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The Overall Design

For a Great-looking Site

SBI Design Tips & Tricks
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A Special Booklet: SBI! Web Design Success

**Best Tips & Tricks to make your
Site Build It Site look Great!**

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Good design goes unnoticed -

***Bad design, on the other hand, has
the power to ruin all your efforts***

Dedicated to SBI! Users 🏆

This E-book is dedicated to SBI! users who wish to have their site design looking a little better, more beautiful, more appealing to your visitor.

You've worked on your template and inserted content and pictures; you've been working your butt off. The last thing you'd want to hear is that you haven't got a nice looking site.

However, deep down you also see that the presentation of all that work isn't shining through like you'd hoped for.

Well, it can be and it will be. This booklet is dedicated to the success of your SBI! design. Let me show you how... in an easy, quick and uncomplicated manner.

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No Design Wonders

Let's set the record straight right from the start. Design is subject to taste and **no one formula** will guarantee a great look & feel. If there were one formula, all sites would look the same and design would not be a concern.

But, as it turns out, design does play a part in the success of your site and hence it's a concern to you.

SBI! leads the way for us in design and the html coding of our Websites. That's a huge advantage and a lot less worry. The SBI! SiteDesigner collection of SBI! templates are your starting point. They form the foundation upon which you can build and customize. But it's not only your template that needs to be designed well. The presentation of content is **vitaly important** to your success.

It's in that stable SBI! foundation that you can polish your site to look fantastic and more connected with your target market. And it's in that finishing touch that you build extra trust and professionalism, making your site stand out in your field of expertise.

Think of a car without oil. It will run only so far until it comes to a halt. Design is the same. Your site will run even with bad design, but good design secures the ongoing momentum of your site.

The design know-how you'll gain from this booklet will result in a great look & feel that matches exactly what your site is all about without you having to be a design wonder.

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Overview

After all the mumbo-jumbo of introductions, terms of use and copyrights you'll find this booklet setup in a very practical way. Let me walk you through the steps that will give you the maximum design benefit.

First, I considered how you would need to approach your SBI! site without feeling that you need to redo everything. Thinking about that made me come up with a step-by-step approach to making your site look better.

I'll work with you from a broad approach right down to the smaller elements on your site. This approach guarantees the most effective and fastest design improvements.

PART 1. Powerful Knowledge Of Design Basics

A few general design basics that apply to SBI! sites. It's the knowledge umbrella above your site ensuring that you always build pages with the right foundation.

PART 2. Essential Template Design

Here's where you discover how to make a great first impression. No matter where visitors arrive on your site, your template is going to be the first thing they see.

PART 3. The Best Designed Navigation Bars And Links

Think navbars and links have nothing to do with design? Sorry, but view a few bad link designs and you'll realize that navbars and links play a major part in a good look & feel.

PART 4. Tips And Tricks For Great Page Layouts

Page layout tips & tricks show you the best way to bring THE look to every page while still keeping an eye on usability issues.

PART 5. Dealing With Common Items In Your Design

When you've arrived at step 5, your site will already be looking great. However, keeping an eye on the smaller design elements will ensure that you get the best out of every bit of screen real estate.

PART 6. How To Stand By Your Design Choices

Once here, you'll be quite comfortable building a good-looking SBI! site. But just to make sure you are convinced about it, too, I'll give you some tips on issues when reviewing your site.

Tell Us What You Think

When it comes to designing, you should realize that views and opinions from outside could help make things better. Of course - the same applies to this booklet.

Therefore, I want to invite you to send me your feedback. Let me know how it's been successful. Send a link to your site. And yes, I'm also open to criticism. All feedback helps make amendments or add-ons to the booklet, so eventually even more SBI! users create beautiful sites.

E-mail any comments, feedback or information. You can also visit our site and use the contact form.

Site: www.web-design-success.com

E-mail: kate@web-design-success.com

Look forward to hearing from you.

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About the Author(s) ¶

Richard Batteram originally wrote this e-Book. The current version has been gently re-written by Kate Wagner Hjorth, the new owner of Web Design Success, to match the new and amazing BlockBuilder, BB2.

Yes, I downloaded all the FREE SBI! stuff and read till deep into the night. I was hooked. Diligently I worked through it and decided to take the next step and order our first Site Build It site. It was a whole different interface at the time. And over the years we've seen it grow bigger and better.

I believe the above to be the story of many SBlers.

I started to create my first website, and while doing that I participated in an SBI! design contest. Graphic Design is my trade. I was lucky to win the contest and after that a guy, who owned a Design company that worked exclusively for SBlers, contacted me: Web-Design-Success.com, Mr. Richard Batteram. For a number of years I worked as a designer for Web Design Success and along with the Web Design Success Team, we created hundreds of template designs for SBlers.

Some time ago, Richard Batteram decided to explore new ventures and he sold his company to me.

I still feel design is not rocket science but somehow my designs and Site Build It just clicked. Eventually that led us to write a booklet so that everybody could make better SBI! designs... A basic approach by simply following a few useful tricks and tips.

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How to improve your template design quickly and easily

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How to Use this Booklet

This booklet is written as a practical guide on how to improve your SBI! design. It's written in a style that enables the non-designer to follow basic steps (see the Overview section for details on what kind of steps) to ensure that the SBI! site will look good enough to guarantee a professional look & feel.

Your design will always be subject to your topic, your own style, the material you have available, and to a great degree to your own design wishes and efforts.

However, using this guide will minimize the need to have design experience. There will be no need for design programs and it's written so that any SBI! user can have a site with a great look & feel.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– We have tried to provide as many examples as possible. We didn't want to do this on anyone else's SBI! site, so the design examples are based on our own site, images from best-motorcycle-gear.com and a non existent website to show you the elements. Most things we talk about are implemented on our company site and if we haven't, we probably have a reason.

Why not use references through links to real sites?

Real sites change and even sometimes cease to exist. We know how frustrating it is to click a link that doesn't work or see an example that no longer applies.

We will provide some links to "real" sites with information that supplements our design advice.

Reference sites in images:

- www.web-design-success.com
- best-motorcycle-gear.com

At the end of the booklet we have made some page screenshots/images and explained why we designed a page in a certain way.

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Contents

Introduction	13
<u>Part 1 - Powerful Knowledge Of Design Basics</u>	15
Not A Perfect Design But Still A Success	16
Rules Worth Respecting	17
Design Comes From Somewhere	18
Recognize Your Kind Of Market	19
A Great Invitation	20
Use Common Elements	21
Let Your Design Flow	22
Design Noise In Your Site	23
Friends Don't Like Surprises	24
Present Your Site In An Understandable Way	25
<u>Part 2 - The Essential Template Design</u>	
The Core Of Your Site Presentation	28
Make Your Site Meaning Super Obvious	29
Make It All Look The Same	30
I'm Sorry, I Can't See You	31
Using Colors In Your Site	32
<u>Part 3 - The Best Designed Navigation Bars & Links</u>	
Hard To Find Your Way If The Destination Keeps Changing	34
Make Navigation Integrate Into The Whole Site	35
Use Easy To Understand Words In Navigation	36
Show Me That It's Clickable	37
Don't Be Scared To Repeat Important Links	38

Part 4 - Tips & Tricks For Great Page Layouts

Design For What You Want Done	40
Does Your Content Match Your Design	41
Design Above The Fold	42
Break Content Into Smaller Topics	43
If They Are Similar They Go Together	44
Important Info At The Top	45
Avoid Having Too Much Material On One Page	46
Work With The White Spaces On A Page	47
Avoid Making Design A Roadblock	48
Align Items On A Page	49
Use Lists To Make A Point	50
Poor Integration Of Ads	51
Use A Footnote In Your Design	52

Part 5 - Dealing With Common Items In Your Design

That Form Looks Way Too Complicated	54
Extra Emphasis Can Lead To Overkill	55
Dealing With Senseless Words In Your Design	56
Headline Designs	57
Long Text Leads To Poor Design	58
Images Need To Match The Content	59
Flashing Is Annoying	60
Images Too Heavy Or Too Big	61
Right Kind Of Image For The Job	62

Part 6 - How To Stand By Your Design Choices

Cut Down Load Times For The Best Presentation	64
The Right Feedback From The Right People	65
View Your Design Everywhere You Go	66
How Does It Look Printed	67
Not Everybody Will Like It	68

<u>Final Words</u>	69
---------------------------	----

<u>Appendix</u>	70
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Introduction ⓘ

You might feel that you need to be born with design skills to be able to create beautiful looking sites, flyers, logos, etc. But that's not entirely true...

