anchor & alpine

Website Accessibility

Branding a City Center

Component-Based Design

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Ahoy there,

It's been two years since the launch of our "annual" magazine. That fairly well sums up post-pandemic business. Even the data scientists are saying that prediction is harder than ever right now. It feels like a new array of political and/or environmental concerns hits us every month or two. As we watch companies roll back benefits[1] and prepare for a possible recession, we are doubling down on what works: A safe workplace, meaningful work, camaraderie, and efficiency.

In the last year, I'm pleased to say we've grown as a company—from six to ten—and we've grown as a team. We've refined our processes—from our Web Project Prep guide we send to clients to kick off projects, to our Project Success Documents that serve as the source of truth and information for large projects, to our adoption of Jira Service Manager so clients can better manage and view their project queue with us. We are process-driven, but not process-constrained.
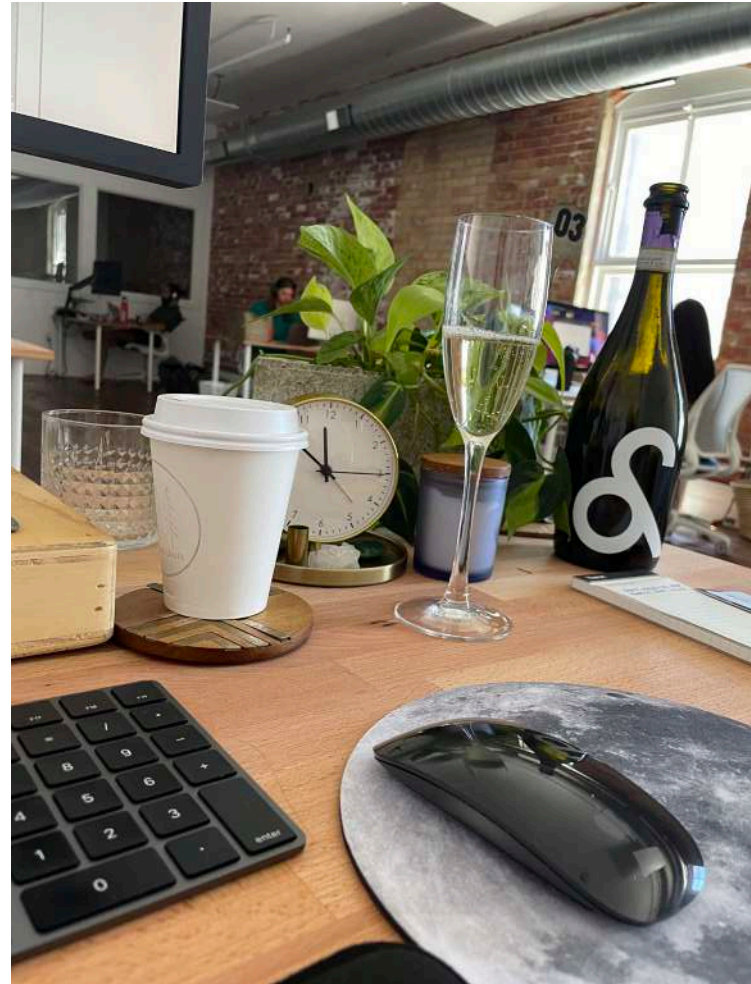
Our team leveled up our skills, both together and individually (see page 4), and now offer motion design, craft messaging, and full content strategy through our partner Content Maven (page 22).

My desk before we left our downtown office.

We're always running internal user experience (UX) tests on things, and earlier this year our crew voted to eliminate our office and work from home. We continue to build camaraderie in a pretty innovative way, and if it all works out I'll share it in the 2023/2024 magazine.

During our first two years in business, Anchor & Alpine has seen three employees purchase their first homes, one home paid off, two dream cars purchased—a 2001 Chevy Astro Van and a 2005 Subaru Baja—and in the new year we welcome the first Anchor & Alpine baby. These milestones are a clue that we are onto something here.

Thank you for being part of that journey!

Amber

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1   Dill, Kathryn, and Angela Yang. *"Companies Are Cutting Back on Maternity and Paternity Leave." WSJ. Last modified August 22, 2022.*

The Whole is More than the Sum of its Parts

Each time we create a proposal or send out our portfolio, we tailor the experience to each client and project. We focus on learning concepts and tools so we can be more efficient, more productive, and create better solutions for our clients. Here are just a few of our newer skills:

ENGLISH **Hello, Anchor & Alpine**

SPANISH **Hola, Ancla y Alpina**

GERMAN **Hallo, Anker und Alpin**

FRENCH **Bonjour, Ancre et Alpine**

SWEDISH **Hallå, Anchor och Alpine**

PORTUGUESE **Olá, Âncora e Alpino**

FINNISH **Hei, Ankkuri ja Alppi**

ITALIAN **Ciao, Ancora e Alpino**
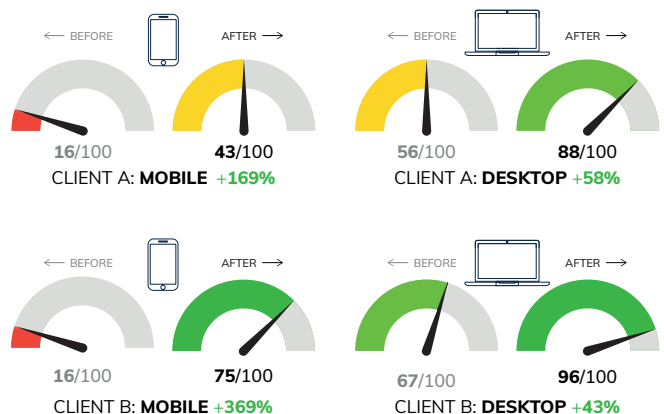
Multilingual Websites

Multilingual websites aren't new to us. We've been supporting Boart Longyear's website for more than a decade now, but last year we helped Recast Software add internationalization (the ability to make a website work in various languages) and localization (translation into different languages). We again worked with Inlingua—a local company here in Salt Lake City—to deploy seven different translators at the same time.

With most of our international websites, we deploy Google Translations across the site, and then install WordPress plugins that allow editors to hand-edit important pages.

Site speed

Seems like we've been battling site speed from different angles for more than 20 years now. In the beginning, when we only had Netscape and Internet Explorer on dial-up, we really had to focus on page size. Images and gifs had to be tiny, we only had a handful of typefaces that would work, and every line of code counted. Fast forward to 2022 with modern browsers like Chrome, ubiquitous wifi, and more computing power on our mobile phones than the Apollo 11 had when it landed on the moon. The Google search algorithm is cracking down on sites that take too long to load, so once again site speed is at the top of everyone's minds.

