

10 Highly Effective Web Design Tips Backed by Research



Presented by Focused Idea

Science-based Web Design Tips for Your Small Business Website



The internet is crawling with web design tips. It seems that everyone has an opinion on what the perfect website looks like. That's because, to a certain degree, design is personal. What one person loves, another might think is repulsive.

At the same time, web design is one of the most critical factors for the success of a website. Nearly 50% of people say that site design is their primary determinant for judging a company's credibility. As a result, it also affects conversions, bounce rate, and more.

If only there was a way to unearth some real data on how to create a successful website. Wait, there is! And a bunch of it has been arranged in this report.

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1. Prioritize Site Speed

It's probably one of the least debated facts in the web design field that speed is vital. Research has confirmed that it impacts everything from bounce rate over user satisfaction to conversions and income.

	Distinct Queries/User	Query Refinement	Revenue/User	Any Clicks	Satisfaction	Time to Click (increase in ms)
50ms	-	-	-	-	-	-
200ms	-	-	-	-0.3%	-0.4%	500
500ms	-	-0.6%	-1.2%	-1.0%	-0.9%	1200
1000ms	-0.7%	-0.9%	-2.8%	-1.9%	-1.6%	1900
2000ms	-1.8%	-2.1%	-4.3%	-4.4%	-3.8%	3100

If your site is slow, visitors will not wait. Period. Plus, because users care, search engines do too and take your page loading speed into their ranking algorithms. For that reason, it's paramount that you invest in making your site as fast as possible.

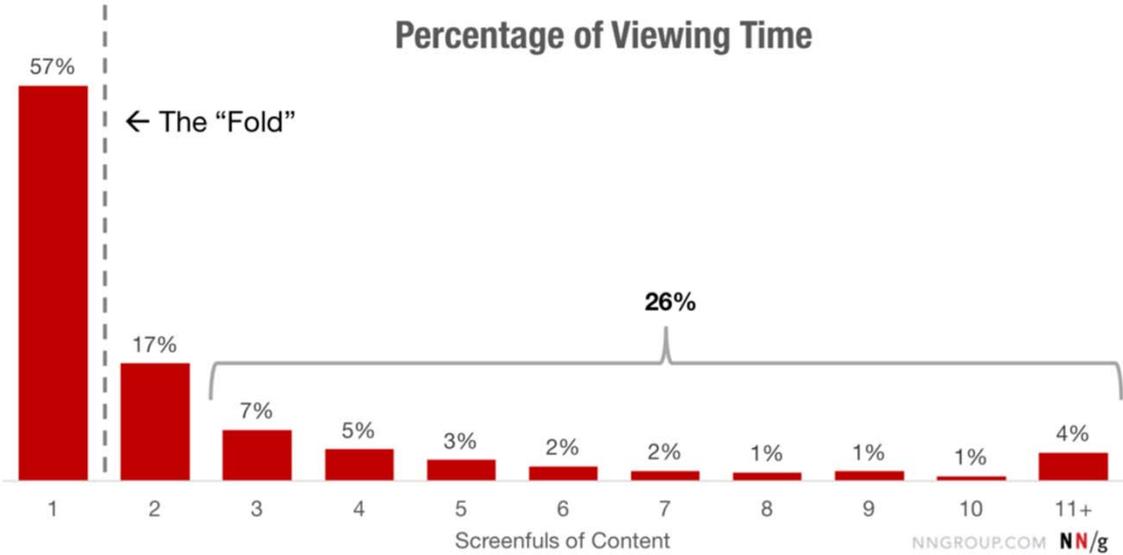
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2. Leverage the Fold

Whether or not the fold really exists is part of a passionate discussion. Some say that because of the various screen sizes these days, the fold doesn't matter anymore. Others have a different opinion.

However, people spend 57% of their time above the fold with a sharp decline afterward. Seventy-four percent dedicate their time to the first two screenfuls.