Don't let me fool you! Design talent helps and naturally it always shines through in the long run. However, there's a foundation that's needed for any design to be successful. Once you're familiar with that foundation, it's skill, talent and experience that will take you to the next level.

But for SBI! we don't need to go to that next design level to produce beautiful looking sites. We do, however, need to be familiar with a few practicalities in design. I'll show you how to avoid common design mistakes and how to apply tips and tricks to make your site look great, professional and trustworthy.

And that's all...

No fancy software programs, no hype or redirects. After reading this, you can easily improve your SBI! look & feel and end up having a site to be proud of.

But... in the end... it's up to you!

*This page intentionally left blank.
Space is important to good design, too!*

Powerful Knowledge Of Design Basics

- Part 1 -

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Not A Perfect Design But Still A Success



Why it's important – Save time and energy by not over designing.

If you're not DaVinci, don't try to be. It's very easy to get caught up in design and end up tweaking for hours when it isn't going to make one bit of difference. Yes, it might make a difference to you, but does it matter for your visitors?

One of the first fundamentals in creating a site that looks good is realizing that you don't need to make perfect designs to be successful. And that applies more so for SBI! sites. We have a lot to do and design is only a small part of it.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Always remember an essential in SBI! design. Don't end up spending more time & energy on improving a design (or one small design feature) that already looks good and gets the job done.

Rules Worth Respecting



Why it's important – *Knowing a few basic design guidelines will assist all your design efforts in the future.*

Rules sounds so official and it might feel like a contradiction to what I'm trying to say in this booklet (we state: You don't use strict rules to tell you where to place things on a site, but you do use rules to help bring composition to your designs).

So, respecting a few basic rules will ensure good composition. Breaking them will automatically put your site in the doghouse and all other design efforts will not really be a success.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Of course now you are wondering, “What are these design rules?” Well, not to worry because most of them are discussed in this booklet. However, check the following resources (time permitting) for a good foundation on design rules and basics. They are well worth the read.

- [Wikipedia about Web Design](#) and
- www.digital-web.com (*tip*)

Design Comes From Somewhere



Why it's important – The clearer you know the style and design you want to present, the easier and sooner you will accomplish it.

Good design doesn't just appear. It's not like designers just make a design from nothing. Design comes from ideas, type of market, type of clients, communication, goals and available material.

Look at your own site and have a talk with yourself (we know that sounds strange). But ask yourself, "What kind of topic do I have (playful, business, leisure)? What images do I have and what kind of style do I have in mind?"

It's from this kind of planning that you get an overall feeling for how you want your site to look. With no planning you'll always be searching for the right touch in your site. Having a design plan will make it much easier to judge whether images, text, template and colors are right for you.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Take a moment to write down and describe the style you'd like to present in your site. Now check to make sure that your site is on track. It may very well be that you are a little off track. No problem, just keep referring back to your wanted style as you implement new design. Your design will come together if you just stick to it.

Recognize Your Kind Of Market



Why it's important – By knowing the designs in your market, you'll know what you need to present in your design to fit into that market.

There is so much you can learn from your own marketplace - your competition. It is essential to have an idea of the marketplace, if you want your site to be part of that market.

Now I'm not saying that you need to be cutting edge and in pursuit of the big leading companies in your field. What I am saying is that you'll notice a certain type of style in your marketplace that you need to tune in to.

Notice the way graphics are presented, text is written and styles are made. By visiting sites with similar topics, you'll automatically get an idea of what makes your kind of visitors more at ease. Presenting that feeling in your site isn't easy, but it only takes a few site elements to have your visitors feel right at home.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– I don't want you to copy anything from another site. I am, however, inviting you to put your own spin on styles you see around you.

- <http://www.blogger.com>,
- <http://wordpress.org>,
- <http://www.livejournal.com>,
- <http://www.typepad.com>

Here are four sites and their market is blog hosting. Notice how they all have that clean, sharp and fresh layout. If I needed to design a site for a blog hoster, I would implement that same style but add one or two little things, which would give it its own identity.

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A Great Invitation



***Why it's important – Attract your type of visitors into your site.
That's a great key to site success. Ensure that your invitation is spot on.***

There is no need to design for everybody. There is, however, a need to design for your target visitors.

To prove my point, let me give you an example. Let's say that you have a Website about building houses. It's in your best interest to design with your target visitors in mind. That might mean a little more technical talk, more technical images, and a construction feel in your template. I'm sure this will get the heart of your target clients beating faster. Now they want to know more about your site. You have built credibility.

There is no need to design for the occasional (non-targeted) visitor who pops into your site. "So what if that visitor doesn't like the design?" you ask. The chance of that visitor becoming a regular visitor or a client is super unlikely anyway. So ... Tough!



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Picture the target visitor you are aiming for on your SBI! Website. Head over to your site and check if your design matches your target visitor. How do you check? See if your words, colors, images, etc. are typical things matching your concept and thus your wanted visitors.

Example – www.dewalt.com

This site is not an SBI! site but it illustrates the point quite well. Design for your target market and make it inviting for them to come in and feel at home. Notice the tough logo, the typical yellow background and the machines & tools.

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Use Common Elements

Why it's important – You don't want to lose any potential clients. Use common elements that keep your pages accessible to all.

Let's say you have attracted your target visitor and he/she is browsing around the site (or so you hope). Now you want to avoid using specific page elements that keep her from using your page. A frequent mistake is making sites that need very specific things to work and look just right.

We don't run a high risk of doing this because SBI! takes care of the html coding for us. But still I wanted to mention it to you. No matter how well you know your own market and visitors always use the most common elements in your site content.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check your page content to ensure that you are not using advanced, special high tech features that only the latest up-to-date visitor can use: the width of your site layout, the sizes and downloads of pages, the need to have certain plug-ins.

Example – This is also where I'd like to introduce "Grandma." Make sure that Grandma's PC can view and use your entire site. I think grandma would have a lot of trouble with this site:

www.strategixsoftware.com



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Let Your Design Flow



Why it's important – Sites are viewed by scanning the design and content. Create a design for scanning and your site will look amazing to your visitors.

Maybe a better way of describing “flow” is to say “scan-ability.” You must promise me that you take this point to heart and always check your design for scan-ability.

Ask any expert on usability and scanning is a major factor in how we view sites. It's what we do (like it or not). So from now on you must ask yourself, “How does my site look if I just scan the whole thing?” Did you do it? Was it a little shocking? It can be!

Many site owners expect people to sit down and read every word on a page, just like it was written and you wanted it to be used. Sorry, that's not going to happen straight away.

The fact is that first your design needs to be easy to scan. Once it's easy to scan it starts to flow. The visitor feels comfortable with your site and picks pages and text areas that she/he wants to know more about. They read those areas in detail.

You can test your own site by scrolling down the screen. With your free hand point to where your eyes are looking as you go down the page at a reasonable speed. If your eyes (or the finger which is pointing) are making illogical stops, improve it (e.g.: remove it, put less emphasis on it, relocate it) and the scanning will become better.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check your pages for scan-ability, a very important part of good design. By following the tips mentioned in this booklet your scan-ability will automatically improve.

www.webdesignfromscratch.com

A great resources on creating design flow (highly recommended).

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Design Noise On Your Site



Why it's important -- Too much presentation on a page kills design, usability and your most wanted response. By cleaning up, you don't run that risk.

It's called noise because it distracts your visitor from what you want her/him to see do. It can take enormous determination to decide what is causing noise in your page, locate it and remove it.