This past year, Anchor & Alpine has improved our site speed testing, upgraded our remediation suite of tools, and have garnered some massive speed gains for clients.

← BEFORE · AFTER →

16/100 · 43/100
CLIENT A: **MOBILE** +169%

← BEFORE · AFTER →

56/100 · 88/100
CLIENT A: **DESKTOP** +58%

← BEFORE · AFTER →

16/100 · 75/100
CLIENT B: **MOBILE** +369%

← BEFORE · AFTER →

67/100 · 96/100
CLIENT B: **DESKTOP** +43%

Motion Design

Motion design is a great way to explain a concept, or add some whimsy to a micro interaction. We have two motion design leads here: one creates bespoke illustrations and animations for clients, while the other makes websites come alive and breathe.

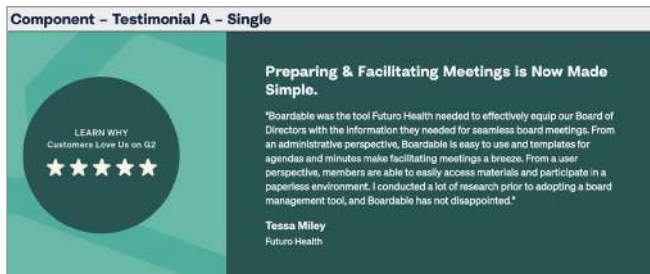**See the graphics in motion!** Scan the QR code with your mobile phone.

Component Based Design

One of the reasons we love WordPress is because of the ability it gives clients to edit their websites, and to have several people editing simultaneously. We've created page templates for years, but have recently shifted to all component-based design.

Components are the building blocks of a website, and work really well with Gutenberg, the native block editor in WordPress. Each component has all of the spacing, margins, and animation built into the component level, so when they stack together you can make any page you can dream up.

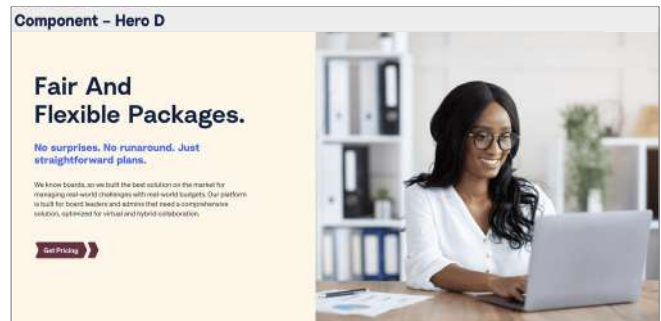*This website has nearly 60 components. Sometimes components are made for different variants, like in this case with the Testimonials from G2.*

The components in this column show some of the range. Each component has spacing and animation built in so they all work well together.

Resource Center + Smart Webinar Handling

Most clients are familiar with our Resource Center product. It's like a blog on steroids that allows editors to tag content in multiple dimensions—by type, by category, by role, by collection, and the list goes on.

We've recently launched Smart Webinar & Event Handling as a type option. Webinars gained popularity during the pandemic, and even though we're back to in-person events, webinars are here to stay.

When an editor sets up a webinar they include the date, location (in-person or remote), and have an optional field for adding in the post-webinar video. From there our Smart Webinar handling will sort and display all webinars, listing upcoming webinars at the top of the page and past webinars (with the post-webinar video) shown in a library at the bottom of the page. If a webinar has passed and there is no video added, it automatically hides from the page.

1

WORDPRESS EDITORS ENTER DATE, TIME, LOCATION, AND THE POST-EVENT VIDEO TO THE WEBINAR AND EVENTS SECTION OF THE RESOURCE CENTER.

2

NEXT EVENT IS AUTOMATICALLY HIGHLIGHTS ON THE PAGE

3

UPCOMING EVENTS ARE LISTED NEXT

4

PAST EVENTS ARE LISTED AT THE BOTTOM
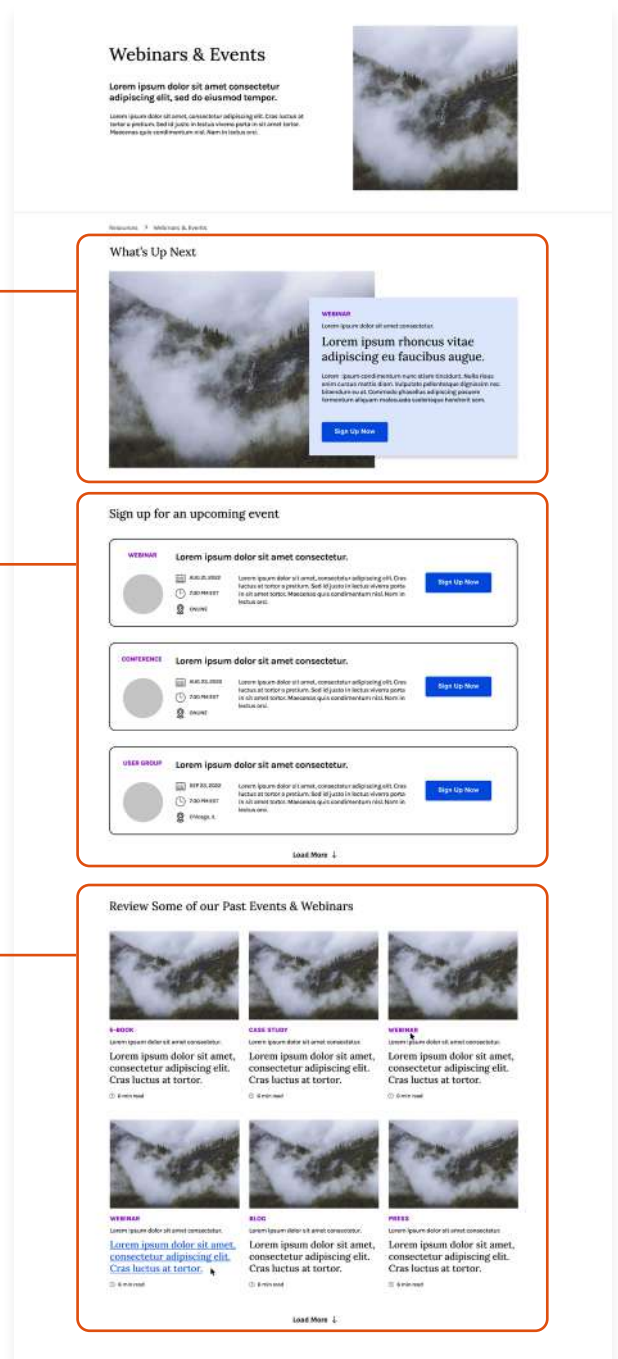
Katie Hoards all the Awards

*We are pleased to celebrate that our designer, **Katie Griffin**, swept up several AIGA awards for her student work. The AIGA is the local chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, the professional organization for working graphic designers. Katie racked up an astonishing five awards, including the coveted Copper Ingot that is awarded to the 10 best pieces of design in Utah.*

Left, Amber, center Katie, right, Kristin Vance, creative facilitator.

