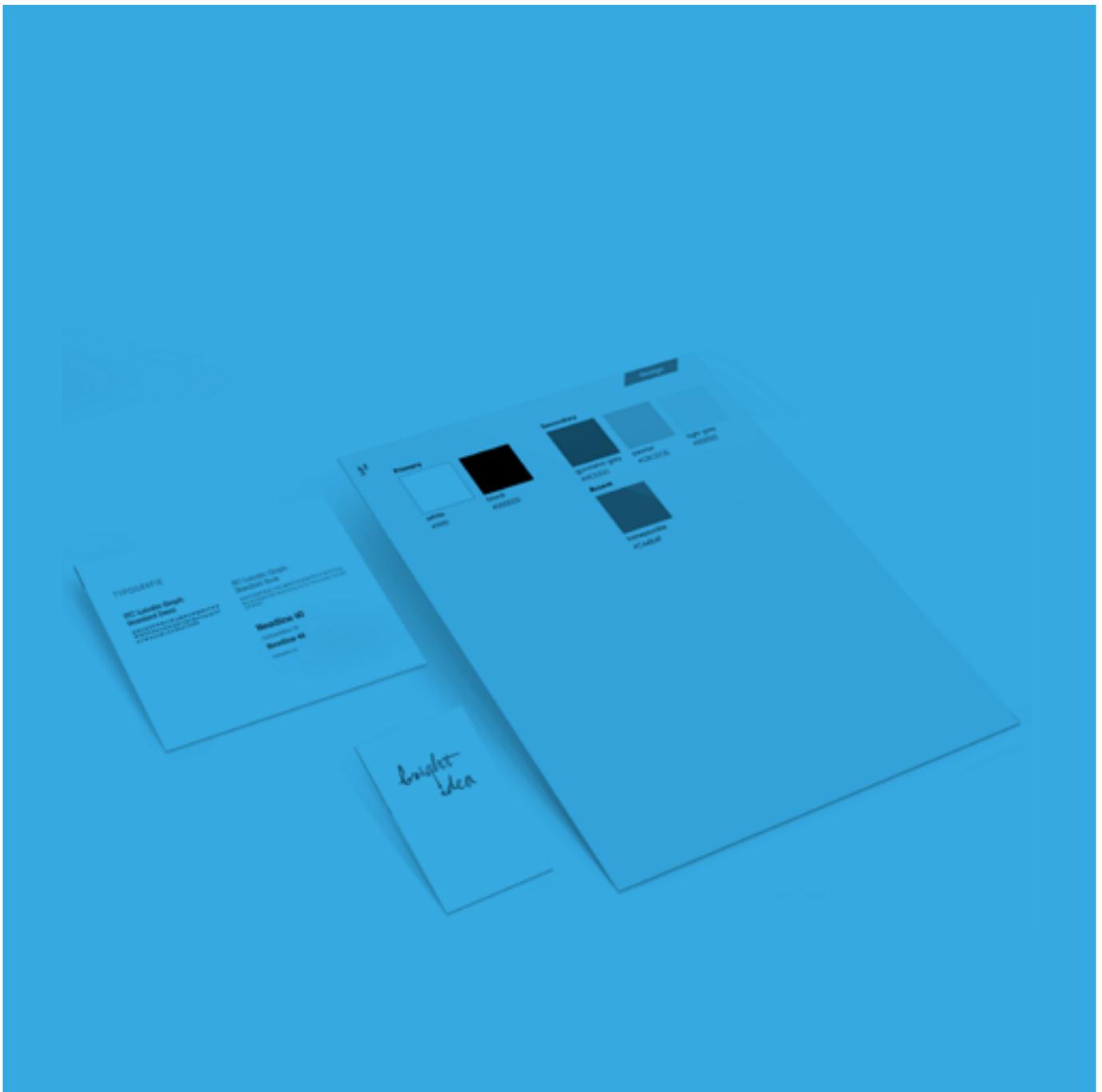


The Website Plan



BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

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Introduction

*bright
idea*

CREATING YOUR WEBSITE PLAN BEFORE YOU GET STARTED
WILL HELP YOU GET YOUR WEBSITE FINISHED...

