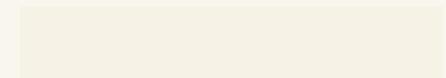




Website Content Guide

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GATHER BEFORE
STARTING YOUR WEBSITE DESIGN PROJECT**

*| DIONNE
| DESIGN |*





Let's GO!

Creating a website can feel overwhelming — there are decisions to make, content to write, photos to gather, and strategy to consider. But take a deep breath. You don't need to do it all at once, and you don't need to do it perfectly to make an impact.

This guide is here to help you simplify,

not stress. Use it as a tool to break things down into manageable steps — whether you're setting aside 30 minutes a day or tackling a section each weekend. Each small task you complete brings your vision closer to life.

When you take the time to gather content with intention:

- You attract the right clients — the ones who connect with your story and value your work.
- Your site becomes a tool that works for you — converting visitors even when you're offline.
- You set a foundation that's easy to update and expand as your business grows.
- You feel clear, confident, and in control of how your brand shows up online.

In this Guide

You're closer than you think to launching a website that not only looks beautiful but truly represents you and connects with your ideal audience!

This guide will walk you through everything you need to launch your new site with confidence!

SECTION 01.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Start strong by choosing a domain name, purchasing your Squarespace subscription, and setting up a professional email address—key steps that establish credibility and create a solid base for your site.

SECTION 02.

GATHER BRAND ELEMENTS AND IMAGES

Before designing, gather your core brand elements—like logo, fonts, colors, and photos—to ensure your website looks polished, consistent, and aligned with your overall visual identity from day one.

SECTION 03.

WRITING FOR THE WEB

Great web copy is clear, concise, and engaging. Your words should quickly tell visitors who you are, what you do, and why it matters—especially on key pages like your homepage.

SECTION 04.

OPTIMIZE FOR SEO

A thoughtful SEO strategy starts with planning. By structuring content, headings, and keywords early on, you'll give your website a better chance of ranking and being discovered by search engines.

SECTION 05.

MASTER CHECKLIST

Use this comprehensive checklist to gather and organize every piece of content your website needs, helping you stay on track, reduce overwhelm, and build your site with confidence.



SECTION

01.

Laying the FOUNDATION

Before you jump into design, you'll want to take care of a few key essentials—like choosing a domain name, purchasing your Squarespace subscription, and deciding on a professional email address. Taking care of these foundational pieces early will make the rest of the process smoother and more organized.

- Website hosting: The space where your website lives online.
- Domain name: The address of your website (like yourbusiness.com).
- SSL certificate: Helps keep your website secure (you'll notice a padlock icon next to secure URLs).

If you're not a tech-savvy person, Squarespace is a great option. It's an all-in-one platform, which means your plan includes many of the tools you'd typically have to set up separately with a custom website.

Here's what's included with your Squarespace plan:

- E-commerce features: Tools to help you sell products or services online.
- Customer support: Free technical support from Squarespace's team—no separate IT service needed.



TECH

A Digital FOUNDATION for Your Website

DOMAIN NAME

SQUARESPACE ACCOUNT

EMAIL ADDRESS

01. CHOOSING YOUR DOMAIN NAME

You'll purchase your domain name when you purchase your Squarespace subscription. But it's helpful to plan ahead and check if your preferred domain is available. You can do this by [searching directly on Squarespace](#)—your results will reflect availability across the entire internet.

Here are some tips for selecting a good domain name:

- Choose something short, easy to remember, and clearly connected to your business or brand.
- Avoid acronyms unless they're easy to remember or widely known. For example, mcdonaldlaw.com is easier to remember than mlglc.com.
- Avoid using hyphens, underscores, or punctuation
- Stay away from names that could be easily confused with other well-known websites. For instance, mcdonalds.org could be mistaken for mcdonalds.com.
- Consider alternative extensions like .co, .tech, or .shop—as long as they don't create confusion with existing sites. [See options here.](#)
- Whenever possible, use the same name across your website and social media handles to make it easy for people to find you.

02. YOUR SQUARESPACE SUBSCRIPTION

After accepting administrative access to your website template, you will have x days/months trial period where you can customize your site without paying for a Squarespace plan. When you want to go live with your site, you will be guided through the steps to sign up for a Squarespace paid account.

When choosing your [Squarespace plan](#), here are a few things to consider:

- **Custom email address:** If you want to create an email like you@yourdomain.com, choose the Core plan or higher.
- **E-commerce:** If you're selling products or services, note that the Core plan charges a 2% transaction fee, while higher plans do not.
- **Video hosting:** If your site will include videos, check each plan's storage and video upload limits to make sure it meets your needs.
- **Booking & Scheduling:** If you need to allow clients to book time with you, Squarespace integrates [Acuity Scheduling](#) for an additional subscription fee.
- **Email Marketing:** Both Mailchimp and Flodesk offer direct integration with Squarespace.

03. EMAIL ADDRESS.

Your business email address should look professional. You can use a free provider like Gmail (e.g., yourbusiness@gmail.com), but ideally, you'll use a custom email that matches your domain—like hello@yourdomain.com.

- Choose the Core plan or higher to set up custom email through Squarespace's integration with Google Workspace.
- You can create multiple addresses like info@yourdomain.com, support@yourdomain.com, or bookings@yourdomain.com to help organize your communication.



SECTION

02.

Gather your BRAND ELEMENTS

A strong visual brand identity is essential in website design because it creates an immediate, memorable impression and helps build trust with your audience.

Through consistent use of color, typography, imagery, and layout, your visual identity tells a cohesive story about who you are and what you offer—often before a single word is read. It guides visitors through your site with clarity and confidence, reinforcing your brand’s personality and making the experience feel polished and professional.