Amber: Congratulations on your phenomenal win! That's a lot of awards, and an ingot too!

Katie: Thank you so much!! It was such an exciting time, I'm certainly still riding that high! I'm very thankful for my professors at Utah State University that helped me design such amazing pieces, and for your help with applying to the 100 Show. I'm excited to win more awards for Anchor & Alpine!

A: How and when did you know your work was really good? Did you get an internal feeling when you worked on it?

K: Hah this is such a hard question to answer! I think it took me some time to realize. Over time small events emboldened me and made me feel more confident in myself and my work. Events like having a project that I've worked hard on be well received by my professors, having my concept be voted on for our graduating class's design show, getting my dream job soon after graduating, and winning awards of course! I do want to mention how lucky I

was to have had an amazing group of peers in my design program. Being surrounded by so many high-caliber designers is a wonderful environment to be in, and their influence definitely built me up! Same goes for Anchor & Alpine, the amazing designers and developers I work with are so inspiring, it's exciting to see how I have continued to grow as a designer at Anchor & Alpine.

A: What has been the most surprising thing about going from school to working in an agency?

K: I think I've been most surprised with how much fun it is to work with our clients! As a student, and someone who isn't the most socially adept person, navigating professional relationships as designer and client overwhelmed me. I wasn't sure how I was going to do it! But since working at Anchor & Alpine it's been such a joy to work with our clients and get amazing work done!

A: What's your favorite project you've worked on at Anchor & Alpine?

K: Oh boy, there have been so many! If I am to choose one, I would say it is the TuscArts website. It was so fun coming right out of college and being tasked with
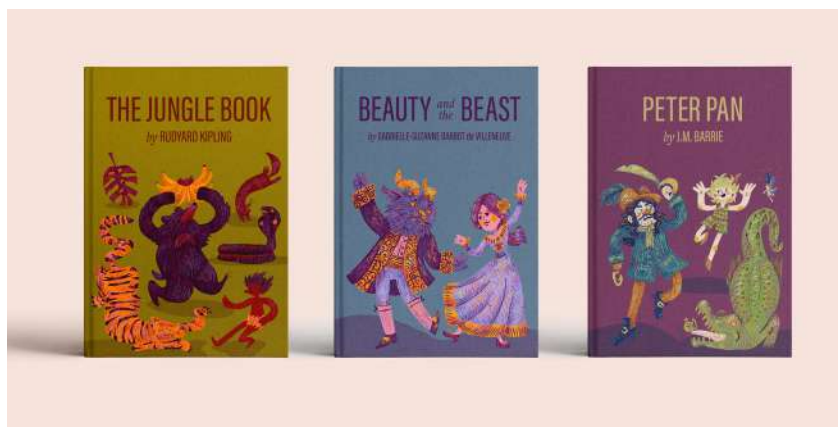
Left to right: Amber, Steve, Caroline, Abigail

designing an arts council website! I certainly learned so much and I'm very proud of it.

A: What advice would you give design school graduates while they are looking for a job?

K: For me the biggest thing was to not be afraid to get my work out there! AIGA, specifically the portfolio review, was such an invaluable opportunity for me and my career. I really lucked out to have met with

you during my review, and to have you guys snatch me up weeks after graduation! But I think other things that helped me was having a solid portfolio website and applying to any and all jobs that could be a fit! I was lucky to have a few other job offers as well, but Anchor & Alpine was such a dream job so you guys were the clear winner!

Thanks Katie. We had a great time celebrating your wins and visiting the gallery opening.

⚓
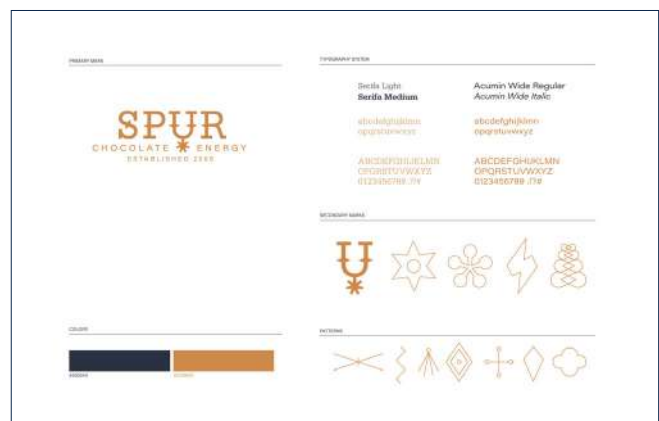
To Wear What You Want is What's Truly Wise

Our former client, Procare Software, had a beloved penguin mascot first introduced in, and used continuously since 1992. This penguin, named Tucker, had been used for the childcare company as an unofficial mascot in many applications. Their designers would add seasonal accoutrements to him, and he'd greet people as they entered the product software.

When Procare rebranded in 2020, the penguin was removed from the brand, as the company evolved to exhibit colorful circles and a range of gradients.

Then one day, their CMO was talking with us about all of the penguin feedback they were taking from customer service, so Amber said, "let's just draw a penguin, how hard could it be? It's just an olive with a beak, right?"

We took the original penguin illustration, updated him to be cuter and friendlier, and created a system to be able to add him to illustrations quickly.

Left: Original Tucker Illustration, 1992; Right: Tucker Updated, 2020.

And just like that, Tucker the penguin was reintroduced to the brand to the celebration of employees—many of whom have been with the company for decades—and the customers, who had come to love the personality that the penguin brought to Procare's products.

Integrating the Penguin

While we weren't involved with the decision to remove Tucker, we were already working through new illustration styles for the website. We'd chosen the Family Values pack from Blush Design. It was a great solution, affording us diversity in characters and age ranges, with lots of kids included in the illustration system.

And at the time—2020—it was also important that our animation system included masks. With the click of a button, we could have every illustration wearing a mask or not. This supported our plan to do a mask takeover of the site, and then be able to remove the masks without recreating every illustration.

