B STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Web * Messaging * Visibility * Engagement

New Year, New Website:
How to Create a Website

Elena Sharnoff

About Elena Sharnoff

I love helping small businesses and non-profits **showcase their story** and **connect with their audiences** through **well-crafted websites** and **strategic messaging**.

I offer 25+ years of expertise in:

- Strategic communications and marketing
- Content creation and strategy
- Branding and messaging
- Website design and functionality
- Audience building and outreach

What is your goal?

- Business website to manage and grow your business
- Online store or eCommerce website to sell your products
- Services website to book new clients
- Online portfolio to to display and sell art or photography
- Event website for weddings and life events
- Restaurant website to help with online orders, delivery and payment
- And more!

A good website is like a puzzle

All the pieces fit together to create a website that both features your message and makes it easy for your visitors to find what they're looking for–and then act!

- Design
- Content
- Organization
- Accessibility Awareness
- Mobile Design
- Search Engine Optimization
- Audience Engagement

Key Elements of a Website

Menu: This central element of your design showcases the different sections of your website, ensuring that visitors can easily find and navigate from one page to another

Website header features what you want visitors to discover immediately, such as your own logo, main menu, and contact.

Website footer is always present at the bottom of every page, so it's a useful location for contact information, social media buttons, and an email/newsletter sign up form.

Favicon: A favicon is a small icon that will be used in a website browser to "represent" your website.
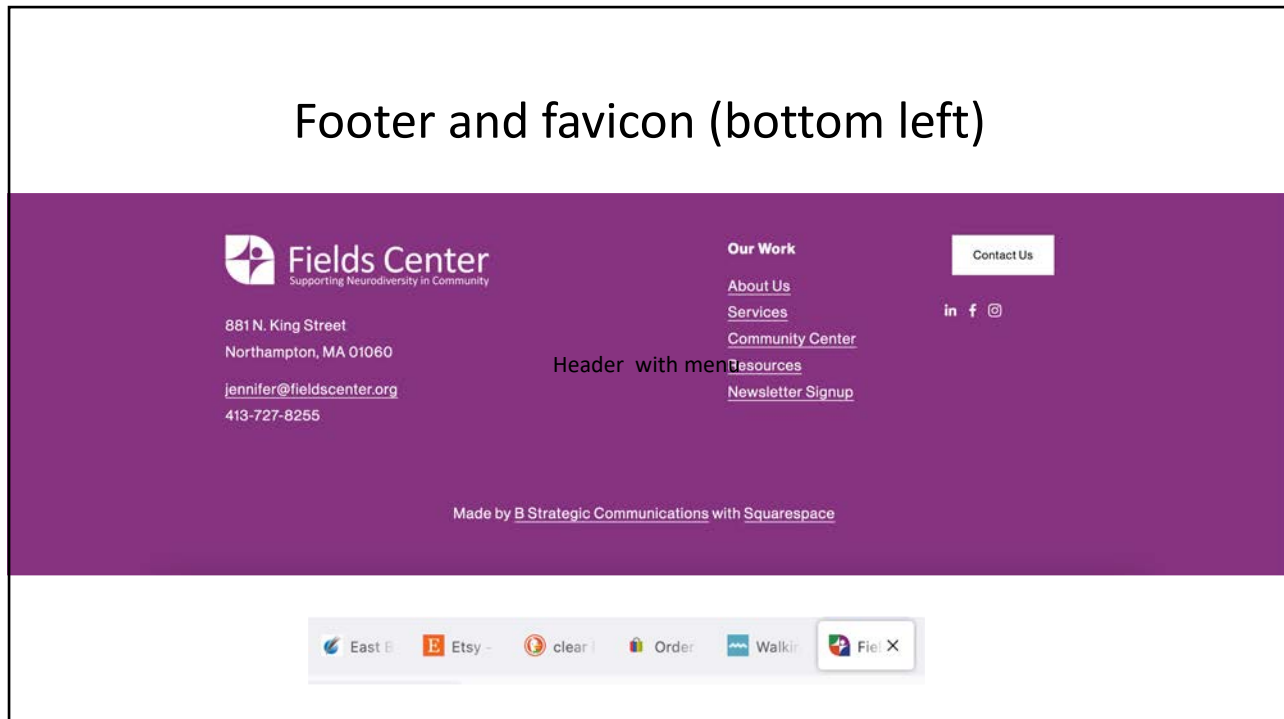
Header with menu

Footer and favicon (bottom left)


Header with menu

Design

- **Your brand:** includes logo, color, and business's overall personality.
- **Colors:** a general rule is to limit yourself to three shades: one primary color (60% of the mix), one secondary color (30%), and one accent color (10%).
- **Fonts:** pick fonts that are legible (both on desktop and mobile) and consistent with your brand identity. Ideally, you'll use 1 font for headlines and 1 for paragraphs, to minimize visual chaos and ensure readability.
- **Imagery:** includes photography, illustrations, animations, and icons.
- **White space:** gives your visitors room to "breathe" between images or pieces of content, contributing to a much better user experience.

