

# How to Grow Your Web Design Business



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# How to Grow Your Web Design Business

If you used our [previous ebook](#) to help you start a web design business, congrats! That's a huge step. You've laid a solid foundation, not only to be your own boss, but also grow your web design business. Who knows... perhaps in the near future you'll be hiring employees of your own and teaching them the tricks of the trade you'd so painstakingly mastered.

But first things first: We created this ebook to help you with the logical next steps after starting your web design business. Now, let's take it to the next level!



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# Getting new clients through lead generation

Remember reaching out to that first client to see if they needed help online? In pro-speak, you were generating a lead. It's a process that many established pros have refined to the point where they can predictably develop new business.

This is key to developing steady business (and income). Let's dive into the fundamentals.

## What is lead generation?

Lead generation is the process of generating interest in your services. A person who is interested in what you have to offer is a lead. Once you generate a potential lead, you want to capture their information, which is why you'll see the term "lead capture" used alongside "lead generation."

## How can you optimize a website for lead generation?

With your business website, it's easy to get caught up in the design and just focus on creating a great-looking end-product. But having a good-looking website isn't the only thing — you also need to set goals and get results.







# Website tactics for a pro-level lead generation strategy

Now that we've reviewed what lead generation involves and how your website ties into it, let's start designing a playbook.

## Optimize for search engines

Ranking a site's content in search engines like Google is one of the best ways to reach qualified leads. With search engines, you already know that people are searching for keywords that relate to a business — all you need to do is get them onto the site to capture their information.

You can rank for specific content in Google so that people find it when they're searching. The content doesn't have to be directly promotional. In fact, it's often more authentic to not be overtly promotional in the content that you create.

Instead of trying to sell people right away, focus more on getting them onto a site and collecting their details — you can always convert them later on once you have a relationship.

## Optimize for speed & user experience

If you want to set up a site for success in Google, that means you also need to focus on optimizing the website for performance.

Here are some tips:

- Verify you're on (or migrate to) [fast, performance-optimized web hosting](#).
- Use page caching to reduce server processing time.
- Minify your site's JavaScript and CSS code to reduce its size without changing functionality.
- Reduce the size of the website pages, paying attention to image optimization can usually result in large reductions in page size. Images account for about half of the size of the average web page. You can also use server compression technologies like Gzip and Brotli.
- On WordPress, make sure you're using a lightweight theme and try to limit the number of plugins to only those that are essential.
- Use a content delivery network (CDN).

## Optimize for security

A [site's security](#) can play a key role in lead generation, as security issues can reduce trust with your potential leads and cause issues with your SEO efforts.

## Optimize for mobile

More than half of all website traffic happens on mobile devices, so you're missing out on a huge source of potential leads if you don't optimize for mobile lead generation. Optimizing for mobile starts with responsive design.

**A website should automatically adjust to show an optimized design no matter what device a visitor is using.**

Most content management systems (CMS) include built-in features or themes to make responsive websites. For example, most [themes for WordPress](#) are responsive by default. The same is true for most [website builders](#). So, all you have to do is test for mobile-friendliness. To see if a site has any issues, you can use [Google's free Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#).



### Page load time

**3.80s**

Previous 3.86s

### PageSpeed Grade

**A - 90%**

Previous 87%

### YSlow Grade

**A - 90%**

Previous 68%

### Optimization

- ✓ Spam comments
- ✓ Database performance
- ✓ Post revisions



## Optimize for lead capture & conversion

Experimenting with types of lead capture methods can help you boost your conversion rates, which means more leads end up in your CRM. Here are some popular options to capture lead's information:

- **Web forms** — Place lead capture forms in the actual content, either on a dedicated landing page or as part of a page, such as in the sidebar. When creating forms, you need to think about what fields to include. You want enough form fields to add at least some lead qualification, but not so many fields that you discourage visitors from filling out the form and lower conversion rates.
- **Popups** — Experiment with different types of popups, such as modals, slide-ins, notification bars, and more.
- **Live chat** — Use live chat and/or chatbots as an interactive way to capture lead information in a more conversational format.

## Response time

Leads are like a cup of hot coffee: very nice to have when you get to them swiftly, not so much once they've been sitting there for a while. So you have to convert a lead into a client before they lose interest.

Make sure you jump on the generated leads right away and have a workflow in place to convert leads into paying clients.



**More on lead generation**







## Get involved with events, podcasts & webinars

Hosting and participating in events builds your authority while promoting your brand. Whether it's online webinars, podcasts or in-person events, participants will remember the expertise you shared.

You can look online to find opportunities as a speaker or join local meetups and conferences. If you work with WordPress, investigate joining or organizing a local WordCamp.

### **If you want to become a resource for potential clients, offer something of value.**

Identify what value you can offer to other business owners and host a free seminar sharing your information. For example, a marketing agency can host a half-day social media conference in-person or online.

In the book [Authority Content](#), David Jenyns lays out a great strategy for using your own hosted in-person workshops. All you need to do is prepare a simple half-day of slideshows to present, rent a small event space, and hire a professional videographer. You could even invite relevant local authorities to present their content.

You can charge for admission to offset the costs or give away tickets to clients. At the end of the day — even if you only have a handful of leads — you'll have a ton of professional video content you can use for months.





## Look for networking opportunities

Being your own boss means occasionally challenging yourself to step outside that comfort zone. While it's truly awesome to spend the day hunkered down, working on the couch in your favorite socks, don't forget about human contact. That's how networking happens.

Networking lets you find possible new referrals without spending a lot of time calling people or spending money on marketing. And when it's all over, you've met a lot of great people and forged some new relationships.

There are three simple rules about networking that apply to small business marketing and sales, as well as personal branding.

1. People buy from people they like and trust.
2. The point of networking is to build relationships.
3. The point of a networking event is to set up the next meeting.

You shouldn't show up at a networking event with a selling mindset. You're there to build relationships, to build trust. The people you meet at networking events are not your clients, they know your clients.



## Building relationships in your network

When you think about networking, you might think about meetings and conferences, but social media can be a powerful tool in that game. The best way to network with social media is to just reach out and connect with a possible networking target on Twitter or LinkedIn. This could be the creative director at a marketing agency, the CTO at a software company, or whoever you've set your sights on.

A helpful strategy is to just have regular conversations with the person. If they ask questions, answer them. Ask them questions. Share news and blog articles that may interest them. Keep it casual and light, and don't go straight for the sales pitch.

**If you want to establish a relationship with someone, think about your initial communications, like the initial meeting at a networking group.**

Communicate with them, share ideas, and ask if they would like to meet up for coffee (if they're local to you) or a Zoom call.

## Remember to network IRL

You can also just network with people you meet out "in the wild," like standing in line at a coffee shop or at the gym. Just ask them, "So, what do you do?" and take it from there. Ask for a coffee, lunch or Zoom meeting, and get to know them. Build a relationship, gain the other person's trust and work to help them achieve their goals.

 **More about networking**







## Ask for referrals

A recommendation from a satisfied customer is powerful social proof. Encourage customers to refer their friends to your web design business by offering discounts and other rewards. This turns your top fans into brand ambassadors, lead generators and referral sources.

**Make sure you track word-of-mouth efforts and where the referrals come from, so you can see the customers who have the biggest impact on your brand.**

Asking for client referrals can feel uncomfortable for many business owners. However, there's no getting around it because straight up asking for referrals is the best way to ensure you receive them.

Here are some approaches to get good referrals:

### In-person

If you meet with your clients face-to-face, that final handshake with eye contact is the best time to ask for a referral. All it takes is something like, "Susie, it was a pleasure working with you. If you have any friends or family who need a web designer, I'd appreciate you pointing them in my direction"

### Social media

Approach clients on a platform they're already comfortable sharing from. Referrals increasingly happen in the digital world. An easy way to tap into word-of-mouth promotions is to engage with fans on social media.

**Ask people to check-in, leave a Facebook review or post photos of your brand.**

You can even turn your request into a contest, and award prizes through random drawings each month. This makes your brand stronger online and helps you reach more people.



## Snail mail

Thank-you cards are always a great touch and the perfect opportunity to mention your referral program. Tuck a few business cards, brochures, or marketing flyers in with a note along the lines of this client referral letter template.

[Client],

I just wanted to send you a quick note of thanks for choosing [Your Company] for [Client's Company]'s new website! Businesses like yours are what make my job so rewarding.

If you were happy with our service, I'd be honored if you'd consider referring us to your friends and family. I've enclosed a few of my business cards.

Thank you again from myself and the whole team here at

[Your Company]

— [Your Name]

## Invoices

The final invoice could also be a good place to add in a line encouraging clients to give you a referral.

## Email

Email might be your best route if much of your communication was via email, to begin with.

**Handy email marketing tools make it a cinch to stay organized and automate referral efforts.**

Here is an example of an email asking for referrals you can try to add to your campaigns:

Dear [Client],

It's been such a pleasure working with you and your team at [Client's Company]. I hope your experience has been as fantastic as ours has throughout this project!

