

FIRST STEPS

XPRESS BUILDER Resource Guide

Choosing a Color Palette



Maryle Malloy

Setting the Mood for Your Brand

A great color palette sets the mood and elicits an emotional response from the viewer, so it's critical that the color palette for your website reflects the type of services or products you're promoting. With these resources, you won't need to obsess about whether your colors work together, because the algorithms are built on color theory and science. All you need to do is play with them, make your selection, record the information and transfer it to your Global Settings in the XPRESS Builder.

A Deep Dive Into Color Resources

The power of the internet is at your fingertips when it comes to finding color combinations for any graphic application. If you're creating new brand colors or simply looking for the perfect color scheme to match your favorite photo, you'll find a resource here. We have not assigned any priority to these recommendations. The numbers simply reflect the way we entered them into the Guide. Click on the name to visit each website.

No. 1 – [Adobe Color](#)

How to use Adobe Color without having an Adobe Creative Suite account. Use this to look at colors and color combinations. Adobe Color is created for designers and to interface with Adobe Creative Suite, it is still a great resource for anyone looking for color options. If you do not have the Adobe Creative Suite or one of their products such as Photoshop or Illustrator, you can simply play with the colors until you find ones that match your brand or the colors you want to use in your website. HINT: Save the HEX Code i.e. #593D30 as in the example. AND, record the R, G, B, numbers i.e. R = 89, G = 61, B = 48. Some systems want the hex code # number recorded while others ask for the RGB numbers. The XPRESS Builder uses Hex Codes.

Recommended Before Beginning Your 14-Day Trial

No. 2 CANVA Color

In addition to the Canva Color Wheel, you may notice that we also listed Canva in our Getting Started Resource Guide – Generating Your Assets. We use Canva for a lot of our free graphics. They have a free version of their tool, which is cool, but we highly recommend their Pro version for individuals at \$9.95 a month. With the Pro version we have access to more photos, as well as great templates for creating awesome social media posts including some with motion graphics.

No. 3 Khroma

Khroma, is a website that figures out your color preferences using machine learning, and generates unique and personalized color combinations to match. When first opening Khroma, you'll be asked to pick out 50 color shades that you love. Yes, this may take some time, but it's an enjoyable process. Once you're done the Khroma algorithm will generate color combos in five different displays.

No. 4. Coolors

Coolors opens with a randomly generated palette of five colors. This is where the fun begins. Press the spacebar and watch your screen transform into more color options. Once you see a combination that strikes your fancy, hover over any of the colors to see the menu options. You'll be able to find similar shades of the same color, drag the colors elsewhere to rearrange your palette, adjust them by hue, saturation and brightness. Once you're happy with your palette, you can export it as a URL, PNG, or copy the hex code to use in your design..

No. 5 Color Tool – Material Design

Recommended Before Beginning Your 14-Day Trial

Material Design is a design system developed by Google. It includes many useful resources in addition to the Color Tool. It is worth your time to explore them all. Pay particular attention to their system which ensures harmony with text legibility so that your text when used over a color is legible. This simple and friendly tool is one of the most professional color palette generators, allowing you to test what your color palette might look like as part of your overall design.

No. 6 [ColorSpace](#)

Do you have a brand color, a favorite color, or even a shade of a color you want to base your color palette on? ColorSpace is a good choice for creating the right combination. Enter your hue of choice using its RGB values, hex code or by recreating it straight on their color wheel. ColorSpace will instantly produce color combinations to match your color of choice.

