

A photograph of a vintage computer room, likely from the 1970s or 1980s. Several people are seated at desks, each with a computer terminal. The terminals have large, boxy monitors and keyboards. The room is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the screens of the computers. The overall color palette is a warm, reddish-brown tint. The text is overlaid on the image.

YOUR LIFE'S WORKSHOP presents:

The Last Goddamn to Planning a Website that You Will Ever need

By Illana Burk

IT TAKES A VILLAGE.

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INCLUDED

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****Reader Tip: If you start feeling a little lost, skip to the end and review the Glossary FIRST.*

WHAT'S IT ALL FOR?

Hiring a web designer can be one of the most stressful and confusing things you will need to do as an entrepreneur. And any way you slice it, it *will* be one of your largest business expenses. Whether you DIY your first site, or hire someone from the get-go, at some point you **WILL** need to hire help. Right up front you need to know and understand one very important thing:

Hiring a creative professional of any kind, for any purpose, is a partnership, and like all good partnerships, you get out of it what you put into it.

The purpose of this guide is to help you feel informed, prepared, and professional as you embark on the creative process.

See, as designers, we know that what we do can feel like mystical wizardry to those on the other side of the drawing table. We know that our clients enter into the design process feeling confused and overwhelmed. Words that we use every day will sound like Greek to you. Things that take us hours, days or weeks will seem simple to you. We know that we make it seem both easy and hard all at the same time. And we know that many of us are terrible at making you feel at-ease with the process. This is why this guide is important.

Because before you start looking for a designer, you need to understand the basics of what we do and how we do it so that you can make sure you've got your shit together first.

In the pages ahead, you will learn about what you need to understand, do, and know to approach the process with professionalism and confidence so that your new website can be the thing that takes your business from where it is to where it *should* be.

WHAT YOU NEED TO *DO*:

1. Preparation is EVERYTHING. Here are the questions your designer will most likely ask you when you first talk:

a. Is your content complete? And by complete, they mean fully edited, formatted, and well-organized. If it isn't, expect additional fees and/or

delays. And by content [or “copy” as it’s often called], we mean all of the words that will appear on your website’s individual pages.

b. Who is your target market? If you don’t know already, look for a designer who can help you figure it out – someone who specializes in brand-building, marketing, and/or business consulting. And expect to pay for the consulting time before you ever begin the design process. Knowing your target market is crucial, and is often something business-owners can’t easily articulate, especially in the first couple of years of business. Not knowing is OKAY. Just know that you may need to pay for help figuring it out.

c. If you are getting photos of yourself and/or your products taken, do you have them in hand? Getting professional photos done can take as much as 4-6 weeks, so get on THIS before you expect to get

started with a designer. [Tip: If you are planning to hire a local designer, connect with them first and ask for photographer references. Most designers have a handful of photogs they recommend.] Budget for this expense and take it as seriously as you would working with any other artistic professional.

d. What are you thinking design-wise? Be ready with a Pinterest board [or at least a handful of like/dislike websites] of things that capture the mood you are after design-wise. But also maintain an open mind for the best results. Your designer will use these suggestions as a jumping off point. They cannot and will not just copy another designer's work. First of all, that's tacky [and illegal – designers take copyright law VERY seriously]. And secondly, your site should have goals unique to *your* business' needs and *your*

target market's needs, so copying someone else's work won't get anyone what they want.

e. What are your primary, secondary, and tertiary goals for your site? What do you want people to DO when they arrive there? Are mailing list signups your only goal? Or do you want them to learn about a specific thing? Do you want them to be nudged to your blog right away? Or is it more important for them to get to your services page? Every business has a different set of needs. Make sure you know what yours are.

If you don't have the materials a designer needs to begin, you will inevitably waste both of your time stabbing in the dark – as you both try to figure out what direction you're heading.

“But can't they just put in placeholders?”

Yes and No. Your content and images are huge parts of your overall brand. Without the ACTUAL goods, nothing will ever feel totally cohesive. The list of things we think about, so you don't have to, is VERY long. Things you may not think about ahead of time, but that your designer must consider include: What color is your shirt in your profile pics? Will it match the colors we choose on the site? What about word length? Paragraph length? What if the headlines are too long for the space designed for them? Being a pro means coming to the table with all your ducks in a row.