A clear visual identity not only distinguishes you from competitors but also deepens brand recognition and loyalty over time.

Before you start building your website, it’s helpful to gather your core brand elements so everything feels consistent and professional from the start. Having brand elements ready ahead of time will help you move through the web design process with clarity and confidence, without second-guessing or making changes halfway through.



BRAND ELEMENTS

Gather Your Brand Elements

The one thing that will set your website apart is your unique branding. Your brand tells visitors who you are at a glance—it includes your logo, brand colors, typography, and the overall feel of your visual identity.

If you haven't established your branding yet, press pause and take care of that first. You can:

- Work with a professional like [Dionne Design](#).
- Purchase a pre-made logo or mini brand kit from platforms like [Etsy](#) or [Creative Market](#).

BRAND ELEMENTS

LOGO

SUB MARK

2-3 COLORS

1-2 FONTS

01. LOGO

You'll need a high-quality, non-pixelated logo for the header of your site. It should be legible even at small sizes (around 200px wide or less). Avoid overly intricate details, as they can become blurry when scaled down.

If your website is for personal use, your name will be sufficient.

02. SUB MARK

A logo sub mark is a simplified version of your logo, often round or square, which can be used in your website footer or elsewhere. You can also use this version as a favicon—the tiny icon that appears in your browser tab or next to your site name in bookmarks. This small touch helps elevate your brand's professional polish.

You can create a favicon using a free tool like [favicon.io](#)

03. COLORS

Your brand colors will be applied throughout your site—headlines, buttons, backgrounds, and more. Your brand palette should include 2-3 colors in both dark and light tones to allow for good contrast and readability.

Gather the hex codes (a six-digit color code like #4A90E2) for each of your brand colors.

Helpful tools:

- [Coolors.co](#): To explore or generate palettes.
- [HTMLColorCodes](#): To find or convert hex codes

04. TYPOGRAPHY

Squarespace offers a wide range of built-in fonts, making it easy to experiment with combinations.

A classic approach is to pair a serif font (which has decorative strokes) with a sans serif font (clean and modern) to create balance and contrast. For example, you might use a serif for headlines to evoke a sense of tradition or elegance, and a sans serif for body text to keep things clear and easy to read. This mix can make your site feel polished and professional while still being approachable.

You can explore font pairings directly within Squarespace's design panel, or browse inspiration on sites like [fonts.google.com](#), [fontpair.co](#), or [typewolf.com](#).

Keep your typography choices simple—one or two fonts is usually enough—and make sure they reflect the tone of your brand, whether that's minimal and modern, bold and creative, or soft and refined.

IMAGES

Types of Images to Use on Your Site

The photos you choose for your website have a huge impact on how your brand is perceived. They help convey your personality, build trust with visitors, and guide people's attention through your site. The right images can elevate your website and make it feel polished, professional, and aligned with your overall brand.

To create a well-rounded, engaging website, plan to include a mix of these types of images.

IMAGES

HERO IMAGE OR BACKGROUND

HEADSHOTS OR TEAM

BRAND PHOTOS

SERVICE OR PRODUCT



01. HEADSHOTS

Professional head-and-shoulder portraits of you (and your team if applicable). Bonus points for showing personality or a sense of your craft.



02. YOU OR YOUR TEAM IN ACTION

Images of you or your team working, collaborating, or creating. This gives a glimpse into your process and helps potential clients picture working with you.



03. CLIENT INTERACTION

Photos that simulate what it's like to engage with you—consultations, conversations, feedback sessions. These are powerful for service-based businesses.



04. CLIENT WORK OR PORTFOLIO IMAGES

If you're a creative or service provider, showcase examples of your best work. Be sure to get permission if needed, and pair images with short descriptions or testimonials for added context and credibility.



05. PRODUCT OR SERVICE IMAGES

If you sell physical products, high-quality product photography is essential. Use multiple angles, detail shots, and lifestyle images where your product is in use.

For services, consider metaphorical or process-based photos that show how your work helps or transforms your clients.



06. BRAND OR LIFESTYLE

These images tell the story of your brand and what it feels like to work with you or use your product. They should reflect your aesthetic and values, and help people connect emotionally with your brand.

If you are selling a product, showing this product in use in lifestyle photos can go a long way to increasing sales.



07. BACKGROUNDS

Photos that serve as textures, backdrops, or mood-setting visuals. Think patterns, landscapes, materials (e.g., linen, wood, shadows)—used to add visual interest without distracting from text.

IMAGES

Sourcing Images for Your Site

When sourcing photos for your website, you have a few great options depending on your budget and timeline. Choose images that feel authentic, match your brand tone and color palette, and avoid overly staged or generic styles.

Many businesses benefit from a mix of both custom and stock photography—just keep the style cohesive for a polished and professional feel.

SUGGESTED STOCK PHOTO SITES:

FREE

PEXELS
UNSPLASH
BURST

PAID

CREATIVE
MARKET
ETSY
MOYO STUDIO



BEST OPTION: PROFESSIONAL BRAND PHOTOGRAPHY

If possible, invest in a professional photo shoot. Custom photos tailored to your brand will pay off again and again—for your website, social media, newsletters, ads, and more.



GOOD OPTION: HIGH QUALITY, ON-BRAND STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

If custom photography isn't in your budget yet, well-chosen stock photos are a great alternative. Just be selective and thoughtful in your choices.



LEAST DESIRABLE OPTION: SNAPSHOTS OR SELFIES

Avoid using low-quality, poorly lit, or mismatched images. These can make your business appear unprofessional and damage first impressions.