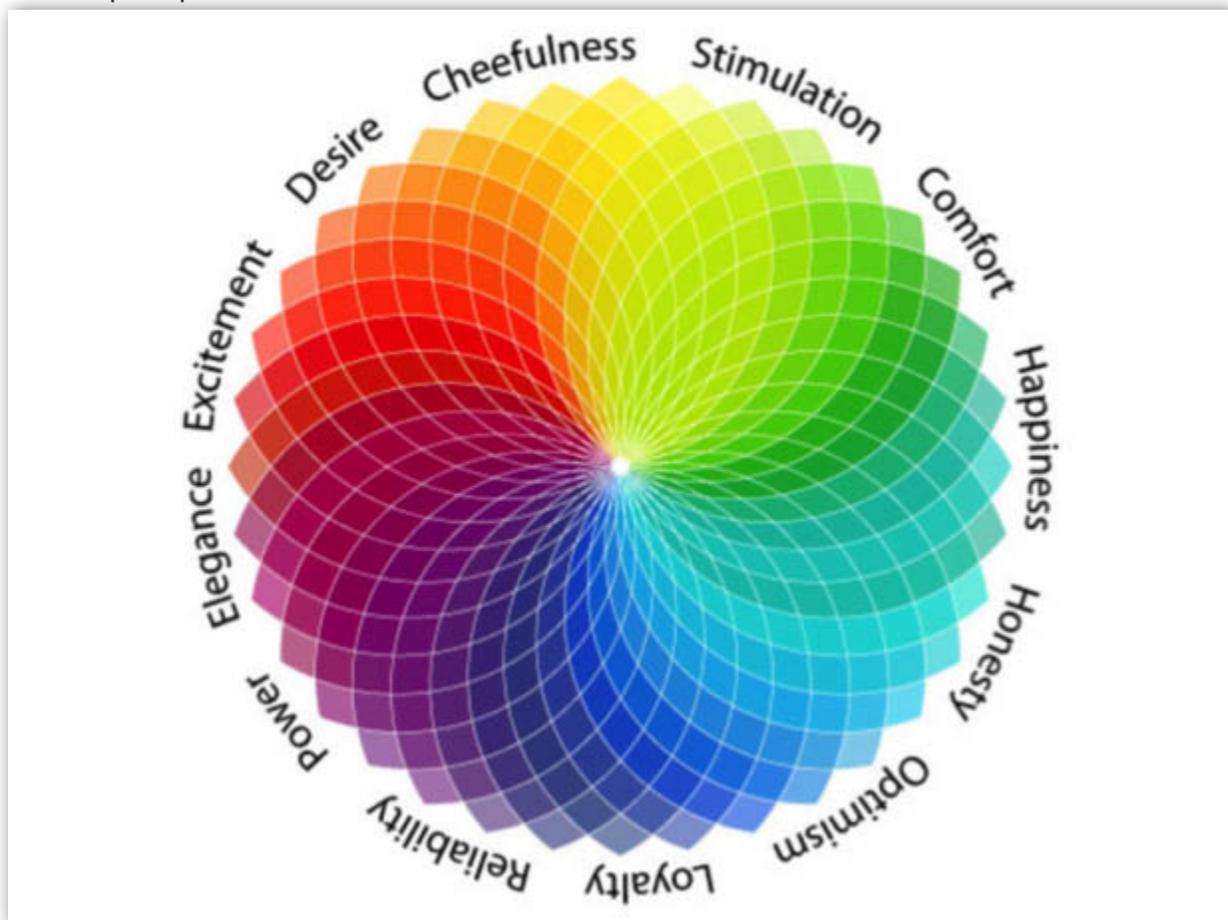
No. 7 [Designspiration](#)

Designspiration has a unique approach. They allow you to color select up to five colors and then browse a variety of designs and stock photos that share the same palette. This novel approach is a great way for a new designer to see how important it is that the graphic assets chosen for a website all work together using a similar color palette.

The Psychology of Color

The psychological effects color can have on users is a complex and often subjective topic. But there are certain aspects that can be addressed on a more universal level. Things like the common meanings of the main colors (primary, secondary, and tertiary), traditional color palettes, and cultural variations in color meanings are all fairly straightforward. Designers easily learn these basics and apply them to their work. You can as well.

While some colors are “universal” such as black, white and gray, at least one of which is used in virtually every good design out there, the colors they’re combined with can have a huge impact on a user’s perception.



Color theory for specific colors

RED Red is the color of danger and passion, as well as excitement. It's a very strong color and can elicit strong reactions in people. Lightening it to pink makes it more feminine and romantic while darkening the hue to maroon makes it more subdued and traditional.

ORANGE Orange is a very creative color that's also associated with adventure and youth. It's very energetic, too. Because of orange's strong ties to 70s style, it can also evoke a retro feeling.

YELLOW Yellow is happy, optimistic, and cheerful. It's popular in designs for children and adults alike. More pastel hues are often used as a gender-neutral baby color, while brighter yellows are popular in creative designs. Darker shades of yellow become gold, which is associated with wealth and success.

