

ECOMMERCE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Creating your site and bringing it to life



E2E x **DESIGN**

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E2E x DESIGN



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Web Design 101

Companies like SSENSE, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Miansai and Barneys have gorgeous sites, all of them communicating and reflecting their own unique brand identity through the design elements.

Content is king in eCommerce. Sites that present their content in an aesthetically beautiful, elevated and easy-to-navigate manner convey a sense of professionalism, trustworthiness, and prevent any confusion or frustration for the shopper. In this case, what's on the inside alone won't cut it--the site just has to look good. Design elements such as typography, site padding, and a carefully thought-out placement of the logo, header, footer, navigation panel, body content and other topical components of the site elicits an emotional (and unconscious) response in shoppers. Put simply, the content that users are exposed to as they scroll throughout the page appeals to their emotions in different ways. Emphasizing certain ideas graphically adds a hierarchy of importance to the page, directing consumers' attention and thus emotions to a core message.

While consumers don't necessarily visit your site with the intention of seeing how visually stunning it is, the way the site looks and feels can determine whether they stay and shop or leave. We're talking first impressions. A site that is well designed will boost conversion rates, bringing consumers back again and again simply because of their experience and engagement with design elements.



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Targeting Your Demographic

Demographically targeted means you're reaching the right people who are going to make purchases on your site. Defining this group is a prerequisite, and the characteristics of the group(s) you are reaching will heavily influence the aesthetic of your site.

Building a well-designed site from the ground up won't be of any use until you've identified your target audience and the demographic makeup of that audience. Are you channeling women over 30? Millennials? People who spend more time on their iPad or iPhone than a desktop or laptop computer? All of these factors are important to consider in the design. Identifying your target audience will shape the stylistic approach, e.g., if your demographic is Millennial girls, the art direction might call for youthful, sexy, and minimalistic design elements; a site with parents as the target audience might use photos of toddlers on the home page or baby blue and pink font colors to indicate boys' and girls' product. In short, targeting the consumer demography is inextricably linked to design.



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Promotional and/or Experiential Presentation

Go outside the box. Consumers want to be able to participate in what they see online, they want in-person engagement in a sea of digital information. Giving them a way of doing this will increase user responsiveness, click-through and conversion rates and will make consumers happier on your site if they have incentives to be there.

Creating and executing unique experiences for customers online, and integrating promotional activations within the site's design will foster an environment that engages with consumers and prompts them to take action. Operating at the intersection of marketing and realized environment—the promotional incentives that you create for consumers will build meaningful relationships with them and allow them do more than browse your site, but become immersed in the brand or product, interactively.



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Organic and Elegant

Minimalistic, stylish, sophisticated—these are all characteristics that make-up an attractive and attention-getting site. It has to be intuitive and user-friendly if consumers are going to stay on your page.

Organic design elements have recently been incorporated into and applied to everything from interior décor and ergonomic furniture to smartphones and self-driving cars. Organic web design follows the same intuitive, natural approaches to improving user experiences, taking on an 'essentialist' quality; that is, organic design that uses or offers only what you're after, minimizing futile and distracting graphic elements. All of this will maximize potential sales and increase conversion rates simply because web design takes into consideration human instincts and the kind of stimuli we are naturally drawn to--creating a natural flow of information and ease of movement throughout the site. Organic does not mean it won't be modern; in fact, the opposite is true. Organic design will make your site feel more minimalistic, cleaner, and more visually appealing. No one wants to go on a site that is cluttered with distracting, busy, non-essentialist design elements. This is especially true for tablets and mobile devices, as the copy is much smaller and the space that you have to engage with consumers is much more limited than on a desktop.



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Hear-now, See-now, Buy-now

Gone are the days where a site featured a few static images and some copy beneath or overlying it. Now, users want interactive, moving, streaming content that works immediately after clicking. If they're waiting, you're in no man's land, and you've likely lost a potential customer. They want to experience multimedia then and there and without delay.