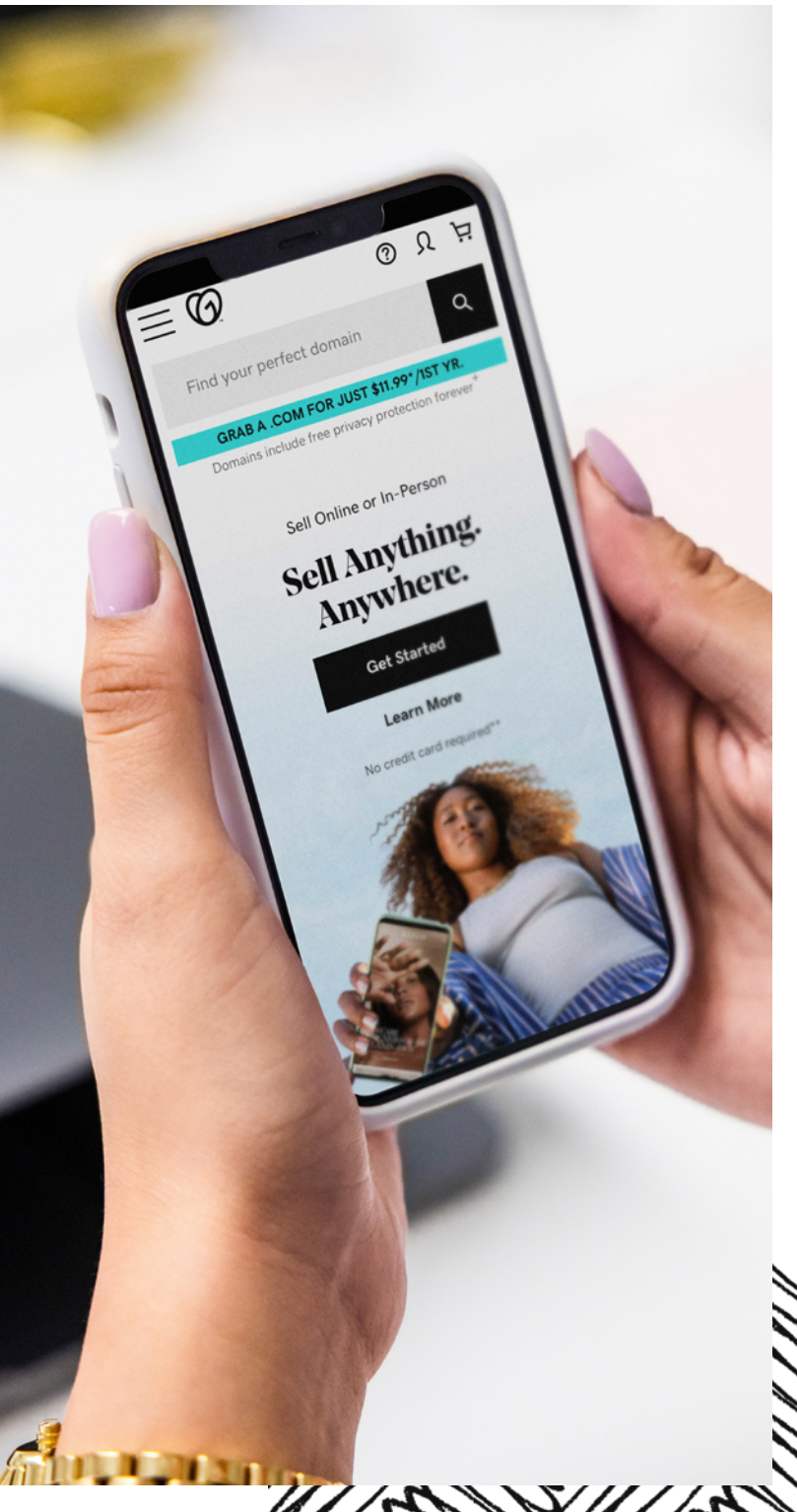
At [Your Company] the majority of our business is generated through client referrals. We would be absolutely thrilled if you would consider referring us to your friends and family.

To show our appreciation, we'll happily give you \$100 for each client you send our way.

Thanks again for choosing [Your Company]!

— [Your Name]





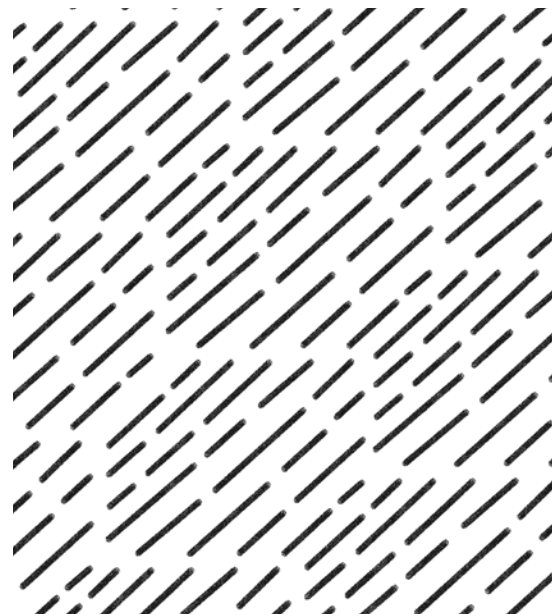
## Your website

Create an irresistible call-to-action featuring content like, “Happy with our service? Refer us now and get \$100 for each new sign-on!” Try adding a big button above your navigation that reads,

“Refer [Your Company] to your friends!”

Linking these to share a marketing post or link via social media or email will make it that much easier for clients to refer you.

 **More on referrals**







## Start marketing locally

To grow your web design business, connect with the community and potential customers who live and work in your area. Community involvement can lead to greater foot-traffic, interest and referrals.

Start building your local customer base with these strategies:

### Develop a referral network

Whenever you're out networking in the community, ignite your local marketing ideas by collecting business cards from people and saving them for potential recommendations. When these businesses see that you're sending them customers, they will keep your brand in mind for future promotions as well.

### Attend networking events

Networking events are one of the best marketing ideas for web design agency owners who want to connect with other companies in the area and form strong partnerships. If you can't find a networking group that you like in your area, create one of your own.

### Get involved in local charities

Your customers want to see you supporting local causes and will think highly of your brand because of it. These sponsorships, donations and events create opportunities to promote your brand to new audiences and more potential customers. Focus on local SEO

If you're a local business, there's no point in trying to compete in search results on a national level. One of the most solid local marketing ideas is to make sure you are targeting local keywords and taking the necessary steps to improve your local search results.

## Maintain updated business profile pages

With more than 100 million reviews and more than 32 million monthly mobile users, Yelp is one of the biggest review engines out there. Google My Business is also a powerful resource, since it is a digital tool and service that is tied to your location. You must first claim your profile for your location, then enter all your data, the most important being your name, address and phone number.

After doing that, searching for your business name on Google.com will display a lot more information that helps people find you locally. Your position on Google maps will be displayed along with a link to directions, photos of your web design agency, hours of operation and even an interface to make appointments if you offer it.

**As a business owner, you can maintain a strong presence on these online review pages to help potential customers decide to buy from your brand.**

A few steps include:

- Updating your hours, menu and contact information regularly.
- Sharing professional photos of your location.
- Responding to both positive and negative reviews to show that you are listening.

## Become a resource for local content

You can rely on paid media and public relations to promote your business, or you can build up a reputation where the media calls you.

**One often ignored local marketing idea is becoming a go-to resource for media outlets.**







# Tools that can keep up with you. Finally.

## Help with local events

If you want to connect with customers in your community, then you need to be a part of that community. Support local events and sports teams and genuinely get involved with your business because you care.

## Dive into local media

Use local news, radio shows, and Facebook groups to advertise your web design business. If people hear about your brand name in different ways, they might think about you when they need to create and maintain a website.

**Local Facebook groups are also an important and inexpensive way to get in front of your targeted audience.**

## Go old-school with print advertisements

You can print out business cards or flyers to hang up (with permission) and pass around your local neighborhood businesses. It may sound old school and outdated, but very few people are doing this to advertise their web design services nowadays and it's truly a missed opportunity!

 **More about local marketing**



# Build a plan for content marketing

Content marketing, especially when you manage it yourself, delivers an incredible return on investment. But keep in mind that to be effective, your content needs to be good enough to attract visitors while converting them into leads.

Here are some tips to get you started:

## Define your buyer persona

You should have a clear understanding of your target market to tailor the content that meets your personas' needs and pain points.

## Come up with a range of topics

Think of the questions, concerns and problems your buyers have. What content would they be interested in?

**Your mission is to provide value, educate and ultimately solve an issue of your potential customers. It is valid to analyze your competitors' blogs to see how they are performing.**

## Dream big in a small niche

Aim to be a recognized expert in the web design industry. If people find your content trustworthy and helpful, chances are they'll trust you enough to pay for your web design services. Follow the latest trends, but don't be afraid to express an opinion of your own.



## Promote your content

You should be spending the same amount of time (or more) promoting your content as you spend on creating it. A key tip to content promotion involves actively participating on social media. Share your content, engage with your following, and ask other bloggers to review your services.

### Tweak your headlines

Analyze your headlines and tweak calls-to-action pertaining to your web design business to attract more clicks. Here are some tips to increase your click-through-rate:

- Appeal to your personal experience (i.e., phrases like, “our team experience,” “how we managed to,” “we’ve tried,”).
- Appeal to emotions.
- Include numbers.

