



FREE EBOOK · V1 · 2026

SITES THAT CONVERT

The web design playbook. Everything I use to go from a client's first message to launch day.



BEFORE YOU START

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is for designers, freelancers and anyone who wants to build websites that look good and bring in results. You don't need to code. You don't need to read it in order either.

Each chapter is short and ends with a **take-away**: a script, template, checklist or cheat sheet you can use the same day. If you only have ten minutes, skip straight to those.

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PART 1

WIN THE PROJECT

01

FINDING CLIENTS WHO VALUE GOOD DESIGN

Good clients don't find you by accident. You make it easy for the right ones to notice you.

PICK A LANE

"I design websites" is forgettable. "I design websites for cafés and restaurants" is not. Choosing one type of client makes your portfolio, your posts and your messages sharper. You can always widen later.

SHOW THREE GREAT PROJECTS, NOT TWELVE OKAY ONES

For each project, tell a tiny story: what the problem was, what you did, and what changed. A before-and-after screenshot does more than a page of adjectives.

WHERE TO LOOK

- **Show your process in public.** Posts and reels that show how you build something attract people who want that thing.
- **Local businesses with old websites.** Slow, broken on mobile, or last updated years ago. They already know they need help.
- **Past clients.** Ask every happy client for one introduction. Referrals close faster than anything else.

■ TAKE-AWAY · FIRST MESSAGE SCRIPT

Hi **[Name]**, I came across **[business]** and loved **[one specific thing]**. I noticed your website **[one specific issue, e.g. is hard to use on a phone]**. I design websites for **[type of business]**. Here's one I did recently: **[link]**. Would a 15-minute call this week be useful?

Keep it short, make it about them, and ask one easy question.

02

THE PAPERWORK THAT PROTECTS YOU

Four simple documents stop most freelance problems before they start.

DOCUMENT	WHAT IT'S FOR	MUST INCLUDE
Proposal	Shows you understood the problem	Their goal, what you'll deliver, timeline, price. One or two pages.
Quote	The price, in detail	Line items, what's <i>not</i> included, how long the price is valid
Contract	The rules of the project	Scope, number of revision rounds, payment schedule, when ownership passes to the client, what happens if the project pauses
Invoice	Getting paid	Invoice number, date, items, due date, payment details

THREE RULES THAT SAVE YOU

- **Take 50% upfront.** It confirms the client is serious and covers your time if things stop.
- **Limit revisions.** Two rounds per stage is normal. Extra rounds are billed.
- **Write the scope in one sentence.** If you can't, the project isn't clear yet.

■ TAKE-AWAY · SCOPE IN ONE SENTENCE

I will design and build a **[number]**-page website for **[business]** that helps visitors **[main action]**, delivered by **[date]**, with **[2]** rounds of changes.

Paste this at the top of every proposal and contract. Have a local professional check your contract template once; it's worth it.

03

STARTING EVERY PROJECT THE RIGHT WAY

The first week decides whether the project feels smooth or painful.

AGREE ON HOW YOU'LL TALK

Pick one channel (email or one WhatsApp group) and one update day each week. Clients relax when they know when they'll hear from you.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK THE RIGHT WAY

- Ask for **all feedback in one list**, from one person who makes the final call.
- Ask "what problem do you see?" instead of "what should I change?". Clients describe problems well and solutions badly.
- Set a deadline for feedback so the project doesn't stall.

TAKE-AWAY · CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What does your business do, in one sentence?
2. Who is your ideal customer?
3. What is the one thing a visitor should do on the site?
4. Name three websites you like, and why.
5. Who are your three main competitors?
6. What brand assets do you have (logo, fonts, photos)?
7. Which pages do you need?
8. What is the deadline, and why that date?
9. Who approves the final design?
10. What would make this website a success in three months?



PART 2

PLAN BEFORE YOU DESIGN

04

KNOW THE BUSINESS BEFORE YOU OPEN FIGMA

Beautiful websites that don't sell usually skipped this step.

ONE MAIN GOAL

Every site needs one main action: book a call, buy, visit the shop, sign up. Every section should push toward it.

UNDERSTAND THE VISITOR

Who are they, what worries them, and what words do they use? Read the business's Google reviews and competitors' reviews. Customers tell you exactly what they care about, in their own language. Use those words in your copy.

LOOK AT 3 TO 5 COMPETITORS

Note what they **all** do (visitors expect it, so you need it too) and what **none** of them do (that's your chance to stand out).

■ TAKE-AWAY · ONE-PAGE RESEARCH SHEET

Main goal of the site	...
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Ideal visitor	...
---------------	-----

Their top 3 worries	...
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Words they use (from reviews)	...
-------------------------------	-----

What every competitor does	...
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What no competitor does	...
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Why choose this business	...
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05

WORDS FIRST, DESIGN SECOND

Placeholder text hides problems. Write the real words first and the design gets easier.