Putting everything on a page does NOT make it more effective. It does NOT improve your chances of more revenue, it does NOT make your Most Wanted Response clearer and it sure doesn't improve your look & feel. All it does is create more and more noise in your design.

The more noise you put on a page, the less chance you have of making a nice looking design. Doing your best to keep noise down is essential for a site to be nice.

Keeping noise down is a classic when it comes to Google ads. Customizing your ads to sit smoothly in your site lowers the distraction (less noise), improves your design and ultimately your click-throughs.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check and scan your pages for noise. Honestly ask yourself, “Is this thing here disturbing my main message and design?” If it is, remove it. You want clean pages with hardly any disturbance (noise).

Example – [Our Contact Us Page](#)

On this contact page we eliminated all noise (distraction) so that it would be as easy as possible to contact us. The only other thing we could have done was to remove the left navigation buttons (but that would not have been so user friendly - so we didn't do that)

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Friends Don't Like Surprises



Focus –Keep visitors from leaving because of unfriendly design features.

Treating your visitors like friends is a common approach to making good personal Websites. Now, after we've made friends, let's whack them on the head with a nasty pop-up, a new page design after every click and a constantly changing navigational setup.

Our example might be a little over the top but with good design comes good manners. It's funny how people are often upset about pop-ups or pop-unders, but when it comes to their own site their use is suddenly justified.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that nothing on your site is bad manners. It's your site and you can best judge what that means. But ask yourself, "How would I like to be treated on someone else's site?"

Example – You want to make a reference to an eBay page, where you sell goods. On this eBay page you present your goods for auction. You don't want to lose your visitor to eBay (by letting the click open eBay page in the same browser window and then your site would be gone). Warn the visitor that the eBay page links open in a new browser window. That way you still keep an "unfriendly" pop-up feature but warn the visitor.

Present Your Site In An Understandable Way



Why it's important – Your site and design are perceived as much more valuable if the content is directly usable.

We're on the edge of walking into a new field of expertise here (Website usability) and I would like to stick to design as much as possible.

Good design means also presenting usable design. Is your design usable? Ask yourself, "Does my Website visitor have to convert anything on my site before it can be used?"



– If you are using any numbers, images, graphs, maps, figures or calculations, make sure they are understandable straight away. Your visitor should not have to convert them to be able to understand them. With conversion I mean: does your information need to be taken off the site and rearranged (recalculated, reviewed, etc) before the information is understood?

Example – best-motorcycle-gear.com
Here Richard presented a selection guide (for motorcycle boots) in the easiest and most understandable way.

Selecting the Best Motorcycle Boots

Motorcycle boots can get complicated quickly. Especially the full length boots. But motorcycle boots come in many different types and when you know what to watch selecting the best motorcycle boots becomes easy. With a motorcycle boots fitting, buying guide and the latest most popular motorcycle boots reviews you're guaranteed a great buy...



Latest [Motorcycle Boots Reviews](#) (by: most popular)
[Alpinestars S MX 5 Boots](#), [Vega Touring Boots](#), [Icon Tarmac Boots](#), [Shift Racing Fuel Shoes](#)



[Motorcycle boots buying guide](#) (tip!)

On this page you will find our motorcycle boots buying guide. It will help you discover exactly what you need to watch when buying motorcycle boots. It's a very useful list to have when it's time for new mc boots. Discover more...



[Motorcycle boots fitting guide](#)

Like all shoes and boots... a perfect fit is important. This motorcycle boots fitting guide will help you decide if the motorcycle boots you selected are a good match for you. Read more...



The Essential Template Design

- step 2 -

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The Core Of Your Site Presentation



Why it's important – Templates are by far your most important opportunity to present a great look & feel that matches your concept.

Look and feel says it all and your template is the best way to express it. We would say that it's the most important thing to get right in your SBI! site when it comes to design. It doesn't need to be fancy. But it needs to match your content and site concept in the best way.

This is so important that it hurts to see so many SBI! users dive into content building and overlook the power of their templates. And now you too need to be honest here... Did you end up moving too fast past your template? If so, then it's time to make some changes.

Here's our guarantee: Energy spent here will reward you every time. Your template will follow your visitor to any page of your site. A nice template is a huge confidence builder and shows your professionalism. Plus ... once you have a great template, it doesn't cost you any more energy.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Does your template match your site concept? Try your hardest to make it match the content. It dramatically improves the value of your site.

At a minimum, select a neutral template (one that has no implication of a certain field or specialty) and let your content (text and content images) convey the site topic. However, if your template matches your content it's a great benefit!

Example – www.web-design-success.com

Here is the customized template we created for our own site and it immediately shows the power of a good template. It also is a very straightforward design. It is fresh, uncomplicated and gives the visitor a professional feeling while saying 'this site is all about SBI!! designs.'

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Make Your Site Meaning Super Obvious



Why it's important – It's a free chance to present your name, logo and slogan. Why waste such a great opportunity.

There is no need to waste this fantastic opportunity. Your site name, logo and slogan should be on your site at all times. The best way to do this is by customizing your top logo with a graphic program.

We know that we promised no usage of special graphic programs, but I had to mention this one. This is such a potential that it is worth asking somebody to do it for you. You need to take out your top image and make sure it has your site name and slogan.

Now work with me here... All we're trying to explain to you is the potential of the top image in your template design.

Ensure that all your pages will present your site theme and topic loud and clear to all visitors. Placing your name and slogan in your top image graphic leaves all page headlines available to say what that page is all about (because what your site is all about is already in the top image).



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

Does your visitor know within seconds what your site is all about and what the name of the site is? Use the top logo image to present the reason for and identity of the site. Use the page headlines to say what that page is about. Remember to describe the slogan as "what's in it for them."

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Make It All Look The Same



Why it's important -- Sticking to visual design consistency makes your site look better and more user friendly.

Your visitor is looking for design elements that are the same throughout the site. If you overlook consistency, you risk making your visitors feel lost and uneasy with your site.

As you're developing your content, you'll come across different features that can be presented in the same way throughout your whole site. Apart from saving you huge amounts of work, a visual consistency creates a nice design and great usability.

So avoid different types of icons, different styles of writing, or different page builds. Work hard to keep the overall layout looking the same. That way, all attention goes to the true content.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

Check the way your site looks on all your pages. Do your very best to keep it looking the same.

You do this by building all your pages in the same way, placing elements in the same area, trying to reuse certain images, splitting up pages in the same way, using similarly styled headlines, fonts etc.

It will improve speed, usability and design of your site. This, in the end, enables visitors to do things you want. You will create and get your MWR (most wanted response)

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I'm Sorry, I Can't See You



Why it's important – Using the wrong background will break down every design effort you make. It also wreaks havoc with usability.

Background images that have a pattern below the text or background colors that hardly differ from the foreground make reading the Web page like trying to find your way in the fog.

Use high contrast between background and text - dark text on a light colored background. Keep it simple and 99.9% of your visitors will thank you for it.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

Please don't mess with a simple clear background. Your site background should have a high contrast (containing no image) to the text on top of it. You are buying the drinks if I catch you making this mistake, my friend.

Example – www.webpagesthatsuck.com

If you want to find a site still using bad backgrounds you might find them at web pages that suck.

P.S. We do wonder about their own site design?

Using Colors In Your Site



Why it's important – You don't want to be surprised that your site looks very different on other computers.

The more you use very specific colors the more risk you run of having them appear differently on other computers. As a matter of fact, you can run into some very ugly surprises when viewing your own site from another location.

Using Web safe colors eliminates this risk. However, you will be limited in the number of color choices. All I want you to realize is that not all colors are the same on other computers. I often use non-Web-safe-colors but I realize what I risk. The more basic the color is, the less chance that it will change on you.

Additionally, think about what kind of colors you are using in your site. Colors can match a topic! A scuba dive site would do nicely with a darker blue color. A safari site would be great in earthy colors and a site about love would be good in a romantic red.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Whenever you have a chance, check to make sure your site colors and images are coming across the way you intended. View your site from many different types of computers. Also, check that the colors in your site make sense with your topic.

