A QUICK GUIDE TO

WEBSITE
strategy

Revisit your brand foundation

Before beginning any work on your site you need to review your business, brand, and people. It's important to revisit your brand foundation for clarity before trying to build out a website because that brand foundation is what will essentially guide your website flow and content.

You want to iron out your mission statement and refer back to it often as you are planning and creating your site. Let your core values guide your site flow and content. Be sure to focus on the uniqueness of your brand and your offering and know your message and sales goals backwards and forwards.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- Why does your business exist? (what it does, who it's for, how it helps)

- What are your 1 & 3 year business projections?
- What are your core message & core values?
- Who is your ideal client and target audience?
- What is your brand's personality and voice?

If you don't know the answers to those questions, or want to dive deeper on the foundation of your brand before building your site, you can use the Brand Strategy Blueprint as your guide for a strong brand foundation.

This is key in not only building a strong brand, but also ensuring that your website is working well for your business.

Determine your website purpose and goals

All websites have a purpose. And while the bottom line of most websites is to make sales in one way or another, it isn't the only thing websites are good for. Your website is an interactive tool for you to engage with your audience on their time, without you needing to be there.

When thinking about your website, what do you want it to convey? What is the overarching goal of your site? What do you want it to do?

Your website should have one clear purpose. But there can be several goals set to reach that same purpose. And each goal needs different tactics within your site to be met. Setting on clear purpose makes it much easier to understand how everything works together as you are building your site and helps you know exactly what you should be focusing on at every step of the process.

Note: If you find that your website needs to have multiple purposes, you may want to consider separating them into multiple websites. Having more than one purpose for your website will dilute the clarity of your messaging and confuse your audience.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SITE PURPOSES:

- Get hired for your services
- Sell digital products
- Sell physical products
- Grow your audience and social media following
- Get people to subscribe to your list
- Increase affiliate conversions/land more sponsors
- Educate your audience

Determine your overall site objective. How will you communicate that with them? Where do you want to direct your readers so you reach this goal?

Think about the goal of your website and create the flow and content of your site around this goal.

Thinking about the main purpose and goal of your site, answer the following:

- What is your primary website purpose?
- What are your primary & additional website goals? (how do they fulfill the purpose)
- What will success look like for your website and how will you measure it?
- What websites do you like and what you like about them?
- What websites do you not like and what is it that you don't like about them?

website goal worksheet

PURPOSE

GOAL	GOAL	GOAL

TACTIC	TACTIC	TACTIC

TACTIC	TACTIC	TACTIC

TACTIC	TACTIC	TACTIC
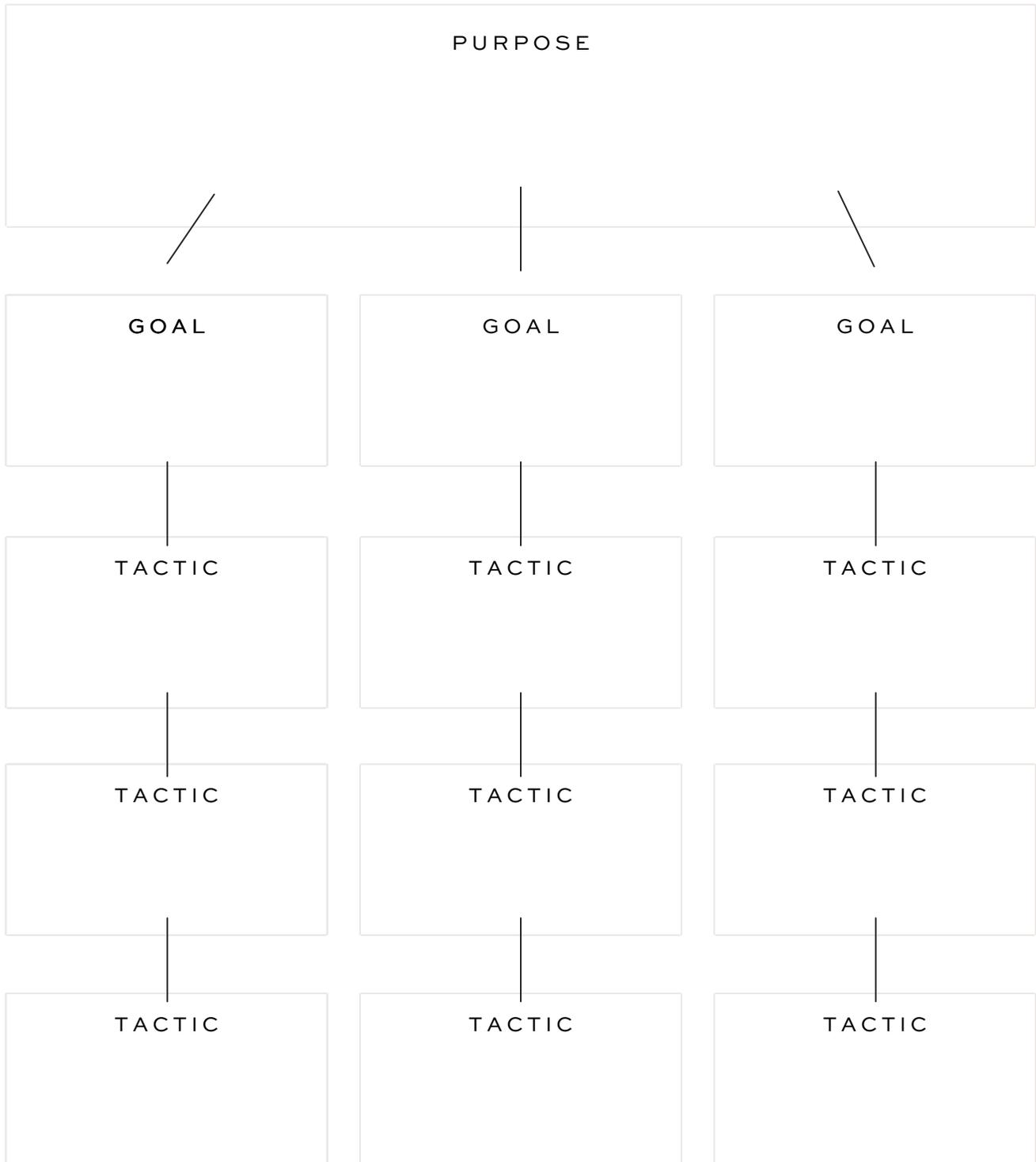
Understanding your visitors