Home page with colors and fonts
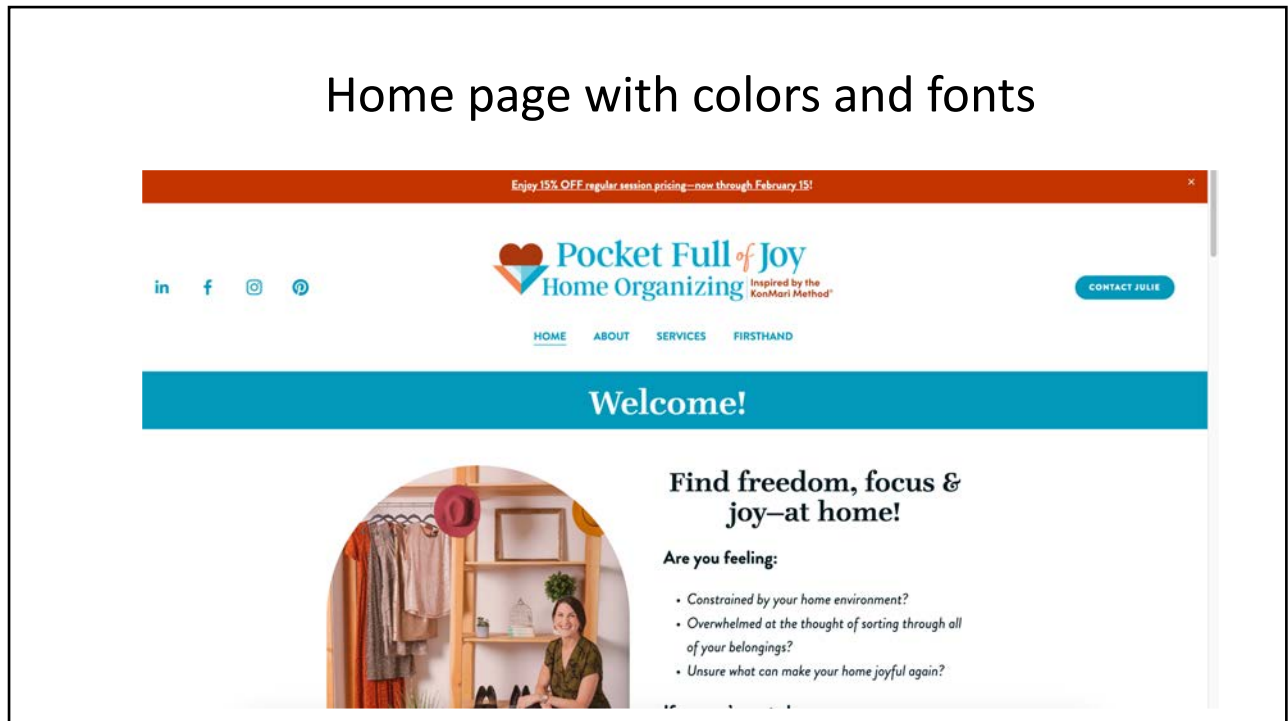
Footer with colors and fonts
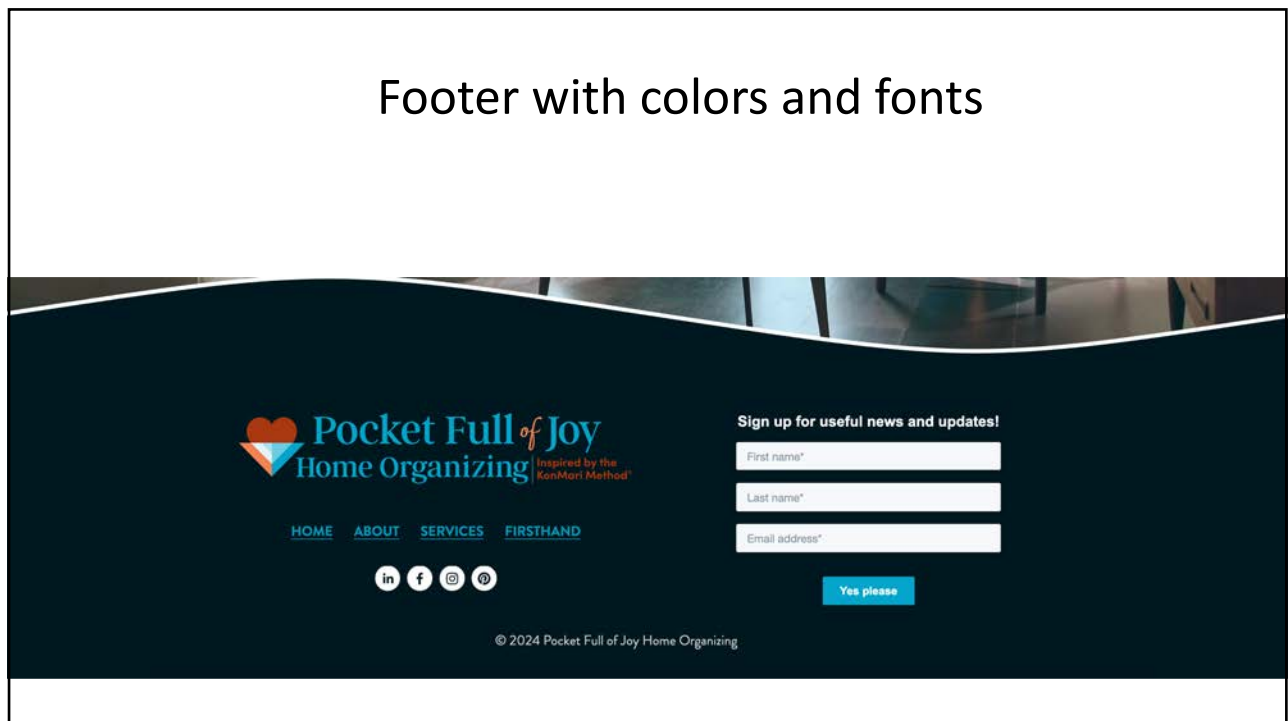
What kind of change are you seeking?