Example – [Wikipedia - web safe colors](#)

Is a great resource for more on Web colors .

And here is a great resource for choosing a color scheme - [mezzoblue.com](#)

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The Best Designed Navigation Bars & Links

– step 3 –

Hard To Find Your Way If It Keeps Changing



Why it's important – When you select certain spots in your design for navigation, your visitors will like your design and find it easier to use your site.

We discussed template designs and how it's best to keep design elements the same. You can imagine that the same goes for the way your navigation is presented on your site.

Finding your way around sites is the pure essence of what Websites and the Internet are all about. The tolerance for poor or changing navigation throughout a site is very low. You need to have a plan when it comes to guiding your visitors around and you need to stick to the plan.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check to make sure that you are using the same kind of navigation throughout your whole site and that the visitor can find it in the same place on every page every time. Tier 2 pages are often no problem because of the navbar (see note below). But it's especially the text links to Tier 3 pages that need your eye for detail. Make them consistent and use the same location time and time again.

While on the topic of navbars and buttons... Did you mess with your original buttons that fitted into your design perfectly? Why? Buttons not really designed for your navbar, usually wreck the whole look & feel of a site. They stick out and make the site look amateurish. Great looking integrated navbar buttons are valuable. Go with the originals. Change only the color or font.

Make Navigation Integrate Into The Whole Site



Why it's important -- Let the navigation be the backbone to your site design. It's so important that it should be one of your first design priorities.

From time to time you come across an SBI! site that seems like little separate islands of content and links. It happens most often to the left navbar, which has missed its connection to the rest of the site.

Mostly it's because the navbar and the background of the navbar have colors different from those of the top image. This immediately breaks the site up into parts and spoils the overall feel of your site.

As mentioned earlier, you should work hard at creating a unity between the different parts of your site.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Make sure that Grandma can make her way around the site without asking any questions. She may not be the target visitor, but she is one of your best testers. ;o)

Make navigation easy with the left margin navigation bar and when going to pages that aren't on that navigation bar, try to include text link navigation at the end or beginning of the designated page.

Use Easy To Understand Words In Navigation



Why it's important – Keep navigation understandable throughout your whole design. Your visitors will thank you for being so clear.

Although you have your target visitor clicking around your site and you think she/he will know what you mean with “Tubidoes click here” (we made up that word right now), try to keep the words in your navigation short, simple, powerful, and most of all, clear.

Of course, you’ll be using topic related words but use the clearest version of each word. Using unclear words in your navigation leads to no clicks. Sure, you can provoke curiosity and temptation but keep it simple and understandable.



Ask an outsider to judge your links and navbar buttons. (If you want to do this exactly right, ask someone who is a target visitor.) Check to see if the navigation makes sense to them. I have often been surprised at how easily I make such a mistake. I think, “Oh, they will understand.” I find confusion often happens when I’m trying to be clever with link text.

Example – from *best-motorcycle-gear.com*

Richard's motorcycle site is all about gear, so he decided to only use the word "Motorcycle" and exactly one word that described the topic on each button. Some buttons would have been better with two words but he wanted unity. At the end he had broader categories and gave them a few words in the button. For clarity he listed them all at the bottom on his "Table of Contents"). Now the navigation looks clean, understandable and logical.

- ➔ Home
- ➔ Motorcycle Helmets
- ➔ Motorcycle Jackets
- ➔ Motorcycle Gloves
- ➔ Motorcycle Pants
- ➔ Motorcycle Boots
- ➔ Motorcycle Leathers
- ➔ Motorcycle Tires
- ➔ Motorcycle Exhausts
- ➔ Motorcycle Chains
- ➔ Motorcycle Batteries
- ➔ Motorcycle Wheels
- ➔ Motorcycle Brakes
- ➔ Motorcycle Oils
- ➔ Motorcycle Fluids
- ➔ Contact Us

Show Me That It's Clickable



Why it's important – By messing with the design of links you end up confusing your visitors.

If you don't know you can click on it, how can you click? Sure, your navigation bar will be quite obvious and most text links will also be recognizable enough. However, it's with custom images and underlined text that problems often arise.

If an image is clickable and it's not obvious from the start, tell your visitor. You can even go so far as including a text link below the image. Don't underline words because often visitors think of underlined words as links.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that links are the correct color. Make sure that you are not underlining normal text or visitors will think it's a link. Also helpful is to mention – click here – in a text link. When using images that double as links, make sure it's obvious. You might have to add a text link below the image or incorporate the image alt tag. (That's the tag used to show text when somebody hovers over the image).

Example – [3rd Column clickable images](#)

In the 3rd column we added two images for easier navigation; one for this e-Book and one for the examples of designs. In this case we used a "button" with the text "Click Here". We could have added a text link, but we like the button and we use the same kind of button on all pages.

Don't Be Afraid To Repeat Important Links



Why it's important – By repeating important links in your design you dramatically improve their click through rates.

I miss things all the time. As a matter of fact I'd probably lose my head if it weren't screwed on. On Websites, visitors often miss essential links, links that you really wanted and needed your visitor to use.

Don't be afraid of repeating important links in your layout. If you take them into account early on in your design, you can find different potential spots for (re)presenting them on your page.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that you are repeating important links in your design. Select special areas on your pages that you are using as navigational areas. Remember Grandma... Give her a second chance if she missed the first opportunity.

Example – [SBI! Design Tips](#)

Because I felt it was important for you to be able to download this booklet quickly and easily (and I felt it was a main point of the page) I repeated the download link a few times - In the navbar, the 3rd column and on several other pages.

Tips & Tricks For Great Page Layouts

- step 4 -

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Design For What You Want Done



Why it's important – Keeping an eye on design can improve your most wanted response significantly.

It's often forgotten how design can boost your most wanted response. You can easily improve that by putting more emphasis on the MWR with design layout and features.

Start by asking yourself, "What does this page need to accomplish?" Then try to focus not only on your text but also on the whole page design.

Google ads are a great example. Your ultimate goal might be to have your visitor click through on any of your Google ads. When you tone down other obvious links and elements in your page, your Google ads receive more attention. This leads to more clicks.

The same principle applies to order forms, e-zine subscriptions, page click-throughs and many other things you might want done. Design can help.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– What is the MWR (most wanted response) for your page? Make sure that it stands out in the best way possible. Incorporate your design to make that happen.

Think of detour signs that make you go a certain direction. Now lights, signs and flags don't work on sites. You need to be clever and subtle... but still apply the same principle. Send the visitor in a certain direction. It's a bit of an art.

Example – live.com, yahoo.com, google.com

Can it be any clearer than with these sites?

Design for what needs to be done. We all know that the MSN, Yahoo and Google have much more to offer but see how they restrain themselves and focus on what needs to be done.

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Does Your Content Match Your Design



Why it's important – Avoid having visitors think that you are not strong in your niche because of unrelated content.

This is a slightly different approach than described earlier (How to match your template and site topic). In this scenario, I presume you have already established yourself with a fine template and are building content as you go along.

Now considering what kind of page you are building, is the content you're placing in your page still matching the template it sits in? In other words, does it still match your overall theme? If not, chances are you're getting off topic and risk spoiling the power of your design.

To emphasize my point... Multiply the above scenario by many off topic pages and what do you get? A site that isn't being true to your niche! Avoid as many off-topic pages as possible. And when building them, try to move them out of the main navigational setup. Use a footer to do this.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check which pages hold content that don't match your concept. Ask yourself why? How important are they? Can they be moved out of the main navigation setup? (try the footer area). Remember, when you have the best presentation (design) in your specialized field, your visitors need to feel that all pages belong within your topic.

Example – mightygoods.com

I think blog sites are a good example of how content influences your site's perception. Generally speaking the templates bloggers have to use are generic and plain. A good blogger will insert pictures and use topic related words and headlines to still show what the site is about. Now back to SBI!!, if you are using a SBI!! template that **doesn't** say much about your topic, do your best to insert topic related pictures, icons, headlines and text.