## Improve on-site SEO

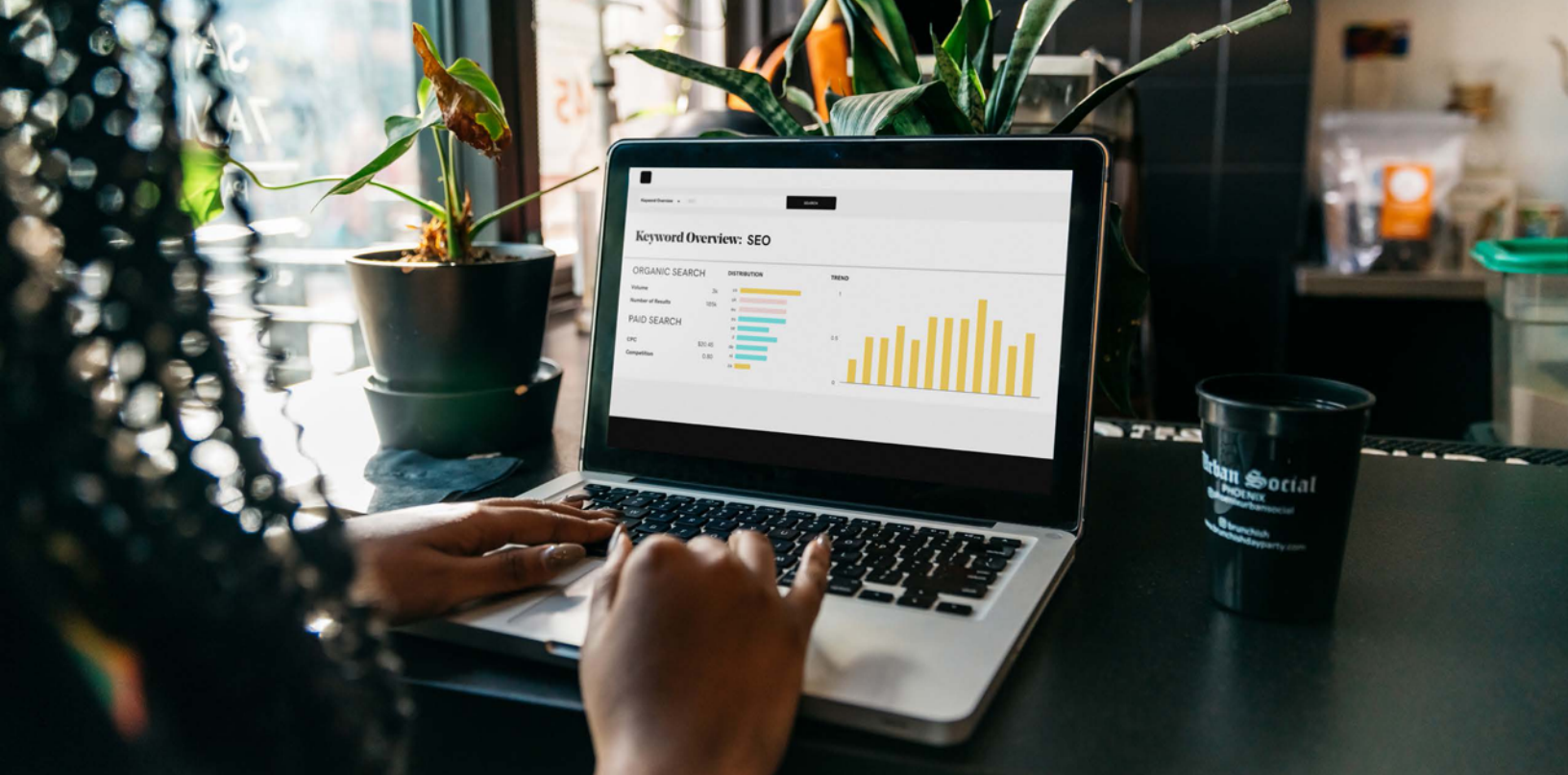
Your website’s SEO is another strategy that can deliver a huge return on investment. To better your ranking chances, fix issues like:

- **Site speed** — Test to check if your site is loading fast enough.
- **404 errors** — Make sure to always use the 301 redirect if you have to move content.
- **Page duplicates** — Set rel = canonical tags if necessary.
- **Tech SEO** — Be sure to include keywords in the title, H1 and H2 tags, as well as naturally throughout the text.

## Write your own content

When it comes to content creation, it might be in your best interests to tackle your own words rather than outsource the project.





## Be consistent

The best content marketing strategy is ongoing and that means consistently producing content for your web design business.

To stay on top of your content game, set up an editorial calendar.

Publish on a regular cadence so your customers know what to expect and to keep Google happy. Make easy-to-scan content

Certain design tips and layout choices will create easy-to-scan content, which can lead to readers fully moving through your pages. Here are some quick wins:

- Break your content into small blocks, separating them with subheadings.
- Say “no” to hard-to-read, lengthy sentences. One paragraph-long sentence is enough for a reader to hit the back button.
- Include images, tables and numbered and bulleted lists.

- Start every sentence with a new paragraph to make your post easier to read.
- Check your post with the Hemingway app. It will highlight the sentences that are hard to read.
- Although long reads tend to rank better in Google, remember to stick to the point.

## Do keyword research

Use an SEO tool to research what customers are searching for. Then, tailor blog posts and web copy around the results. Pay attention to the user intent behind the keywords. You don't want to mislead visitors by using a keyword that doesn't really fit your business. Traffic is good, but conversions are better.

## Create a conversion-friendly site

Clear-cut CTAs, easy-to-navigate interface, and responsive design are elements that play an important role in turning browsers into buyers.



**More about content marketing**





## Dial in your advertising tactics

A sure way to keep your list of clients growing is to keep prospecting potential customers with the help of an effective advertising campaign.

**The more efficient you can get at advertising, the more high-paying clients you will get, and the better your business can run.**

Here are some web design promotion ideas:

### Tap into a larger network on social media

A great way to get people asking about your services is to share your completed or current works with your social media network.

### Laser-target customers with paid advertising

Advertising platforms from Google and Facebook allow you to designate a budget and choose who you want to show your ads to. These accurate targeting methods let you reach your exact potential customer with a few clicks.

### Create listings on freelance websites

Websites for freelance projects are a great opportunity to expand your services nationally and even globally by bidding on web design projects from around the world.

There are many websites where clients can post the scope of their web design projects and allow freelancers to bid on the project based on the cost, timeline, scope and reputation of the freelancer. However, one downside of this method is sites like Upwork often take a small percentage of your overall project cost.

### Offer free consultations

A good method of advertising is to offer to meet with prospects (in person or on video) for a free consultation to cover recommended improvements on their business website.

**Most owners will be open to the advice and could end up wanting to hire you to implement the suggested changes.**

At worst, they'll keep your business card and possibly give you a referral down the road.



## Make sure your portfolio looks good

Even as a highly skilled web design professional, you still need to offer proof of your abilities. Spend time creating a strong web design site to show off your expertise and your past projects.

**You need an online portfolio that lets you break through the noise and stand above the competition to get your dream clients.**

The most compelling web design portfolios have a few common ingredients:

**Engaging** — They grab clients' attention by using bright colors, original imagery, or interactive elements to stand out from the competition.

**Focused** — They frame every element around the ideal client. Instead of just talking about what you do, they explain what you do for your clients, focusing on benefits over features or services.

**Uncluttered** — The best web design portfolios don't overcomplicate things unnecessarily. They make navigation straightforward and always direct visitors toward the desired result.

**Relevant** — They show the design journey using case studies. Potential clients want to know you can solve their problems, and the best way to explain how you'll achieve this is through detailed case studies. Explain the challenges behind the project and how your solution overcame them. Highlight measurable outcomes from each project.

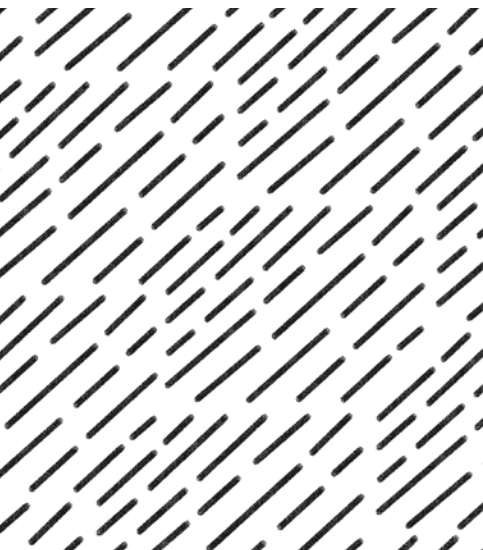


**Trustworthy** — They create confidence using social proof and other trust signals. Potential clients trust the recommendations of others, even from people they don't know. You can include other trust signals, like describing your process and mirroring clients' beliefs in your copy.

**Relatable** — They inject a bit of personality. Clients hire people, not brands. Adding a few personal touches to your website helps create a connection with your ideal clients.

**Understandable** — They include a clear call to action. Since your web design website is meant to attract new clients, make sure you're asking them for their business. A clear CTA lets clients know what they should do next, whether that's setting up a call or filling out a contact form.

💡 More on great design sites





## Make sure you have good reviews

When it comes to attracting new high-paying clients for your web design business, few things are more powerful than social proof. Shoppers often move as a group — more likely to jump on the bandwagon than to opt for the road less traveled.

**Reviews on sites like Yelp, Google and Facebook can act like a magnet, attracting new customers to your door.**

Make sure you've already set the foundation by creating profiles on the most popular review sites. Include direct links to the profiles in multiple places. Your website, newsletter and follow-up emails are prime locations.

The next time a client compliments your service, tell them you'd appreciate it if they would leave the same feedback in an online review and provide one-click links that take them directly to the review sites. Online recommendations like these have become nearly as influential as direct referrals, with a vast majority of consumers trusting online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

 **More about reviews**





## Find a niche & specialize in it

Finding your niche market in the web design business is a solid way to go about creating a successful presence online that will attract high paying clients.

For example, if you specialize in creating websites for law firms, you will have a better chance of being the best in this industry, thus catching the eyes of your dream clients.

Here's how to find and conquer your niche market:

### Identify your niche market

Take an honest look at your areas of expertise. What do you know a lot about? This should include both base knowledge and the latest trends about a particular industry as it is today.

### Consider what interests you

Narrow down those niches you know and see if they match up with your interests. You can usually leverage your expertise in a niche and apply it to find something more appealing.

### Boost your authority with related topics

Now that you know your niche for certain, you can start finding related topics that will feed into your efforts going forward. Think of it like a brainstorming exercise. Your niche is in the middle and all the tendrils moving outward are other topics that are similar, but not quite the same.

 **More about finding your niche**



## Gather testimonials & write case studies

For a prospective customer not entirely sure how good your product or service is, the right testimonial is the most important piece of marketing material you have.

**A testimonial serves as proof that your company is so great to work with that your past customers are willing to stand up and help you win over new business.**

A testimonial is a direct quote from a client reporting how great your business is. Because they take up little physical space, they can easily be added to your website, print collateral and email outreach.

Because your clients submit testimonials, they're an easier lift when you're in business by yourself. It might be helpful to write a reusable email template that you can send to clients you believe will be receptive to writing a testimonial for you.

Case studies provide proof that your services work. As a marketing tool, they capitalize on the idea that potential clients perceive long, in-depth reviews as more reputable than brief quotes. Producing a case study takes more time than obtaining a simple testimonial or review, but it has the power to draw in new clients and can help you stand out from other designers and developers who don't bother to invest the time and effort.

 **More on case studies**





## Develop a social media strategy

Having a powerful presence on social media can help you maintain a competitive edge, setting you up to success.

