# the
# WEBSITE AUDIT GUIDE

SIMPLY SIANNE

# WELCOME

I'm guessing you feel like your website isn't speaking directly to your ideal client and doesn't seem to be working for you.

I'm also gonna go out on a limb and guess that you get a lot of website envy when you look around.

Wishing your visitors just knew they were in the right place when they land on your site. And, ultimately that your site just worked for your business.

## I HEAR YOU.

My one-on-one clients come to me with this issue all the time. I've taken the best practices and the basic principals used in website design to create a comprehensive checklist for you to successfully audit your website.

## THE 4 PILLARS

In order to have a website that works for you and your business, you need to build it and audit it based on these 4 pillars: effectiveness, design, SEO, and tech.

In this document I'm breaking down each aspect of the 4 pillars and how to leverage them to make changes to your site, helping you convert visitors into clients.

*hey there!*

### I'M SIANNE

A tea-loving marketing and branding strategist and website designer. Corporate marketer turned creative business owner.

Helping small business owners and creative entrepreneurs gain clarity in their messaging and grow their businesses, simply.

# EFFECTIVENESS

## YOUR HOMEPAGE

With less than 5 seconds to let a visitor know if they arrived in the right place, you need to make sure your messaging on your homepage is clear, concise and effective.

Your message needs to include the following components:

what you offer: _____

who it's for: _____

how to purchase / learn more: _____

BONUS: If possible, I love asking the visitor a yes / no question, so they can easily identify if they are in the right place.

# EFFECTIVENESS

## STRONG CALL TO ACTIONS

Call to Actions (CTAs) are used to help direct visitors throughout your site. It's a way to make sure you are guiding them on the journey you want them to experience once they arrive.

This will help them step through your site in a logical format, one that you're in control of, because you are guiding them.

**GOOD CTA COPY:**

| | | **BAD CTA COPY:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Get My eBook | Let's Talk | Click here | Enter |
| Stay Connected | Give Me More | Download | Request |
| Join the Fun | Watch Right Now | Submit | Continue |

## A FEW WAYS TO MAKE YOUR BUTTONS STANDOUT & ENCOURAGE CLICK THROUGHS:

**UP THE SIZE**
Scale up the button and text size to make your CTA standout.

**CREATE HIGH CONTRAST**
Use high contrast colors for your CTA buttons. This can be hard to achieve when you're trying to stay on brand, (something I admittedly struggle with) which is why I use my brighter, bolder colors for CTA buttons.

The 3 best colors for effective CTAs are red, green, and orange / yellow. The 3 worst colors are black, white, and brown.

While these are best practices, there are some exceptions to the rule depending on background color, design, etc.

**PLACEMENT**
The location of your CTA buttons within your website design makes a difference in how many visitors click on the button and continue on their journey.

# EFFECTIVENESS

## CONSISTENCY

The last piece of creating an effective website is to be consistent.

Consistency with your branding (your brand messaging and brand identity) need to be consistent across all of your touchpoints (even before they land on your website). This helps build the know, like, and trust factor.

Once there is inconsistency within your branding and website presence you create doubt with your visitors.

### MAKE SURE YOU'RE CREATING CONSISTENCY WITH THESE 3 ITEMS

☐ Use the same brand bio that covers what you offer, who it's for, and how to buy on your website and on your social media profiles

☐ Use the same headshot and imagery to used on your website as the images you use in your other touchpoints (Pinterest graphics, social media posts, email marketing, etc.)