2. Have a site map.

If you don't know what pages you will need on your site, how is your designer supposed to create something effective for you?

3. Hosting matters and hacking happens to people just like you all the time.

If you have GoDaddy, expect your designer to either: a. Encourage you to switch to someone else. Or, b. Charge you a premium. Why? Because their servers are overcrowded, their policies make our jobs harder, and they break things all the time. They are also a huge target for hackers. And they are dicks.

Likewise, your site WILL go down from time to time, no matter what host you have. And your page load time might be really slow for seemingly no reason. This is usually your web host's fault. Not ours. We are fanatical geeks about making your site work well. The very last thing we would ever want is for you to be annoyed with us.

If you want to be SURE your site is the safest it can be, go for what's called Managed Hosting. Reach out to learn more about this option. We don't offer it in-house, but have some great recc's.

WHAT YOU NEED TO *KNOW*

[managing your expectations]:

1. You almost always get what you pay for.

Everyone always wants to know how much it will/should cost. And the answer is:

I have no idea.

Most designers I know charge somewhere between \$2500-\$8000 for a pro/custom WordPress site. But what's included

in each of those packages is completely different. Some are all-inclusive, meaning they will also throw in logo, mailing list, Facebook cover, custom this, doodad that, etc... Where others might give you an a-la-carte menu of options to pick and choose from.

Some might offer long payment plan options.

Some might want 50% down and 50% on completion.

Some might offer a discount for pre-payment up front.

Yes, we know that this is frustrating. But we all have our own way of doing things that we have found works best for us. Sorry. Really. We wish there was a standard too.

What I CAN tell you is that you should plan on spending at least \$3k on your brand package and website. Minimum.

“Why are they so expensive? My sister’s cousin’s best friend got one from a guy she met at Starbucks for \$500.”

Custom brand development and design is time consuming and requires years of expertise. Yes, you could absolutely get a cheap or even free website that might look just fine. And I am not at all discouraging doing so. It simply comes down to your business goals. If you want to build a company – one with its own identity and flavor, you have to pay for custom work. Period. If you go with one of the millions of templates or cheap options, your site can, at best, look like someone else’s site and at worst, it can look downright unprofessional.

Professional web designers also concern themselves with emerging trends, security, stability, and user experience. Just like any other specialized pro, we invest in ongoing education, emerging technology, and professional growth.

When you buy cheap, you have no way of knowing how secure your site will be, how well it will function on new devices, or how it will perform in high-traffic periods.

A professional web designer is going to use their considerable talent and experience to partner with you for weeks, months, and in some cases years to help you achieve your business goals. When something goes wrong, they are there for you. When you’re ready to grow, they already understand your business and your taste.

Can the same be said for Starbucks guy?

2. Your website is for your clients. Not for you. Yes, you need to like it. But your potential clients are the ones that need to be punch-in-the-face-bowled-over-by-the-awesomeness.

You are not your clients. Be clear about who they are and what they like and direct your designer accordingly, and your site will serve you and your clients beautifully.

3. The process will take twice as long as you think it will – or more.

No matter what you are saying to yourself right now about how YOU are different, ideas take time. Decision making takes time. Writing copy takes time. Getting photos taken takes time.

The more prepared you are ahead of time, the faster it will go, but expect a completely custom site to take no less than 8 weeks. And it's reasonable to expect it to take as long as 10-15 weeks.

4. Designers and Developers are entirely different animals.

Though some do both, a Designer specializes in the visual direction of your new website. Designers handle the “front

end” [the pretty parts]. A Developer is the one that will make it all go. They take the designs and do all of the coding, or “back end” work. When you are building a new site, you will usually only need to hire a designer – most of the time the designer will have a

developer they work with regularly and will interface with them directly, or they will do both themselves. Ask about

“People searching for a designer should know: that every designer has a different process and communication style. Make sure to ask lots of questions, and ensure that your designer's communication style suits your own!”