IMAGES

Choosing STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY from Commercial Sites

The challenge with stock photography is standing out—but it's possible with smart curation. Here are 8 tips and search terms for each type of photo you might want to use.

8 TIPS FOR CHOOSING STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Match your brand vibe. (E.g., minimal, bold, feminine, natural.)
2. Stick to your brand color palette. Choose photos that visually harmonize.
3. Be truthful. Never use stock photos to misrepresent yourself—especially on your About or Services pages.
4. Customize. Crop, add text overlays, or apply filters to make stock photos your own. Tools like Canva are great for this.
5. Use as backgrounds. Think of stock as visual texture for banners, sections, or Instagram Stories.
6. Include people wisely. It's okay to use photos of people—especially hands, partial faces, or back-of-head shots—if they reflect your audience.
7. Avoid overused images. If a photo looks like it came from a generic ad, skip it.
- Never use copyrighted or watermarked photos without proper licensing.

TEAM OR CLIENT INTERACTION

- Collaborate
- Co-working
- Consulting
- Team/teamwork
- Consultant

WORKSPACE

- Workspace
- Desk
- Work from home

LIFESTYLE

- Lifestyle
- Aesthetic
- Objects such as books, coffee, wine, champagne
- Luxury

BANNER BACKGROUNDS

- Background
- Nature elements: forest, ocean, fog
- Watercolor
- Shadow
- Texture
- Fabric, marble, wood

AESTHETIC

- Moody
- Light
- Colorful
- Feminine

CORPORATE

- Skyline
- Office
- Corporate

IMAGES

Incorporating Banner Images

Banner images are large visuals at the top of your pages. They should complement, not compete with your text.

Choose images with enough empty space (called “negative space”) to place headings and buttons.

Avoid images that are overly busy or contrast too sharply between dark and light areas.

If your text is hard to read, add a color overlay using a dark brand color or soft gradient to improve legibility.

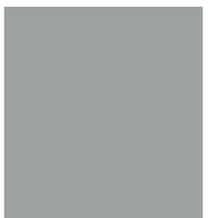
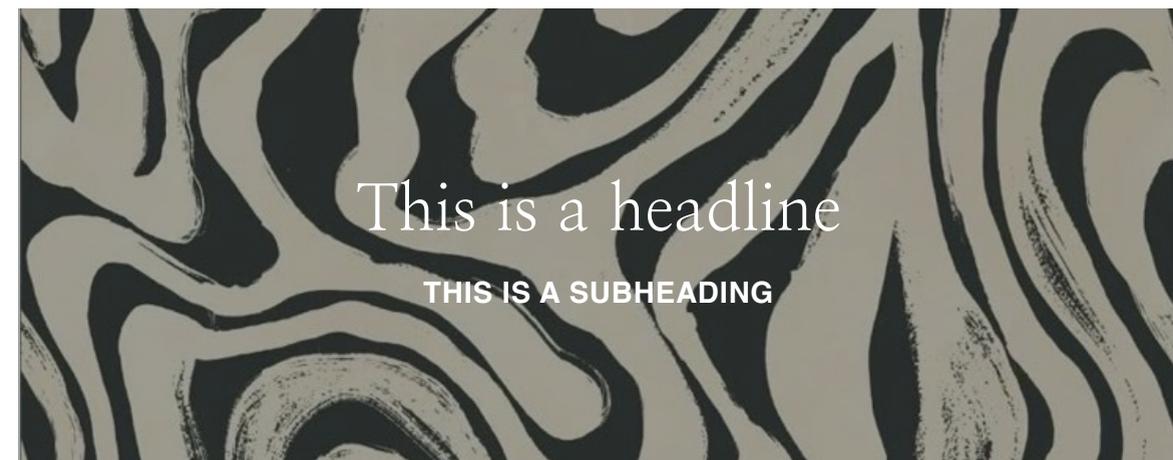
An image balanced between light and dark areas like this textile image adds interest but still allows text layered on top to be readable.



This high contrast image (with both bright white and dark shadows) makes parts of the headline unreadable.



To counteract this, add dark color overlay with 50% opacity to make text readable, even on a high-contrast background.



Dark gray at 50% opacity



SECTION

03.

Write Your Website CONTENT

Writing for the web is a little different from other types of writing. Website visitors tend to skim, looking for quick answers and clear next steps. That's why it's important to write in a way that's easy to read, visually organized, and focused on your audience's needs.

Whether you're writing an About page, a service description, or a call-to-action, your words should help guide visitors through your site with clarity and purpose.

This section will help you think through what to say and how to say it so your message connects.



WRITING

Writing your website CONTENT

ABOVE THE FOLD

This term comes from newspapers, where the most important headlines were placed above the fold to grab attention. On a website, “above the fold” means what visitors see before they scroll. Make this space count with your most important message and a clear call to action (CTA).

WRITING FOR THE WEB

Keep your writing clear and easy to understand with these guidelines:

- Start with the main takeaway or benefit.
- Be clear and direct
- Keep each sentences and paragraph short (2–3 sentences).
- Use clear headlines and subheadings to break up the page
- Use calls to action (CTAs) throughout

your site to guide visitors to the next step—like “Book Now,” “View Services,” or “Contact Me.”