GREEN Green has varied associations. On one hand, it provokes feelings of wealth and tradition (particularly darker hues), while on the other it's strongly associated with environmentalism and nature. Lime greens are often associated with renewal and growth.

BLUE Blue is most often associated with loyalty and trust. Brighter blues can be affiliated with communication, while duller and darker blues can be associated with sadness and depression. Blue is the most universally liked color in the world, which may explain why so many companies opt for blue shades for their branding.

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PURPLE Purple is another hue with varied meanings. It's long been associated with royalty and wealth (since purple dye was rare in many ancient civilizations, it was reserved for royalty). But it's also associated with mystery and spirituality. Purple can also evoke creativity.

BLACK Black implies sophistication and luxury. It can also be tied to sorrow and negativity, however. Depending on the other UX colors being used alongside black, it can feel modern or traditional, formal or casual.

WHITE White is tied to purity, innocence, and positivity. White is also very popular in minimalist designs, due to its neutrality and simplicity. Like black, white easily takes on the characteristics of other colors it's used with

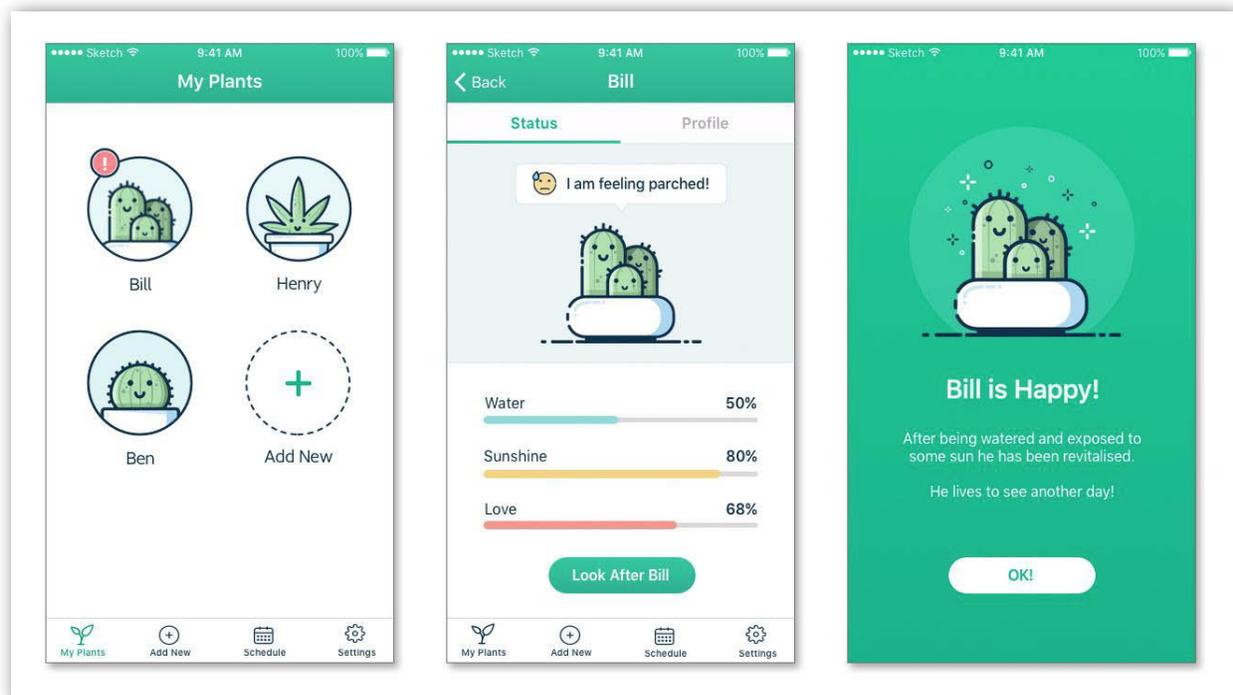
GRAY Gray has varied meanings, depending on context. It can be conservative and sophisticated or dingy and dull. It can be emotionless or moody. It can also be associated with sorrow and sadness.

BROWN Brown (which is actually a dark shade of orange) is associated with being down to earth and grounded. It's also associated with nature and even coziness. And, of course, it can be affiliated with being dirty or dingy.

Knowing these basic color meanings gives us a solid basis on which to build color palettes for any brand or product.

