

KEO Marketing

MARKETER'S

GUIDE

5 STRATEGIC APPROACHES

TO WEBSITE DESIGN

AND DEVELOPMENT

FOR INCREASED CONVERSIONS

Is your website delivering highly qualified leads and sales every day? If you do not have the volume of those leads or sales you would like, this is the guide for you.

As internet technology continues to advance, new website design ideas and methods are brought to the market. New ways to display information, new menu layouts and new user interfaces are prominently displayed by web designers as the latest style.

Web design is more than making the site look attractive, however. What is important to remember is that a company's website is a tool. Its real purpose is to help sell the company's products and services. It is the vehicle that delivers the brand message, provides information, shows prospects how they can reach their goals and leads them through the buyer's journey until they ultimately purchase your products or services.

This marketing guide examines a strategic view of website design. We will focus on the customer experience and how the website helps a company achieve its goals in serving its customers. Company-effectiveness is more than just a pretty site design and user experience. As a tool, the website must deliver incremental and quantifiable results that help the company reach its targeted goals.

1. DESIGN THE WEBSITE FOR THE OBJECTIVES YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

What is the most important design element for a website? Appealing graphics? A compelling headline? Well-written copy? No. The most important design element is the *objective you want to achieve*. Each page should be focused on obtaining a specific response from the visitor.

A common mistake in business websites is that the pages are loaded with so many links, pictures, buttons and other elements that visitors are either unable to find what they are looking for, or are so overwhelmed that they leave the site completely. It is for this reason that a successful website will be simplified to prominently feature just one or two calls to action per page. We typically recommend an early stage (research) call to action and a later stage (ready to buy) call to action on each page. For most business to business (B2B) websites that could be making a request for a demonstration, opting-in to an email newsletter, making a purchase or even just clicking through to the next page in a planned sequence.

Here is how to do it:

First, decide on the two most important calls to action you want visitors to take when they arrive on the page. These can be two of many actions such as:

Early Research Stage Calls to Action:

- Download a white paper
- Talk to an online representative
- Subscribe to an e-mail newsletter

Late Ready-to-Buy Stage Calls to Action:

- Request a sample or demonstration
- Move on to the next page in the sequence
Buy the product

Next, design the flow of the page to present the information in a way that addresses their location in the buyer's journey.

Objectives and the Buyer's Journey

When visitors are on your website they are likely to be at a certain position in the buyer's journey.

Within the buyer's journey are these stages:



Awareness

The buyer becomes aware that they have a problem or a desire.

Research

The buyer gathers more information about the problem or desire.

Consideration

The buyer explores options for addressing the problem or desire.

Purchase

The buyer is prepared to make a purchase decision.

While we cannot always know where the visitor is in the journey, we can provide content that will address the needs of each position as he/she moves through the process. If the web visitor is in the early stages of the journey they will be interested in information such as white papers and case studies. If they are further along in the buyer's journey they will likely be interested in seeing a product or service demonstration.

Select two desired calls to action and place content on the pages that will prompt the visitor to take one of the desired actions. When the visitor encounters the content, they will quickly determine if it matches their immediate needs. If it does, the visitor will take the desired action; if it does not, they will continue moving through the website.

SocialMediaExaminer.com has a great call-to-action for early-stage prospects. At the top of the home page they give the visitor an opportunity to download an industry report for free. All the visitor has to do is provide their email address. If the visitor is in the research stage of the buyer's journey they will very likely download the report.

