

WELCOME

Website Refresh – Writing Website Content that Resonates

Thursday, June 3, 2021



MARIA MCGOWAN

- Maria McGowan is the President of Sociable Media, a digital marketing agency that specializes in social media, online ad campaigns, and website development.
- Sociable Media helps clients tell their stories online to create scroll-stopping content.
- Maria has a 30+ year career in non-profit, government, and corporate sectors in progressive roles in marketing and communications.
- Maria was an early adopter to social media and digital marketing. She celebrates this spectacular province with her Facebook Page “The Right Coast Nova Scotia”.

WRITING WEBSITE CONTENT THAT RESONATES

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HELLO

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HERE'S WHAT WE'LL COVER



Write for a New Normal

Decide what content will be interesting for the reader

Edit and Proofread Like a Pro

Create easy-to-read content to help someone choose you over a competitor

Say it with Video and Photos

In a scrollable world, tell your brand story in a meaningful and emotional way

Search Engine Optimization

Design content that addresses what people are searching for

User experience

New trends and ways visitors are interacting with websites



**WRITE FOR A
NEW NORMAL**

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



You'll need to make sure your content is interesting.

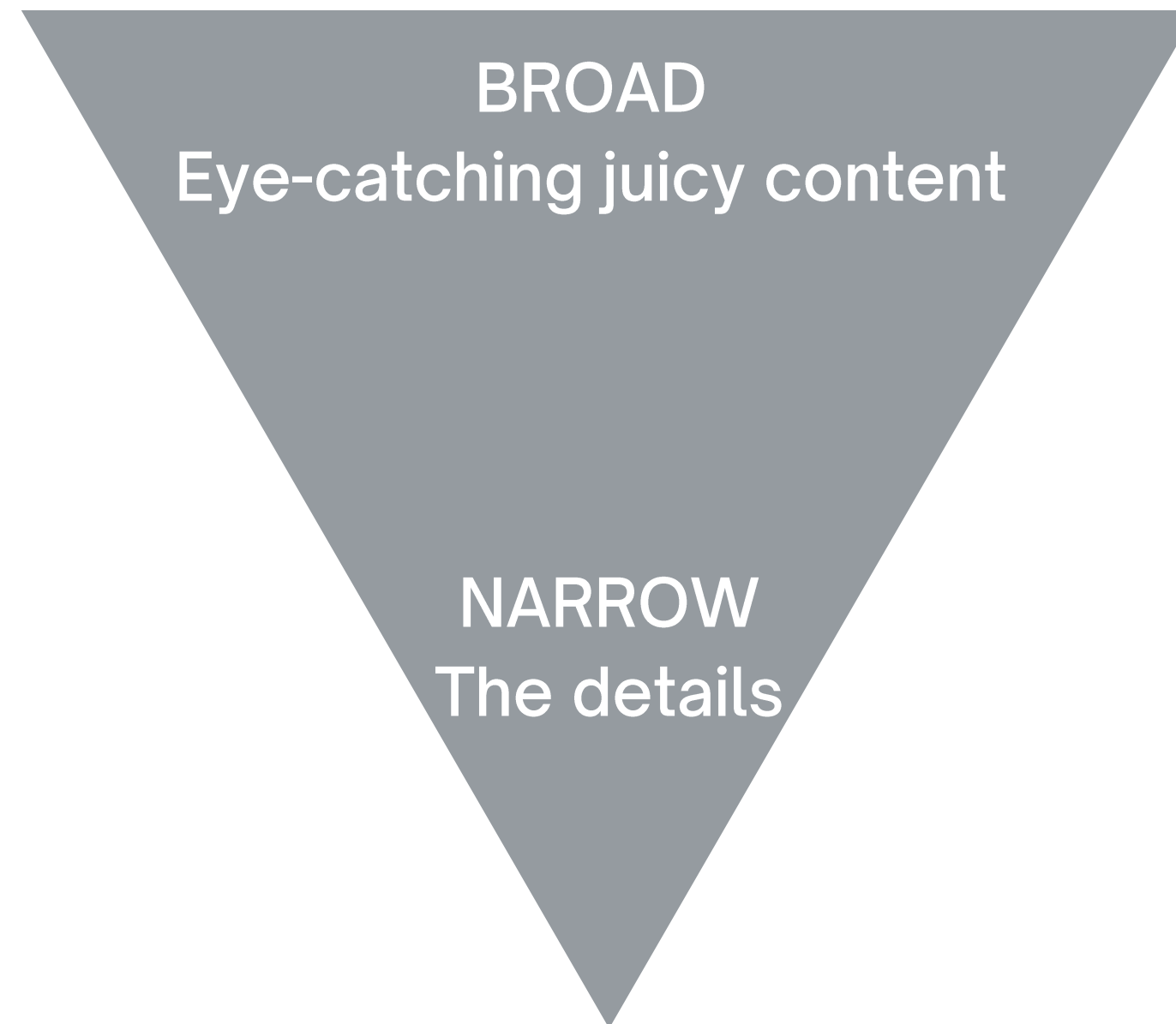
The text should speak to your ideal customer so they qualify themselves as needing to read more to learn about you and how it can serve them.

Make yourself relatable.

Put yourself in their shoes.