The Story

After we had illustrated Tucker in various arrangements to help bring him back into the website and branding system, the client asked, "can you write a children's book about Tucker?"

Heck yes we can.

So we pitched our story boards: Tucker helping with contactless check-in, Tucker helping child care centers to be state and federal-compliant, Tucker showing how easy it is to run payroll and support your staff, etc.

We pitched. There were crickets.

Then the client said, "We want, like a *real* children's book. One with a story and a message, and it should rhyme and be fun!"

Oh. That sounds like a lot more fun. It also sounds harder, but in the most fun, creative way. Okay, give us a minute to regroup.

Again, we're still in 2020, the pandemic is raging and

no one is going outside. If you are looking for inspiration, you'd best hope your neighbors and your family provide that to you, because we weren't seeing anyone else at that time. Our client gave us a list of children's books to buy and read. We had some hilarious adult story hours as we read books to each other over Zoom and shared the best illustrations.

And then, just like every day, the mail carrier came. And just like every other day, our next door neighbors' children, three little kids, came running out to see him in their costumes. Every day was something different, from princess costumes to superhero costumes, to matching clothes for all three of them. It was an adorable ray of sunshine amidst our days. The kids would meet the mail carrier and help him deliver all the mail to the circle.

"What if we dress up Tucker?" I said to Joey one day. We started drawing tank tops and t-shirts, button down shirts and flip flops. We added hats and sunglasses. We added a grass skirt. Every time we laughed, we thought we might be on to something. Around this time I remembered my pre-quarantine friends and their little boy who love to dress up in pink sparkles and rainbows.

And with that, we had the concept: Tucker is at

day care as a helper, as we always intended when adding him back to the brand—and now we had a narrative: Tucker loves to get all dressed up for work. He wears some wild outfits, and most people like it, but we all know that one person who has to pick on other people. We named our antagonist Lester and like that, we had a story on our hands.

Teamwork & Collaboration

This will remain a favorite project of all time—it was just plain fun, but it also allowed us to stretch our creativity and use some tools we don't normally use as web and UX people. It's also so much fun when you've worked with a client for a few years and you can do something different that still supports your overall mission and goals together.

Everyone on the team contributed a line, joke or an illustration idea. One night we were trying to rework the way that Lester was taunting Tucker. We needed a word that conveyed that his clothes were "odd", but once you start rhyming, you have to find a word that has the meaning and the cadence to fit the narrative. Steve was in the backyard cutting down bushes and I hear him yell, "BIZARRE!?! What about bizarre?" Bingo. That's what we needed.

Joey wrote the pure-poetry line, "To wear what you want is what's truly wise". We finished the book with Michelle's line, "Let's all celebrate how being different can be wonderful and chic."

Penguin Research

We are big on research informing our decisions. We have a UX researcher on staff that runs down all sorts of data for us. Learning all about penguins was no different.

We had usage rules for Tucker — he wasn't allowed to speak. We didn't want a Clippy situation and penguins don't have a very nice voice. His hair always points to the right. However, once he became a character with a house and an office and a car, we got to augment his personality. He drives a Smart car,

he likes to listen to classic techno, he has a full and vibrant life, and loves working with kids.

We learned all about penguins. Emperor penguins are BIG! Standing almost 4 feet tall.

Penguins can get covid. Penguins just eat fish. We did add an orange and a canned drink to the image of his cafeteria meal, but penguins shouldn't really eat oranges (or energy drinks, probably). One person on the client team suggested that someone seated next to him in the illustration is pinching her nose.

To keep Tucker moving along we created a character sheet using components in Sketch (and later migrated it to Figma). With a click of a button you can change Tucker's facial expression, flipper position, and add some other accoutrements.

Penguin Size

What is the average heigh of an Emporer Penguin and an Adult Human?

This Antarctic explorer is 6' tall.

Emperor Penguins are big! About 4' tall.

Tucker is about 3' tall. He's about the same height as the kids.

Anatomy of a Tucker

Hair tuft facing right

Expressive eyes

Procare-pink cheeks & gradient yellow beak

Flippers

Gradient feet

Tucker Faces

Tucker uses stage directions - so "left" is as you look at him, not his left.

Look Left   Look Straight   Look Right   Happy Eyes

Tucker History & Cannon

Tucker has been part of the Procare logo since 1993. Before he was a named character he was one of the two babies following a mother penguin with the tagline "Professional Solutions... Follow the Leader."

At that time we were Professional Solutions selling Procare Software.

The next version of Tucker made his appearance in 2008 with the beginning roll out of v10 which was released in the fall of 2009 on our Procare home page.

Tucker appears as the embodiment of Procare to help teachers, staff and kids. **Tucker does not speak.**

Tucker Bodies

Standing   Flippers Up   Left Flipper Up   Flippers Left   Right Flipper Up   Sitting

Tucker Accessories

Tucker + Suitcase   Tucker + Headset   Tucker + Mask

Our team reading the Tucker book to gentoo penguins at the Loveland Aquarium.

We also took the whole team to meet real penguins and share our book with them. We learned even more about penguins—like the fact that they are heavy, dense little dudes. A gentoo penguin stands 30 inches tall and weighs about 30 pounds!

Branding a City Center

Millcreek Common is the central gathering spot and new city center for the residents of Millcreek and the surrounding area. We brought together historical influences with fresh clean lines to create the logo. The city is named after the mill work that was done when the Utah Mormon Pioneers settled the Salt Lake Valley.

We used the mill stone as our central element, typography that evokes old hand-painted signs we found when we poured through the Utah State Historical Archives, and modern type to pull everything together. We created an in-depth branding guide that includes tone of voice and logo alternates.

Research

We deployed the entire crew, and a few friends to photograph branding and signage at other public areas around town. We compiled the photos into a sortable catalog so we could review all the examples of elements for one installation, or compare similar signs across all installations.

Typography

We had a strong graphic with the millstone, but wanted ot make sure the logo was more than just the round element. We stayed true to the history of Millcreek and chose two typefaces—a sign painter font and a cursive font that would evoke the rich history of neon work in Millcreek and the surrounding areas.

One of the interesting things about looking at historical typography is that it is heavily influenced by the way in which you make the mark. Cuneiform writing looks like the stylus and clay tables used to produce the letters. Greek-style serif lettering fits a chisel to stone.

Salt Lake & Jordan Mill, 1909. © 2002 Utah State Historical Society. All Rights Reserved.

Since we knew there would be a lot of applications of the logo we opted for typefaces that would be hardworking in the conditions which they were going to be used for — painted, stamped, made of neon.