KEYWORDS

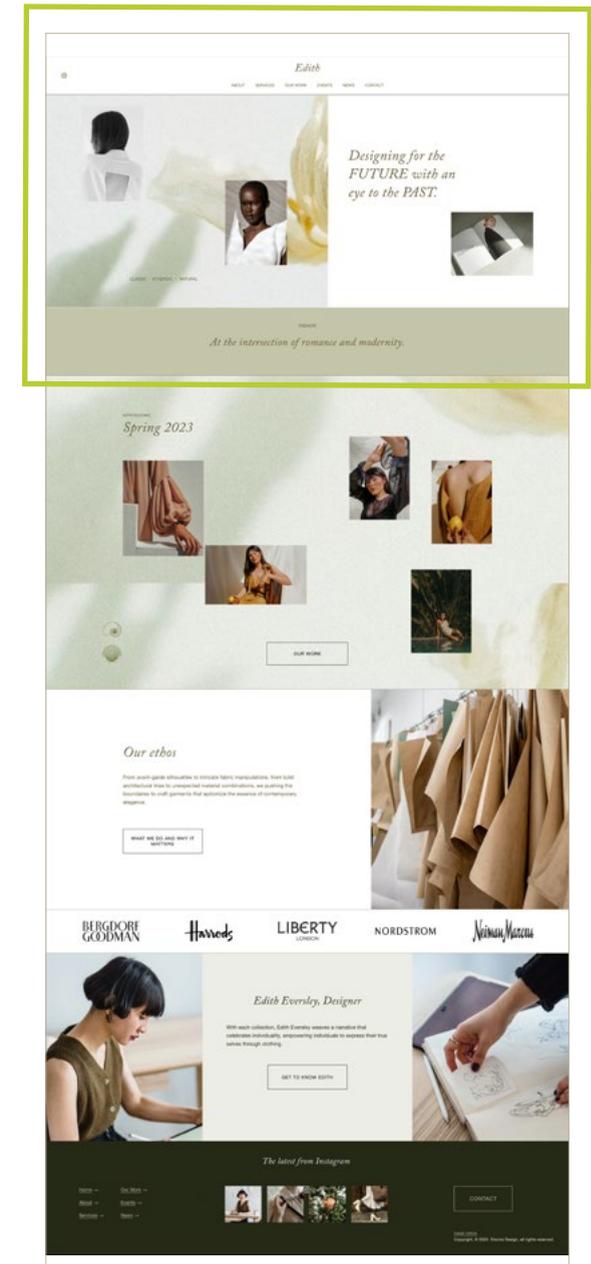
Your writing should also include keywords. These are search terms that your client or customer might type into Google when looking for a business like yours. These should include:

- Your service or product (e.g., “wedding florist,” “life coach”)
- Your location (if relevant)
- Specific offerings (e.g., “brand strategy for creatives,” “online therapy for moms”)

These keywords should appear naturally throughout your text—especially in your homepage, page titles, and section headings.



ABOVE THE FOLD



WRITING

Anatomy of a HOME PAGE

Your homepage is often the first impression your audience will have of your business—think of it as your digital storefront. It should quickly and clearly communicate:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- Why it matters to them
- What to do next

A strong homepage builds trust, encourages visitors to explore further, and guides them toward taking the next step, whether that's learning more, getting in touch, or making a purchase.

With thoughtful design and messaging, your homepage sets the tone for your entire site and lays the foundation for a successful user experience.