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Design Above The Fold



Why it's important – Design your pages to show the most important things first, making your visitor want to discover more.

The word "fold" comes from the newspaper business and it represents the area visible when the newspaper is still folded, the area where you'll find great headlines and small intros to get you hooked and open the paper to read more.

Well, on Websites it works the same way, and here we are referring to the first bit of site that is visible without any scrolling. You want to place your best and most eye catching text and images right here. "*Hook 'em and reel 'em in*".

Because screens have different resolutions, you can't give a set size for the above fold area.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– "Fire your big guns first." (Ken Evoy.) For us it means: Make sure that you are presenting your best stuff on the first visible screen. Swap content around if need be to make the best impression with what's visible first after the page has loaded.

Oh yes... remember to present that first screen from a "what's in it for them" point of view (and by "them," I mean your visitors)!

Break Content Into Smaller Topics



Why it's important – By breaking your content into sections, your page design becomes much more attractive.

Think how all your page content would look laid out on the kitchen counter! Now imagine having to sort it out and place it into different topics. It could very well be that you end up with only two topics or many different ones.

The number of topics doesn't matter! The fact that you can look and decide that your page content has different topics is essential in presenting a page.

With the knowledge of your topics you can design each page by respecting that you have different topics and splitting them up in your page layout. Sometimes all that is needed is a little extra white space or a line to break up the page.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Remember how important scanning was? Well, dividing your page into topics makes scanning a whole lot easier. Divide your page into smaller sections by using sub headlines, extra white spaces, images, lines, etc.

Important: When I refer to different topics on one page, I of course assume that all of the topics discuss the overall page topic and that the overall page topic matches the site topic.

If They Are Similar They Go Together ✓



Why it's important – When you place closely matching topics together within your page design, your whole page becomes much more logical for the visitor to use.

As you design a page to be built up into different topics areas, you'll notice that it would be quite impractical to place similar topic areas far apart. Think of your visitor and how that would seem while moving up and down your page, trying to make some sense of it all. Hmm... I thought I'd already read about that.

Grouping similar topics has a lot to do with the previous tip. The better and more logically you split your page topics, the easier it is to match certain topics together.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check to make sure that similar topics sit as near to each other as possible. They can still be in different sections, but grouped in the same area.

Ask yourself (a) Is this topic strong enough to be placed individually on a page? (b) What makes the most sense to follow up this topic with?

Important (also mentioned before): Of course, when I refer to different topics on one page, I assume that all of the topics discuss the overall page topic and that the overall page topic matches the site topic.

Example – from *best-motorcycle-gear.com*

On this page Richard had to deal with a very long page. The whole page is about different things concerning helmets. He split the page up to make it more logical parts (introduction, tips, fitting guide, types of helmets etc).

[Motorcycle helmet buying guide](#) (tip!)

This motorcycle helmet buying guide will help you discover exactly what you need to watch when buying a motorcycle helmet. So before you buy, make sure to review these important points....



[Motorcycle helmet fitting guide](#)

If you don't know exactly how to make sure you have a perfect fit you can never be guaranteed a great motorcycle helmet. The steps in this fitting guide make sure you select the best helmet for your head...



[Types of motorcycle helmets](#)

The most important piece of safety equipment is your motorcycle helmet and there are five motorcycle helmet types from which to choose. Here is an introduction to motorcycle helmets and briefly how they work. Read more...



[Motocross motorcycle helmets](#)

Motocross helmets resemble full-face street helmets, with the full head coverage, visor, and chin bar. Motocross motorcycle helmets are used primarily with off road motorcycles. They come with a variety of colors, graphics, and options. Read more...



[Half motorcycle helmets](#)

Also known as a shorty motorcycle helmet. These motorcycle helmets offer the least amount of protection however offer the widest optical view. Half helmets are similar to a bowl shape. They have no chin bar, and do not come down the back of the neck, thus just protecting your



Important Info At The Top



Why it's important -- The top always receives more attention, so use it to your advantage in page design.

Your page layout is probably looking much better by now. You've split it into different topics and grouped similar topics together while still keeping them somewhat separated.

The following is different from placing important info above the fold as mentioned earlier. Now you order every topic on a page to present the most important info first.

Honestly judge the importance of each topic and the information mentioned. The more important the information, the closer to the top it goes. The more important the page topic, the higher it goes on the navigation.

But **do** look at it from your visitor's point of view. What's the most important thing for her/him?



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that your headlines, sub headlines, tops of paragraphs, and tops of lists contain the most important info you want to present. Make sure the topics at the top of the page are also the most important.

Don't expect your visitor to read down a semi dull paragraph in the hope of discovering the important stuff. Present the good stuff as soon as possible.

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Avoid Having Too Much Material On One Page



Why it's important - Too much material on a page will kill anything you actually want to do with that page. Less is better.

Avoid endless amounts of information. Did you know that a long page of text was one of the most annoying things about Web pages for a long time?

While it's not quite as annoying now because scrolling has become much easier and connections are much faster you should still avoid too much content on one page. Frankly speaking, it's scary, and after two or three page screens of scrolling most visitors get exhausted and want out.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– This always sounds so much easier than it really is. But you need to be hard on yourself and take out all material that isn't contributing to the MWR (most wanted response) for your page. Too much page material spoils great design.

Golden Rule: Try to present the same page with as little content as possible while still making a great impression.

Feel free to use the content that you cut away on a new page (yeah, even include some good new keywords) you will end up with some nice looking focused pages.

Work With The White Spaces On A Page



Why it's important – White spaces are often overlooked but are useful for creating great looking page designs.

The white spaces you have at your disposal are often overlooked, but are highly effective in page design. Using a few well-placed white lines will create a breathing space within your design (in BB2 you can use Shift + Enter to make a soft enter leaving one line blank).

Remember when we told you it's all about making it scan-able? Well, white spaces do just that. You may need to play a little... extra or fewer white lines create just the right look.

If you are using an HTML editor then you can use a
 tag. Make sure that your
 tags attach to each other like so

 and that the first one you use sticks to the last thing in your sentence. The
 tags apply when you create your site content with a text or HTML editor.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Discover how inserting extra white spaces in your page design can improve the look & feel dramatically.

Example – [web-design-success.com](http://www.web-design-success.com)

Notice how many white spaces are between the different topics. Especially on a homepage you are often presenting a variety of different topics; extra white lines help them stand out by themselves.

Use some additional white space at the bottom of each page.

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www.web-design-success.com

Avoid Making Design A Roadblock



Why it's important – Avoid the page layout influencing the follow through of visitors; this might result in them missing the end of a page where you want them to do something.

Sometimes without noticing it you make a design that creates a roadblock, an obstruction in the flow through your site.

Imagine your page as a road that your visitor is traveling down while he/she scrolls the screen. You've placed two big images just before your order link. That kind of design is what I refer to as a roadblock.

Roadblocks come in many forms: images, banners, unexpected introduction of different content, little navbar boxes and much more.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Scan down your pages and notice if something interrupts the flow and makes you stop scanning. If that stop holds no value, it's a roadblock and I suggest that you remove it from your page design to keep the flow going. Trust your feeling here.

Align Items On A Page



**Alignment creates rest for those tired eyes (Visitors have viewed many pages before yours).
What a treat to be able to relax on your design!**

Aligning a page is not hard to do and when consistently done it results in great design. Draw imaginary (here I go again with my imagination) lines up and down your site.

Most of your content should start on exactly the same line. You still have the opportunity to be flexible but use the same alignment when inserting a similar element lower down on a page. Alignment goes not only vertically, but also horizontally.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that everything is aligned.
Don't let new things start on a new line.
Align them with a similar point higher
up on the page.

Have images all on the same row (and
preferably the same size). Let text start
at the same point.

Example 2: [Our BB1 examples pages](#)
Same-sized images and the explanatory
text in the same position down the
page.

[Motorcycle helmet buying guide](#) *(tip!)*

This motorcycle helmet buying guide will help you discover exactly what you need to watch when buying a motorcycle helmet. So before you buy, make sure to review these important points....