Gentle Change

One 4-hour session per month

• Gentle home transformation taking 12 or more months

• Ideal for people who seek gradual change at home OR for people who want to declutter mostly solo but with my periodic guidance

Steady Change

Two 4-hour sessions per month

• Steady whole home transformation over about 5-8 months

• Ideal for people who want to make solid progress over a couple of seasons.

I recommend this level for most clients at the start of their KonMari journey.

Speedy Change

Three 4-hour sessions per month

• Speedy home transformation over 2-5 months

• Ideal for people planning to meet a deadline—like preparing for a residential move or another major life event.

Enjoy this bonus: 20% off all regularly priced merchandise at The Container Store whenever you order with me online!

Written Content Considerations

- What do you want your visitors to know?
- What do you want them to feel?
- What do you want them to do?
- Develop a voice and tone: Your voice is an extension of your brand's personality — it remains consistent and always represents the characteristics of your brand.

Main website pages

- Homepage
- About Us
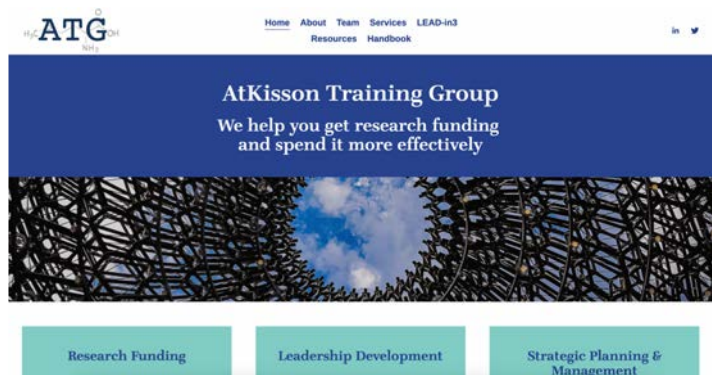- Contact Us
- Products/Services

Useful Additional pages

- Blog
- Testimonials

Main website pages

Homepage: aim for a homepage that's clean, organized and eye-catching.
It should clarify who you are and what you do, and serve as a starting point
for visitors to navigate through your site.

Main website pages

About Us: Tell your story, and share your values, expertise, and any other information that defines your organization. Using the first person ("I" or "We") adds a friendly touch and warmth.