01. VALUE STATEMENT/HEADLINE

02. SUBHEADING

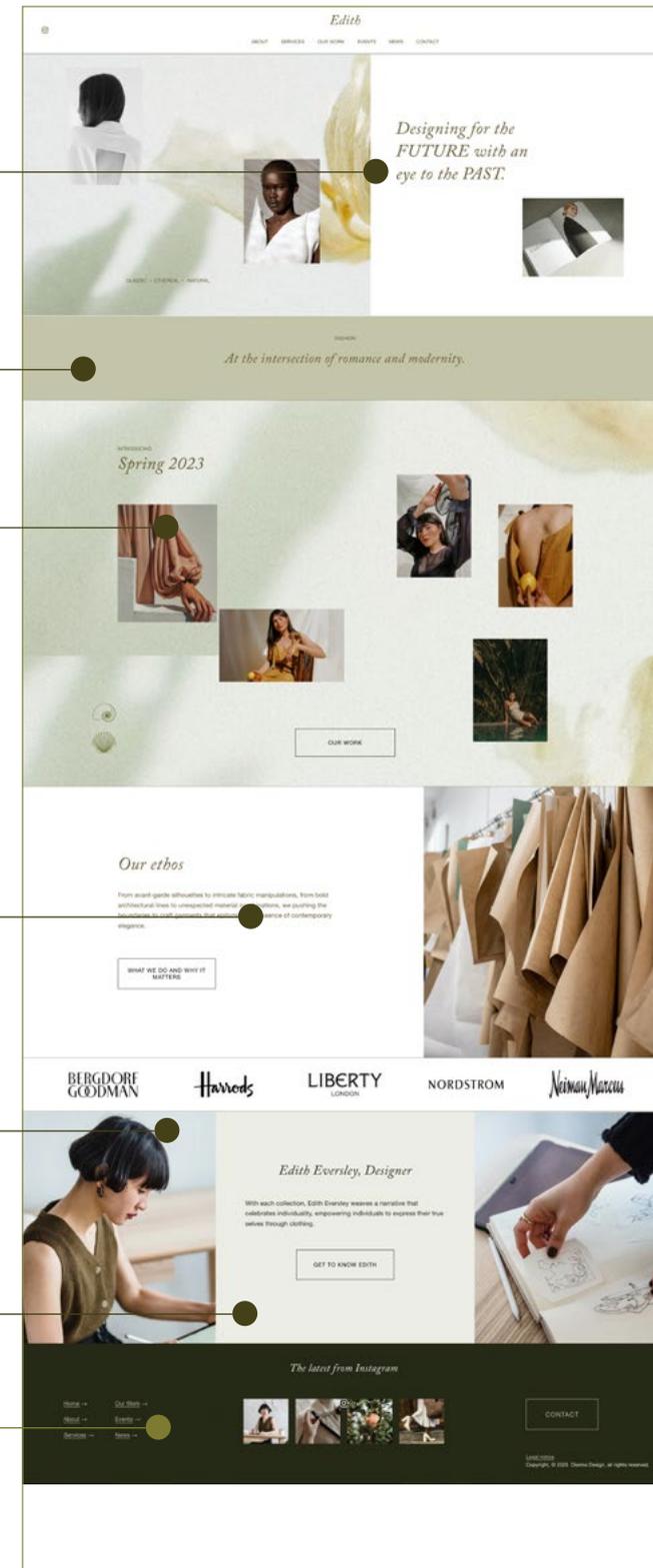
03. SERVICES/OFFERINGS

04. TEASER ABOUT SERVICES

05. SUCCESS INDICATORS

06. TEASER FOR ABOUT PAGE

07. FOOTER



WRITING

Write your HOME PAGE Content

Your home page should contain the most compelling information on your site.

The goal is to intrigue your visitors and to encourage them to explore your website to learn more about your business, and ultimately, to become a customer.

01. VALUE STATEMENT/HEADLINE

Your headline is one of the most important pieces of text on your site. In just a few words, it should communicate what you do, who you do it for, and what makes you unique

Formula: “We are [what you do] for [who you serve] who want [what makes you different].”

Example: “We create modern florals for couples who want a wedding that feels effortless and bold.”

02. SUB-HEADLINE

This line should support your headline and add clarity. You can:

- Highlight a pain point your business solves
- Explain your service in simpler terms

Example: “Helping busy couples feel calm and confident with seamless, design-forward floral planning.”

03. PRIMARY CALL-TO-ACTION

Include at least one call-to-action above the fold that directs people to the action you would like them to take. Keep the copy brief — no more than 3-4 words — and action-oriented, so it compels visitors to click whatever you’re offering.

For example: “Book now”, “Schedule your free consultation.” This will typically be on a button.

04. SERVICES, OFFERINGS AND BENEFITS

Clearly list your core services to help potential clients quickly understand what you offer and whether you’re the right fit for their needs. Pick two or three offerings or services and keep descriptions short, benefit-focused, and free from industry jargon.

For example, instead of: “Custom design and visual strategy” try: “Strategic brand design that connects with your audience and grows your business.”

05. TESTIMONIALS

Include just a few of your best (short) quotes on the homepage, and link to case studies/testimonials if applicable. Adding a name and photo gives these testimonials more credibility.

06. SECONDARY CALL-TO-ACTION

Some visitors aren’t ready to buy yet. Give them somewhere else to go. These links help build trust, keep visitors on your site longer, and show your expertise. This CTA can be located further down the home page

- Blog or resource library
- About page
- Portfolio

07. SUCCESS INDICATORS

Reinforce trust by showing external validation:

- Awards
- Press features
- Certifications
- Well-known client logos
- “As seen in” badges

These quick trust-builders reassure first-time visitors that your business is legit and respected.

WRITING

Write Your ABOUT PAGE Content

Your About page needs depth. It's not just a biography—it's a chance to build trust and connection. If someone is on this page, it means they're curious. They've already shown extra interest in your story. Now it's your turn to invite them in.

01. FOCUS ON YOUR CLIENT/CUSTOMER

It may seem counterintuitive, but just like every other page on your website, your About page isn't really about you—it's about your audience.

The goal here is to find common ground. Ask yourself:

- Where do my story, experiences, and values intersect with those of my ideal customer?
- How can I show them I understand their needs, challenges, or aspirations?

You might answer these questions by sharing why you started your business, what you love about your work, and what motivates you to keep showing up.

02. INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Now it's time to share your background and the skills you bring to the table.

But skip the dry resume rundown—this is a conversation, not a cover letter.

Tell a bit of your journey:

- What drew you to this field?
- Did you follow a straight path or make a pivot back to something you've always loved?
- What's the most rewarding part of your work—helping others? Creating something beautiful? Solving problems?

This is your opportunity to create a narrative that resonates with your audience.

03. SHOW YOUR PERSONALITY

If it fits your voice, sprinkle in a few personal touches: your love of The Office, your morning coffee ritual, or your favorite cereal. Just keep it brief, relevant, and relatable. These little glimpses humanize your brand without overshadowing your message.

04. SHOW YOUR FACE

This one can feel vulnerable, but it matters: people want to see who they're buying from.

Including a professional photo of yourself (or your team) goes a long way toward building trust. It doesn't have to be overly formal, but it should be high quality—clear, well-lit, and on brand.

Bonus: Throughout your site, consider adding a few photos of you “in action”—doing your work, meeting with clients, or behind the scenes. This helps potential clients imagine what it's like to work with you.

05. SHARE YOUR LOCATION (IT HELPS CONNECTION AND SEO)

Telling people where you're based can create a sense of familiarity. You don't have to share your exact address—just your general location:

- “Based in the Lower East Side”
- “Rooted in the New England seacoast”
- “Serving clients from the high desert and beyond”

This not only helps create connection with local clients—it's also a great SEO trick. Mentioning your city or region naturally throughout your site improves your chances of showing up in local searches.

06. DON'T FORGET A CTA

Your About page isn't the place for a hard sell—but you don't want it to just trail off, either. Think of it like a conversation: you've shared your story, now pass the mic.

Wrap up with a gentle invitation:

- “If my work resonates with you, let's connect.”
- “Curious how we can work together? Reach out below.”

Then link to your contact page, booking calendar, or newsletter sign-up.