THE “INVERTED PYRAMID” MODEL

Web readers will decide whether your site has the information they need in seconds.

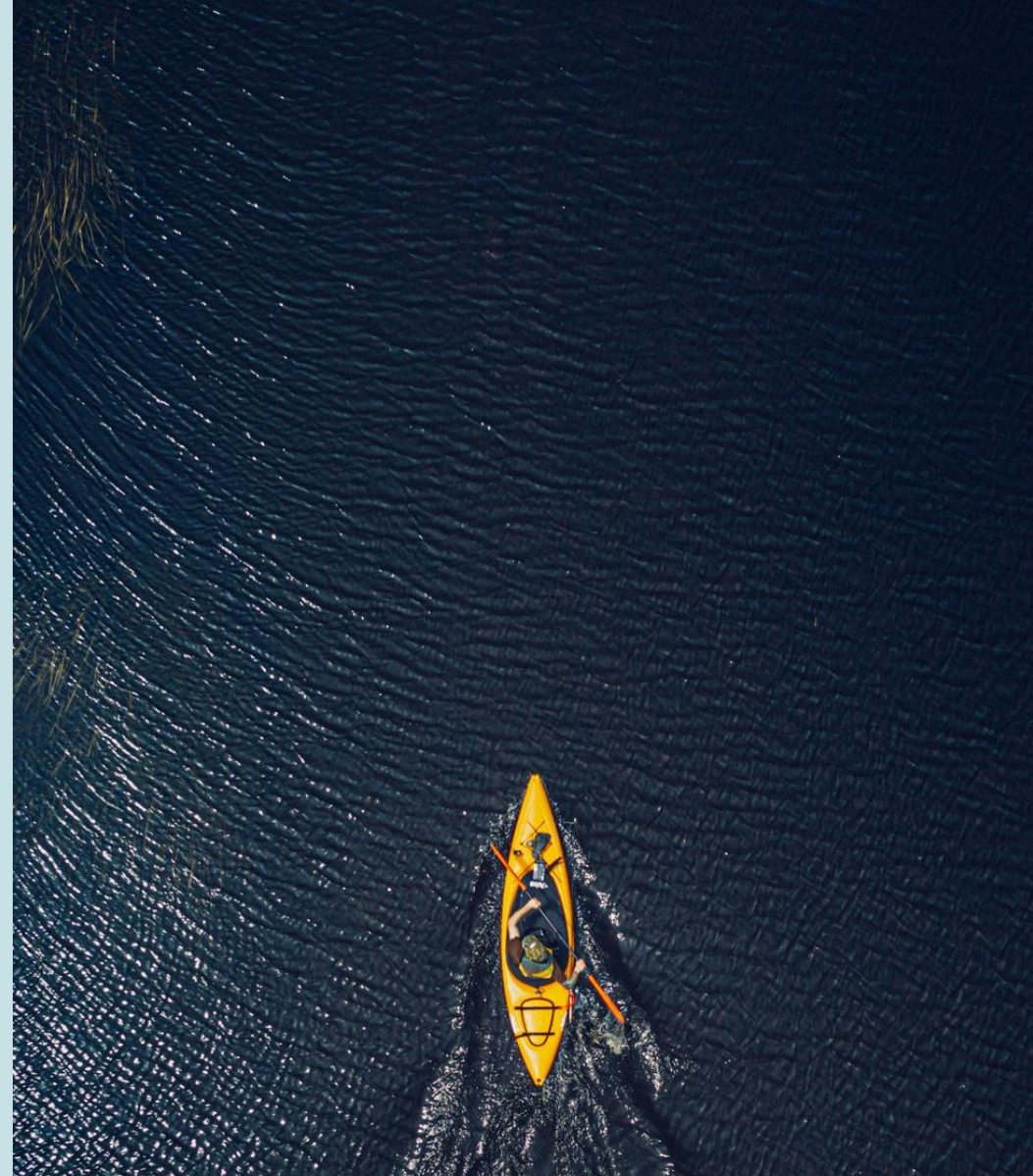


A coastal scene with waves crashing against rocks and a forested hill in the background. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

**THE SHORT ATTENTION SPAN
OF TODAY'S READER
DEMANDS SENTENCES OF
35 WORDS OR FEWER**

This is what thirty-five words looks like. This is what 35 words looks like. This is what thirty-five words looks like. This is what 35 words looks like. This is what 35 words look like.

WRITE SHORT SIMPLE SENTENCES



READABILITY TEST TOOL

Quick and easy way to test the
readability of your work.

TEST BY URL

TEST BY DIRECT INPUT

TEST BY REFERER

TOOL FEEDBACK

Test by URL

Test the readability of a web page:

http://

CALCULATE READABILITY

EXAMPLE WEB ADDRESSES:

» <http://www.example.com/> for a complete web page

» <http://www.example.com/#mainContent> for part of a web page, based on a content area within a container <div id="mainContent"></div>

Note: Testing only the main content part of the page removes any skew in the results due to navigational elements

Readability

Did you know that the
average adult reads at a
7th to 9th grade level?

Focus on using nouns and verbs

Use adverbs and adjectives
sparingly.