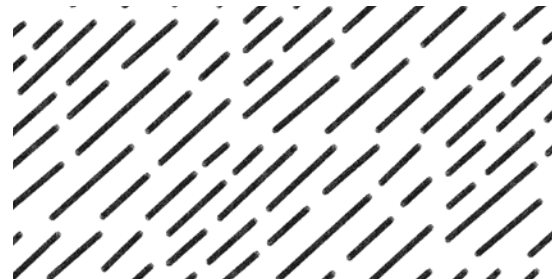
Everything that sees the light of digital day must be in line with a social media strategy.

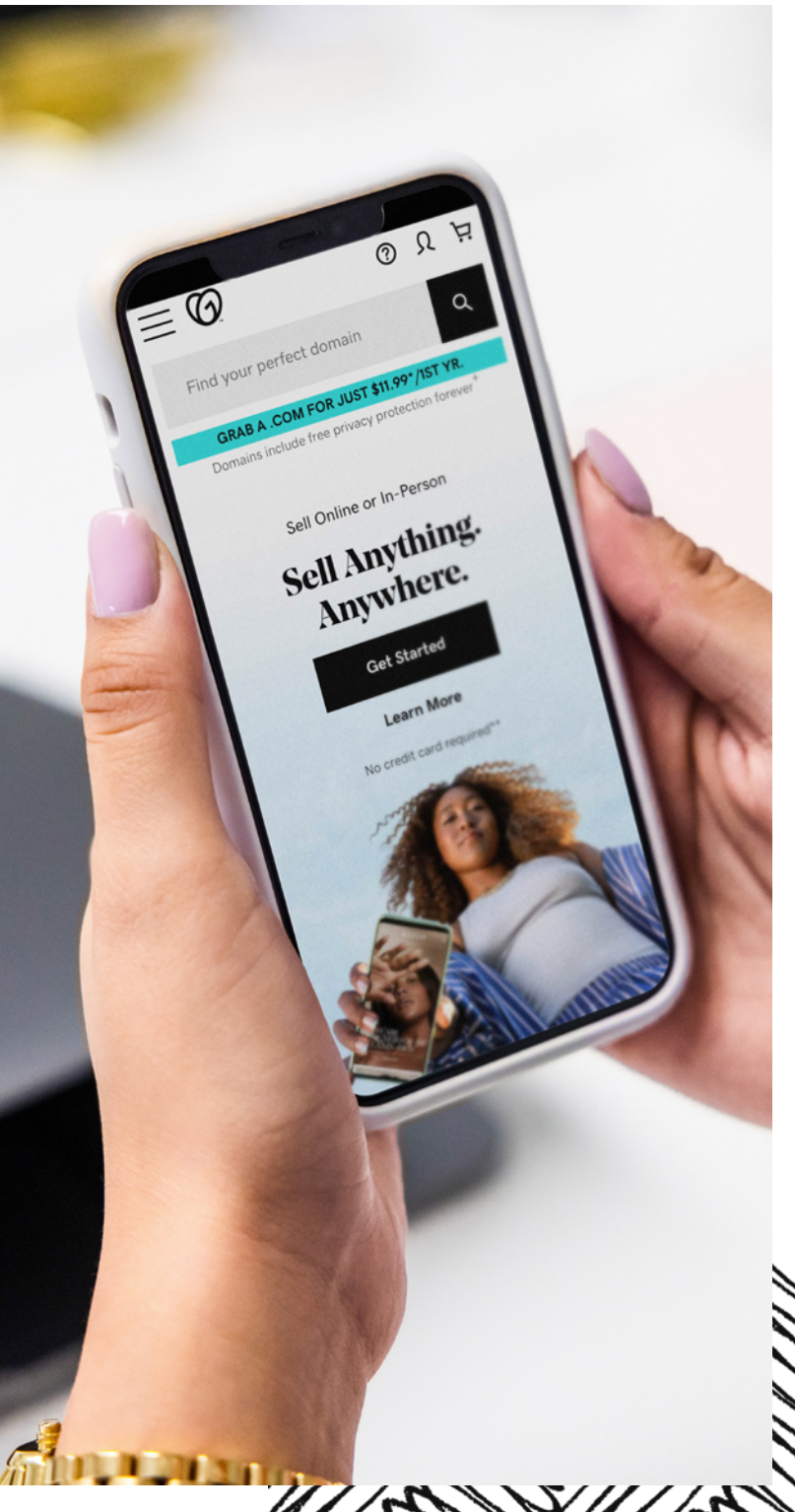
This not only creates cohesion across all the platforms you're on, but also projects a strong sense of purpose and mission to your customers.

One way to do that is to identify the role and strengths of the social media platforms you're on and tailor your content according to those strengths:

### Facebook

Facebook remains the first choice for many businesses to establish as wide a reach as possible. When you have something important to share, do it on Facebook first. Lately, this platform has become a primarily visual medium, so work on your videos and images and make your web design business look good on Facebook.





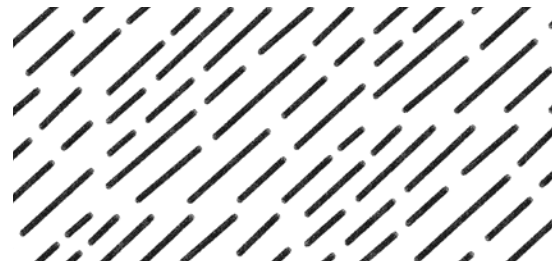
## Twitter

Twitter is the preferred choice for many organizations looking to share information in a more straightforward fashion. The platform's simple and single timeline remains to be its strongest feature together with its flair for brevity. Twitter presents information in a swift yet fleeting manner. Old tweets get pushed down when new tweets arrive, all within a single timeline of all the brands and people you follow.

With social media strategy, Twitter has become the choice platform for news organizations covering events, brands for their announcements, and — as the birthplace of the hashtag — individuals looking to start or latch onto trending topics.

## Instagram

The beauty of Instagram, like Twitter, is its concise and clean interface for displaying visually arresting content. Brands establishing a social media strategy need to focus on creating a personal persona not seen elsewhere. While you post the finished ad on Facebook and Twitter, offer intimate behind-the-scenes on Instagram. Live Tweet your product launch on Twitter, and post the catalog in an album on Facebook, but create a series of photos of your product in the real world on Instagram.





## Optimization

- ✓ Spam comments
- ✓ Database performance
- ✓ Post revisions

Page load time

**3.80s**

Previous 3.86s

PageSpeed Grade

**A - 90%**

Previous 87%

YSlow Grade

**A - 90%**

Previous 68%

# How to optimize your processes

Once you've created a process for generating leads and done it enough time to see that it works, the next step is optimizing it.

Optimizing a process means shaving it down to the nitty-gritty, so that hardly any time or effort are wasted.

This will ensure that more of your workday goes toward getting paid, not spinning your wheels on tedious busywork.

When it comes to optimizing processes, you could easily run down a rabbit hole, investigating every new app and model out there. For the sake of optimization (see what we did there?) we've winnowed things down to a few key considerations.

## Tasks

- ✓ Automatic emails
- ✓ Social media reply
- ✓ Auto-invoicing Ne
- ✓ Spam message fil
- Client Database
- Dev. Call

## Calendar 3/24

- 10:00AM Site client meeting
- 12:30PM Present revisions
- 3:00PM Dev. networking event

# Automate busywork

Automation is key to success because it saves your most valuable asset — your time, setting you free to work on growing your business. When it comes to automation for a web design business, we're proud to discuss a free platform created for this very purpose.

We built [the Hub by GoDaddy Pro](#) to streamline workflows and shave time off tasks that typically eat up a workday.

**Users report they save an average of three hours each month per site when they move to GoDaddy Pro.**

💡 What's New in the Hub

💡 How to Get Started





Here are some features of the Hub that were designed to help you optimize your client management processes:

- **Code snippets** — You can execute custom code right from the Hub, without signing into a website. This time-saving feature eliminates the need for plugins to run commands like list files, check file readability, remove default widgets and more. It's easy to save, edit and delete snippets to reuse them without re-entering code.
- **Backups** — Schedule backups weekly, daily, every 12 hours or every six hours. You can then select and download any backup you need to restore.
- **Performance checks** — Schedule and view automated performance checks on a weekly or daily basis.
- **Security checks** — Schedule automated checks on a weekly or daily basis and receive alerts if an indicator of compromise is detected.
- **Uptime monitoring** — Automated, continuous monitoring sends you an alert if your site goes down.
- **Bulk comment management** — View all comments for all your WordPress sites or review them one website at a time. This bulk tool lets you approve or disapprove, mark as spam, trash, and delete comments more quickly and efficiently.
- **Comments on projects** — This is a handy tool for keeping track of updates or reminders.
- **Electronic signatures** — Electronically sign, notarize and store documents with this feature powered by Acronis Notary Cloud. You'll have convenient access to key documents like contracts and proposals, as well as the ability to send them to clients.
- **Tags** — Create and name new tags, change their colors, and edit or delete existing tags. Apply tags to your websites in The Hub for easing scanning of your list of websites.
- **Maintenance mode** — Quickly set up maintenance and coming soon pages on sites you manage, right from The Hub.
- **Client reports** — Build and share reports that showcase all your work, project progress, and the status of clients' sites, projects, and data.
- **User management** — Manage WordPress users on every website you manage, right from The Hub. You can add, edit, or remove any WordPress users without logging in or out of clients' websites or leaving the Hub.
- **Recurring invoices** — Set a recurrence of weekly, biweekly, monthly or a custom value.
- **Client report editor** - Create a report using the Gutenberg editor, the same tool found in WordPress, for an overview of sites you manage. You can then generate a link to send to clients, which is especially useful when you offer recurring maintenance services.
- **Bulk updates** — The Hub will run your updates all at once, so you don't have to do it manually.

"The Hub has helped me maintain, manage, and customize so many different projects of such different needs, that I've begun to forget how much of a headache it all used to be."