WRITING

Write Your SERVICES PAGE Content

Your Services page is where curiosity turns into clarity. A potential client may like your vibe, appreciate your story, and enjoy your aesthetic—but if they can't quickly understand what you offer and how to take the next step, they'll click away.

Your goal? Make it as easy and compelling as possible for someone to say, "Yes, this is what I need."

Note: Be sure to incorporate your keywords into this page in a natural way.

01. START WITH A CLEAR OVERVIEW

Begin with a short paragraph (2–3 sentences) that orients your audience. This is your big-picture summary of what you do and who your services are for. Make sure the copy is direct and benefits-focused.

Example: "I offer brand and web design for small business owners ready to level up and stand out. Whether you need a full re-brand or a simple refresh, I'll help you create visuals that feel like you and connect with your ideal clients."

This gives the visitor a quick reason to keep reading and lets them know they're in the right place.

02. BREAK DOWN EACH SERVICE OR PACKAGE

Create a section for each major offering. Give each one a clear, skimmable name (bonus points for clarity over cleverness), then follow with a short description. Aim to answer the questions your client is likely asking:

- What is this?
- Who is it for?
- What's included?
- What's the benefit?

If you offer packages, you can list:

- What's included (bullet points are great)
- Timeline or process
- Price (optional—see note below)

03. KEEP IT CLIENT-FOCUSED

Avoid getting lost in process jargon. While it's helpful to briefly explain how things work, focus more on the results and experience for the client.

Instead of: "I'll conduct a discovery call, build 2 design concepts, and present a brand board for feedback..."

Try: "We'll start with a conversation about your goals and vision. Then I'll create custom brand concepts you can choose from, with time for feedback and revisions along the way."

Speak directly to what they will get and how they'll feel—clearer, more confident, more visible, more polished, etc.

04. USE VISUAL HIERARCHY

Keep your Services page easy to scan. Use headlines, bold subheadings, short paragraphs, and bullet points to break up text. Someone should be able to glance at the page and understand your offerings without reading every word.

05. INCLUDE TESTIMONIALS OR SUCCESS STORIES

If possible, pair each service with a related client quote or short testimonial. Social proof near the point of decision can help validate what you're offering.

06. ADD A FAQ SECTION (OPTIONAL BUT POWERFUL)

A short FAQ near the bottom of the page can reduce hesitation and preempt questions.

07. END WITH A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION

Your Services page should naturally lead to the next step—whether that's booking a discovery call, filling out an inquiry form, or viewing your pricing guide.

WRITING

Write Your CONTACT PAGE Content

The Contact Page isn't a throwaway page. It's your last opportunity to close the sale, make a warm impression, and turn a curious visitor into a client. A well-crafted Contact Page doesn't just tell people how to get in touch—it reassures them that they should.

Whether you want to encourage direct messages, get someone to fill out a form, or book a discovery call, your Contact Page should feel welcoming, easy to navigate, and confidence-building.

01. LET YOUR VISITOR KNOW HOW TO CONTACT YOU

Start with a friendly introduction—something more inviting than just “Contact Me.” Let people know they're in the right place, and clearly state how they can reach you.

You can include:

- A form (keep it simple—name, email, message, and any necessary context)
- A direct email address (especially useful for folks who prefer to skip forms)
- Optionally, a phone number, location, or business hours if relevant

02. GUIDE YOUR CUSTOMER TO THE NEXT STEP

Let visitors know what to expect after they reach out. When will they hear from you? What happens next? This helps set expectations, builds trust, and reduces uncertainty.

Example: I respond to all inquiries within 1–2 business days. If it sounds like we're a good fit, I'll follow up with a link to book a free 15-minute consultation call.

03. REASSURE YOUR CUSTOMER

Reassure your customer that you are the right person for the job. Use a short sentence or two to build confidence. Remind them of the kind of clients you work with or the results you help people achieve.

You might also include a very short testimonial or quote from a past client here as social proof.

04. ANSWER SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Preempt common concerns and give visitors a reason not to hesitate. This is especially helpful if you tend to get the same questions via email.

Keep the answers brief, clear, and friendly. If you already have a dedicated FAQ page, you can link to it here.

05. ADD A WARM AND INVITING SIGN-OFF

A little warmth goes a long way. End your Contact Page like a conversation—not like a transaction.

- “Can't wait to hear from you!”
- “Let's build something great together.”
- “Talk soon!”

This small detail helps humanize your brand and encourages connection

WRITING

Other Content

TEXT

TESTIMONIALS

DOWNLOADABLE ASSETS

CERTIFICATIONS /
ACCREDITATIONS

MEMBERSHIPS/PARTNERS

LINKS

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

MEMBERSHIPS, ETC.

01. TESTIMONIALS

Client testimonials are powerful trust-builders. Including a few strong quotes from past clients—especially near key decision points like your Home, Services, or Contact pages—can reassure potential customers that others have had a positive experience working with you.

02. DOWNLOADABLE ASSETS

If you offer downloadable materials like a pricing sheet, service menu, or welcome guide, make sure they are on-brand, easy to access, and helpful. These assets provide value to your audience while also moving them closer to working with you.

03. CERTIFICATIONS OR ACCREDITATIONS

Listing your relevant certifications, memberships in professional organizations, or official partnerships helps build credibility and authority. When possible, link to these organizations so visitors can verify them. This adds another layer of social proof and professionalism to your site.