Web design isn't easy. Even for professionals, it can take quite some time to master. When designing and creating a website, there are many factors that weigh in. If you have decided to do it yourself, it's likely you'll find yourself overwhelmed. We know how hard it is for non-designers to get the hang of this whole web design thing, so we created this handy guide to walk you through the basics.



1. Content

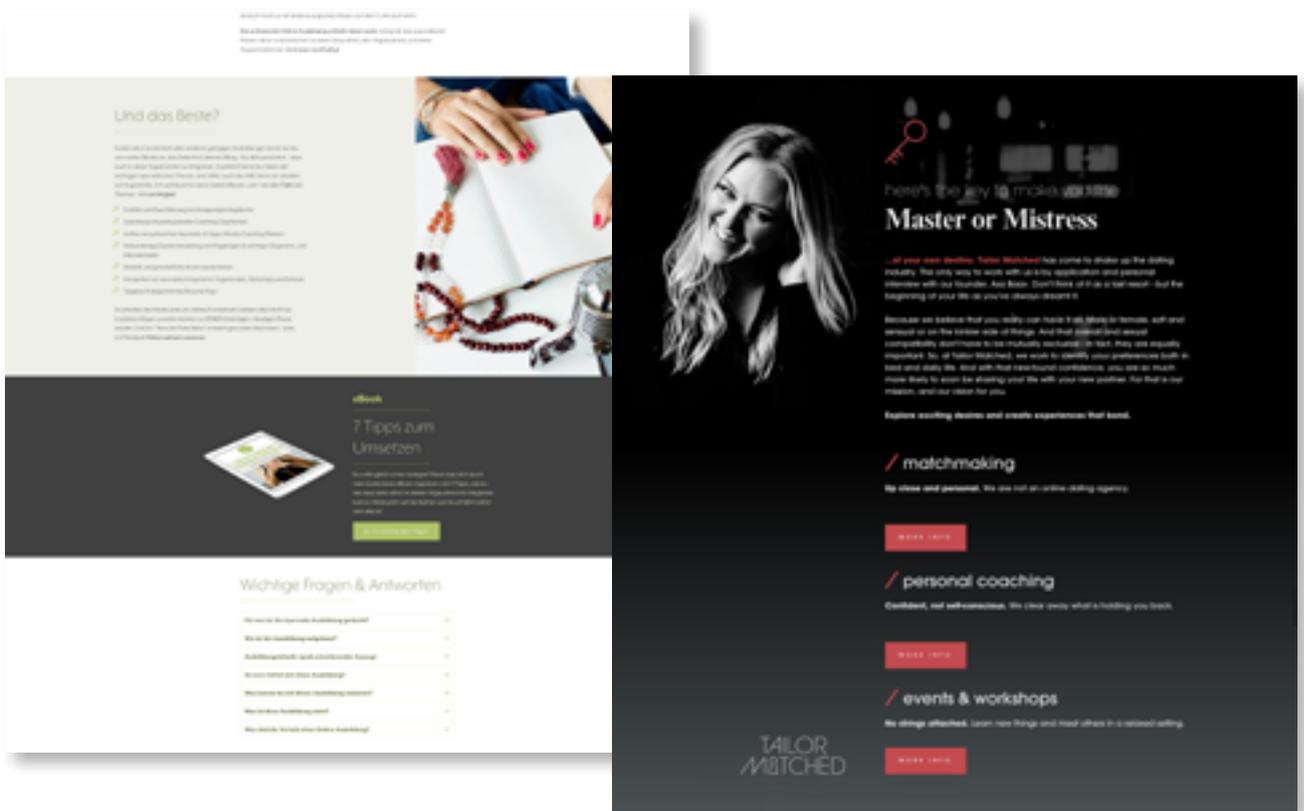
Content is king and your web design is its servant. The main purpose of everything we discuss here regarding designing your own website is for you to find ways of displaying your content - and conveying your brand message - in the best way possible. You want to streamline the content in order for your website to be effective. You want your audience to clearly understand what you, your brand and your services are about. There must be a clear path or paths for the user to follow. For this, a couple of basic rules will help you on your way...

