

DESIGN GUIDE: NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS

A practical resource for understanding and working with ☒
designers to bring your brick and mortar business to life.

BRAND

DIGITAL

SPACE

IMPLEMENTATION



DESIGN GUIDE: NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS

A PRACTICAL RESOURCE FOR UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH
DESIGNERS TO BRING YOUR BRICK AND MORTAR BUSINESS TO LIFE.

BRAND

DIGITAL

SPACE

IMPLEMENTATION

18-35



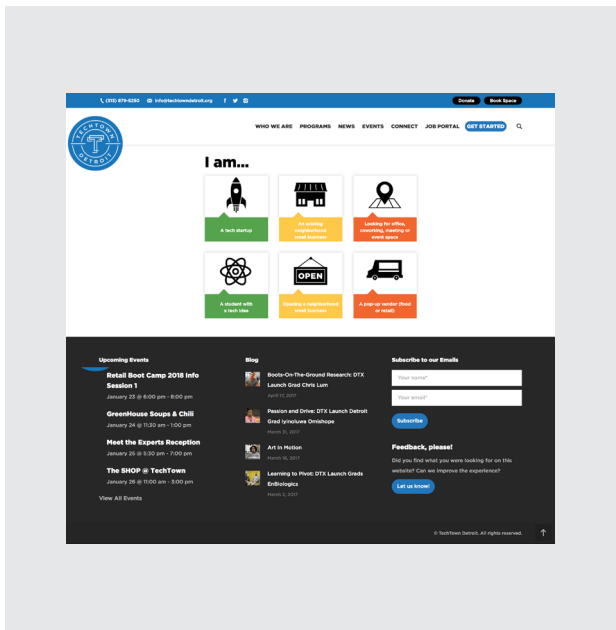
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IMPLEMENTATION



Strengthening Detroit's Commercial Corridors through Design.

Vernor. Grand River. Livernois. Gratiot. Jefferson.

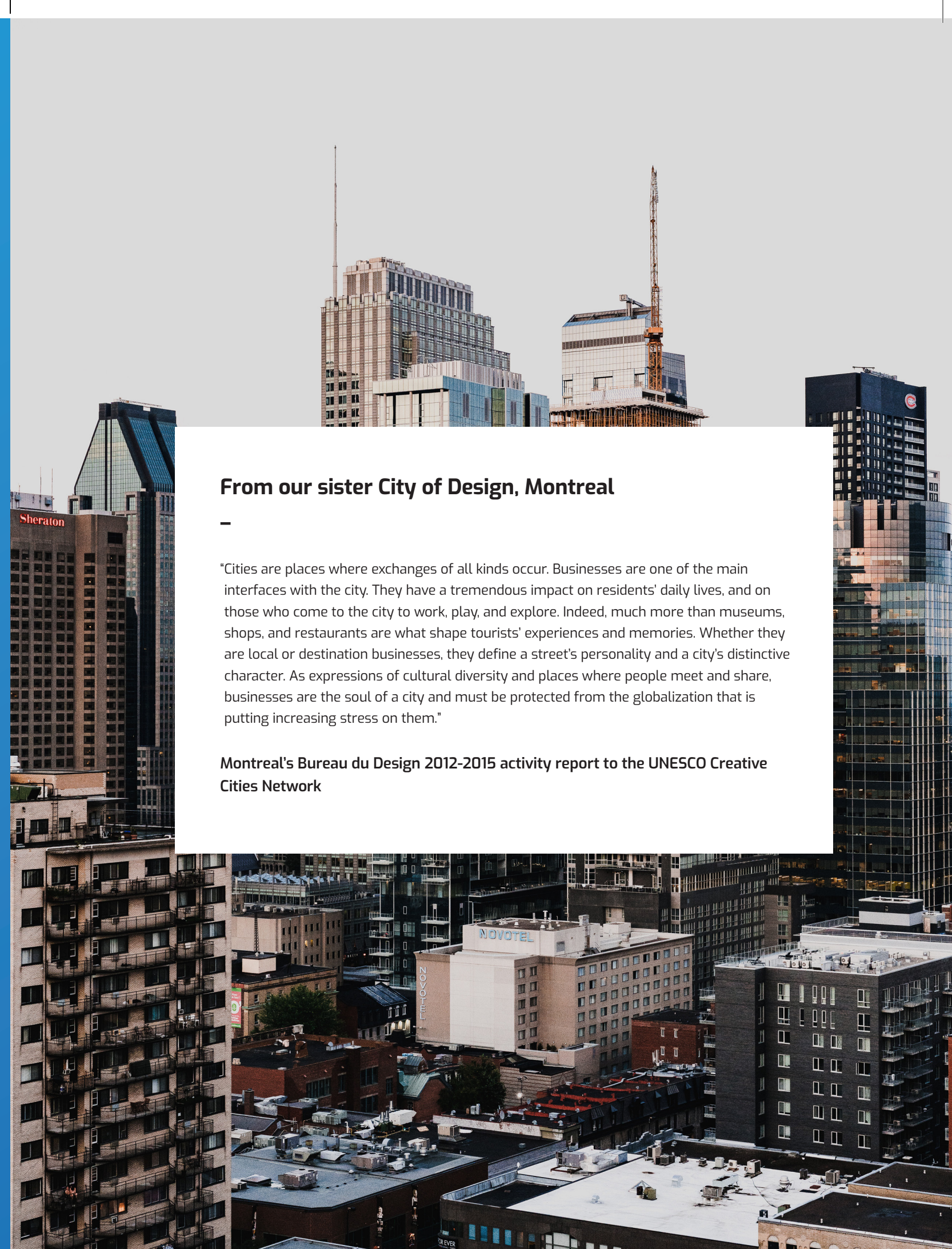
From Eastside to West, every neighborhood in Detroit has a commercial thoroughfare that is home to shops, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. These districts are arteries in the heart of the city, serving as gathering places for local communities and creating memorable experiences for visitors from near and far.

Recently, the city of Detroit and the small business support network have recognized the need for increased investment in these areas to provide greater access to both basic and desired amenities and products for residents, to improve the overall safety and aesthetic of our commercial corridors, and to increase traffic and competitiveness for local businesses. As the stewards of Detroit's UNESCO City of Design designation, Design Core Detroit believes strongly in the power of design to support these goals and to have a profound and lasting impact on the health and prosperity of our neighborhood business districts.

From our sister City of Design, Montreal

"Cities are places where exchanges of all kinds occur. Businesses are one of the main interfaces with the city. They have a tremendous impact on residents' daily lives, and on those who come to the city to work, play, and explore. Indeed, much more than museums, shops, and restaurants are what shape tourists' experiences and memories. Whether they are local or destination businesses, they define a street's personality and a city's distinctive character. As expressions of cultural diversity and places where people meet and share, businesses are the soul of a city and must be protected from the globalization that is putting increasing stress on them."

Montreal's Bureau du Design 2012-2015 activity report to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network



This design resource guide aims to empower and inspire Detroit's brick and mortar business owners through information, examples, exercises, and more. Additionally, it's expected to serve as a starting point for businesses ready to engage in conversation or contract with designers. Through a combination of case studies, worksheets, and guided instruction, you'll gain an appreciation for design as an effective business tool and build the confidence you need to manage design projects for your business.

This guide aims to:

01.

Demonstrate the value of design for small brick and mortar businesses in the city.

02.

Help neighborhood businesses integrate a comprehensive design strategy into their annual business plans and budgets.

03.

Increase competitiveness of new and existing local businesses and support Detroit's revitalization strategy for commercial corridors.

Simply Casual on Livernois Avenue. Photo courtesy of Rufus Bartell and Michael K. Farkas Jr.



04.

Encourage the development of inclusive and inviting spaces throughout the city.

05.

Preserve the unique local identity and culture of neighborhoods.

06.

Grow the market for local design professionals.

07.

Change public awareness of eagerness for great design in neighborhoods.



Bird Bee store exterior in Capitol Park, photo courtesy of Daily Detroit.



Detroit Vegan Soul exterior signage in West Village. Photo courtesy of Detroit Vegan Soul.

SECTION 01

Introduction

GETTING STARTED WITH DESIGN

12 Context

16 Budgets and Costs

14 Building Trust

17 Types of Designers

When you're done with this chapter you will:

1. Learn basic information about types of designers and the importance of working with a professional to develop your business's brand, digital assets, and physical space.
2. Know how decisions about your website, signage, and in-store customer experience all start with understanding and effectively communicating your brand
3. Know the difference between budget and cost
4. Understand and appreciate context and the value of building trust with your designer.



Context

Context refers to the circumstances or environment in which your business operates; it sets the stage. It can include people, places, events, regulations, traffic patterns, competition, market conditions, industry trends, and other factors relevant to where and how your business operates. Every successful business design project requires both examination and understanding of the contextual factors most strongly influencing your business. Both you and your designer should ask and answer these questions relative to your immediate neighborhood or district, the city at large, and the state or federal jurisdiction in which your business operates.



Place

Place refers to the community in which your business is located and can be as specific as your block, street, or neighborhood, or as broad as the whole city or state.

- 1 What other buildings, businesses, or spaces surround your business?
- 2 What is the condition of each? What relationship do you have to them?
- 3 Are the sidewalks, streets, and surrounding spaces kept clean and safe?
- 4 Are there environmental or economic conditions affecting the business climate?



Detroit, MI Whole Foods c. 2013, 115 Mack Ave, Detroit. Photos courtesy of JGA.

“Design partners, local artists, and fabricators joined with the Whole Foods team to create a fusion of food and place through reclaiming, re-purposing and even re-imagining pieces of Detroit's past into an expression of Detroit's future. The character of the store creates an instant connection with the shopper in the neighborhood; a neighborhood that represents the past, present, and future of urban Detroit and its eclectic, colorful and welcoming message to those looking to contribute to the future of the city.”

JGA, Detroit Whole Foods



People

People are others with a stake in your business, including local residents, business owners, employees, and, especially, your customers.

- 1 Who lives, works, shops, dines, or visits the area surrounding your business?
- 2 What other products or services are made or sold in your community?
- 3 How many people do you employ and what are their needs during the work day?
- 4 What are the demographics of your current and future customers and how do they impact needs, desires, behavior, and experiences?



Policy

Policy can mean official or unofficial rules or local ordinances and licensing and permit regulations.

- 1 Is your corridor, for example, part of a Main Street Overlay or a Historic District?
- 2 Does a local association suggest or impose design guidelines for businesses?
- 3 Are you allowed to put merchandise, signage, or seating on the sidewalk?
- 4 What are the commercial building codes in your area?
- 5 What permits or licenses are required for signage, construction, or upgrades?

Pages Bookshop in Grandmont Rosedale. Photo courtesy of David Lewinski Photography.



Commerce transaction, photo courtesy of Pexels.



Photo courtesy of Design Core Detroit.



Trust

Trust is at the core of every successful small business design project. If a business owner doesn't trust their designer to be open and honest and to have their best interests at heart, the relationship and the finished product will likely not meet anyone's expectations, and vice versa. If a designer doesn't trust the business owner to participate in the process or to be responsive, the final project will be unsatisfactory for all.

What can you do to build trust?

- 1 Treat each other with mutual respect.
- 2 Ask questions.
- 3 Take time to know each other and agree on the project goals and process.
- 4 Participate actively in the process.
- 5 Be forthcoming with information, including available resources and possible constraints.
- 6 Communicate openly and honestly in language easily understood by all.

Budget and Costs

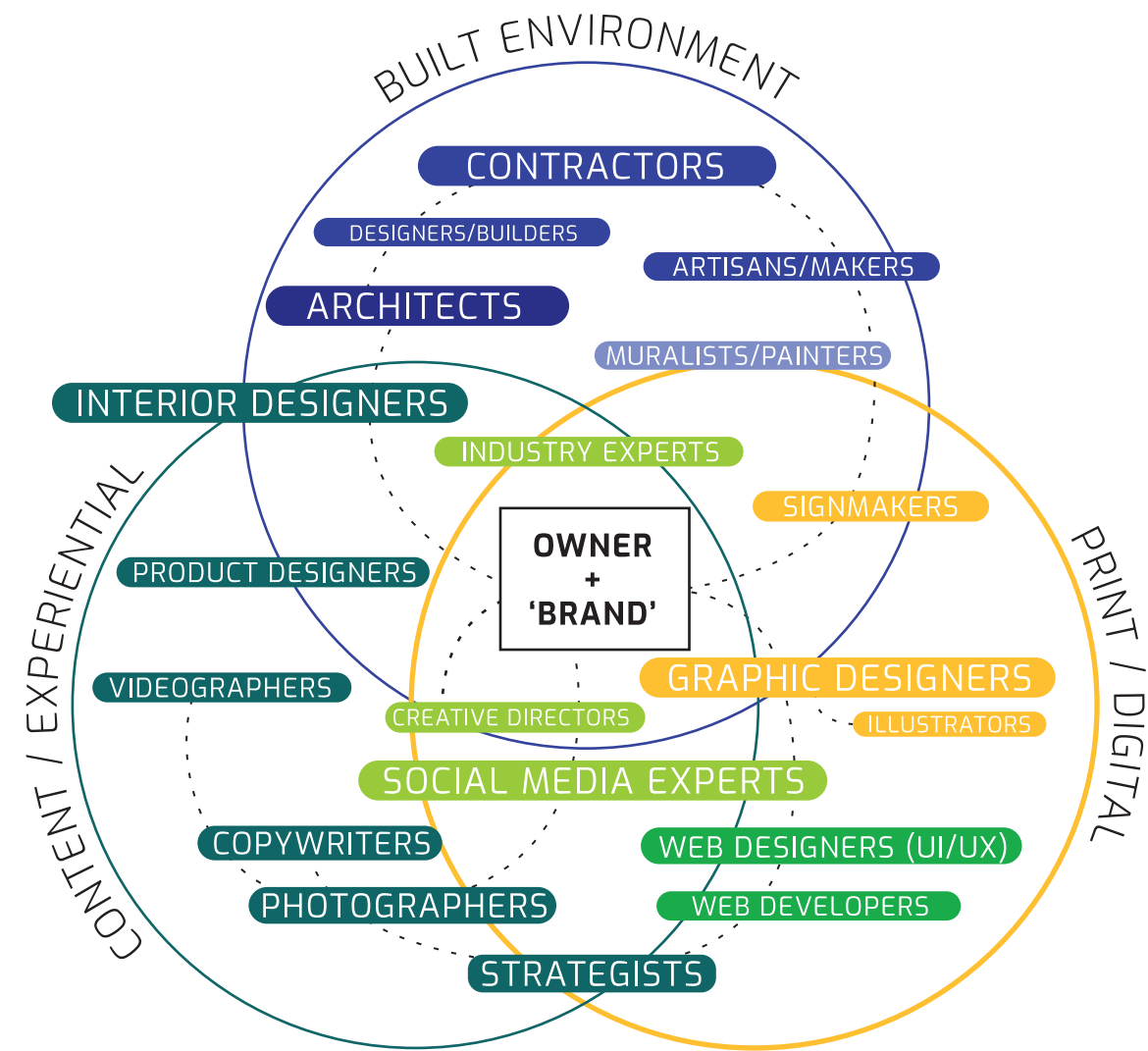
One of the first questions a designer will ask a potential client when determining whether to engage in the work is, "What is your budget for the project?" For many business owners, this triggers apprehension and distrust, because they assume the vendor will purposefully deliver a proposal or quote that uses every last penny of the budget. For designers, however, this is a critical piece of information and could save everyone involved a lot of time, aggravation, and additional costs.

This is because the scope of a design project can vary widely, based on the difference in costs for current and future requirements and the "nice to have" features. Note, costs are different than budget. Your budget is how much money you want to or can afford to spend on a project— it's what you actually have. Costs, on the other hand, are directly related to the work outcomes.

To illustrate the difference between budget and costs, and to reiterate the importance of an early discussion with your designer about both, consider a website development project. What features and services does your business need? If it's a simple homepage and you'll provide all the content, and host and manage the site yourself, it will cost much less than if you need several pages of navigation, professional content, e-commerce, mobile optimization, hosting, and an ongoing management contract.

The same principles apply to the scope and costs of design projects in other disciplines. In architecture and interior design, for example, the condition of an existing building, code requirements, and material selection can impact overall costs. It's critically important, when discussing budget and costs, that both business owners and designers are open and transparent about what's available for the project and how those funds will be allocated. You will also want to know whether costs are fixed, based on the project scope, or billed hourly.

Landscape of Creative Professionals



Even within the various design disciplines, there can be several different titles for designers or creative professionals, and it can be difficult to know which you need for the type and scope of project you're considering. Some larger firms will include many of these creative specialists in house. Other times, a team of independent professionals may come together to work on a project. This diagram will give you a basic understanding of who does what.

PRO TIP #1:	INTRODUCTION	FACTORS THAT CAN IMPACT THE COST OF A DESIGN PROJECT
Introduction	01. Existing assets or constraints	06. Code requirements, including mechanical, electrical, structural for physical space projects
	02. Time delays due to incomplete communication, indecision, lack of consensus, or perfectionism	07. Unexpected problems inside walls or other elements of an existing structure
	03. Level of complexity	08. Work closely with your designer from the beginning to establish expectation and be as realistic as possible about how much time it will take your team to participate in the process and keep the project moving
	04. Being indecisive or making multiple revisions to things previously agreed on	
	05. Selected materials and finishes	

SECTION 02

Brand Design

ESTABLISHING YOUR BUSINESS IDENTITY

21 Brand Basics

24 Phases of Brand Design

27 Exercise: Defining your Brand Strategy

33 Exercise: Brand Personification

34 Glossary

35 Resources

When you're done with this chapter you will:

1. Understand the value of a cohesive brand for your business.
2. Be empowered to share your business story.
3. Be confident and prepared to work with a designer and produce your shared outcomes.
4. Better understand the competitive edge that your brand gives your company.

Interior menu board at New Order Coffee in Midtown, Detroit. Architecture and interior design by Et al. Environmental graphics by Unsold Studio. Photos courtesy of Chris and Michelle Gerard.

"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room."

Jeff Bezos, CEO and Founder, Amazon

Defining and designing your brand is a necessary step for any successful business. Your brand should be at the core of all design decisions, including the look and feel of your website, your facade, and your customer's in-store experience. So, we'll start with guiding you through brand discovery and design.

Brand Basics

Brand Strategy:

Brand strategy is your organization's mission, personality, promise to your customers, and, ultimately, your competitive advantage. It includes the thinking, feelings, and expectations of the target market. It is a means of identifying and distinguishing your organization from another and a way to align your values with customers, as well as, employees, partners, board members, and neighbors.



"The value of branding is immeasurable. Without it you are missing one of the most important tools needed to build a successful business."

Kimberly Jones, Skin Bar VII

PRO TIP #1:

BRAND DESIGN

TYPES OF DESIGNERS WHO MAY WORK WITH BRANDS

While a graphic designer or creative director will often lead branding projects, you should be prepared to interface with other creative subject matter experts that may play a part in creating your brand image. This may include, photographers, illustrators, brand strategists, researchers, typographers, web designers, print specialists, sign installers, or muralists.



New Order Coffee brand assets include the bean menu boards, coffee packaging, and beverage sleeves, designed by and photos courtesy of Unsold Studio.

Brand Identity:

A well-designed brand should wrap around your customer's experience and tell your business story all the way through each process or customer touch point. Once the brand strategy has been crafted, the identity design follows. Brand Identity includes all of the visual ingredients that will be used in any branded collateral, as well as instructions on how to use them. Beyond simply a logo, your Brand Identity includes a color palette, typefaces, icons, illustrations, photographic styles, and taglines/tone of voice. Brand consistency across all channels (in store, online, in printed materials, over the phone) is key to reinforcing an authentic experience and establishing a successful brand identity over time.

Brand Assets:

Think about brand as the spine of your business. It is the underlying support structure from which all other assets should extend. Brand assets are all of the different pieces of communication from print and packaging, to digital design presence, to the interior and exterior of the space, that use the Brand Identity elements to create a full picture that accurately reflects your business.