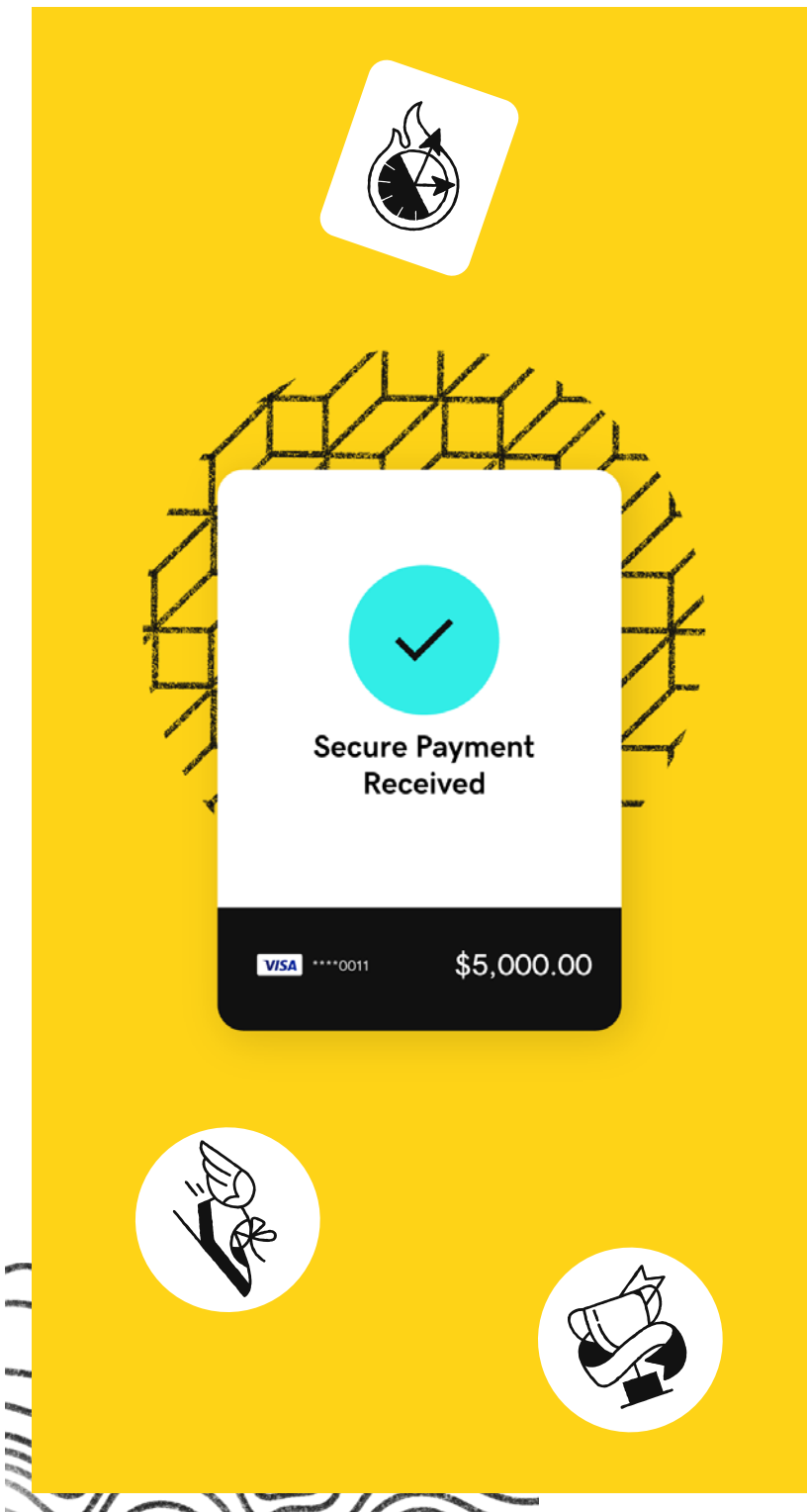
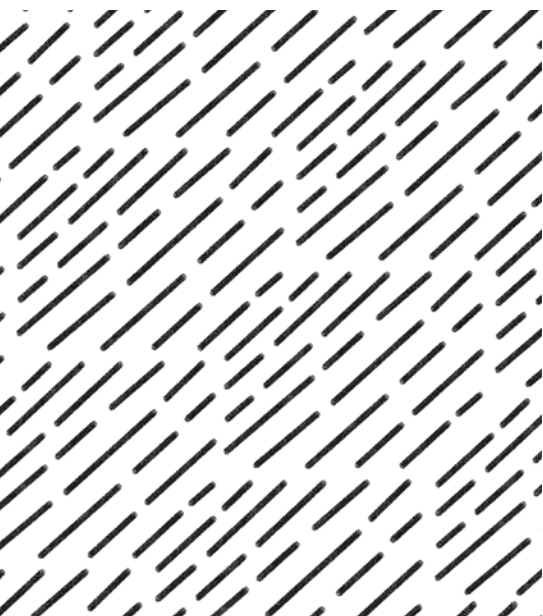
Sam Schick

## Automate your contact forms

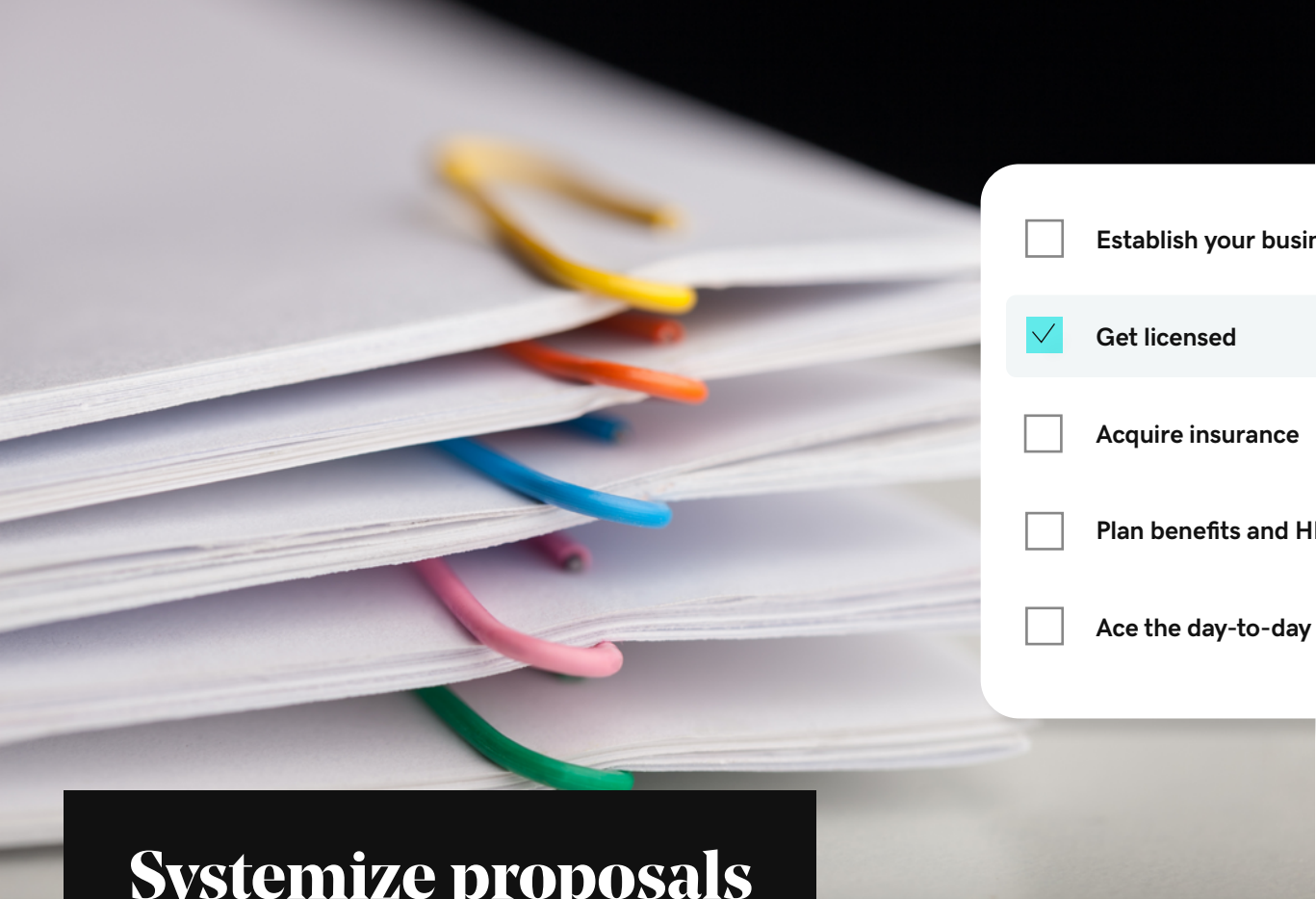
If you have criteria for accepting or rejecting clients, automate your client contact form with conditional logic. Many form plugins offer this function.

Let's say you are only interested in taking projects that will get you \$5,000 or more, but don't want to reject a \$2,500 client right away. You can create a form and use it to ask your leads what their budget is.

If the answer is \$5,000, an email comes to you as normal. But if the answer is \$2,500, using conditional logic, you can show a message or redirect the lead to a landing page indicating you're not available, giving them a path to partner web designers and other resources.







# Systemize proposals

Your web design proposal can make or break a web design project — so you need to get comfortable packaging and selling your design services in order to land your dream clients.

Proposals give you the opportunity to convince clients you understand their business and their needs and to make your case for why you're the right person for the job.