An important part of building your website is understanding who will be visiting your website and how to meet them where they are so they get the best experience possible.

ON EACH PAGE OF YOUR SITE, YOUR VISITOR SHOULD HAVE:

- The information they need
- In words they understand
- At the time they need to hear them
- From someone they trust
- With a clear call to action

TYPES OF WEBSITE VISITORS AND WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO:

Browsers

You want them to understand what you do and who it's for. Let them know they are in the right place. Send them to your blog or free resources for more information so they start to trust you.

Researchers

You want these visitors to look at your offerings so they convert from researchers to buyers. Give them the info they need to make a decision.

Buyers

These people are ready to buy but you still want them to feel confident in their decision. They need to understand how you will solve their problems. This is when you can give them a demo of your product or encourage them to set up a consult call.

Returning visitors

These are your loyal fans and customers. You want to keep them coming back to your site for more. Give them value and get them on your email list so you can keep connecting with them.

Map out the behavior flow

A behavior flow is where you clearly map out how you expect your website visitors to move through your website. You may think that providing people with every possible option in a navigation bar and letting them choose what to do is the best experience. But it's not.

As people scroll through your website, your visitors want two things: to know that they're in the right place, and to be kindly told what to do and where to go next. A behavior flow serves as a guide for that, illustrating how you plan to walk people through your website.

It's important to remember this behavior flow should be driving home the purpose of your website. You may want to create a few user flows, one for each goal, if your goals are all different or don't have any overlap. But defining at least one user flow for your website can be the difference between an average and an amazing experience for your audience.

MAPPING OUT YOUR BEHAVIOR FLOW HELPS TO:

- Explain how you'll engage people to meet your website goals
- Show the order in which you'd like people to visit various pages, for certain goals / use cases
- Show how you'll avoid trapping a user on any one page (the navigation doesn't always solve this problem, it's important to have clear CTAs on all pages)

behavior flow worksheet

GOAL:

start

end

GOAL:

start

end

Determine the navigation and sitemap

I recommend determining the navigation, or page list, of your site first so that you have an overview of the pages and content you will need. Unorganized website navigation confuses people and turns them off. You need to plan your site navigation flow to prevent that from happening.

Now that you know the main purpose, goals, and the behavior flow, you can make sure that the information you need is included and organized to maximize its potential. You can look at it with a big picture perspective and add, move, or delete pages easily before getting too far into the process.

THERE ARE 4 DIFFERENT AREAS OF NAVIGATION ON A TYPICAL WEBSITE:

Header Navigation

These are the pages that display in your top navigation. You want to keep this as simple as possible, so stick to the most important pages and only use drop-down menus when absolutely necessary. This is where you want to direct them first and foremost.