READ MORE AT
AnchorAlpine.com/MillcreekCommon

Neon in Utah

We have a lot of neon signs in Utah, thanks in part to a man named Thomas Young who, in the 1920s studied neon sign making in Paris before returning to Utah. He was the right person at the right time to head out to a little-known railroad stop in the desert in 1938 where, just a year prior, gambling had become legal. By the end of WWII Las Vegas was booming and the Young Electric Sign Company, now called YESCO, was doing one hell of a business.

Throughout Salt Lake City, Provo and Ogden we have some amazing neon signage, and Millcreek is no different. From the Villa Theater to the Ritz Classic bowling pin and even the signs on Dee's, the history of neon in Utah is fascinating.

YESCO owns and operates the famous Welcome to Las Vegas sign as well as two giant cowboy signs, Vegas Vic and Wendover Will.

Villa Theater, 1949. © 2009 Utah State Historical Society. All Rights Reserved. Vegas Vic 2013. Photo by EQRoy licensed via Shutterstock.

❖ Boardable

We take on one large project per year, and our 2021-2022 project was to help Boardable revamp their website and deploy their new branding. This project, like so much of the last few years, was hit left, right, and center with personal changes and shifts in priority. We weathered the storms and all became better sailors as a result.

This website is the first to use our component-based system design, and we are thrilled with how it turned out. We created a few custom animations to explain processes, coded website loading animations that make the site feel alive, and created custom illustrations of devices that automatically load scrollable and zoomable screenshots of the product.

We look forward to a long and productive relationship with Boardable and to continue to help their mission to support nonprofit boards. Shout out to InnovateMap in Indianapolis for the great branding work. ⚓
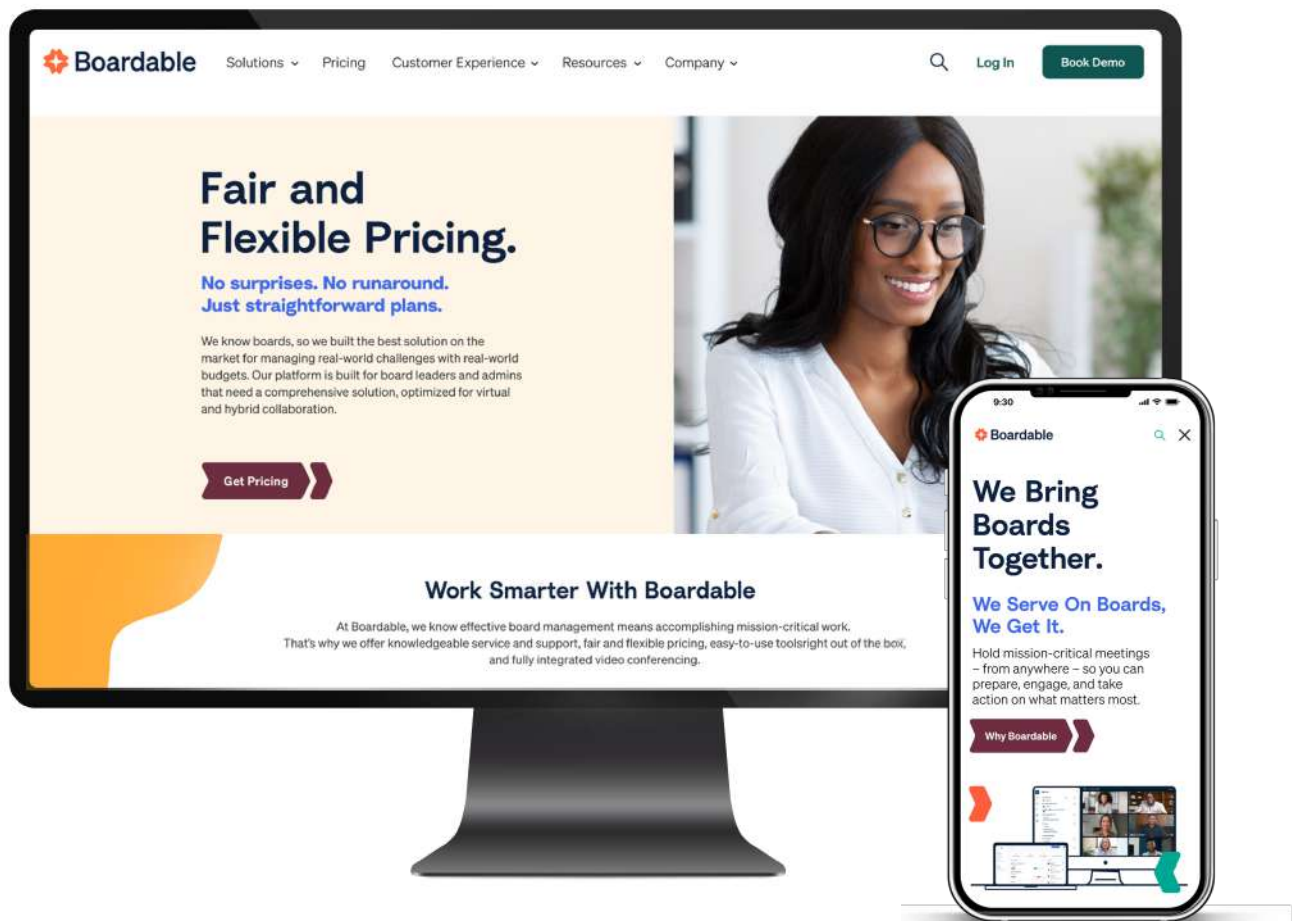
What are the benefits of a component design system?

A component design system is ideal for designers, developers, and most importantly, clients. By targeting the function of every section used on a website, we create a library of components that can be reused, repurposed and effortlessly mixed and matched with other elements. This makes for a more cohesive site that our clients can add to after the project is complete, without needing to design new elements.

A huge resource for Anchor & Alpine's first component library was *Atomic Design;* written by Brad Frost, about his design system of the same name. A student of chemistry, Frost used the basis of the atom to develop the theory. In chemistry, several atoms combine to form a single molecule, which can then be combined into a series of progressively larger organisms and molecules.

By defining our components by where they would live in a matrix, as seen below, we were able to avoid redundant design pieces, as well as make sure that we didn't overlook critical elements.

Supplemental information on *Atomic Design* sourced from the article "5 UI Components in Atomic Design" by UXPin.

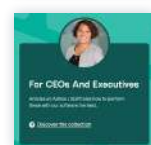| Atoms	Molecules	Organisms	Templates	Pages

Header 1

Header 2

Header 3

Body copy
Lorem ipsum doloramet, consectetur adipiscin, sed do eiusmod tempo.

