to helping generate leads and sales, a well-executed blog has many additional benefits:

- You have a convenient way to communicate instructions, advice, support, and other valuable information to your customers.

- You can demonstrate your expertise and competence to customers and prospects, making them more likely to trust you and want to buy from you.

- You control a forum on which to discuss your products and services in a way that is useful to your readers and creates a desire in them to have those products/services for themselves.

- You give people a reason to keep coming back to your website (to read your latest blog articles).

- And a blog can make your website much more visible in search engines, which in turn drives in more traffic.

Pillar Articles

There is a specialized form of blog article that is strategically very important for company websites: the "pillar article".

For a detailed explanation of what pillar articles are, check out this article by Yaro Starak.

I'd recommend you start with 3-5 pillar articles as the first articles you publish on your company blog… and promote the heck out of them.

Focus all your blog promotion efforts on your pillar articles. Get them to rank well in search engine results—and drive lots of traffic to them through paid online advertising.

Include a content upgrade in each pillar article, which serves as your lead magnet. Use these content upgrades to build up your mailing list, and then follow up with these leads to get them moving through your sales funnel.

It's a very effective strategy for generating leads on your website, and fueling your sales funnel.

Mailing List

If you're wanting to use your website for increasing business income, one of your highest priority goals should be building up your email mailing list.

> *The size of your mailing list, and the frequency with which you mail to it, determines how much income your business will make.*

That's a bold statement… but I think you'll find it to be true. We've seen this countless times in analyzing our clients' business metrics—when they start mailing to their mailing list on a regular basis, income goes up—provided their mailing list is a healthy size. When they stop mailing, income falls.

If you think about it, it makes sense. Your mailing list contains people who have expressed some interest in your product or service. *They are already on your sales funnel.*

They just need to be helped further down your funnel until they buy. And the way you nudge them down the sales funnel is to keep communicating with them. The more you communicate, the more you fuel your sales funnel, and the more eventual sales you end up with.

Opt-in forms

To build up your email mailing list, place opt-in forms (on-page or pop-ups) throughout your website. An "opt-in" form is a place where a visitor can give you their email address and other contact info to sign up for your list. They "opt in" to your mailing list.

Always use an opt-in procedure for building your list—NEVER put someone on your list who hasn't specifically asked to be on the list. Otherwise you will be spamming people, which can get you into trouble (both legally and by damaging your reputation; undermining people's trust in your company).

Lead magnets are a great way to build your mailing list. Offer website visitors something they consider valuable, such as a PDF download (eBook, checklist, etc.), in exchange for their email address.

Your lead magnet should be aligned with the products and services your company sells, so that people who request them and get on your mailing list are ideal prospects for you to follow up with.

There's no point in building up your list with people who aren't interested in what your company has to offer.

Copywriting

The word "copy" comes from a Medieval Latin word meaning "to write in plenty."

It is used in publishing circles to refer to text—as opposed to photographs, graphics or other elements found on a published page. You may have heard the terms "advertising copy" (text that appears in ads) and "newspaper copy" (text that appears in newspapers).

Copy isn't just for print publishing; the text on your website is also called "copy." And the act of writing copy for your website is called "copywriting" (don't confuse this with copyrighting, which is the act of protecting written material with copyrights).

> *The quality of your copy is the single most important factor in determining how effective your website will be at getting people interested in your products/services and willing to pay money for them.*

Good copy grabs and directs your visitor's attention.

Good copy engages your reader and keeps them reading.

Good copy persuades readers to see things your way.

Good copy makes your customers feel good about purchasing from you.

Your website copy is your online salesperson. Great copy means having a great online salesperson who piques people's interest in your products and services, generates a torrent of qualified leads, closes lots of new sales, and gets a remarkable amount of repeat business.

Conversion copywriters specialize in writing copy that is designed to walk your readers through the sales process and get them to take action, converting them into paying customers. It's a different skill set than writing copy for informational purposes or entertainment.