- **create a navigation** You want your website's visitors to find information quickly and easily. Make sure you take them by the hand and make it as easy as possible for them to find what they're looking for. Spread out your content in a way that makes sense and divide it into meaningful pages, and make sure they're easily accessible in a clear menu. When creating a menu, don't try and be too creative. This goes for web design in general, but especially for such a vital part as your site's navigation: Instead of trying to be different no matter what, rather stick to what your users know and are used to.
- **don't be afraid of scrolling** Your website visitors don't mind scrolling your pages as much as you might think. In fact, people rather scroll than get lost in clicking, being redirected to different pages. Especially since more and more people visit websites from their mobile devices nowadays! What you DO need to keep in mind is the order in which you feature your content. If you have something important to say, make sure it's at the top of your page.
- **deliver your content step-by-step** Consider featuring short introductions for a certain topic, before going 'in-depth'. Let people know what it's about and enable them to read or find out more (by clicking a button which will direct the user to a specific page, or opens a collapsed item which reveals more on the subject). Divide your content in a way that allows the user to choose, instead of making them read a book before you've made your point.
- **consider what's important** Don't be afraid to edit stuff out. What might have been important at first, may not be so after all. Get rid of content that is superfluous and obsolete. If it's of no use to your audience, then it's of no use to you. In fact, content that's unimportant will only distract from what IS important, so clean up your content ;-)

2. Layout

If you have done some preparation work, you should have a fairly good idea of what content you want on your website. When you build and design your own website, you should keep in mind that it isn't just about what you add to your website, but how you add it. How you present your valuable content will have great effect on how users will absorb it. By following certain basic rules, you should be able to come up with some solid layouts for your website...

- create clarity** A common mistake is a cluttered screen. Beginners tend to throw everything they have onto the screen at once. Try instead to lay your content out in a clear way and present it bit by bit. In doing so it's really important to enable users to focus on the essential message, so strip your design of any unnecessary distracting elements that divert the users attention from what it is you have to say.
- create a visual hierarchy** Consider size, placement and colour of the different visual elements to guide your users to focus on what's important, like a Call-To-Action button. Using visual hierarchy like this, you can prioritize certain elements over others.