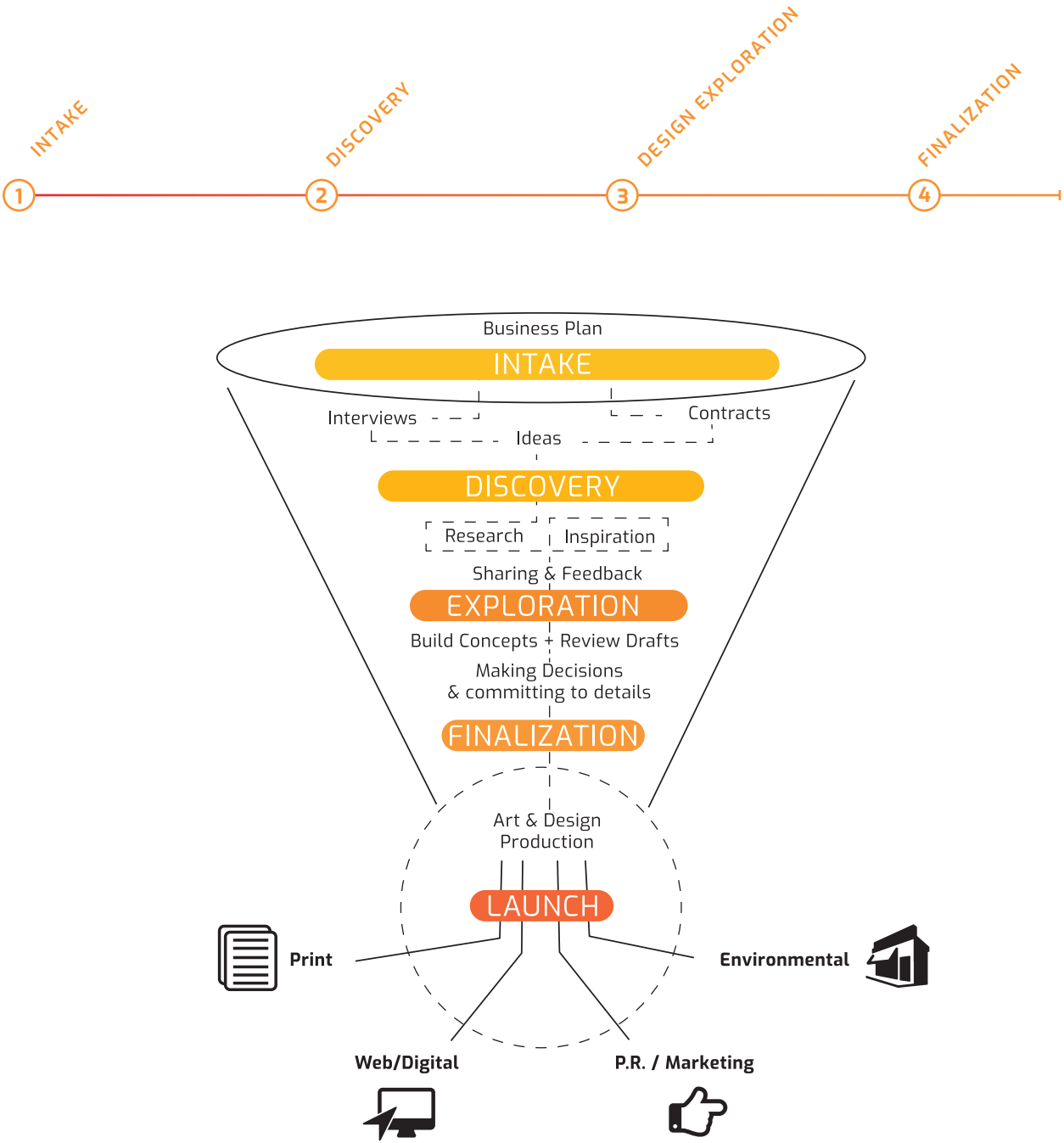


Detroit Denim Company letterpressed business cards, custom product tag and leather patch designed by Who's That? and CBS Ink.



Phases of Brand Design

All good designers and firms will have a process. If we think of design as a problem-solving tool, it is really more about the process than the solution. These subsequent pages will cover the general process that you may work through with your designer(s) in establishing a visual and experiential presence for your brand.



Brand

1 INTAKE

Phase 1: Intake

The very first step in the process - the intake - is where the designer and business owner get to know all they can about one another and the business. It is where you establish the baseline for what will be created and how you want your business to fit into the market. The intake phase may include:

Intake Questions:



1. Who are you, and what is the nature of your business?
2. What's in it for customers? Why should they care?
3. Who are your businesses competitors?
4. What, if any, existing assets do you currently have? (e.g., photos, logos, etc.)



Define Goals:

What are your business goals for a new or refreshed brand?



Budget:

What are we working with to create your brand? We ask this early to inform the approach without sacrificing quality.



Stakeholders:

Identify both internal and external stakeholders, i.e., customers, employees, vendors, etc. How do each of those constituencies intersect with your business?



Defining the Competition:

Who are the other local players in your same business space? What do they do that works well and where is there opportunity for improvement and differentiation?

Phase 2: Discovery

Following the intake period comes the discovery process. This phase is where designers and business owners begin diving deeper to tease out opportunities, conduct due diligence, secure naming and acquire access to any platforms, servers, or pre-existing content needed before moving into the actual creation process.



Research:
A key step is to browse the web beyond Google to learn more about your industry, visual trends, best practices, historically relevant details, and any other hidden gems that can help craft an identity.



Inspiration/Visual Benchmarking:
A transitional step that moves us into the visual realm. Your designer will look at existing images or designs with you to determine: What inspires you? What aesthetics are you drawn to? [See moodboard exercise on page 81.](#)



Brand assets and inspiration, photos courtesy of Unsplash and Who's That?

Identify the key pieces of collateral to be created for your business:
Work with your designer to finalize the list of deliverables or collateral that will need to be created. A basic package typically includes a logo, color palette, typeface, business card, letterhead, and envelope. A restaurant, however, will also need menus, while a salon may use a brochure.

PRO TIP #2: BRAND DESIGN DURING THE DISCOVERY PROCESS YOU MAY WANT TO

- 01. Register your social media handles
- 02. Register your domain name
- 03. Ensure that you don't violate copyright or intellectual property

Your brand designer may be able to help you complete the above tasks, depending on your contract agreement.

EXERCISE

DEFINING YOUR BRAND STRATEGY

Defining your brand is like a journey of business self-discovery. It will pay to establish a baseline for reference as your business ebbs and flows and your brand story unfolds over time. It may be difficult, time-consuming, and uncomfortable, but if you haven't already, answer the questions below. They will help your designer better understand your business so that they can accurately represent you and your brand.

What is your company's mission?

What are your goals for this year?
In five years?

What are the benefits and features of
your products or services?

What do you want people to say about their
experience in your store?

What do your customers and prospects
already think of your company?

What qualities do you want customers to
associate with your company?

What do you want people to say about
your business, product, or service?

What are you selling?

02 . Who are your customers? What are their lifestyles, interests, hobbies, ages, ethnicities, income?

03. Your story as defined by others

Ask 3 of your customers or neighbors what makes your business unique.

List all of the places that people see or interact with your brand. Think signage, your website, your employees. Is their experience consistent?

04. Competitive Analysis

What makes you the expert in your industry? What brings people in your door?

05. Neighborhood Context

How does your brand fit within the context of your neighborhood?

How does your business serve the broader community/neighborhood?

NOTES:

3 EXPLORATION

Phase 3: Design Exploration

At last, this is where the magic begins. Design Exploration is the apex of the brand process, where designers will interpret all data and materials collected during Intake and Discovery and format initial concepts for your brand look and feel. The goal is to come up with a logo that's flexible, dynamic, and memorable.

Content Creation begins:

Designers will begin sketching, pulling typefaces and colors, and formatting document structures.

A photoshoot or purchase of stock images may come into play here.

Once ready, you and your designer will review and respond to initial design drafts. This is a crucial time for exchanging feedback and making sure from the start what you're seeing aligns with your expectations, goals, and context.

The Revision Process:

Consider questions like these to ensure a successful conversation with your design team:

1. Does it solve for the problems identified in the brief?
2. Does it meet the level of design you expected?
3. Do you understand how this direction was reached?

Ask yourself the following questions, to determine whether the symbols and colors that you see align with your expectations, goals, and context.

1. Are they authentic? Are they true to your company history and culture?
2. Are they relevant to your audience?
3. Are they remarkable and unique?

PRO TIP #3:

BRAND DESIGN

PHOTO SHOOT ALTERNATIVES

If conducting a photo shoot for your brand is not in your budget, stock photo websites are a great alternative. Make sure the images are rights free or work with your creative team to purchase a license.

3

So how do you provide the most valuable feedback to your designer?

Designer

What do you think of the design?

D

Client

I don't Like it.

C

Designer

Umm... Can you elaborate?

D

Client

I'll know what I like when I see it

C

Designer

*Facepalm

D

Better Example:

Stating a goal and backing up certain design decisions makes for a more productive conversation. Here, the designer is able to bring the client into a deeper conversation, continuing to ask why and provide data to support design decisions

Designer

Does this design feel resolved? Anything missing?

D

Client

I think it feels complete! I like the colors and the lettering. I'd just like to see it with the tagline.

C

Designer

Ok, great! We will shoot that over to you with the rest of the pieces this afternoon.

D

Client

Awesome, Thank you!

C

Poor Example:

Being as specific as possible when asking questions will yield the most actionable feedback. Here, the designer fails to frame the goal or problem, so the client's answer has no context and focuses arbitrarily on aesthetics.

Designer

What's memorable about the design?

D

Client

I love the font choice, but not sure about the color ...

C

Designer

Ok. What about it is confusing or doesn't work for our audience?

D

Client

It feels too bright, not calming enough

C

Designer

I see what you mean, We'll keep that in mind as we make revisions for round 2.

D

Best Example:

Most importantly, providing multiple opportunities for feedback and being as specific as possible will help keep projects and expectations on track. Feedback and approval happens at every step, so at the end, the client can claim ownership as well, and everyone can feel successful with the result.

4 FINALIZATION

Phase 4: Finalization

Finally, Brand Design culminates with Finalization. In this last phase, designers enter into production mode, building out a detailed collection of all Brand Identity assets and delivering them to the client in a well-organized package for ease of use.

Style Guide:

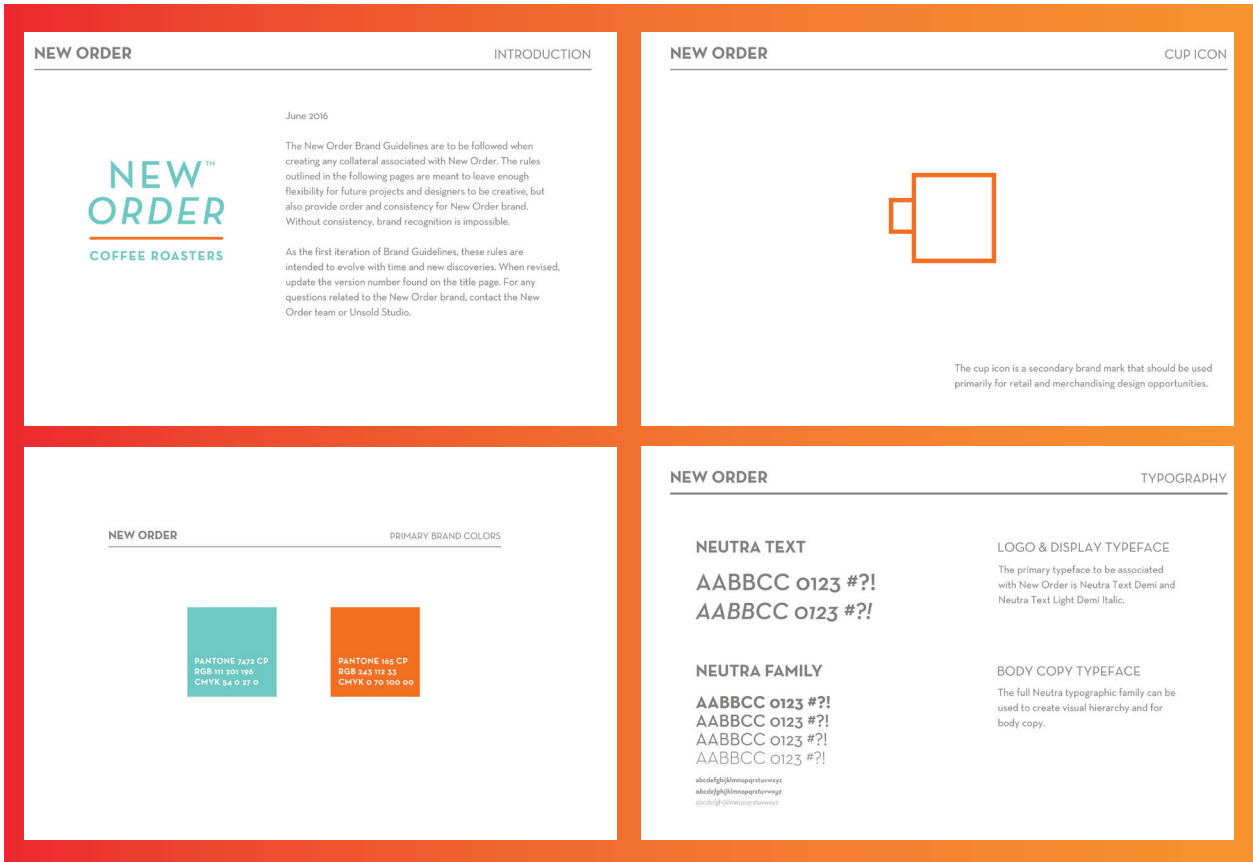
Your style guide details all the elements used to communicate your brand identity, including colors, typefaces or fonts, icons, and language. It will provide detailed instructions and examples of how your brand should be used across various mediums, in print, online, and in your space. Your style guide will serve as your "brand bible" for you, your staff, and any outside contractors charged with producing collateral or otherwise communicating your brand, i.e., social media managers, web designers, copywriters, photographers, architects, interior designers, sign makers, and more.

Launch/Rollout:

After all your brand assets have been approved, it's time to roll them out. You'll be excited to reveal your new brand to the world, but taking time to craft a thoughtful action plan here will increase success. Consider business cards, signage, email signatures, and any other big or small piece of collateral that will need to be updated. Then decide who will do it and when. Be mindful of holidays and industry trends when determining the best time to release your brand to customers and the public.



New Order Coffee-branded social media collateral, designed by Unsold Studio. Photos courtesy of Chris and Michelle Gerard.



Logo, color palette, and typography are some of the main assets documented in a brand style guide, like these pages for New Order Coffee, designed by Unsold Studio.

PRO TIP #4: BRAND DESIGN PLANNING YOUR BRAND ROLL-OUT

Don't wait until your brand assets are ready to start thinking about how you'll reveal them. While your brand is being developed, you should be drafting an action plan for how to roll it out. Enlist any marketing, public relations, or communications support available to you.

Brand

EXERCISE

BRAND PERSONIFICATION

01. If your brand were a person, what would they be like?

For example, are they loud, honest and in your face or quiet, shy, and introspective? Write a list of at least five personality traits that describe your brand:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

03. If your brand were the weather, what would it be?

For example, is it a stormy, blustery day that forces everyone to pack an umbrella, or is it a warm sunny day in paradise? Write a description of your brand's future forecast:

05. What are songs featured on your brand's playlist?

For example, is it a mix of Motown classics, or does it have an eclectic mix? List at least five tracks that would be on your brand's list of jams:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

02. Where does your brand hang out on a Friday night?

What does the crowd look like? What does the interior of the space look like? For example, is it a fancy jazz club, or is it dive bar? Write a description of your brand's perfect Friday night hang out:

04. If your brand were an animal, what would it be?

For example, is it an overfed indoor house cat that lives in a bookstore soaking up the sun by the window, or is it a lioness, ruling the pack in the wild? Write a description of your brand's animal instincts:

Exercise courtesy of Unsold Studio

GLOSSARY

Brand Assets: Any aspect of a brand that has strategic value. Examples include brand associations, brand attributes, brand awareness, or brand loyalty.

Brand Audit: A thorough examination of a brand's position in the marketplace compared to its competitors, to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a brand, along with brand inconsistencies and opportunities for improvement.

Brand Identity: All of the unique attributes that define a company and shape its perception by customers. A few examples of brand identity components include: business name, logo, business card, products and services, and dress code.

Brand Mission: The core of a business's goals that set the tone for its brand identity.

Collateral: The collection of marketing materials used to promote a company and its sales. Collateral can include brochures, presentation templates, email signatures, email templates, business cards, and data sheets.

Competitive Landscape: An analysis that identifies a business' primary rivals to understand competitors, followed by an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses so that the business can improve upon what its competition is doing.

Copywriting: The process of writing verbal content for advertisements, website, collateral, and other communications.

Core Values: The set of guiding principles that communicate what a company believes in.

Customer Touchpoint: The points at which customers come into contact with your brand before, during, or after they purchase something from you.

Logo: A graphic symbol or other design used by a company to represent its brand.

Story/Storytelling: The process of writing and creating content guided by personal and existing stories, emotions, and experiences, to engage customers in a brand narrative.

Target Audience: The desired potential customer audience most likely interested in a product or service.

Tone and Manner: A distinct way of communicating to make a brand's voice quickly recognized and easily remembered in the marketplace.

Typeface: A set of one or more fonts that share an overall look of the characters contained within the font.

User Experience: The overall experience that a person has when interacting with your brand.

RESOURCES



The BizGrid: An interactive online and physical directory designed to help entrepreneurs navigate the landscape of organizations providing business assistance in Detroit.
<http://detroitbizgrid.com/>

Bēhance

Behance: A platform to discover the latest work from top online portfolios by creative professionals across industries.
<https://www.behance.net/>



Brand Camp University: A summit that gathers thought leaders, technologists, geeks, and creatives around a conversation on branding, entrepreneurial thinking, social media and the use of technology. The purpose of Brand Camp is to change how people build, launch, and grow ideas, with the belief that these innovators can change cities.
<https://brandcamp.design/>



The Brand Stylist: Books, workshops, online courses, retreats to unlock the potential within your brand.
<http://thebrand-stylist.com/>

The Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas: A strategic management and entrepreneurial tool that helps you to describe, design, challenge, invent, and pivot your business model.
<https://strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas>

Designspiration

Designspiration: A network used to collect and share design work that inspires you, and see what inspires the work of fellow creatives.
<https://www.designspiration.net/>



The Dieline: A packaging design website that highlights the value of well-designed brand packaging, provides a platform for community to plug into the design process, and keeps users informed of industry trends.
<http://www.thedieline.com/>



