

# Mastering the Design Process

---

Being a great designer is about more than creativity. It means producing designs that provide real business value and to do so while dealing with difficult stakeholders.

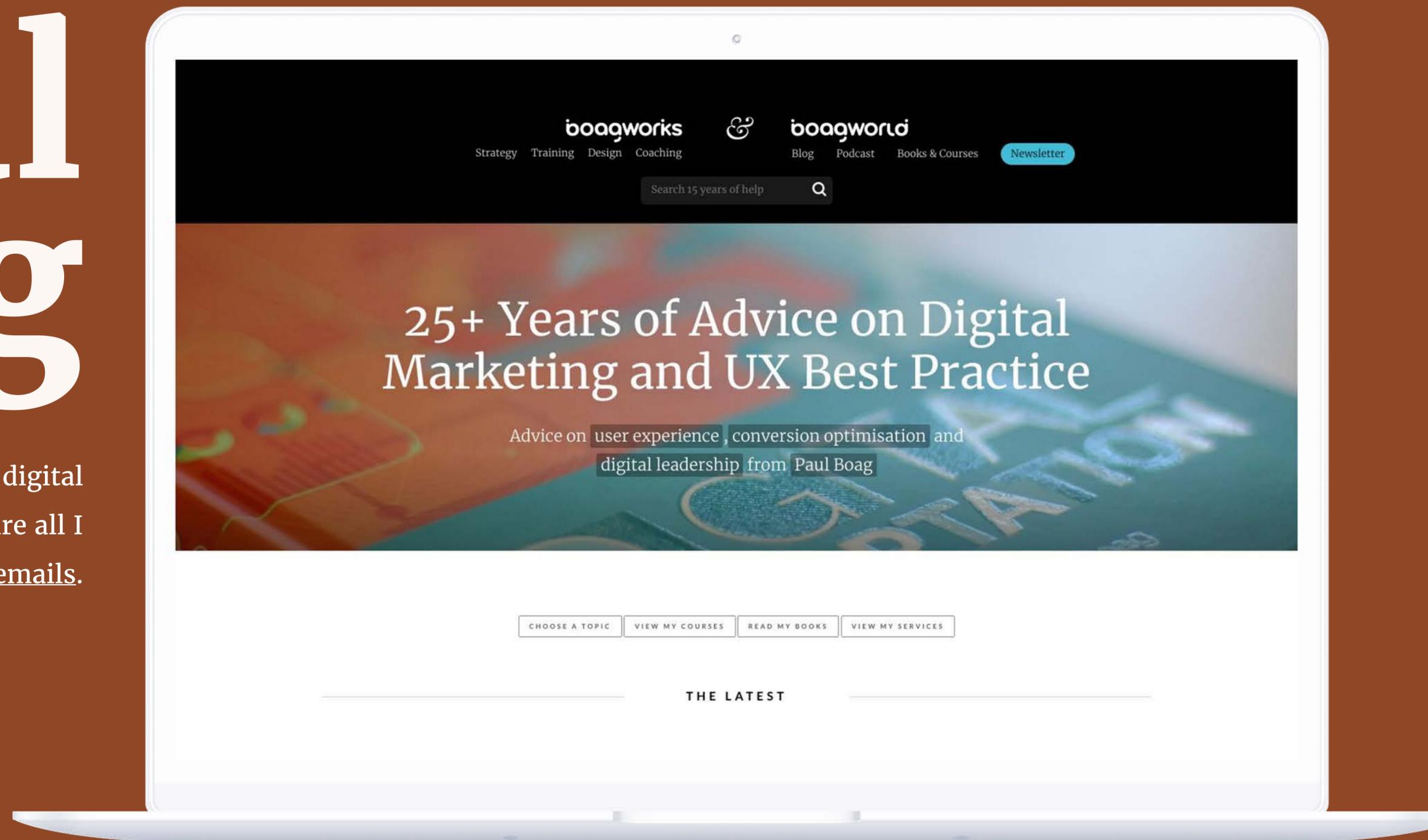
# Paul Boag

I have been working in digital for over 27 years, 13 of which involved running an agency and 6 as an independent consultant.

I have worked with clients in every conceivable sector and both multi-nationals as well as small startups.

# Paul Boag

I have written 6 books on various digital topics, speak internationally and share all I know through [my blog](#) and [emails](#).





# Running a Design Project

Running a design project in the right way is essential for success. In this session, you will learn how to structure your design projects and what to include in each stage.

# Why design projects struggle

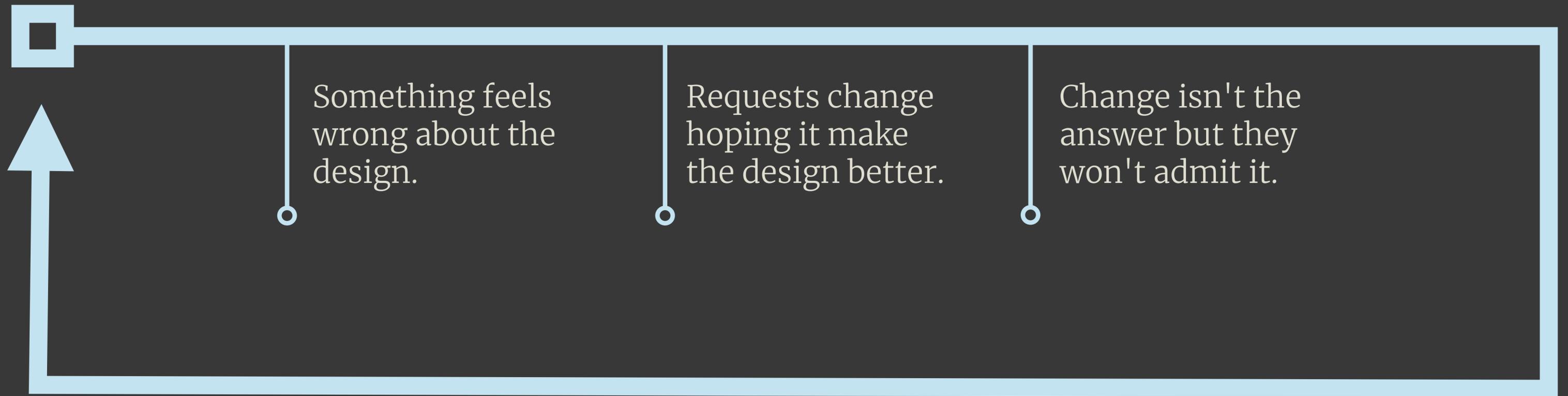
## Scope creep

It is not until a client can see the website that they will think of what else can be done and spot what is missing.

## Subjectiveness

Design is subjective and each stakeholder will see it differently leading to **endless iterations** and **Frankenstein design**.

# Iteration Hell



# Avoiding the pitfalls

## Introducing objectivity

Design decisions should be made with data, not opinion. Design cannot appeal to everybody, so who should your design appeal to?

## Involving the client often

By involving the client often and from the start of the process, we provide a sense of ownership, educate them and help to flush out ideas early.

## Providing reassurance

Client's interfere in the design because they don't trust you to deliver. You can build trust with a robust process.

# Agreeing design principles

## What?

Design principles are a set of short statements about how you intend to make decisions during a project.



## Why?

Design principles move the decision-making process away from personal opinion and provide a framework for making informed decisions.

[principles.design](https://principles.design)



[gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles](https://gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles)

# Design with

d a t a

www.gov.uk/design-principles

## Government Design Principles

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Start with user needs              | 6 This is for everyone                      |
| 2 Do less                            | 7 Understand context                        |
| 3 Design with data                   | 8 Build digital services, not websites      |
| 4 Do the hard work to make it simple | 9 Be consistent, not uniform                |
| 5 Iterate. Then iterate again        | 10 Make things open: it makes things better |



Let data drive decision-making, not hunches or guesswork.

Start with identifying user needs. If you don't know what the needs are, you won't build the right thing. Do research, analyse data, talk to users.

# Start

# with user needs

www.gov.uk/design-principles

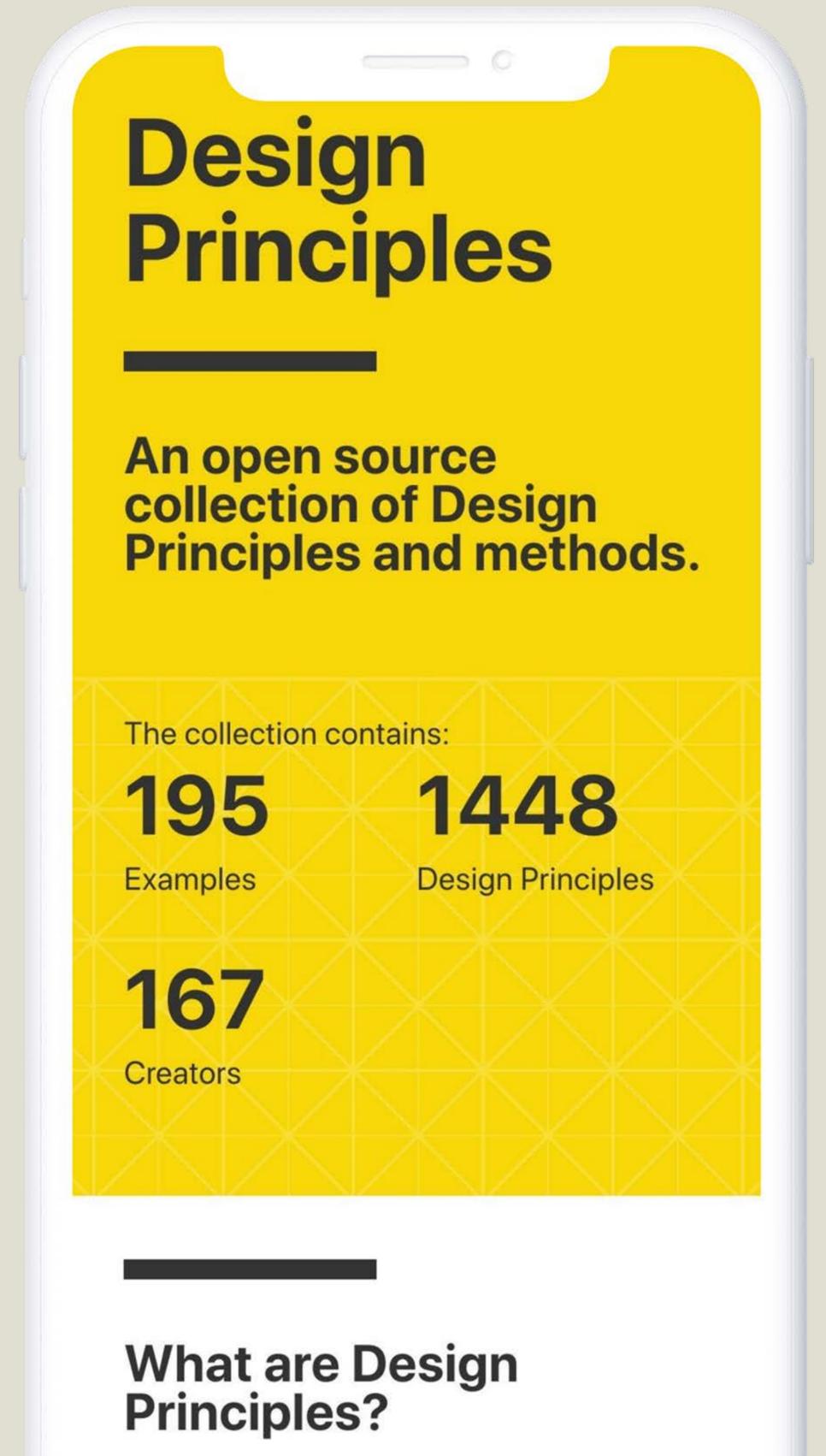
## Government Design Principles

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Start with user needs              | 6 This is for everyone                      |
| 2 Do less                            | 7 Understand context                        |
| 3 Design with data                   | 8 Build digital services, not websites      |
| 4 Do the hard work to make it simple | 9 Be consistent, not uniform                |
| 5 Iterate. Then iterate again        | 10 Make things open: it makes things better |



# Workshop your design principles

Using the [design principles website](#), create approximately 20-30 design principles cards. Give each stakeholder 5 points to spend by marking cards they like. They can spend all 5 points on one card or spread them over multiple cards. Next, select the top 6 cards for your design principles.



# Introducing a better design process

---

A robust design process reassures the client, and so reduces micro-management. It also better manages the client's expectations and educates them, eliminating scope creep and endless iteration.

# Your current process in a nutshell

Some form of kickoff.

You present the design.

You design additional templates.

Content is added.

Your produce an initial design concept.

You go through multiple rounds of iterations.

The design is built.

# The problem with your current process

You are forced to design without content.

Clients lack the knowledge to provide quality feedback.

The final site often looks very different from the designs.

The design will come as a surprise.

Iterations are hard to predict and waste time.

The project involves a lot of risks.

# An aside about speculative design

## What?

Speculative design is the practice of producing unpaid design work for a prospective client to prove your capabilities.

It costs everybody money

It is about selling not delivering

It is wasteful

It is uninformed

It is not collaborative

# A better design process

○ Discovery

○ Prototyping

○ Build

○ Live

EACH PHASE IS A SEPARATE PROJECT AND DEFINES THE NEXT

# Benefits to stakeholders and clients

## Reducing risk

A client can test the working relationship with a supplier on a smaller project. Each phase also validates the viability of the next, reducing committing to one large and potentially flawed project.

## Accurate costing

Because each phase scopes the next, they can be costed much more accurately. That allows for tighter control over spending and the allocation of resources.

## Reducing failure

Because the project is broken into self-contained phases that are well defined and researched, the chances of building something that generates a return on investment increase considerably.

# Discovery

## What?

The discovery phase is a period of time (anything from a single workshop to 8 weeks) dedicated to defining the problems being solved and the project's scope.

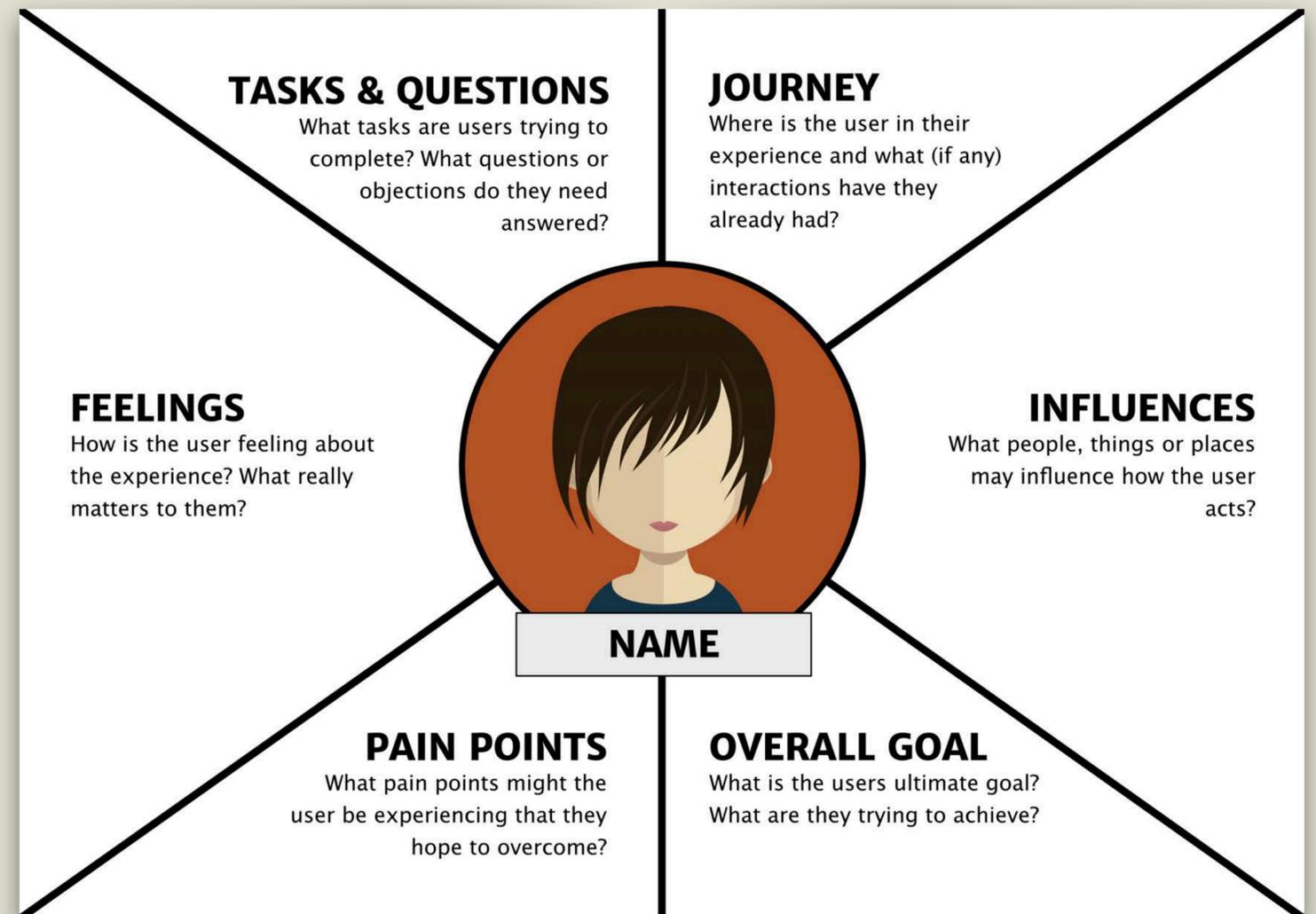
## Why?

Carrying out a discovery phase helps reduce scope creep, uncover any constraints to the design, and provide the context for better decision-making during the project.