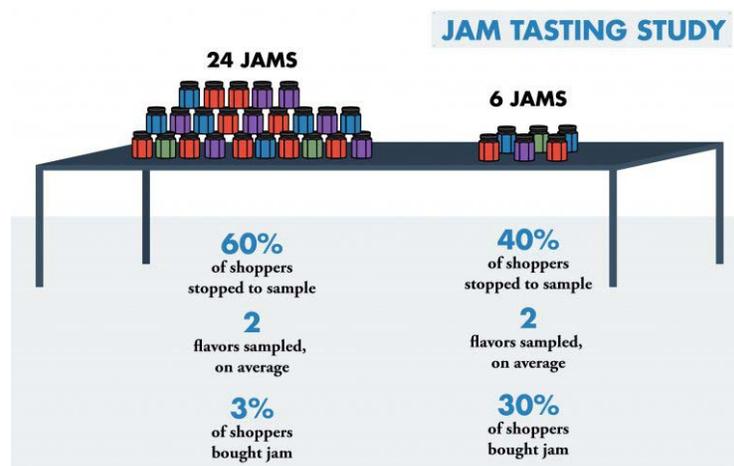
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3. Observe Hick's Law

Hick's Law declares that the more options someone has, the longer they will take to decide.

There's actually an interesting study on this phenomenon where people in a grocery store were given more or fewer choices of jam to try. In the end, those who had more options were much less likely to buy jam than the ones that had fewer options.



How does that matter for your website? Because you may be able to increase your conversions by merely narrowing the choices you give to users. Here are a few ideas:

- Decrease the amount of menu items
- Reduce form fields
- Concentrate on a single call-to-action
- Only show social buttons for platforms you are active on

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4. Keep it Simple

Staying with the idea of less is more, this also pertains to your overall website design. An extensive study by Google has revealed that visitors don't like visual complexity. The significance: the more complicated your design, the less engaging it is seen by visitors.

How does this affect your site? Aside from that point, here are a few thoughts:

- **Reimagine the sidebar** — More and more websites are discarding the sidebar in favor of single-column layout. It means fewer distractions and keeps the focus sharply on the content.
- **Stick to standard layouts** — People prefer familiarity and can get uneasy by non-standard website designs. So, it can be a good idea to stay with familiar design comparisons and layouts. You can still find other ways to stand out.

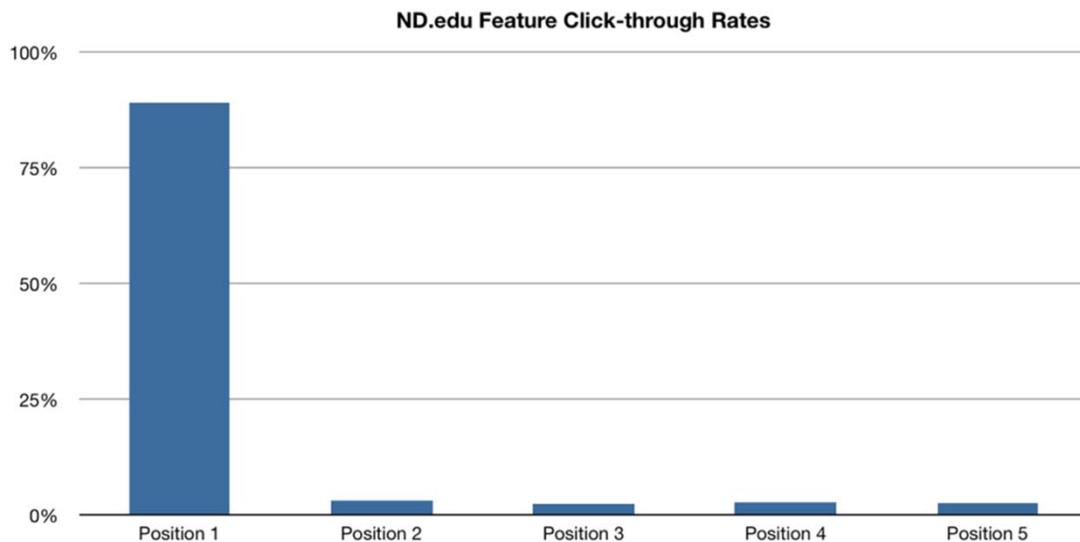
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5. Forget About Carousels, Sliders, Tabs and Accordions

Website owners love carousels. It's just about the most client-requested features. Regrettably, analysis says that they are rather worthless.

One of the most mind-blowing data comes from Notre Dame University. The webmaster there saw that the first slide on a carousel got almost 90% of the clicks while the rest were mostly overlooked.



Tabs and accordions face the same quandary as sliders and carousels – they frequently go unnoticed. This is increased by the fact that few visitors actually read the entire page. Most people simply scan and are not inclined to make more clicks to see your content.

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6. Prioritize Scrolling Over Clicking

So, if you don't compress content into sliders and/or accordions, how do you display it? The solution: put everything on one long page, including the material customarily buried. Seriously, it works.