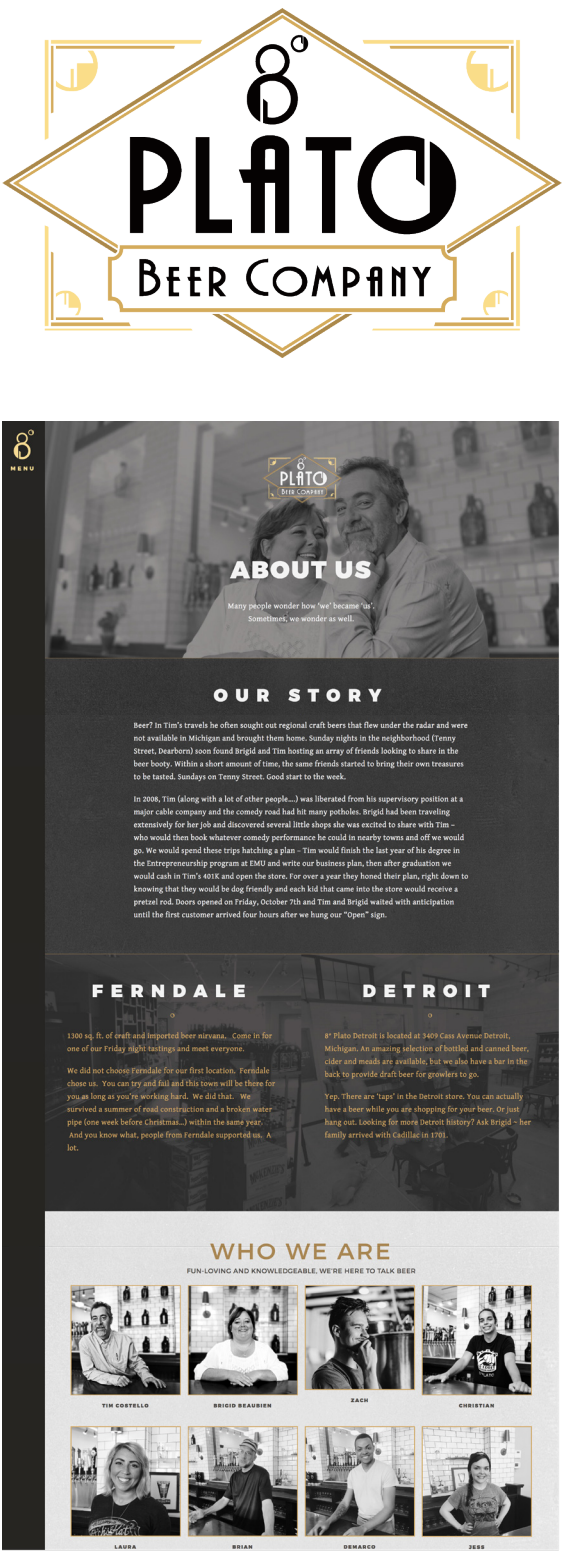
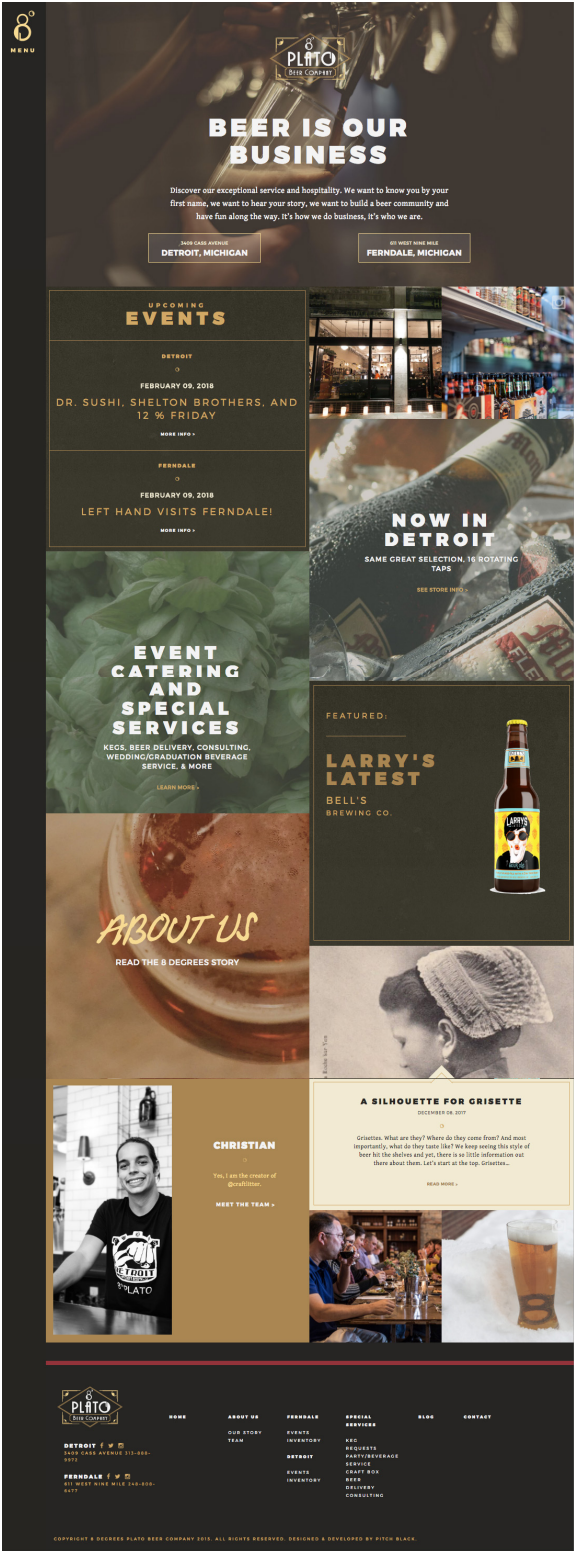
Michigan eLibrary: A free, online library for Michigan residents. MeL users can access a powerful database system for business research, online full-text articles, full-text books, digital images, and other valuable research information.
<http://mel.org//>



Pinterest: A social network and online moodboard, used to collect visual pieces of multimedia.
<https://www.pinterest.com/>



TED: TED Talks are influential videos from expert speakers on education, business, science, tech and creativity.
<https://www.ted.com/>



Home page and interior web page design for craft beverage retailer 8 Degrees Plato, designed by Pitch Black.

SECTION 03

Digital Design

CRAFTING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

- 39 Digital Design for Business
- 41 Digital Design Professionals
- 42 Design Process: Digital
- 44 Exercise: Website Worksheet
- 59 Glossary
- 60 Resources

When you're done with this chapter you will:

1. Understand the value of digital marketing in today's economy.
2. Determine how customers will reach and engage with your business online.
3. Know what types of designers work in a digital space.
4. Learn tools to promote your business online.

"Businesses making use of the web are growing faster and hiring more people."

"Get Your Business Online" with Google.

The objective of this chapter is to help you understand why your online presence matters and how to best present your business to potential customers. We know the majority of customers now research a store online before visiting in person. A strong, well-designed online presence can make your business more attractive to customers.

"Studies show that between 70-80% of people research a company online BEFORE visiting the small business or making a purchase with them."

Betsy McLeod, Blue Corona

Digital Design for Business

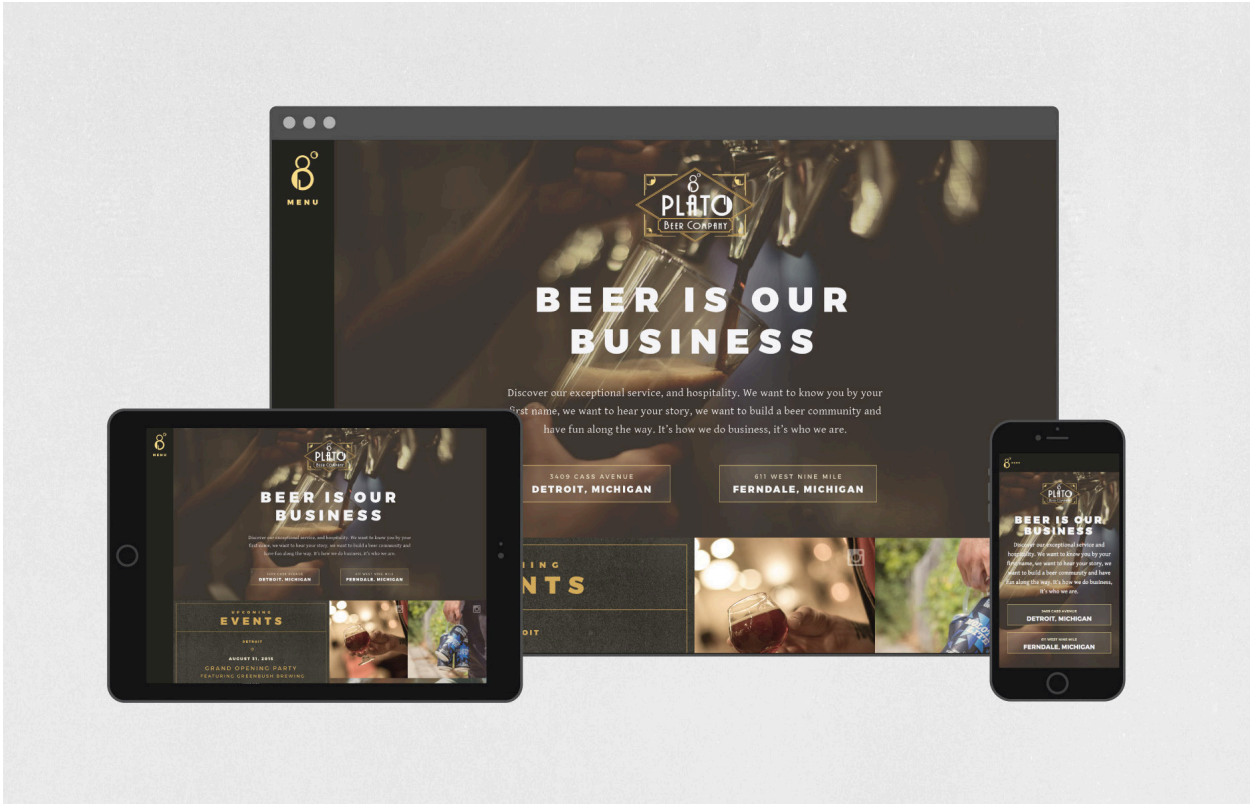
Why does your online presence matter?

In today's consumer market, much of our product research and many of our shopping experiences happen online. If your business does not have an online presence in today's economy, you essentially don't exist to many of your potential customers. If they don't know you exist, they can't buy from you. Conversely, if you maintain a consistent brand image and regularly engage with your online audience, your digital assets have the power to help you build trust and establish a community of loyal customers.

We know consumers search the Internet to:

- ① Find you
- ② Contact you
- ③ Comparison shop
- ④ Get relevant and timely information
- ⑤ Be entertained

So, you want to make sure they easily find that information on your site or social media channels. Be sure you've included a physical address, for example, if you want customers to come into your shop or office. And feature phone numbers and email addresses in logical places, so it's simple for people to contact you. Finally, consider adding product or pricing details and other information to position you and your business as the customer's best choice.



8 Degrees Plato homepage display shown across desktop, tablet, and mobile screen formats, courtesy of Pitch Black.

Digital design professionals will help weave your brand consistently through all communications, including your website and social media channels, which ensures your current and future customers will always have the experience you intend.

Well-designed digital assets can help your business:

- 1 Stay in touch with existing customers
- 2 Share info, promotions, coupons, updates
- 3 Attract new customers and retain existing customers
- 4 Tell your business story
- 5 Support e-commerce
- 6 Gain a deeper understanding of your business, your customer, and your market

PRO TIP #1	DIGITAL DESIGN	BEFORE MEETING WITH YOUR DESIGNER
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Before meeting with your designer, you should be prepared to talk with them about:

01. Your existing brand identity and assets, including any pictures, copy or other content you have for your website, social media, etc
02. Your target customer profile or audience
03. Your unique selling proposition. What makes your business special and why should people buy from you?

Digital Design Professionals

Below are some of the creative professionals that you might work with across the various phases of digital design development:

Strategy:

These individuals help you to research and plan which media or channels to use and how to best engage with target audiences.

Industry Consultants: A person or firm with specialized knowledge in a certain area, i.e., food and beverage versus healthcare, or retail versus professional services.

Social Media Manager: A social media manager can help you set up a consistent and meaningful schedule for posting brand content to your online channels.

Public Relations Firm: A person or firm that can improve your reach and response to your brand messaging by aligning with the right media outlets or brokering promotions and partnerships with other brand ambassadors.

Digital Strategist: A strategist can help you measure, analyze, and adjust your digital performance for optimal impact.

Content:

Refers to the creation of all text, pictures, icons, videos, and quotes listed on your website or social media pages.

Photographer: A trained professional who captures and edits images. Different photographers have different areas of expertise, so choose based on whether you need portraits, product pictures, food, sport or action shots, etc.

Videographer: A person who captures and edits moving images.

Copywriter: A person or firm who specializes in writing, i.e., titles, stories, descriptions, and other language for your digital assets.

Design:

These design individuals are responsible for coming up with the actual look of web pages and making sure they tie in with the given brand persona.

Graphic Designers: A person who assembles images, typography, or motion graphics to communicate ideas, thoughts, and information visually.

User Interface Designers: Someone who designs the visual way that a user interacts with an interface, like swiping controls on an application or clicking buttons on a website.

User Experience Designers: Someone who creates the overall feel and experience that a person has when interacting with a system.

Development:

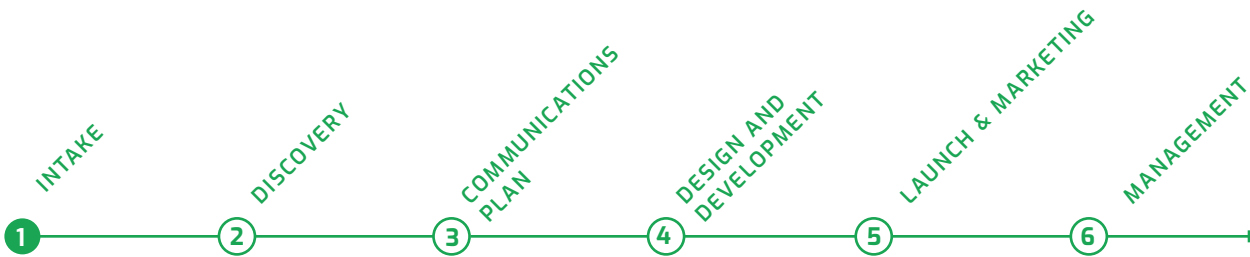
This includes the mathematical and linguistic coding required behind the scenes to make a website functional.

Back-end Developer/Coder: A person who is responsible for writing the mathematical and linguistic code to make a functional website infrastructure.

Database Managers: Someone who uses specialized software to store and organize website data. They can also help with data security, backup, and recovery.

Digital Design Process

Below is an example of the process for working with a Web/Social/Digital Design professional, and some suggestions for what you should prepare before meeting with them. You will notice that this process looks very similar to the Brand Design process. However, there are some unique aspects for applying your brand to online channels.



Phase 1: Intake

What is your budget?

Prepare your budget for digital design and share with your design professional as soon as possible. They can't help you if they don't know what kind of resources they will have to work with. The cost of digital design projects can vary widely, depending on how complicated your needs are. A digital designer can help you prioritize where to use your resources, based on the outcomes you want to achieve. Keep in mind, things that can impact the overall cost of your project are:

- 1 Your active and timely participation in the process
- 2 Clearly defined objectives and priorities
- 3 Existence and availability of appropriate content
- 4 Timely decision making
- 5 Your actual budget

1 2 DISCOVERY

Audit your existing digital assets. What does your online digital presence look like?

Acknowledge Constraints:

Acknowledge budget, social capital, and capacity constraints and make a plan that fits within them.

What can you do with a small budget and only five minutes a day?

What could you add if you were able to budget more time and money?

Brand Consistency:

Note all of the places where your existing digital assets and messages are inconsistent with your brand

Do you have a high-resolution version of your logo?

Do you have professional product images?

Note all of the ways your customers currently connect with you digitally. Do you have an email mailing list? Are you on Instagram? Do you have followers on Facebook? Do you blog or publish a newsletter? How often do you update content?

Phase 2: Discovery

What outcomes do you expect to achieve from this process?

There are essentially 3 levels of engagement with customers:

Awareness

People recognize and respect your brand or identify you as source for particular products, services, or information.

Consideration

People evaluate their options and take some measurable action, like share your content online or walk through the door of your business.

Conversion

People actually choose your product or service over all their other options and direct sales increase.

EXERCISE

WEBSITE WORKSHEET

01. Business Snapshot

What is the name of your company?

Website URL:

What does your company do? What products and services do you offer?

What budget have you allocated for this project?

03. Is there anything about your current site that serves the business well?

05. What are the reasons your ideal customer will visit your website?

02. What are the top 5 needs of your new website?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

04. Who is your ideal customer?

06. How do you want people to feel when they interact with your brand?

Check or fill in the box on the scale below.

Playful	Serious	Youthful	Mature
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive	Exclusive	Local	National
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable	Expensive	Relaxed	Intense
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Progressive	Conservative	High Touch	High-Tech
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

07. List your competitors' websites:

08. What do you think your competitors are doing successfully?

09. Are there any other websites in particular that you like the design of? Why?

10. If we were to be celebrating a successful website strategy in 12 months time, what would that have to look like? How many website visitors? How many leads? How many sales? Be as descriptive as you possibly can.

DISCOVERY

2

What are you trying to accomplish?

Include a call to action that delivers the results you're looking for, like visiting the store, signing up for a mailing list, or using a coupon, etc.

Consider your future goals:

Will you be able to integrate components like e-commerce or a point of sale system, as needed?

Who are your customers?

What do you know about them? Where do they hang out? What do they read? What clubs or organizations do they belong to? How old are they? How much discretionary income to they have? To truly plan for effective digital communication, you need to fully understand who you're trying to reach.

Who are your competitors?

Do you have existing analytics?

Are you tracking how many people visit your website? How often do they click open your coupon or other promotions? How often is your social media content shared?

Benchmarking:

What are 3 websites you like? Why?

1

2

3

What are 3-5 examples of social media posts you like? Why?

1

2

3

4

5

How do these examples relate to your brand?

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

3

Phase 3: Communications Plan

In this phase, you will determine which technology tools will be most effective for your business and how and when you will use each. Remember, every single time a current or potential customer connects with your brand, you want them to have a consistent experience. Be sure when they call your business or visit your website, for example, they get the same service they would get if they walked through your door. Some of the most common and useful channels for small businesses are:



Website:

E-commerce: Will you sell your goods or services online? Again, its important to know what specific objectives you're trying to achieve with your website. Will it be primarily used to direct people to your physical location? Or will customers be able to buy products, sign up for classes, or book appointments?

A well-designed website lends credibility to your business and can help you build trust with your customers. Some basic standards of design for websites are including sufficient white space, breaking up large sections of text with titles or headlines, and using elegant and stylish images and other content. Even the most basic websites should include some combination of the following information:

Home page: This is where people land when they first come to your site. What are the first things you want them to see?

About page: This is an opportunity to tell the story of you and your business and help people engage emotionally with your brand.

Team: Who are the people that run your business?

Products and Services: Include clear and concise descriptions of your offerings

Portfolio: Consider featuring past projects, awards, or articles that showcase your business.

Contact: How can people get in touch with you?

Information sharing: To be seen as a source of information or expertise in your industry area, consider including a blog or other content here.

3



Point of Sale Integration:
Does your in-store point of sale software allow you to also handle online sales? Can it keep track of inventory across both? If not, will you expect it to do so in the future? Some platforms and features will impact your ability to do it, so you'll want to think this through with your designer before making decisions.



Email:
Targeted email messages, newsletters, and other forms of direct digital messages are an extremely effective way of staying connected and communicating with clients, so you want to capture and use email addresses whenever possible. However, you have to balance the opportunity with the threat of saturation and customer privacy. Be sure to follow all applicable rules and regulations. For more information on what they are, go to:

<https://www.business2community.com/email-marketing/can-spam-laws-compliance-best-practices-01756757>



Social Media:
Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, and more are great and cost effective tools for small business, but can also be very time consuming, overwhelming, and ineffective, if not managed well. Know which channels your customers are most likely to be on and focus on those. Establish a consistent schedule for sharing and engaging with your audience. How much are your contributing to the conversation? Do you share information and expertise or just solicit sales? Are potential customers able to see you as an expert on a product or in an industry? How often are you posting or updating content?

Social media explained with Bacon

	I like bacon
	I'm eating bacon
	Here is a vintage photo of my bacon
	I have skills including eating bacon

	Watch me eat bacon
	Here's a recipe with bacon
	This is where I eat bacon
	I work for Google and I eat bacon

Steps for Social Media Success:

- 1 Decide which channels make sense for your business and your customers.
- 2 Be consistent with your brand, your messaging, and your participation.
- 3 Use social media to build relationships and engage new customers.
- 4 Consider hiring someone to manage your social media channels.



Google business, Yelp, etc. (Platform Management):
Your business will get listed by others, so be sure you know what information is being shared and be sure that the information you can control is accurate and consistent. Also, check on your business profiles frequently. You'll want to respond promptly to all comments, whether compliments or complaints, so customers know you're listening, feel heard, and can deepen their trust and relationship with you.



Telephone:
Many small business owners in today's digital world use their personal phones or mobile devices to conduct business. They're often the most available and basic technology for connecting to customers. But you should still remember to always treat your business like a business and ensure each call or message to those devices is considered a current or potential client and handled professionally every single time.