Part Science and Part Art

Color theory is part science and part art. Just because a color is generally associated with a particular feeling or mood doesn't mean it can't be perceived in other ways by combining it with different colors, altering the exact hue, or varying how it is used among other design elements.

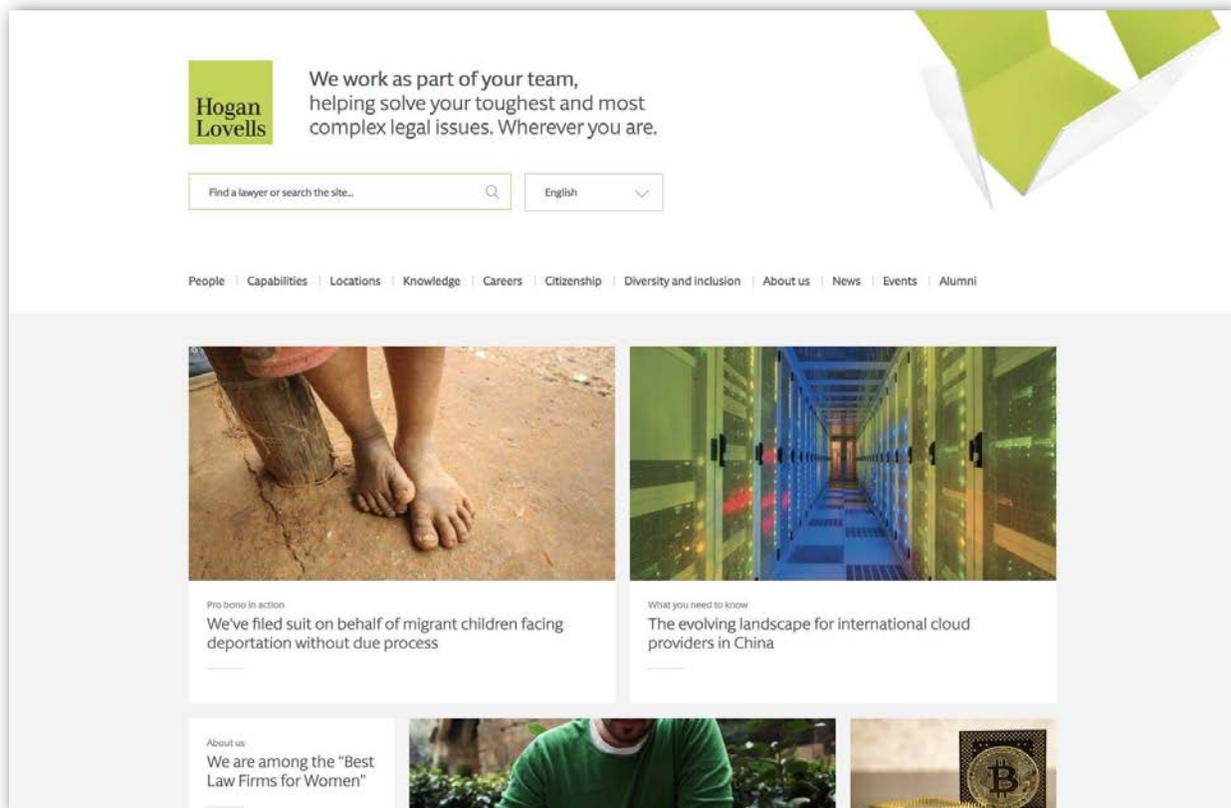


This plant-watering app concept uses a nice shade of green for its primary color, with blue, yellow, and red accents used in ways that will make sense to users.

Graphic: [Amy Holley Hirst](#)