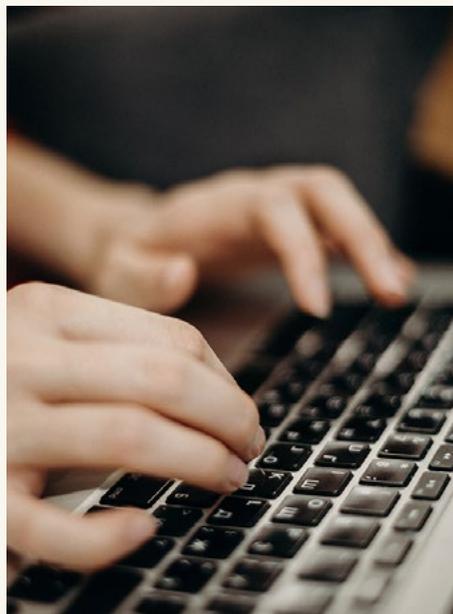
04. MEMBERSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS.

Including partnerships, memberships, or affiliations on your website builds credibility and trust. They signal to potential clients that you're connected to respected organizations and uphold industry standards.

05. LINK TO YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

By linking platforms like Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Pinterest, you give potential clients a chance to explore more of your work, stay updated on your latest news, and engage with your brand beyond the website

You can also link to membership organizations, partner accounts, certifying bodies and accreditation and award sites.



SECTION

04.

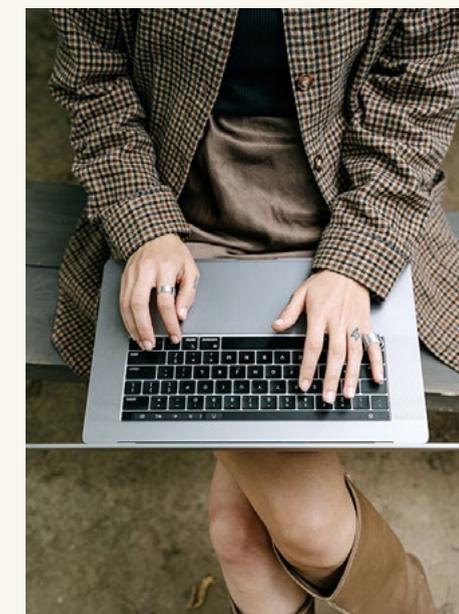
Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving your website so it shows up in search engine results when someone types in words related to your product, service, or industry. The better optimized your content is, the more likely it is that your ideal customer will find you online.

Some people think SEO should come after their website is built—but that's like building a house without consulting

local building codes. Just as an architect plans with the end goal in mind, you should approach your website content with SEO baked in from the start.

By making intentional choices during the content planning phase, you'll set yourself up for long-term visibility, discoverability, and success.



SEO

Optimizing Text for SEO

The words you choose for your website play a powerful role in how easily your site can be found online.

During the content planning phase, it's important to think strategically about your text—not just what you say, but how you say it. Incorporating relevant keywords, writing clear headings, and using language your audience is likely to search for helps search engines understand what your site is about.

At the same time, thoughtful text choices improve the user experience by making your message easy to read, scan, and connect with.

01. KEYWORDS

Keyword research is one of the most essential parts of SEO. It means identifying the exact terms your ideal clients are typing into Google:

- What you do
- Where you do it
- Who you serve

Start by brainstorming 20–30 phrases that relate to your industry. Include specific services, target audience details, and location-based terms. For example:

- “Curly hair stylist in LA”
- “Wedding florist in New Hampshire”
- “Eco-friendly branding for sustainable startups”

You can use tools like:

- ChatGPT or another AI platform (ask for keywords relevant to your business or based on competitor URLs)
- Ubersuggest
- Keywords Everywhere (browser extension)
- Google's Keyword Planner

Once you have your keyword list, ask AI to help you weave them into your content—especially your headlines and opening paragraphs.

02. USE HEADINGS STRATEGICALLY (H1, H2, H3)

Search engines pay special attention to your headings. Each page should contain:

- One heading with a H1 tag (this is your main page title and should include your primary keywords)
- Additional headings with H2 and H3 tags (use these to break up sections and include secondary or related keywords)

03. ACCESSIBILITY

Making your website accessible ensures that all users, including those with disabilities, can navigate and interact with your content. It's not just about inclusivity — accessibility also improves user experience, supports SEO, and can help you meet legal compliance standards. Prioritizing accessibility from the start makes your site more usable for everyone.

Accessibility considerations:

- Use high color contrast for readability
- Add descriptive alt text for all images
- Structure content with proper heading levels (H1, H2, H3, etc.)
- Ensure all buttons and links have clear text (avoid “click here”)
- Make forms accessible with labels and instructions

03. LINK BUILDING

Search engines look for signs of credibility, and one major trust signal is when other websites link to yours. These are called backlinks. A few ways to build backlinks:

- Submit your business to online directories (Yelp, Google Business Profile, industry-specific listings)
- Collaborate with others in your industry (guest posts, partnerships, etc.)
- Get featured in blogs or publications
- Encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews on Google, Trustpilot, or social platforms
- Set up your business on Google Maps for local SEO benefits

SEO

Controlling Page Load Speed

Page load speed plays a crucial role in both user experience and search engine optimization (SEO). A slow-loading website can frustrate visitors, causing them to leave before they even see your content—and search engines take note. Google and other search engines prioritize websites that load quickly because they offer a better overall experience. Improving your site speed not only helps you rank higher in search results, but also keeps users engaged and more likely to take action

Fortunately, many of the steps to boost load speed—like optimizing images and limiting unnecessary scripts—can be addressed early in the website building process.

TOOLS

- Free image compression tool: [TinyPNG.com](https://tinypng.com)
- Free image resizing tool: [ImageResizer.com](https://image-resizer.com)

01. PAGE LOAD SPEED

Keep your page size small—ideally under 100 KB per page. Compress large images and avoid uploading video files directly (use YouTube or Vimeo embeds instead).