[Motorcycle helmet fitting guide](#)

If you don't know exactly how to make sure you have a perfect fit you can never be guaranteed a great motorcycle helmet. The steps in this fitting guide make sure you select the best helmet for your head...



[Types of motorcycle helmets](#)

The most important piece of safety equipment is your motorcycle helmet and there are five motorcycle helmet types from which to choose. Here is an introduction to motorcycle helmets and briefly how they work. Read more...



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[Half motorcycle helmets](#)

Also known as a shorty motorcycle helmet. These motorcycle helmets offer the least amount of protection however offer the widest optical view. Half helmets are similar to a bowl shape. They have no chin bar, and do not come down the back of the neck; thus just protecting your



Use Lists To Make A Point



Why it's important – Lists look great in design and receive enormous attention.

Lists work so well in quickly showing different points that it's hard to believe we don't use them more. Use lists as soon as you have a few points to make and organize them from the most important to the least important (unless that absolutely doesn't apply to the list in question).

Do remember that a list is not one point. It looks empty if you try to use a list and present only one point. In such a case, try to work the point into your content and give it a little extra emphasis. (Having a text link in a text paragraph is always a great attention grabber.) When you make a list with more points, keep the points close together and don't space them out too much or it will look like all separate sentences and not a list.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that you are using lists whenever you are presenting more than two different points. We all love lists and they get a huge amount of attention when a visitor scans a page.

If every point you are emphasizing fits onto one line I would not have a white line between each point. If the points are longer sentences which go over two lines. I would insert a blank white line between each point.

Poor Integration of Ads



Why it's important – Bad integration wreaks havoc with your potential click through rate. Advertising that flows with the design gets super results.

Because we want advertising in our sites it plays a major part of the page look & feel. However because we often end up integrating advertising **after** we have finished designing our pages, the new look & feel looks terrible.

Plan for your advertising. Just as you've discovered how to split up your page content into smaller topics areas, reserve some room for your advertising. By doing so, you not only improve the effectiveness of the ads (you can match relevant content to relevant ads) but also the total design layout.

Remember the old days when banners were so obvious that nobody clicked on them? They were just sitting there, big and bold, hoping for a click. Today your advertising needs to complement what's happening IN your content.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– The art of integrating advertising. Think of your ad as an image and where it would have a great value. Then integrate the ad exactly there. If possible, try to adjust the ad to make it match your page design.

If you're stuck with an ad that can't be adjusted to your look & feel, figure out how to place it in the page without spoiling the look & feel of your site. Otherwise, it's not worth it.

Your advertising income can receive a huge boost from great design integration. But you might have to gain some experience before you get the hang of it. Just like template design this is worth getting right!

Example – [Sitesell advice on Ads](#)

SBI! has some excellent articles on the usage of Google Ads. (The link requires login to your SBI!! account)

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Use A Footer In Your Design



Why it's important – By using a footer in your site design you have an opportunity to move unrelated niche topics out of the way.

Some things just don't belong in your core design and mess with what you want to present. They stop you from shining in your topic. These are things like copyright notices, terms of use, and other dull but necessary info pages.

To avoid having them mess with your design too much, we suggest using a footer in your design. This is an ideal way to still have the information on your site but not in plain view.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Use the footer to get things out of your design that aren't adding to your site concept or niche.

Example – [Footer example](#)

We use the Footer for links to stuff like "Privacy Policy". The footer/footnote can also be used for things like "Contact Us", "Terms of Use" etc.

Dealing With Common Items In Your Design

– step 5 –

That Form Looks Way Too Complicated



Why it's important – Forms need to be used. So design them to look as easy and comfortable as possible and they will be used.

Avoid going overboard with your form. While it may be very tempting to ask just one more question, you should try to keep your forms as simple and easy as possible.

Design them so that an absolute novice can use them and don't ask more than you actually need to get the job done. Asking more will only add to the way the form is perceived and might put people off from using it.

On a side note, when using more than one form, try keeping the same layout and style going as you had in your previous form. It once again shows that eye for detail and makes your overall site design look that much better.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

*– Check that Grandma is prepared to fill in your form. Does it look easy and inviting?
Use short clear instructions with well-labeled text fields.*

Extra Emphasis Can Lead To Overkill



Why it's important – By wanting to emphasize a lot, you risk emphasizing nothing. Your visitor gets overwhelmed and doesn't see clearly anymore.

Most often you'll find it on dedicated sales pages where a lot is being emphasized to make you aware of the benefits. Sales page designs have different rules that are best avoided when making content pages for your SBI! site.

We know that you feel so strongly about your content that you want to emphasize the heck out of it. So you make words bold, use many headlines in all kinds of colors and even start to underline sentences, plus anything else you can think of. I mean... this is important stuff you know!

Remember the Golden Rule: Try to design with the fewest number of elements and still get the point across. The same applies to emphasizing text.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that you are emphasizing only a few things in selected places. Don't go crazy with too much bold and too many underlined words. By being selective, you really make a point that stands out!

Dealing With Senseless Words In Your Design



Why it's important – Don't expect visitors to read useless text.

Show that you realize that their time is valuable and they will spend more time on your site.

We all do it. We end up doing it when we're tired... We somehow get on the “babble train” and useless words mix into the content, words that add no value to what we're trying to present on that page.

All useless words need to be erased. Sure, it can be tough after spending hours typing that new text. But think of it this way, better that your visitor read the short power version instead of nothing at all.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that your text does not have a high “bla bla” factor. That late night content writing can get the better of you. Make your writing short and powerful in 4 line paragraphs.

The goal is to leave out words and still say the same thing. (Don't remove your keywords!) Do one page and compare it to the old version. I guarantee you that short and powerful rule on the screen.

Headline Designs

Why it's important – Headlines receive maximum exposure in page design. Use them to your greatest benefit.

Working with headlines can be very rewarding when you get it just right. On the other hand, it can be frustrating when you miss the mark.

Usually we associate headlines with the top of the page, but headlines are also great to use as section dividers within a page. (Use a smaller size headline than the one at the top of the page.)



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that you are using headlines that grab attention and answer “what’s in it for them.” Keep all your headline styles the same throughout your site to build trust and consistency. Use powerful sub-headlines to break up pages, improve design, and pull visitors down the page.

Example:

Notice how the headlines break the content up nicely and make different sections. Have fun with (sub) headlines (use catchy descriptions combining your keywords) or keep it very simple (use only your keywords in your headline).

[Motorcycle helmet buying guide](#) *(tip!)*

This motorcycle helmet buying guide will help you discover exactly what you need to watch when buying a motorcycle helmet. So before you buy, make sure to review these important points....



[Motorcycle helmet fitting guide](#)

If you don't know exactly how to make sure you have a perfect fit you can never be guaranteed a great motorcycle helmet. The steps in this fitting guide make sure you select the best helmet for your head...



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Long Text Leads To Poor Design



Why it's important – Text on screens isn't the same as text on paper. Text for the screen should be written for scanning. Long screen text is hard to scan and difficult to read.

When it comes to screen text and how to best present it, you need to be thinking in short crisp paragraphs. If your text layout looks like one long text page, your visitor is most likely not reading it.

The more your visitor is in need of that specific information, the more willing she/he will be to read long text. (Often long text is printed to read in a more relaxed manner.) But generally speaking, all your text needs to be built up of smaller paragraphs.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Text on screens is fundamentally different from text on paper. Check your pages for short powerful paragraphs. Break between paragraphs with a clean white line. Stick to about four lines per paragraph. Split or shorten long paragraphs if need be.

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Images Need To Match The Content



Why it's important – Matching content and images is like hitting a homerun.

Why not score every time?

Yeah sure, that's a no brainer. We agree, we find too many sites presenting images that just don't match the content, or that are not clear in what they are trying to present, which is equally annoying.

We can understand that you might not have the right images or lack the know-how to customize them. But that is no excuse for placing bad images on your site.

Let's face it folks, you can ask your teenage nephew, the neighbor or me to do your images. Anything is better than bad graphics. Time and time again we have seen the power a single well-presented image holds on a site -- and the havoc bad images create.