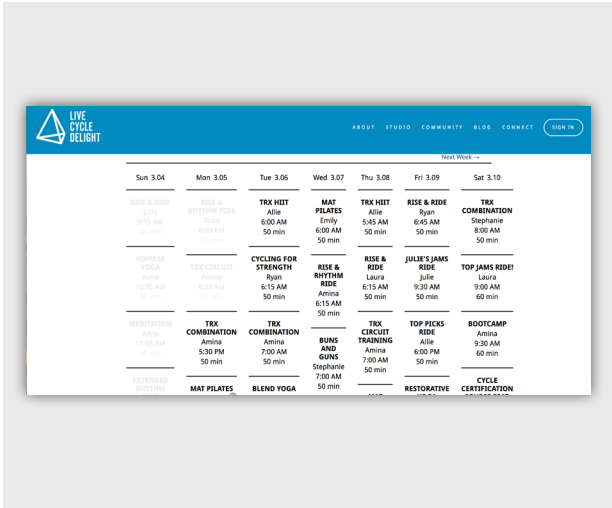
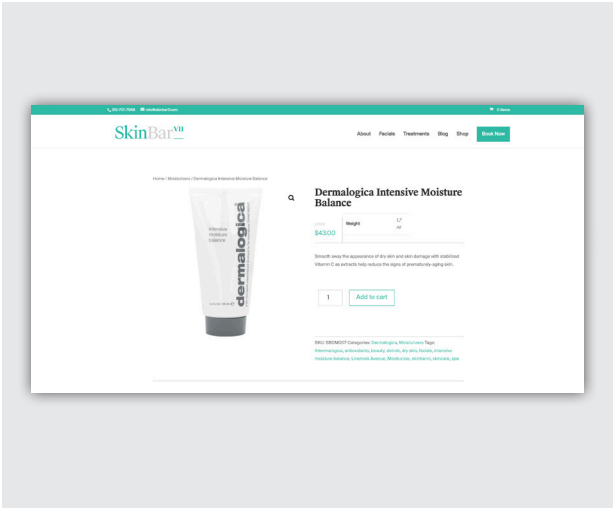
Consider the following:

- 1 How are calls answered? Is it an official office or store line?
- 2 Are customers directed to voicemail? Is your voicemail greeting professional? Does it provide critical information for your customers about hours or location?
- 3 Is the person who answers trained to deliver great service, provide accurate information, or close the sale?

4 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Phase 4: Design and Development

For website projects, this phase is broken into two essential areas: creating wireframes or mock ups and applying styling and branding. Wireframes or mock ups refer to the structure of a website: how many pages it will have and which functions will be included where. The styling is more about visual and written content.



Functionality

How will customers interact with your website? Is it strictly informational? Or can they purchase goods and services, make appointments, sign up for classes, or upload records and documents? Adding a function like e-commerce, shown above on the SkinBarVII website, allows you to offer products to consumers all over the globe, but it may also require custom coding and added time to understand and manage the logistics. Be realistic and make sure to understand how adding function now may impact your workflow later.

Content Creation

Content refers to text, pictures, videos, quotes, stories, blogs, contact information, maps, and other information included on your website. In today's fast-paced digital marketing world, we often hear "content is king." Stories and images must quickly capture the attention of your target audience and inspire them to engage with and share it. What content do you already have? What will you create? If you can't create it, who will do it, and how much will it cost? Your customers will share content that is meaningful to them, which makes your digital presence stronger and exposes your business to more potential customers.

4

"People ignore design that ignores people."

Frank Chimero, author of *The Shape of Design*



Photography and Videography

Pictures and video make online content more interesting and help engage customers. You may want to include pictures of your team in action or a product demonstration video on your website. The quality of the content should reflect your brand image. Consider whether you'll use stock photography or budget for hiring a professional to take pictures or shoot videos to capture the visual stories you want to tell

Written content

Even the most basic websites will require a bit of thoughtful writing. Consider, for example, how you will describe your business's products or services, share contact information, direct people to make a purchase, or tell the story of your business to attract and retain customers. Your "About" page is a great opportunity to tell your unique and compelling story and make an emotional connection with your customers.

PRO TIP #2:

DIGITAL DESIGN

WRITTEN CONTENT

A clear top-level navigation on your website is key to directing customers to additional information about your business.

Increase customer engagement by simplifying the content on your homepage into a few key points. Allow them to discover more about your business as they click into the deeper web pages. This way your customers won't feel overwhelmed and bombarded with all the information at once.

4



Web Designers

Web Designers are responsible for applying the brand style and design language to the content, functionality, and User Experience/User Interface of the website. While not critical, familiarity with html, css and responsive frameworks helps bring efficiencies to the web development phase.

Developers

Developers bring the web design's functionality and interaction to life by writing the code that transforms the static designs into a dynamic and interactive website. They work closely with designers to ensure the functionality, design, and user experience is presented as intended across a broad range of browsers and devices.

5 LAUNCH AND MARKETING

Phase 5: Launch and Marketing

Like everything else, the successful launch of a new website or digital advertising campaign requires careful planning and execution. The planning timeline can vary widely and depends on multiple variables and adjustments while you review and approve content. In general, plan on at least 6-8 weeks of development and planning before you're ready to launch.

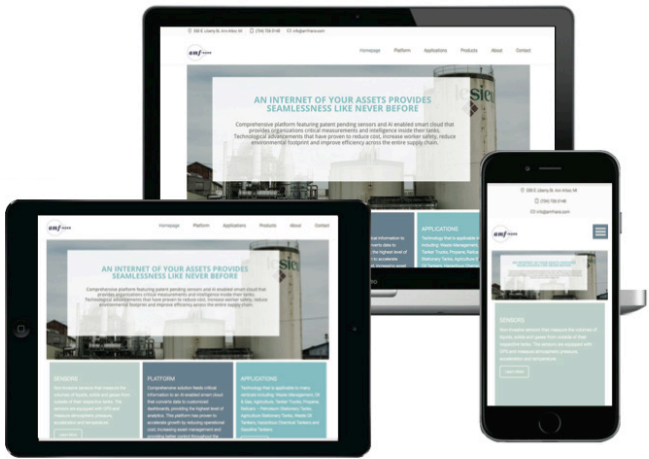
When it comes to execution, you may decide to use any of the following marketing tools to get the word out:

- 1 Social Media
- 2 Calls to Action
- 3 Keyword Research
- 4 Google AdWords
- 5 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

Social Media

Social media is a great place to start to build your audience and get your website or product seen. If you create the right content and reach the right audience, you can actively grow your following organically. This means defining your audience personas for your business or product - who is most likely to be interested in what you're doing? If you're just starting out on social media, Google Analytics can help you determine some audience demographics of the traffic to your site, which you can use to determine your target audience on social. If you already have social media accounts and have some followers, try a social media planning and reporting tool like [SproutSocial](#), which can help you collect some demographic data on your audiences. You can also use personas and demographics to target audiences when running ads or promotions on social media.

When you can narrow down the group of people you're trying to reach, social media paid promotions can be extremely successful in getting your name out there. Once you know who you should be reaching, you can craft content tailored to your user personas. Researching relevant and popular hashtags related to your content can also be helpful when trying to reach as many people as you can. On Instagram, use unlimited hashtags to get your content out there. On Twitter, stick to one or two strong hashtags that best relate to your content. Limit hashtag use on Facebook—research shows that the more hashtags used on Facebook posts, the lower the reach of your post.



AMF Nano: Website Development/Design

Challenge: As an "Internet of Things" startup, AMF-Nano needed a website to showcase their unique product and movtivate investors.

Our Role: Designed and developed a responsive website that put AMF-Nano on the same level as other key "Internet of Things" players.

Impact: The new site exceeded expectation, improved user experience, and impressed investors.

Calls to Action

CTAs are essential in getting people to complete the action you want them to make. A CTA can be in an email or a social post, or on a website. A successful CTA is clear and concise, and easily picked out of a content piece. If you can nail your CTA in an email subject line or on a sign-up sheet on your site and get the response you're looking for, then CTA can be a great, cost-free marketing tool.

A few dos and donts for CTAs

Do make your CTA noticeable. If it's in an email, it's a button with few words like "Read More" or "Shop Now."	Don't Over Promise Be honest about what your readers are interacting with. If you're selling a product, don't make the buyer think they are getting more than what they're actually purchasing.
Do make your CTA actionable. How is your reader going to know they have an action to complete if you don't tell them to do it?	Don't make your CTA longer than it has to be. Especially if it's a button in an email or on your site, a CTA button shouldn't include more than 3 or 4 words.

Keyword Research

Keyword research is one of the most important things you can do for your website. Moz is a great tool to use for keyword research and getting started with SEO <https://moz.com/explorer>. You can use Moz's tool to research which keywords perform the best for your site, which can help you determine which keywords are the best to advertise on. Google AdWords Keyword Planner is another great tool to set up and track your keywords, as well as research and discover new keywords https://adwords.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/#?modal_active=none.

Google Adwords

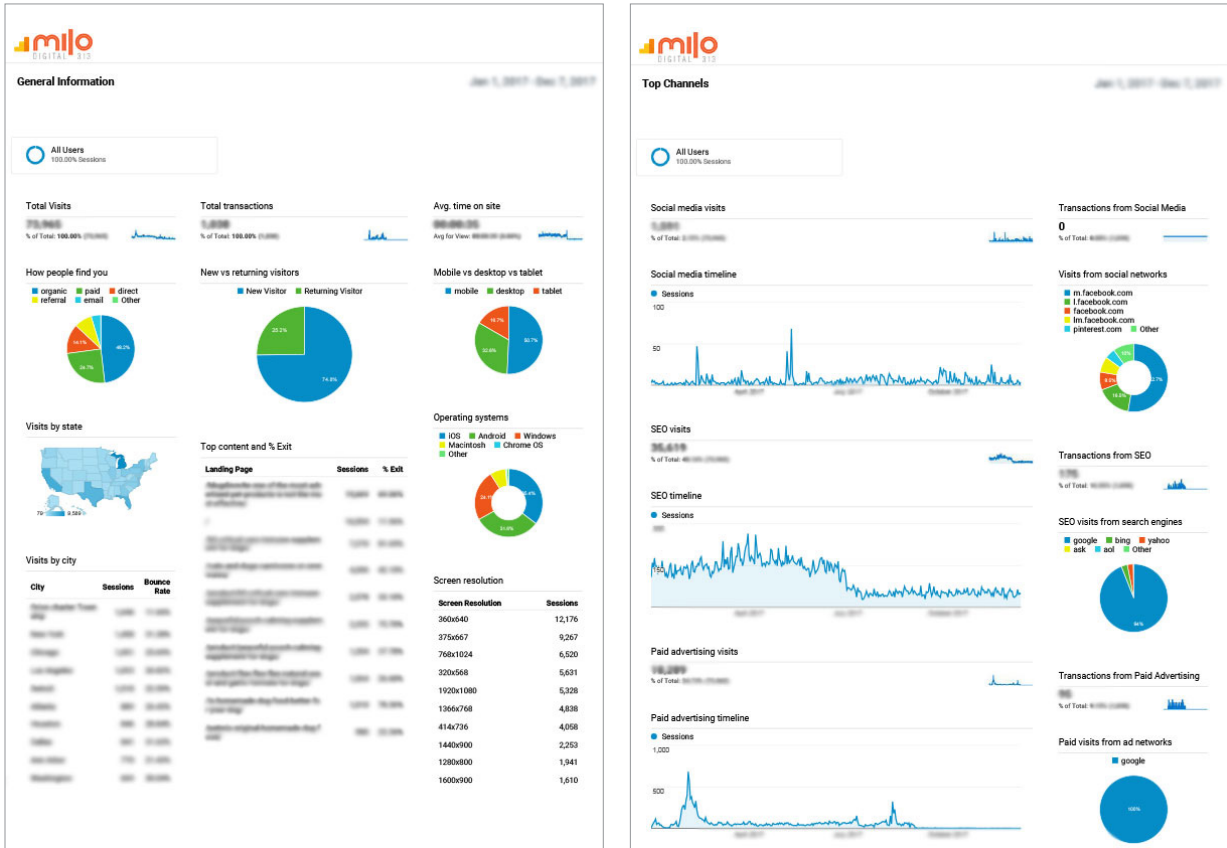
AdWords can be a great tool to get your website displayed in Google search results, especially if you rank low on the results page organically. However, popular search terms can be competitive in that you have to outbid other websites trying to advertise on the same keyword. Sometimes keywords often become too expensive per click for AdWords to fuel a decent return on investment (ROI). Our recommendation is to build up your SEO organically first. Include keywords and backlinks on your site and create unique content to help boost your ranking on Google search results. As long as you follow the rules, these steps can be extremely helpful in getting your website out there. Rules can be found at <https://www.semrush.com/blog/7-seo-rules-every-marketer-should-know/>

KPIs

Key performance indicators, also known as KPIs, are crucial in measuring the success of your efforts. The first step to any marketing plan is to identify your goals and how you can measure your achievements. Social media KPIs may include fans/audience growth, reach, impressions and engagement.

“Set goals, track your progress with reporting on social media platforms or an outside service like SproutSocial, and don't give up if one thing doesn't yield the results you're looking for – be open to adjusting your strategy.”

Suzie Djordjevic, Community Manager, Pitch Black



Analytics dashboard for a select client, photos courtesy of Milo Detroit.

6 MANAGEMENT

Phase 6: Management

Once your website or other digital campaigns have been launched, you will need to be diligent about monitoring and managing them. Keeping information current, for example, is critical to maintaining customer trust. But effective management goes way beyond consistent posting and engagement.

A person skilled in the science of measuring and analyzing digital marketing, for example, will evaluate Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to help you assess whether you're achieving your goals. A digital strategist can help you determine what data you should be looking at, where you can find it, and what you can do with it.

Consider the objectives you outlined during the Discovery Phase for customer awareness, consideration, and conversion. In order to know whether your customers are responding the way you'd planned, you need to periodically assess the effectiveness of your strategy and adjust accordingly if they're not.

Which do you care more about?

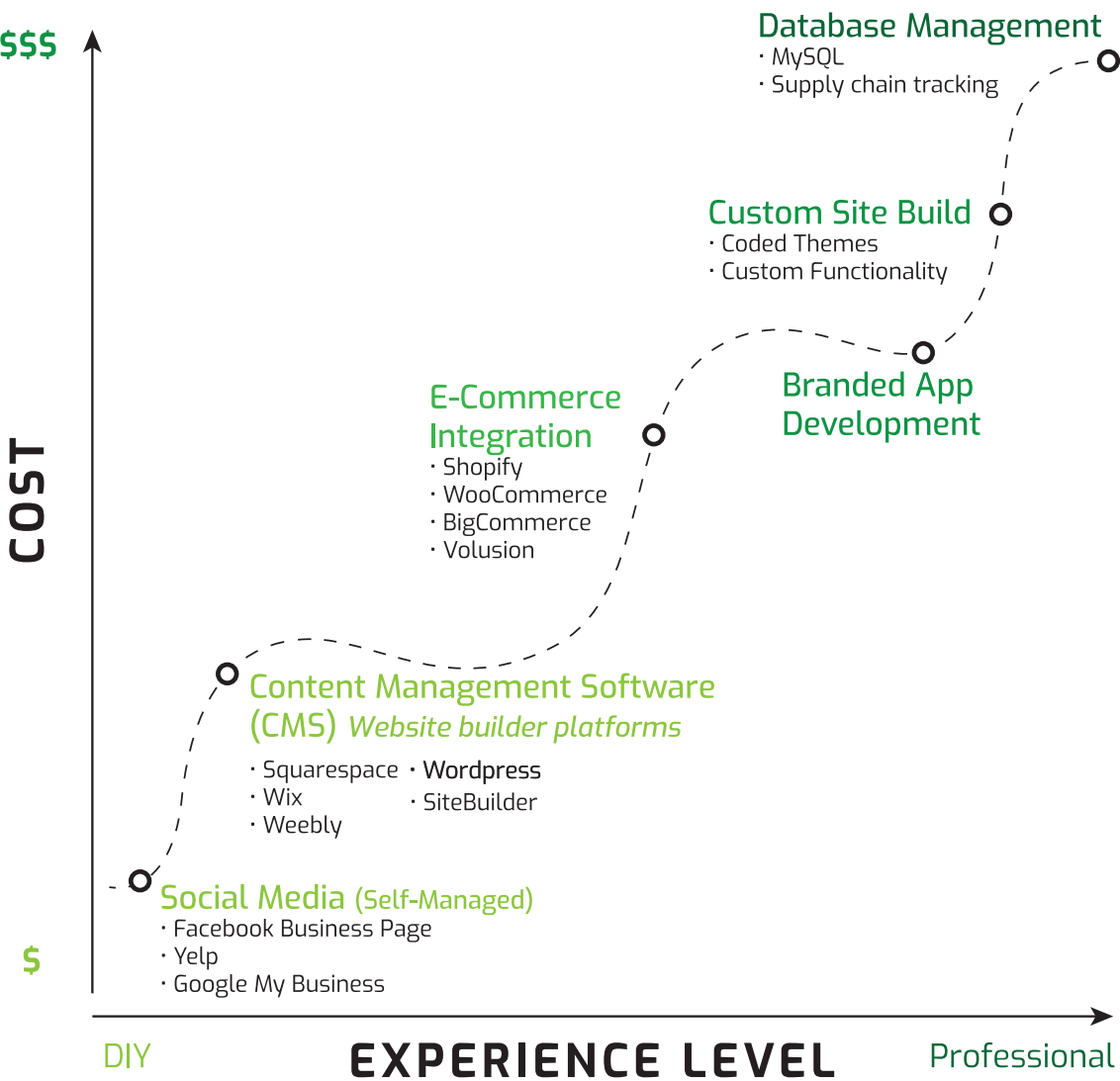
- 1 Website traffic or click-throughs to purchase?
- 2 Number of followers or social media shares?
- 3 How often you show up in online searches or increased foot traffic in your store?

Reputation Management:

Yelp, Google Business, and Foursquare are search and discover channels for consumers looking for local stores, restaurants, services, and amenities. A page often exists for your business, even if you haven't created one. To effectively manage your brand and your customers' experiences, be sure to:

- 1 Claim your page
- 2 Respond to questions and comments
- 3 Ensure accurate business and location information
- 4 Add a photo
- 5 Get your business online with Google: <https://www.gybo.com/>

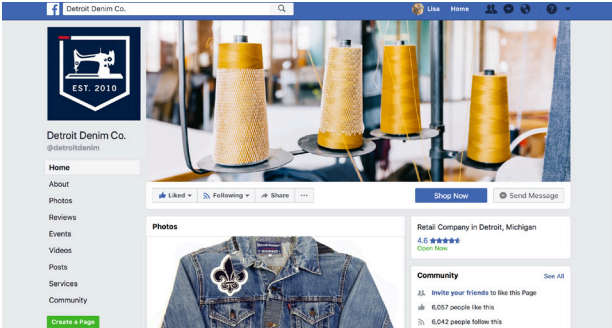
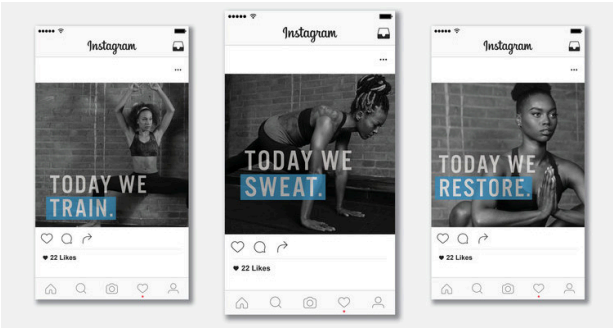
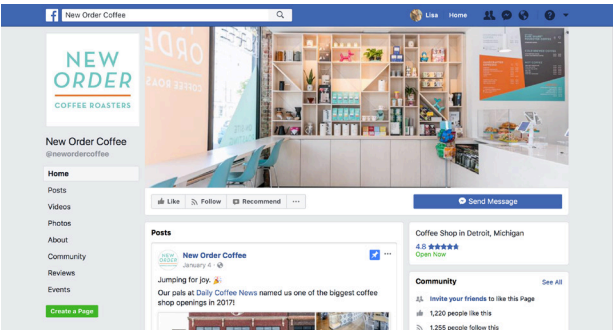
Digital Design Difficulty Scale



In the scheme of web design and digital brand development, many different platforms and services exist to help business owners create unique websites and carry out various business functions. Some are geared toward DIY users, while certain functions may require the help of an expert. While this chart by no means represents all the options, it does serve to give a general sense of the level of investment and experience required to execute different kinds of online content.

Conclusion

Just as with brand design, a key consideration of digital design is the consistency of your message and your voice. Other factors of effective digital design are frequency and content. Maintaining consistency of tone in who produces your content and how it looks, as well as consistency in frequency of communications will keep your customers informed and empowered when considering your business. Take advantage of all you can do on your own to control your brand's narrative. Make sure that clients and customers can find out more about your business and how to get in touch with you via the web or social media.



Consistency in branding should extend from the mission and assets, all the way to the social media profiles and websites, as demonstrated here in the cohesive brand character of New Order Coffee's Facebook page, Kuzzo's Chicken & Waffles homepage, Live Cycle Delight's Instagram Feed, or Detroit Denim Co's Facebook profile.

PRO TIP #3: DIGITAL DESIGN SOCIAL MEDIA CONSISTENCY

Using your brand assets consistently across channels will elevate your business and ensure that customers keep you in mind.