FREE: Social Media Marketing Industry Report

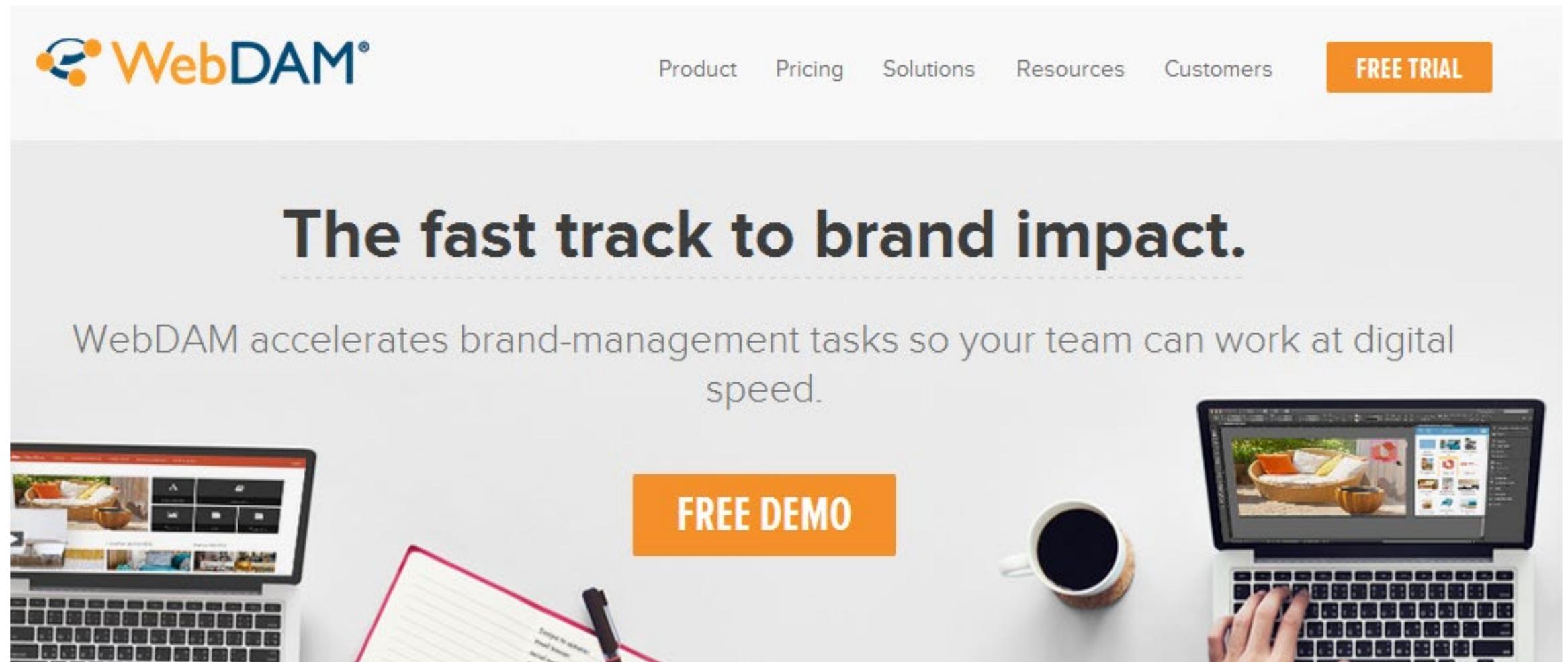
Wondering how your peers are using social media? In our 8th annual social media study (56 pages, 90 charts) of 5000+ marketers, you'll discover which social networks marketers most plan on using more (hint: it's not what you think), how much time they spend on social media and much more! Get this **free report** and never miss another great article from Social Media Examiner.

Enter your name

Email

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WebDAM.com, a B2B digital asset management (DAM) company, provides a great example for buyers who are in the late stages of the journey. Their homepage at www.webdam.com has a clickable button in the center of the page that says “Free Demo.” WebDAM starts the relationship by immediately moving the visitor toward a test of the product.