Marie Poulin – Designer/Developer/Branding Expert
MariePoulin.com

this up front. Find out how many hands will be touching your site, and how hard it will be for you [or another designer down the road] to make changes. Don't assume anything. If you aren't sure, ask.

5. Designers are not one-size-fits-all.

Some are brilliant business strategists. Some know squat about business, but are brilliant at bringing your strategy to life.

Some are coders, some aren't.

Some are experts in a particular field because they specialize in only designing for one industry.

Some only work with solopreneurs.

Some can handle projects of all sizes, big or small.

Some do ecommerce and/or membership portals, others do not.

Some design logos. Some don't.

Some only use a specific platform [like WordPress

or Drupal], some can build on anything.

Some like pie. Others like cake.

"Print + web + branding design are all different, and you should see whether the designer has skills to handle all the types of design you need, or if they will collaborate with other specialists. Before you commit to working with a designer it's important to figure out if their skills and way of working are a true fit for your needs."

Tzaddi Gordon - Designer/Developer
TzaddiMade.com

I think you're beginning to get the idea.

To get the most from YOUR designer, come to the table prepared with clear ideas on what you and your business will need over the next 2-4 years, or look for a designer who also does business strategy. The key is to not expect your designer to do more than what they are great at, or you will both feel disappointed. For more on this see the Starting Line Worksheet.

DURING THE DESIGN PROCESS

Here are some things to keep in mind once you've chosen your designer, signed contracts, and are ready for shit to get real.

1. Drop the ego, and learn how to trust.

Every designer has stories of clients who micromanaged every single step of the process and who treated them as if

THEY were the designer and the actual designer was simply there to do their bidding. Never forget that if you could do it yourself, you would have.

Good designers keep their eyes on a thousand things you would never think of: Usability, user behavior and psychology, balance, trends, site longevity, technology changes, security, edit-ability, etc... Just because you want something doesn't mean you should have it.

Every single designer on earth will tell you that their very best work is done when they had a client who trusted their expertise.

2. Remember these very important guidelines when giving feedback or asking questions [or: How to not be a dick when you don't like something.]

a. Asking for a different font or a different color can be considered a small change or 'tweak'.

Saying, “Can you just do a couple more completely different options?” is something different altogether. That would be edging into the territory of paying your designer more for more work.

b. If you really have a major problem [like you really just hate everything your designer has done so far], consult your

contract, agreements, and previous communications before you approach your designer. It is always a possibility that they missed the mark, but it's always a good idea to remind

yourself of the info you provided to them, and the agreements you made before reaching out.

c. **Come to the table with solutions and examples.** If you don't like something, you need to

“The best creative people are amazing collaborators and will work their asses off for you... if you value them for their experience and knowledge, not just for their Photoshop proficiency.”

Amanda Farough – Designer
VioletMinded.com

help your designer understand what that ‘something’ is and how to make it more to your liking. Saying, “I’ll know it when I see it,” is the fastest way to make sure that you will never, ever see ‘It’.

3. Don't design by committee.

The only people who should be weighing in on your site designs are: you, your designer, *maybe* a business advisor,

and a couple of people who fall firmly into your target market.

Your best friend, husband, wife, dog, sister, design-student niece, guy-at-the-coffee-shop, and your teenage daughter have no business weighing in. They are not who you are designing for. This is your *business*, not your prom dress. And I guarantee that if you show it to people who are not in your target market, they will say things like, “Meh. It’s just not YOU.” Or, “I think the logo should be bigger.” Or, “Are you sticking with *those* colors?” The people in your life mean well, but they also want to be helpful when asked, and to most people, helpful = critical. And criticism in the midst of the design process from people who are not in on internal conversations about the direction and goals of your business is wildly counterproductive.

4. Treat every email/call/question/request you get from your designer as if the pope just asked you for wardrobe advice.

If you are not responsive, expect your designer to care less and less about making your project amazing. Their time is just as valuable as yours, and if you blow them off for any more than 2-3 days, you have officially derailed your own project schedule. Coming back to your designer after weeks or months of silence and expecting them to drop everything for you is disrespectful and rude and puts the designer in the position of either a. having to tell you something that might disappoint you [like because you dropped the ball, they’ve moved on to other projects and so there will now be more delays to your project – and believe me, we want that even less than you do], or b. rearranging their life and business schedule just for you.