GLOSSARY

Analytics: The measurement and analysis of website data used to understand and improve web usage and conduct market research.

Backlinks: A link for a given website or piece of web content linked from some other website (the referrer) to that web resource (the referent). A backlink is like a reference comparable to a citation in print.

Blog: An online journal or diary used to share your thoughts with the world. It can also be used as a marketing tool.

Boost(ed) Post: A paid post from your business' social media page that can appear as an advertisement in your audience's news feeds.

Content Marketing: A form of marketing focused on creating, publishing, and sharing online material to attract an audience and generate interest in a company's products or services.

Conversion Rate: The percentage of visitors that take a desired action on a website such as signing up for a newsletter or making a purchase. It is used to measure website success.

Customer Relationship Management system (CRM): Technology that allows businesses to manage business relationships and customer data in one central location.

Domain Name (URL): The unique online address where Internet users can access a website.

E-Commerce: The buying and selling of goods and services over the Internet.

Point of Sale system: The combination of hardware and software used to manage sales and track sales data in a retail store.

Search Engine Marketing: A collective name for all advertising and marketing activities that take place within the front or back end of web search engines, like Google, Bing, or Firefox.

Site Map: An organized chart of a website that shows relationships between web pages and content. It is designed to help both users and search engines navigate the site.

User Experience (UX): The overall experience that a person has when interacting with a company, its services, and its products.

User Interface (UI): The visual display of a computer or software that determines how users give commands to the computer, and how information is displayed on the screen.

Wireframe: A visual guide used to lay out content and the organizational framework of a website.

RESOURCES

AMY PORTERFIELD

Amy Porterfield: Host of top-rated 'Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast', Amy Porterfield is a marketing professional who teaches business owners, educators, and entrepreneurs the profitable action steps for building a strong online presence and community.
<http://www.amyporterfield.com/>



Basecamp: Trusted by millions, Basecamp puts everything you need to get work done in one place. It's the calm, organized way to manage projects, work with clients, and communicate company-wide.
<https://basecamp.com/>



Constant Contact: An email marketing platform where you can create other online marketing campaigns to meet your business goals.
<https://www.constantcontact.com/index.jsp>



DoubleClick by Google: Get connected. In today's marketplace, being there means being everywhere. Connect with the people that you care about, wherever they are, with DoubleClick's holistic advertising solutions and global reach.
<https://www.doubleclickbygoogle.com/>



Google Analytics Solutions: Google Analytics Solutions offer free and enterprise analytics tools to measure website, app, digital, and offline data to gain customer insights.
<https://www.google.com/analytics/>



GSuite: Do your best work with Google's suite of intelligent apps. Get business email, video conferencing, online storage, and file sharing.
<https://gsuite.google.com/>



Get Your Business Online: Managed by Google, GYBO is a program that helps small businesses across the US with online training, tools for building mobile-friendly sites, and in-person workshops to help them connect with more customers and achieve lasting success.
<https://www.gybo.com/>



MailChimp: An online platform that provides marketing automation for e-commerce businesses. Users can send well-designed emails, connect their e-commerce store, advertise, and build their brand.
<https://mailchimp.com/>



MOZ: Moz builds tools that make SEO, inbound marketing, link building, and content marketing easy.
<https://moz.com/explorer>



SEMrush: SEMrush is a powerful and versatile competitive intelligence suite for online marketing, from SEO and PPC to social media and video advertising research.
<https://www.semrush.com/>



Social Media Examiner: An online social media marketing resource that helps businesses discover how to best use social media to connect with customers, drive traffic, generate awareness, and increase sales.
<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>



Sprout Social: Sprout Social is a social media management tool created to help businesses grow their social media presence.
<https://sproutsocial.com/>



Unsplash: A website dedicated to sharing copyright-free stock photography.
<https://unsplash.com/>

SECTION 04

Space Design

BUILDING YOUR BRAND STORY INTO BRICK AND MORTAR

67 Architecture

69 Design Process: Architecture

71 Exercise: Programming
Questionnaire

79 Exercise: Develop a Moodboard

85 Interiors

87 Exercise: 360° Walkthrough

90 Merchandising and Display

96 Glossary

97 Resources

When you're done with this chapter you will:

1. Understand how the space your business occupies is an extension of your brand.
2. Understand the design processes of architects and interior designers.
3. Develop a successful customer experience, both inside and outside your business.

House of Pure Vin, 1433 Woodward, Detroit, designed by and
photos courtesy of M1/DTW.

The objective of this chapter is to help you understand how the physical space your business occupies is an extension of your brand, and a crucial tool in attracting and retaining customers. As discussed in the introduction, this includes the context your business exists within—customer experience begins long before they step foot into your store, so be prepared to think about what your customers see and feel as they approach and once they step through the door.

Where to Begin

Space design, in this context, can cover a very broad range of projects. Your business may be in a stand-alone storefront, or you may lease a portion of a much larger and professionally managed retail building. The unique opportunities, challenges, and goals for your business will determine how you establish the scope of your project, but a qualified design professional can be an invaluable guide to navigating the process.

This chapter will break down space design into two categories: Architectural Design and Interior Design. Many architecture firms offer interior design services, and some design firms will have a licensed architect on staff to address structure or building systems. The following page contains a general description of the similarities and differences to help you decide what services your project might require:



Interior view of wine display and cold storage at House of Pure Vin, designed by and photo courtesy of M1/DTW.

Space

BOTH Architects and Interior Designers:

- 1 Are skilled in spatial planning and design, and know what questions to ask you to guide the process.
- 2 Are well versed in the building codes and regulations that apply to their work.
- 3 Can produce floorplans, elevations, and visualizations, and assist you in selecting materials, finishes, and hardware.
- 4 Undergo rigorous education, training, and examination, and pursue ongoing educational programs to maintain their expertise. Obtaining a license is a requirement for architects only. There is no license in Michigan for interior designers. Although some interior designers take a national certification test (NCIDQ), the lack of certification does not mean they cannot practice interior design.



Architects

Are required to seal permit documents. Not all "architects" are licensed those who aren't are typically referred to as Architectural Designers and would need to work with a licensed architect for sealed drawings just as an interior designer would.

Are needed whenever the project might impact the building's structure or 'envelope' (outside walls, roof, and foundation)—essentially, the 'skin and bones' of your building.

Can address building systems like the electrical and plumbing, permanent elements like doors and windows, and exterior elements like landscaping, parking, and utilities.

Can perform energy calculations to optimize things like insulation and natural lighting.

Interior Designers

Usually perform most of the interior architecture, including space planning, furniture layouts, millwork design, lighting design, interior ADA compliance, etc, in addition to the selection of materials and furniture.

Can assist in furniture selection and design custom elements like cabinetry and other millwork.

Have deep knowledge of current trends and innovations in materiality, and new products in areas like lighting, hardware, and fixtures.

May be more appropriate if you only need to redesign the interior of your space, and aren't touching any permanent building elements.

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

Architects vs. Interior Designers

SPACE DESIGN

Architecture

BREAKING DOWN THE BUILD-OUT PROCESS

69 Pre-Design

72 Schematic Design

75 Design Development

80 Construction Documentation

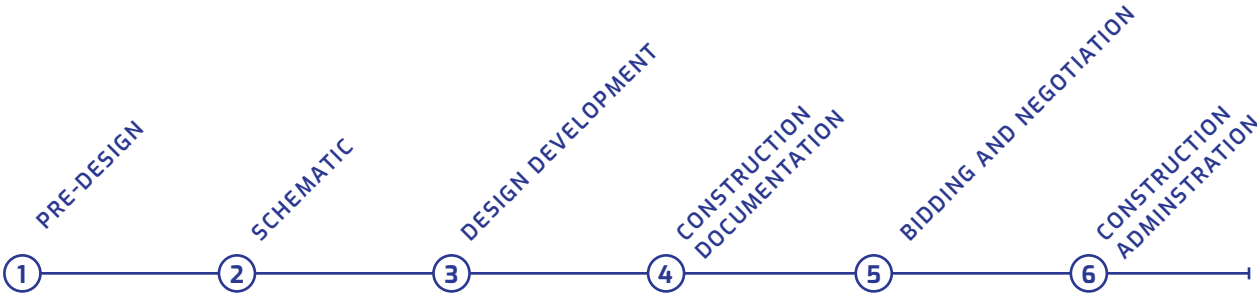
81 Bidding and Negotiation

81 Construction Administration



Business Name: Paul's Pizza, Business Owner: John Grossi and Jason Ghannam, Address: 7635 W. Vernor, Detroit MI 48209
 Architectural firm: Steven C. Flum Inc., Sign Designer and Builder: Richard Gage with Richard Gage Design Studio
 Photographer: Myrna Segura with SDBA, Organization/Program: SDBA Façade Improvement Program

You may have a life-changing product or service to offer, in a store that perfectly represents your brand. But if your building is in disrepair, poorly lit, or lacks appropriate signage, you may be losing out on the potential for organic business from the people who live, work, play, or visit your neighborhood. Improving your building may seem daunting, but the benefit to your bottom line can make all the difference in the world. This section will break down the process of working with a licensed architect to breathe new life into your building and its surroundings. While the specifics may vary based on your project scope, architects and the many other players in a construction project generally describe the process in six phases:



PRO TIP #1: SPACE DESIGN WORKING WITH A REAL ESTATE BROKER

Commercial real estate brokers who represent tenant interests will sometimes draft an RFP and assist in selecting and managing architects and other design and construction professionals working on your project. Their expertise may also cover costing and risk assessment, so be sure to inquire about these services if you're working with an agent to identify and secure your space.

- Peter A. Bacevice, PhD - Director of Research, HLW International

1 PRE-DESIGN

Architecture Design Process

Phase 1: Pre-Design / Conceptual Design

What do we already know/have/want?

Much like the Discovery phase in the brand design process, this step is really about you and your design professional getting a solid understanding of what you have to work with.



Goal
Research existing assets and information, and determine project criteria, constraints, and broad goals.



Preliminary Project Budget and Timeline
Start the project with a general idea of the resources you plan to commit to the project, and any timelines or milestones that may need to be considered.



Business Plan and Brand Strategy
Bring your design team any existing materials you've developed that describe the character of your business, how you operate, long- and short-term goals for your business, etc. This could include your completed Brand Personality Worksheet and / or Moodboard.

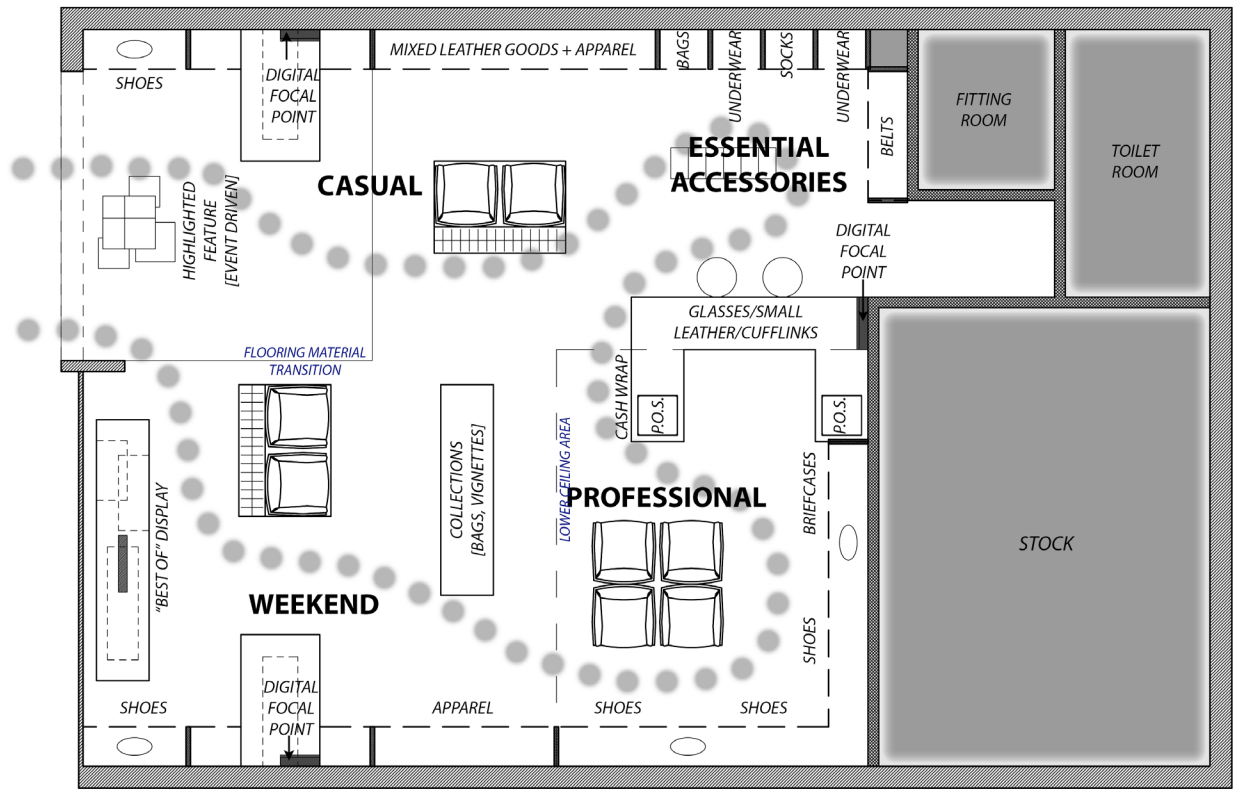


Existing Conditions Survey
Gather any pictures, floor plans, or other documentation describing the project site, inside and out. A professional architect can help you assemble information on things like electrical service and other existing building systems, municipal utilities like water and sewer connections, the condition of the structure and building envelope, etc.



Review of applicable codes, regulations, and neighborhood context
This might include building codes, zoning regulations, neighborhood ordinances, and historic district regulations.

1



This annotated floor plan clearly marks different retail zones, overlaying a suggested customer traffic pattern for the flow of shoppers throughout the whole space. Illustrations like this are helpful to plan focal points and customer interaction patterns. Design and illustration courtesy of JGA.

PRO TIP #2: SPACE DESIGN THE POWER OF PAINT (FROM PATRICK THOMPSON DESIGN)

A fresh coat of carefully selected paint can go a long way and is an affordable way to transform a space.

Space

EXERCISE

PROGRAMMING QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the first things any design professional will do is start asking questions. While these questions may vary by industry, the following will give you a general idea of what will be asked:

01. What products or services does your business provide?

02. Who are your customers?

Be as specific as you can about demographics.

How old are they?
Where do they live?
How much money do they make?
What is their level of education?
What is their cultural identity?

03. Are there new market opportunities in your future?

Will the space need to be designed to accommodate those changes in products, services, or customers?

04. How many people work in the space?

What are the staff-specific needs?

05. Do you make products in the space?

Should customers see you doing it?

06. What specific areas or zones are needed in your space?

What spaces are for customers and which might be for staff only? For example, a restaurant usually has a "front of house," where patrons come in and eat, and a "back of house," where food is prepared and / or staff convenes. A clothing store might also have an employee break room or storage area, which is separate from customer space.

1

2 SCHEMATIC

Precedent Study

Gather pictures of other businesses you like and don't like and be prepared to describe why or why not for each.

Preliminary Blocking, Circulation, and Space Planning

Start to think about what the major areas within the space will be, and how they relate/connect to one another. If you will need fitting rooms or seating, for example, consider whether those need to be near the front or in the back, by the register or away from the bathrooms, etc.

Preliminary Palette, or "Look and Feel" References

Initial ideas of colors, materials, and finish qualities that embody your goals for the user experience.

Phase 2: Schematic Design

What is your vision for the project?

This is where the real back-and-forth design work starts to happen. Your design team will gather up all the information you shared with them, digest it, and start making recommendations. Don't be worried if you don't like the first design they suggest—this part of the process relies on honest and open feedback to home in on a design that is functional, practical, and the best representation of your brand.

Goal

Explore various design concepts based on the information and goals above, iterate and discuss design concepts, and narrow them down to one preferred design.

Begin to Design

Based on the information gathered in the first phase, designers begin to develop rough sketches, layouts, and physical or digital models to describe different approaches to the design.

Iterate

Designers will present one or more concepts and encourage discussion of what you like and don't like, and the strengths and weaknesses of each concept. This process will repeat until a single, cohesive design concept emerges.

Commit

At the end of this phase, after lots of back-and-forth, you'll arrive at a design concept and be asked to commit to that plan so the design team can flesh it out. Some changes beyond this point are inevitable, but making big changes after this point can cause delays and added expenses.

Document

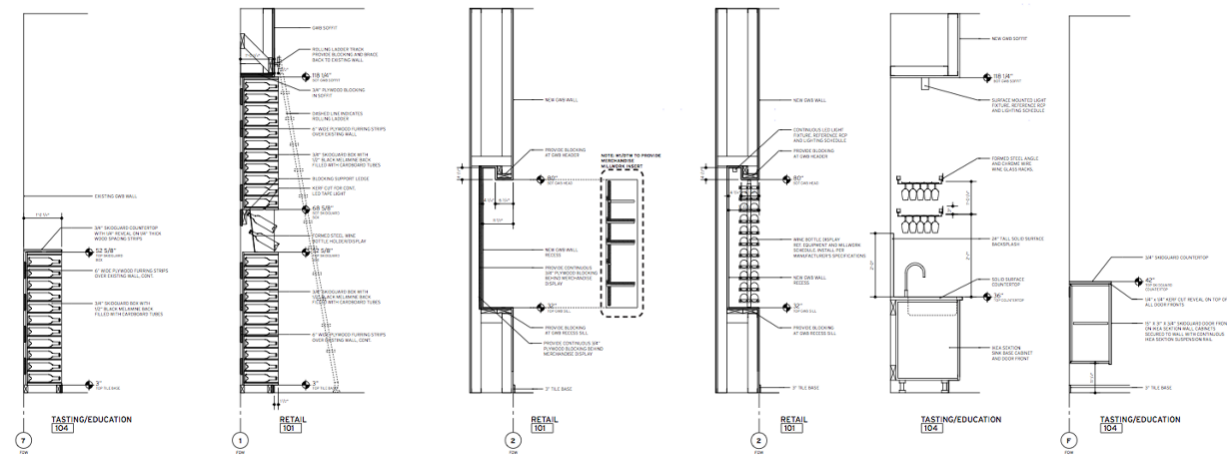
By the end of this phase you're likely to have some or all of the following documents in early draft form:

Site Plans:

Drawings that describe the area around your building and the relationship to adjacent properties.

Floor Plans:

Top-down-view showing the existing building elements and rough ideas of where walls, rooms, and other new elements might go.



Section schematics for House of Pure Vin specify the building and installation requirements needed for the various fixtures and display cases customized to fit the space. Plans courtesy of M1/DTW.

PRO TIP #3:	SPACE DESIGN	THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT YOUR PROJECT SITE
-------------	--------------	--

Architectural elements of your building and surrounding community go further than just your property line:

Lighting	Landscaping
Signage	Sidewalks & Outdoor Seating
Parking	Security and Public/Private Access

“When designing a space, it is imperative that there is a moment of co-creation where all the necessary parties are in the same room collaborating, discussing ideas, and building off of each other to come up with the best possible solution.”