## How?

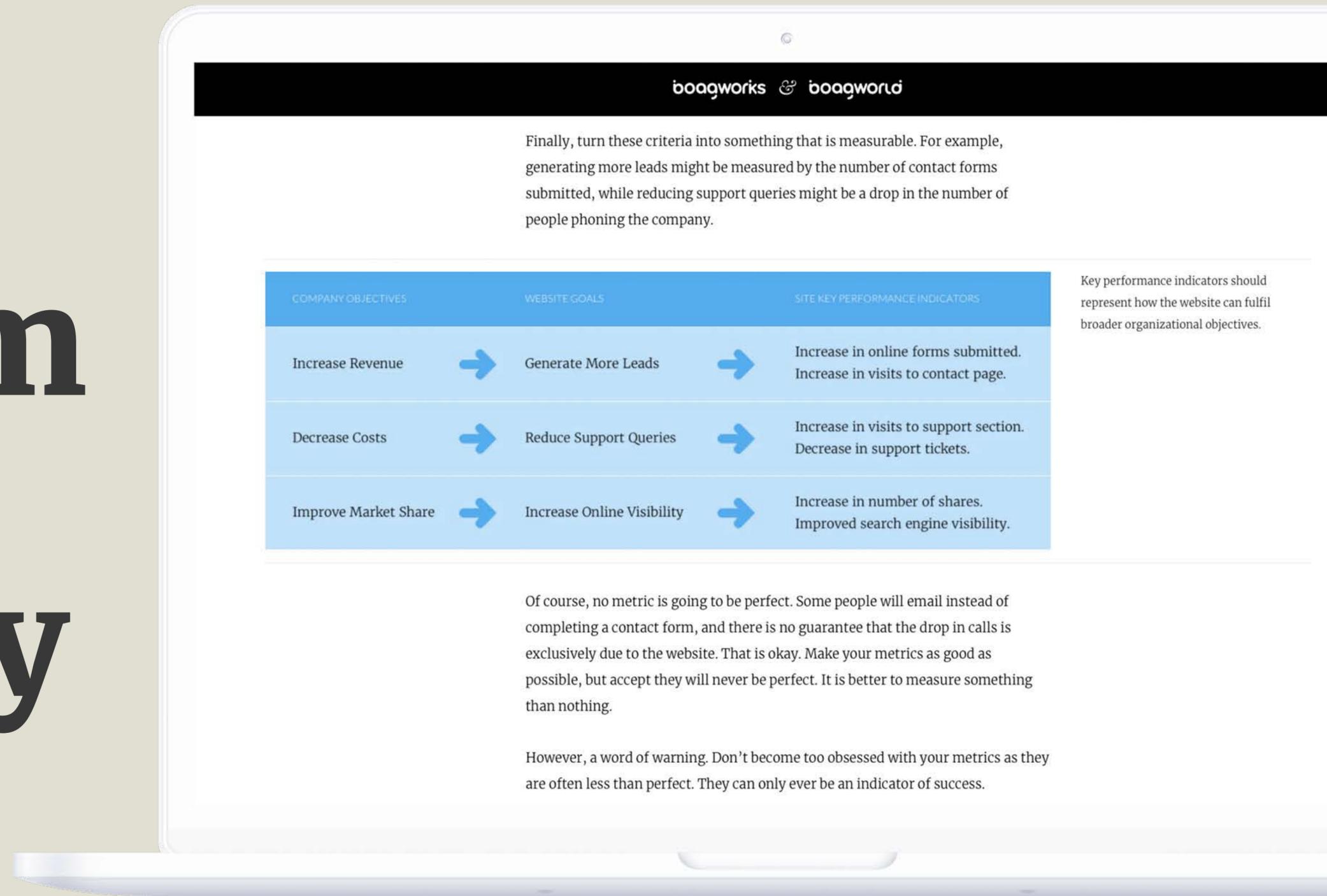
- User research.
- Stakeholder interviews.
- Competitive analysis.
- Research constraints.
- Review existing website/app.

# The Minimum for a Discovery Phase



Adapting empathy maps for UX design

# The Minimum for a Discovery Phase



**Dedicate 10% to discovery**

# Prototyping

## What?

The prototyping phase is where the design direction is established and the scope of the build defined.

## Why?

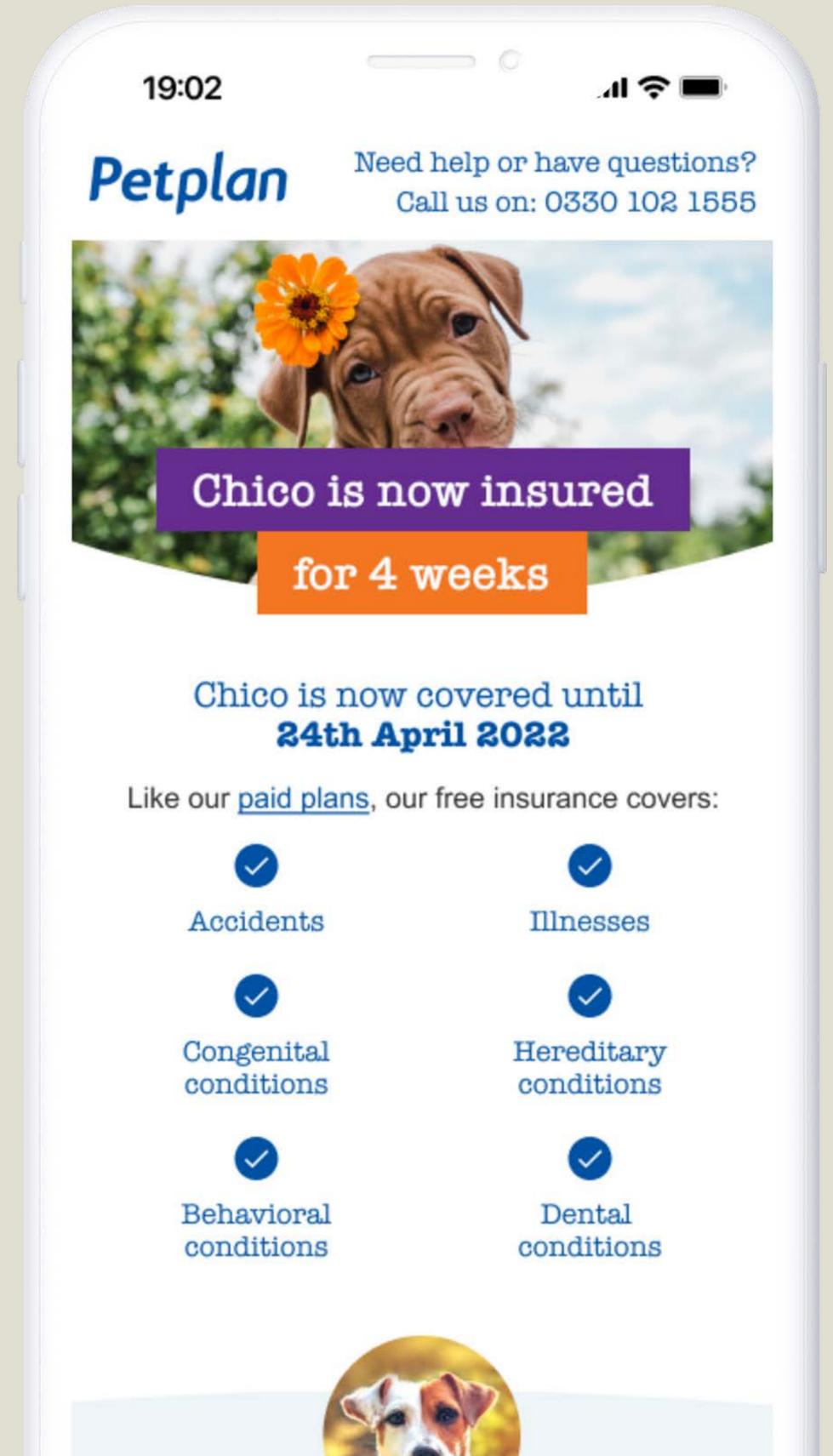
Prototyping allows us to validate the design approach to avoid costly changes during build. It also helps to better define what the build involves for more accurate costing.

## How?

- Establish aesthetics.
- Design mockups for key templates.
- Site wireframing.
- Usability testing.
- Aesthetic testing.

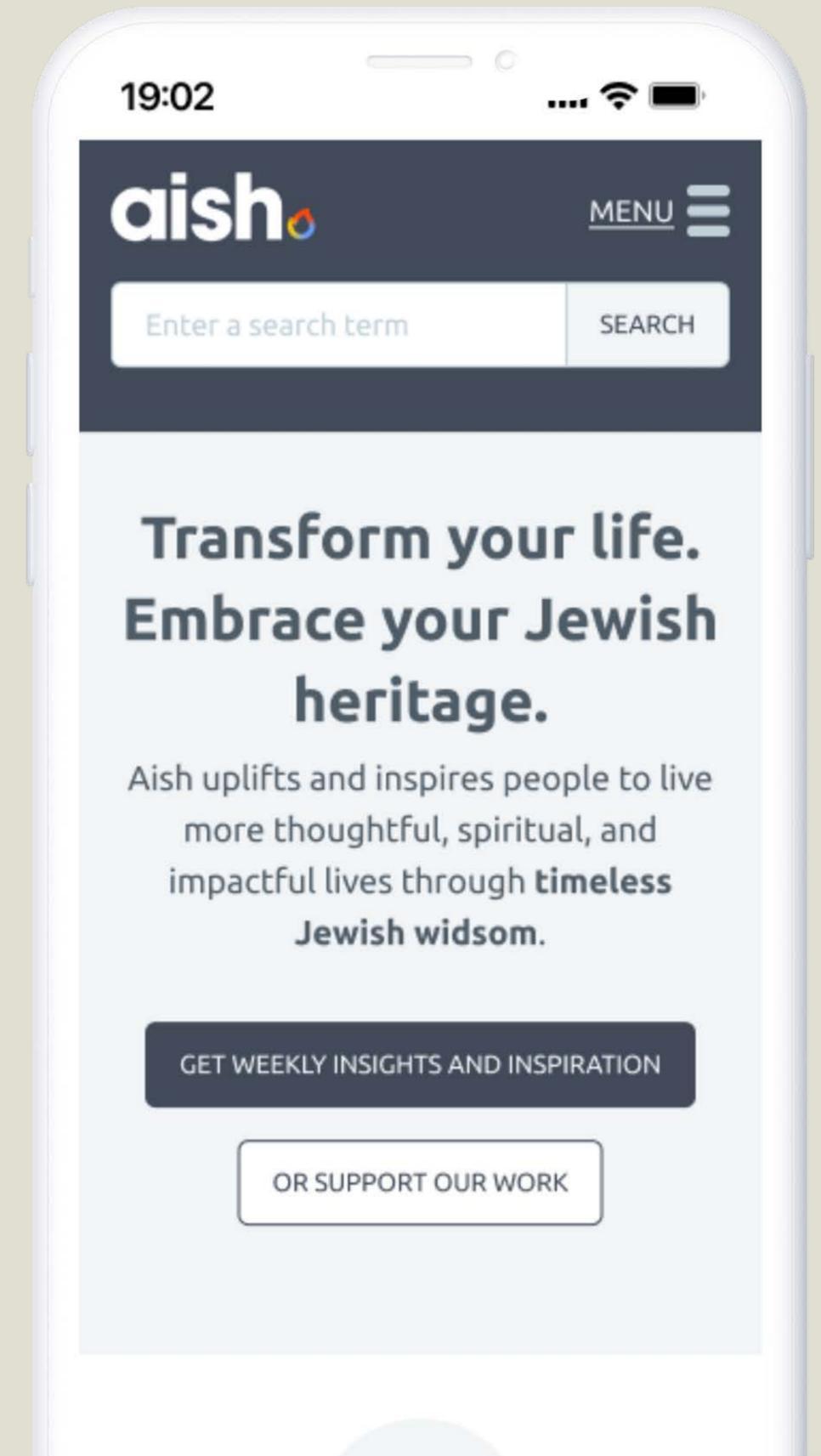
High fidelity mockups of critical templates to demonstrate how the website aesthetics, integrate with the site structure.

# The Minimum for prototyping



A navigable wireframe of the website including draft content and mockups of proposed functionality.

# The Minimum for prototyping



# The Minimum for prototyping

## Testing aesthetics

Color, typography, imagery, and styling are all perceived differently depending on our experiences. By testing aesthetics, we can save hours of endless debate.

## Testing usability

A website will not succeed if people cannot find content, understand the functionality, and comprehend content. By testing usability, you increase the chance of project success.

**You don't have  
the time or  
money not to  
test!**

Carrying out aesthetics and usability testing may seem like a luxury you cannot afford. However, in reality, if approached in the right way it will save you endless meetings, discussions and revisions.

**Testing is the secret to design sign off.**

# Build

## What?

The build stage is where your designs are turned into fully functional websites. It is when the design is finalized to be fully responsive and include states for things like buttons and forms.

## Why?

It is better to finalize a design in the browser, where you can see it become fully interactive. Involving the designer in this stage also ensures the design is not undermined during the build.

## How?

- Fully responsive design.
- Button and form states.
- Error messages.
- Design systems.
- Animation.
- Usability testing.

# The Minimum for build

As an absolute minimum the developer will need to know the various states for buttons, links and forms. They will also need styling for error messages, notifications and form validation.



# Live

## What?

Going live should not be the end of the project. Once the website has been launched, it is necessary to monitor user behavior and adjust the design to maximize conversion and engagement.

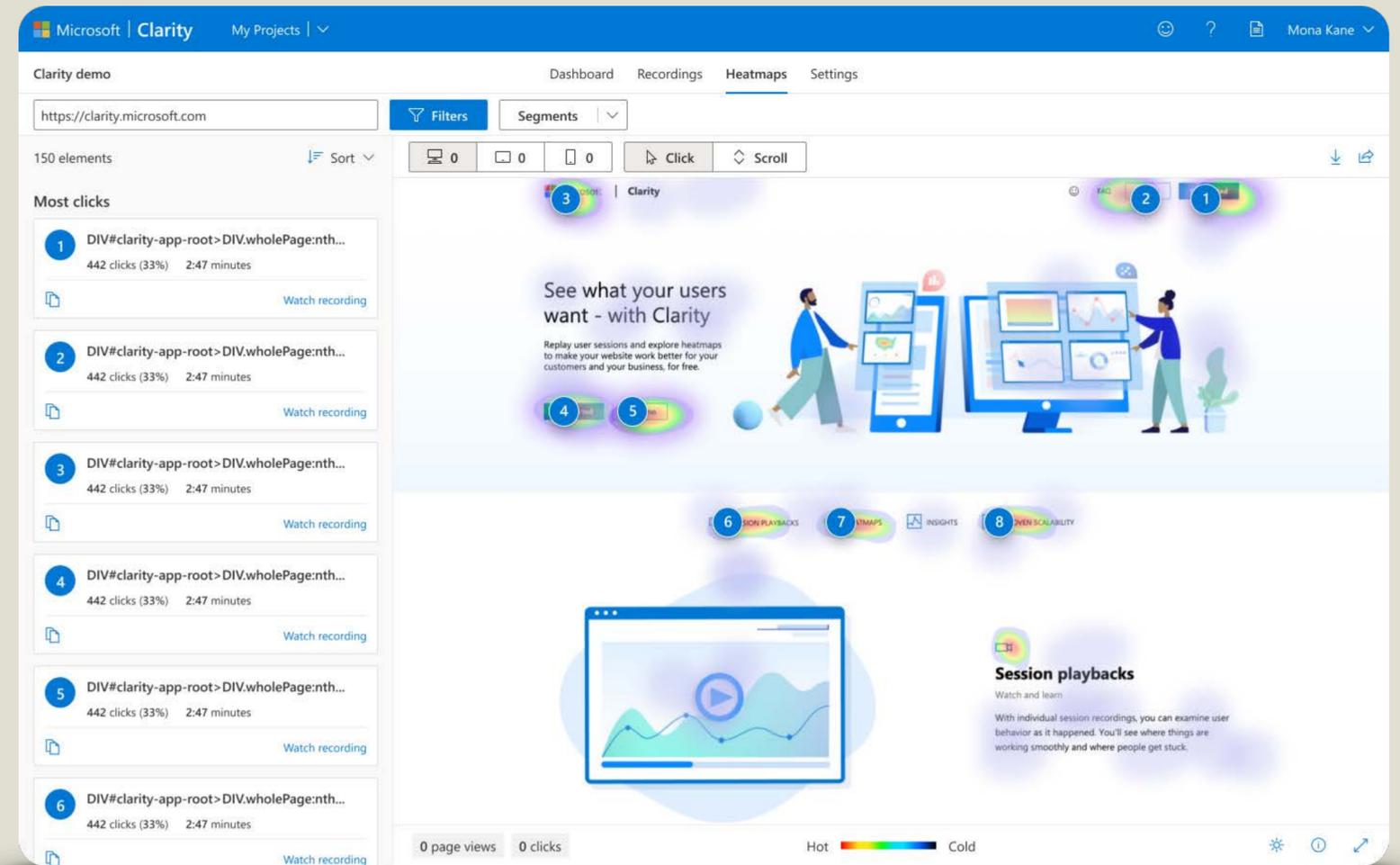
## Why?

Until a website goes live we only have theoretical knowledge of how users will respond. The live phase allows us the chance to observe user behavior and make user the design is working well.

## How?

- Analytics.
- Session recording.
- Heat maps.
- AB testing.
- Usability testing.

# The Minimum for live



Set your 'go-live' milestone about two thirds through the overall project timeline, not at the end. Use a tool like [Microsoft Clarity](#) to monitor user behavior and adjust the design to ensure better performance.

# Defining the stakeholders role

## Why?

Stakeholders often provide irrelevant feedback or attempt to micro-manage the design process. It can be beneficial to define their role and your own to prevent this from happening.

They find problems, you find solutions.

They champion the business needs.

They defend the user.

# Before you start checklist

- ✓ Define both your role and that of the clients.
- ✓ Outline the project process and its benefits.
- ✓ Agree on a set of design principles to aid decision making.
- ✓ Carry out as much user research as you can and turn it into empathy maps.
- ✓ Agree on a list of key performance indicators for defining success.
- ✓ Identify and speak to as many key stakeholders as possible.

# Questions

I have proposed a very different way of working for many. This will inevitably lead to questions. Either ask them now or email me on [paul@boagworld.com](mailto:paul@boagworld.com).

---

# Producing Initial Designs

This session will explore techniques for engaging stakeholders while maintaining control over the final design.

---

# Techniques to keep in mind when designing

## Involve the client

We tend to design in isolation for fear of stakeholders interfering in the design.

However, this is a mistake. Stakeholders are more likely to reject a design they have not contributed to, and the big reveal can turn into an uncomfortable surprise.