Neither of those things is going to make your designer love you. And if you want lovely work from them, you want them to *love* you. Creative juices come from good feelings, not annoyance and resentment.

Remember that whole, “This is a partnership,” thing from the beginning? Yeah. We are in this together.

Likewise, read communications from your designer very carefully, and be sure to respond to *everything* they ask. Nothing is more frustrating for a designer than asking five questions on a Wednesday and getting three answers at 11pm on Friday, right before you leave on vacation for a week.

Chances are good that if we ask you something, we need the answer before we can proceed. That means your project just lost a week and a half because you neglected to read and respond to the whole email.

5. Designers are not mind-readers [usually].

You will get out of the process what you put in to it. If you are organized and clear, you will get organized, clear communication in return. If you are articulate about what you like and don't like [and why] you will get well-articulated design. When a designer asks you something and you respond with, "Isn't that your job?" That is usually a sign that you are unclear. It is not a designer's job to help you get clear; it's their job to interpret your ideas and goals visually. If you don't know what those are, neither will they.

6. If you are not happy with something, it is your responsibility to speak up early, and to offer alternatives.

Saying that a font needs to be cooler, more professional, more modern, have more WOW, or that it should pop more are not acceptable forms of feedback. All of these things are WILDLY subjective. Your version of 'cool' and

"A relationship with a designer is a type of partnership. As such, it's important to approach that partnership with a collaborative mindset. That means that the designer needs to have access to sufficient information to help brainstorm ideas and a strategy for you. They need to know the "why" behind things in order to fully understand what your business needs. It's also important to note that designers are problem-solvers by nature. They are at their best when given crunchy problems to solve rather than solutions. Keeping all this in mind will allow them to do their best work for you and together you will come up with results even better than you ever dreamed of."

Naomi Niles – Designer
ShiftFWD.com

my version of ‘cool’ are likely two very different things. Instead, try, “The font is hitting me wrong. Here are five examples of sites with similar but different fonts that I like to give you a better idea of the vibe I’m after.”

Don’t forget, we are the experts, but this is YOUR website. That makes the designer/client relationship a partnership. Yup. There’s that word again.

It is unreasonable to expect a designer to continue to go back to the drawing board because you are, “a visual person who will know what they want when they see it.”

Comments like these tell your designer that you have no idea what you want and that they are in for a bumpy, and probably costly, ride.

7. If you change your mind, expect it to cost you.

A design package usually includes a specific number of revisions. You are not paying a designer to infinitely guess

what you might like. If you approve something and then want a change, expect to pay for that.

8. Avoid trendy doo-hickie requests.

If a designer tells you that the ____ you want is trendy and will be outdated in five minutes, trust them. Trendy design choices are usually expensive and pointless and will make your site look dated in a year. Anyone seen a good animated Flash website lately? Yeah. Me neither. Wanna know how much a Flash site cost to build 5 years ago? Probably more than your car. And now they are the Internet version of a paperweight.

9. Just because you see Feature X on So-And-So’s site doesn’t mean you can [or should] have it on yours.

You have no idea how much Feature X cost. It probably was not simple. It was probably custom coded. And if it was on a big corporate site, it may take a TEAM of engineers to

make it work consistently. If your designer says they can't create something for you within your budget, listen and be willing to compromise.

10. Not all designers design for mobile viewing.

Don't take responsive design [see glossary] for granted. There are many ways to code a site and many designers do not automatically design your site to look good on phones and tablets. Make sure you ask this up front. Likewise, responsive design should not be your only priority when choosing a designer. Not all businesses need it as much as others. For example: If your business offers services to bloggers, responsive design will be important because they are a very tech-savvy target market and will undoubtedly be viewing your site on mobile devices. But if you are a clothing designer and a beautiful, big flashy portfolio needs to be the centerpiece of your website, responsiveness is less

of a priority because your work will never look good teeny-tiny anyway.