While each website design will be different, every proposal you create should follow the same simple structure:

## Introduction

Introductions should be short and eye-catching. Consider using a background to add visual interest and make the text pop. It should include the following basics about the project:

- The client's name
- Your or your company's name
- Your business logo (if you have one)
- The project's name
- The date



## Problem statement

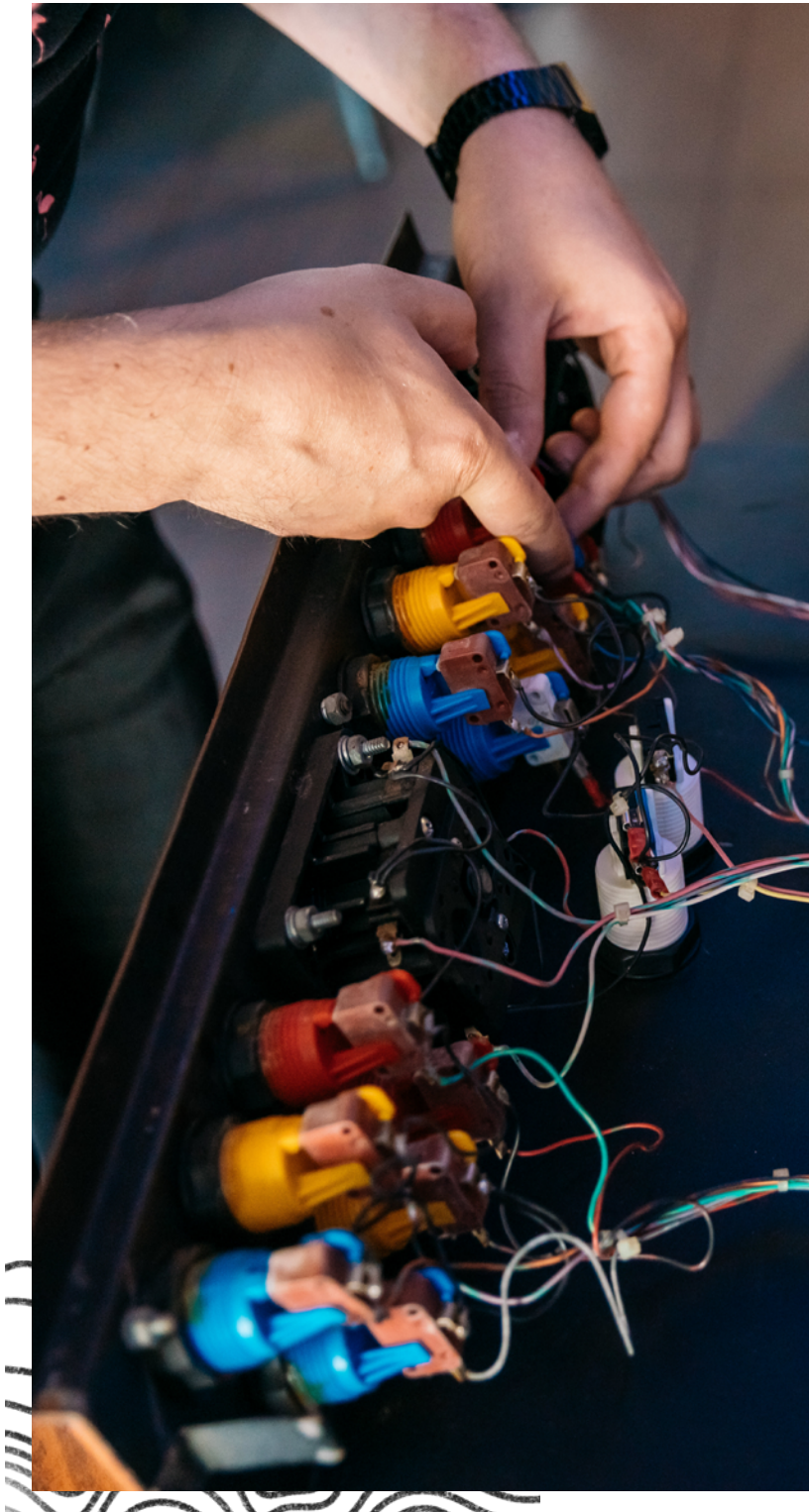
The purpose of the problem statement within a website design proposal is to answer the questions “why are you here?” and “where do you want to be?” Your problem statement should focus on the pain points your potential client is experiencing:

- What are they struggling with?
- Why did they come to you for help?
- What would it feel like to have that pain go away?
- What could tomorrow look like for their business?

## Proposed solution

Your proposal should cover how you’re planning to solve the problem you outlined. In this section, provide a clear and obvious solution — without confusing your prospect. Be specific about the benefits and results your solution will provide, focusing on what your web design clients will value the most:

- More sales/clients/traffic
- Reduced costs
- Insurance against potential revenue loss







## Project outline

The goal of the project outline is to set your client's expectations for what will happen in each phase of the project and help them understand what you'll do. Here are the phases:

- **Discovery and strategy** — Discovery is the process of learning about your client's needs, user or consumer needs and competitor tactics. Strategy is all about developing a plan for the website and how it will address your client's pain points. This may include the number of pages on their website, how users will navigate it, how it will generate leads and what content it will include.
- **Design and build** — The design stage helps your client understand how their website will appear to users. You should set their expectations for the various stages of design, such as starting with a barebones wireframe to give them an idea of layout and content, then progressing to a mock-up of the actual design and appearance of the website. Next, outline your process for building the site once your client has signed off on the design. Give information on the hosting platform, website type/format and how your client will be involved in this step, if at all.
- **QA and testing** — QA and testing refers to testing out a built website before launching it live, looking for bugs or errors. This is often done internally by the design company, and testing may sometimes include user acceptance testing (UAT) tactics, like having a beta version available to get user feedback. In the proposal, you should explain which of these steps you'll complete and the timeline for any beta or similar testing.
- **Site launch** — When everything is running smoothly, you'll push the client's site live. In the proposal, include steps you'll take in this process, such as walking the client through the site before launch, archiving their previous site and training their team on how to edit it.

## Timeline & schedule

The timeline and schedule should include estimates for the project start date, completion date and the time needed for each phase. Be sure to set reasonable timelines for yourself, with a little room to account for unexpected delays or troubles. This way, there's a chance you may even get the project completed early, delighting your client, as opposed to falling behind and frustrating them. In addition, add in actions that your client needs to take along with anticipated timelines they should expect to follow.

## Pricing

Always give your prospect at least two potential packages to choose from, at different price points. By offering multiple packages, you're competing against yourself instead of competing against other web designers.

"We moved to primarily flat rate pricing a long time ago, and we find that with our clients like this because it gives them a known rate, which is better for planning and budgeting."

Amy Masson

## Terms & conditions

In this section, you should have the following items:

- Payment terms
- Fees and delays
- Licensing of wireframe, workflow documents, visual assets created, etc.
- Fees due to change requests

 **More on writing web design proposals**







# How to make more money & reduce costs

We just covered generating leads and optimizing the lead-generation process. Feeling good? Cool. Now, let's examine how to cut unnecessary expenses and get the most money from your efforts.







# Build an outreach strategy

Outreach means amplifying your efforts, so your work reaches a larger audience and has a greater impact once it does. Fortunately, this practice relies less on expensive apps and technology you have to buy, and more on simple know-how and effort.

## Digital PR

Digital PR is a marketing strategy that shapes the online image of a company. The objective of a digital PR campaign is to improve organic search results and customer reviews via digital content to build a company's brand.

The core of our digital PR definition revolves around improving organic search results and, most importantly, having a backlink strategy.

As you can see in the [GoDaddy Community](#), SEO and backlinks are hot topics because getting quality backlinks is one of the hardest things to do in digital marketing.

These are some digital PR strategies that seek to improve organic search results.

- **Reverse engineering** — This digital PR strategy examines the backlink profiles of multiple competitors and identifies the referring domains they have in common. If you can figure out how each of your competitors generated a backlink on a domain, then chances are your website can take a similar approach to secure a backlink.
- **Skyscraper content** — This content marketing strategy identifies weak content with links, makes better content, and then reaches out to the sites that link to the weak content with your better content. Start by identifying high-ranking content in your niche that was last updated four or more years ago. Chances are, your business can create content with more up-to-date information that external websites would find more value in linking to.



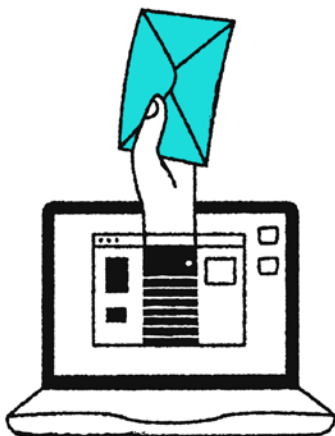
- **Community sites** — Since digital PR is about building brand awareness and increasing inbound traffic, community sites like Reddit and Quora are good outlets to create a focused campaign. Participating in a community site can produce brand awareness, referral traffic, and sometimes, a nofollow link.
- **Internal links** — Internal linking is a tactic that seeks to use existing pages on your website to boost the authority of a target page you'd like to promote. You can start by including links to a target page in places like a footer, sidebar, or within the text of blog posts and landing pages.
- **Customer reviews** — Google determines local ranking based on relevance, distance and prominence. Prominence, which digital PR aims to influence, is based on information such as links and online mentions about a business that Google monitors.

## 💡 More on digital PR

## Email outreach

Once you have the email addresses you need, make sure to come up with an email strategy to nurture existing clients and to reach out to your dream clients. That starts with making sure they read your email. Here are a few tips to help you with that:

- Have a good subject line so to help your open rates.
- Make your body copy clear, concise and worth someone's time.
- Have a call to action that shows clearly what you want the reader to do next. For example, click, buy, or share.
- Create simple signup forms.
- Send an email at the right time. Showing to your subscribers that you understand and care about them affects your open rates positively.



## Leverage fractional talent/outsourcing

Let's face it: as you land bigger and bigger clients, there's going to be a lot more work. To maintain this momentum, it's critical to have all the ability to expand to accommodate bigger projects, and then scale back down to maintain lean operating costs. That's where strategic partnerships can make a difference when you are planning on growing your business.

What you can do to make sure you have covered all the grounds that a high-paying client is expecting from you is hire freelancers or add talents to your team.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when working with contributors:

### Set boundaries

Strategic partnerships involve a give and take, so be honest with yourself and what you expect out of a business partner. If it's only a few hours per week, make sure you communicate that clearly. You might need help again soon, so maintaining good relationships is key here.

Share your schedule with partners

Nobody likes nasty surprises, especially on deadline. Make sure you implement a few practices to keep things on track:

- Utilize a shared calendar.
- Hold regular meetings to keep up with progress.
- Set checkpoints for the project.