☐ Repeat your messaging multiple times within your website. Just because it's on your one page doesn't mean it is enough. Lace your messaging through multiple pages and parts of your website to create consistency.
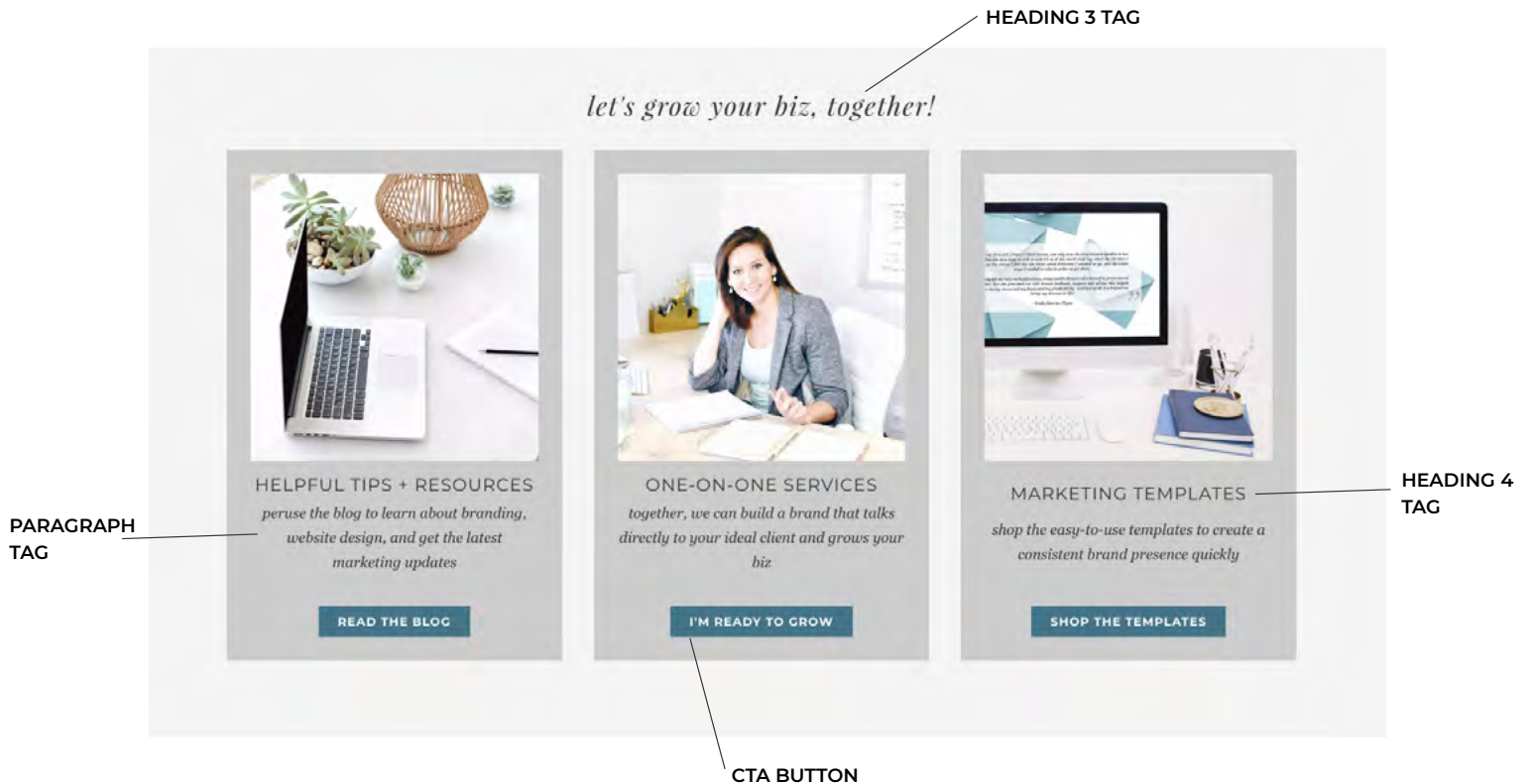
# DESIGN

## VISUAL HIERARCHY

The design of your website plays just as important role as the effectiveness of your messaging.

This is how your content is percieved. If there is no visual hierarchy or natural flow to the design it will be overwhelming for visitors to consume and digest your messaging.

Creating a hierarchy is important for both visitors and search engines scanning your site for information.



HEADING 3 TAG

*let's grow your biz, together!*

HELPFUL TIPS + RESOURCES
*peruse the blog to learn about branding, website design, and get the latest marketing updates*

READ THE BLOG

ONE-ON-ONE SERVICES
*together, we can build a brand that talks directly to your ideal client and grows your biz*

I'M READY TO GROW

MARKETING TEMPLATES
*shop the easy-to-use templates to create a consistent brand presence quickly*

SHOP THE TEMPLATES

PARAGRAPH TAG

HEADING 4 TAG

CTA BUTTON

With the use of different heading tags, the information in the example above allows the text and information to be broken up in a way that is easy to digest.