A HEADLINE THAT WORKS

Say what they get, who it's for, and what pain it removes. Example: **"Fresh sourdough delivered to Gurgaon offices before 9 am."** It's clear in three seconds, and that's all the time you get.

BUTTONS SAY WHAT HAPPENS

"Book a free call" beats "Submit". "See the menu" beats "Learn more". Tell people exactly what will happen when they click.

THE STORY ORDER

Most landing pages that convert follow the same order. Use it as a starting point:



Hero

The promise + main button

Problem

Show you understand their pain

How it works

3 simple steps

Proof

Reviews, logos, numbers, photos

Offer

What they get and the price

FAQ

Answer the doubts that stop them

Final call to action

Repeat the main button

Take-away · the landing page story template. Fill each block with real words before you design anything.



PART 3

MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL

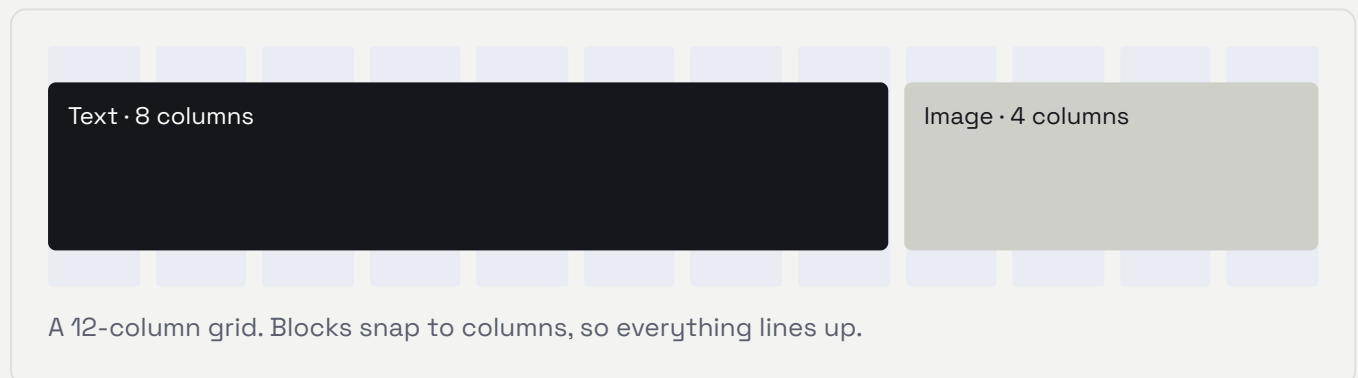
06

LAYOUTS THAT FEEL EFFORTLESS

Sites look “premium” mostly because of alignment and space, not decoration.

USE A GRID

Split the page into 12 equal columns on desktop and 4 on mobile. Every block lines up with the columns. Your eye can’t see the grid, but it can feel the order.



PICK A SPACING SCALE AND STICK TO IT

Only use these gaps: 4, 8, 16, 24, 32, 48, 64, 96 px. Small gaps inside a group, big gaps between sections. When everything uses the same steps, the page feels calm.

ONE HERO PER SECTION

In each section, one thing should be clearly the biggest. Squint at your screen: if nothing stands out, make one thing bigger and everything else quieter.

TAKE-AWAY · SPACING CHEAT SHEET

4 px		icon to its label
8 px		inside buttons and tags
16 px		between items in a card
24 px		between cards
32 px		heading to its content
48 px		between groups
64 px		between sections (mobile)
96 px		between sections (desktop)

07

FONTS THAT MAKE A SITE LOOK EXPENSIVE

Type is most of what people see on a website. Get it right and the rest is easy.

- **Two fonts, maximum.** One with personality for headings, one easy to read for everything else.
- **Body text 16 to 18 px.** Smaller than that looks cheap and is hard to read on phones.
- **Grow sizes in steps.** Multiply by about 1.25 each time: 16, 20, 25, 31, 39, 49.
- **Line height:** about 1.5 for paragraphs, 1.0 to 1.1 for big headings.
- **Line length:** 60 to 75 characters. Longer lines tire the eye.

49 39 31 25 20 16

A 1.25 type scale. Each size is a clear step up from the last.



■ TAKE-AWAY · 10 FREE FONT PAIRS (GOOGLE FONTS)

HEADINGS	BODY	FEELS
Bebas Neue	Space Grotesk	Bold, modern (this book)
Instrument Serif	Manrope	Calm luxury
DM Serif Display	DM Sans	Premium, clean
Playfair Display	Source Sans 3	Elegant, editorial
Syne	Inter	Creative studio
Fraunces	Manrope	Warm, friendly
Archivo Black	Archivo	Strong, sporty
Cormorant Garamond	Montserrat	Fashion, weddings
Sora	Sora	Tech and SaaS
Poppins	Lora	Friendly blog

08

COLOUR WITHOUT THE GUESSWORK

You don't need colour theory. You need one simple rule and some restraint.