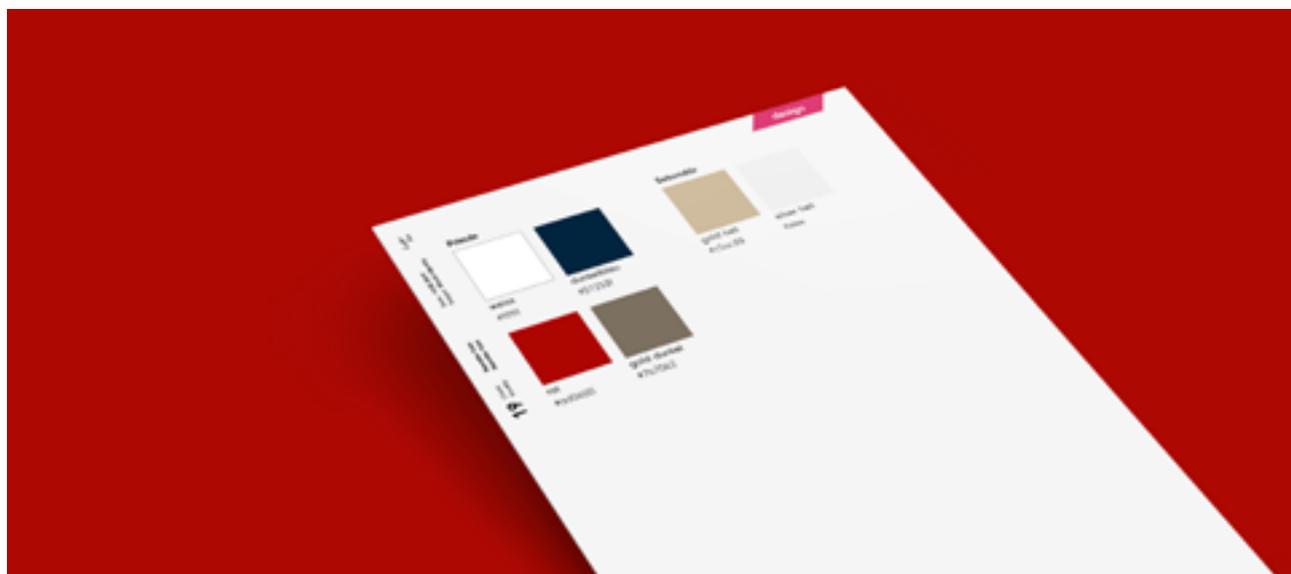


make use of 'empty' space A very powerful tool to create clarity and improve legibility is the use of 'negative space' or 'white space'. This is a technical term in visual arts for an 'empty' space that doesn't grab attention. What it can do instead is complement a more prominent feature and make this stand out even more. The more negative space around something, the more attention it receives. A good example of this would be a full screen section like the one below. In general, you want to avoid 'squeezing in' content altogether: Remember to leave enough space between elements like text blocks, images, headlines. It will 'let your content breathe' and give your page an overall calmer feel. It might seem obvious, but many people are somehow afraid to leave spaces in their layouts. Don't be!



avoid busy backgrounds Background pictures are often used in modern web design. They are supposed to go largely unnoticed. If your background doesn't have enough negative space, it will steal attention from your main elements, especially when the background image contains lots of (different) colours.

choose your colours wisely An important part of your web design is the use of colours. Colours can have great effect, both positive and negative, so you should really take your time to define a set of colours. Be aware that every colour has a different emotional connotation. Also keep in mind that colours relate to one another in different ways. To use colours effectively, you need to find a balanced colour palette that allows you to make contrasting as well as harmonious combinations. Just because you personally like certain colours doesn't mean you should just throw them together and expect a positive result. Some colours just don't go that well together or even clash. Take your time to try out different combinations, and consider adding colours (or even greytone) for practical reasons. In doing so, try to keep it minimal and set a consistent color hierarchy; meaning the definition and application of a primary colour (for your main elements), one or two secondary colours (for highlight or accents) and some background colours. Once you've established this, stick with it and use your colour palette consistently throughout your website.



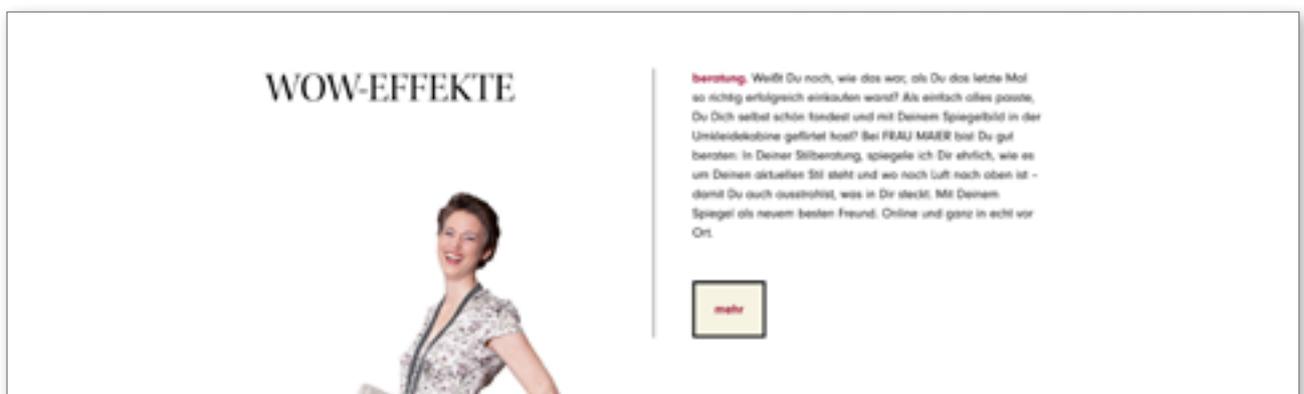
repurpose layouts When it comes to the design, you want to maintain a certain consistency throughout your site. Try and avoid a big jumble of different designs and layouts. If you have designed a couple of good sections (parts of a web page), try and use them again throughout your site, or even on that same page. It's not boring, but consistent and also user-friendly; it will make it easier for users to understand and recognize the content on your whole site.