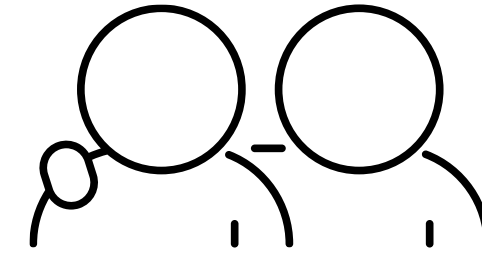
Tools to test your readability

MS Word

Readability Test Tool:
webfx.com/tools/read-able/



STICK TO ACTIVE VOICE



Use active rather than passive verbs to create reader-friendly sentences.

Instead of saying

“Products can be ordered on our website.”

say

“You can order products on our website.”

When you speak directly to the audience
 (“You can do it”) it’s more engaging than saying
 “It can be done.”

SHOW, DON'T TELL

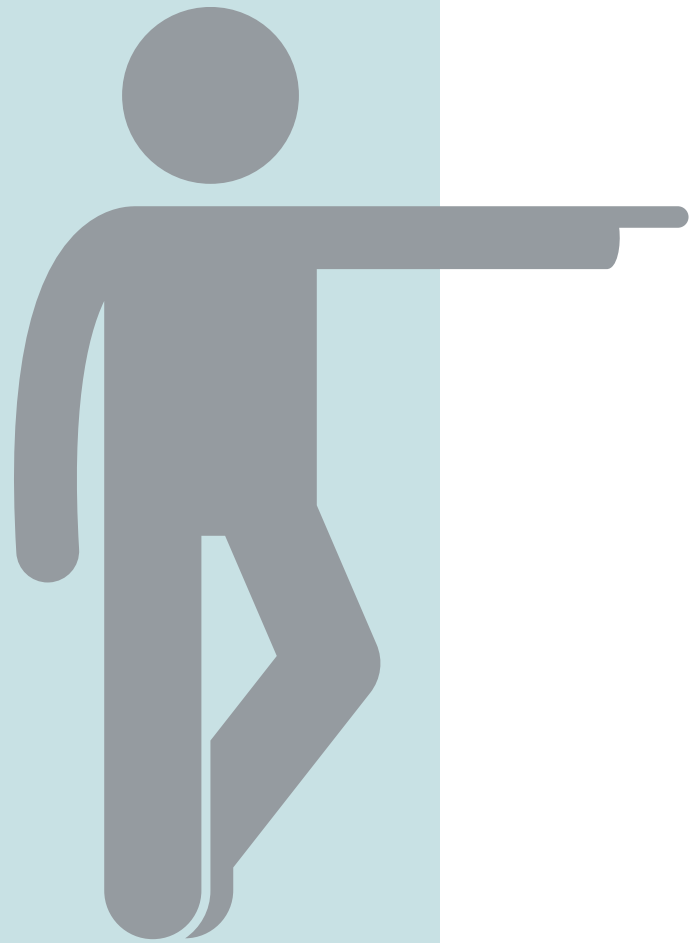


Don't limit your prose to generalities and high-level statements.

They're too vague.

Be descriptive and personal.

SHOW, DON'T TELL



"Stay at our award-winning hotel."

Or

"Our award-winning hotel is known for our customer service excellence that provide our guests memorable experiences."

Or

"Treat yourself to a warm welcome from our award-winning customer service team."

Specific examples help readers better understand and visualize your messages. Good for SEO too.

MAKE TEXT SCANNABLE



PEOPLE READ BIG, BOLD HEADLINES

Use bulleted or numerical lists.

Divide content into sections.

Always include “white space”

The human eye wants a place to “rest” from the various components of the page.

The eye also needs to know where to go next.



**SAY IT WITH
VIDEO AND
PHOTOS**

INCORPORATE MULTIMEDIA

Research shows that people
process visual information

60,000 x faster

than text

Look for an **emotional** element:

- dramatic angle
- lighting
- laughing
- intrigued
- relaxed
- ... authentic!

Images and video also help break up the text, making your pages easier to read.