Get Pricing

Learn More

Get to Know Us
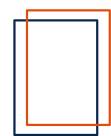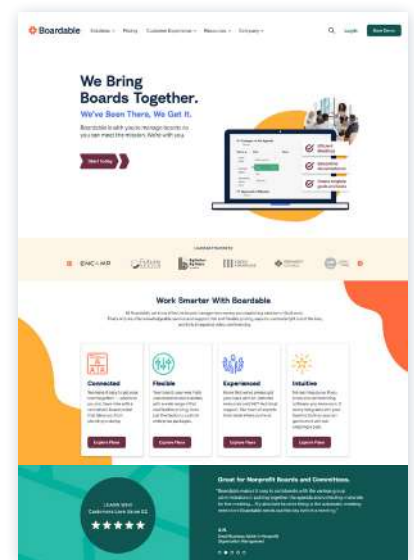
The Legal & Ethical Importance of
Website Accessibility

15% of the global population—over 1 billion people—have a disability. Focusing on accessibility not only welcomes all users to your website or product, but it's also good for SEO and legal reasons.

We are big on accessibility here at Anchor & Alpine. When we build better, we welcome more people, and when we keep the abilities of all users in mind, we put more good into the world. We know that websites and product UIs that are built according to accessibility requirements perform better in search engine rankings, attract more visitors, last longer, and facilitate a better user experience. With more than 15% of the

> ## *As designers we are in the position where we can have a wider and more positive impact on people's lives.*
>
> — Furquan Ahmad

global population living with a disability—more than 1 billion people— It's crucial to ensure that everyone has an equitable and pleasing experience online.

There are plenty of commercial, legal, and SEO incentives for complying with accessibility standards. Failing to make a site accessible will result in a smaller audience and potentially a huge loss of business. During a time when a large portion of people work remotely, and rely more heavily on virtual means to accomplish their daily tasks, it is more important than ever before to make all websites accessible for everyone. Not to mention the fact that in 2016, the UN passed a resolution declaring access to the internet "a basic human right". Looking beyond the ethical and financial incentives, there are also important legal motivations for making every website accessible.

"A lot of people dismiss accessibility requirements as "optional" or "extra". They're failing to see the big picture. The fact is, everyone falls into two categories:

ABOUT ADA & WCAG

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a civil rights law passed in 1990 that applies to non-profits, businesses, and state and local governments. A violation of the ADA could lead to civil lawsuits and fines ranging from $75,000 to $150,000.

In legal settings, the ADA refers to the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** which is a set of specific accessibility standards for websites in order to determine if a website is accessible or not compiled by the World Wide Web Consortium.

WCAG consists of specific, actionable accessibility guidelines which ensure web content is accessible. WCAG is not formally mandated by law for private businesses and non-compliance will not lead to civil lawsuits or fines; however, WCAG guidelines are frequently used in legal environments to prove accessibility. Federal agencies and contractors, however, are legally required to comply with WCAG 2.0.

WCAG is divided into three levels of conformance, WCAG Level A, AA, and AAA[1].

A **A: Essential**, is the bare-minimum level of conformance.

AA **AA: Ideal Support,** is the mid-level and target level of conformance and is often cited in legal proceedings.

AAA **AAA: Specialized Support,** is the maximum level of conformance and is typically used for websites and web apps that serve a specialized audience.

1   "Checklist." The A11Y Project. Accessed May 17, 2022. https://www.a11yproject.com/checklist/

those who will at some point in their lives need some kind of physical accommodation for their abilities, and those who are dead."[1]

Accessibility and Legality

Legally, failing to make a website accessible can have some expensive consequences. If you receive an ADA demand letter, in the best-case scenario, you will spend $25,000 for legal fees as well as audit and remediation costs. It is significantly more costly to address accessibility after you receive an ADA demand letter, therefore it's important to comply with accessibility standards as early as possible.

The majority of accessibility lawsuits are filed by visually impaired individuals who are unable to use their screen-reading software on a website. For website accessibility, color and contrast are extremely important for users with visual disabilities to be able to access a page.

The most common types of WCAG failures were:

low contrast text (86.4%)

missing alternative texts for images (60.6%)

missing form input labels (54.4%)

empty links (51.3%)

missing document language (28.9%)

and empty buttons (26.9%)

2,352 web accessibility lawsuits were filed in 2021 (a 14.3% increase from 2020). Interestingly, 20% of all cases were filed by only six plaintiffs, and 50% of all cases were filed by only six law firms. U.S. businesses are estimated to have spent 6.625 billion dollars in legal costs related to accessibility in 2020 alone.

(continued)

1   AssistiveTouch on my Apple Watch makes me feel like I'm living in the future by Gray Miller | Apr, 2022 | UX Collective

The real kicker—**The National Federation of the Blind, America's most powerful civil rights and advocacy group for the visually impaired banned AccesiBe, one of the accessibility overlay companies, from their national convention.** The board of the group says the company, "currently engages in behavior that is harmful to the advancement of blind people in society."[2,3] Making your website adaptable and readable for screen readers immediately makes your site more accessible to millions of people with a diverse range of disabilities which will benefit your business and conversion rate.

217 million people globally are vision impaired and 826 million people globally live with near-vision impairment. In the U.S., the number of visually impaired people is expected to triple from 36 million to 115 million by 2050. A good way to improve your website's accessibility, in order to avoid legal problems, is with screen reader accessibility.

Avoid taking shortcuts with widgets and overlays, as 12.75% of website accessibility lawsuits were filed against sites using widgets and overlays, proving that only utilizing these two is not sufficient to make a site accessible.

Accessibility and SEO

SEO is another financial incentive to prioritize accessibility on every website. There is no concrete accessibility ranking factor, but there has been a steady increase in the intersection between SEO ranking factors and accessibility standards in the past decade. This trend leads SEO experts to predict that accessibility metrics will become more important for the search algorithm in the future. An accessible website with accessible components will make a website easier for robots and search engines to read and interpret the site which will, in turn, positively affect SEO.

Some accessible components which help search engine rankings are meta titles and descriptions, link anchor text, alt text, video transcriptions, consistent page organization, and semantic HTML.

Descriptive link anchor text, such as "Download the Signup Guide Here" rather than "Click Here" is a good strategy to improve accessibility and SEO on your website.