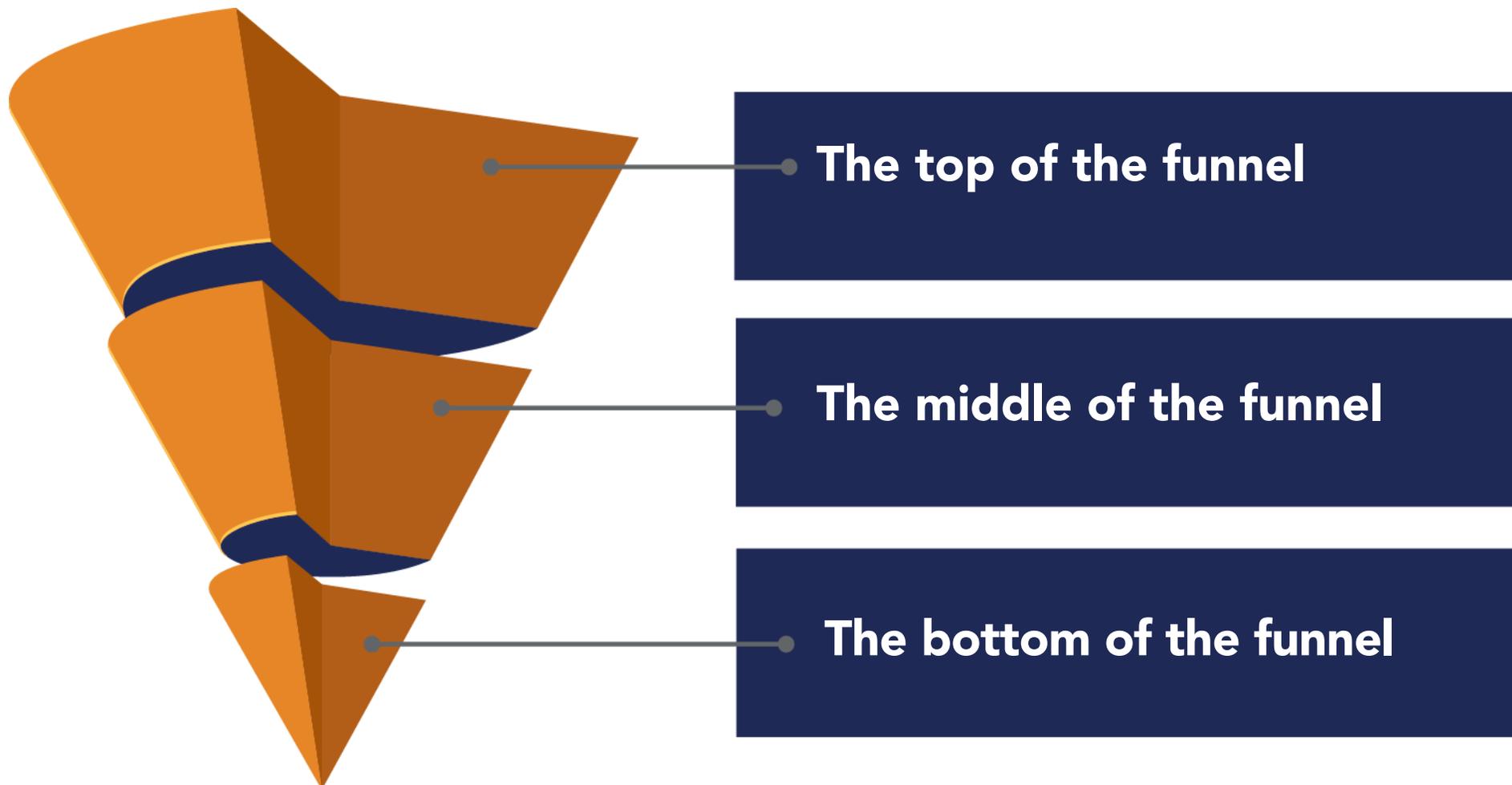


2. DESIGN IN SALES FUNNELS

Your website is a sales tool to attract visitors, convince them of the value of your products and then close a sale. Therefore, design in sales funnels to lead the site visitors through the buyer's journey.

Sales funnels can be determined by:

- **Educational paths:** information that will build the brand message and/or drive the visitor to products and services.
- **Services:** information leading to a purchase.
- **Products:** information leading to a purchase or request for a demo.



Where the visitor is in the buyer's journey determines the location within the funnel that will most appeal to them.

There are three parts to every funnel:

The top of the funnel

At the top of the funnel the visitors have recognized a problem and are now gathering information about it. Therefore, the top of the web site funnel should focus on the problems that your customers typically face, the solutions to those problems and how your products solve the problems. Downloadable papers and awareness-building videos will capture the attention of the visitors.

The middle of the funnel

In the middle of the funnel, prospects are aware of a business issue and are exploring options that will help them address the issue. Therefore, you want to provide content that will help prospects realize that your products or services will solve their problem.