Footer Navigation

This space is usually used for important items you want visitors to easily access but they don't need to be at the top. Often times a footer navigation lays out all the pages on a site in columns for an organized way to give people all the info in one place.

Sidebar Navigation

A sidebar navigation can be use within pages as a way to subcategorize things on your site. You've probably seen this used most often on shop or blog pages.

Menu Navigation

Since you want to only display the most important options in your header navigation, you can also add a menu navigation that displays more links when opened. This is typically a button or link in the top area of your site that will display a list of more links.

The specific pages you need for your site will depend on your business, brand, and industry. Here are 4 examples of header navigation that you might use for your site based on your type of business:

Note: the home page is not listed as a main navigation link because it is standard practice for a logo to link back to the home page so you can leave it off to make room for other important links

PRODUCT BASED BUSINESS:

- About
- Shop (possibly broken down by category/collection)
- Blog
- Policies + FAQ
- Contact

SERVICE BASED BUSINESS:

- About
- Services
- Portfolio
- Blog
- Contact

PROGRAM/COURSE BASED BUSINESS:

- About
- Sales Page
- Testimonials
- Blog
- Contact

Once you've listed out all the pages, you can start organizing that into a sitemap. A sitemap gives you a high-level overview of your entire website. It lays out all the pages of your website and gives them each a general ranking of importance and placement.

Your homepage is usually at the top and all pages in your primary navigation are directly below that. If you're using a secondary navigation bar, include the pages that will go there. Anything that's standalone or not a key part of the website can go in the footer section.

BLOG BASED BUSINESS:
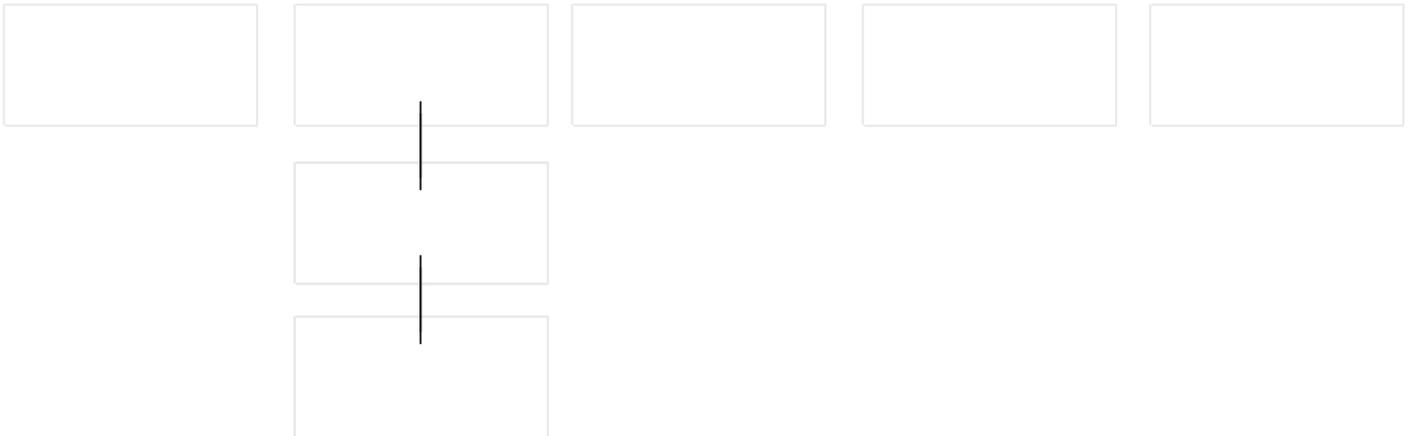
- About
- Blog Category 1
- Blog Category 2
- Blog Category 3
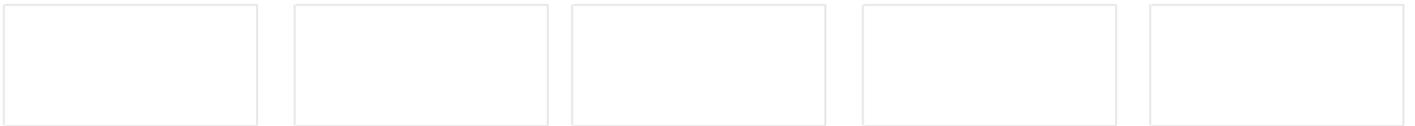- Contact

ADDITIONAL PAGES YOU MIGHT NEED:

- FAQ
- Reviews / Testimonials
- Resources / Favorites
- Terms + Conditions
- Privacy Policies

sitemap example

primary navigation

secondary navigation

additional pages