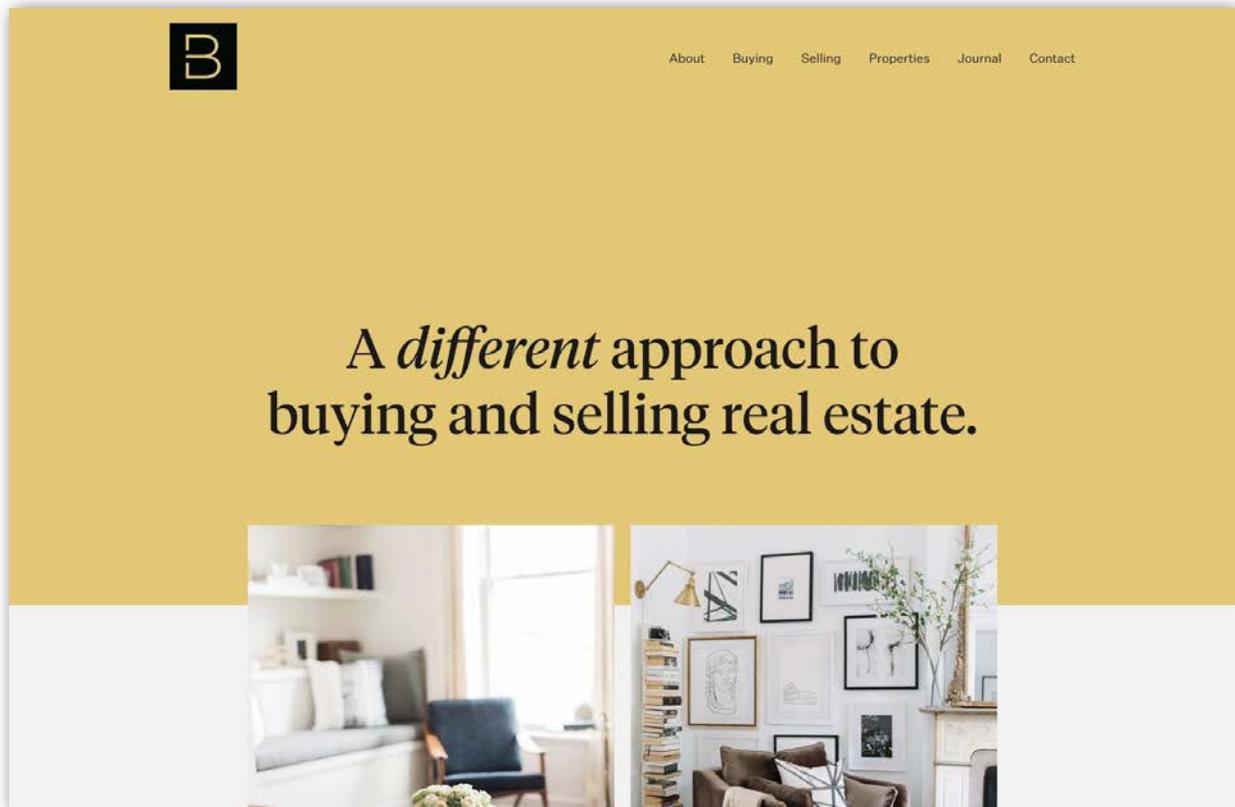
Using Unconventional Colors

Unconventional use of colors is a great way to set a brand apart. And while it takes more finesse than simply combining any old colors a designer feels like combining, it's not that difficult to learn how to use unexpected colors. Accent colors are the easiest place to start when it comes to adding unconventional colors into a design. For example, a law firm website might use a traditional color palette of navy blue and gray. But add in some lime green accents and suddenly the design is set apart from the sea of other law firms with navy blue and gray websites. Or look at this example from [Hogan Lovells](#), which uses a white, gray, and lime green color palette to create a modern website that definitely stands out from other legal industry sites. It would appeal to a younger, more modern crowd than your average legal site.