3. Copy

The importance of effective copy is sadly often underestimated. A good-looking website doesn't make up for poor use of language, and yet we see this quite often. If writing is not your strong suit, you should pay even bigger attention to the words you use. Hey, even a lesser-skilled writer can produce decent copy, provided you're willing to make an effort. While copywriting is an art that requires talent, it's also a craft...and THAT, you can practise. Of course you can always ask someone else to put into words what you have to say (and we strongly encourage hiring at least a proof reader if grammar isn't your thing). But whoever is going to take care of this, these basic guidelines will help you on your way...

be genuine and clear, not artificial and confusing Simply put, this means: write like you would speak. Even Nietzsche already recommended this as the first rule of good style, for crying out loud! To get there, you can record your voice and have it transcribed to written words, for example. There are loads of free services that do this, such as the Apple or Windows built-in dictation functionality or Dragon, if you want to go more pro. To enliven the copy, you can even voice-record it while talking to a friend - just tell them what your business is about, why you started it, how you help people and - most importantly - who you help. In short sentences, avoiding foreign or poncy words!

write short and snappy, yet meaningful headlines People don't have time these days. This is especially true online! Tell them exactly what each page, section and paragraph is about in the headline. You may also want to highlight the essence or summary of the info provided like we do here, by underlining important stuff, for example. Don't try and get too creative - guide the reader to what matters to her!



The image shows a promotional graphic for 'WOW-EFFEKTE'. On the left, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a patterned top, is smiling. To her right is a white text box with a thin border. The text inside the box is in German and reads: 'Beratung. Weißt Du noch, wie das war, als Du das letzte Mal so richtig erfolgreich einkaufen warst? Als einfach alles passte, Du Dich selbst schön fandest und mit Deinem Spiegelbild in der Umkleekabine gefirtel hast? Bei FRAU MAIER bist Du gut beraten: In Deiner Stilberatung, spiegle ich Dir ehrlich, wie es um Deinen aktuellen Stil steht und wo noch Luft nach oben ist - damit Du auch ausstrahlst, was in Dir steckt. Mit Deinem Spiegel als neuem besten Freund. Online und ganz in echt vor Ort.' Below the text is a small yellow button with the word 'mehr' in red.

don't write a book; stay focused People don't...oops, I said that already. And heck, I'll say it again, just louder: PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TIME THESE DAYS. Always write with the end in mind: what is each page, section, paragraph meant to achieve? Who are you talking to? Are you even boring yourself? Are you (over-)using the passive voice and lots of relative clauses? You need to be ready to kill your darlings, dahling, if you want to impress readers rather than have them - gasp! - click away to somewhere less wordy.

chop up long texts into different paragraphs OK, we get it. Some bits of copy do need to be on the longer side, sometimes. Exceptions prove the rule! That's fine, as long as you don't make all. That. Text. look like the leaden desert of doom the reader has to wade through, risking an untimely death from boredom. Yaaaawn...! Short(ish) paragraphs, mucho white space, clear headlines, don't talk like a vacuum cleaner instruction manual or your nan (unless she's supercool) - badabing. You're halfway there! (Can you tell the difference between Hans' copy and mine in this document? I sure can. But he's only the designer, so that's fine.)