11. Don't cheap out on seemingly small details.

The small details are the things that ALWAYS stand out the most. Spending \$5k on the site design and then creating a Facebook cover yourself to save \$100 is an awesome way to make sure everyone on Facebook thinks you're an amateur. And none of those people will even bother to click through to see your \$5k website. Most web designers offer collateral design items [like Twitter backgrounds, newsletter templates, etc... for other spaces on the web so that your internet presence looks cohesive.

12. If you want help learning how to use your site, ask your designer to add some training time to your estimate.

It's their job to design a site for you. Training is a separate thing because not everyone needs it. And those who do are all over the map skill-wise. If your designer does not offer training, they can usually point you towards some solid resources on the web that will help you get started.

13. Designers are humans too.

Chances are good that we need to eat and sleep and have time with our families, just like you do. We also get the flu and have days where we don't feel inspired. Before you get upset about things taking too long, ask yourself the following questions:

- a. Was I slow in responding to some of my designers' requests?
- b. Has it really been AGES, or has it been a day or two longer than I expected?
- c. Would I rather have a design that my designer pushed themselves to finish just to please my

deadline, or would I rather have an inspired and stunning design that changes the face of my business?

We always ALWAYS aspire to be all things to all people and to delight you at every turn. But we humbly ask that you remember that we are also people.

AFTER THE DESIGN PROCESS

Congrats. You are now the proud owner of a shiny new website. Now the real work begins.

1. Updating, backups, security, and hacking recovery are probably not included in your site design project.

If you are concerned about this, ask your designer if they have a maintenance plan available.

2. Technology changes faster than ANY of us can keep up with.

We do our level best to stay up on things, but it is not actually your designer's responsibility to educate you on every new technological advance out there. You need to do your homework before you start talking to designers so that you know what to ask for. Much of the time, we are responding only to the info you give and the questions you ask. There's a big gap left between what you don't know that you don't know and what we don't know that you may have wanted to know. Please help us fill this gap.

3. Once your site is live, our job is done. Yours has just begun.

a. If you want us to change anything not included in your original contract, once the site is up, expect a bill.

b. A website is not a set-it-and-forget-it deal. You need to do updates, backups, etc... to keep it running well. Need help with this? Ask your designer for assistance, and expect a bill.

c. A word about content—a dynamic site with a blog needs consistent attention and updating if it's going to do its job for you. If blogging regularly isn't part of your content strategy, having one could do more harm than good. So if you had your designer build a blog into your site, make sure you are actively posting, or have them remove it.

UNDERSTANDING WEBSITE STRUCTURE

If your website is a tricked out snazz-mobile parked in a parking lot....

Hosting [GoDaddy, Bluehost, Fatcow, or private servers, etc...] is like the parking lot. It has a whole

bunch of space and not much else. Sometimes the spots are too small and cars are jammed in like sardines. Other times, they are spacious and an attendant makes sure no one messes with your ride. Godaddy would be the one where you get a new dent every time you park your car there. Private, managed hosting would be like the valet who totally knows your name and who doesn't fuck with your radio presets.

WordPress is the parking place. Think of it like the white lines painted on the pavement. You can basically fill the space with whatever you want. But until it's filled, it's just an empty space.

Your theme is the car itself – as it was when it came off the production line – before it got all the trimmings that make you like it.

Your design is all the trimmings. The sunroof. The leather seats. The stereo system. All the things that make

your car look entirely unique. Also, it's the things that make it comfortable for drivers and passengers [website visitors].

Development is the engine. It's the things under the hood that makes it all purrrrrrrr.

And just like cars and parking lots and engines and bells and whistles, not all are created equal.

THE GLOSSARY

The Glossary is divided into three areas of interest:

- **General Common Terms**

Mixed bag of terms related to web design, hiring a designer, and other words you should understand around the care and management of your website.

- **Technical Terms Relating to Website Structure**

Clear explanations of the areas most commonly related to the ‘development’ of your site. The nerd stuff, if you will.

- **Design/Designer Terms**

Common designer-y jargon that we toss around with wild abandon.

General Common Terms

Designer

Person who makes your site look pretty and who plans the functions of your site.