## Separate aesthetics and structure

Stakeholders can reject an entire design because they don't personally like the aesthetics. By approaching aesthetics and structure separately you focus stakeholders on one thing at a time.

## Work with real content

We cannot separate design and content. The design process should begin with the content, how it is organized and how users can easily access it. We should always be working with actual content, not Lorem Ipsum.

# Making content findable with good navigation

You cannot design a site's navigation without having a good understanding of what the content is going to be.

# How to approach content when you aren't a copywriter

## Identify it

Start by identifying the different content that will appear on the site. That includes product descriptions or blog posts and features, benefits, questions, and answers to objections.

## Structure it

Content then needs to be structured into a site hierarchy that enables users to quickly find the content they require.

## Draft it

Don't wait for stakeholders to deliver content for templates you are prototyping. Draft initial copy yourself to start the discussion and focus stakeholders on the right kind of content.

# Agreeing on the value proposition

Strapline

Benefits

Features

# Discovering questions, objections and tasks

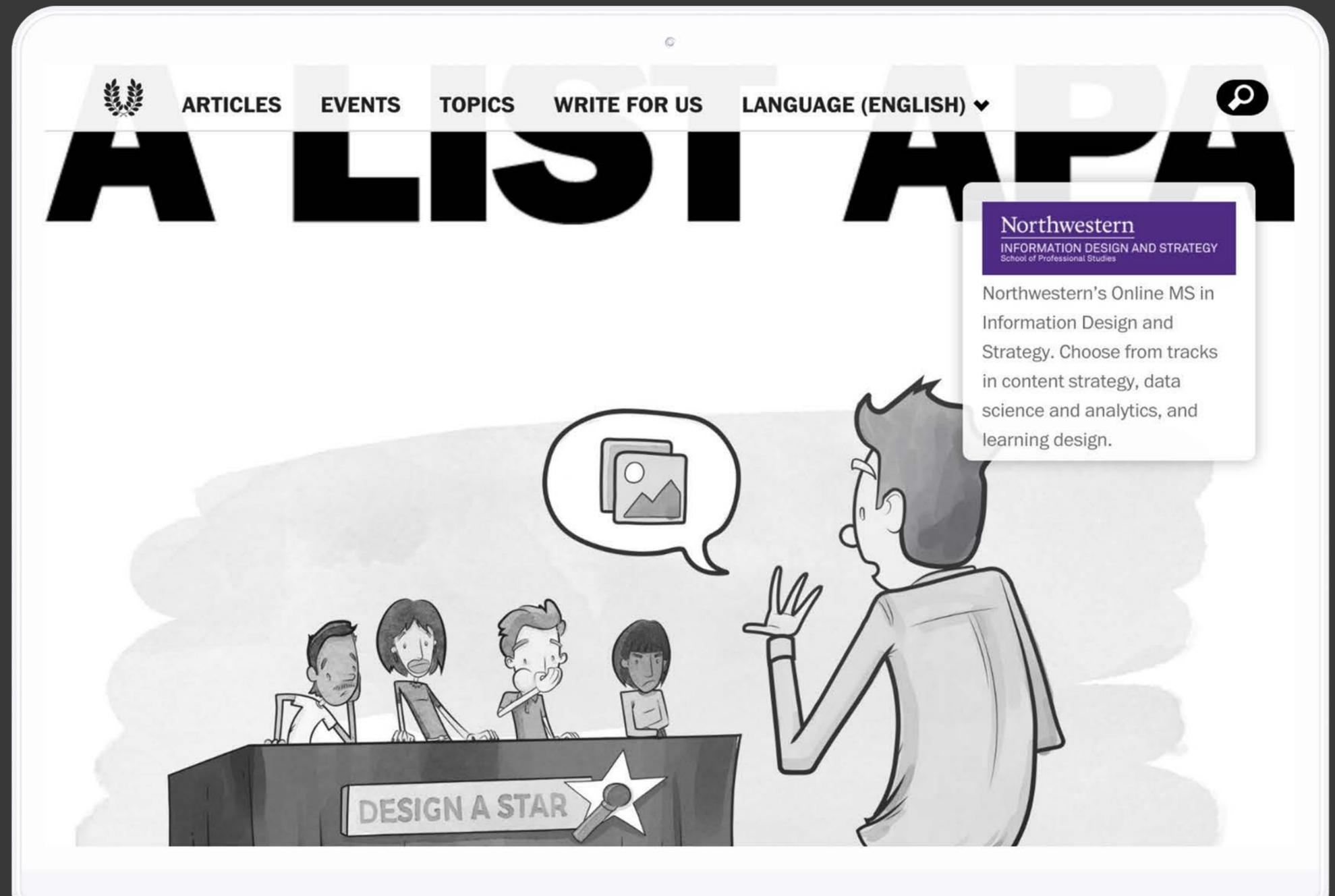
Most content on a website should answer a user's question, address an objection that stops people from acting or enable somebody to complete a task. To structure that content, you first need a list of those questions, objections, and tasks.

## How?

- Speak to sales.
- Speak to customer services.
- Analyze search terms.
- Ask users.
- Monitor social media.
- **Run a questions and answers workshop.**

# Prioritize your content

Not all questions, objections and tasks are equal. Some matter more to users than others and we need to highlight these. Consider using top task analysis to identify the most important content.



Northwestern  
INFORMATION DESIGN AND STRATEGY  
School of Professional Studies

Northwestern's Online MS in Information Design and Strategy. Choose from tracks in content strategy, data science and analytics, and learning design.

# Card Sorts

Understand and optimize for your users' mental models for free.

Get started

## Run any type of card sort like a pro

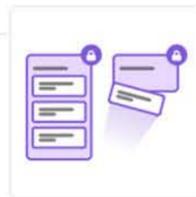
Three techniques to choose from. All optimized for a great participant experience on any device. Instant insights with crystal clear reports.



### Open Sort

Participants sort cards into groups **they** create and name.

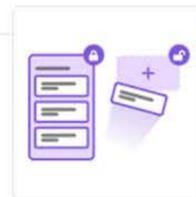
Participant demo →



### Closed Sort

Participants sort cards into groups **you** create and name.

Participant demo →



### Hybrid Sort

Participants sort cards into **both** types of groups.

Participant demo →

# Organize your content

Once we know what content has to appear on the site we need to create a site hierarchy to support it. This is typically done through running card sorting to ensure we watch the user's mental model.

Instructions

All done?

Submit

Drag all the cards below into groups that makes sense to you.



Vehicle

Payment methods

Policy coverage summary

Inspections

Insurance ID cards

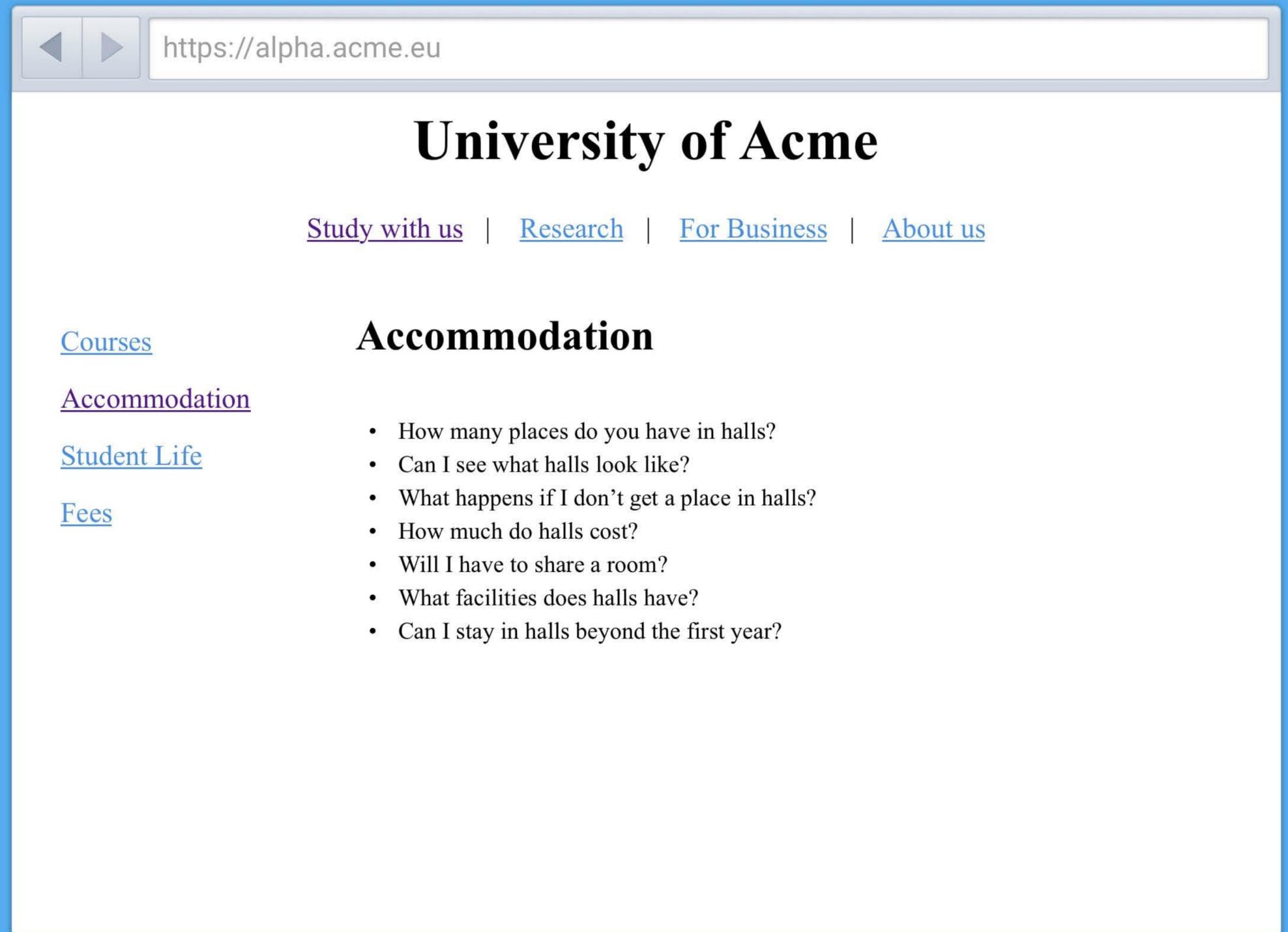
Billing documents

Billing



# Map content to pages

Take your value proposition, questions, objections, and tasks and organize them into pages based on the results of your card sorting. This task can be very quickly in a tool like [Notion](#).

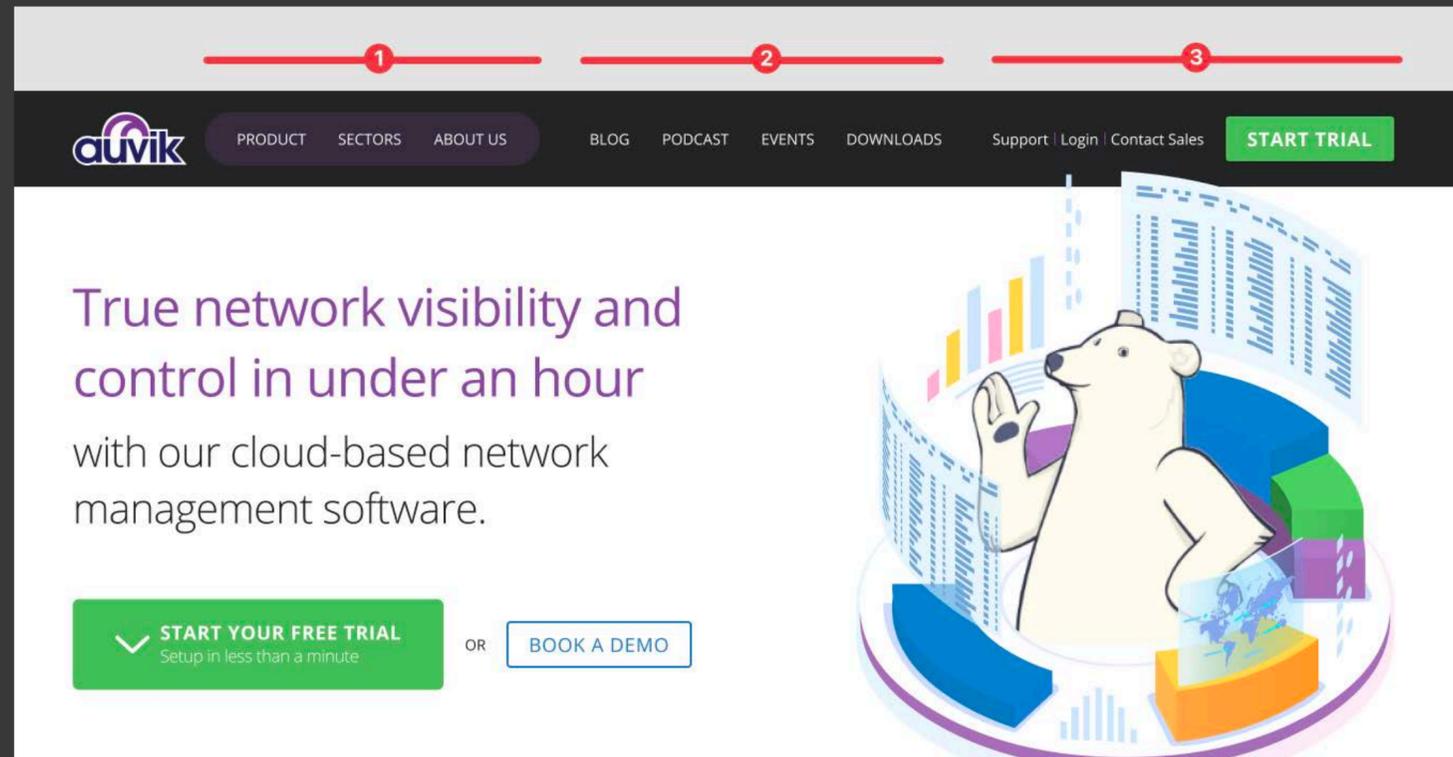


# Chunk your content

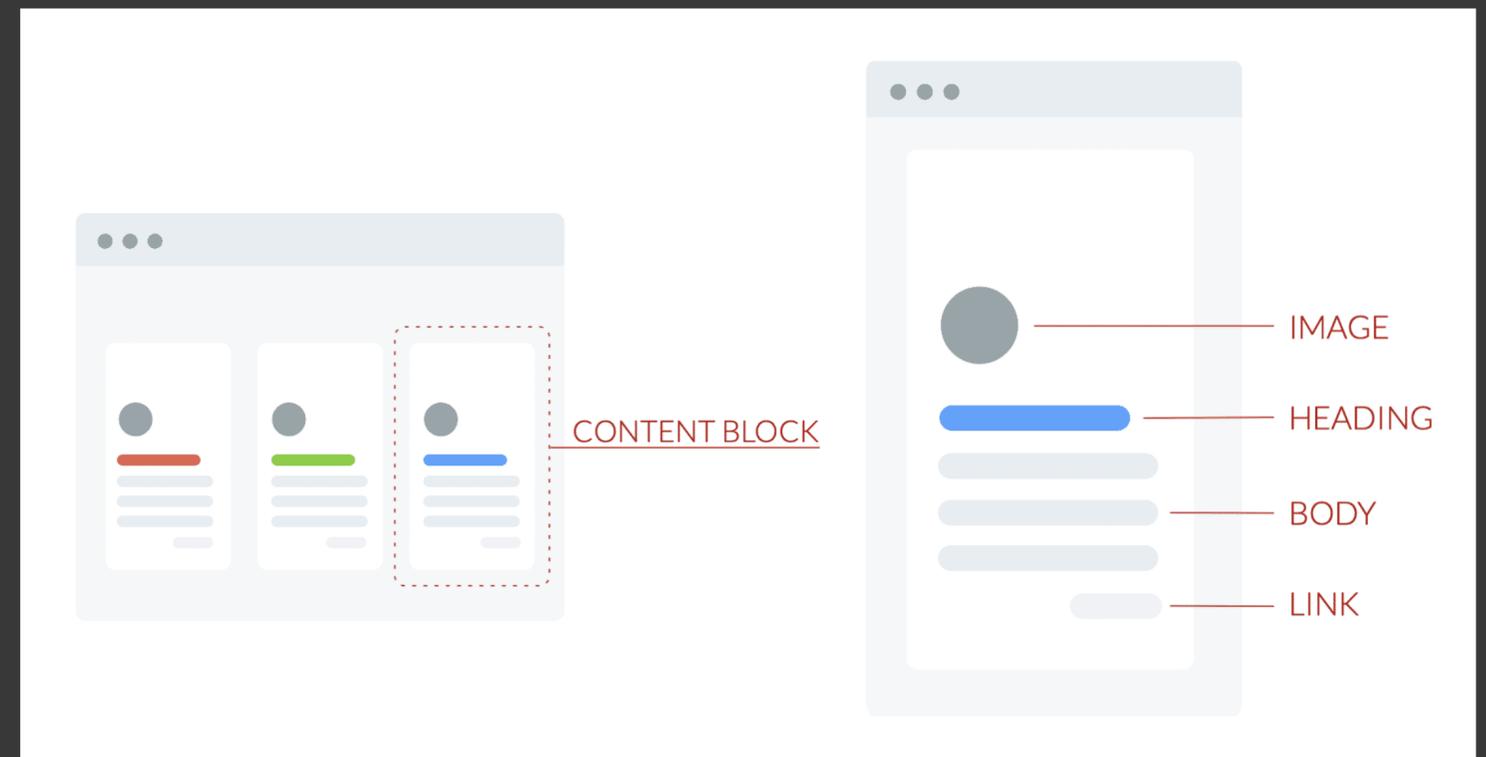
We can only hold four things in our short-term memory, so designers need to break the content down into small 'chunks' to make them easier to digest.

Introducing stakeholders also prevents them making bad content decisions such as too many options and pages of copy.

## Chunk navigation and lists



## Chunk content into blocks



Designed for developers

# The world's most powerful and easy-to-use APIs

We agonize over the right abstractions so your teams don't need to stitch together disparate systems or spend months integrating payments functionality.

[Read the docs >](#)



## Tools for every stack

We offer client and server libraries in everything from React and PHP to .NET and iOS.

[See libraries >](#)



## Prebuilt integrations

Use integrations for systems like Shopify, WooCommerce, NetSuite, and more.