Live a more fulfilling lifestyle in just 40 days.

HOW ABOUT TAPPING INTO
YOUR UNIQUE, HIDDEN
POTENTIAL?

Life these days has gotten really fast, complex and confusing. In our hectic days, nothing is constant – except constant fluctuation. How can we stay more grounded? What tools and habits help us to meet the challenges that arise? Which daily rituals invite in the success we dream of?

Take a time-out to zoom out, look at the big picture and find answers to your questions. Develop a routine that is nourishing and sustainable and foster self-love and self-compassion if you hit bumps along the way. Learn how to deal with your inner critic, your self-sabotage and your limiting beliefs (and EFT, aka tapping, is only one of many tools to get you there).



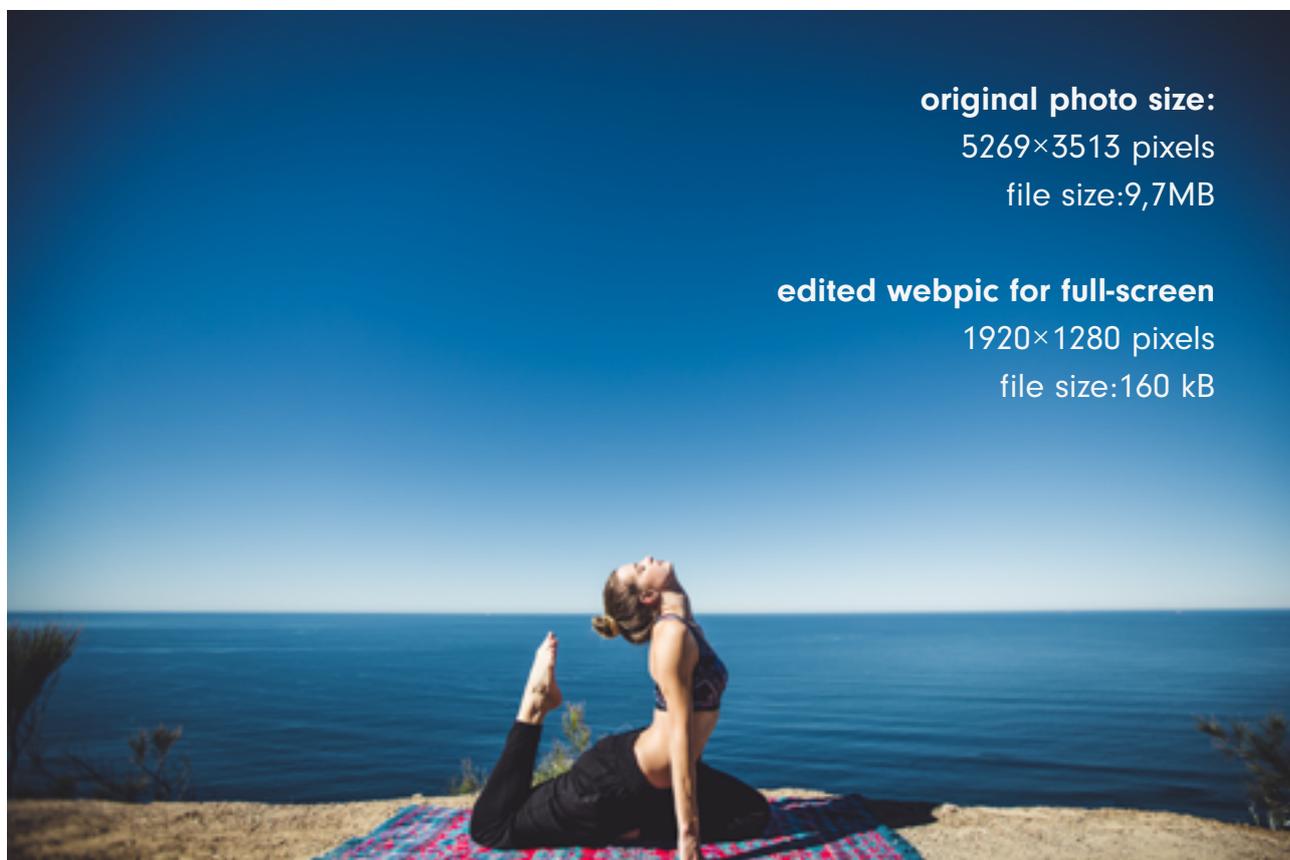
4. Images

Images are obviously a hugely important part of your website and their effect can be quite powerful; both positively and negatively speaking. Just as a great picture can proverbially say more than a thousand words, bad use of imagery can break your message and your credibility. Whether it's photos or graphics, images visualize your brand values and help you tell your story. When choosing the right images for your website, there are a couple of things to keep in mind...

use meaningful images However great or beautiful a photo might be, if it doesn't fit your topic, or message, the image is lost and will have a negative effect. Images are a powerful tool for your website, but only if they coincide with your website's mood, style and texts.

don't rely on stock images As tempting as they might be, stock images often give your site a very generic feel. Stock imagery can be beneficial, but only if the user doesn't realize it's stock. Even though there are millions of different stock photos available and you're sure to find photos that will suit your brand or product, people who visit your website WILL notice 'obvious' stock photography. You want to display what YOU and your brand are about. You want to evoke trust in your company and you want your images to look genuine. Ideally, you want to use original photos, for instance portraying you, people that work at your company and the office itself. Consider investing in having professional photos shot. If that's beyond your budget, consider doing it yourself. If you DO want to use stock imagery, be sparse and do it with great care.