TELL A STORY

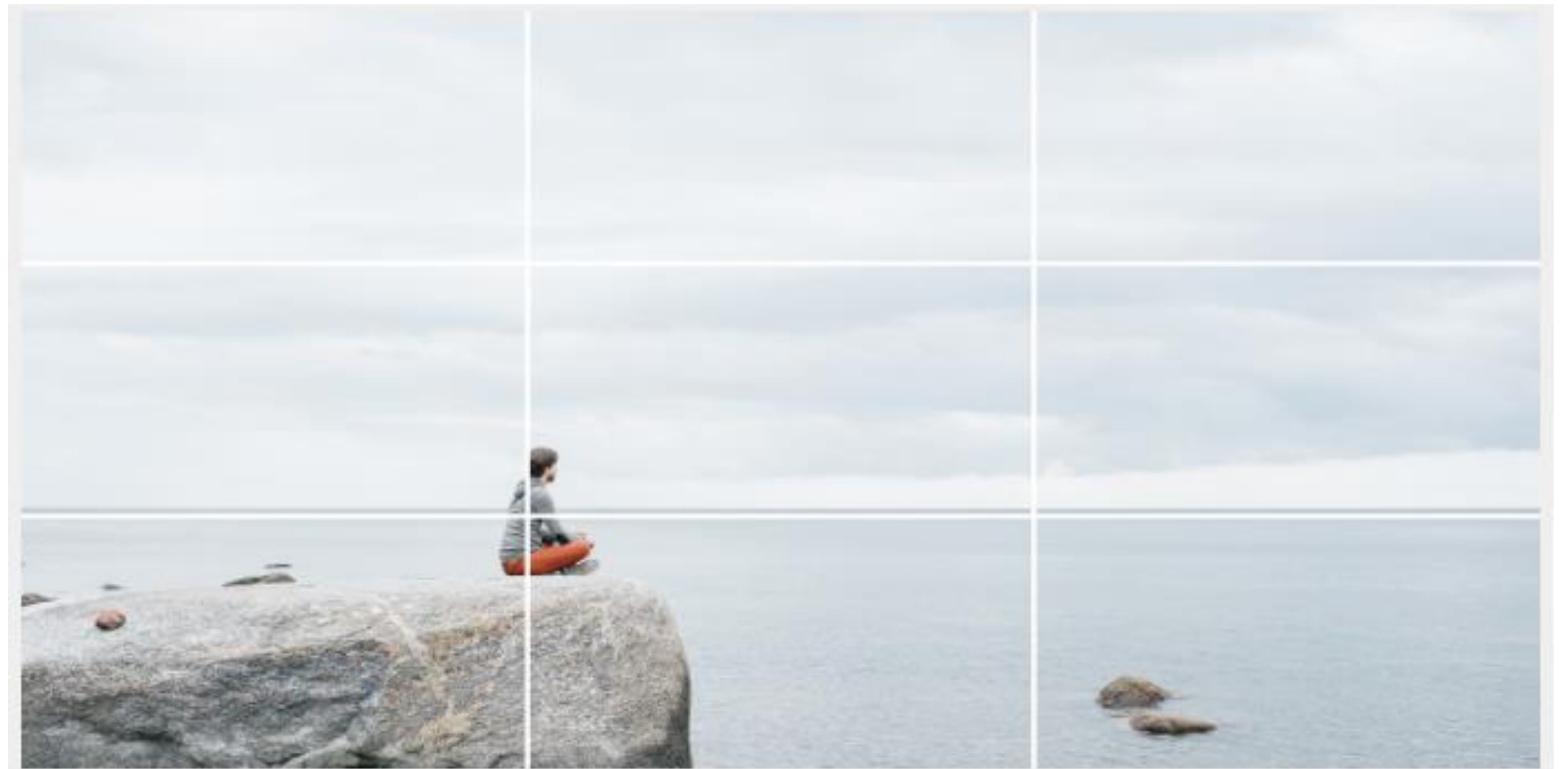
Professional, DIY images,
or stock photos?

Be picky about the photos you choose.

Make sure it's in focus.

Hero image.

Make they match the
color, resolution, and
style of your other
images.



VIDEO KILLED THE...

Video help make websites more
engaging and helps them rank
better

Video has the power to:

- Increase website traffic—video users get **41% more web traffic from search** than non-users. (Aberdeen Group)
- Engage visitors—**72% of people would rather use video to learn about a product or service.** (HubSpot)
- Keep people on your site—the average internet user spends **88% more time on a site that contains video.** (Mist Media)
- Improve search rankings—websites that make effective use of video increase their likelihood of being ranked on the first page of Google search results **by as much as 53x.** (Forrester)
- Bump up conversions—Video users have **34% higher web conversion rates.** (Aberdeen Group)

LEAVE THEM WANTING MORE



CALL TO ACTION



Download

Let's Watch

I'm interested



I want to learn more

PLACE CALLS TO ACTION AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE

TRAVEL WEBSITE TRENDS

Good websites end each page with a strong call-to-action.

Hotel websites focus on large, high-quality images.