The bottom-line: better one well-presented image than 10 bad ones.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that images match what you are writing about... more specifically, what you are writing about exactly in that area of the page. Using matching images improves page design and overall site design dramatically.

Important !!

*Make sure any photo presented on your site is **Copyright FREE**.*

You'll be surprised to learn how many people think they are allowed to use images they have downloaded off the net. That mistake CAN be expensive!

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Copyrights



Why it's important – Making sure you own the Copyrights to your content elements can save you LOTS of money.

When you build your content, you will want to add graphics and images to your text. In general ALL material, photos, text etc. on the Internet is copyright protected material. This means that you are NOT allowed to download and use the material in anything that is distributed on the Internet (Social Medias, e-books, websites etc.) or in any public offline activity.

The only way you will be able to legally use anything from the Internet, is if you track down the owner of the material and get the owner's permission (in writing!) - OR you **purchase a license** that will grant you the right to use the material.

Royalty Free?

Royalty is a payment agreement on certain material - usually paid to the owner every time the material is used.

Royalty Free does **NOT** mean that it's free for you to use. It means that the material either doesn't have a royalty agreement, the royalty has expired OR the company selling the material has paid the royalty. You can then purchase a *License to use*, which means that you don't have to pay the Royalty (the fee that needs to be paid every time the material is used.)

Example:

There is a photo you want to purchase the right to use from a Stock photo Company. You pay a small one-time sum for the license, and you thereby have the *right to use* that photo.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

Examples of Stock Photo Companies:

- [Istockphoto](#) - [Iclipart](#) - [Fotolia](#) - [Dreamstime](#) - [Stock.xcng](#)- [123RF](#)

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Flashing Is Annoying

Why it's important – Don't annoy your visitor or look like an amateur.

Luckily very limited, and not seen often, but anything animated must die. Anything moving (in the old sense of the word) must be very well considered before becoming an integrated part of your design.

Nothing spells amateur more than animated, flashing and moving objects on your site. Despite the fact that they might be very funny, they don't belong on well-designed Websites anymore. So, does that mean you can NEVER use anything that moves? Sure, you can. Subtle rotating banners can work great on certain sites that are graphic in nature. In fact they can add value and feel to your site.

As we speak, more and more streaming content is coming to sites. It is not that kind of movement we're referring to. As a matter of fact, we are great believers in the potential the Internet holds for this kind of interaction.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check that nothing is flashing and if for some odd reason something is, check that you are very sure about the need for it to be there.

Example – [You'll know what I'm talking about!](#)

Here you can find some really annoying animated images.

Example - [Subtle rotating images](#)

Used in just the right places on your site they can add value and feel to your site.

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Images Too Heavy Or Too Big



Why it's important – Using images that are too big kills a great design and slows downloads.

Did you know that hardly anybody asks, “What point does this image need to make on my site?” That’s a shame because the answers could help determine whether the images are too heavy or too big for the job.

Ultimately, you want to be using small and light images that present exactly what you have in mind. No more, no less.

Walk through your images and give them a critical look. Can you get away with something lighter or smaller? Often cropping (cutting away what’s not needed) an image would give much better results.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Check images for load time. Loading should be quick and easy. Also check whether you are using the smallest sizes.

If the above is hard to judge, then ask yourself, “Am I using the smallest image that is still clear enough to get my point across?” If not, you can improve your images to improve speed (usability) and most likely, design.

Example – please see [‘cut download times’](#) for useful resources for testing your page load times.

Right Kind Of Image For The Job



Why it's important – To ensure nice and sharp images you need to use the right image type for the job.

Images used for Websites are often a choice between gif and jpg. This is nothing more than a format used for the image. Each format, however, has certain advantages and disadvantages. Using them in the wrong way gives you a lesser quality picture and often a higher image size.

JPG images are used for pictures where you'll find a lot of small subtle color changes. Such images will keep a nice composition in the jpg format.

Gif images are used for high contrast basic color images - graphs, solid color drawings etc. Such images will stay nice and clear and bright when used in a gif format.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Here is an interesting short article if you are still not sure when to use a gif or a jpg image.

[Gif versus Jpg](#)

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How To Stand By Your Design Choices

- step 6 -

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Cut Download Times For The Best Presentation



Why it's important – If your pages load too slowly by the time they finish loading your visitors will be long gone.

Your design is most likely wonderful, but is everybody sticking around to see it? Download time has a huge influence on the way your site is perceived.

We have seen situations where the most beautifully designed site wasn't even considered for further review because it didn't load quickly enough. Sadly, the owners had spent a whole lot of money for somebody to design it.

If there is any way that you can make your presentation load faster by omitting parts while still presenting the same thing, do it!



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Make pictures smaller, text more compact, logos and banners leaner and the overall page smaller, and your page will load faster.

[On This Site](#) - you can run a Webpage through a free html test. It will also give you a load time reference. Interesting guidelines.

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The Right Feedback From The Right People



Why it's important – Feedback from the right people ensures that you improve the right aspects of your site.

Often we ask friends and family to review our site only to hear what we like to hear. It's those people who often know how hard you've been working and they are the least likely to want to tell you that something sucks.

Equally tricky is to ask for feedback from people who have no feeling for your target market. Ultimately, it will be hard for the reviewer to adequately judge the design you have made.

Forums in your field of expertise are an ideal place for feedback but do ask for specific feedback. "What do you think of my site?" is, in essence, a wasted question because you are asking for someone's taste, which is always subjective. Be specific in what you want reviewed... "What do you think of...?"



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– Have your design reviewed by three well-selected people that hold true value to your site design (see points described above).

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View Your Design Everywhere You Go



Why it's important – You might have designed a part of your site in such a way that it looks different on another system. Check your work.

Mama Mia, have we been surprised at our own work, even to an extent that it was shocking. After getting over the initial scare, we researched what made the design look so different and corrected it. But if we had never looked on that other PC or Mac, we would never have known.

We hope you avoid a shock like we got. But just to be sure, check your site whenever you're out visiting a friend, in an Internet café and of course when you come across somebody with a different system (Mac/PC).

It's a healthy habit to have.



SBI! DESIGN TIPS

– There is something that you need to keep in the back of your mind when reviewing your site on different systems. Some of your visitors will be using Microsoft software - Internet Explorer, which sometimes does odd things.

Try to review your site not just on other computers, but also in different browsers like Mozilla Firefox, Safari and Google Chrome.

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How Does It Look Printed



Why it's important – If your content is to be printed, you should make sure it looks great on paper, too.

Run it through the printer and see how it looks. Don't go adjusting your printer to make it look perfect. Just use the default settings anyone would use.

Depending on your topic, and if it's meant to be printed, decide if you want to amend your layout so the page also looks great printed. If your site does not need printing, I wouldn't go to great lengths to accommodate this. But if you can make it better with a few small improvements, go for it.

Not Everybody Will Like It



Why it's important – Avoid endless tweaking by realizing that not everybody will like your design. Stand by what you believe in.

Sad but true!

There is simply no way that everybody will like your design or your site. First off, you need to consider who's talking. (See the comments on getting feedback.) Second, you'll need to decide if it's an issue that is okay to disagree on.

It's okay to have different opinions about what you've designed as long as you are happy with the design and it's getting the job done. Remember the first tip we gave you:

Not a perfect design, but still a success. **That's what it's all about.**

Final Words



After improving many SBI! sites and seeing even more sites that would benefit hugely from a touchup, our mind was made up... an SBI! design booklet had to come.

The idea was a practical easy to read manual. Down to earth advice on how to improve your SBI! site. Now that you've come to the final words, you can be the judge whether this manual will do the trick.

One thing we are confident about, with this booklet you have a lot of design potential at your fingertips. If taken step by step, these ideas will lead you to a nice professional looking site.

For those in need of design services, do contact us via [Our Website](#)

We specialize in template designs for the SBI! BlockBuilder, but we also offer design of template headers, rotating images, picture galleries and much more.