Developer or Dev or Coder

Person who understands servers and who codes the back-end of your site.

eCommerce Integration

Loosely used to define any shopping cart functionality your site may need.

Hacking

When someone fucks up your website for no good reason and you get to pay hundreds of dollars or more to fix it. Usually happens because you ignored your designers' advice telling you to make your WordPress and hosting passwords really, REALLY hard, and keep your site, theme, and plugins up-to-date.

Mailing List/Newsletter System

Refers to a third-party company that handles storing your business' mailing list and also delivers newsletters to your lists' inboxes. Examples: Mailchimp, AWeber, InfusionSoft.

Opt-In

The free thing you give away when people sign up for your eNewsletter or blog via email. And/Or refers to the box that captures their name and/or info.

Podcast

Audio recording posted online at regular intervals.

Scope

The reasonable and mutually agreed-upon parameters of your project.

Scope Creep

What designers and other service people call the common predicament of a client asking them to do many small things that are hard to charge for, but that fall outside the parameters of the original project scope.

Site Map

For planning purposes, a Site Map is just a simple outline of page hierarchy. Like so:

Home

About

- About Me
- About Our Company

Blog

Services

- Marsupial Care Workshops
- Stripper Pole Lessons
- Book Editing

Contact

For Actual website purposes, a Site Map is something usually auto-generated by an SEO plugin – designed to tell search engines what’s included on your website.

Social Media Icons

Refer to the icons your designer creates or adds that link to YOUR social media profiles.

Social Share Buttons

You know those nifty little buttons at the ends of blog posts that let you easily share the article you just read to Facebook, Twitter, and the like? Those.

Timeline

What you mean when you say this word: _____

What we hear when you say this word: _____

Undefinable word. Try another. Depends on too many variables to nail down.

Technical Terms Relating to Website Structure

Back End

The part of your website that no one sees but the coder who developed it. This is the mythical area where magicians and wizards type in 1's and 0's and make your website do all the fancy things.

Backups

The only insurance you have when something goes wrong with your website. We recommend [BackupBuddy](#) [affiliate link].

Code

CSS, HTML, PHP, Java, jquery, etc... All of them do different things. I totally don't understand 99% of it. CSS and HTML are gonna be the most common. CSS has to do with colors and fonts, etc... and HTML [these days]

has to do with text styling a good bit of the time. Ask a developer if you really want to know.

Content

All of the copy on your site + any images you want designers to use.

Database

Basically a filing system on your server where all of your website info and data lives. Never go there. It's confusing and easy to break. Basically, I'm pretty sure The Database exists to keep developers employed because every designer I know is terrified of it.

Front End

The part of your website that users see and interact with.

GoDaddy

The hosting equivalent of the shittiest Wal Mart you have ever been in.

Plugin

Magical little bits of code that other people took the time to create that add a functionality to your site. Though, they are also made by third-parties [not WordPress], meaning they can be crappily made. Use sparingly and with caution. They may disrupt other functions of your site, or worse, break the fucker. Your designer and/or developer may add a couple of plugins while building your site, and you *can* add more after your site is done... just remember that you are doing so at your own risk.

Server

Magical machine somewhere [probably buried underground in a flyover state] that houses your data.

SEO

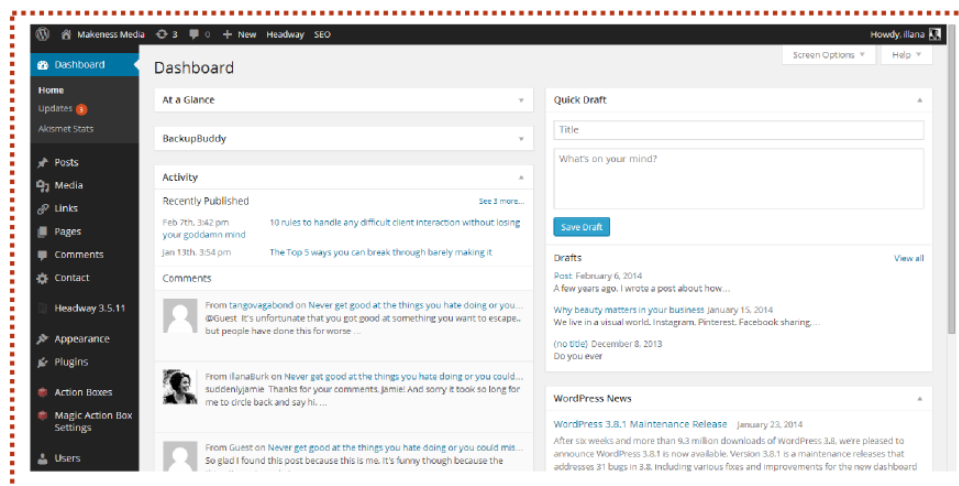
Search Engine Optimization. Or, the moving target of guessing what Google might like this week. Most designers will use a WordPress plugin like Yoast or All-In-One SEO to handle the SEO integration on your website.