THE 60-30-10 RULE

60% base

30% secondary

10%

60% background, 30% secondary (text, cards, sections), 10% accent (buttons and links only).

- **One accent colour, used only for things people can click.** Then visitors always know where to go.
- **Avoid pure black text.** A very dark grey looks softer and more expensive.
- **Check contrast.** Text must be easy to read. Paste your colours into WebAIM's free contrast checker and aim for at least 4.5:1.
- **Start from something real:** the logo, a product photo, or the place itself. Pick colours from it.

■ TAKE-AWAY · 5 READY PALETTES

Midnight & Lime

#0E0F12

#1C1F26

#F2F2EE

#C8FF57

Sage & Clay

#EEF1EA

#B6C3B0

#10201F

#E8732A

Ocean Trust

#F4F8FB

#D6E4F0

#0B2545

#1F6FEB

Luxe Sand

#F7F3EC

#E4D8C4

#2A2622

#9C6B30

Candy Pop

#FFF7FB

#FFD6E8

#2B1030

#FF3D7F

Order in each strip: base, secondary, text, accent.

09

IMAGES, VIDEO AND MOTION THAT STOP THE SCROLL

Visitors decide in about three seconds whether to stay. The top of the page does most of that work.

- **One strong visual beats five weak ones.** Pick the single image that says the most.
- **Keep one style.** Same lighting, same colour mood, same kind of shot across the whole site.
- **Where to get visuals:** Unsplash and Pexels for free photos; Midjourney for images and Google Flow for short videos made with AI.
- **Motion should guide, not decorate.** Animate the one thing you want people to notice. Subtle beats flashy.
- **Keep it fast.** Save images as WebP under about 300 KB. Keep videos short and muted.

■ TAKE-AWAY · HERO IDEA BANK

Fly-in-front	A bird or object moves in front of the giant headline
Scroll-scrubbed video	The video plays forward as the visitor scrolls
Hover reveal	A second image appears under the cursor, like a brush
Layered landscape	Mountains, clouds and text move at different speeds
Product spin	The product turns as you scroll down
Before / after slider	Drag to compare. Great for renovation, beauty and editing.
Video in the letters	Footage plays inside a big headline
Spotlight cursor	A soft light follows the mouse over a dark page

Ready-made prompts for many of these are free at thinkingods.com/prompts.



PART 4

BUILD AND LAUNCH

10

MY PROCESS, START TO FINISH

Here's the whole workflow on one page, with rough timing for a three-week project.

01

Discover

Kickoff call + questionnaire ·
day 1–2

02

Research

Visitor, goal, competitors ·
day 2–3

03

Copy & sitemap

Real words, page list · day 3–
5

04

Wireframes

Grey boxes, no colour yet ·
day 5–6

05

Key page design

Homepage first · day 7–9

06

Feedback round 1

One list, one decision-maker ·
day 10

07

Other pages

Reuse the homepage's styles
· day 11–13

08

Build

No-code or AI builder · day
14–17

09

Test

Phones, forms, speed · day
18–19

10

Launch & hand-off

Go live, walkthrough video ·
day 20–21

Why the homepage first? Once the client approves it, the fonts, colours and spacing are agreed. Every other page gets faster to design, and you won't have to redo everything later.

11

BUILDING WITHOUT WRITING CODE

Choose the tool based on one question: who will edit the site after launch?

TAKE-AWAY · TOOL COMPARISON

TOOL	BEST FOR	LEARNING CURVE	CLIENT CAN EDIT?
Framer	Animated marketing sites, portfolios	Easy for designers	Yes, simple text and images
Webflow	Sites with blogs, many pages, a CMS	Medium	Yes, through the Editor
WordPress + Elementor	Clients who want cheap hosting and full control	Medium	Yes, very familiar to clients
Shopify	Selling products online	Easy	Yes, built for owners
AI builders (Claude and others)	Fast one-page sites and prototypes from a prompt	Easy to start	Hard without you

A good default: Framer for design-led one-to-ten-page sites, Shopify for anything that sells products, Webflow when there's lots of content.

12

DESIGNING WITH AI PROMPTS

AI builds exactly what you describe. A vague prompt gets a generic site; a precise prompt gets something that looks designed.

- **Describe one big idea.** "A bird flies in and lands in front of the headline" beats "a modern hero section".
- **Give real values.** Exact fonts, colour codes, sizes and timings. AI guesses badly and follows well.
- **Go section by section.** Describe the page from top to bottom, the way a visitor scrolls it.
- **Fix one thing at a time.** "Make the headline 20% smaller" works better than "improve the design".
- **Always check it yourself.** Look at it on a real phone, check the text is readable, and check it loads fast.