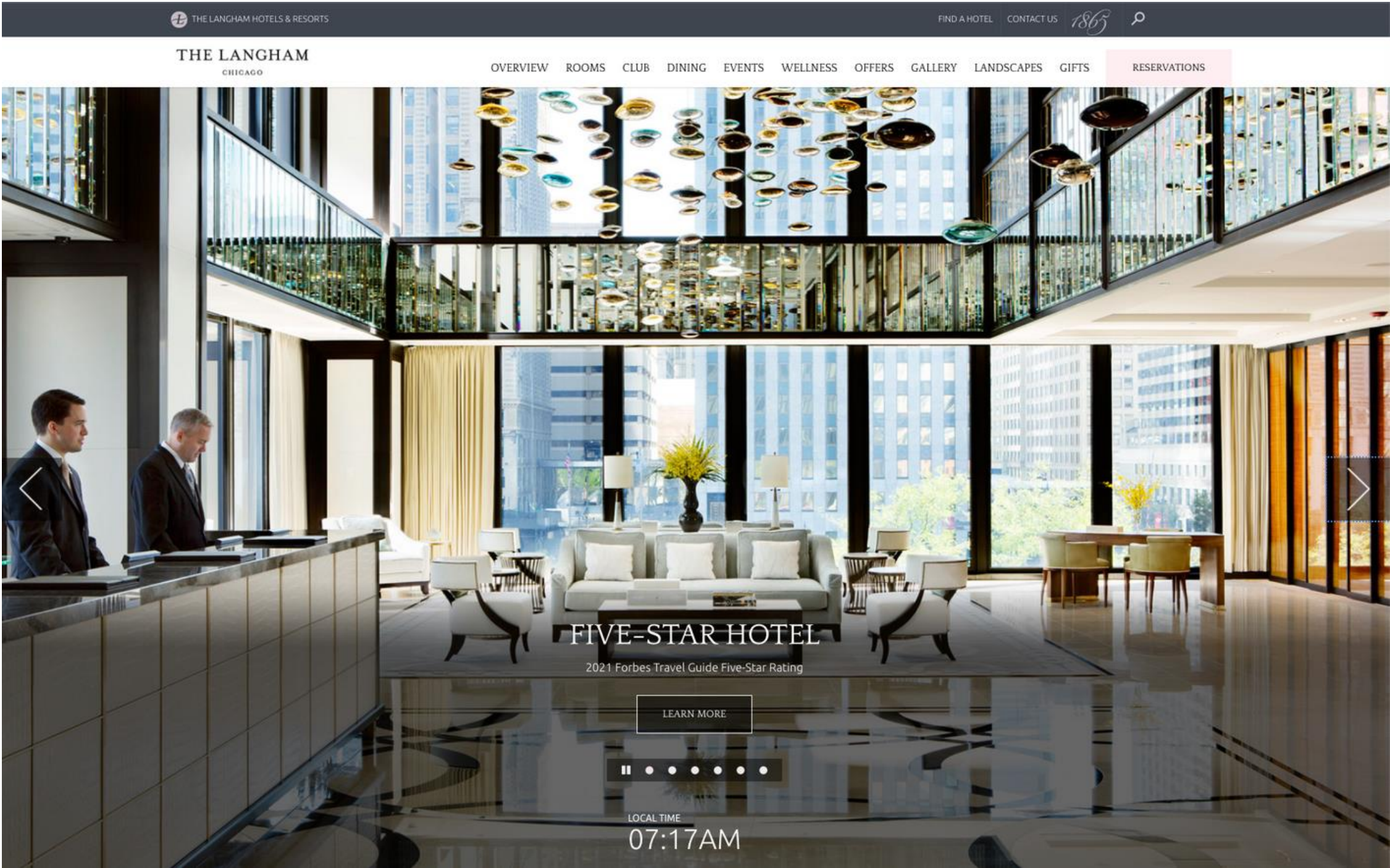
Have a benefit-driven booking promotion.

Have captivating descriptions.

Have a simple layout, and
a dedicated section for each room.

Source - Trivago

DO MORE WITH LESS

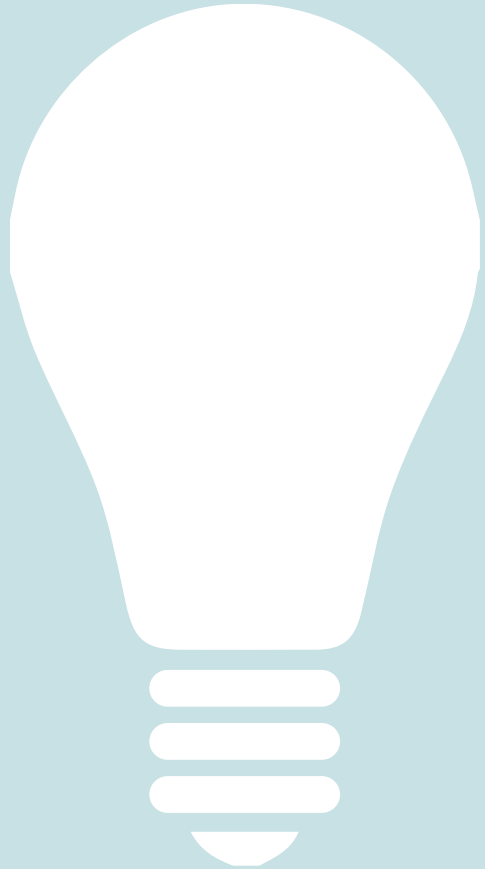


LOOK EXPENSIVE, DEMONSTRATE VALUE

Visitors have higher expectations, want to feel special and that they are getting a good deal.

Fancy images? Luxury appeal? This will not scare anyone off.

DO MORE WITH LESS



Aim for simple and clean.

Show what visitors want to see. *(Instead what you think they want to see)*

Keep text is minimal and to the point.

Utilize captivating descriptions to appeal to emotions. Instead of stating the obvious, go with text that is emotive and benefit-driven.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

USE INTERNAL LINKS

Build internal links within your own site - guide them from one page to another.

For example, say this sentence is on your bike rental website:

"Biking in Annapolis Royal is like biking back in time."

You could hyperlink "Annapolis Royal" to an internal page (blog) with content about the area.

"Biking in Annapolis Royal is like biking back in time."



DIRECT READERS FROM ONE PAGE TO ANOTHER



Visually, if you overload your text with links, people won't know what to click on.

Google recommends keeping the number of hyperlinks on a page to a “reasonable number.”