Crazy Egg conducted a captivating case-study to confirm this. They went from having a basic, short sales page to one that was 20 times lengthier than the original.

The effect: conversions increased 30%! That's definitely something to take notice of.

It looks like users prefer scrolling a lot more than they like clicking. Accordingly, if you are currently publishing the information about your product across multiple pages, it's time to rethink this tactic.

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7. Direct Eyes with Visual Cues

One of the principal purposes of web design is to lead users. You can do that by giving varying importance to different parts, thereby guiding focus where you want it to go.

However, you can also use more straightforward visual cues to accomplish this. One is by taking advantage of the truth that people tend to look in the same direction as the people they see in ads.



Notice that more people read the text the baby is looking at than when the baby is looking directly at the camera? This is a real thing that you can use this to direct focus on your website where you want it most.

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8. Use Photos of People (But Avoid Stock Images)

Beyond using them to focus attention, incorporating images of other people on your site is usually a great idea. People like to connect to other people in real life as well as online. It's why, for example, we use *About* pages.

You can see this in action in one case study by Basecamp. They were able to boost their conversions by 102.5% by changing from a text-based landing page to one with a large image of a person in the background.



ORIGINAL DESIGN



PERSON DESIGN
102.5% ↑

Simple but effective. But, a note of caution: the entire effect is quickly neutralized by using stock photos. A Nielsen-Norman Group study determined that we are very proficient at identifying these generic images and ignoring them.

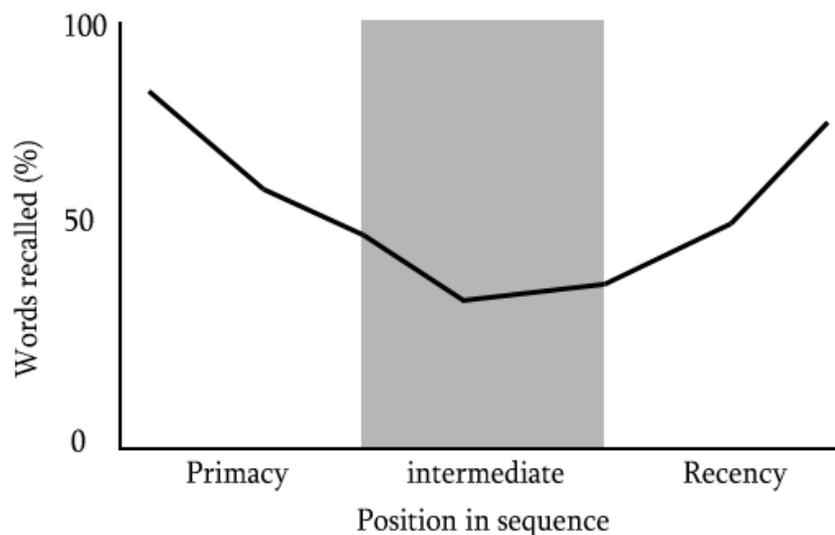
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9. Put Things in the Right Order

Working with lists, both ordered and unordered, is an excellent way to make content more convenient. But, here, too, human awareness is flighty.

This is because of the phenomenon called the serial-position effect. Basically, it states that in a list, people will most likely remember the items in the beginning and at the end. The middle section, however, goes mostly ignored.



The lesson here: When listing aspects of what you offer, be sure to put the most essential items where they will make the most significant impact.

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10. Leverage Social Proof

The last web design suggestion is about conformity bias. This is the inclination of people to do as others do. This means, if a group of people supports something, others are more prone to do the same.

One way to leverage this on your site is to give social proof. If you can show that other people have a positive judgment of your site, content, product, or service, new visitors are more inclined to do the same.

You can most easily prove this with social share counters, media mentions, and/or testimonials.

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Web design is a complex topic and is a factor with a lot of influence on the success of your website. For that reason, it's best to know what you are doing. Relying on research for advice is a good way to ensure that.

The above techniques can be used to make your sites more effective, better serve your visitors as well as improve conversion and other success markers of your site. Let's summarize them one more time:

1. Prioritize Site Speed
2. Leverage the Fold
3. Observe Hick's Law
4. Keep it Simple
5. Forget About Carousels, Sliders, Tabs and Accordions
6. Prioritize Scrolling Over Clicking
7. Direct Eyes with Visual Cues
8. Use Photos of People (But Avoid Stock Images)
9. Put Things in the Right Order
10. Leverage Social Proof

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