choose the right format, size and resolution First of all, consider what kind of format you will be needing. Photos on websites are commonly used in 'landscape' format (when the width of the image is larger than the height, like the format of a common computer screen, 16:9), either as a full screen images or background picture. However photo are used, it's important they have the right, high, resolution (measured in pixels) but at the same time don't have too big a file size (measured in bytes). Mistakes in both cases are made very often; images with a (too) low resolution will look blurry and errr...pixelated, whereas unnecessarily big pictures with a file size of a couple of MB will negatively affect the your page's load time. Not very user-friendly.



prepare your images As discussed in the previous section, you need to properly prepare your images, at the least save them in the right format and resolution, before uploading them to your website. But how? Most professionals prefer Photoshop for this task, but that might not be within your budget. There are plenty of alternatives around though, both cheaper and free, like GIMP for instance. Here's a list of some good alternatives: <https://www.creativebloq.com/photoshop/alternatives-1131641>

give images a title when you upload them to your site. Google likes 'bright-idea-hans-groen.jpg' way better than 'DSC_104556.jpg'. Make the title meaningful, and while we're talking SEO anyway, don't forget do give your image an alt-description.

be consistent! In most cases, you want to try and find a coherent style of photography and/or graphic elements. Like I said, images can be an important part of your website, but if they're used in a consistent manner, as part of the whole mood and style of your brand, you have an even more powerful tool at your disposal.

5. Typography

The typography of your website basically means what fonts you use and how you use them. The way typography is executed on a website will have great impact on the overall look and feel. Strangely enough, however, it is often not given proper attention or simply underestimated - especially by beginners. Typography plays a vital part in web design, not only aesthetically but also when it comes to usability; when implemented the right way, it will provide an excellent way to help guide the user through your content.