If you don't have a great writer on staff who can skillfully do conversion copywriting, it's worth investing in a professional copywriter to write the copy for your website. Hiring a skilled and experienced conversion copywriter for crafting website copy tends to pay for itself many times over in increased sales.

To brush up on your conversion copywriting skills, I highly recommend learning from the original conversion copywriter, Joanna Wiebe, at Copy Hackers.

Analytics

After you've implemented everything we've talked about here so far, you're not done… you're just getting started.

What?!

That's right, you've just laid the groundwork, and now the real fun begins.

Even the most skilled copywriters and website professionals don't always knock it out of the park on their first attempt—if they do, it's often just luck. Professionals spend a lot of their time testing and tweaking until they start getting the results they want.
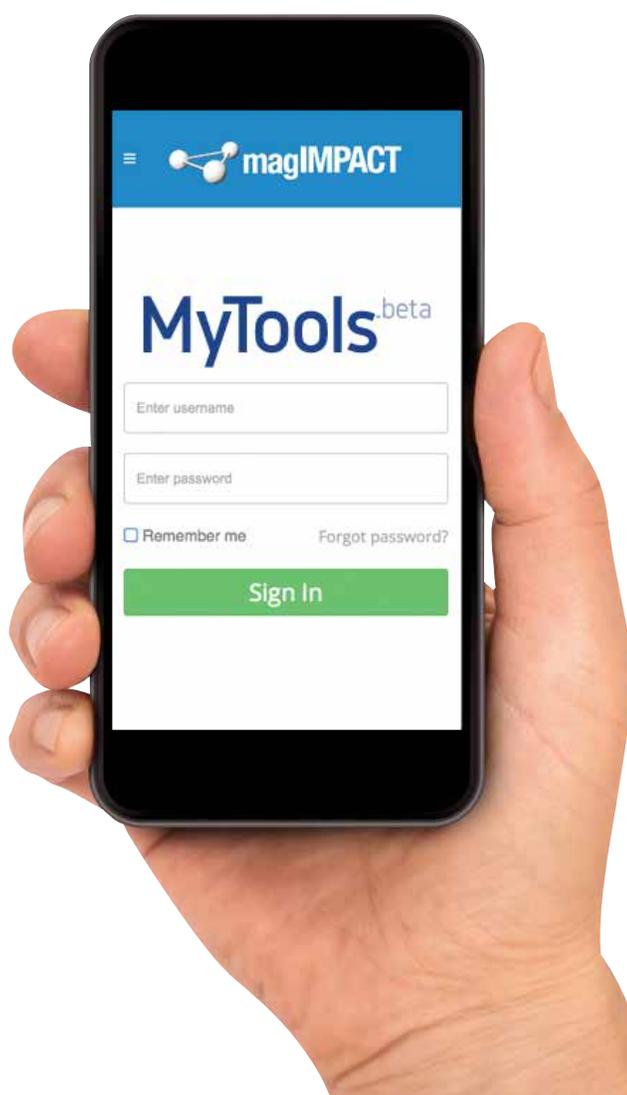
In order to fine-tune your website, you need to closely watch your traffic analytics (information and statistics about how people are using your website), strategize based on what you see in the analytics, and make adjustments to your website to improve the user experience, increase the amount of leads being captured, and get more sales.