Support for the Journey

I have coached clients in various industries including IT, healthcare, finance, and throughout the globe. I have worked with and coached some of the most brilliant and creative minds in these sectors. Companies include Slack, Salesforce, Kognitiv, Accenture, PNNL, Planned Parenthood, Amazon, Brooks Automation. Toshiba and

Main website pages

Contact Us: Your visitors should be able to get in touch with you easily. Consider listing your business email address, phone number, postal address, and social media accounts–or, use a contact form to provide your with more information as part of the contact process.

Spark Joy Mary Ann

Home   About   Services   Stories   Speaking   Before & After   (in) (⊞)   CONTACT

Contact Mary Ann

Name (required)
First Name   Last Name

Email (required)

Subject (required)

Product/Service: The product/service section showcases what your organization offers, and ideally, convinces visitors to purchase/sign up/hire you. Use high quality product photography, write precise and engaging descriptions, and make it easy for the visitor to move forward.

Blog: A blog can boosts your reputation as an expert, help you foster a loyal community, and can be used as an effective way to drive traffic to your website.

Testimonials: An honest testimonials page is an effective addition to your website. Studies show that 77% of satisfied customers will recommend your business or service to a friend after having a positive experience.

Home   Expertise   Clients   About   CONTACT

What People Are Saying

Unquestionable asset

"I have worked with Elena since 2019, and she is an unquestionable asset to have on my marketing team. Elena brings an effective combination of website development and digital marketing expertise, excellent writing skills, and a keen sense of how to position your message to your target audience. She is expert at pacing the

Knew just what I needed

"Working with Elena was delightful – she knew just what I needed to do and then I could step back and watch her work her magic! Elena did a great job in a short time producing a site for my book that is nothing short of 'eye candy' for my prospective buyers."

– Mrs Simon, author of My Intentional Year

Experience was exceptional

"I had the privilege of working with Elena on the creation of my website– the experience was exceptional. Elena made the entire process effortless, capturing my passion and personality flawlessly in the design. The site's user-friendly layout ensures easy navigation, and Elena was incredibly open to my input, making adjustments and offering


Web content writing principles

- Know your audience
- Identify your vistors' top tasks and asks
- Write content that is easy to skim and scan
- Use the inverted pyramid
- Make it visual
- Engage your visitors with calls to action
- Help people (and search engines) find your content

Important Considerations

- Phones account for 65% of all website interactions, so make sure your site is mobile friendly.

- Build for search, optimize for browse.

- Your homepage is key, but sprinkle your message throughout and make sure your users know where they are on the site.

Desktop version

Mobile version
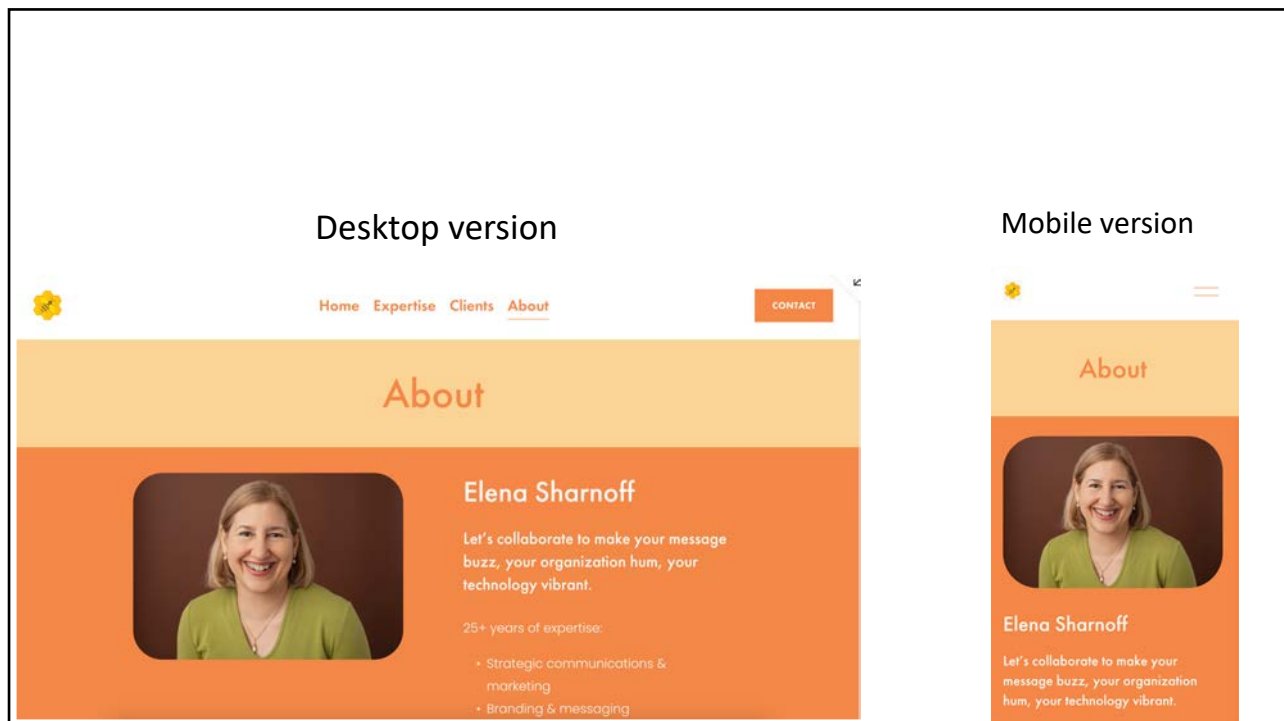
Make your site accessible to everyone