With drag and drop website builders like the ones in this post, you're able to easily set the font, size, and color of each heading tag.
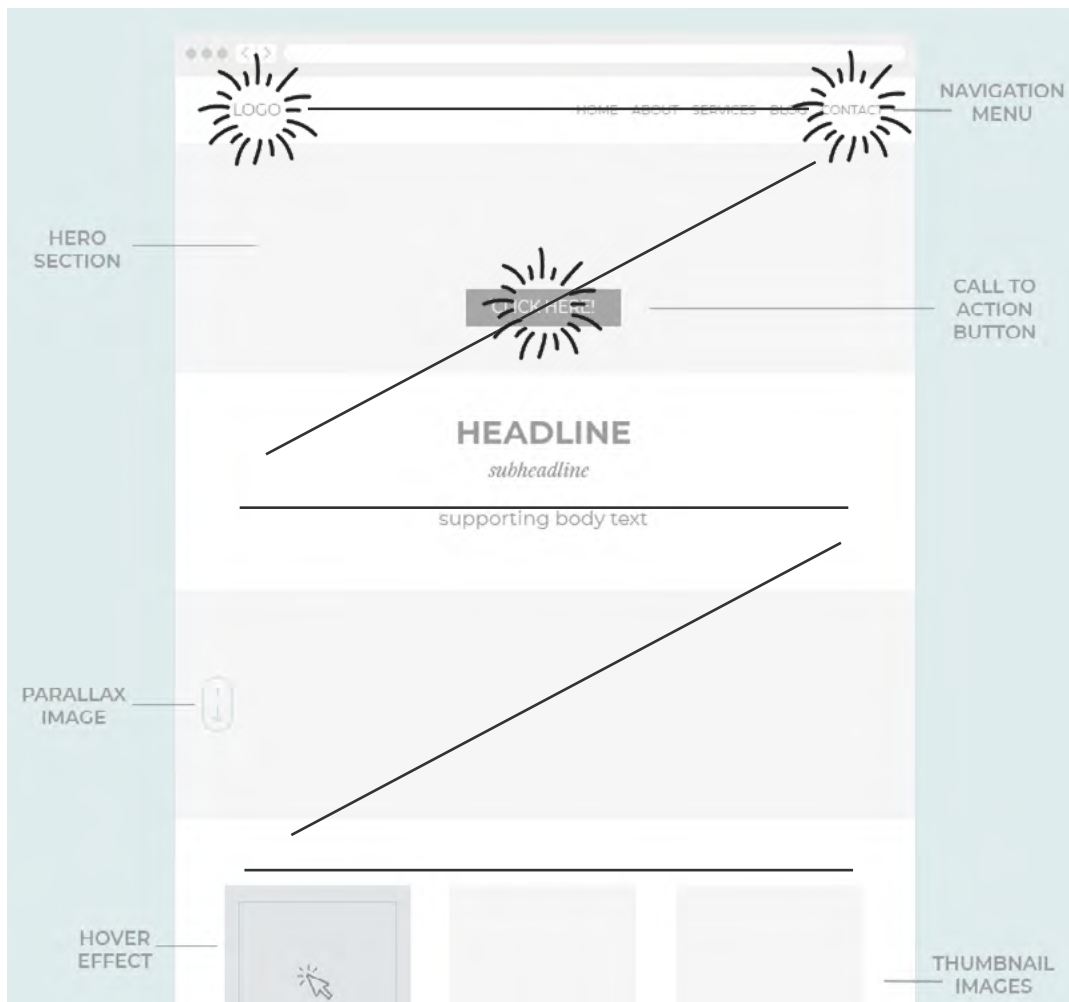
# DESIGN

## USE THE NATURAL SCANNING PATTERN

Let's start with your home page design. The most common natural scanning pattern is the Z pattern.

You start scanning from left to right, working your way down the page, repeating this pattern, creating a line similar to the letter Z.

Keeping this pattern in mind when you design your website will help you create an effective and easy to navigate site that guides your visitor throughout the journey.

## Z PATTERN WEBSITE LAYOUT

# DESIGN

## USE THE NATURAL SCANNING PATTERN

By putting your logo in the far left and your biggest CTA on the far right, you are making it easy for visitors to easily scan your site and figure out the next logical step.

On the homepage design leverage the natural flow of the Z pattern by putting your brand bio in the center of the hero image, followed by a strong CTA to learn more, work with you, or discover your products.

As you can see, the strong CTA in the center of the hero image section is within the natural scanning Z pattern.

**PRO TIP:**
Use an image of you on the homepage to build the like, know, and trust factor, but make sure your body is positioned towards the text and CTA - this will also lead your visitors to look at the text!

## MAKE IT RESPONSIVE

93% of Internet users browse the Internet on a mobile device every day. That's a lot of people who could potentially be seeing your website on their phones or tablets at any given time.

Make sure your website design is responsive and mobile friendly. The next page has a helpful responsive design checklist for you to make sure you're making it easy for visitors to navigate your site on mobile.