Widgets

Fun little boxes that are part of WordPress that usually go in your sidebar or footer that offer some kind of specific function [like an email-capture box, or a list of recent posts, or a search box]. Not all themes use widgets, but many do. They are cool because they are easy to change out, if you want to move things around.

WordPress Dashboard

WORDPRESS DASHBOARD



The closest you should ever get to the Back End. The WP Dash is where you will enter blog posts, edit pages, update WordPress, etc... It's VERY easy to use.

WordPress Themes

a. **Free Themes:** Often inflexible, commonly vulnerable to hacks, can make you look like an amateur if not customized by a designer. That said, the basic WordPress theme [called 'Twenty Fourteen'

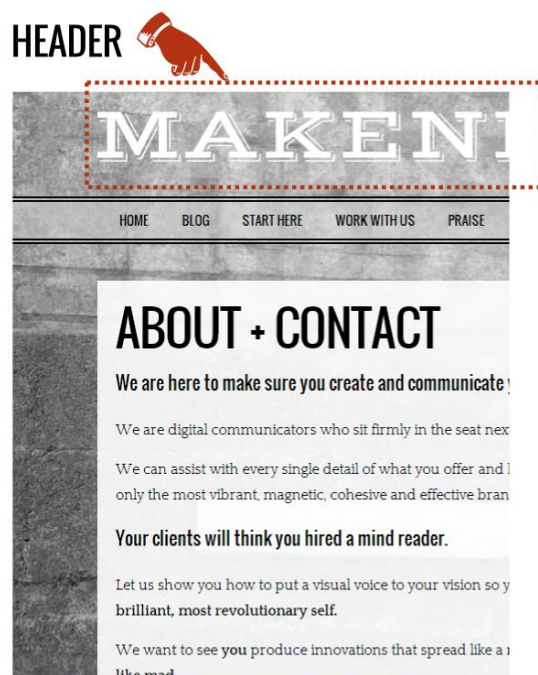
– comes with all new WordPress installs] is very well-built and can work for basic sites.

b. **Low cost [\$10-\$90ish]:** Occasionally more flexible [you *might* get to change the background color]. Sometimes

still vulnerable to hacks. Can make you look like a pro if you happen to pick a good one out of the millions available.

- c. **Premium themes [\$90-up]:** 100% customizable. Only a few good ones are out there [[Headway](#) [affiliate link], Thesis, Canvas, and Genesis are the most common]. These are basically design frameworks. It takes someone fairly skilled to customize them and make them look good. Many designers use one of these as the framework and build your custom design within it. They are very stable, well-supported, great for SEO, and are far less vulnerable to security breaches, as long as you keep them up-to-date.

Design/Designer Terms



Featured Image

Image selected that will appear on your site in special areas that are programmed to specifically display your featured image from a post or page. Often, these show as a small cropped version of the image next to a blog title. Featured images also usually appear as the main image in Facebook updates – though this is sometimes unreliable due to Facebook’s ever-changing algorithm.

Footer

The section at the bottom of your website. Usually holding copyright and sometimes contact information.

Lorem Ipsum

Nonsense text designers use in place of your actual content.