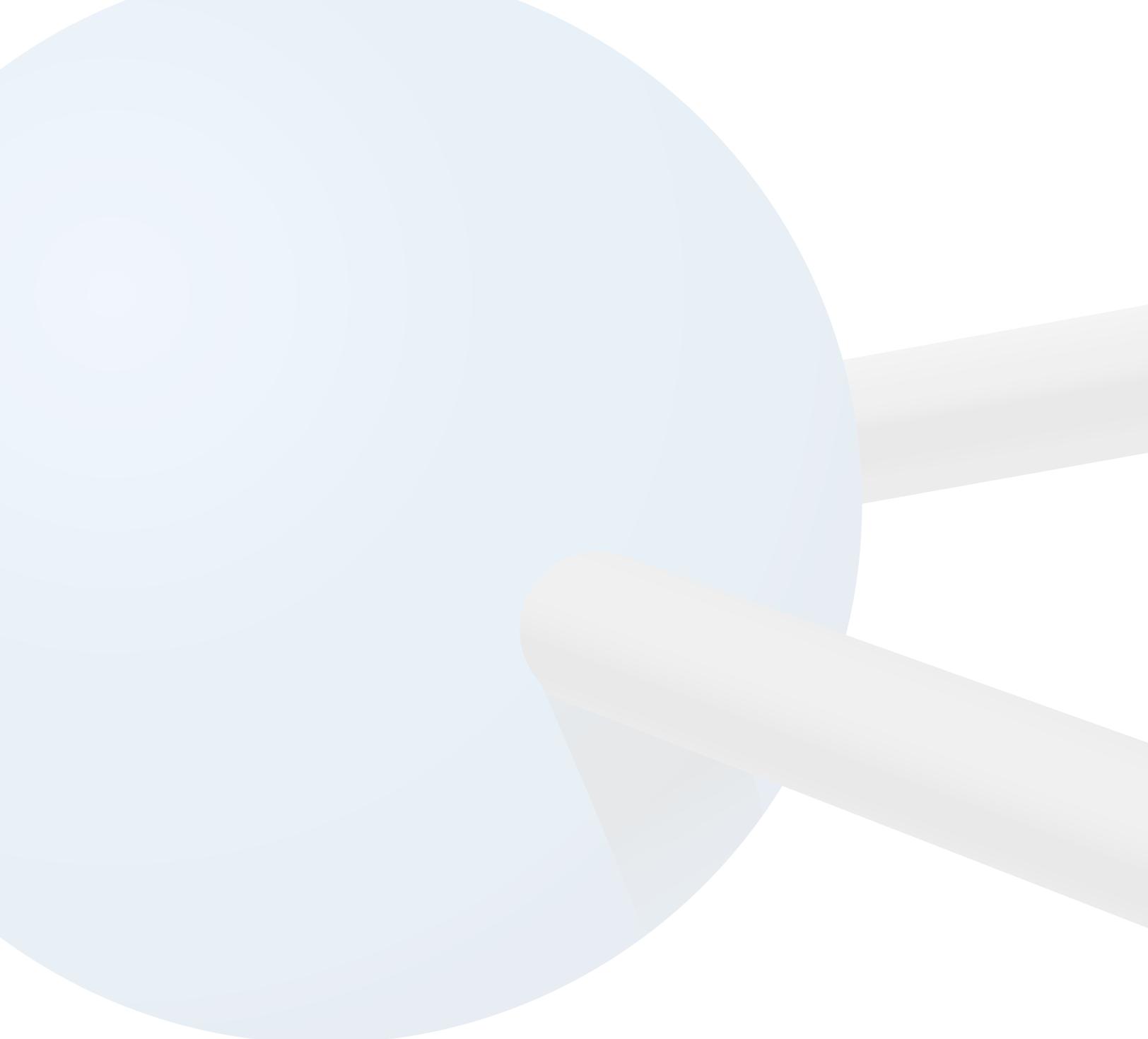
For tracking your website analytics, you can use common tools like Google Analytics—but don't neglect more specialized tools like Heat Maps and Content Analytics by SumoMe. These tools help you figure out exactly what your visitors are doing as they use your website—where things are going according to plan, and just as importantly, where things are not.

magIMPACT offers MyTools™, which provides simplified—yet very powerful—analytics reporting intended for business owners and their marketing staff.

MyTools guides you through the Analyze ➞ Strategize ➞ Execute cycle to help you pinpoint and focus on the exact things you need to be doing to improve the effectiveness and profitability of your website. It simplifies and clarifies your marketing, so you can start having fun with it and getting much better results.

Whatever tools you use, it's important to track how people are using your website and, based on what you observe, tweak things to improve your numbers.