# RESPONSIVE DESIGN CHECKLIST

With limited space on a mobile design, your website needs to get to the point, immediately. You also need to make sure the priority of information is shifted accordingly on mobile design so your site remains

- ☐ Ditch the nav bar on mobile device, and use a hamburger menu instead

- ☐ Keep the most important elements within reach (the center of the screen) and avoid putting these priority elements at the very top and bottom of the page

- ☐ Link phone numbers and addresses so they are optimized to be click to call

- ☐ Optimize contact forms for mobile (make it shorter)

- ☐ Use at least a 16 point font for mobile design

- ☐ Disable intrusive pop ups on mobile devices (nothing is as annoying as trying to view content on a mobile device than having it blocked by a pop up that you can't get out of!)

- ☐ Make sure your text placement doesn't get cut off or is placed on a background that makes it hard to read when it repositions itself for mobile

# SEO

Search Engine Optimization is a vital piece in running an effective website. It's also a pretty big topic to discuss in this guide, so I am going to provide a few helpful articles, checklists, and resources for you to reference when conducting your website aduit, while leaving you with a few best practices for you to reference as you keep working through this guide.

**HELPFUL LINKS:**

SEO Basics     Optimize Your Content with SEO     SEO Checklist

☐ Do keyword research to identify the best keyword to use when optimizing your content

☐ Once your keyword is identified use that in the URL and title of the page or post you are optimizing

☐ Use keywords in headings and throughout your copy

☐ Update the meta description to provide an overview of the content and include the relevant keyword

☐ Make sure you write your content for humans, but keep these best practices in mind so search engines can help people searching find your content! (Google is smart - it knows if the content is helpful and relevant to those who visit)

**PRO TIP:**
If your content is answering a question - add the answer to the question in your meta description. Google favors sites that provide a clear answer to the question immediately in the meta text and post.

# TECH + SECURITY

This is probably the least fun aspect of conducting a website audit. The backend technical and security functions are just as important as the front end messaging and design. Making sure your page speed load time is reasonable, and your site is secure is imperative to turn visitors into clients.

MAINTAIN YOUR SITE

- ☐ keep your plugins and website up-to-date on a regular basis backup content regularly (you can pay for this service through BlueHost)
- ☐ make sure you are using the latest version of Wordpress

REDUCE PAGE SPEED

- ☐ ensure image sizes are optimized by setting the resolution to 72 or 150 dpi
- ☐ reduce the file size of images to be no more than 1000 pixels wide
- ☐ use a plugin like WP Smush to optimize images uploaded to your website just in case you forget to optimize it before uploading!

**PRO TIP:**
add a monthly calendar reminder to make sure Wordpress and all of its plugins are up to date.

If you leave these plugins sitting active on your site without being updated, you are essentially leaving the doors and windows to your home unlocked, which makes it easy for people to break it.

HELPFUL LINK: 4 Ways to Keep Your Wordpress Site Safe and Secure

# MISTAKES TO AVOID

## MISTAKE #1

### NOT KEEPING YOUR IDEAL CLIENT IN MIND

In order for your site to be effective and convert visitors into customers, you need to keep your ideal client in mind. From the messaging to the information shared on your site, it needs to be written based on the wants, needs, fears, and desires of your client, and then showcasing how your service or product can help fix those wants and needs, while also alleviating their fears.

## MISTAKE #2

### LEADING VISITORS TO A DEAD END

When designing the various pages of your website, you want to avoid creating a dead end. A dead end is a page that doesn't have a CTA to help continue to move them throughout your website. By not guiding your visitor through this journey you leave them to determine where to go next on their own, often leading in them bouncing (aka leaving) your website.

## MISTAKE #3

### NOT USING BRANDED IMAGES

A truly great website experience is one that uses unique, branded imagery. This should include imagery of you, the person behind the business! Of course, you can use stock images throughout your site, but using nothing but stock photos or poor quality photos doesn't help build the trust factor when you look like just like another business, or because you don't have good quality photos. Invest in branded imagery to uplevel your website and brand!

I'm Sianne, a tea-loving marketing and branding strategist.

Not too long ago I ran a marketing department for large companies.

After feeling helpless in my corporate marketing job - constant roadblocks, red tape and political bs, I craved freedom to create, help, and serve those who truly needed it - creative small business owners.

I was faced with making a decision of continuing to feel helpless or to chart my own path.

After deciding I was meant for more, I knew I could make a real impact on others and pursue a life of passion and freedom.

Today I help creative entrepreneurs gain clarity in their brand messaging so they can speak directly to their target audience and grow their business using the same strategies I used for the large companies.

I'm so excited to help you gain clarity, master your branding, and market your business!

*let's be social!*