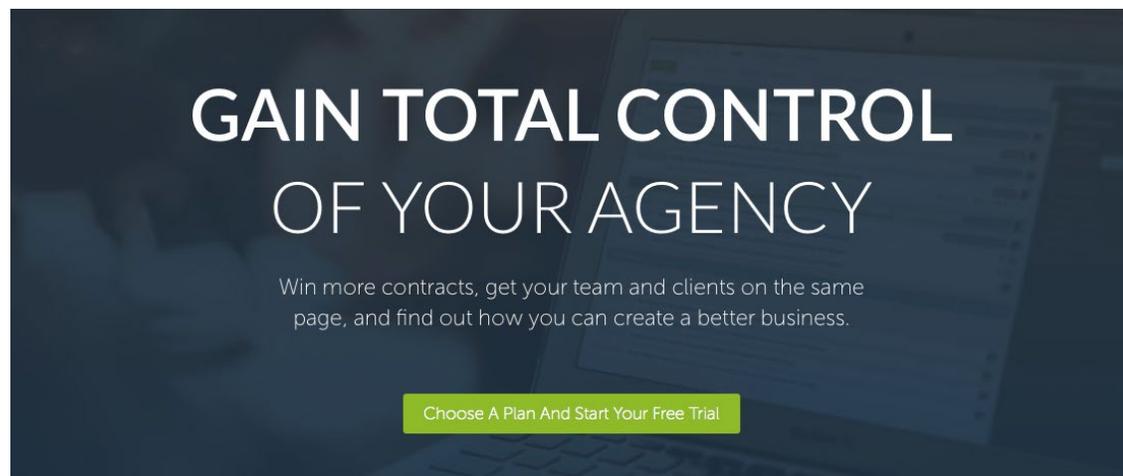
Content for the middle of the funnel can include:

- How-to articles
- Blog posts that offer innovative solutions
- White papers
- Explanatory videos

The bottom of the funnel

The bottom of the funnel is all about closing the sale. The visitor has identified their issue, researched the options and is now ready to make a decision. At this point the web pages should contain content that builds trust: testimonials, case studies and customer stories can help convert interest into a sale.

As an example, **Planscope.io** is a good example of a B2B company with sales funnels built into the web site. Planscope helps freelancers and teams plan and track projects with their clients.



Planscope's Sales Funnel

- Web site visitors come from their email newsletter and blog posts.
- The homepage offers an instant sign-up button.
- For those who do not sign up, there is a product tour. This gives the user a guided tour of how the product works.
- Then there is a call-to-action for a 14-day free trial at the end of the tour.

A good sales funnel helps the prospect make a decision. Make sure you design your web pages to compel the prospect to make the desired decision.

3. DESIGN WITH YOUR BRAND STORY IN MIND

Brand storytelling is a powerful technique for building B2B relationships. It is a technique that draws in readers and makes your business more approachable. Even though being in business is about providing products or services, human-to-human connections are at the heart of most business transactions.

This is the message that must come through in telling your brand story. You want your web visitors to realize that your company is made of regular human beings who are interested in helping them reach their goals. That is why it is important for companies to take the time to fully develop their approaches to brand storytelling.

How to build the story

Start with the big picture. What is the story of your brand or company? It needs to be unique and interesting. It needs to be something that people actually want to share, retell or participate in.

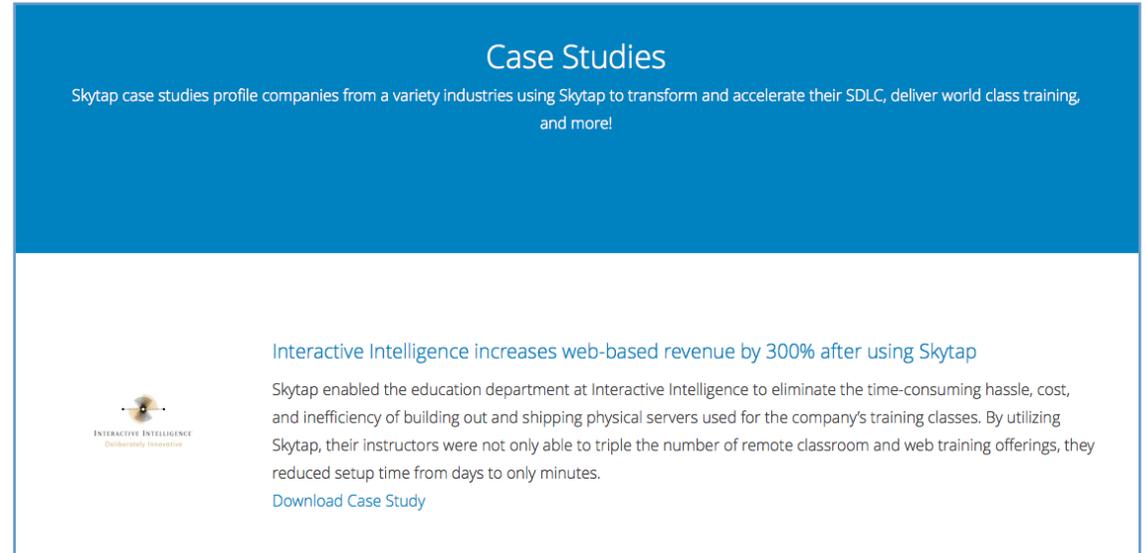
Consider the elements that all stories have – characters, plot, action, emotion. Your story should contain these elements as well. Characters are your employees and the “plot” is how your company is contributing to the community and the customer’s needs.