## Allow for (artistic) freedom

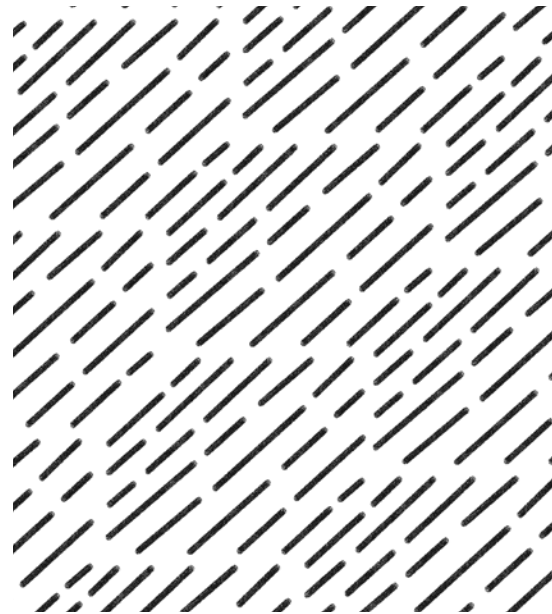
When you're working with other people, expect to field a variety of ideas and solutions. Different people working on the same project can help catch a problem you didn't initially see or bring a different angle.

**The big takeaway here is to give your colleagues the opportunity to flesh out their ideas.**

You never know what concept will elevate your project to the next level!

## Develop lines of communication

Establish clear rules and communication from the beginning. There are many ways to talk to your partners, such as in-person meetings, online chats, emails, phone calls, text messages, Skype, Zoom, and others. Choose the option that works best for you and focus on getting your client projects done.





## Engage with business partners

Partner programs help you through revenue, resources, credentials, promotions, leads and discounts. Adding multiple revenue streams to your business mitigates risk and gives you more negotiation power with clients.

Partner-provided resources, like free training or higher-level support, improve your business. The skills and capabilities developed through continued learning can help you take on bigger projects and raise your rates. Dedicated or exclusive customer support can help you resolve issues faster, giving you more time for billable work.

Credentials, like partner-exclusive certifications, set you apart from your competition. They display your expertise and bolster your credibility. Potential clients may not recognize you, but they'll recognize the endorsement of Google or Facebook.

Partner promotion lifts your visibility and puts you in front of potential clients who might never find you otherwise.

So, with those benefits out of the way, let's look at a few types of partner programs you should join as a web design business.





## Affiliate programs

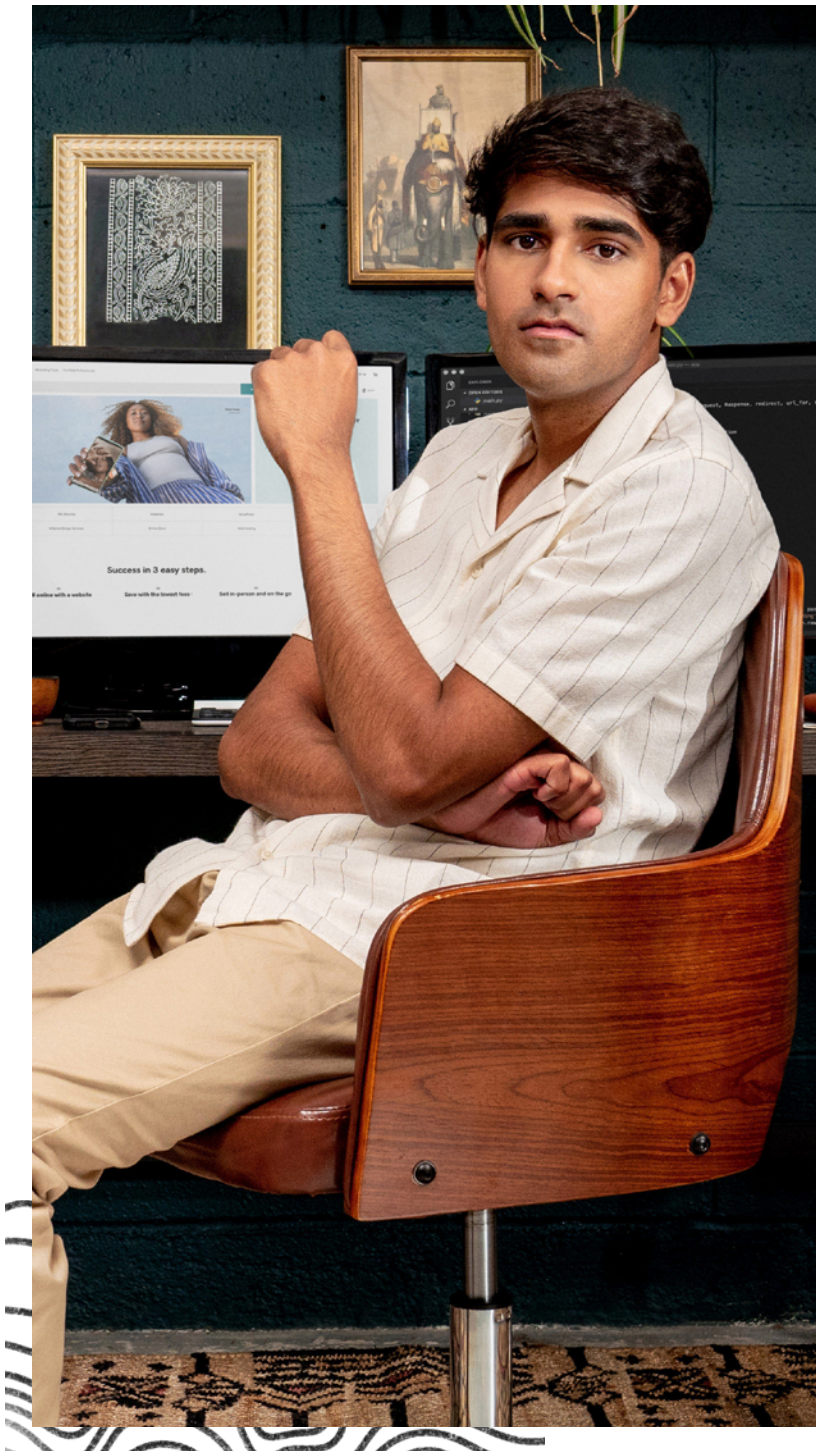
Affiliate programs are a source of revenue. You're paid to promote a product or service. They're performance-based, in that you're only paid a commission if someone makes a purchase through your link or uses your affiliate code during a transaction. Your commissions are either a one-time payout or an ongoing percentage of revenue.

**To start making more money with your web design business, look at what products or services you're already encouraging your clients to purchase, and see if they offer affiliate programs.**

Check with your domain registrars, web hosts, WordPress theme and plugin authors, email service providers, and email marketing tools. Join their affiliate programs and get your clients to make purchases through your affiliate links.

Next, look at what products or services you're using to run your own business. There's likely some overlap between these and what you encourage your clients to purchase. But you'll also have other tools and services, like project management or billing software, that you can refer other web designers to.

Finally, look at joining major affiliate marketplaces like CJ Affiliate (formerly Commission Junction), Rakuten Marketing, and ShareASale. These marketplaces include tons of vendors that you may have never heard of but might be a great fit. Note: Make sure to disclose your affiliate relationship with these businesses clearly. It's a requirement under the FTC in the United States and to varying degrees in other countries.





## Reseller programs

Reseller programs give you discounts and resources. They typically offer a reduced per-unit price on their products. But as the reseller, you're responsible for covering your own marketing and support costs. Your clients will come to you when they have a problem — you can't refer them to the company you're reselling for.

White-labeled web hosting is the most common type of reseller program for web designers. Your clients won't see any mention of the hosting company anywhere. As far as your clients know, you have a dedicated team of IT professionals managing your own servers.

But you're not left high and dry as a reseller.

**The best reseller programs offer a higher level of support and free resources to help you succeed in business.**

To get started as a reseller, check out your existing hosting provider(s) and see if they offer a reseller program. For example, the [GoDaddy reseller program](#) includes more than just web hosting — you can also sell domain names, business email, SSL certificates, website security, and managed WordPress plans. (And you can do it all from a [WordPress plugin](#) on your own site.)

## Certification programs

Certification programs provide training and credentials. They typically come from companies who sell complicated products or services, or from specialized institutions that teach technical courses. Web design is an unregulated industry, so anyone can claim that they're web designers. That's why it's so competitive — clients have so many options to choose from — and why it's easy to get caught in a race to the bottom on pricing.





**Credentials and certifications are a way to differentiate yourself from competitors, and to justify charging higher prices for your work.**

Even course completion certificates show that you're invested in professional development and ongoing improvement. Showcase your credentials on your own site alongside testimonials from your best clients and case studies from your successful projects.

To get started, look at the type of services you're already offering, or plan to offer in the future.

If you're selling digital marketing services to small businesses, consider getting certified with Google Ads, Google Analytics, Facebook Advertising, and LinkedIn Advertising.

If you're interested in improving your code, check out courses from sites like Team Treehouse, Codecademy, or Pluralsight. If you prefer in-person learning, look for local programs, like those offered by General Assembly.

## **Referral programs**

Referral programs reward you for getting others to try or buy a product or service you're already using. They usually do this with incentives, like tiered discounts or free upgrades.

To get started, check on the products and services you're already using, and see if they're offering a referral program of some kind. Even though it's not additional revenue, the discounts and upgrades can add to your bottom line by reducing your overhead costs.

## **Rewards programs**

Like referral programs, reward programs incentivize behavior by offering perks. Unlike referral programs, rewards programs are about your loyalty and repeat business.

To get started, look at what purchases you're already making on a regular basis. Would you benefit from a rewards program that adds extra perks to something you're going to buy anyway?



## Offering clients discounts

When you offer a reduced price, that discount can actually be an investment in the relationship with a client. Imagine having a prospective client on the fence and being able to sweeten your proposal with a discount that tips the deal in your favor.

You can create discounts when you package your products in different ways. For example, if you sell web design and recurring management services, you can offer a new customers-only discount on the initial website design or even a reduced rate for the ongoing maintenance service.