RL Concetti

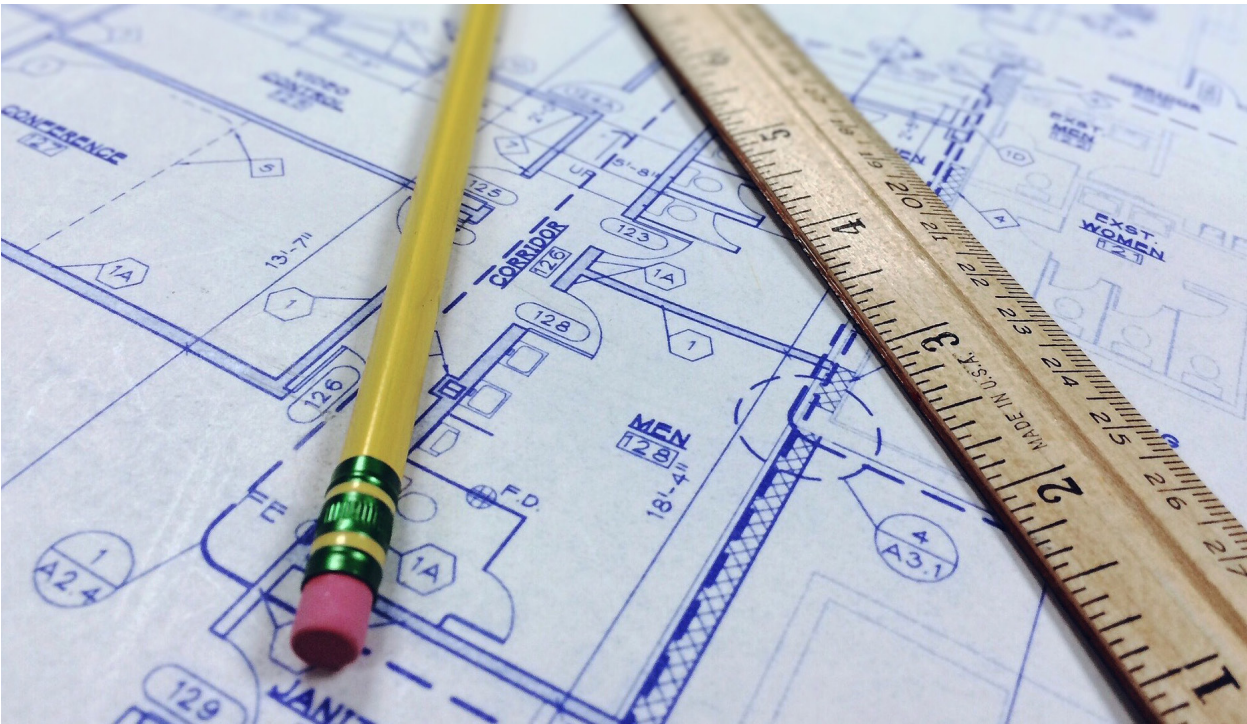


Photo courtesy of Unsplash

PRO TIP #4:	SPACE DESIGN	ALL ABOUT BLUEPRINTS
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Floor plans, along with other drawings like sections and elevations, are what most people think of as “blueprints”---the name refers to the process architects once used to copy their hand-drawn designs. Copies showed up blue wherever the original was white, and white where the original black lines were. True blueprints are rarely used today, but the name stuck!

Space

2

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

3

Key Elevations and Sections:
Views of how the outside faces of the building might look, and views cut through the building to show the height of spaces and relationship to floors, ceilings, and the roof

Area Analysis:
General ideas of the functions and sizes of rooms and other areas of your space.

Visualizations:
Renderings, videos, or 3D models that start to let you see what the design will look like when complete

Preliminary Cost Estimates, and Anticipated Specialty Consultants:
Best guesses, based on industry knowledge, of the hard and soft costs you might expect, and what kinds of specialty trades might need to be involved, like a food service consultant for a restaurant, or an acoustical engineer for a performance venue

Phase 3: Design Development

How do we turn our vision into a design?

At this point in the process, you and your design team have decided on a single approach to the project, and it's now up to your architectural or interior design team to dive into the nitty-gritty and figure out all the details.

Goal
Refine and develop the approved design to address major decisions and incorporate building systems.

Refine Design
Just like the name of this phase implies, the design team will take your approved design and continue to develop more and more detailed information about every surface, material, fixture, and system, from the size of the toilet stalls to the style of light fixture over the entryway.

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

Architectural Design Process

3

“Design impacts people’s lives everyday. A well -designed space can change the way we live, work, and play.”

Patrick Thompson Design

Engage Consultants

Specialists will be enlisted to help lay out systems like the HVAC, plumbing, electrical (collectively referred to as “MEP”, or “Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing”), landscaping and parking, fire protection and security, and other specialty systems unique to your business. In some cases, structural or civil engineering may also be needed.

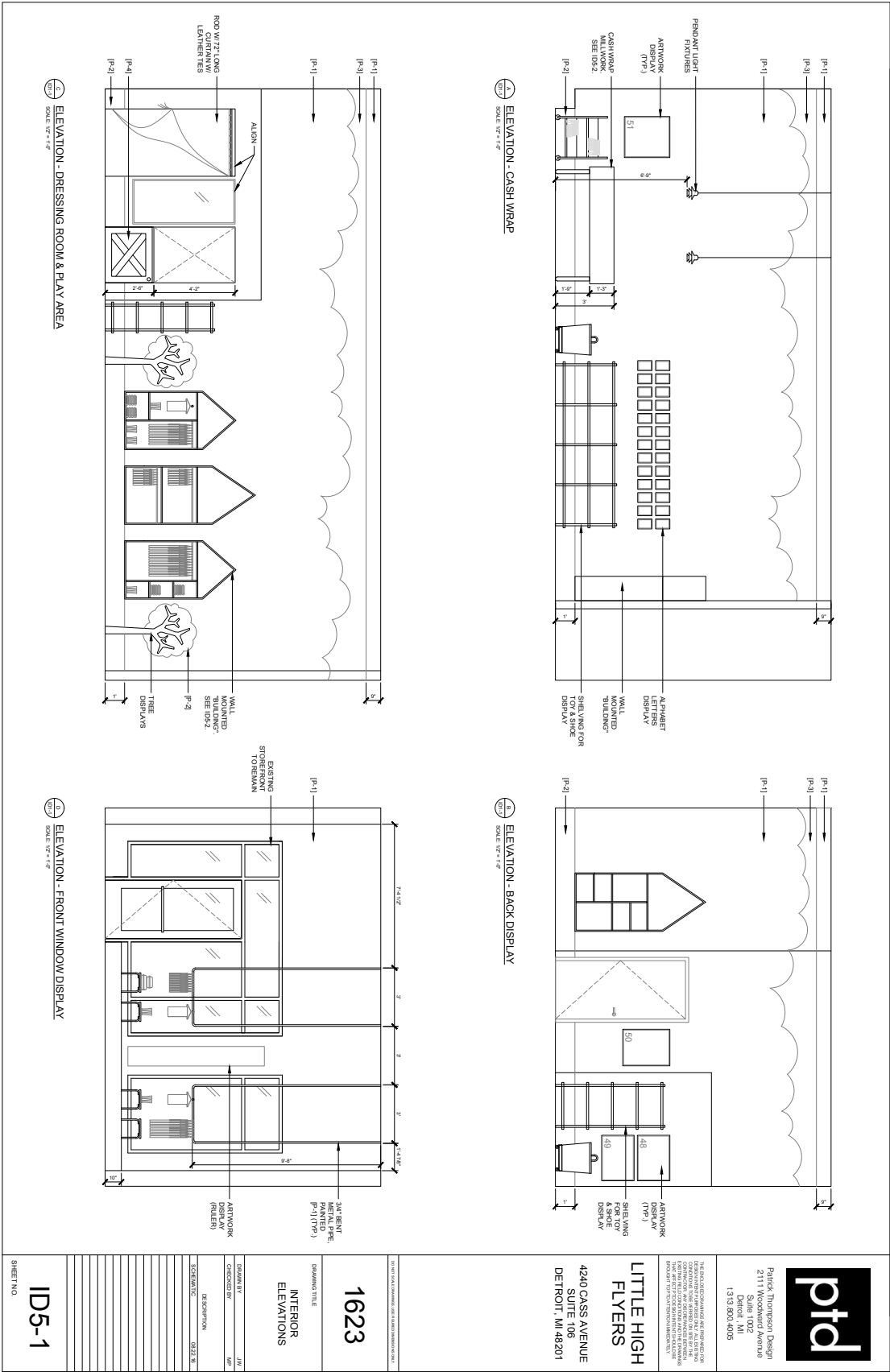
Selections

You and the design team will begin to select specific materials, colors, and products to be used. (See “Outline Specifications” below).

Document:

The design team will continue to refine the set of documents developed in Schematic Design, and might start to create new ones, like:

- 1 Outline Specifications: Often referred to as “Specs,” these are written descriptions of approved products, materials, and finishes, or descriptions of the performance criteria the products must meet, which the contractor can use to guide their own product selection—for instance, you might specify the rating you’d like for the insulation in your walls, but not a specific brand or type, which lets the contractor shop around for a good product that meets your needs.
- 2 Interior Elevations: Drawings showing what the interior walls might look like, including things like paint or wallcovering, cabinetry or built-in storage, and the placement of doors, windows, lighting and electrical, etc.
- 3 Reflected Ceiling Plans: Often called “RCPs,” these drawings are much like the floor plans and elevations, but show the ceiling, with details about the ceiling type and finish, lighting, vents, and sprinklers (“Reflected” just means that the plans have been mirrored, so that they have the same layout and orientation as a floor plan).
- 4 Schedules: The design team will start to assemble lists and tables of common elements throughout your project, such as all of the different types of doors, or door hardware, or wall finishes; these lists can be referenced in the plans to avoid having too much text in the drawings.



Elevations for Little High Flyers on Cass Avenue, in Midtown Detroit. Photo courtesy of Patrick Thompson Design.

Preliminary Details

Some unique or complex elements may start to get their own close-up detail drawings.

Consultant Sets

All of the specialty consultants and trades will produce their own sets of drawings—the architectural team will pull them all together and coordinate.

Revised Cost Estimates

As more and more specific decisions are made, the design team can update the cost estimates to give a more accurate picture of the overall project cost.



Proposed interior rendering of Skin Bar VII on Livernois Avenue, near six mile. Designed by Virtuoso Design + Build. Photo courtesy of Skin Bar VII.

Space

EXERCISE

DEVELOP A MOODBOARD

Now that you've developed your company's identity, it's time to create a vision for your business utilizing Pinterest or DIY magazine clippings. This is called a moodboard, and it is a physical or digital collage of ideas that can represent your business goals and help you define your direction.

Materials Checklist:

- ☐ A posterboard or corkboard
- ☐ A stack of old magazines
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Markers or paint
- ☐ Glue, tape, thumbtacks, or pins

Activity:

- 1 Set aside an hour to complete your moodboard. Find a quiet space where you can fully concentrate on the project.
- 2 Find images that represent your company's identity and vision. The images should represent a feeling and show your designer the kinds of things that you like - don't worry about details such as materials. Your design professional will figure out how to make it a reality!
- 3 Print or cut out images from magazines, and paste them on your board!

PRO TIP #5: MOODBOARD IMAGE SELECTION

As you are collecting images for your moodboard, be sure to write down why you like the certain images you have chosen.

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

Exercise: Develop a Moodboard

3

4

CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION

Phase 4: Construction Documentation

How will the design get put together?

At this point in the process, you and the design team have figured out almost all of the decisions that need to be made. Now, they'll take those drawings from the Design Development phase (or "DD Set"), and translate them into a set of drawings and written instructions that will tell the construction team exactly what you want, and show the permitting authorities that it's safe and appropriate!

Goals

Develop detailed instructions for construction and the permitting process.

Construction Drawings

Also known as "CDs" or the "Permit Set".These are the final, highly detailed drawings—including plans, sections, elevations, RCPs, and details—describing every part of the building and site. They serve as the contractor's 'assembly instructions' when directing their team and their subcontractors. This set may also be used to get final approval from regulatory agencies like the building department, thus the name "Permit Set"

Specifications

The final specifications provide written details on every finish, material, product, and process to be employed during construction. These written instructions, along with the construction drawings, comprise a legally binding contract between the owner and the contractor—as such, the Construction Drawings and Specifications together form the "Contract Documents"

5

BIDDING & NEGOTIATION

6

CONSTRUCTION
ADMINISTRATION

Phase 5: Bidding and Negotiation

Who's going to build it, and how much will it cost?

In a typical project, this is the point where the design team will send the instructions they developed out to a number of different construction companies or General Contractors, and ask them to estimate how much they think the construction will cost.

Goals

Using the information assembled in the Contract Documents, gather competitive pricing from potential contractors and subcontractors to establish actual project cost and obtain necessary permits

Phase 6: Construction Administration and Project Closeout

Contractor Selection

When it comes to hiring the contractor the owner typically has two choices:

- 1 **Negotiation:** You may have already selected a contractor based on qualifications, capabilities, and/or referrals, in which case the contractor will put the drawings out to bid with multiple subcontractors at this time. Typically, 90% of the project is competitively bid. The contractor will select the best bids from the subcontractors, and put together an overall project bid. The owner can then negotiate the terms of the contract, including the construction fee, and, if desired, a guaranteed maximum price.
- 2 **Bidding:** If you did not get a contractor involved in the design phase, the next step is putting the drawings and specifications out to bid with two or more contractors. The design team will help preselect contractors who are a good fit for your project and assist the owner in evaluating bids.

Permitting

During this phase the project is submitted to the local building department for a plan check, which is the process by which city agencies review the submitted documents for compliance with zoning and codes. The owner will be required to pay a fee to the city when the documents are submitted. The time frame varies depending on your project's size and complexity, and the speed of the local jurisdiction.

TRADITIONAL METHOD



DESIGN BUILD METHOD



Project Duration

Design Build Delivery

Traditional Delivery

6

Are we getting what we designed?

In this final phase of the project, the design is effectively complete, but the construction is probably just getting started. Along the way, it's likely that the General Contractor or their subcontractors might have questions or need clarification, or even find a problem in the design that needs to be addressed by the architect.

Goals

Observe the construction process to ensure that it follows the intent laid out in the design, respond to any questions from the construction team, and coordinate any revisions that may be necessary during the process.

Owner's Agent

At this stage of the project, the design team and the owner have agreed on a final design, and the designer will act as the owner's representative when observing the construction process.

Submittals and Shop Drawings

The design team will be responsible for reviewing documents submitted by subcontractors or specialty trades describing how they plan to complete their piece of the project—for instance, a metal fabricator may submit "Shop Drawings" of a custom awning to show how they plan to assemble it, and the architect will review those drawings to make sure they're consistent with the design.

Change Orders

Since the drawings and specifications form a legal contract, any changes that are requested, either by the contractor or the owner, must be documented and attached to the contract.

Punch List

As the contractor is nearing the end of construction, the design team will walk through the project with the contractor and compile a list of items they observe that have not yet been completed in accordance with the contract documents. The contractor must see that all of these items are complete before the design team will certify that the contractor's job is finished and signed off on.

SPACE DESIGN

Interiors

DEFINING YOUR IN-STORE EXPERIENCE

85 Pre-Design

87 Exercise: 360° Walkthrough

88 Design Process: Interiors

88 The Customer Experience

90 Merchandising and Display

95 The Five Senses

Detroit Denim Co. Flagship Store & Factory in Rivertown, Detroit. Custom fixtures and finishes were designed and built by Ware MFG and filled with handmade selvedge denim and dry goods. Designed by and photo courtesy of Who's That?

Once the customer has made it into your space, they should already have a sense of what to expect of your brand. But the layout and other interior design elements will really tell your brand story. While designing your store layout, consider how it will shape your customer's experience. What kind of in-store experience do you want your customers to have? What experience will they have if they visit your competitor? Why is yours better?



Downtown Detroit's Go! Sy Thai restaurant demonstrates the use of color and texture through furniture and lighting that beckons to customers from behind the all-glass facade. Designed by and photo courtesy of Patrick Thompson Design.

Space

EXERCISE

360° WALKTHROUGH

Objective

First, visit other brick-and-mortar locations, then look at your own. When completing this observation exercise, try to visit the location during a variety of times of day and days of the week.

Use all Senses:

What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What can you touch? What can you taste?

Observe the space from a variety of perspectives:

- Driving in a car
- Standing across the street
- Standing outside the front door/window
- Standing at the back of the space, front of the space.
- Walk through looking only at the ground, then at eye level, then above at upper displays.

What do you see? Is it compelling at all eye levels? Does it need to be?

Questions to ask yourself:

- ① Is the space inviting?
- ② Does it stand out from its neighbors?
- ③ Does it represent its services?
- ④ How long does it take you to walk the entire space?
- ⑤ Does it inspire you to want to come back to experience it again and learn more?

Exercise courtesy of TechTown Detroit

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

Exercise: 360° Walkthrough

Interior Design Process

Working with an interior designer is likely to be very similar to the six general design phases described previously. There will be a pre-design phase to gather existing documentation, assets, and information about your business; a schematic design phase to iterate on a number of concepts to home in on the one that you feel suits your business best; a design development phase to make specific decisions on materials and products; a documentation phase to drill down on the nitty-gritty details of how it will all come together; and a construction phase, working with consultants and contractors to ensure the work is executed as intended.

The Customer Experience

Define your customer experience. What kind of experience do you want your customers to have? How will the layout of your space dictate their experience? How will your customers move through the space? Spatial design is a complex balance of art and science—if the architectural design process skews toward the "science" side, think about the interiors as the "art" of communicating your brand through the customer experience.

- 1

What is your brand?
- 2

Where do you like to shop or experience services (dining, personal care, etc.) and why?
- 3

Who is the customer and why are they coming in today? Where were they before they visited? Where are they going after they leave?
- 4

What problem(s) are you solving for your customer?
- 5

How much time do they spend in the space? Are they in a hurry or are they looking to linger?
- 6

Does a purchase decision or service require multiple visits?
- 7

Do you need a place for customers to wait or relax? If so, does the space allow them to do that? If not, does it encourage efficient exits?
- 8

Is it easy or comfortable to complete a purchase or service?
- 9

How are all customer senses being engaged?
- 10

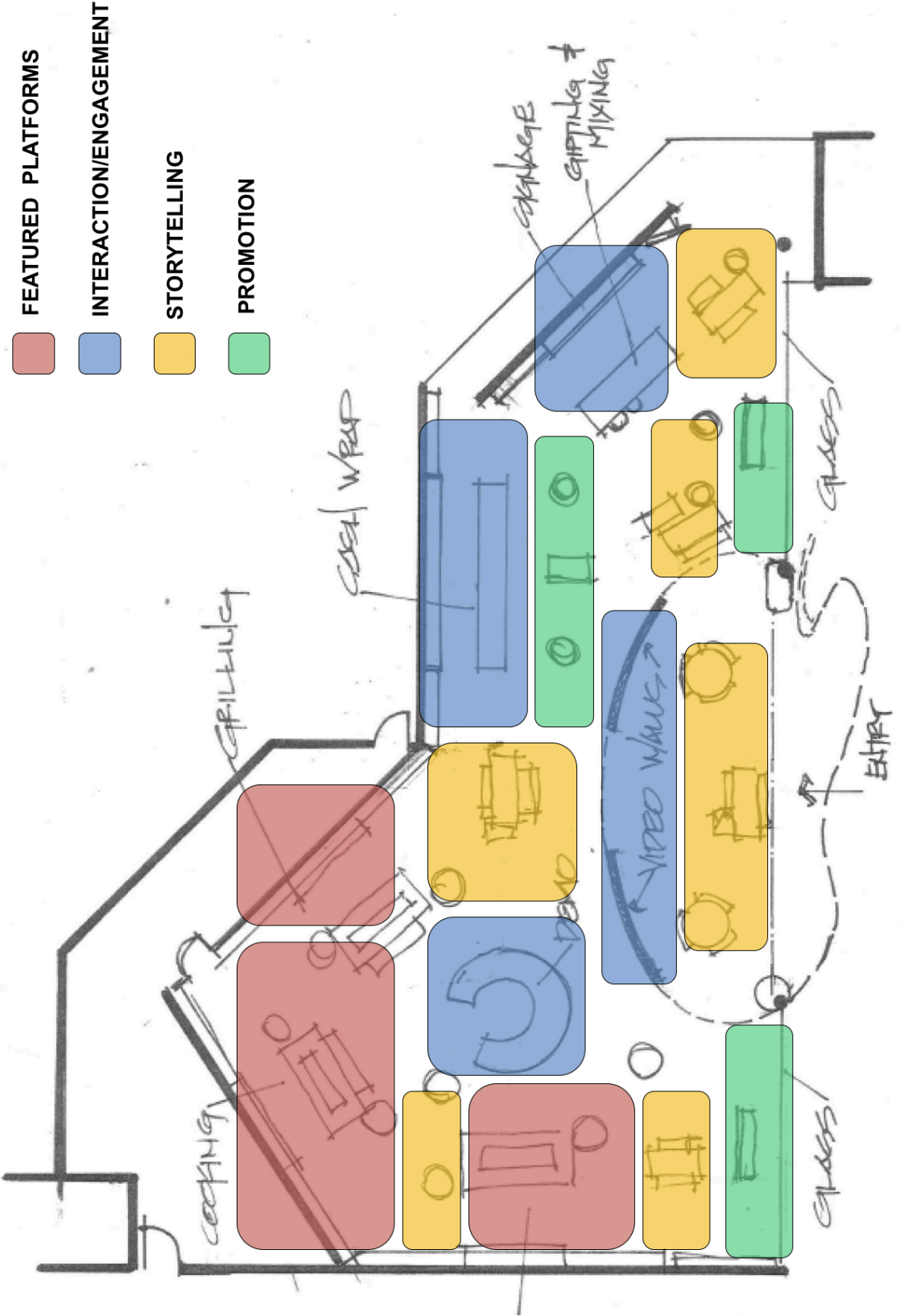
Are employees prepared to interact with customers in a friendly, helpful, and efficient manner?
- 11

Does the customer need additional service or education to make their purchase? If so, is it provided from the staff or signage?
- 12

Does your packaging reflect the experience? (i.e. size and material of shopping bag, menus, carry-out food and beverage containers, etc.)