We hope you enjoyed reading the booklet and your SBI! site benefits from it.

Kate Wagner Hjorth & the Web Design Success Team

P.S. Do let us know how your site has turned out.

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Appendix

1) Screenshots

Well let's get visual! We received so many requests to make screenshots of our tips & tricks that we couldn't say no anymore. Here is a collection of screenshots from the examples. We hope it will give you a better understanding of making nice layouts.

Feel free to do it your way. Let us know about it.

Image 1 - Your template

The image shows a wireframe of a website template with several callout boxes providing design tips:

- Template:** If you want your navbar background colored, choose a color that works well with the header colors. This way the whole template will come together nicely.
- Template Background:** Your template sits on a browser background, which you can change the color of. Make sure the color matches your template and doesn't get overwhelming. In most cases a solid color works better than a disturbing pattern or image.
- Header:** Your header is your Site headline. Make it catchy, professional and to the point! - but not overwhelming. Your header needs to tell your visitor in seconds what your site is about.
- Footer:** Your footer can be a color or an image. Some templates will benefit from having a footer image that matches the template design, but it's NOT important as long as the color matches the design.

The wireframe itself includes a header with the text "Your template header" and "Your slogan", a navigation bar with links like "Home", "Button 1", "Button 2", "Button 3", and "Button 4", a main content area with multiple "H2 Headline" sections and "Lorem ipsum" text, and a footer with "Extra Link 1" through "Extra Link 5" and a copyright notice for 2012.

Image 2 - Headlines and white space

Extra Link 1 | Extra Link 2 | Extra Link 3 | Extra Link 4 | Extra Link 5

Your template header
Your slogan

Navbar Header

Home

Button 1

Button 2

Button 3

Button 4

Navbar Header

Button 1

Button 2

Button 3

Button 4

Button 5

H1 Headline
A catchy Sub Headline

Your body copy will appear here. This is just a paragraph of text for display purposes. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum inure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue.

H2 Headline

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H2 Headline

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H2 Headline

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EXTRA COLUMN

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IMAGE PLACEHOLDER

Lorem ipsum

IMAGE PLACEHOLDER

Temper incididunt

The headlines

Yes, it's basic - keep the headlines the same throughout your pages. Same alignment - same sizes.

Make it logical!

The use of a sub-headline is a great opportunity to use good keywords.

White Space

Don't be afraid to add white space to your text.

Space will add to the readability and the scan-ability.

Page End

The usual page end white space and "curl". The curl (use throughout your pages) tells the visitor that he has met the end of the page.

"No need to scroll on"

Extra Link 1 | Extra Link 2 | Extra Link 3 | Extra Link 4 | Extra Link 5

Copyright 2012 www.your-domain.com

Image 3 - Adding Photos



Image 4 - Using Lists

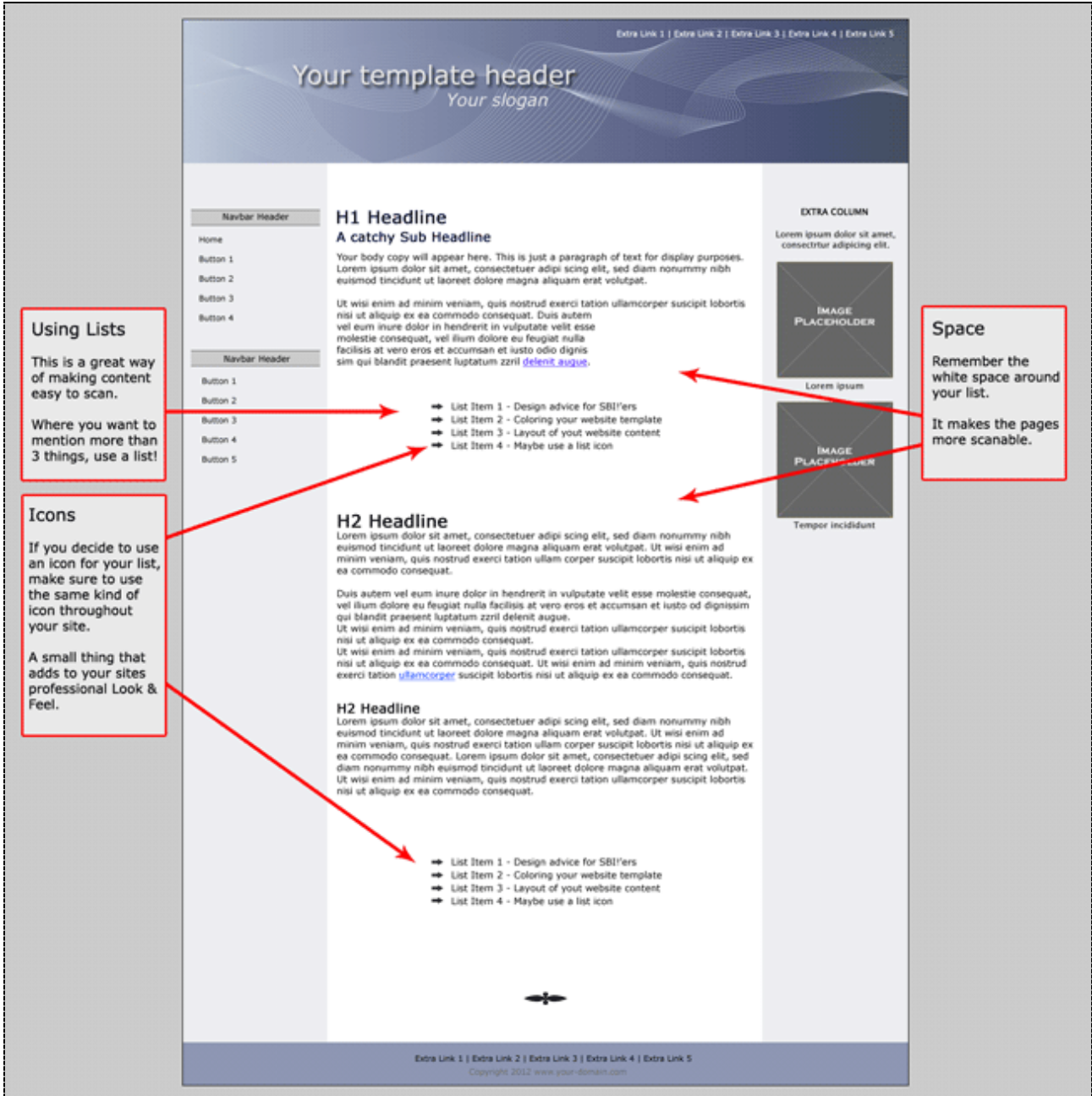


Image 5 - Forms

Extra Link 1 | Extra Link 2 | Extra Link 3 | Extra Link 4 | Extra Link 5

Your template header
Your slogan

Navbar Header
Home
Button 1
Button 2
Button 3
Button 4

Navbar Header
Button 1
Button 2
Button 3
Button 4
Button 5

H1 Headline
A catchy Sub Headline
Your body copy will appear here. This is just a paragraph of text for display purposes. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipi scing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.
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EXTRA COLUMN
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IMAGE PLACEHOLDER
Lorem ipsum
IMAGE PLACEHOLDER
Temper incididunt

Form Fields
Make the form as easy to fill in as possible.
Don't ask more questions than you actually NEED to know.

Look & Feel
Let your form stand out a little. Give it a light background color and/or a line around it.
Scanability!

Space
Remember the white space around your form. It makes the pages more scanable.
Space makes your form visible

If you use more than one form - use the same layout for all forms throughout your pages.
Make it easy for your visitor to recognize your website style.

First Name*
Last Name*
E-mail Address*
Place your info here
Please enter the word that you see below.
CAPTCHA
Click here - to send your info

H2 Headline
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipi scing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullam corper suscipit lobortis nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.
Duis autem vel eum inure dolor in hendrent in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo od dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue.
Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.
Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Extra Link 1 | Extra Link 2 | Extra Link 3 | Extra Link 4 | Extra Link 5
Copyright 2012 www.your-domain.com