■ TAKE-AWAY · FILL-IN PROMPT TEMPLATE

Build a single-page website for **[business]**, who helps **[visitor]** to **[main goal]**.

Big idea: [the one visual moment in the hero]

Sections, in order: [hero, problem, how it works, proof, offer, FAQ, final CTA]

Fonts: [heading font] for headings, [body font] for text, body at 17 px

Colours: background [#...], text [#...], accent [#...] for buttons only

Motion: [what moves, when, how fast]

Mobile: stack everything in one column, no sideways scrolling

Avoid: stock gradients, emoji, more than two fonts

13

LAUNCH DAY CHECKLIST

Most "broken website" moments come from skipping one of these.

■ TAKE-AWAY · LAUNCH CHECKLIST

- ☐ Checked on a real phone, not just the browser preview
- ☐ Every link and button goes somewhere
- ☐ Forms tested: you submitted one and received it
- ☐ Speed checked on PageSpeed Insights (aim for 80+ on mobile)
- ☐ Images compressed (WebP, under about 300 KB each)
- ☐ Every page has a title and a short description for Google
- ☐ Favicon and social share image are set
- ☐ Analytics installed and counting form submissions
- ☐ Spelling and phone numbers checked twice
- ☐ Privacy page added if you collect any details
- ☐ Domain connected and the padlock (https) shows

THE HAND-OFF THAT EARNS THE NEXT PROJECT

- Send all logins in one document.
- Record a 5-minute video showing how to edit text and images.
- Say clearly what support is included, and for how long.
- Two weeks later, check in. That's when referrals and repeat work happen.



THAT'S THE PLAYBOOK

NOW GO BUILD SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

Free prompts for the hero effects in this book: thinkingods.com/prompts

Want Thinking Gods to design your website? Start a conversation at thinkingods.com

Follow the builds on Instagram: @thinkingods

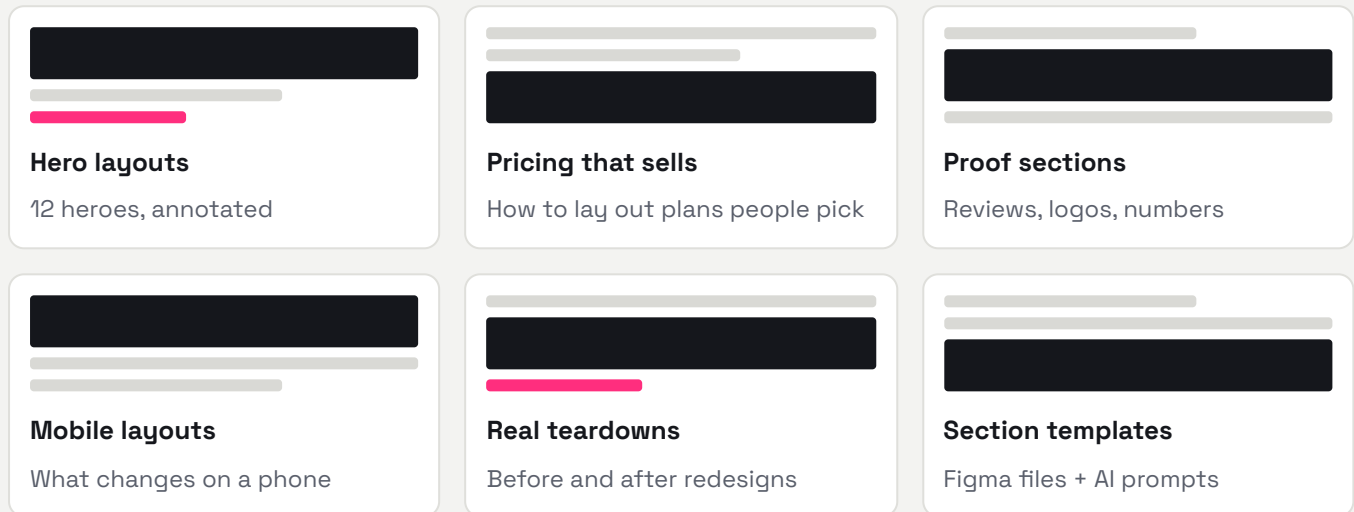
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COMING NEXT · V2

THE LAYOUT LIBRARY

v1 gave you the rules. v2 shows you the layouts: real website sections, with images, taken apart piece by piece so you can see exactly why they work.



First chapter of v2: why the best hero sections break the grid on purpose, and how to do it without the page looking messy.

GET V2 THE DAY IT DROPS

Comment this word on our latest Instagram reel [@thinkingods](#) and we'll DM it to you first:

LAYOUT

Tell us what to put in it: reply to the email this ebook came with and name the one section you find hardest to design.