Speak to your audience

An important part of brand storytelling is to make sure you are speaking to the persona (or personas) that you have established for your products and services. Your targeted personas do not want generic sales pitches. They want to know that your company is genuinely concerned about fixing *their* problems in *their* situation.

For example, the marketing team at Skytap, a self-service provider of cloud automation solutions, utilized the power of marketing to personas very well. Skytap launched a content marketing strategy in 2012 to generate and convert more leads. The team's strategy was to develop a deep understanding of its prospects and buyers and then creating content that matched the needs and wants of those buyers.

- The case studies and testimonials on its website featured satisfied customers for each of the company's use-cases.
- Blog posts spoke to specific roles, such as one titled "Sales Engineers: Own Your Time and Leverage the Cloud."
- Website copy also spoke to specific roles. For example: "Developers, test engineers and QA managers are faced with a dilemma: How do you get access to a scalable, ready-to-go cloud development and testing environment quickly, easily and securely?"

A screenshot of the Skytap Case Studies page. The page has a blue header with the title "Case Studies" and a sub-header "Skytap case studies profile companies from a variety industries using Skytap to transform and accelerate their SDLC, deliver world class training, and more!". Below the header is a white content area. On the left is the logo for "INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE" with the tagline "Deliberately Innovative". To the right of the logo is a case study titled "Interactive Intelligence increases web-based revenue by 300% after using Skytap". The text describes how Skytap enabled the education department at Interactive Intelligence to eliminate the time-consuming hassle, cost, and inefficiency of building out and shipping physical servers used for the company's training classes. It states that by utilizing Skytap, their instructors were able to triple the number of remote classroom and web training offerings, and reduce setup time from days to only minutes. A "Download Case Study" link is provided at the bottom of the case study text.

Case Studies

Skytap case studies profile companies from a variety industries using Skytap to transform and accelerate their SDLC, deliver world class training, and more!

Interactive Intelligence increases web-based revenue by 300% after using Skytap

Skytap enabled the education department at Interactive Intelligence to eliminate the time-consuming hassle, cost, and inefficiency of building out and shipping physical servers used for the company's training classes. By utilizing Skytap, their instructors were not only able to triple the number of remote classroom and web training offerings, they reduced setup time from days to only minutes.

[Download Case Study](#)

The result: Skytap saw excellent year-over-year results:

- 210% increase in North American site traffic
- 55% increase in organic search traffic
- 97% increase in leads from online marketing
- 124% increase in leads from all channels

The beauty of the brand story is that it can be used to lead the visitor through the buyer's journey. So as you are creating the story of your product or company, keep the buyer's journey in mind and make sure you are subtly leading them toward the conversion opportunity.

4. DESIGN FOR CLARITY

How web visitors interact with web sites is constantly evolving. As computers get faster and mobile devices access the internet more frequently, visitors' viewing characteristics change. Because of these changes, web sites need to be designed to accommodate how visitors view the sites. Two new behaviors to be aware of are the shortened attention span and visitors scanning pages rather than reading them.

Shortened attention span

According to a study titled “**Not Quite the Average: An Empirical Study of Web Use**”, the human attention span has dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8.25 seconds in 2015. Further research shows that on the average web page, users will read at most 28% of the words during an average visit and will often leave web pages in just 10 to 20 seconds.

Human attention span has dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8.25 seconds in 2015

Scanning, not reading

Visitors to websites do not read the pages word-for-word. They scan them. Their eyes quickly skim over the content looking for items of interest. Numerous eye-tracking studies have shown that a reader's eyes will focus on 2-3 points of interest and just skim over the rest of the information.