Beyond the obvious ethical reasons for giving 1 billion people globally the basic right of accessing the internet like everyone else, there are various other unexpected benefits for making your website more accessible: Avoiding lawsuits, reaching a wider audience, building a positive PR, improving SEO ranking, increasing usability, writing cleaner code, improving branding, and avoiding long term maintenance costs are among the most common incentives for accessibility, which will benefit your website and will bring an excellent return on your investment.

Accessibility is not a passing fad, and will likely become more important in the future. Allocating resources to audit your site against WCAG standards, address assistive technology barriers first, and hire a third party to monitor the accessibility of your site is a wise move for the future, as accessibility is becoming increasingly more important every year.

Special thanks to our UX Researcher, Hannah Brewster, for her work on this article. For Sources and more information please visit anchoralpine.com/accessibility

READ MORE AT
AnchorAlpine.com/Accessibility

2   Alexiou, Gus. "Largest U.S. Blind Advocacy Group Bans Web Accessibility Overlay Giant AccessiBe From Its National Convention." Forbes. Accessed May 17, 2022. https://www.forbes.com/sites/gusalexiou/2021/06/26/largest-us-blind-advocacy-group-bans-web-accessibility-overlay-giant-accessibe/?sh=5107b40e5a15

3   by way of— Rivenburgh, Kris. "The ADA Checklist: Website Compliance Guidelines for 2019 in Plain English." Medium. Last modified July 2, 2021. https://krisrivenburgh.medium.com/the-ada-checklist-website-compliance-guidelines-for-2019-in-plain-english-123c1d58fad9
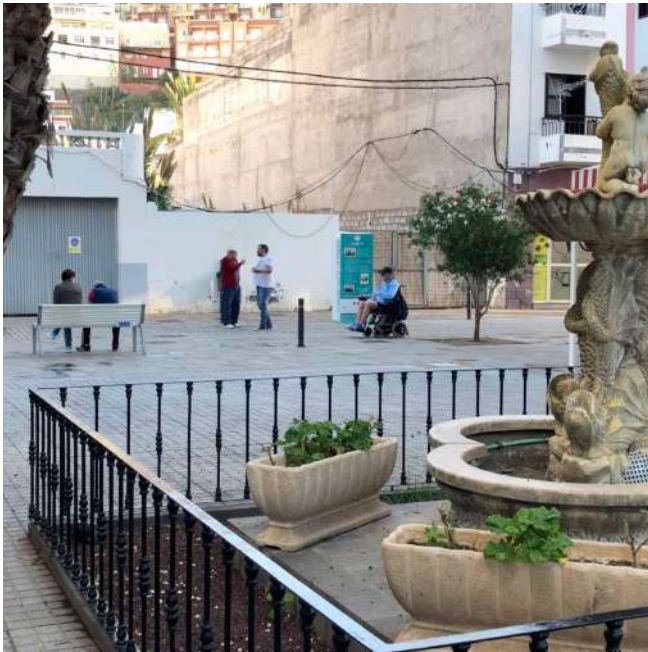
We offer UX services to make the world a better place, and the intersection of UX and accessibility is increasingly important to us.

We followed our friend Alan from ROW4ALS around a small town in the Canary Islands (Spanish islands off the coast of North Africa). Alan has ALS and uses a wheelchair.

One morning we saw him zoom past one of the squares in the town. Then he went back the other way. Amber went to find him and see if things were okay. He was trying to get to the bank to exchange currency, but the curbs were too high and he couldn't get in. Watching Alan move himself around the world—and row across the ocean as part of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge—really brings home that he's not unable—he just does things differently.

We recently learned[4] that the UAE refers to people with disabilities as 'people of determination' in recognition of their achievements in different fields.

4   @jesstawil on TikTok for her June 12, 2022 video about the People of Determination. https://www.tiktok.com/@jesstawil/video/7108481935684619566?_t=8T9iLbsx5rO&_r=1

ROW4ALS

Anchor & Alpine is pleased to continue our support for Row4ALS. Follow the team as they take on the Pacific Ocean in 2023. www.row4als.org

5 Content Principles Crucial for Business Success

Imagine having an engine for your business that continually brings in new, happy customers. You're able to connect with potential customers in the right place and time in their buying journey, so they praise the heavens that they've found you! To your customers, it feels like kismet. But you know it's actually through the power of compelling content that your customers joyfully discover your business.

Great content connects with people and creates loyal customers who will love your brand for years to come. It's never too early or late to build a meaningful content strategy for your company. No matter your business stage, the right content can make a direct impact on your bottom line– and it's crucial for long-term business success.

1. Create Shared Value

Whatever your business does, it serves a purpose that improves people's lives in some way. Your content should show the value you add to the world, share your purpose, and impart knowledge or help. That's how you'll form strong bonds with your customers and become a trusted resource.

You can create shared value with your customers in many ways:

- ☑ Conduct research to understand customers and solve pain points
- ☑ Share a compelling brand purpose, mission, and story on your website
- ☑ Clearly communicate what your company cares about and why
- ☑ Show how you give back to the community
- ☑ Educate your customers through blog posts, resources, or white papers
- ☑ Reward your loyal email, social, and SMS audiences

The real magic happens when you find the sweet spot between customer needs and your business objectives, and you continually seize those opportunities through content.

2. Anticipate Content Your Potential Customers Want

In the digital age, it's easier than ever to tap into your potential customers' wants and needs through search engine optimization (SEO). Through SEO research, you can see exactly what your potential customers are searching for online and optimize your content to show up in search engines, like Google.

But that's not enough. You should also anticipate your audience's needs. When you get ahead of search trends, you'll be the first to rank and show up in search engine results.

You can anticipate search trends by referencing key sources:

- ☑ Google Trends
- ☑ Market analyses
- ☑ Consumer trends reports
- ☑ Shifts in Google search volume
- ☑ User research
- ☑ Website searches

These resources can help inform new content ideas, as well as uncover opportunities for updating existing content. If you anticipate target customers' pain points and questions, you'll always be in the right place at the right time to solve them.

3. Champion Expertise

With online content, you must quickly build trust with both customers and search engines. In fact, it's so important to Google that they've coined a shorthand term for how they evaluate a website's credibility, called E.A.T., or Expertise, Authority, and Trust.

Customers want to know why they should trust you with their time and hard-earned money, and Google wants to protect people from potentially shady businesses.

Level-up E.A.T. on your website by showcasing trust signals:

- ☑ Awards you've won
- ☑ Links to news or media mentions
- ☑ Customer quotes or testimonials
- ☑ Photos of your business
- ☑ An 'About Us' section
- ☑ Names, titles, and photos of team members
- ☑ Author bios for your blog with credentials
- ☑ Relevant business stats
- ☑ Customer reviews
- ☑ Contact information

When you prove expertise, your brand shines. People trust you. And Google and other search engines reward your credibility with better rankings. So, it's a win all around.