Header

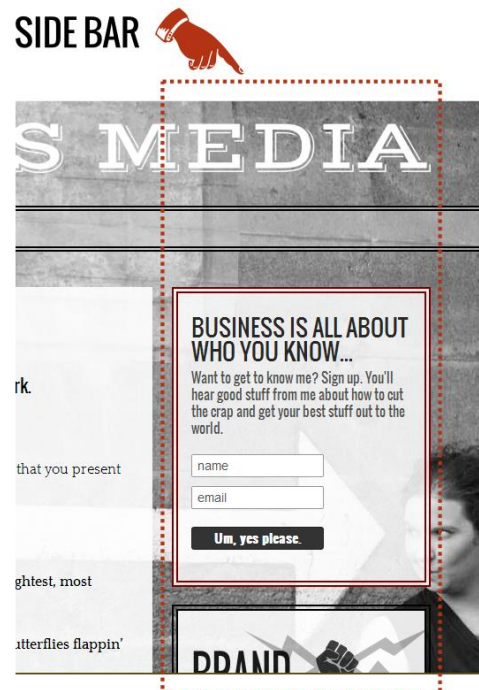
Generally refers to the graphic element at the top of your website.

Information Architecture

A designer term for how information flows in and around your site and the 'path' that we want users to follow.

Iterations

Derivative designs usually integrating a design already created with new feedback. Clients should ask for no more than three iterations [though all designers' policies vary on this] without paying more.



Mock-Up

A flat image [meaning not clickable] of a design concept created by a designer. Usually created in Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator.

Navigation Bar

The part of your site that offers clickable options to navigate to other pages.

Premium Fonts

There are GOBS of free fonts out there. But many are WAY over-used. Pro designers often like to purchase higher-end fonts and may or may not pass the cost on to

you. But understand that since it is your website, you are responsible for making sure you have the proper rights to use fonts and/or stock photography. Always a good idea to double check licensing with your designer.

PSD

Photoshop Document. Usually this refers to the design mockups your designer creates for you, but it can be used to define any file created in Adobe Photoshop – the industry standard for most designers.

Responsive Design

A responsive site adapts its configuration and design automatically on different devices.

Sidebar

A column on the right, left, or both sides of your main content area on your website. Usually where you'll find an opt-in box, promotion badges, etc...

Static Design

A static [or Traditional] site design does not adapt itself to mobile devices and can be hard to read on anything but a computer screen.

Static Website vs Dynamic Website

Yes, this is confusing. But a static site can also be a site that does not have frequently changing content [like maybe a local restaurant that just has menus and an about page up and not much else]. A dynamic site would be a site that is changing frequently [so if you have a blog, you have a dynamic site].

The Fold

Commonly refers to the invisible line at the bottom of your screen. So when someone says ‘above the fold’, they actually mean the portion of your website that is visible without scrolling down. The fold will fall in a different place on different devices and screen sizes, so it really doesn’t exist at all.

Tweaks

Loosely used to define small changes like changing a color’s shade or a font size – often when a site is near or at completion. Most designers appreciate it when clients look at their entire site, live with it for a few days, and then compile a short list of tweak requests if necessary. It is considered unreasonable to ask for more than two or three changes without offering to pay more.

User Experience [or UX]

The experience that your website’s visitors will have while visiting your site.

User Interface [or UI]

Generally refers to the actual design of the interface itself that a site user sees and interacts with.

Vector Graphic

Defines a graphic image that can be resized to any size. Usually created in Adobe Illustrator. A web designer may ask you for a vector copy [.AI or .EPS file formats] of your logo or other site element if someone else designed it so that they can easily resize for different uses on your website.

Web Fonts

Generally refers to any font that is web-ready. Not all fonts render [display] well on all browsers. Examples of services that offer web fonts your designer may use include Typekit and Google Fonts.

though not all designers do wire frames. They are more commonly used for larger projects.

Web Resolution

Refers to the pixel size that images should be for optimal page loading time and viewing. Generally speaking, you want your images to be as small as possible. Images should be 72-100 dpi (dots per inch) and should not exceed 2000 pixels wide.

Now go... and be brilliant.

Wire Frames

A rough outline of a potential site design – outlining the general areas where different components will go on a new website. Usually done before the design mock-up,