02. OPTIMIZING IMAGE FILES

Make sure each image file:

- Is compressed
- Has a relevant file name (e.g., curly-hair-stylist-LA.jpg)
- Includes alt text describing what's in the image (helps visually impaired users and boosts SEO)

03. SECURITY

Ensure your site has an SSL certificate (your URL should start with https://). This boosts trust and is a Google ranking factor. Squarespace includes SSL certification in its packages for free.

04. MOBILE FRIENDLINESS

Most users browse on their phones. Make sure your site is responsive—meaning it looks and works well on mobile and tablet devices. Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test to check.

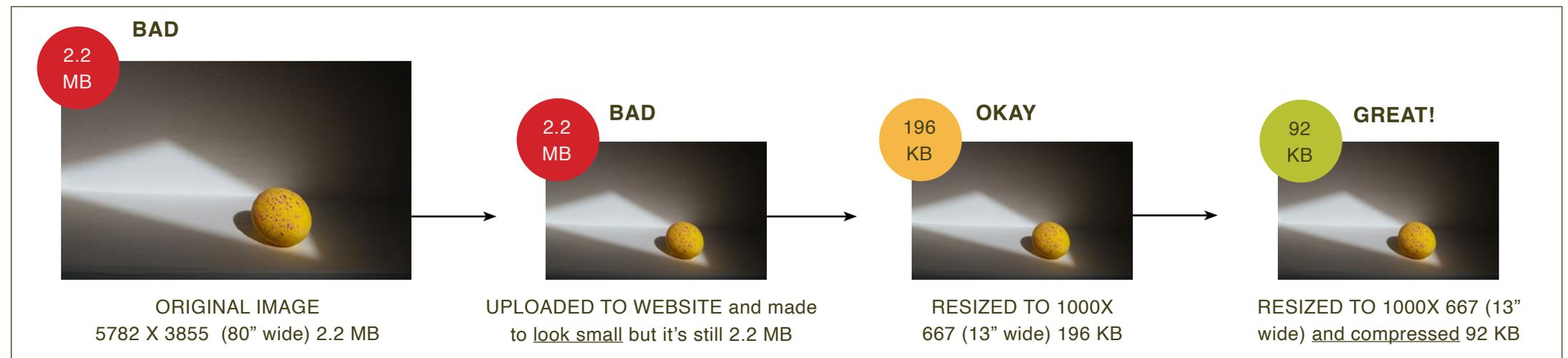
Your website template has been optimized for mobile. However, if you add pages or make edits to the structure of a page, be sure to check the mobile view to make sure it still displays well on mobile.

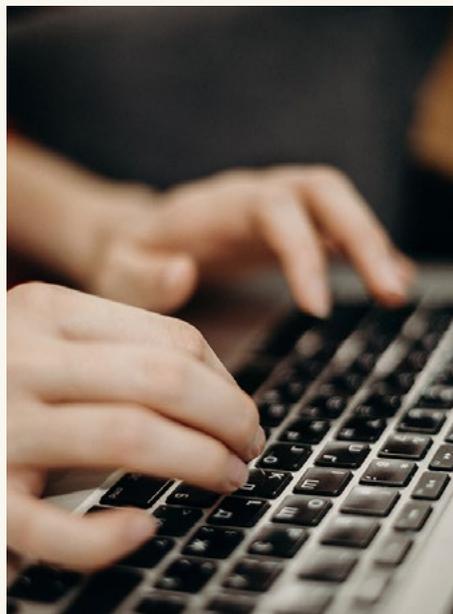
05. GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Once your website is live, it's important to track how it's performing so you can improve over time.

Tools to use:

- Google Analytics – See who's visiting, how long they're staying, and what pages they're viewing
- Google Search Console – Find out what search terms people are using to find your site and see if Google is indexing all your pages





SECTION

05.

Final Thoughts

Master CHECKLIST

Building a website doesn't have to feel overwhelming! By taking things step by step and using this guide as your roadmap, you'll move through the process with clarity and purpose. Every decision you make—from choosing your domain to writing your homepage headline—is a building block that brings your vision to life. Business apart as unique.

You already have what you need: your passion, your expertise, and a reason for doing what you do. Reference this guide often to help you shape your passion into a clear, confident online presence.



BONUS

Master CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a step-by-step guide to track your progress, gather everything you need, and make sure no detail gets overlooked. Whether you're starting from scratch or refreshing an existing site, this checklist will help you move forward with clarity and ease.

FOUNDATION

DOMAIN NAME

SQUARESPACE ACCOUNT

EMAIL ADDRESS

BRAND

LOGO

SUB MARK

2-3 COLORS

1-2 FONTS

IMAGES

HERO IMAGE OR BACKGROUND

HEADSHOTS

BRAND PHOTOS

SERVICE OR PRODUCT PHOTOS

TEXT

KEYWORDS

HOME PAGE TEXT

SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS/PACKAGES

ABOUT PAGE TEXT

CALLS TO ACTION

TESTIMONIALS

DOWNLOADABLE ASSETS

CERTIFICATIONS/ACCREDITATIONS

MEMBERSHIPS/PARTNERS

LINKS

SOCIAL MEDIA

LINK TO PARTNERS, ACCREDITATIONS, ETC.

Congratulations!

YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY TO BUILDING— NOT ONLY A WEBSITE—BUT THE FOUNDATION FOR BUSINESS!

Every decision you've made so far, from defining your brand to gathering content, is shaping a space where your work can be seen, trusted, and celebrated. It's more than just pages on a

screen—it's your story, your values, your vision made visible.

Keep going, one step at a time. What you're creating is the beginning of something big!



Sarah Sullivan, Owner/Designer
Dionne Design | dionnedesign.com



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