Space

MCCORMICK WORLD OF FLAVORS



This retail floor plan for McCormick world of flavors demonstrates how the retail environment can be broken down into distinct zones for communicating different aspects of the product or service while adding structure and variety to the customer experience. With clear areas of storytelling versus promotion, you can influence how shoppers learn about your product and influence where their eyes travel to first.

Merchandising and Display

Once you have your space fully realized, it is time to consider how your product itself is representing your brand. In a retail setting, and even in a restaurant or service-based business, you will undoubtedly be faced with decisions about how to represent what it is your business is offering to your customers. These are not decisions to be made once and never thought of again; Your products and visual displays are most engaging when they are new and exciting, so updating your visual merchandising and window displays regularly will be key to not only attracting customers, but retaining them. Below are some tips to use on a regularly recurring basis to keep your visual merchandising fresh and appealing.

Merchandising Calendar

This schedule acts as a foundation for all visual merchandising activities, including window displays. Start with major holidays and fill in the remainder with local activities that impact sales. Use this tool as a guide for purchasing product, scheduling promotions, and coordinating staff. Take photos of displays once they are 100% quality and compile in a master visual merchandising guide so the team can maintain it throughout the day.

Sales per Square Foot

Whether a restaurant or retail store, every amount of space needs to pay its rent. The selected size, quantity, and placement of tables and fixtures warrant a specific number of customers and/or product that can be supported within a given footprint. Flexible fixtures enable re-merchandising to happen quickly to react to customer demand and business trends.

Planogram

Use a map or diagram to place where each product story lives on every surface. A product story is a group of complimentary products that can be purchased individually, but also be viewed as one purchase. Every product story should enhance the path to purchase – the physical path customers visit from initial selection to transaction. Strategic placement of product will enhance sales; miscalculated displays will slow sales. Track the sales of every item and reposition if necessary to avoid dead inventory.

PRO TIP #6:

SPACE DESIGN

BREAK THE RULES (FROM PATRICK THOMPSON DESIGN)

Don't worry about following trends or rules; a meaningful and original idea can make a huge impact when executed well.

Sample Retail Business Calendar

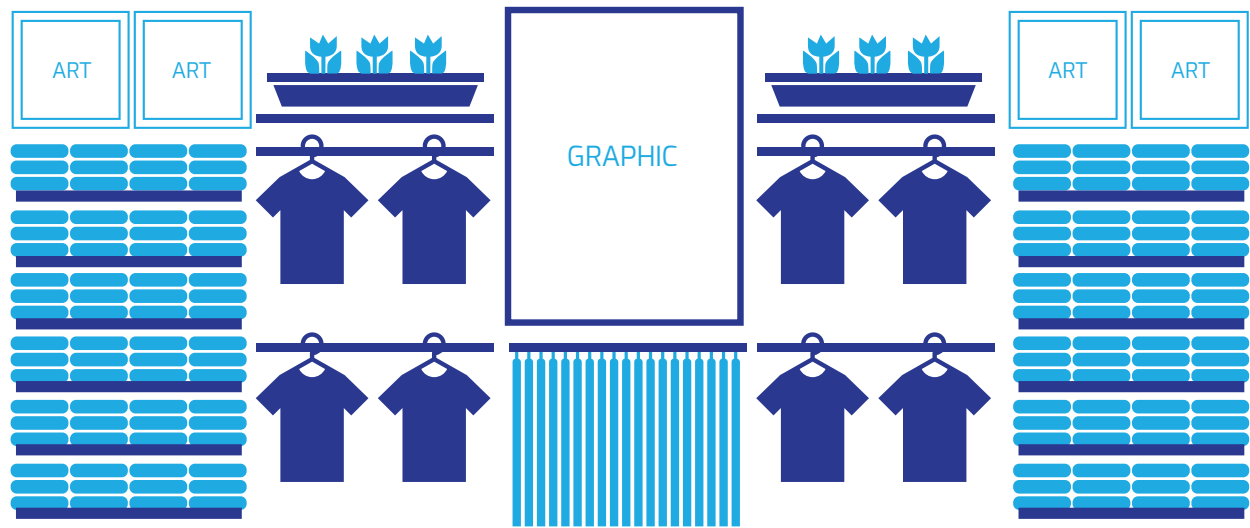
January	New Year's Day Martin Luther King Day	July	Independence Day
February	Groundhogs Day Superbowl Sunday Chinese New Year Valentines Day President's Day	August	International Youth Day World Humanitarian Day
March	International Women's Day St. Patrick's Day First Day of Spring	September	Labor Day Rosh Hashanah International Literacy Day First Day of Fall
April	April's Fools Day Earth Day Good Friday Easter Sunday	October	Columbus Day Boss' Day Halloween
May	Cinco de Mayo Mother's Day Memorial Day	November	Veterans Day Thanksgiving Black Friday Small Business Saturday Cyber Monday
June	Flag Day Father's Day Summer Solstice	December	Hanukkah Christmas Eve Christmas Day New Years Eve

PRO TIP #7:

SPACE DESIGN

CONSIDER SEASONAL CHANGES

01. Do you offer different products or services seasonally, or around certain holidays?
02. Do you offer special promotions at certain times of year?
03. How does your brand adapt to changes like these throughout the year?



An example of a 20-foot wall planogram presenting women's t-shirts and pants with props, tulips with planters.



The Peacock Room inside the Fisher Building, New Center, Detroit. Photo courtesy of TechTown Detroit.

The Five Most Important Elements of Visual Merchandising

Each element of visual merchandising (lighting, fixtures, signage, product) should address these five concepts

- ① Color is King
- ② Create a Focal Point
- ③ Tell a Story
- ④ Expose Customers to the Maximum Amount of Merchandise
- ⑤ Use Empty Space Wisely



Retail feature wall display at Bird Bee women's boutique in Capitol Park. Designed by Virtuoso Design + Build. Photo courtesy of Daily Detroit.



Color blocking at Bleu Bowtique. Photo courtesy of TechTown Detroit.



Jeans display at Red Bag Boutique. Photo courtesy of TechTown Detroit.



Retail display at Mama Co's Boutique in Corktown, Detroit. Photo courtesy of Mama Co's Boutique and Julieanne Lindsey.

Space

Five Senses

Remember, you want to create a positive experience that is designed around the interests of customers visiting your store. Be sure that customers can engage with your store by all five senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste, in a way that is enjoyable and complimentary to your store.



Sight

Light, symmetry, balance, colors, contrast, and focus. What do customers see when they walk in the door? Is your store layout open, well-lit, and comfortable for all customers to navigate?



Sound

Music has been shown to attract and keep (or repel) customers. If you play music in your store, it should reflect your space and the experience that you want customers to have. Therefore, it makes sense to play relaxing music in a spa, upbeat music in a bar, and so on.



Touch

Accessibility to touch and feel is important; it allows customers to get more engaged and likely to buy things. Some products might be better displayed locked and/or behind glass, while some need to be touched for a full experience, like trying on clothes in a dressing room.



Smell

Another aspect that can attract or repel; smell is very linked to emotion and memory and also has been proven to enhance the shopping experience. Does your business have a signature smell? If you sell strongly scented products, is there a way to make the combined smells less overwhelming? If you're a restaurant, is the space well ventilated?



Taste

Giving people the ability to taste and sample before they buy. This is a great way to give your customers a preview of your product, which helps to convince them why they should buy.

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

Five Senses

GLOSSARY

Accessibility (ADA requirements): An aspect of the design process specifically considering how people with different physical limitations may interact with your space. Many aspects of accessibility planning, like wheelchair-accessible doors and bathrooms, are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA.

As-Built (drawing): The revised set of drawings submitted by a contractor after a project or particular job has been completed (Drawings of the space as it is in its current state).

Bidding: Allows vendors, manufacturers, or subcontractors to submit their competitive pricing to supply the specified product and/or service as part of the construction process.

Code Review: Necessary to ensure the design complies with building, zoning, and accessibility codes. Code compliance is not only a design responsibility, but also a legal responsibility.

Color Blocking: Pairing colors that are opposites on the color wheel to make interesting and complimentary color combinations.

Elevations: A 2-dimensional drawing that shows the front or side view of a building, wall, or object, from one side. Typically showing important details such as exact dimensions, electrical placement, millwork details, etc.

Environmental Graphics: Graphic design elements applied in a physical space---these can include branding or promotional graphics, visual wayfinding and navigational signage, information displays, or simply decorative graphics to bring color and form to otherwise plain surfaces.

Finishes (materials): Materials (like stone, tile, metal, fabric, and glass) that make up the finished design of the components of the interior, i.e., floors, walls, ceiling, fixtures.

General Contractor: A person who is responsible for day-to-day oversight of a construction site, management of vendors and trades, and the overall coordination of a building project. Also known as the "GC," the general contractor works heavily with the Architect and Interior Designer to ensure the design is executed correctly.

Interior Decorator: A person who helps a client decide on a style, choose a color scheme, purchase furniture, and accessorize a space.

Millwork: Permanent or semi-permanent building elements, typically made from wood or a wood composite, for both decorative and practical uses. This can include custom cabinetry or built-in shelving, reception desks, fixed seating elements like window benches, or the trim and other details where surfaces like floors and walls meet.

Palette: The range of colors used in a particular project

Programming: The process of discovering and defining the feasibility constraints along with the clients specific needs, desires and requests through questionnaires, analysis, and user interviews.

Schematic (drawings): Studies prepared by an architect, engineer, or interior designer to establish the scale of the building and project requirements. These drawings and documents illustrate project scale, components, and design goals.

Space Planning: A plan the defines the zones of a space and the activities that will take place within those zones. The plan also shows how people will move through the space, and is finished by adding details of all the furniture, equipment, and hardware placement.

Value Engineering: A cost-control measure to identify elements of the construction budget that may be substituted for less expensive alternatives that will still achieve the desired result.

Visual Merchandising: The practice of developing floor plans and retail displays to attract, engage, and motivate customers towards making a purchase.

RESOURCES



City of Detroit Zoning Division: Zoning, Main Street Overlay, Signage requirements, council by district. The City of Detroit's Zoning Division reviews all incoming projects to ensure compliance with the City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance. It is the first step of the building permitting process, and staff can provide the most accurate information regarding zoning questions related to your project or activity.
<http://www.detroitmi.gov/How-Do-I/Apply-for-Permits/Zoning-Permit-Information>



City of Detroit Commercial Building Permit/Plan Submittal Checklist: This checklist contains the standard information required for commercial construction projects submittals in the City of Detroit.
http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/Permits/BSEED/Construction/Comm%20Bldg%20Permit%20Plan%20Checklist_2013-06.pdf



DTE Energy Outdoor Protective Lighting Program: A flat-rate program through DTE Energy to install energy efficient lighting options, ensuring that the alley near a business is well-lit, inviting, and safe.
<https://www.newlook.dteenergy.com/wps/wcm/connect/dte-web/home/service-request/business/electric/electric-services/outdoor-protective-lighting>



Design Core: Collaborative membership network of interdisciplinary designers and agencies founded to fulfill the creative needs of Michigan's business community.
<http://designcore.org/>



Hatch Detroit: Hatch Detroit is a vehicle to champion and support independent retail businesses through funding, education, exposure, and mentoring.
<http://hatchdetroit.com/>



Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development: Plan Review resources contains many useful resources for Michigan-based businesses in the Food Establishment Industry. The worksheets and applications included are intended for actual use in completing a plan review.
http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-50772_50775_51203---,00.html



Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA): LARA is responsible for the state's regulatory environment, and oversees the licensing and regulation of more than 1.2 million individuals and entities on an annual basis.
<http://www.michigan.gov/lara/>



Motor City Match: Quarterly business competition that connects new and expanding businesses with Detroit's quality real estate opportunities, providing them with funding and tools to fuel the city's entrepreneurial revolution.
<http://www.motorcitymatch.com/>



Motor City Re-Store: Quarterly business competition that gives Detroit's neighborhood businesses a boost in curb appeal through matching grants that improve their storefronts, making the city's commercial corridors more walkable, more attractive, and better for business.
<http://www.motorcityre-store.com/>



Pinterest: A social network and online moodboard, used to collect visual pieces of multimedia.
<https://www.pinterest.com/>



TechTown Detroit: Detroit's entrepreneurship hub. Techtown is a different kind of incubator and accelerator, with a full suite of programs for both tech and neighborhood small businesses. Works with businesses at all stages, helping startup, emerging, and established companies develop, launch, and grow.
<https://techtowndetroit.org/>

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS



American Institute of Architects (AIA), Detroit: Professional organization for architects in the United States.
<http://aiadetroit.com/>



American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), Detroit: Professional organization for all forms of design in the United States.
<https://detroit.aiga.org/>



International Interior Design Association (IIDA): Michigan Professional organization for interior design professionals, industry affiliates, educators, students, firms, and their clients.
<http://www.michiganiida.org/>



Michigan Retailers Association: Retail association that provides services ranging from legislative advocacy and expert credit card processing to business insurances, discount programs, and college scholarships.
<https://www.retailers.com/>



National Retail Federation: The world's largest retail trade association, dedicated to advancing the interests of the retail industry through advocacy, communications, and education.
<https://nrf.com/>



Retail Design Institute: Organization that promotes the advancement and collaborative practice of creating selling environments.
<https://retaildesigninstitute.org/>

SECTION 05

Implementation

BRINGING BRAND, DIGITAL AND SPACE DESIGN TOGETHER

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102 Vendor Selection

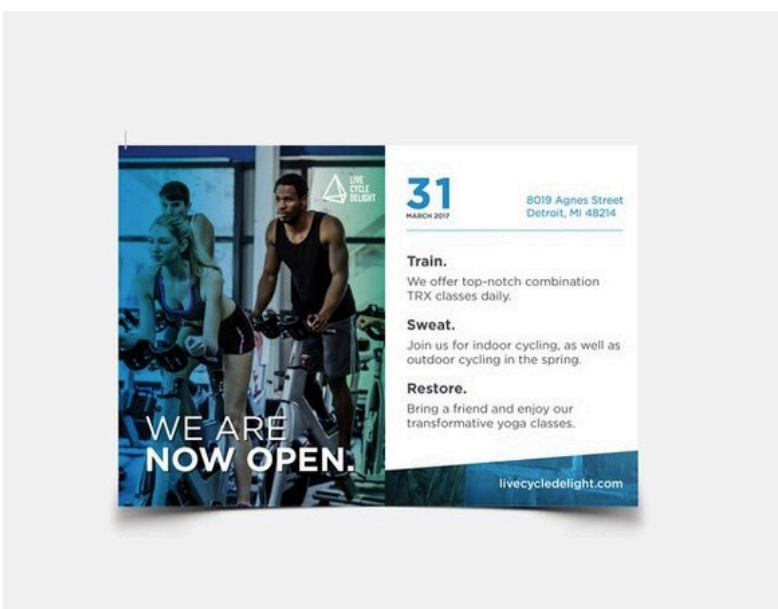
103 Drafting an RFP

105 Hiring a Designer

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When you're done with this chapter you will:

1. See local examples of businesses who have established and implemented their brand online and in their brick and mortar space.
2. Understand all of the phases of a design project and how to get started.
3. Develop questions to consider when hiring a designer / design firm.
4. Draft a request of proposals (RFP) or a scope of work for your project.



Getting Started

If you’ve read through this entire guide, you should know the importance of understanding context, having a realistic and manageable budget, and building trust with your design team. You’ve probably also noticed some common phases in the design process, so you know that each time you embark on a business design project, you can expect to work through some version of the following:

- 1 Pre-design, intake, discovery, existing conditions review, research, and analysis
- 2 Concept, design, content creation, initial planning, drawings, color schemes
- 3 Refinement, review, revisions, finishing touches
- 4 Final product, plans for code review, published website, or brand assets

If you’ve completed all the exercises in this guide, you’ll have the basis of everything you need to competently and confidently begin a design project. Now, you need to draft a scope of work specific to your needs and find the designer that’s right for you and your business.

Vendor Selection

Much like the rest of the design process, finding the right designer will depend heavily on planning and communication. Whether your project is big or small, the process will include some version of the following steps:

- 1 Consider who will make the final decision and what criteria you’ll use.
- 2 Make a plan and assign deadlines for each step.
- 3 Draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Scope of Work (SOW).
- 4 Decide how, where and to whom you’ll share the opportunity.
- 5 Create a schedule for the following:
 - Initial RFP / SOW announcement
 - Submission deadline
 - 1st round proposal review
 - Selection of finalists
 - Vendor finalists review
 - Award notification
 - Project start

If your project is large and/or complex, or if your organization requires it for funding or procurement reasons, you’ll want to manage the selection process by drafting a complete RFP and collecting formal proposals from multiple designers. A template and example are included for your reference.

Implementation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Template Example

Cover Page

The cover page of the Request for Proposal (RFP) should include your company’s main contact information, including: your company name, address, and logo; the proposal name; its due date; and to whom the proposal is going. The design should reflect your company’s brand, and the layout should be arranged in a clean and organized manner.

Table of Contents

A table of contents page should come before the main content of the RFP. A sample list of section titles that can be incorporated in your table of contents can be found below. Make sure the layout is clean and organized and includes page numbers.

Summary and Background

This section of the Request for Proposal (RFP) should provide a high level description of what the request is for and the purpose of the requirement. It may provide background information of the organization requesting proposals as well. Most of the requirement details will be included in subsequent sections of the document.

Proposal Guidelines

This section of the Request for Proposal should provide a description of what each responding organization’s proposal should contain. It should also include a deadline. Any required information should be described in detail in this section of the RFP.

Project Purpose and Description

This section of the Request for Proposal should provide the purpose and description of the project or work to be performed using as much detail as possible. In order for companies to submit accurate proposals, they need the details of exactly what work needs to be performed and the purpose of the work. The purpose of the work is important because sometimes bidders may be able to provide different but more effective solutions.

Project Scope

While the project description provides bidders with general information about the project, this part of the Request for Proposal should include detail of what exactly is required for the project as well as what is not included as part of the project. In addition to the description of the project, this section should detail any additional work required to achieve the desired result (i.e. research, coding, etc.).

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

RFP Template

Template Example Cont'd.

Request for Proposal and Project Timeline

The Request for Proposal should provide known information about the timeline for the RFP process as well as the project itself. Much of the project timeline will be determined in the project initiation and planning phases once the winning bidder is chosen. However, any known deadlines or timeframes should be listed in this section.

Budget

This section should explain what budget information bidders should include. Often, an RFP will ask bidders to list pricing a certain way or describe what exactly should be included in the pricing for the proposal. This may describe specific items to include or exclude depending on the project or task, and could be project based, hourly based, or other.

Bidder Qualifications

This part of the Request for Proposal should describe the criteria that will comprise the successful bidder's organization. You may solicit examples of work from bidders, contact information, company history, executive background, information on company size, organizational charts, or any other information to aid in the decision making process.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Here, the Request for Proposal should describe exactly how proposals will be evaluated. It should include a list of criteria that will be reviewed and describe what is suitable for each of the criteria. The more detail that can be included, the more thorough and complete the proposals should be.

Template courtesy of Design Core Detroit

For smaller, less complex design projects, or for projects with greater urgency, a simple scope of work might be enough. In any case, if you're able to answer the following questions about your project, you're on your way to effectively communicating your needs with a design professional:

Who?	Describe your organization and team roles, including the main point of contact.
What?	Define the nature of the project or work you're expecting
When?	Include a timeline for the project.
Why?	Explain your current challenges and the reasons your need design services.
How?	Include details about the project, including what deliverables you're expecting, information needed, evaluation and award criteria, budget, etc.