Web accessibility ensures that all people, regardless of their abilities (such as vision impairment), can comfortably experience and interact with your website. Catering to everyone's needs is crucial and shows that you and your organization value inclusivity and diversity.

Ways to improve user experience for everyone:
- Organize your content hierarchically, using head levels to define the different levels of information.
- Use one font for headings and a different one for paragraph content.
- Write alt text for your images.

Alt Text content for an image (in Squarespace)
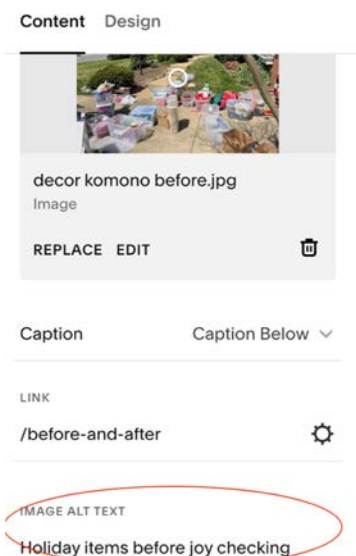
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Conduct keyword research: Keyword research helps you find the keywords that are most relevant for your site. Use the most useful key words where relevant in your content and meta descriptions.

Include on-page SEO: Your meta descriptions tells search engines what your pages include, and helps with ranking. Write a brief meta description for each page that summarizes what a user will find there.

Add alt text: Alt text is a written description for your images. Alt text helps your visual content appear in search engine results pages AND improves your website's accessibility.

Boost internal linking: Adding links to internal pages throughout your website encourages visitors to discover more pages AND helps search engines to navigate your website.

CLOSE

Page Settings

General

SEO

Social Image

Advanced

SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) allows you to improve your ranking in search results. Use these features to make it easier for users to find your page when they search for it. Learn More

SEARCH RESULTS PREVIEW

Our Approach — Homestead Bookkeeping and Business Advisory
https://www.homesteadbookkeeping.com/our-approach

We call our unique approach "Business Therapy" because at Homestead, we really listen and collaborate with you to uncover the best path forward for your business. No generic business plans here!

Audience engagement

- Follow the "two-click rule:" Your visitors shouldn't have to click more than once to access any page of your site, wherever they are.
- When your visitors are encouraged to do more than simply reading, they'll stay longer.
- Ask yourself: what do you want your visitor to do when they visit your site:
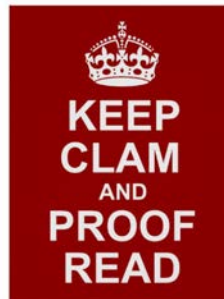- Then, make it a call to action.

Sample calls to action

Check list before launching

- Proof the spelling
- Test all the links
- Make sure it's easy to find key information
- Look at your website on your phone to ensure it's optimized for mobile
- Check all of the SEO elements to make sure they're all in place

Essential website elements that cost $$

Domain name: This is the address of your website on the internet, such as example.com. You can register a domain name through a domain registrar. Keep it short, simple, professional, and evocative.

Website builder/ content management system (CMS): the software platform that helps you to create and manage your website's content. I prefer and use: .

Professional email: an email that uses your domain name. Yes, you have to pay for it, but it's especially useful because it helps your email go to the inbox, not the spam folder.

I love what I do and I'm here to help!

I use website design to help my clients **express the essence** of their unique approach and offerings.

I draw on a combination of **visual impact, organizational strategy, and inspired wordsmithing** to capture and showcase the **vital elements** that make each business special.

Working with each client becomes a **creative collaboration** where the end result isn't just a website**.**

It's an eloquent expression of the business.

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Thank you for coming!