HELP GOOGLE FIND YOUR PAGES

The web is like an ever-growing library with billions of books
and no central filing system.

H1 is for your page title

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H2 is great for making a new section

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

- **Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet**, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.
- **Ut enim ad minim veniam**, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.
- **Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit** in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

H3 is great for making finer points

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

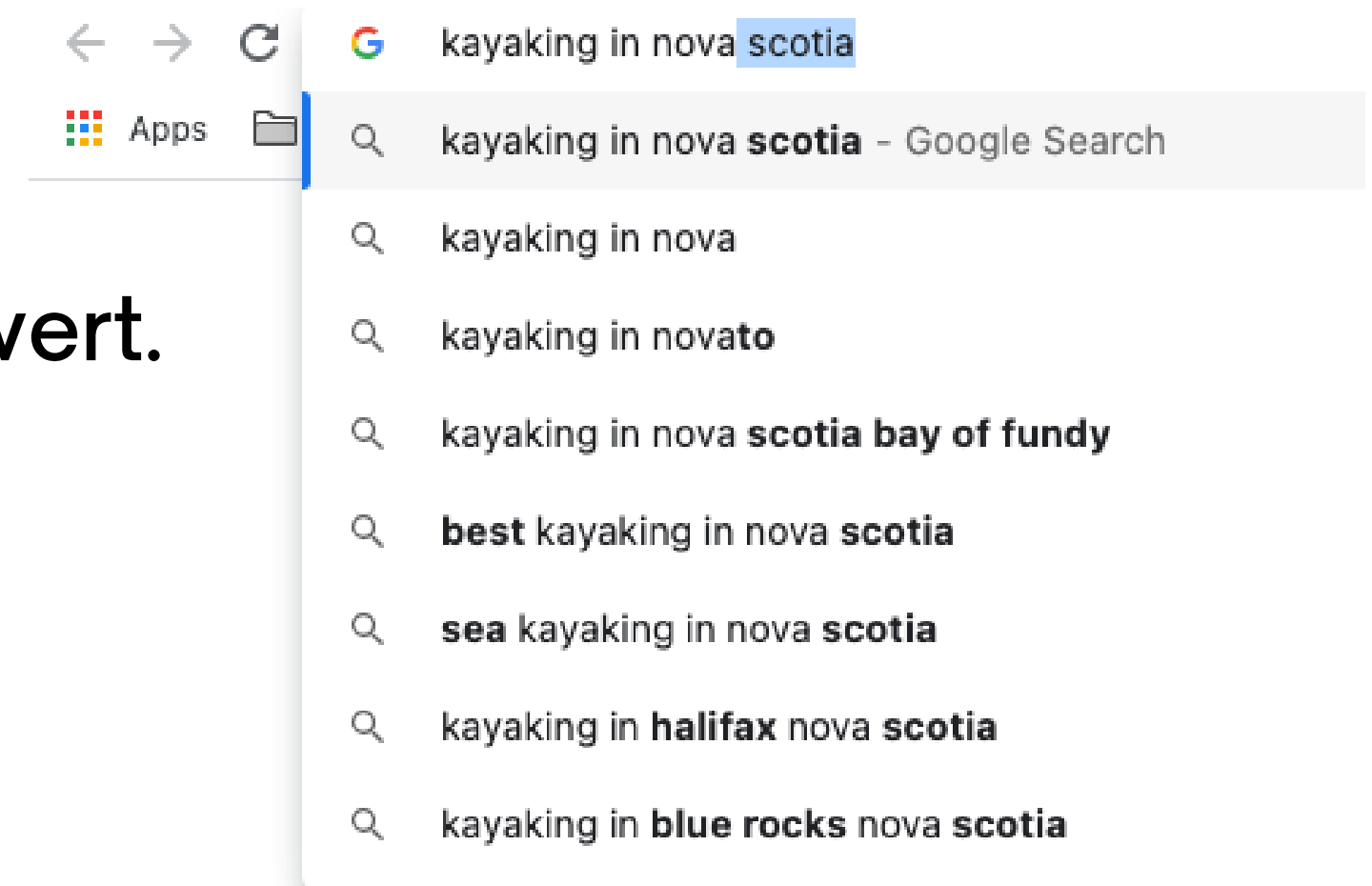
ABOUT KEYWORDS

Keywords are one of many factors that go into your site's SEO performance.

Create content that's based around your keyword research that solves the problem or answers the questions of people who search your target keyword phrase.

The traffic you'll get from long-tail keywords is much more likely to convert.

Google AdWords Keyword Planner.



WHAT GOOGLE SAYS...



Make pages primarily for users, not for search engines.

Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine ranking. A good rule of thumb is "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"

Think about what makes your website unique, valuable, or engaging. Make your website stand out from others in your field.



GOOD USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

UX = USER EXPERIENCE

Good UX design is all about getting inside the head of your visitors.

It's anticipating their every move, and creating a website that is simple, intuitive and enjoyable to use.

Unfortunately, there is no easy answer or silver bullet for good UX design.

It's the culmination of lots of tiny tweaks. Each one improving the experience on your website.

SPEED

It's your first UX hurdle.



Too slow and your visitors are already agitated and less likely to trust you.

We instinctively associate speed with professionalism.