[Explore partners >](#)

```
1  const stripe = require('stripe')('sk_test_BQokikJOvBi2H14
2
3  await stripe.paymentIntents.create({
4    amount: 2000,
5    currency: 'usd'
6  });
```

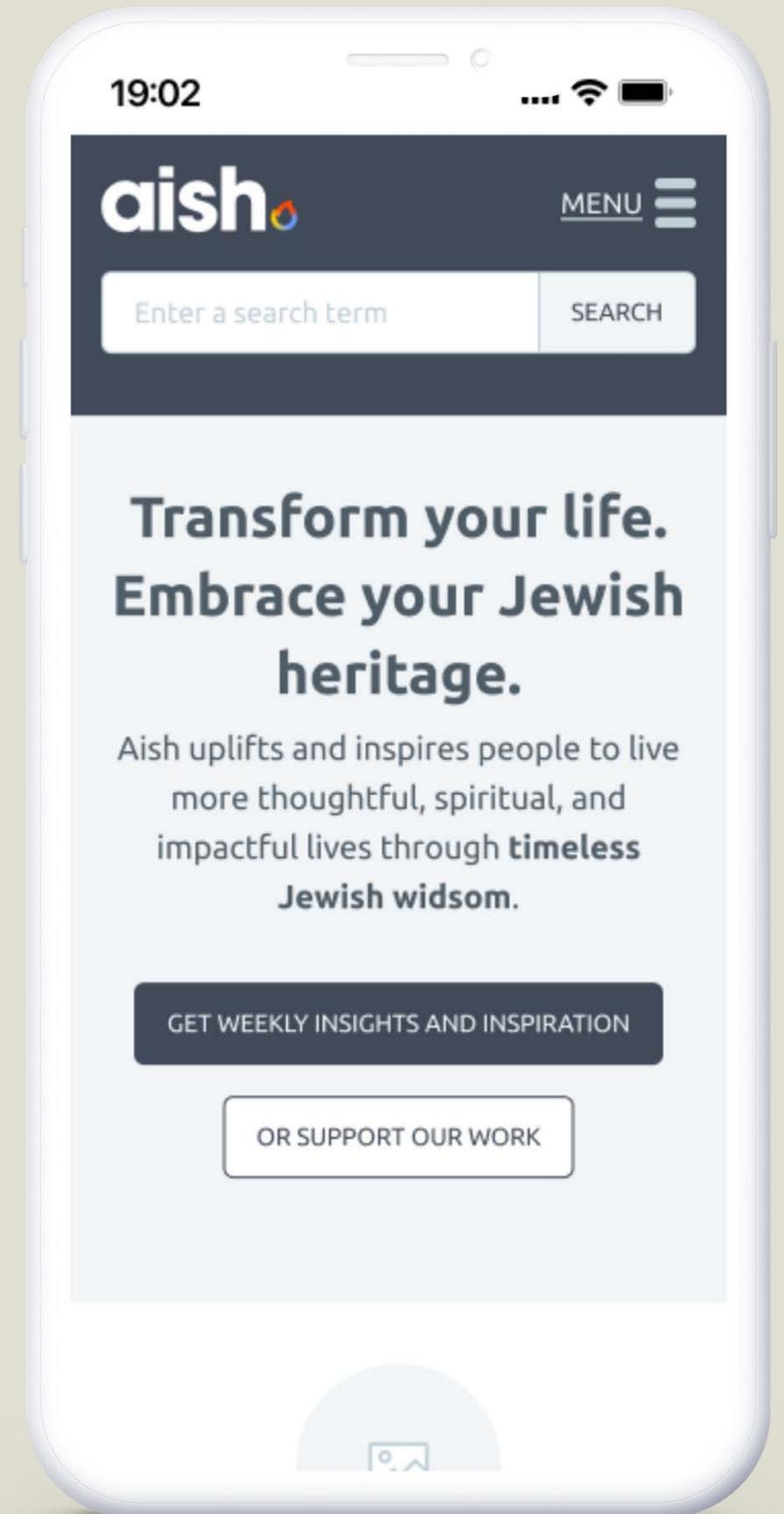
NORMAL server.js

100% 6/6 ln : 4

\$

# Wireframing critical pages

Greyscale wireframes are an opportunity to quickly organize content, test layouts, and establish page flow without getting drawn into conversations about aesthetics.



# What pages should you be wireframing?

For example:

Forms

Ecommerce checkouts

Account management

App functionality

Home page

Landing pages

Text template

Interactions

# Deciding on page content with stakeholders

## User attention point exercise

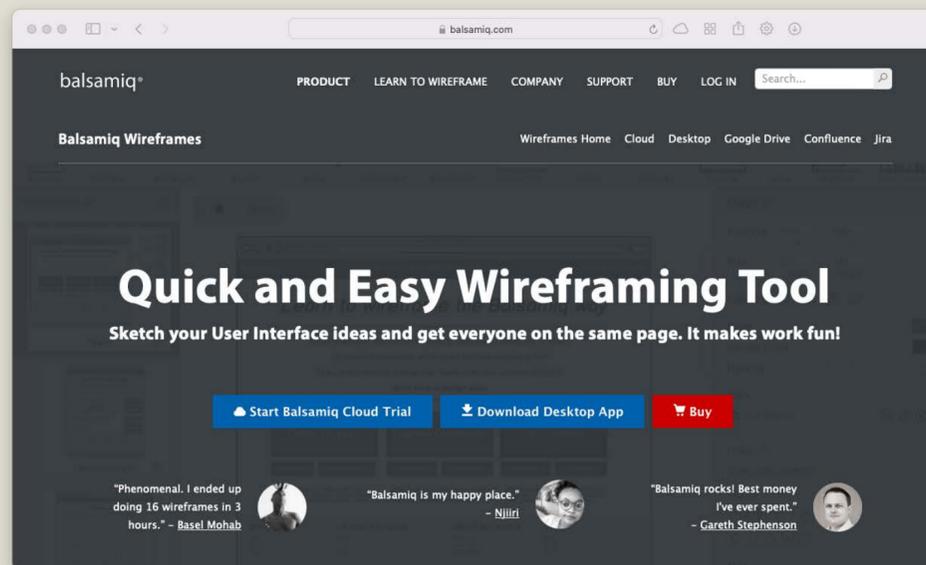
In this exercise, users are given 24 points of user attention to assign to screen elements. The more attention stakeholders want users to pay to an element, the more points it requires — [details available here](#).

## Defining your content blocks

Once you have decided what should appear on a page, begin defining your content blocks. Don't worry about the exact wording; focus on getting the key messages across.

# Use the right tool to wireframe fast

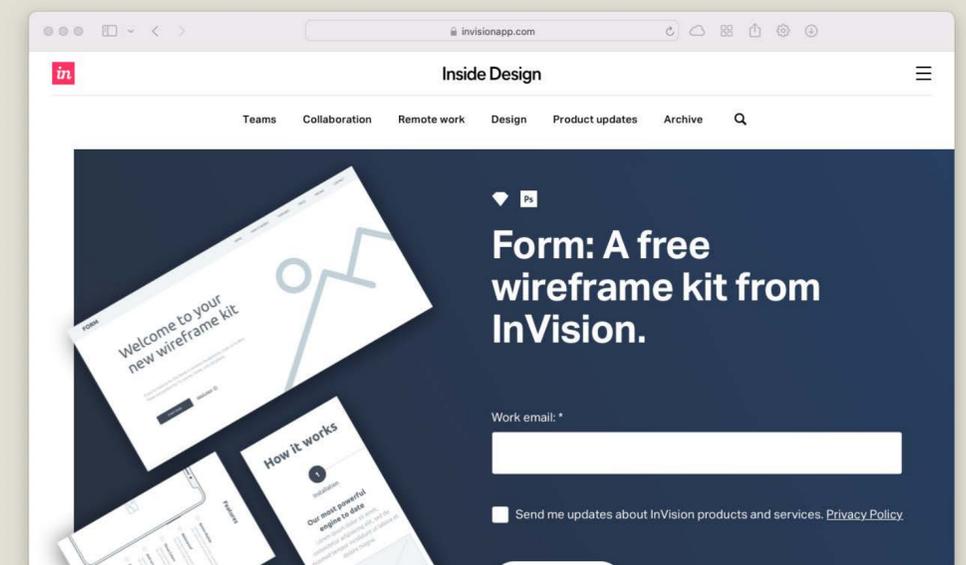
Don't use sketch or Figma for wireframing. They take too long and you will get sucked into designing screen elements.



Balsamiq



Whimsical



A Wireframe Template Like Form

# Run two quick tests on your wireframes

Instead of getting into discussions about page layout and whether users will see your call to action, run a 5-second and first-click test with Usability Hub.

Don't worry about who you test. You can use friends, family or social media followers. Anybody outside of the business.

Five Second Test

When Red Cross calls, Australia answers.

This March, help people overcome hardship by raising funds in your community.

HOW WILL YOU ANSWER THE CALL?

Expand image

Please write down all of the main elements you remember from the page you saw.

- The top bar said "Get involved." I remember people. At the bottom I saw a few ways to help.
- how to volunteer, donate contact us
- when red cross calls Australia answer's
- shop, fundraise, donate blood and there was a fourth option I can't recall

NYU | Alumni

Search

Be...

Events | Programs

NYU P...

Get Involved

Give

FAQ & Contact

NYU Named Top University for Graduate Employability

READ MORE

Area #1

Benefits

20.9s 20% 10

Area #2

News | Publications

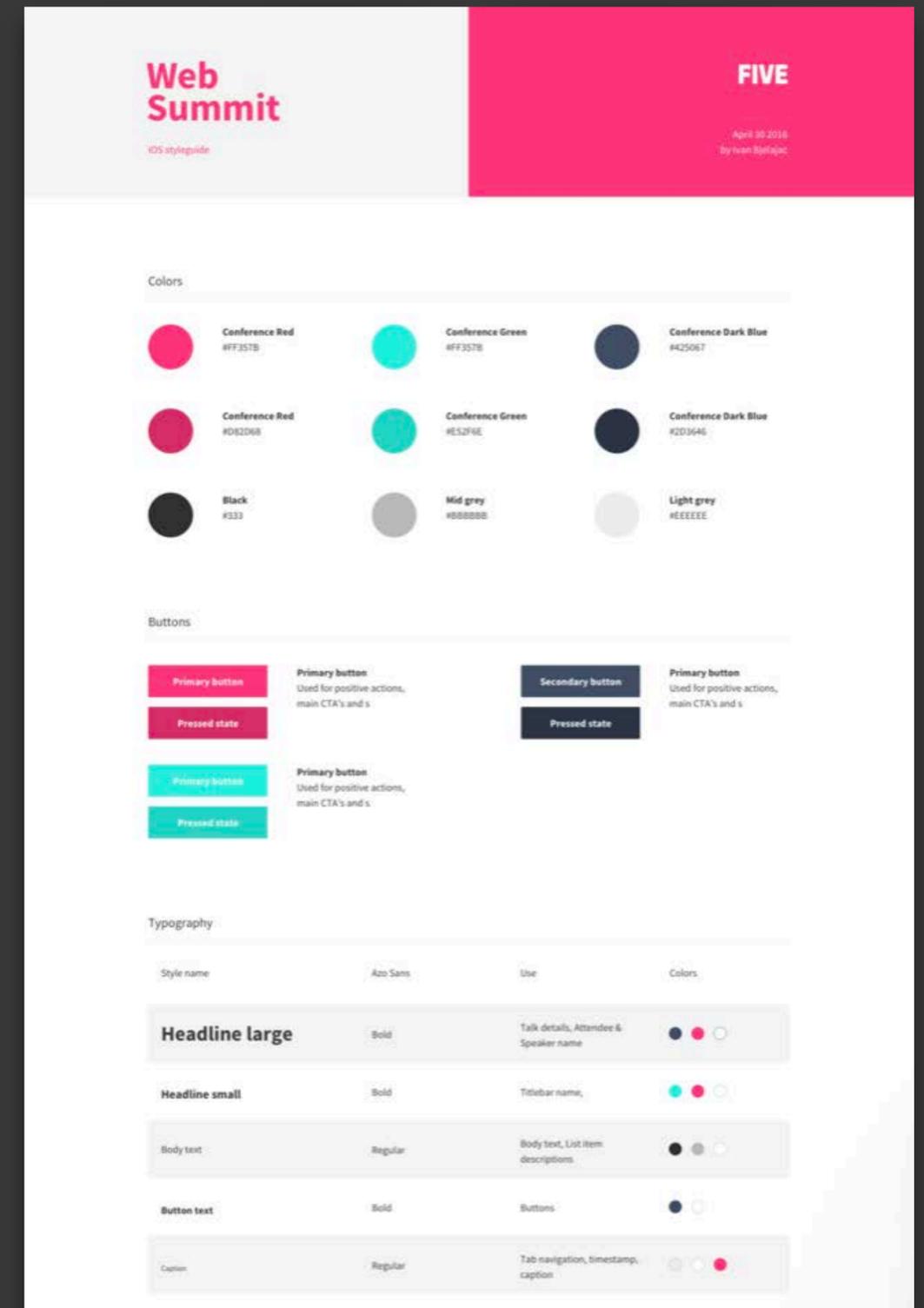
22.0s 54% 27

# Introduce your site aesthetic

With the content and layout largely decided, now is the time to tackle the most controversial part of the design process, aesthetics. This is the area people have wildly differing opinions over.

# If they have strong brand guidelines you are in luck!

If the company has a style guide, all the discussions about aesthetics have already happened. However, if you believe that the brand is not working, you can prove that through testing.



# Define keywords that represent the brand

By defining the exact words we want a design to convey, we can test with users to see if it achieves this goal. This will eliminate subjective debate.



# Three ways to define your brand with stakeholders

## Famous person exercise

Ask participants to name a famous person who represents the brand. Then ask them why. Make a note of the adjectives that they use to describe the person.

## Reception room exercise

Ask participants to describe a reception area for the business. Get them to describe the furniture and other interior decor. Make a note of the adjectives they use.

## Brand deck exercise

Using a set of brand cards, ask the participants to organize the cards into three piles: things they are, things they are not and others.

See also: [Building a brand using the web](#)

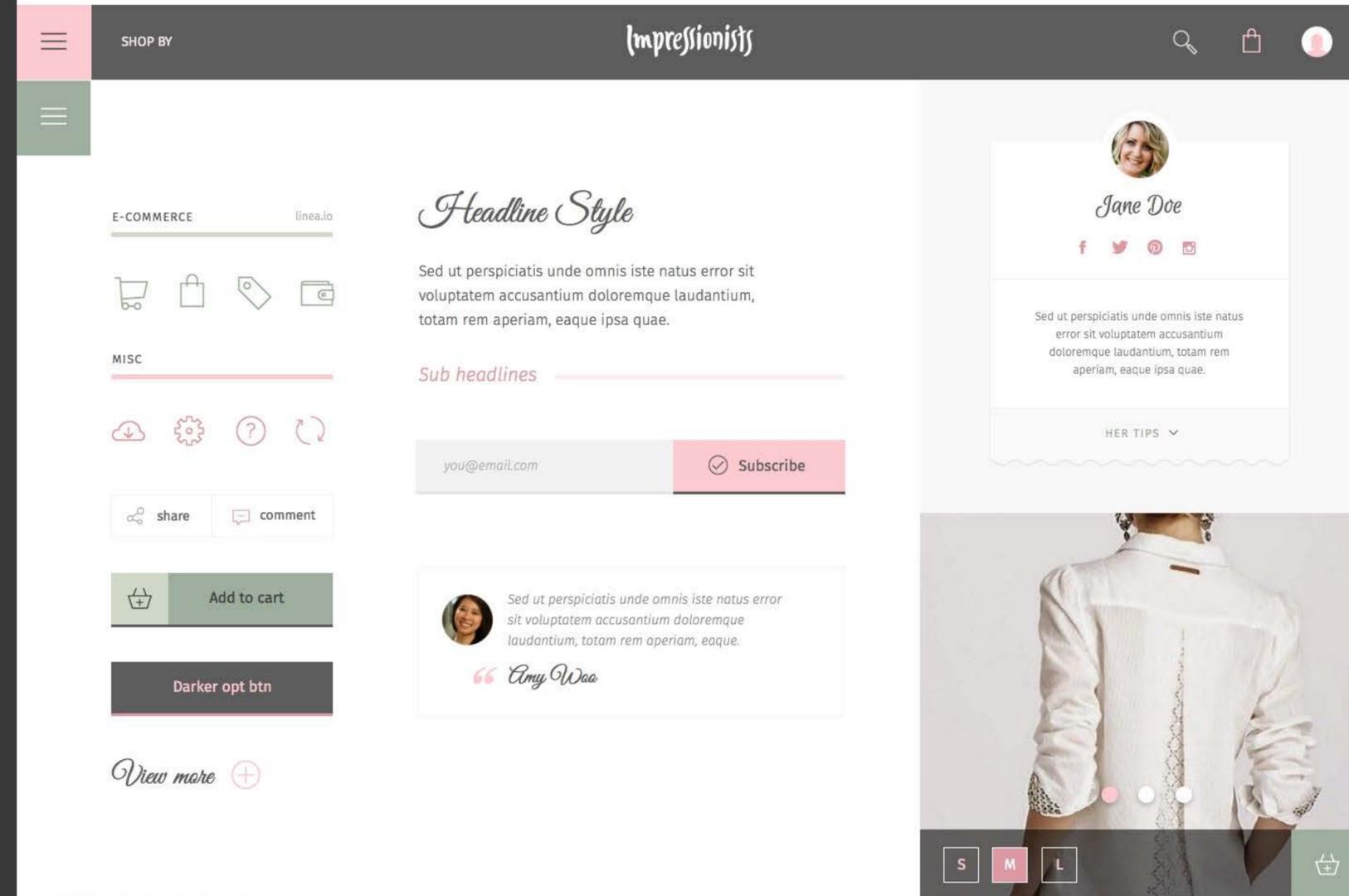
# Create style tiles alone or with stakeholders

Remember, if a stakeholder is involved in setting the aesthetics they are less likely to reject it and more likely to defend it to others.

- Include imagery from [Google Images](#)
- Use [Picular](#) to research colors.
- Explore typography with [Google Fonts](#).
- Find stylistic inspiration on [Dribbble](#).