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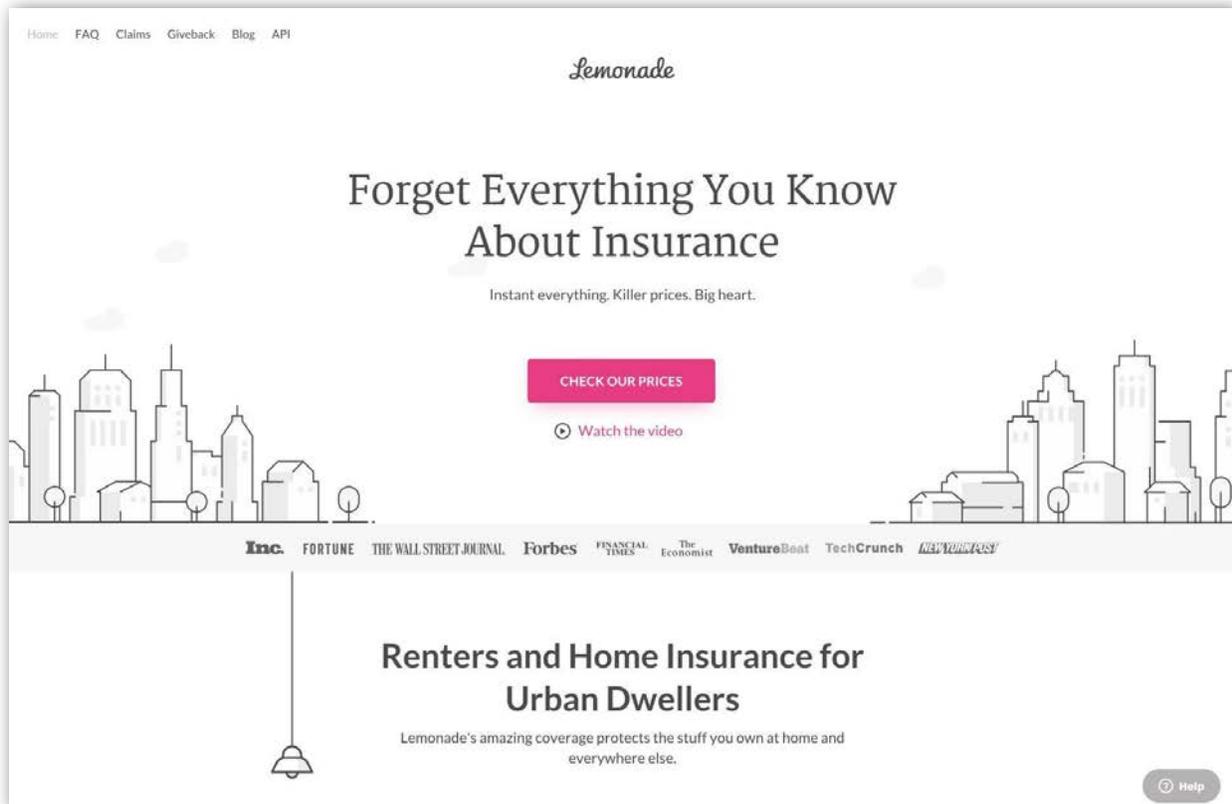
Berdan Real Estate is another site that uses an unexpected color palette. The real estate site uses shades of yellow and peach, both of which are much more energetic than your average property site (where large swaths of blue, red, and green dominate).



[Berdan Real Estate](#) eschews the typical corporate color schemes in favor of something fresh and warm.

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Insurance isn't generally thought of as a modern, groundbreaking industry, but that doesn't mean their designs can't be. Lemonade's website uses a gray and white color scheme with fuchsia accents. It's completely unexpected in an industry that isn't known for taking risks.



Lemonade's choice of fuchsia in their branding is entirely unexpected in the industry. There is a multitude of other examples of unconventional colors used in practice around the web that can be used for inspiration.

The 60/30/10 Rule

The 60-30-10 Rule is a simple theory for creating color palettes that are well-balanced and visually interesting. The idea is that one color—generally something fairly neutral (either literally or psychologically)—makes up 60% of the palette. Another complementary color makes up 30% of the palette. And then a third color is used as an accent for the remaining 10% of the design. This method makes it much easier for designers to start experimenting with unconventional color palettes without stepping too far outside the expected norms within an industry or brand. Adding a pop of some unexpected hue can elevate a design that otherwise fits within what is expected of a particular company. It can also be the first step toward creating a brand palette that is much more forward-thinking than its competitors, thereby setting the brand apart and making it more memorable.

While color theory is a complex subject, it isn't particularly complicated to learn the basics. From there, designers can build on their knowledge to create more varied and sophisticated color palettes for their designs. A well-designed color palette, particularly one that includes some unexpected hues, isn't merely an aesthetic choice. It can have significant psychological effects on users.

Portions of the article on Color Theory were excerpted from articles written by Cameron Chapman

Creating Your Color Palette

Welcome to XPRESS. We want your experience with XPRESS to be enjoyable. We also want it to be productive, so that at the end of your 14-day trial, you have your website well under way, or at the very least you have the "bones" or foundation for your homepage complete. We want it to be visually pleasing, the content clear and concise, and your target audience to know exactly how your services will help them solve a problem or your products will meet their needs.