Necessary sections of your scope of work are similar to those of an RFP, but can be more briefly stated. It is important to remember to, provide all necessary information in order to find the best possible match with a designer. You don't want to advertise for a \$50K web developer, if the budget for your landing page is \$4K. A scope of work should include:

- Company description and values
- Statement of current challenge
- Project goals and expected outcomes
- Existing assets, content, or technology
- Timeline, including proposal due date
- Budget (can be a range; should be realistic in terms of capacity to pay and scope of project)
- Include information on other important assets or constraints
- Primary point of contact
- Samples of existing marketing materials, collateral, your logo, link to website, etc.

Interviewing and Hiring a Designer: Questions and Considerations

You and your designer are both responsible for working together to maintain a productive and beneficial relationship. The designer will guide you through the process of achieving your project goals, but you need to give them an informed starting point! Knowing the importance of establishing trust in this relationship, and knowing problems can result in increased project costs, it's critically important you select a designer right from the start who's right for you, your business, and your project.

General

- 1 Does the person listen to you?
- 2 Is the person you're talking to the person who will be working on your project?
- 3 Do you feel like this person understands your business and your vision for the project?
- 4 What are this designer's professional and technical qualifications?
- 5 Will you have a designated point of contact throughout the design project? Will you have ready access to that person, if you have questions or issues?
- 6 Do you get the sense you can trust this person to deliver what's promised within your time and budget constraints?
- 7 Your designer should meet you in person and visit an existing business or space early in the process to fully understand your business and get a sense for the space, the community, and the customers.

Specifics

Depending on whether your project involves developing a brand, designing a website or social media campaign, or building out your physical space, there will be specific questions you need to ask and information you'll want to confirm before signing a contract for services. This is where the importance of a clearly written scope of work or RFP comes in. It establishes clear expectations and sets everyone up for success.

If yours is a website project, for example, you'll want to clarify whether the designer's bid includes creation of content or ongoing maintenance and management of your site. If it's a brand project, be sure you're clear on the final deliverables. Will your designer simply create a logo? Or will they deliver a complete brand asset package, including color selections, black and white logo versions, etc.

Space Design

Because architectural and interior projects and contracts are often very complex, it's especially important to understand what you're agreeing to. The following points should be considered in the bidding and negotiation phase. During the bid phase, ask about the difference between a site plan and a legal survey, which one(s) you'll need, which are included in your bid, and who does them. You will also need to understand the difference between architectural drawings and mechanical drawings, the requirements and approvals for each, and whether both architecture and MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) costs are included in your bid. It's difficult for a designer to anticipate the cost of mechanical construction until the process is underway, which is why so many people are surprised and disappointed when this phase of the project is complete.

A designer may be designing for space only, not mechanics, but the building might require mechanical upgrades for compliance and approval of inspections. If you are a tenant, some of these issues will be the concern of the building owner, but you should be aware of where you and/or your landlord stand in terms of responsibilities, and be aware of any unexpected or associated costs before you embark on a project.

If you signed a lease for a white or gray-boxed space, but the fireproofing, fire alarm, venting, and other requirements aren't up to code, you're going to run into delays and extra costs in your build-out projects. Make every effort to understand this prior to signing a lease or design contract.

IMPLEMENTATION

Case Studies

BRANDING AND SPACE DESIGN IN PRACTICE ACROSS THE CITY

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CASE STUDY

Trumbull & Porter

Trumbull and Porter is a mid-level property in the historic Corktown neighborhood of Detroit. The hotel had not been renovated in nearly 20 years and had become a rent-by-the-hour motel and a burden on the neighborhood.

Patrick Thompson Design was responsible for the exterior design, interior design, graphics, branding, and custom artwork for the entire property.

As with most projects, the biggest challenge was the limited budget. We stripped the hotel back to its bones and let the architecture of the building become the backdrop for local artwork, furniture, and custom millwork. Traditional building materials grace the walls, floor, and furniture creating a unique experience at a palatable price tag. Paint, plywood, re-purposed furniture, and murals all make an impact without breaking the bank.

Project: Trumbull & Porter Hotel
Business Owner: Barry Caplan
Design Firm: Patrick Thompson Design
Neighborhood: Corktown, Detroit



With Corktown being such a close-knit part of the city, the designers needed to be sure to create a space for locals and for out-of-town guests at the same time. Inclusivity was important for the client.

CASE STUDY

Detroit Denim Co.

Detroit Denim Company started decades ago with a sewing machine and one man's interest in making things and altering his own jeans. Since their launch, Detroit Denim has scaled from the early days at Ponyride in Corktown to their own factory and flagship retail store in beautiful Rivertown. Detroit Denim Co. jeans use the finest quality components, all sourced

from American companies, handmade in Detroit, by Detroiters – to demonstrate that it's possible to create a sustainable jeans business domestically. The company helps diversify the manufacturing base of Detroit by producing a line of men's jeans like no other.



Case Study



Who's That? worked with Detroit Denim to mature their brand, while honoring their heritage with a custom sewing machine mark: a traditional indigo, red and hunter palette; and a sturdy transitional type pairing, all informed by the product and environment. The designers expanded the brand with a full image and text campaign around the company's five ready-to-wear cuts of men's jeans, in addition to in-store environmental design, tagging, and merchandising for the flagship boutique and factory. The work was capped off by a custom-themed Shopify website featuring the new branding, the image campaign, and a comprehensive online store.

- Project:** Detroit Denim Co
- Business Owners:** Eric Yelsma and Brenna Lane
- Neighborhood:** Rivertown, Detroit
- Strategy Firm:** The Utmost Group

- Graphic Design Firm :** Who's That?
- Design/Build:** Ware MFG
- Photography:** Hayden Steinbaugh
- Web Development:** Justin Mulwee

Detroit Denim Company

CASE STUDY

Dangerously Delicious Pies

Dangerously Delicious Pies is a brand rooted in rock and roll paired with delicious food. The bold color scheme and classic lighting silhouettes give off a retro vibe all while a warm seating area beckons people to gather near the stage for live acoustic music. A petite dining area pays homage to the historic building's black and white original marble flooring. Pops of red bring a vibrant touch to the space and natural, industrial materials juxtapose nicely against the original traditional wainscoting and sleek marble floors. This space is not only inviting, it's fun and interactive, leaving the guests wanting to come back for more pie, and some interior eye candy as well. Dangerously Delicious Pies had such a strong identity, it was easy for the designers to find inspiration when they began the discovery process.

More importantly, as form should follow function, it became clear that the challenge would be incorporating all requirements needed within an 1000 sq ft space. Creating for the people to ensure all end users felt comfortable and well taken care of was key. The materials and many layers of detail became evident once the designers understood how things needed to function. For instance, the kitchen entrance needed to be next to the bar so the servers could pick up drinks and food with ease. Seems obvious, but if designers aren't thinking with empathy then unnecessary mistakes can be made that will affect the productivity of the staff, in turn affecting the customer's experience. When you focus on the details and you think about how people really experience the space, people can feel the care that was invested.



Project: Dangerously Delicious Pies

Business Owner: Sam Wood

Neighborhood: Midtown, Detroit

Interior Design Firm: RL Concetti

Design/Build: Virtuoso Design + Build

Photographers: Kendra Koman, Michelle and Chris Gerard

CASE STUDY

Kuzzo's Chicken and Waffles

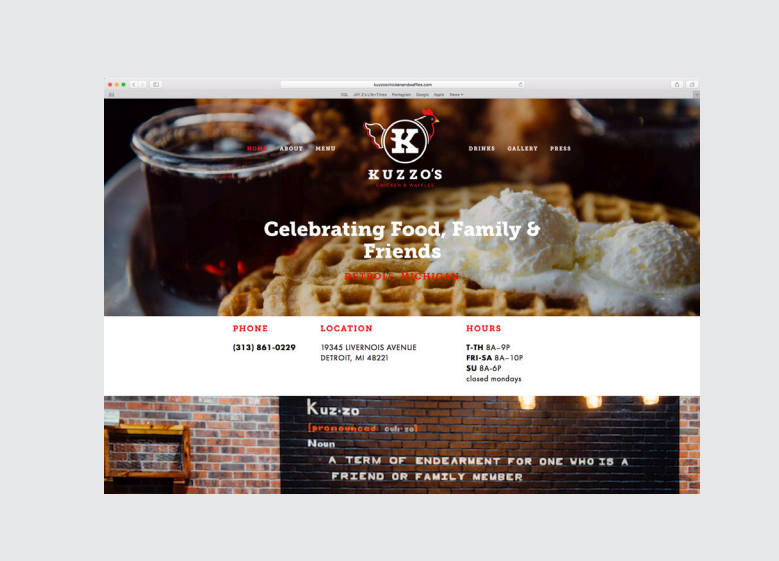
Easily one of Detroit's most recognized and celebrated new eateries, Kuzzo's Chicken and Waffles has fast become a destination on the city's northwest side. Teaming with Kuzzo's founder, Ron Bartell, a Detroit native and veteran NFL cornerback, the designers set out to create an impactful impression that would serve residents of the surrounding University District, as well as metro Detroiters at large, while raising the design aesthetic and expectation in one of the city's strongest neighborhoods.

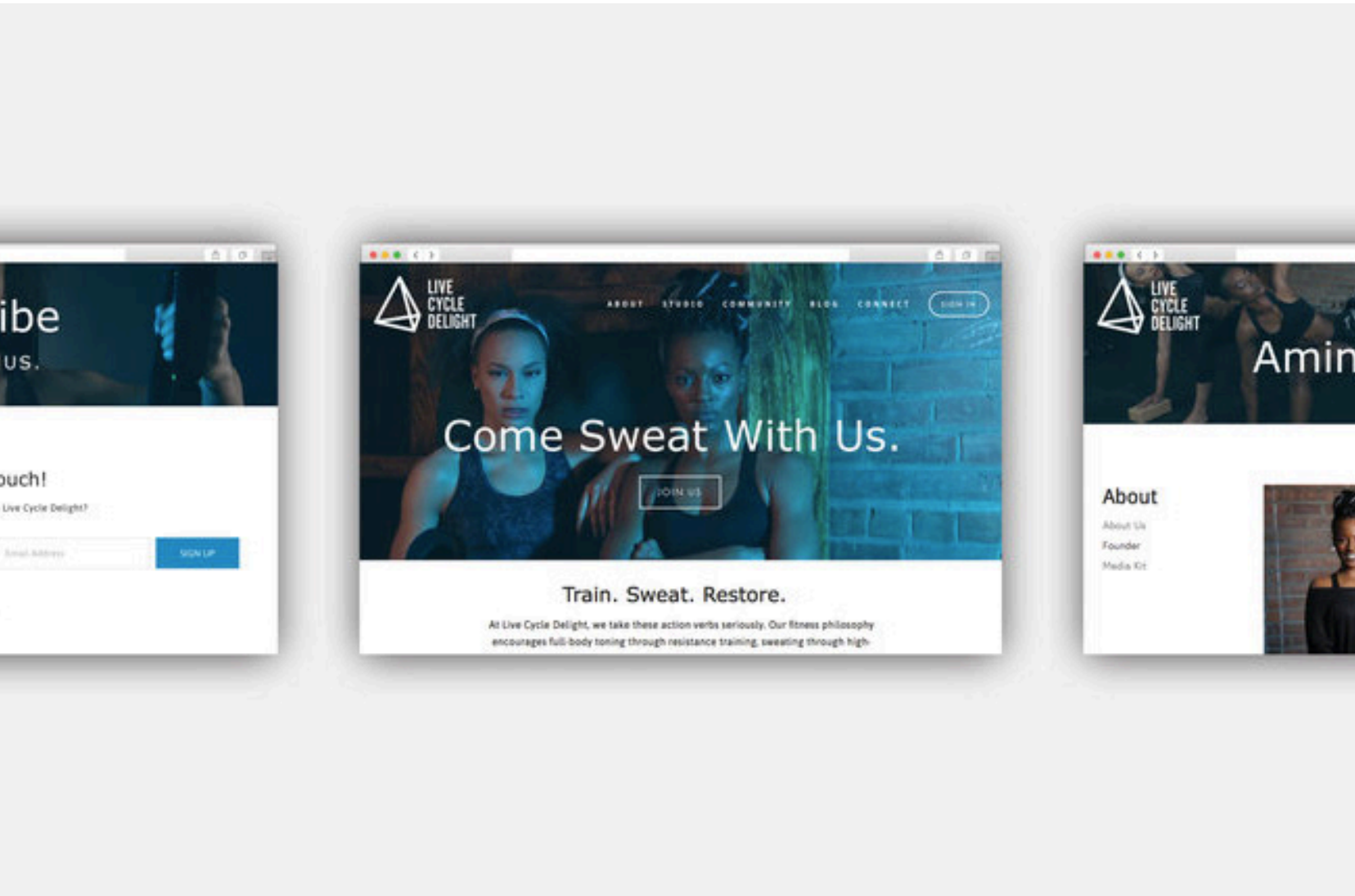
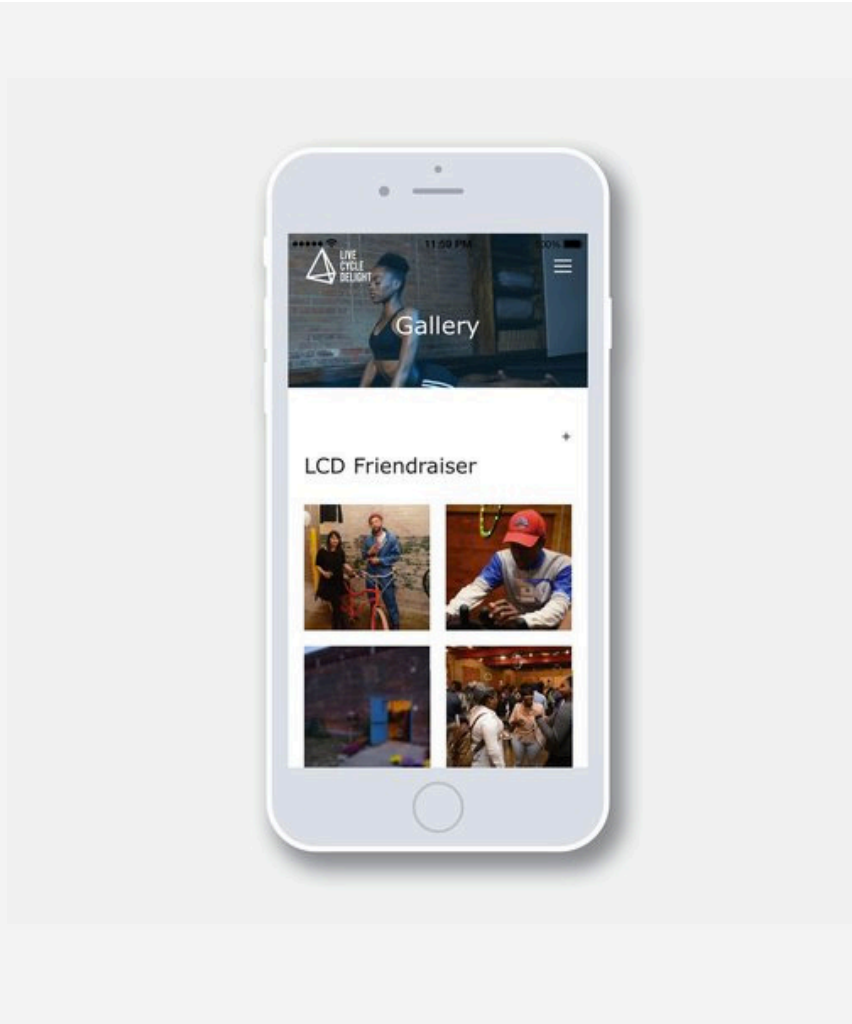
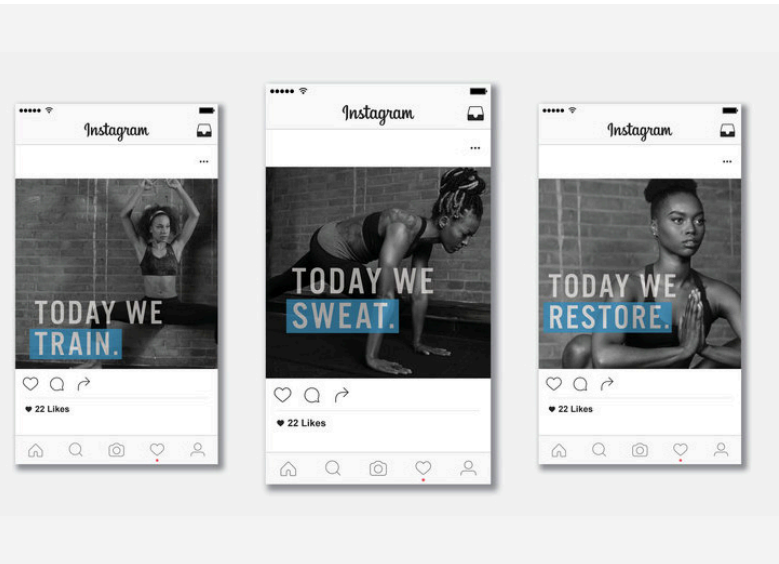
From the beginning, the goal was to create a warm, friendly, approachable and signature community-centric restaurant. The designers worked with the restaurant founders to custom-craft the Kuzzo's 'K' and chicken emblem, and to implement the eye-catching horizontal cedar facade and striking palette of deep reds and golden honey colors. They aimed to capture the warmth and savory sweetness of Kuzzo's signature dish, allowing them to immediately and authentically welcome patrons. If tripling their first year sales projections is a reliable indication, one could say they were successful. The bottom line – comfort food with a contemporary edge for a neighborhood poised to have its contemporary moment.

- Project:** Kuzzo's Chicken and Waffles
- Business Owner:** Ron Bartell
- Neighborhood:** University District, Detroit
- Graphic Design Firm:** Who's That? and Jessica Janda
- Interior Design:** Shari Gamlin
- Design/Build:** Charlie Wingate

Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

Kuzzo's Chicken and Waffles





CASE STUDY

Live Cycle Delight

Live Cycle Delight is a fitness studio in Detroit's West Village neighborhood. With boutique cycling studios on the rise in recent years, LCD is on-trend and the answer to the prayers of fitness enthusiasts who live and work in Detroit and neighboring communities.

The brand identity is rooted in 3 core areas: train, sweat, and restore. These core areas are symbolized by a triangle, which also represents strength. This identity translates across spatial, digital, and print platforms, proclaiming Live Cycle Delight as a champion for good physical and mental health. An interior mural

by Sydney G. James greets guests and embodies the sense of strength and community that guides the Live Cycle Delight brand.

Carefully curated fitness activities include group fitness classes (including TRX and core strength training), indoor cycling, outdoor social rides, and restorative yoga. LCD caters to those who value a high quality fitness experience, and a strong sense of community. The combination of cycling, strength training, and yoga under one roof makes LCD a coveted destination for individuals of all fitness levels. And, a strong brand identity consistently tells this story across each customer's experience.



- Project:** Live Cycle Delight
- Business Owner:** Amina Daniels
- Neighborhood:** West Village, Detroit
- Architect:** Hamilton Anderson
- Marketing/Strategy:** Saga
- Graphic Design:** Lori Evelyn
- Contractors:** Walcon
- Muralist:** Sydney James



Remember, to have faith and have fun. Trust your designer and participate actively in the process, and you are far more likely to achieve your design and business goals.

We hope this Design Guide for Neighborhood Business has inspired you to consider what's possible and given you the confidence to manage a successful relationship and project with a professional designer. Design is known to drive the competitiveness of businesses, enhance the overall appearance of commercial corridors, and create welcoming and inclusive spaces for customers and visitors alike.

Design Core is excited to see how you use this guide and welcomes you to share stories, pictures, and examples of your future design projects with us so we can help celebrate your success. Please email info@designcore.org or call 313-664-7400, if we can be of any further assistance to your business.

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Contributors

Brand Design

Brand Camp, Hajj Flemings
Unsold Studio, Meaghan Barry, Lillian Crum
Who's That?, Joshua Smith, Lisa Nettler

Digital Design

Design Source Media, David Lee
Milo Detroit, Billy Strawter
No Pulp Digital, Joe Romo
Pitch Black, Gary Spondike

Editors

Detroit Collaborative Design Center, Dan Pitera
HLW International LLP, Peter Bacevice
JGA, Joanne Healy
ROSSETTI, Deena Fox
Retail Design Institute, Heather Detrichson

Business Programs

DEGC, Helen Broughton, Kyla Carlsen
Ponyride, Erin Patten
TechTown Detroit, Sarah Donnelly

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AIA Detroit, Charlie Klecha
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