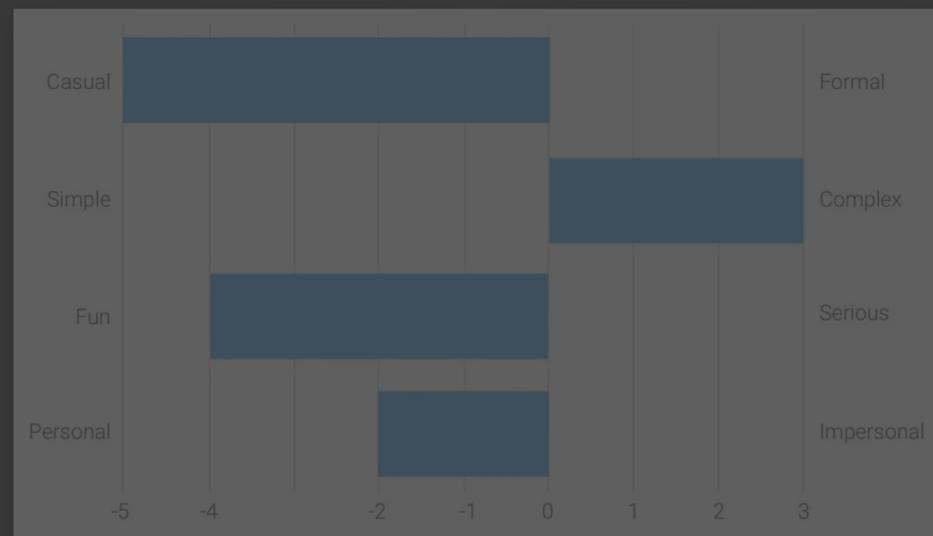
Ab *Great Vibes*  
abcdefghijklmnop  
opqrstuvwxyz

Ab Fira Sans light  
abcdefghijklmnop  
opqrstuvwxyz



# Test your style tiles

When testing aesthetics try and test with your target audience.



Which of the following words describe the above image?

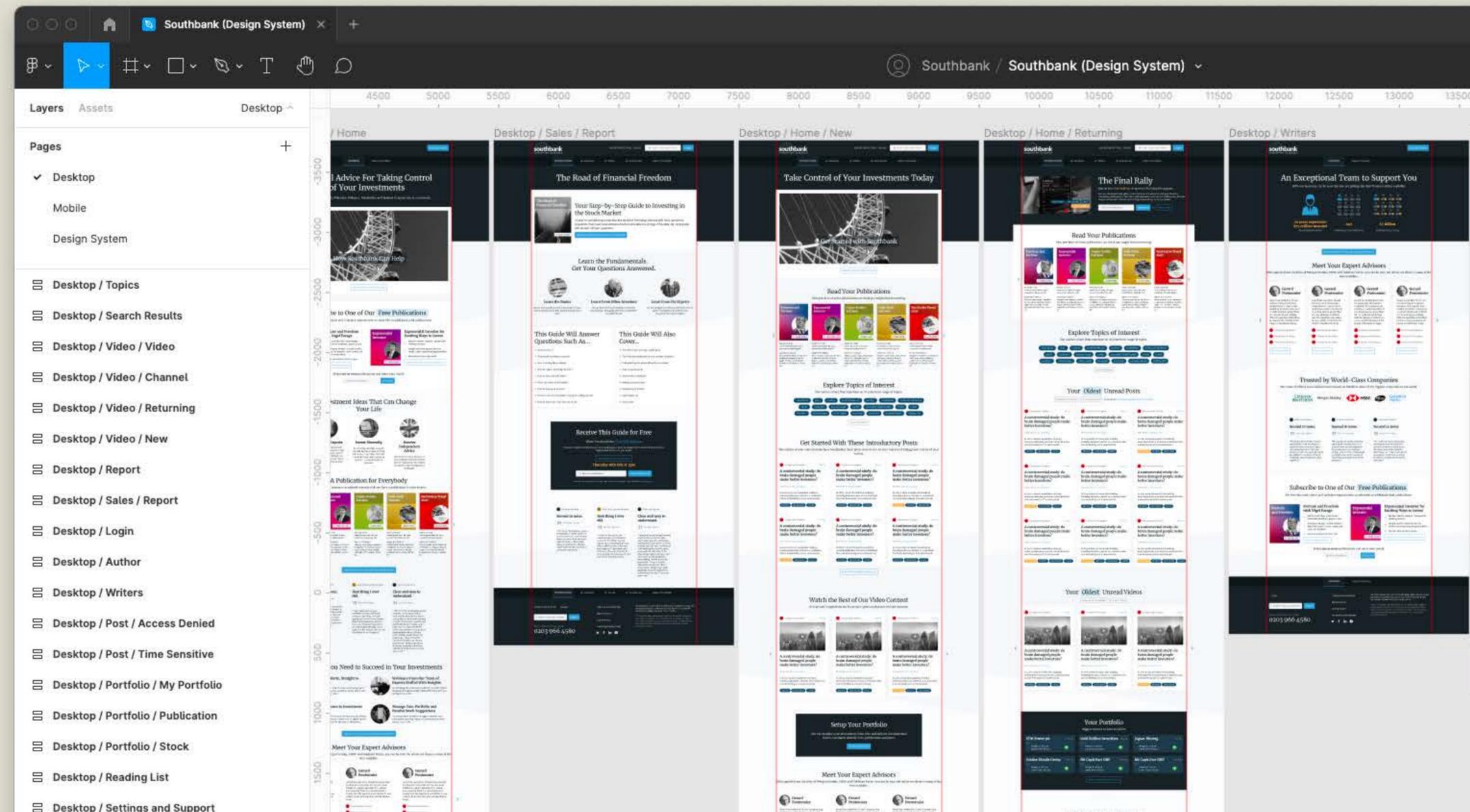
- Fresh
- Cold
- Professional
- Personal
- Friendly
- Approachable
- Distant
- Minimal
- Handmade
- Slick
- False
- Masculine
- Childish
- Sophisticated
- Modern
- Classic
- Feminine
- Childish
- Sophisticated
- Light
- Serious
- Charming

Which of the following sites looks most **approachable**?

The grid displays six different website designs for various institutions, including Discovery Days, a world top 100 university, The University of Furnbush, Welcome to Portsmouth, Queen's Award Winner 2017, and the University of Strathclyde.

# Bringing it all together

Once you have tested and approved your wireframes and style tiles, you can now produce the final high fidelity designs.

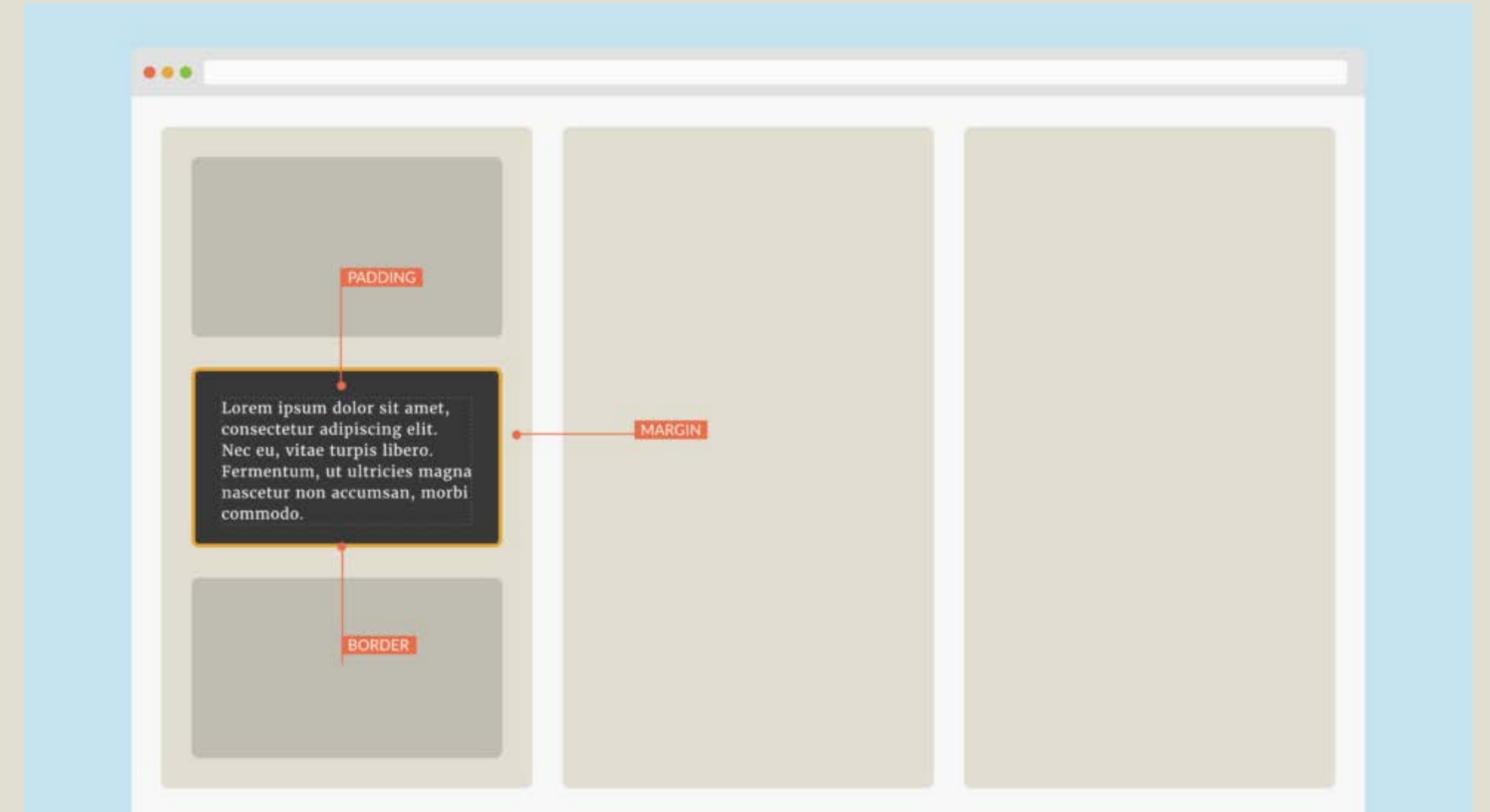
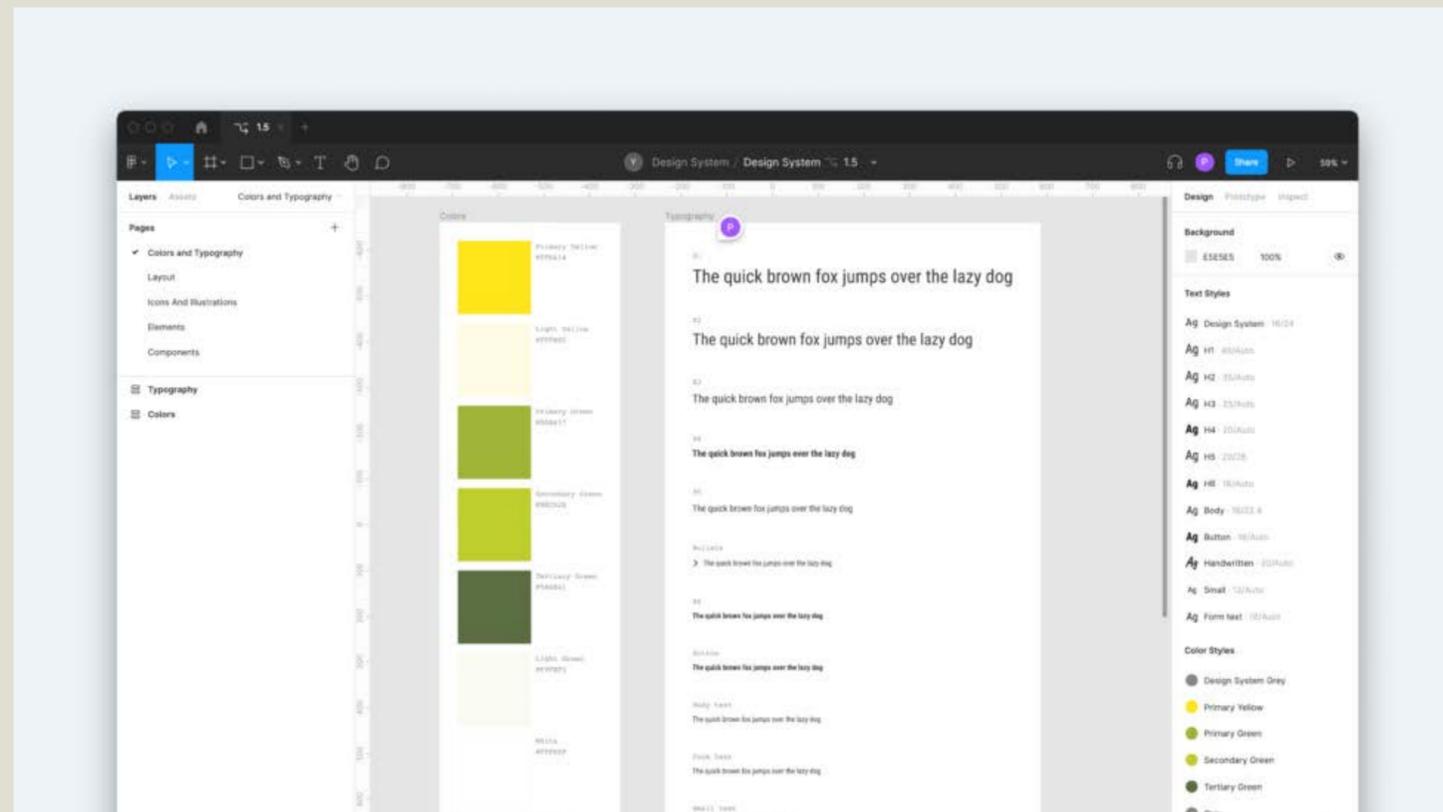


# Create a high fidelity mockup

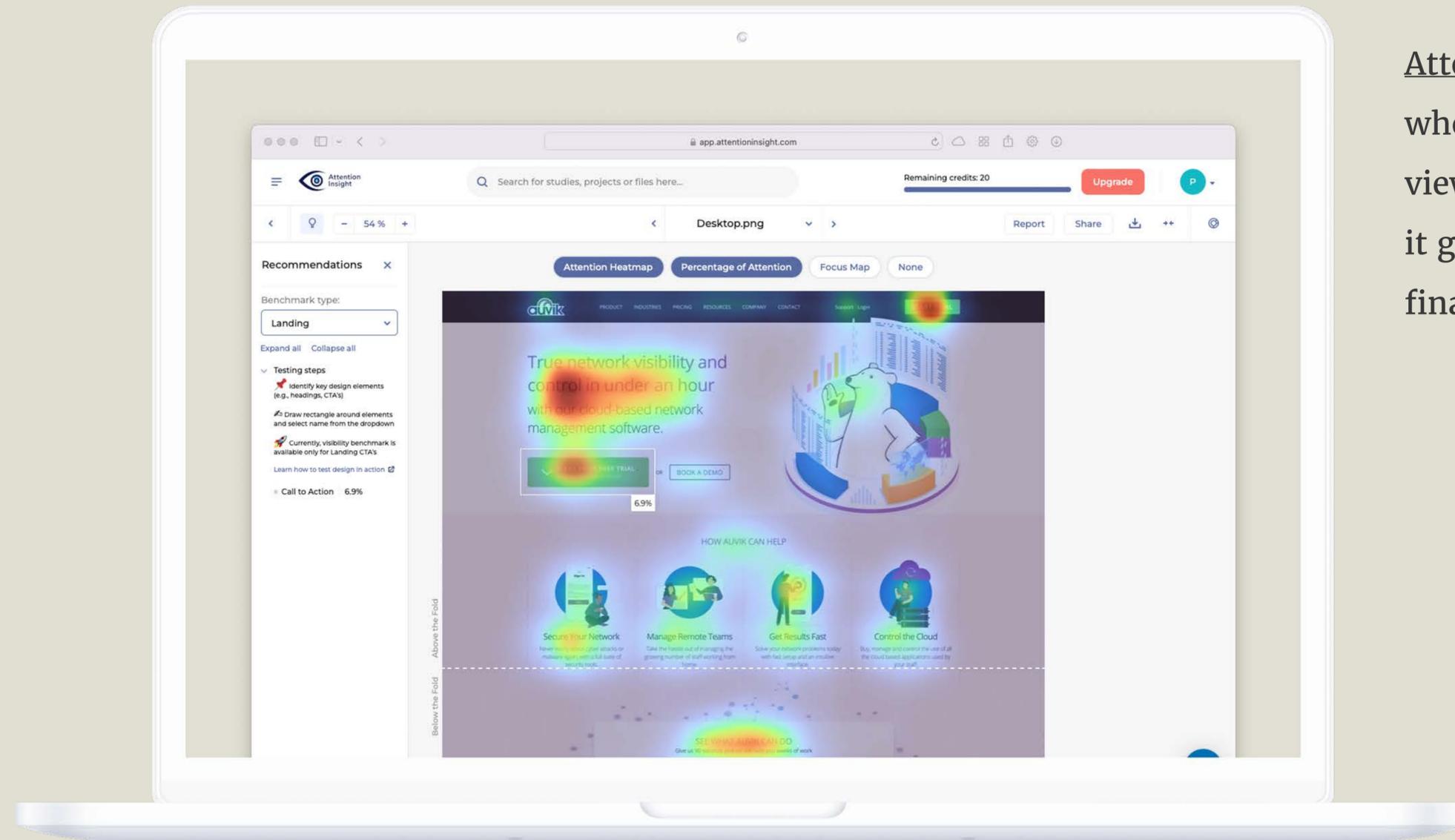
When producing high fidelity mockups that are going to be passed to a developer, keep that developer in mind.

Use styles and components to ensure consistency across your designs.

Don't position elements by eye but instead use features like Auto Layout to position elements.