Discounts sound counterproductive when it comes to bringing in more revenue, but they contribute to retaining customers and considering you for future projects or continued work. Established clients may deserve some amount of discount on subsequent projects, as you've not invested in marketing to land that project and your client-interaction overhead is more efficiently managed.

**One way you could try this is by offering clients a small discount when paying for multiple months in advance, rather than auto-billing every month. This ensures they'll stick around for a while.**

Referral bonuses are also a great way to reward clients who send more work your way.

No matter how you create discounts, just the fact that you offer any discounted rates can be the factor that will make you hook your next client.





## Create addons & upsells in your proposals

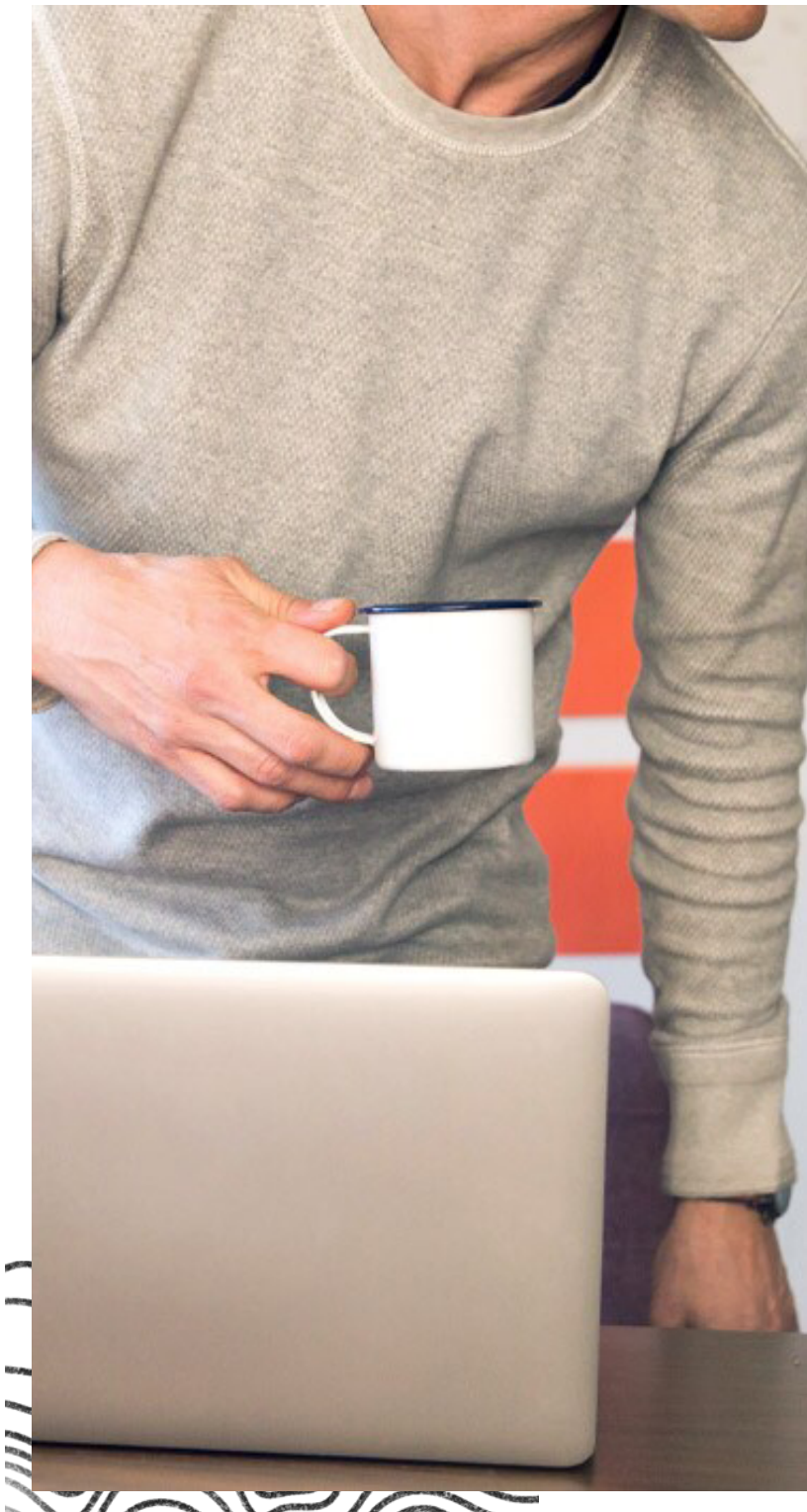
You're likely already familiar with the concept of upselling. In a nutshell, it's a method of turning a current customer into an even more profitable one by introducing them to a higher-priced version of their current purchase. Alternatively, you could offer an add-on to their existing purchase.

As a web design business, there are clear benefits for you in implementing upselling: greater income and profit as well as increased customer loyalty. This loyalty also creates a willingness for existing customers to recommend you to others.

As a rule of thumb, you'll want to get your client committed before pitching further ideas on how to improve their holistic web design experience. Clearly your business objective is to increase the total order value, by encouraging purchase of more profitable services, products, product bundles, or package deals — resulting in higher spending than originally planned. However, the messaging to customers is about providing additional value, and often at an overall savings.

In addition, this demonstrates the breadth of your web design offering, and increases the client's confidence that you're the best provider of multiple solutions that can include:

- Website design
- Website maintenance plan
- Website security
- Content creation and SEO services
- Social media campaigns
- Paid campaigns
- App creation
- Email marketing



Subtotal \$3,425

Discount 10 % \$342.50

Tax 215.78 \$ \$215.78

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**Total Due \$3,298.28**

## Make necessary price adjustments

When thinking about getting your high-paying client on the hook, you need to reevaluate your pricing strategy.

Before deciding what you should charge your clients, it's helpful to understand the two most common web designer rate pricing models: hourly vs. fixed (per-project).

### Hourly rate model

The benefits of having hourly-rates setups include:

- It gives you an idea about how long it takes you to complete different kinds of website projects, which can be helpful for scheduling your time.
- It makes most clients a little more conscientious about your time.
- It's useful if you're offering additional "à la carte" services, such as logo design or animation.
- It's often the best way to charge for vague or open-ended projects where clients aren't sure what they want or may make frequent changes.
- Hourly rates do have some drawbacks, including:
  - An hourly rate only considers the time put into the work, not the value of the work itself.
  - Working quickly can mean that you earn less.
  - After gaining extensive experience, you may hit a price ceiling that clients won't want to pay.





## Fixed rate model

Many clients ask for a complete project cost because it's easier to factor the project into marketing budgets. Fixed per-project rates are often advantageous for freelancers because:

- This style of pricing model helps you turn a profit sooner as you become more skilled and can complete projects faster, developing efficiencies of scale.
- Clients tend to see more value because they aren't looking at the same clock you are during the design stage.
- You can build in pricing for the ad hoc services that most clients request — particularly those clients who take a big-picture look at website design services.

Like the hourly rate model, having fixed freelance design or development rates also has disadvantages, including:

- It can be difficult to gauge fair pricing for projects at first.
- You'll have to lay out a reasonable timeline with deadlines, set the number of changes or edits you'll allow within your given rates, and determine what to charge if the client requests extras.
- If the project takes longer than expected or the client does request bolt-on services, you'll need to renegotiate the contract, or you'll have to accept that you'll be paid less this time and apply what you learned to future projects.

You can also use a mixed model. Some web designers charge a flat fee for website development and an hourly rate afterward for additional services that fall outside the project scope.



Subtotal		\$5,500
Discount	% ▾ 20	\$1,100.00
Tax ⓘ	\$ ▾ 308.00	\$308.00
Total Due		\$4,708.00



## Reevaluating your model

Make sure to weigh your competitors' prices. While they shouldn't be the only reference you use to set prices, current market rates can give you valuable insights. They signal how much those well-known web designers are charging and how much clients are expecting and willing to pay.

You want to stay competitive while still earning enough to support yourself.

Compare your prices to current market rates and direct competitors with commensurate skill sets.

- If your prices are higher than others', reevaluate your budget and expenses to see if there's room to cut costs.
- If your rates are lower, you might be undervaluing your skill set and bump them up. If what you charge is right in the middle, it's probably a fair rate.

Most web design projects can benefit from one of two packaging options:

- Offer a quicker package with a limited set of benefits alongside a pricier "premium" package with all the bells and whistles. For example, website design with SEO and content creation.
- Offer a fixed-price package with optional extras for clients who want to invest more. For example, website design for a fixed price with the option to add website security, email marketing, and other services.

Both packaging strategies let potential clients choose an option that meets their budget and still gives them the business results they're hoping for. You'll also end up maximizing your profit with clients who are willing to pay for the more premium options. However, web design and development are not one-size-fits-all services. Offering limited pre-defined packages means most customers are not getting accurate pricing, and you'll find yourself with projects that are more time-consuming than anticipated.

Pricing all sites at a fixed, page-based cost can quickly prove to be problematic, as pages have a wide range of complexity and functionality.

**Crafting a custom proposal lets you demonstrate value and price far more accurately, while highlighting your skills and the required effort.**

Because each project will have its own unique deliverables, it makes sense that your pricing will be unique, too. Factors to consider when determining your individualized pricing include the size and type of website (for instance, a large ecommerce website will have different needs than a basic small business website), as well as the client's budget.

Ask if your clients have a set budget for this project, then take it from there. Decide for yourself if you're willing to complete the project within that budget. If not, it may be helpful to explain what you can do for their offered price point. It may also be beneficial to think about the project from your prospective client's perspective, analyzing what you would be willing to pay for web designer costs if you were a business owner.



# The sky's the limit!

We've just covered strategies for developing and converting new leads, refining those processes, and then making adjustments to get things just right. But this isn't the end of the voyage — growing your web design business is a cycle.

Each time you work through the topics in this book, you're getting better and better. You have the potential to grow from a one-person operation handling a few clients, to a full-fledged agency with talented employees and a stable of lucrative clients.

How far will you take it? It's up to you!