choosing webfonts When building your website, it's important to have a good idea of what fonts you want to use. Besides fitting your subject or brand of course, you should also make sure that whatever font you want to use must be available as a webfont. If you have a font available on your computer, that doesn't mean you can use it as a webfont on your site. Webfonts come in a certain format for use in websites. There are many available for free, the most well-known and widely used of which are **Google Fonts**. It's also an option to buy a license for a premium font, if you want something more specific that not everyone is using. You could check out <https://www.myfonts.com> for instance, which has an extensive font library to choose from, including lots of 'classic' typefaces (a different word for font ;-). For some more in-depth info on webfonts, check out: <https://en.99designs.de/blog/web-digital/choosing-fonts-for-web-design/>

don't use too many fonts at once Many companies or brands have one font family (one font, with a variety of styles, such as italic, bold, medium et cetera) as their corporate font. In web design it is not uncommon, though, to use more than one font, or font family for that matter. Using more than one font can open up your design possibilities. Some font combinations just work really well and can enhance your overall web design, when done the right way. Having said that, it's a common mistake to go overboard with this. As a rule, don't use more than three fonts, and if you do, make sure they complement each other.

be consistent Yet again? Well yes...Consistency in your overall web design is of the utmost importance, but when it comes to typography it's key. And it is precisely here where mistakes are very often made...Once you've settled on a certain font, or combination of fonts, try to define rules how you will be using different fonts, font weights and font sizes. It's very important to then stick with this and keep it in check. Keep the fonts of your headlines, paragraphs, lists, blockquotes the same throughout the entire site.



consider legibility, readability and functionality However great your copy is (and of course it should be :-)) and however good you think a font looks, it's pretty worthless if no one can read it properly. Legibility plays a vital role in typography. It's also important for your copy to be laid out in an aesthetically pleasant way, so that it helps your users to absorb your content. A couple of general rules will help you achieve just that:

- **avoid curly, showy or script-like fonts for body text.** Extravagant fonts may work well for headlines, but not when used in a block with line-after-line of text. For this you might want to stick to a more common, simpler font that's 'easy on the eyes'. In general it's a good idea to not overuse 'flashy' fonts altogether.
- **don't include large blocks of text.** Large blocks of text are intimidating to most of your readers, which will often result in them not bothering at all. Try to break up your texts into smaller chunks and/or force paragraph breaks every now and then.
- **pay attention to color pairings and backgrounds.** Some color combinations can lead to text being very hard to read. Make sure there's enough contrast for the text to be legible. Also avoid using 'busy' background images behind text blocks; the text is important and should be legible, not the picture.

SOME FINAL TIPS BEFORE YOU GET STARTED WITH YOUR VERY OWN WEB PROJECT...



DONE IS BETTER THAN PERFECT. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TEST, TRY THINGS OUT AND ADJUST AS YOU GO ALONG.



THE GUIDELINES IN THIS DOCUMENT APPLY TO MOST SITUATIONS, THEY SHOULDN'T HOWEVER BE INTERPRETED AS RULES SET IN STONE. IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE GOOD REASONS TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY, DO SO. OR AT LEAST JUST TRY THEM OUT.



DON'T LOSE YOURSELF IN TRYING TO BE DIFFERENT. AND THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH 'CONVENTIONAL' DESIGN TECHNIQUES. SOME THINGS JUST WORK AND THEY DO FOR A REASON.



GO OUT THERE AND TAKE A LOOK HOW OTHERS DO IT. THERE'S SO MANY GREAT WEBSITES AROUND, EVEN VERY BASIC ONES. TAKE YOUR TIME TO GATHER IDEAS AND SEE WHAT MIGHT WORK FOR YOU, TOO.



INVITE PEOPLE AROUND YOU TO TAKE A CRITICAL LOOK. LET THEM SEE WHAT YOU'VE COME UP WITH AND ASK FOR HONEST OPINIONS. YOU DON'T NECESSARILY NEED TO BE A PROFESSIONAL TO BE ABLE TO GIVE FEEDBACK THAT MIGHT VERY WELL BE USEFUL.



WE'RE NOT SAYING IT'S GOING TO BE EASY AND WE DON'T GUARANTEE THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO TOSS YOUR LAPTOP OUT OF THE WINDOW AT SOME POINT, BUT STILL:

TRY AND HAVE FUN CREATING!!

H&K



Game Plan



Plan

This week's goals

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