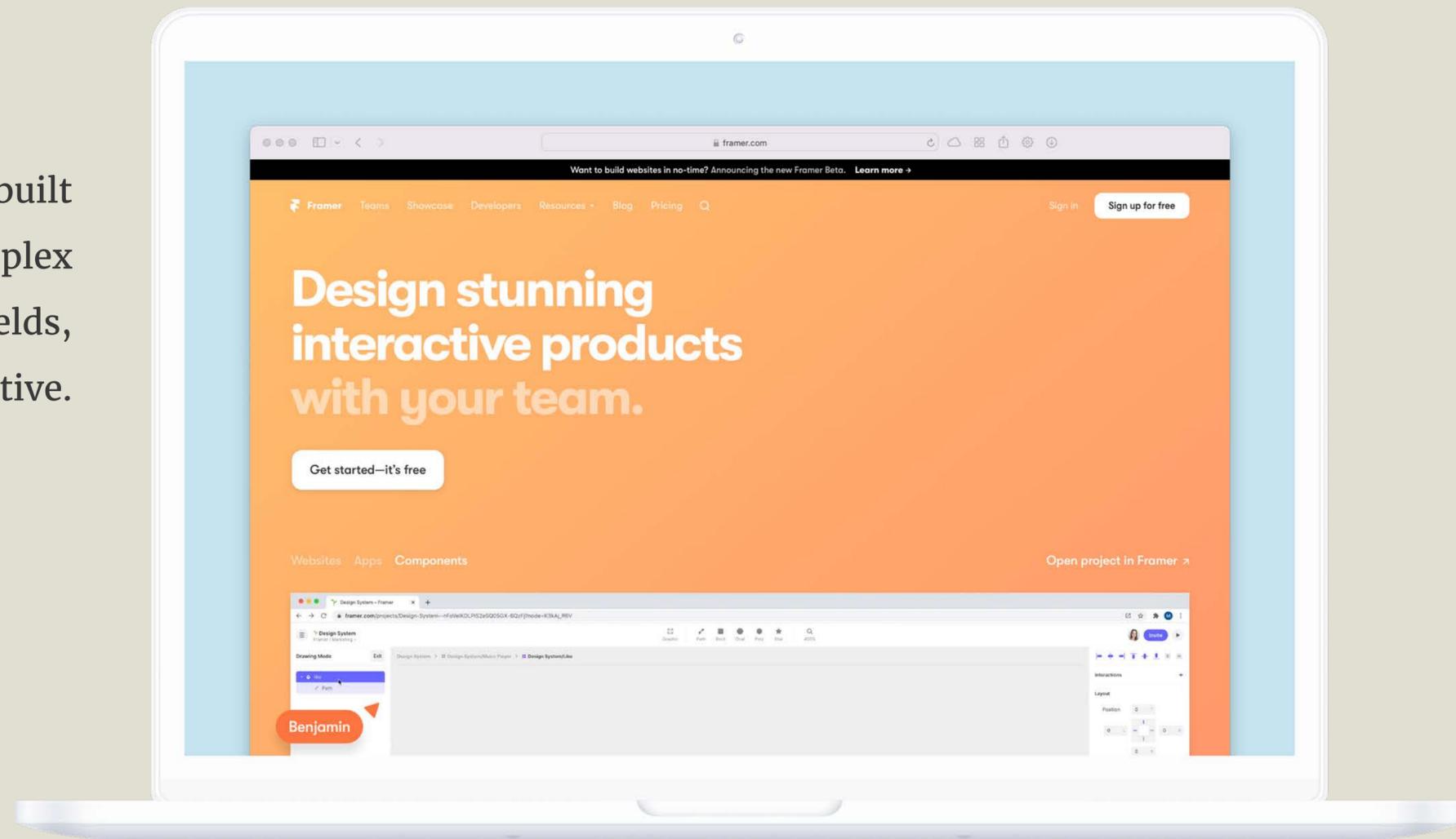
# Sanity checking your mockups



Attention Insight predicts where people will look when viewing your design, making it great for sanity checking a final design.

# Creating a high fidelity prototype

Figma has excellent prototyping tools built in. But if you want to do more complex animation or require interactive form fields, then Framer is an excellent alternative.



# Testing your high fidelity prototype

There is little point of creating a high fidelity prototype unless you are going to test it with users.

---

## Remote Usability Testing

Test a prototype with a small number (no more than six) users to see if they can complete critical tasks. Normally carried out over Zoom.

## Unfacilitated Usability Testing

Testing a prototype with a larger number of users by asking them to complete critical tasks. Watch back session recordings or review aggregated data with a tool like [Maze](#).

# Doing the design checklist

- ✓ Identify and draft your content.
- ✓ Run card sorting to create a site hierarchy.
- ✓ Create wireframe for critical pages and test.
- ✓ Produce style tiles based on agreed keywords and test.
- ✓ Break aesthetics and wireframes together in mockup or prototype.
- ✓ Sanity check your final design with a last round of testing.

# Questions

I have covered a lot of ground in this section. No doubt you have questions around the details. Either ask them now or email me on [paul@boagworld.com](mailto:paul@boagworld.com).

---

# Presentations and Feedback

In this session, we explore how to handle stakeholder feedback and how testing can help maintain control over a design once stakeholders get involved.

# Take the time to prepare before presenting

By preparing thoroughly, you will go in more confidently, which will **give stakeholders confidence**.

Preparation will **prevent you from being surprised** by questions or objections from stakeholders.

By having a plan, you will **remain in control** of the process and avoid being reduced to a pixel pusher.

# Prepare by involving stakeholders

## Understand

The more a stakeholder is involved in the design process, the more they will understand the decisions made.

## Own

By involving a stakeholder in the process of creation, they feel ownership over the final design, making them less likely to reject it.

## Defend

If a stakeholder feels a sense of ownership over a design, they are more likely to defend it when speaking to colleagues.

# A reminder of how to involve stakeholders

Defining content

User attention point  
exercise

Defining brand  
keywords

Style tiles

# Other collaboration options



**Book Jacket Exercise**



**Six-up Exercise**

[Why and How You Should Create Wireframes With Others](#)

# Identify possible objections

The chances will be that you can make some educated guesses about problems or changes stakeholders might raise in the presentation. Make a list of these and jot down some thoughts about how you might answer them so you are not required to think on your feet during the meeting.

# Common objections

## **Move it above the fold.**

It is an understandable misconception that users do not scroll, based on research carried out by Jacob Nielsen in 1994. However, even by 1998, he noted that this behavior had changed.

## **It doesn't wow me.**

It doesn't particularly wow me either, but we are not the target audience. The design tested well with our audience, and I would advise against designing for us rather than the people we are trying to attract.

## **People won't see...**

It scored very highly when we ran the design through an eye-tracking algorithm. However, you might be right in the real world, so we could test further if you have the budget and time.

# Speak to stakeholders individually if you can

## Why?

Speaking to stakeholders individually allows you to tailor your message to their areas of responsibility and makes them feel listened to.

When speaking to **marketing**, present the design in terms of engagement and lead generation.

When speaking to **sales**, focus on lead quality and quantity.

Talk about reduced call volumes and other cost-saving benefits when speaking to **finance**.

When speaking to **IT**, emphasize the ease of build and maintenance.

# Appeal to the selfish gene

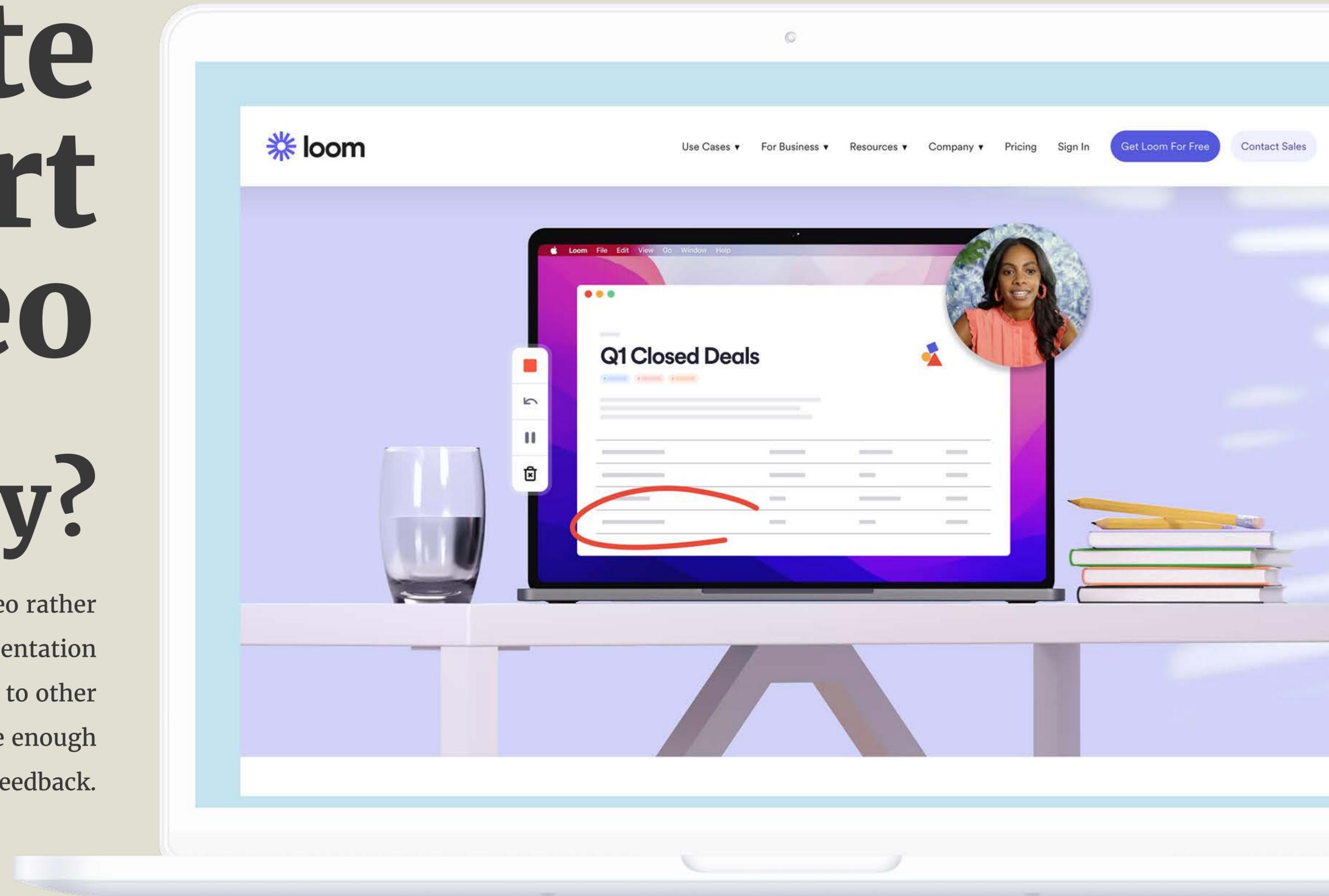
People don't care about users or even business objectives.

They care about how the design will help them.

# Create a short video

## Why?

Providing stakeholders with a video rather than a mockup after your presentation means that if they pass it on to other people, those people will have enough context to provide valuable feedback.



# How to prepare a video of your design approach

Keep it short — no more than 20 minutes.  
Ideally nearer 10.

Cover the same basic information as in  
your main presentation (more on that  
later).

Ask for structured feedback (more on that  
later).

# Nail your presentation

If you have followed the advice about speaking to stakeholders individually and involving them in the creation process, presenting the final design should be nothing more than a formality.

Nevertheless, there are things you can do to reduce negative feedback.

# Before showing the design recap the following

## Decisions

Recap what decisions have been made already. Cover areas such as brand keywords, value proposition, success criteria, and content.

## Collaboration

Revisit the design assets you produced together, such as style tiles or the user attention points exercise.

## Testing

Cover all the testing that has been done including card sorting exercises, 5 second tests and first click tests.

# Why Recap?

## Triggers the commitment bias

If we agreed to something previously we do not like to be seen to change our minds.

## The methodology provides reassurance

By showing you have a process and clearly explaining it before showing the design, you give stakeholders more confidence in your approach.

# When Presenting

## Reference previous work

Point out where the design reflects the style tiles, wireframes and other decisions made with the stakeholder. This will trigger the commitment bias.

## Preempt objections

Do not wait for stakeholders to express an objection. Once they have objected out loud, they will be unlikely to back down, especially in front of a group or if they are particularly senior. Nobody likes to be proved wrong.

## Emphasize testing

Emphasize how the design reflects the testing done and show the heat map captured using Attention Insights.

# Downplay sign off

Sign-off makes stakeholders feel that a design has to be perfect before proceeding. That tends to encourage them to micro-manage the process. Better to remove sign-off or at least downplay it.

# Ending your presentation

## Do not ask for immediate feedback

Give people time to digest the design before providing feedback.

Instead focus the conversation on any questions they have about the design process.

# Gathering feedback the right way

If you ask stakeholders for feedback when you present, this will lead to conversations about how to fix the design. Unfortunately, you will then lose control over the design process, and it will turn into **design-by-committee**.

Fortunately, there is a better way.

# How to avoid feedback during your presentation

Don't leave enough time.

Tell people you want to give them time to digest the design.

Suggest people consult with others.

Say you will send them specific questions.

Focus on questions around the process.

# Email stakeholders post presentation

**Send the video you prepared along with your structured questions.**

Asking specific questions focuses stakeholders on what matters and avoids them getting sucked into expressing their personal opinion.

**Never ask  
"what do you think?"**

# What questions you can ask?

Does the design support the needs of the users it is aimed at?

Does the design achieve the organizational objectives?

Do you believe users will associate the brand keywords with the design?

Does the design incorporate the stylistic elements defined in the style tiles?

Does the design reflect the wireframes that were previously created for critical pages?

Does the design communicate the value proposition agreed at the outset of the project?

Are there any additional considerations we need to take into account as we move into the build phase?

A common mistake I see designers and project managers make is to ask for a single point of contact who collates and provides all the feedback.

**You want all feedback to come directly to you** because that allows you to question feedback, judge its importance, and ultimately decide what to act upon.

# Control the narrative

Be the single person who has the whole picture and take control.

# Common objections

## **Move it above the fold.**

It is an understandable misconception that users do not scroll, based on research carried out by Jacob Nielsen in 1994. However, even by 1998, he noted that this behavior had changed.

## **It doesn't wow me.**

It doesn't particularly wow me either, but we are not the target audience. The design tested well with our audience, and I would advise against designing for us rather than the people we are trying to attract.

## **People won't see...**

It scored very highly when we ran the design through an eye-tracking algorithm. However, you might be right in the real world, so we could test further if you have the budget and time.

# Handling disagreements

Ask why

Word objections as  
questions

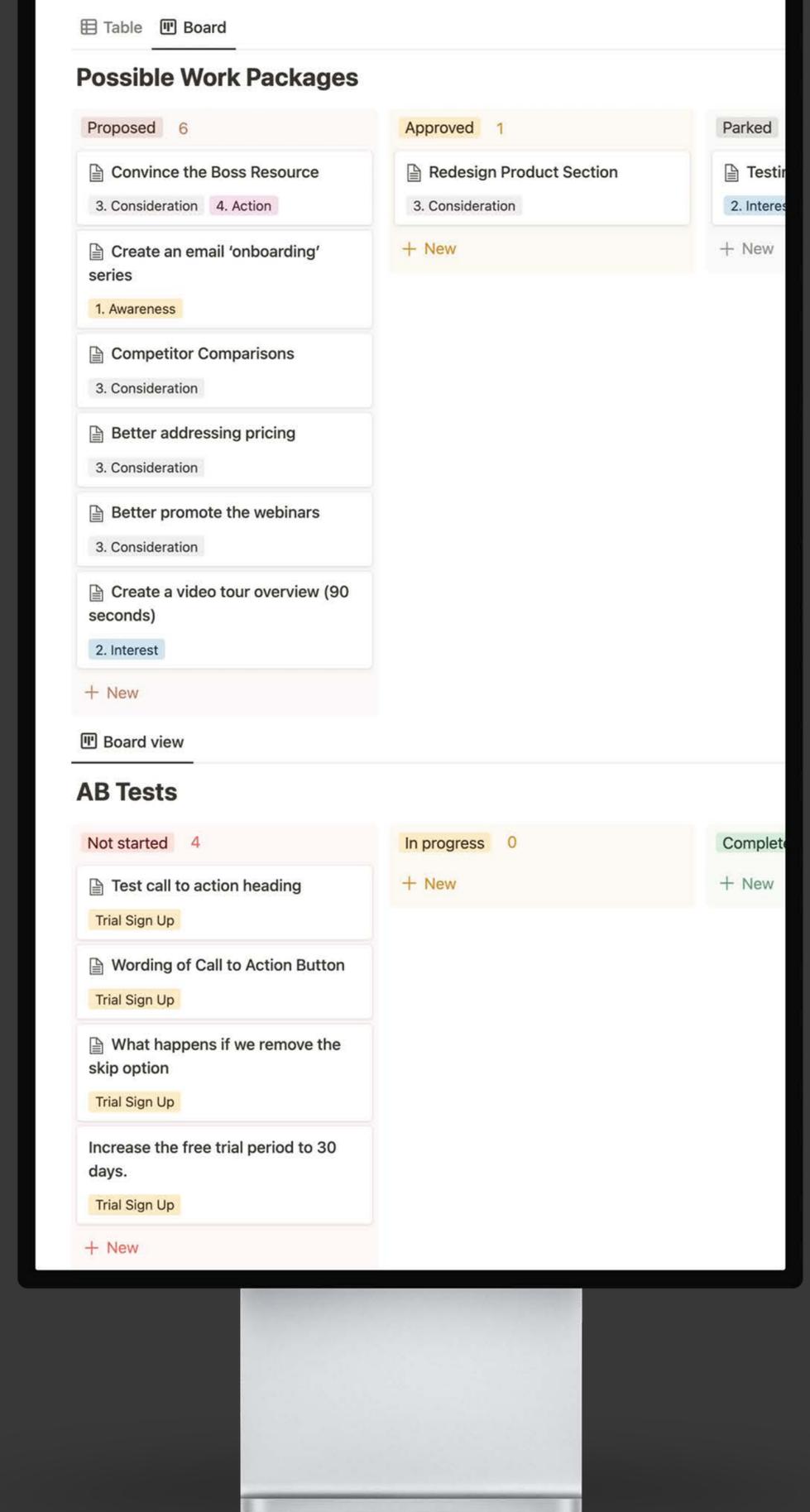
Suggest testing

Move to post launch  
optimization

# Handling scope creep

Scope creep is not inherently bad. Digital allows us to be adaptable if the project is run in stages. However, where it is impossible or inappropriate to accommodate we need a strategy for dealing with it.