Both of these have tremendous implications for web design. If the average visit to a website lasts only 20 seconds, and of those, the viewer's attention is already drifting within 8 seconds, what can you do to keep the visitor on the page?

Here are some ideas:

Create "snackable" content

The best way to get a reader's attention is to create content that is quick and easy to consume. As attention spans decrease, content that is in bite-sized pieces becomes more popular with website visitors.

This eye tracking heatmap shows the reader's gaze duration on a webpage. Here we see that the eyes focus in on single discreet groups of information. This shows the need for creating discreet "snacks" of information rather than long unbroken paragraphs of text.



People assimilate information in chunks. When creating a page, break up the content into short paragraphs. Use headings and subheadings. Add bullets and numbered lists. Also think in terms of strong visual elements that utilize positioning, strong colors and well-thought-out spatial organization.

Use visuals

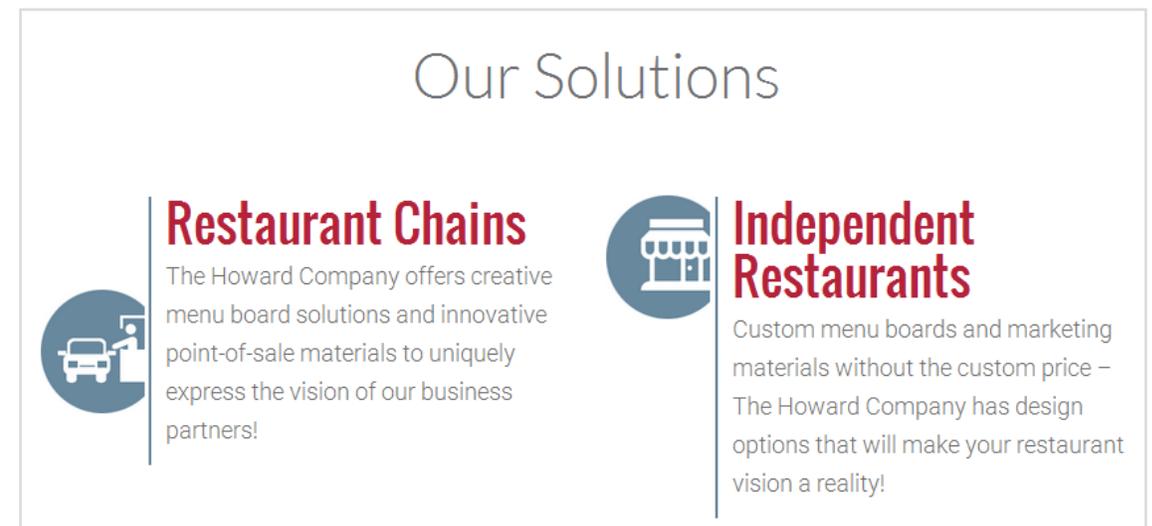
According to research by SocialMediaExaminer.com, photos have an amazing 87 percent interaction rate. B2B websites can use visuals effectively by displaying single photos of each of their products along with a one-sentence caption that describes the biggest benefit and a link to the product page.

Photos have an amazing 87 percent interaction rate.

Use a “Card” layout

The web design structure called “cards” is fast becoming the most popular design pattern for websites. With card design, content is broken down into individual components and then paired with a rectangular image to deliver a desired message. These “cards” can then be stacked or laid out in a grid pattern on the homepage so that the visitors can view them quickly and then make a decision about which content to move toward.

For example, **The Howard Company**, a B2B restaurant marketing company, uses card layout on their website. The web pages are laid out in a grid pattern with pictures and graphics that direct visitors to a specific location in the website that delivers product or problem-solution information. Navigation is easy because there is minimal text on the home page. Its sole purpose is to direct the visitor to locations that will help them the most.



Remember: design your website so that the message is concise and easy-to-read. Visitors will stay longer and read more which improves brand awareness, builds the relationship and positively impacts search engine ranking.

5. DESIGN FOR MOBILE DEVICES

When you are designing your website, make sure you have taken mobile users into account. More people are getting online every day through a variety of mobile devices; smart phones are the most popular device and tablets are catching up very quickly.

Even though the point of “design for mobile” has been discussed and explored many times, it is still important to address because designing for mobile devices can have major impact on customer experience and SEO.