Most visitors expect your website to load within two seconds.

High-resolution images are the #1 reason.

- Check the file size of your images, anything above 1MB is really unacceptable.
- Use JPEG instead of PNG, especially for larger images.
- Icons are ok.

Contact your hosting provider.

YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

What makes you so awesome?

Know what the user wants and give it to them quickly and simply.

Images ought to show your product or service **in action**. It's not enough to tell users who you are and what you do. You need to show them.

Give them a clear reason to trust you over the competition. Are you the easiest service, the best, the cheapest, the most popular, the most eco-friendly?



HOW VISITORS CAN GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU



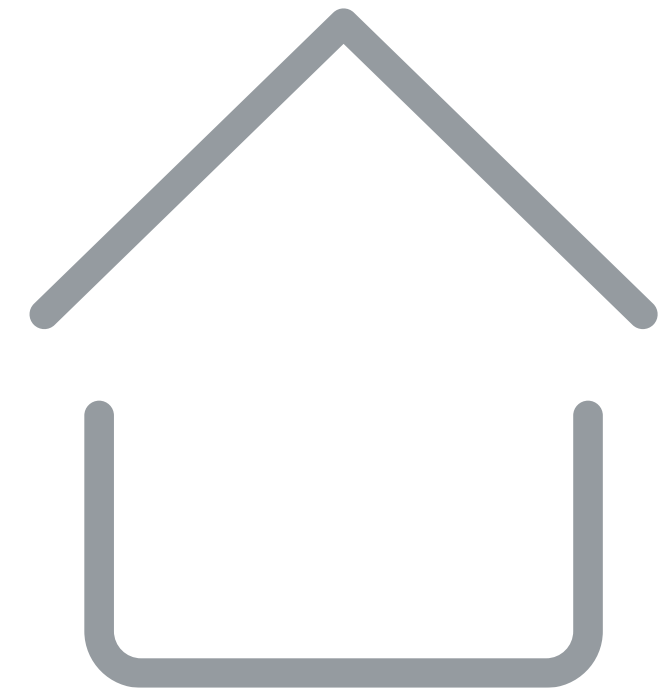
If your visitor or customer need help, they want it now.

They don't want to fill out a "Contact Us" form and wait to see when, if ever, they get a response.

Let people get in touch with you via email, the phone, and social media, live chat box...

GO HOME

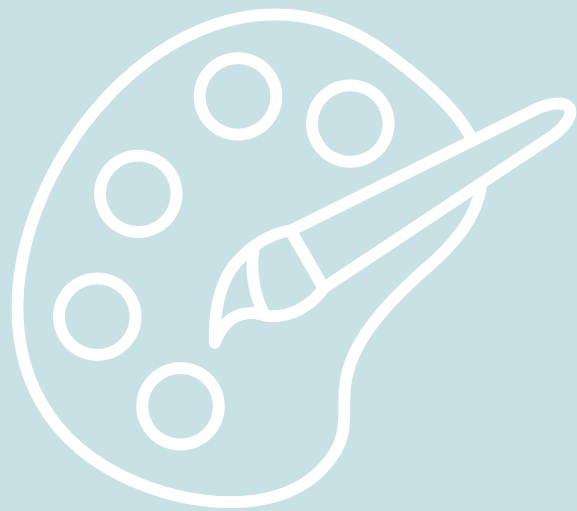
Add a HOME button to the top navigation bar.



Make sure there's a clear and defined 'home' button, so they can always start over.

Typically, users expect your logo to link back to the home page too.

STICK TO A SIMPLE 3-COLOR PALETTE



Resist the urge to over-complicate things.

Color is connected to psychology and emotion.

There's a reason why Facebook uses blue!

Fast Food industry is red and orange.

Match your color palette with your product.

STICK TO JUST TWO FONT FAMILIES

Consistency and branding is key to a good user experience.

It's very confusing if:

Your logo font is Garamond

Your body text is Times New Roman

Your call to action is Roboto

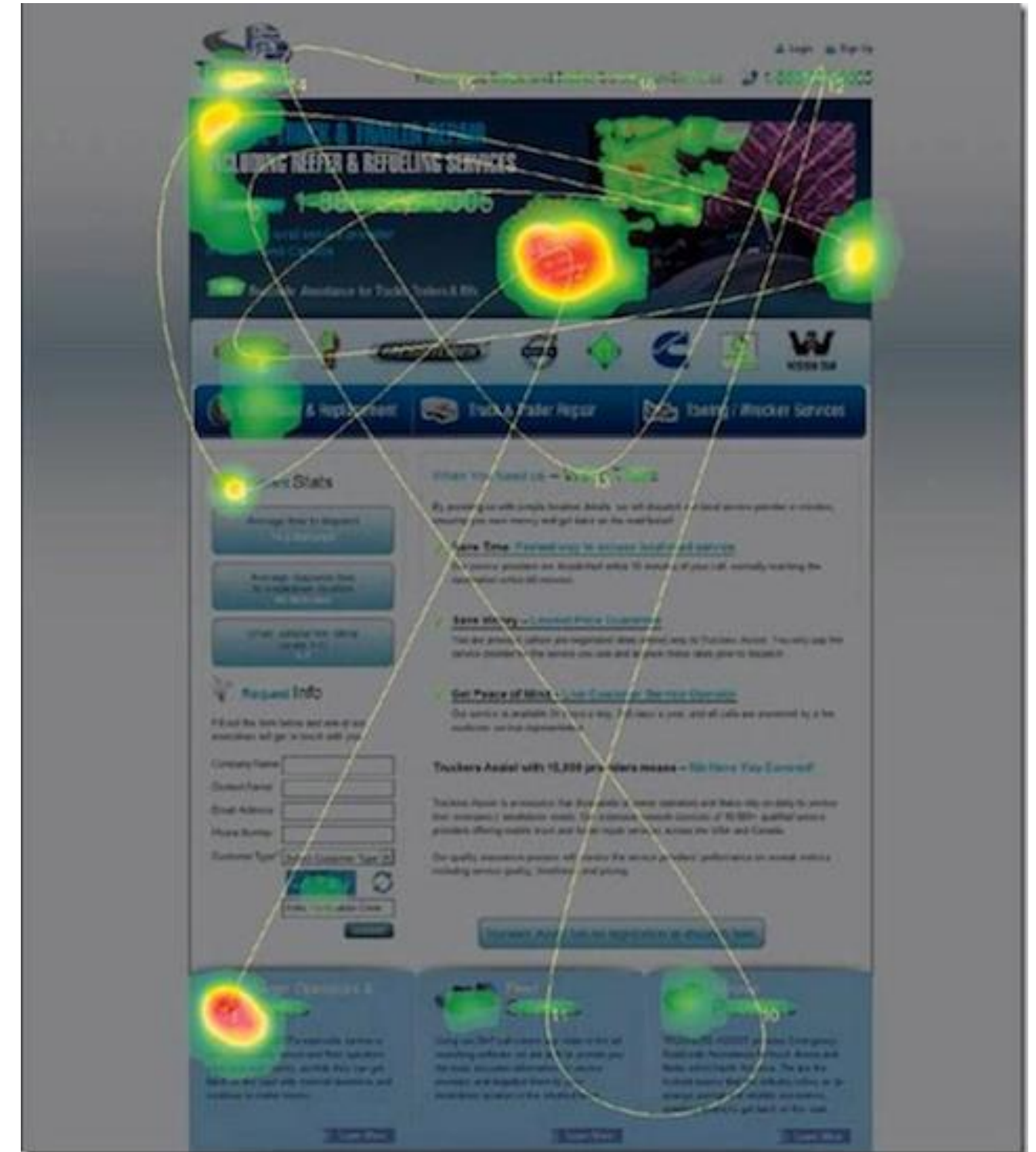
Your headings are Cabin Sketch

And your headings are **Gatwick Bold**

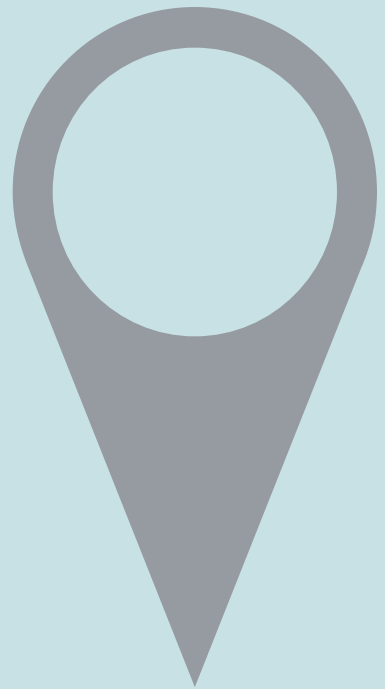


PUT YOUR MOST VALUABLE CONTENT ABOVE THE FOLD

We don't read websites
like we read a book.



TO THE LEFT, TO THE LEFT



The left side of your page is important.

Eye-tracking studies indicate that users spend most of their time with their eyes on the left half of the page.

PEOPLE LIKE PEOPLE

Looking at someone else, even in a photo, prompts – usually – a positive physiological reaction of attraction, understanding, or identification.

A page that has pictures of a person's face encourages interaction and viewing and decreases a bounce rate.



...and animals too

THAT'S A WRAP

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Write for your visitor

Like you're talking to a friend. Scannable.

Emotional aspect

Writing. Visuals.

High quality visuals

Watch the file sizes

Make it easy for people to contact you

Test this. Contact form? Messenger?

KISS and WIFM

THANK YOU



PHOTO CREDITS

Tim Foster

Robert Moser

Maria McGowan

Friends of Taylor Head Provincial Park

Jamie Morrison

Matthew Smith

Taffese Woubishet

QUESTIONS?



UPCOMING WEBINARS

Join Tourism Nova Scotia for a preview of our 2021 marketing campaigns

- Date: Thursday, June 10, 2021
- Time: 10 am – 11 am
- Free to join

<https://tourismns.ca/webinar-series>

STAY CONNECTED!

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- **Contact Business Development**
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- **Newsletter**
Sign-up for *inTouch*
- **Twitter**
Follow @TourismNS
- **LinkedIn**
Follow Tourism Nova Scotia
- **Corporate Website**
Visit tourismns.ca
- **COVID-19 Resources**
tourismns.ca/coronavirus