# Create a backlog of post launch work packages and test scenarios



**Never say  
no, ask  
questions  
instead**

We could do that but it would add 2 months to the timeline, is that feasible?

We estimate that would cost an extra \$2,000. Do you have a budget for that?

What feature should we drop to make this happen?

Would you prefer to deal with this post-launch or push back the launch date?

We would need a business case to justify that. Is this something you can put together?

# Presentation and feedback checklist

- ✓ Prepare a video presentation up front.
- ✓ Brainstorm objections and possible answers
- ✓ Attempt to speak to stakeholders individually before presenting.
- ✓ When presenting, heavily reference previously agreed work.
- ✓ Gather structure feedback after the presentation, not during.
- ✓ Channel all feedback via you and challenge by asking questions.

# Questions

Perfecting your presentation and feedback process takes practice. However, if you have questions I am happy to answer them either now or [via email](#).

---

# Ensuring Your Design flourishes

In this session, we explore how you can ensure your design survives and prospers by working alongside developers, using design systems and optimizing the site post launch.

---

# Working with a developer

All team members must work closely on a web project, but the designer/developer relationship must be incredibly close.

When the final website doesn't reflect the design it is almost always because of a failure in this relationship.

# Don't forget to design with developers in mind

Create components that the developer can reuse.

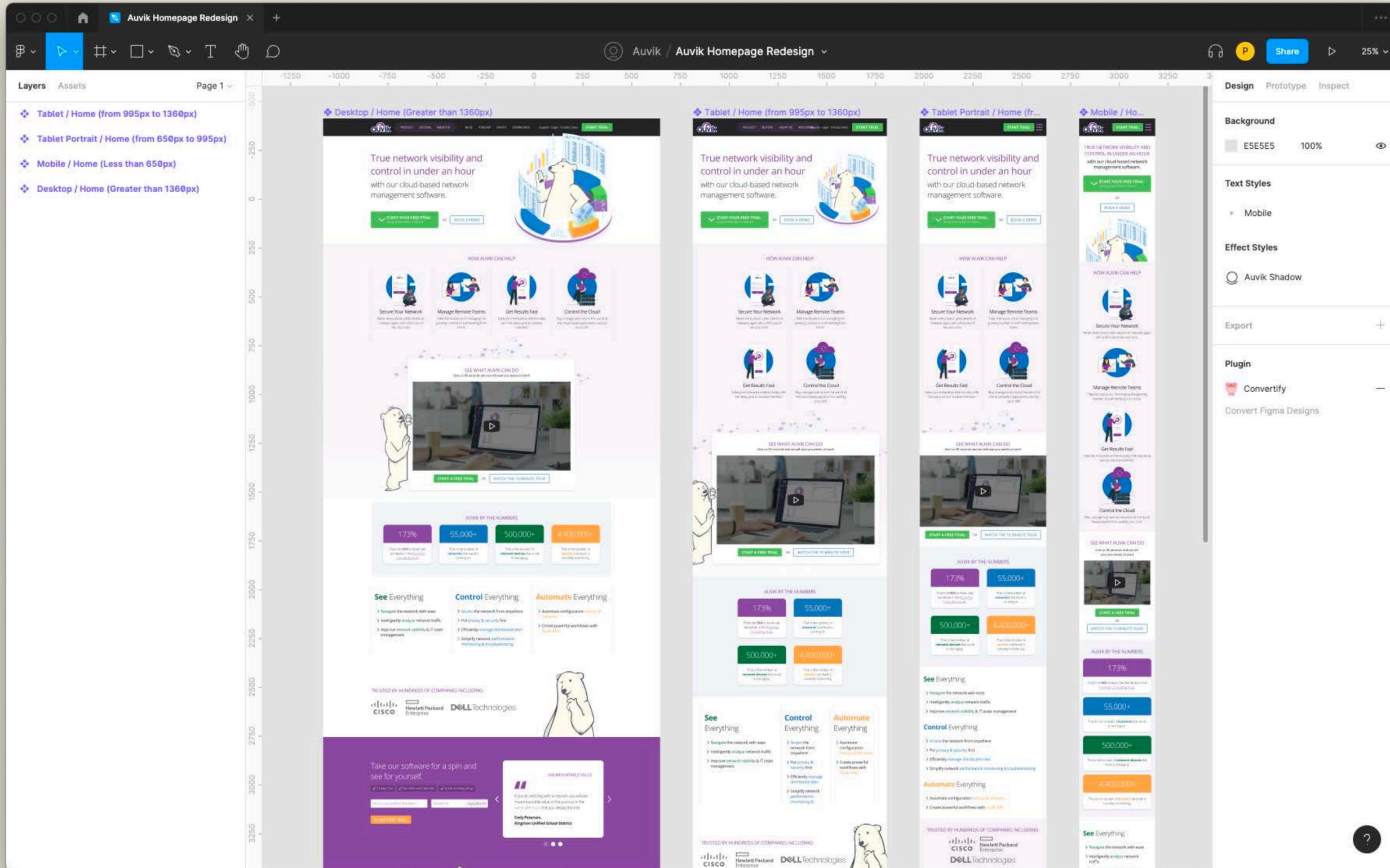
Design with auto-layout to replicate the CSS box model.

Make use of color and typographic styles to ensure consistency.

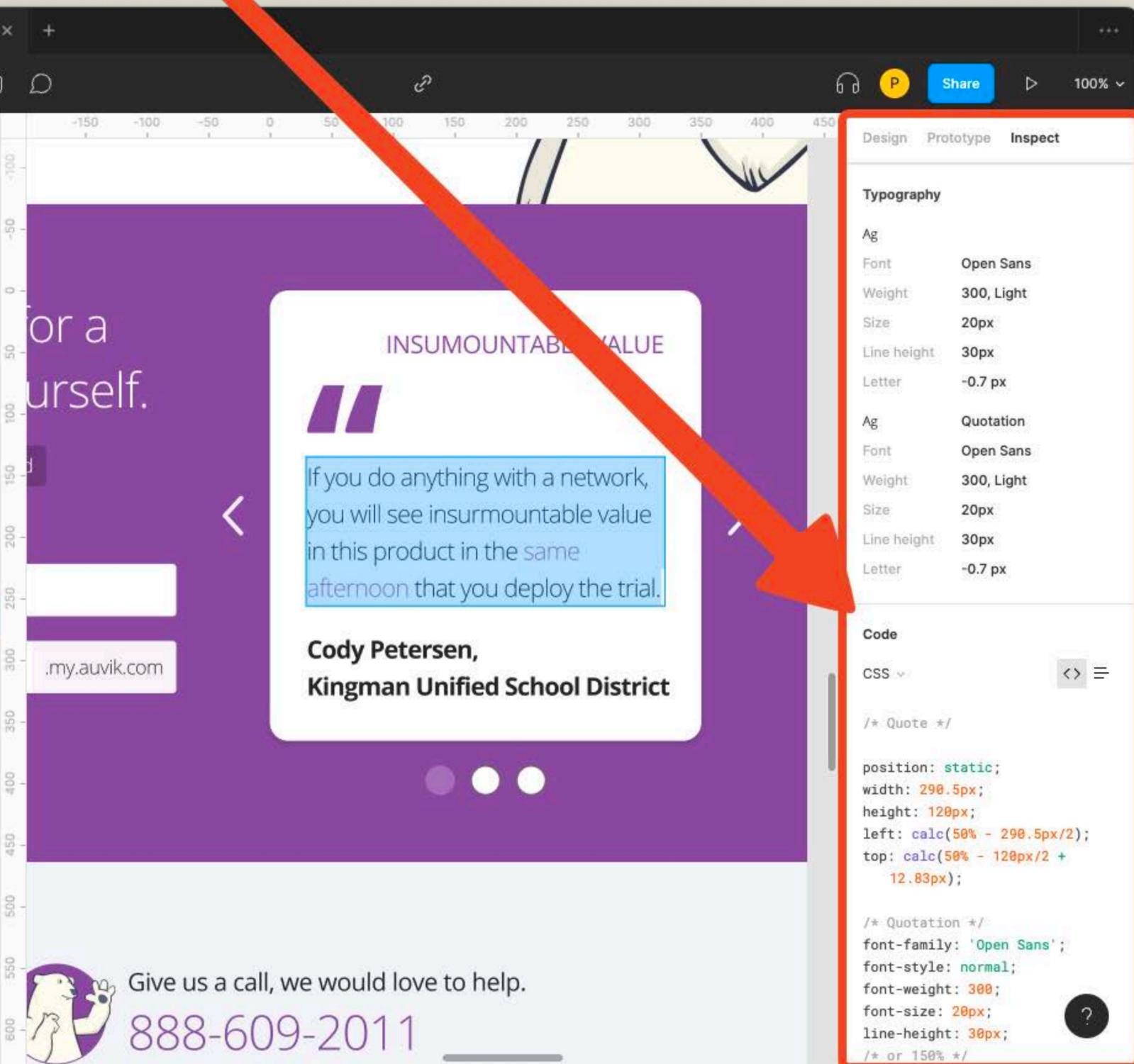
Create the states for buttons, links and forms.

Provide error messaging.

Consider responsive breakpoints.



There are more than 2 breakpoints. Design breakpoints around the content, not the device.



Use a tool  
with an  
inspect  
mode

# Be flexible for the sake of performance

## Fonts

Fonts are big unless you pick a specific type of font called variable fonts. Avoid too many different fonts (2 max) and limit the number of font variations.

## Imagery

Avoid purely decorative images. Instead, ensure they help explain the content. Avoid complex images with a lot of detail. If appropriate, go for vector illustrations.

## Javascript

If you add interactive elements or design delighters, ensure that the website still works without them, as Javascript can be slow to run on mobile devices.

# Work collaboratively with the developer on design delighters

## What?

A design delighter is an interactive or visual element that although not necessary to use the site, enhances the experience.

## How?

- Accordions.
- Animation.
- Carousels.
- Interactive guides.
- Wizards and configuration tools.

## Why?

A developer will have a much better idea of what is possible and what fits within the project's budget.

**Never show a design to  
the client before the  
developer!**

**And while I am at it...**

# Let go of pixel perfect design

The developer will not be able to reproduce your design exactly as you envisioned it.

The final design is a collaboration between  
the designer and developer.

That means you need to involve the  
developer early in the process.

And you need to be available to collaborate  
with the developer during the build.

# A collaboration

The ultimate example of this collaborative  
relationship is a design system.

# Consider creating a design system

## What?

A design system is a set of components and styles that you can use to help ensure consistency across a website.

## Why?

Although particularly useful on larger websites, a design system will help designers and developers quickly create new templates on a website of any size.

## When?

Ideally, you would start planning a design system as soon as you start working on the design. However, it can also be applied after the website has gone live.

# Critical parts of any design system

## Styles

Styles include typographic styles for things like headings, quotations, links, and a color palette.

## Elements

Elements include the fundamental building blocks of any website. These include things like buttons, form fields, navigation, and icons.

## Components

Components are more complex aspects of the UI that are made up of multiple elements. For example, a header component could contain elements such as a search box or navigation.

Layers Assets Page 1

- Tablet / Home (from 995px to 1360px)
- Tablet Portrait / Home (from 650px to 995px)
- Mobile / Home (Less than 650px)
- Desktop / Home (Greater than 1360px)

# Take our software for a spin and see for yourself.

✓ 14 days trial ✓ No credit card required ✓ Quick and easy setup

What is your work email address? Desired url .my.auvik.com

**START FREE TRIAL**

INSUMOUNTABLE VALUE

If you do anything with a network, you will see insurmountable value in this product in the same afternoon that you deploy the trial.

**Cody Petersen,**  
**Kingman Unified School District**

Component

Design Prototype Inspect

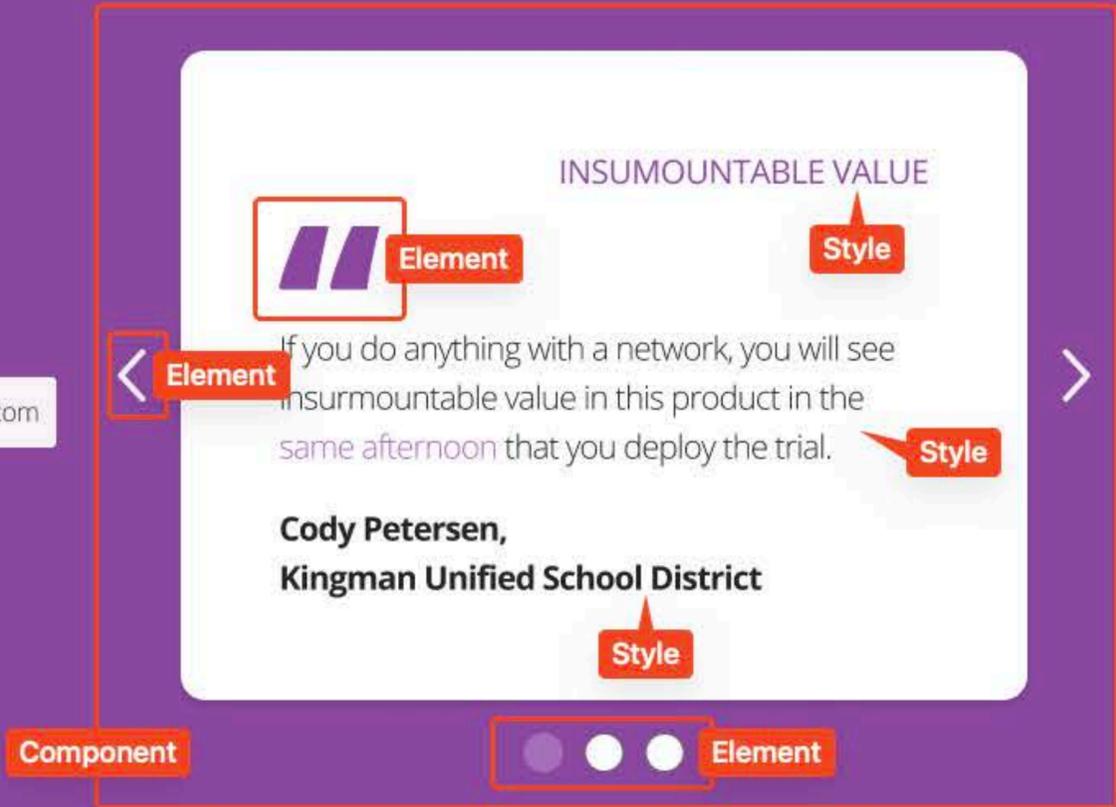
Background  
E5E5E5 100%

Text Styles  
Mobile

Effect Styles  
Auvik Shadow

Export +

Plugin  
Convertify  
Convert Figma Designs



# Organizing your design system

## Start Simple

Your design system can start as nothing more than a few styles and essential elements. Then add header and footer components and grow from there.

## Don't overthink

Try and strike a balance between not having too many components and entirely abstracting them. For example, it is okay to have separate news and events listing components even though they are similar.

## Stay flexible

Your design system should evolve. Add new components as required, but also seek to combine components when your system starts to become bloated.

# Both design and code

app.zeplin.io

Workspace Dashboard Flows Styleguide

### Carousel

Property 1: Large cards Small cards Snack boxes

Property 2: Advanced Simple

Bottom: 16pt (spacing-m)  
Gap: 12pt (spacing-s)

Swift

```
let
property1LargeCardsProperty2SimpleView: UIStackView =
{
let view = UIStackView()
view.axis = .horizontal
view.alignment = .top
view.spacing = 12.0
view.layoutMargins =
UIEdgeInsets(top: 16.0,
left: 16.0, bottom: 16.0,
right: 16.0)

view.isLayoutMarginsRelativeArrangement = true

view.translatesAutoresizingMaskIntoConstraints = true

return view
}()

// Define children here
property1LargeCardsProperty2SimpleView.addArrangedSubview(
cardView)
property1LargeCardsProperty2SimpleView.addArrangedSubview(
cardView)
property1LargeCardsProperty2SimpleView.addArrangedSubview(
cardView)
```

Design view

Code view

zeplin.io

The image shows a laptop screen displaying the zeplin.io website. The browser's address bar shows 'zeplin.io'. The website features a navigation menu with links for 'Why Zeplin?', 'Figma Plugin', 'Pricing', 'Enterprise', and 'Go to Projects'. A prominent orange banner reads 'Introducing Flows & Annotations' with the subtext 'Spend more time designing, less time documenting design files →'. Below this, the main headline is 'Handoff more than specs', followed by a paragraph: 'Organize screens. Publish locked designs. Scale design systems. All in a workspace friendly to the entire team, including non-designers.' A blue button says 'Get started for free'. To the right is a video player showing a design tool interface with a play button overlay. The footer contains logos for HSBC, salesforce, Starbucks, box, Pinterest, and AUTODESK, along with a chat icon.

zeplin.io

Why Zeplin? Figma Plugin Pricing Enterprise [Go to Projects](#)

**Introducing Flows & Annotations**  
Spend more time designing, less time documenting design files →

## Handoff more than specs

Organize screens. Publish locked designs. Scale design systems. All in a workspace friendly to the entire team, including non-designers.

[Get started for free](#)

HSBC salesforce Starbucks box Pinterest AUTODESK

# Empower your content creators

boagworks & boagworld

Edit Post "It's not marketing. It's being helpful." < Paul Boag - User Experience Advice - Wor... It's not marketing. It's being helpful. - Newsletter

Like this email? Get them delivered to your inbox.

- Free Courses
- Free Books
- Exclusive Insights
- And Much More!

Your first name

Your email address

Where do you work? ▾

SIGN UP TODAY

hating the idea of a personal brand when my site is literally named after me. That was a regretful decision made without the benefit of hindsight.

So anyway, we are all supposed to build our personal brand, whatever that means. And distasteful though the idea may appear, its proponents have a point.

**Why You Need a Personal Brand**

If you run an agency or are a freelancer, the need to market yourself is obvious. One cannot live on word-of-mouth recommendation alone. At least not if you want to avoid those nail-biting months when the phone doesn't ring.

But what about those of us who take a paycheck for a living? Well, we kind of need to build our personal brands too.

Having a strong personal brand improves your career prospects and ensures our colleagues ( especially our boss) take us more seriously. After all, if other people follow you and say you are great, it must be true!