How to design for mobile

Use a card-layout design. As described earlier in this guide, the card design provides small snippets of information that fit well on any size mobile device’s screen.

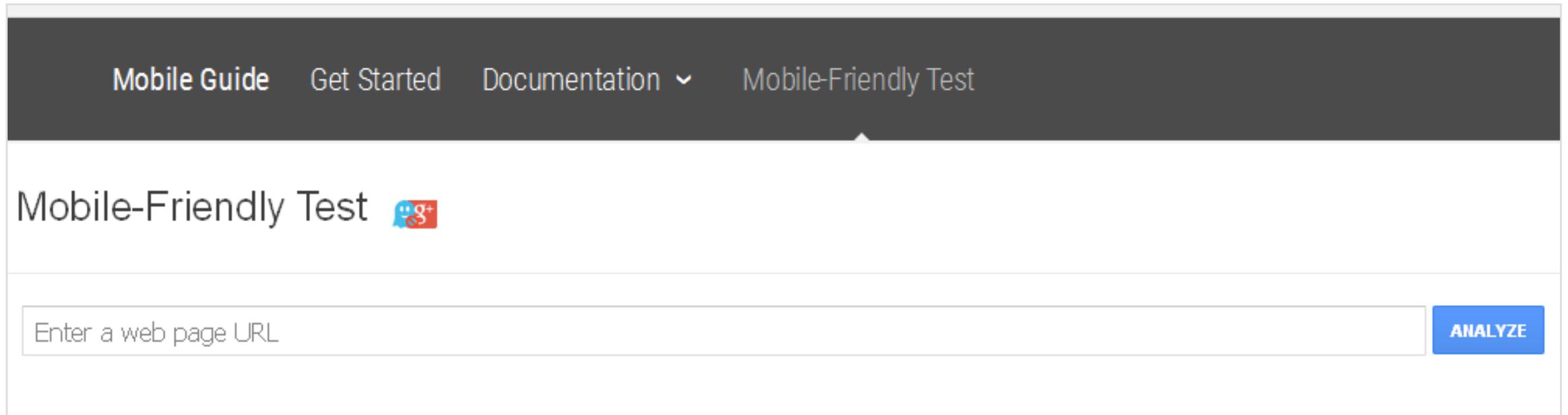
Reduce steps. Make sure your mobile website is easy to navigate and information is easy to find. Do not make your mobile visitors drill down through multiple screens in order to find what they are seeking.

Make the copy easy to read. Clear headlines and succinct copy is perfect for mobile readers.

Make calls-to-action easy to see and respond to. Make the call-to-action obvious on the mobile page so that the prospect does not need to search for it.

Make sure the site loads quickly and is mobile responsive. Google recently added “mobile friendly” to their search algorithm. They require that a website can adapt to the mobile device’s browser, deliver content that displays well on the mobile screen and allows the user to complete common tasks quickly. If you want to determine if your site is mobile-friendly, Google has provided a page with

Mobile device usage and mobile marketing is determining the future of website design. Take the time to understand how your customers use their mobile devices and use that information to design a more effective website.



The screenshot shows a web interface for a mobile-friendly test tool. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with the following links: "Mobile Guide", "Get Started", "Documentation" (with a dropdown arrow), and "Mobile-Friendly Test". Below the navigation bar, the main heading is "Mobile-Friendly Test" followed by a small icon of a speech bubble with a plus sign. Underneath the heading is a large text input field with the placeholder text "Enter a web page URL". To the right of the input field is a blue button labeled "ANALYZE".

CONCLUSION:

Today's strategic web design strategies focus on simple interfaces and a cleaner style. Achieving the desired results and meeting your business objectives are just as important as the appearance and experience. As you consider the next iteration of your website's design, give thought to the five strategies we discussed in this marketer's guide. When you do, you will have a website that will persuade your visitors to become your customers.



About KEO Marketing

KEO Marketing Inc., a leading business to business (B2B) marketing agency based in Phoenix, Arizona, develops and implements strategies to help clients significantly increase leads and sales.

The company's solutions include marketing strategy, brand positioning and messaging, inbound marketing, search engine marketing and optimization, website development, social media, pay per click and display advertising, local and mobile marketing and more. Some of the world's largest brands have depended on KEO Marketing for marketing programs that deliver tangible and substantial results.

For more information and to request a complimentary marketing audit visit keomarketing.com

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