Using HTML5, animation, live streaming content and other multimedia technologies that are custom tailored to your site's specific needs will help to create variety and adds tools to grab your consumer's attention. Multimedia that is seamlessly integrated (and without error) will have a positive impact by making your site more active and attract more traffic to your site. Yet, too much stimuli is never a good thing either. Audio and video must be constructed in a way that is integrated in a natural and enjoyable manner, not in an invasive or distracting one (and you can't bog the site with too much here). Managing interactive multimedia web applications takes a delicate touch, but doing it correctly gives your site the potential to attract and increase site traffic and keep users on the site and engaging with your unique content.

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'Dev': Bringing Approved-By-You Designs to Life

Web development is the unsung hero of eCommerce. While many may think that design is what's most important, development is where the magic—and the brains of the site's operation—occurs. It is what brings your site to life and what makes it work the way it was intended.

Web development is a core component of a 360-degree approach to creating a site and maintaining its success. Using best-in-class technologies, development translates to performance, and consequently, sales. Responsive web development refers to a site that is able to adapt to different devices, e.g., iPad, iPhone, desktop, by adjusting content, sizing, and proportions to function the way the site is intended to function as the users access it on a multitude of devices. You require complete control over the details of how your site looks, and equally as important, how it performs. In order to make this happen, it's important to have adept front-end developers to generate code that the user can interact with. The back-end developer takes front-end code and implements it such that everything is displayed dynamically and functions as planned; both aspects of development are vital in creating websites that work seamlessly.



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The Holy Grail of eCommerce: Optimization

The product page is where the battle for a sale goes down. It's not rocket science—better quality images, videos, gallery pages, different angles, all of these can make or break a sale. This is why optimizing is so important, making it an effective way to convert browsers into buyers.

Using resources such as Google Analytics and CrazyEgg will help to synthesize what products and/or categories are performing and provide intelligence and insight into everything from what people are clicking on, what they are scrolling past, if it's an image or link, and a bevy of other functions. Putting what users respond the best to in prominent places (such as above the fold), using success metrics such as Revenue Per Visitor, but also looking at the bigger picture and using these tools to create a consistent, larger narrative will only make your site better and increase conversion rates. Optimized delivery of all content—no matter what the content is—will make the experience on your site enjoyable. We're talking faster load times, maximal global exposure, cross-browser compatibility, and all of the bells and whistles that make a site look its best no matter where it's being accessed.



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Full Schema.org Support

Google, Microsoft, Yahoo!—they may be competitors, but when it comes to delivering a standardized method of gathering information and data from millions of sites, collaboration is key.

Schema.org improves the web universally, making a systematic way for search engines such as Google or Bing to understand data markup, which yields richer search results. Developing a schema that is supported by the major search engines is essentially a one-stop-shop for webmasters where they can go to gather information about markup, giving search engines everything they need to attract users. Schema.org is a collaboration among Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! and Yandex who, despite being competitors, join efforts to utilize markedup data on pages from different sites. Schema.org support gives search engines a mechanism to detail data and entities that live on the page in a systematic and centralized manner. This essential construct is a fundamental aspect of strategic design and development, so that sites are highly searchable.



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Custom Metadata Fields

Customizing metadata fields allows you to be flexible and adapt to the varying needs of customers.

In order to truly harness the power of your content and the management of that content, it's important to utilize a flexible database design for all custom fields and additional meta information that a customer may need. If they want to search item numbers, check on the status of an order, or anything else they want to know. It's important to develop a category hierarchy to classify your data to increase the likelihood that a user will be able to find what they are looking for with ease. It's up to you to decide what goes at the top of that hierarchy and what has less visibility. Customizing your metadata is a great way to provide additional information about your data, increasing performance and user interactivity on your site. All of this makes your site easier to use and easier for users to access exactly what they are looking for with a few clicks of a button.



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VITAL BGS

VITAL BGS is a progressive leader in full-spectrum End-2-End (E2E) consumer and business eCommerce. The organization enables B2C brands to sell worldwide, while feeling local to global shoppers. The company engages in virtually all vertical markets, and has case studies in nutraceuticals, fashion and apparel, luxury and leather goods, legal services, personal services, and innovative aspects of eGovernment.

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