Of course, unless you are a sociopath like me, then chances are you feel slightly

*We are all supposed to have personal brands these days. Well, that sounds like a truly terrible reflection on the world.*

Tweet this

Component

# Empower your content creators

The screenshot shows a WordPress editor interface for a post titled "It's not marketing. It's being helpful." by Paul Boag. The editor is in the "Block" view, and a "Break Out Box" component is highlighted with a red border. The component contains a "Pull Quote" with the text: "We are all supposed to have personal brands these days. Well, that sounds like a truly terrible reflection on the world." Below the quote is a red "Component" label. The main content of the post includes a paragraph about building a personal brand, a section titled "Why You Need a Personal Brand", and a paragraph about the need to market oneself. A sentence in the final paragraph is highlighted in yellow: "Having a strong personal brand improves your career prospects and ensures our colleagues (especially our boss) take us more seriously." The right sidebar shows the "Break Out Box" component selected, and the "Advanced" settings are visible.

boagworld.com

Edit Post "It's not marketing. It's being helpful." < Paul Boag - User Experience Advice — Wor... | It's not marketing. It's being helpful. - Newsletter

Switch to draft Preview Update 10 / 100

Break Out Box

Pull Quote

We are all supposed to have personal brands these days. Well, that sounds like a truly terrible reflection on the world.

Component

So anyway, we are all supposed to build our personal brand, whatever that means. And distasteful though the idea may appear, its proponents have a point.

### Why You Need a Personal Brand

If you run an agency or are a freelancer, the need to market yourself is obvious. One cannot live on word-of-mouth recommendation alone. At least not if you want to avoid those nail-biting months when the phone doesn't ring.

But what about those of us who take a paycheck for a living? Well, we kind of need to build our personal brands too.

Having a strong personal brand improves your career prospects and ensures our colleagues (especially our boss) take us more seriously. After all, if other people follow you and say you are great, it must be true!

Newsletter > Break Out Box

# Expand your design system

boagworks boagworld

## What Is a Design System?

A design system consists of four elements that help manage larger websites. These are:

- **A Set of Components.** These are sometimes known as a pattern library, reusable UI elements and associated code that brings consistency to your website.
- **Design Principles.** A set of guidelines that define how your organisation approaches designing online experiences. They are a framework for decision making.
- **Content Style Guide.** A set of guidelines for content creators which help ensure consistency in the tone of voice across your website.
- **A Service Manual.** Documentation that covers digital governance and how you manage your digital projects.

DESIGN SYSTEMS

**UI Components**  
Sometimes known as a pattern library, these are reusable UI elements and associated code that brings consistency across your site.

**Content Guide**  
A set of guidelines for content creators which help ensure consistency in tone of voice across your website.

A design system consists of more than a set of UI components.

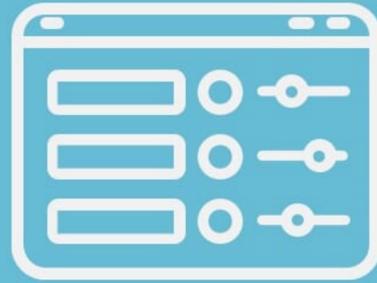
AGE

[boagworld.com/boagworks/design-system/](https://boagworld.com/boagworks/design-system/)

# DESIGN SYSTEMS

## UI Components

Sometimes known as a pattern library, these are reusable UI elements and associated code that brings consistency across your site.



## Design Principles

A set of guidelines that define how your organisation approaches designing online experiences. They are a framework for decision making.



## Content Guide

A set of guidelines for content creators which help ensure consistency in tone of voice across your website.



## Service Manual

Documentation covering digital governance and how digital projects are managed.



# Optimize your design post launch

No design is perfect at launch, no matter how much testing you do beforehand. **Nothing beats watching real users carry out natural interactions to learn how to improve your design.** That is why post-launch optimization is so important.

ARTICLES

# The \$300 Million Button



by Jared M. Spool

Editor's note: Thanks to Yannick Primel, you can [read this article in French](#); thanks to Uwe Keim, you can [read this article in German](#).

*[While Luke Wroblewski was writing his well-received book, [Web Form Design: Filling in the Blanks](#), he asked if I could think of an example where a change in a form's design made a noticeable difference in business. "You mean like \$300 million of new revenue?" I responded. "Yes, like that." said Luke. So I wrote this article, which he published in his book.]*

## How Changing a Button Increased a Site's Annual Revenues by \$300 Million

It's hard to imagine a form that could be simpler: two fields, two buttons, and one link. Yet, it turns out this form was preventing customers from purchasing products from a major e-commerce site, to the tune of \$300,000,000 a year. What was even worse: the designers of the site had no clue there was even a problem.

The form was simple. The fields were *Email Address* and *Password*. The buttons were *Login* and *Register*. The link was *Forgot Password*. It was the login form for

# Watch and Learn

wiltshirefarmfoods.com

Enter Delivery Postcode | Sign in | Register

0800 077 3100  
WILTSHIRE  
EST. FARM 1991

Contact us  
Shop by brochure code  
FOODS

Search for items or brochure code Search Request a brochure

Select a meal Home | How to get started | About our food | About us 0 items: £0.00 Basket

**BROWSE OUR MENU**

Choose from over 330 delicious frozen meals and desserts, prepared by award-winning chefs and delivered nationwide by our friendly local team.

Start shopping

Chat with us

We're delivering our good old-fashioned service with a smile, offering no-contact deliveries on request. [Click here to learn more about deliveries.](#)

Excellent ★★★★★ 4.7 out of 5 based on 34,877 reviews ★ Trustpilot

Over 300 Delicious Dishes  
Order online or call 0800 077 3100  
Free Friendly Delivery  
Satisfaction Guarantee

A 100 fold increase in 5 years.

# Preparing the ground for optimization

## Start Early

From the very start of the project, talk about post-launch optimization. Add at least some into your timeline, but emphasize this will be ongoing work.

## Create an idea list

Start an ideas list at the beginning of the project - a place to collect possible post-launch features and improvements. This list will not only encourage thinking about what happens post-launch it will also help with scope creep.

# **Post launch optimization process**

**Identify Drop Out  
Points**

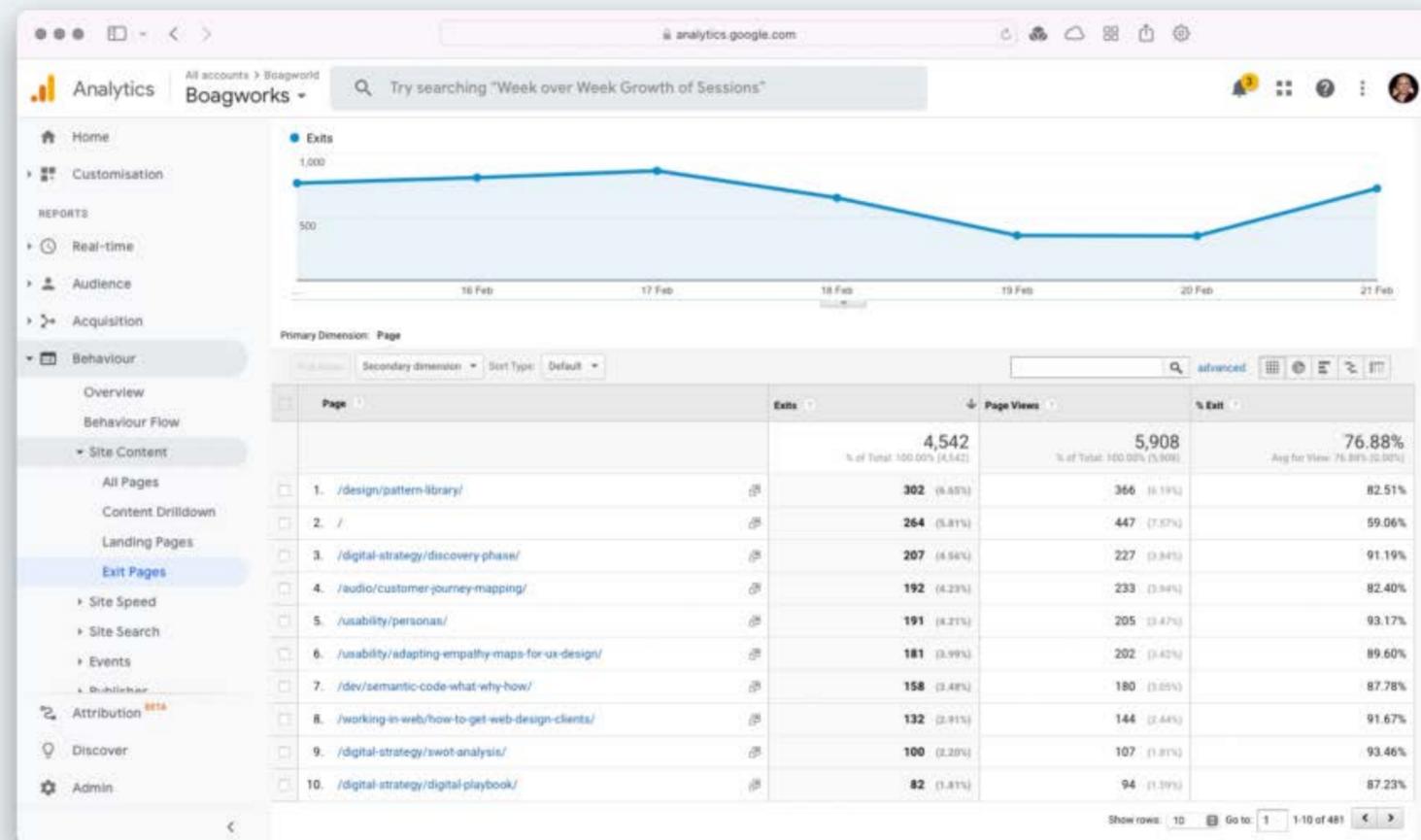
**Identify the Problem on  
the Underperforming  
Page**

**Test the Solution**

**Rolling Out a Solution**

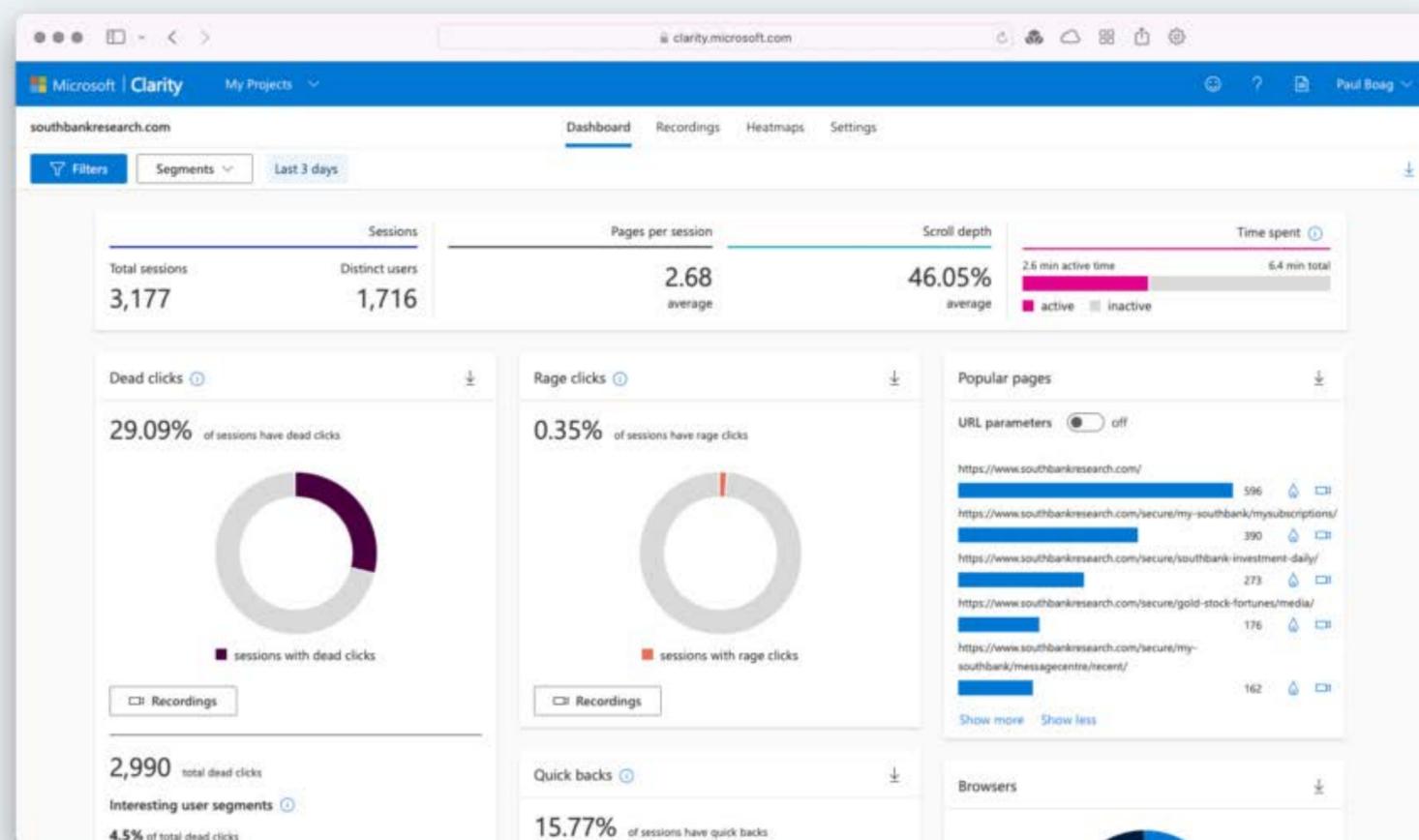
**Rinse and Repeat**

# Identify Drop Out Points



In Google Analytics pay attention to pages with a high bounce rate or are ranked highly as an **exit page**.

# Identify the Problem

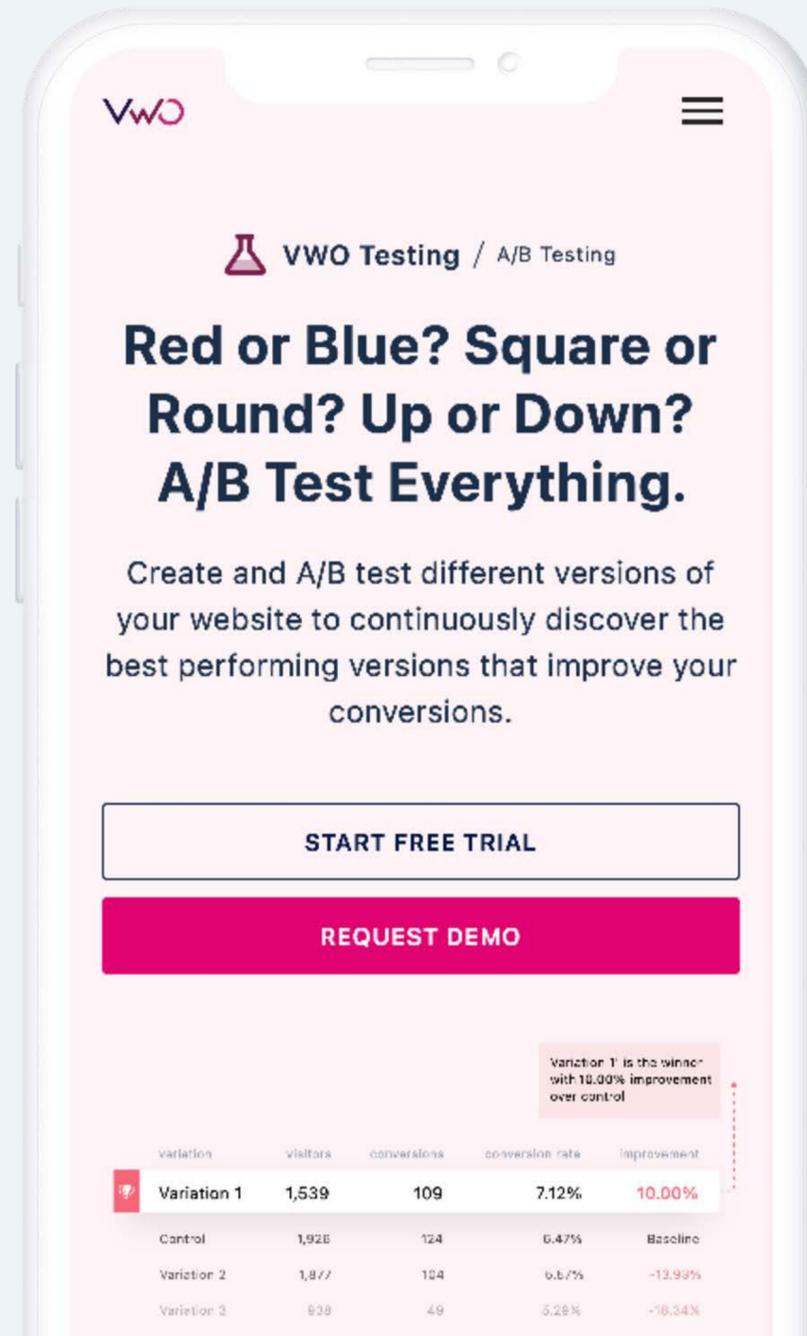


- **Did users not see something?**  
Use heat maps, session recordings and eye tracking software.
- **Did people not understand something?**  
Look for rage clicking, clicking non-clickable elements, or triggering validation errors on forms
- **Did we not convince them?**  
Use an on-exit intent surveying asking why they did not act.

# Test the Solution

## Small

If the change is something small like updating some text or changing the color on a button, the best approach is to use an AB testing tool like [VWO](#).



## Large

If the change is more significant, you will need to create a prototype of the new approach and run some facilitated usability testing to ascertain its potential.

**Launch and repeat  
forever**

# Your final checklist!

- ✓ **Consult with the developer as you design.**
- ✓ **Never show a design to a client before showing the developer.**
- ✓ **Create a simple design system as you work on a design.**
- ✓ **Build a more robust design system for larger websites.**
- ✓ **Start talking about post-launch optimization early.**
- ✓ **The work of site optimization should be an ongoing cycle.**

# Questions

Last chance to ask me questions live today.  
Alternatively you can ask questions anytime  
[via email.](#)

---