4. Prioritize User Experience

Customers will always remain loyal to the companies that offer the best experiences. When people interact with your website or content, it should feel seamless. For all of us, time is our most precious commodity, and people won't waste it trying to navigate a difficult website or hard-to-scan text. So, optimizing your content for user experience (UX) is a must.

There are five well-established principles of user experience:

- ☑ **Findable** – Users can find our content & easily navigate next steps.
- ☑ **Usable** – Content is effective, navigable, & complete.
- ☑ **Accessible** – Can be accessed & understood by anyone.
- ☑ **Useful** – Fulfills wants and needs.
- ☑ **Credible** – Established, well-informed, expert advice.
- ☑ **Desirable** – Solves pain points the user didn't know they had.

Becoming an expert in UX takes time, so may want to enlist a professional consultant to help with optimizations. However, any team can continually improve UX when they understand the principles, educate themselves on their users, and regularly conduct user testing.

5. Treat Your Content as a Product

Your content should have a high barrier of entry that's difficult for competitors to replicate. It should be more thorough, complete, and helpful than any other content on the same topic. Just as you build a moat around your business to protect it against competition, you want to do the same for your content.

To treat your content as a product, provide unique value that can't be found elsewhere:

- ☑ Showcase singular expertise
- ☑ Share first-person stories
- ☑ Conduct in-depth research and share it
- ☑ Leverage customer-generated content
- ☑ Create thorough how-to's
- ☑ Add proprietary tools, calculators, or quizzes

Consistently creating unique, helpful content means you'll attract loyal audiences in various channels, so you're always top-of-mind and seen as the ultimate expert in your field.

Final Thoughts

We all got into business to ultimately help people. Your business may help people find solutions to problems, indulge in self-care, learn new things, find products they need, or create memories. No matter the business, your content has the potential to change lives for the better. When you tap into your business purpose and create impactful, useful content, your business will reach new heights you never thought possible. ⚓

THANK YOU TO OUR GUEST AUTHOR
Ashley Walton
www.contentmaven.org
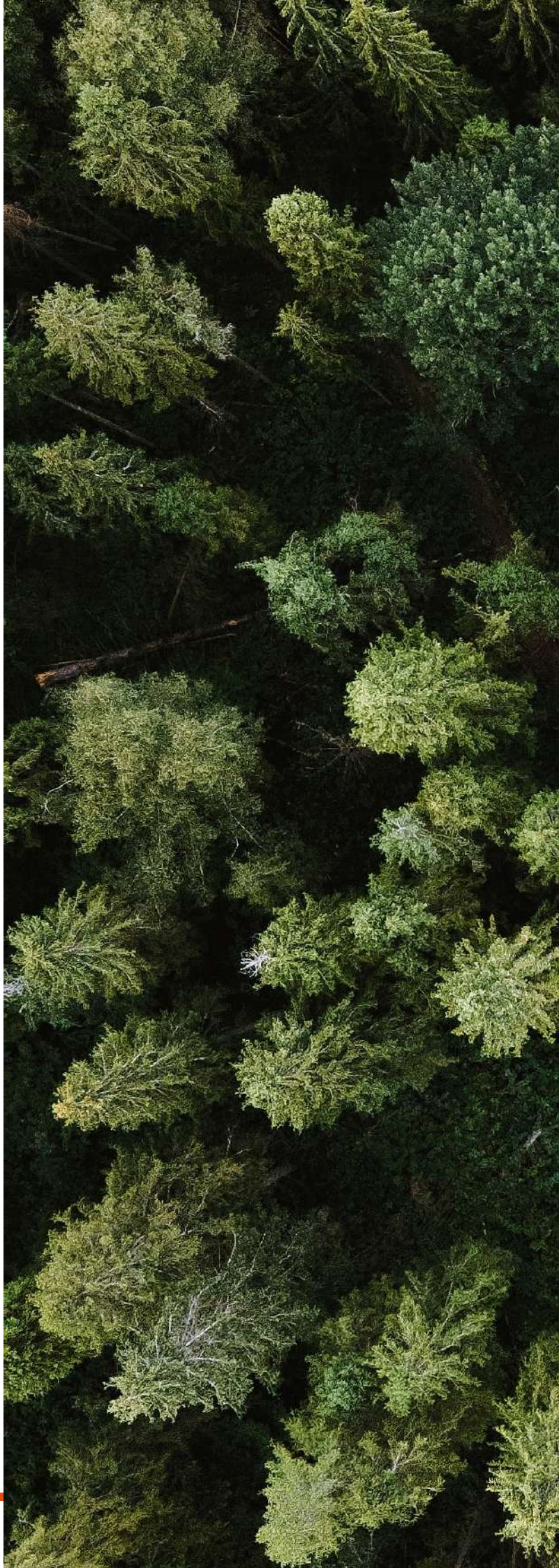
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Calm Tech

5 Techniques to Calm your Technology Life

Smartphones, laptops, and all of the gadgets connected to the Internet of Things can give us so much freedom, and make our lives so much easier and richer, but damn if that phone doesn't suck you in!

by Amber Sawaya

When I was traveling back-and-forth between Salt Lake City and San Francisco for my last job, I used to sit down on the plane, order dinner, legal cannabis, and groceries from my phone. I'd also start the robot vacuum so knew I was walking into a well-stocked and clean apartment. I absolutely love having a smartphone and all the things it can do. I'm horrible with directions and having a tiny box in my hand that has my map, phone, and camera was one of the reasons I was able to live in a new city alone.

Yet owning a smartphone is also a burden. The nagging notifications, the constantly-on dopamine drip. These distractions are reorganizing our brains, creating dopaminergic dysregulation. In areas of the brain where we should be focusing, we're ruining our ability to concentrate. Smartphone dopamine drips are potentially one of the many reasons ADHD cases have doubled in adults over the last decade[1].

Someday I hope to see a focus on passive tech: Technology that gets out of your way. It's there when you need it and out of sight, out of mind, and out of reach when you don't. I don't know if we'll ever see that because the reasons that we use technology are not the same reasons that technology is created. Devices and apps are initially created to improve our lives, but somewhere along the way the people building that tech have to feed the algorithms, their own OKRs, company engagement metrics, and a slew of other KPIs. They are incentivised to snag and capture your attention to turn data into dollars. The engineers and the UXers that build these tools know what they are doing. It's up to us to recognize and take control of our technology and create calm tech.
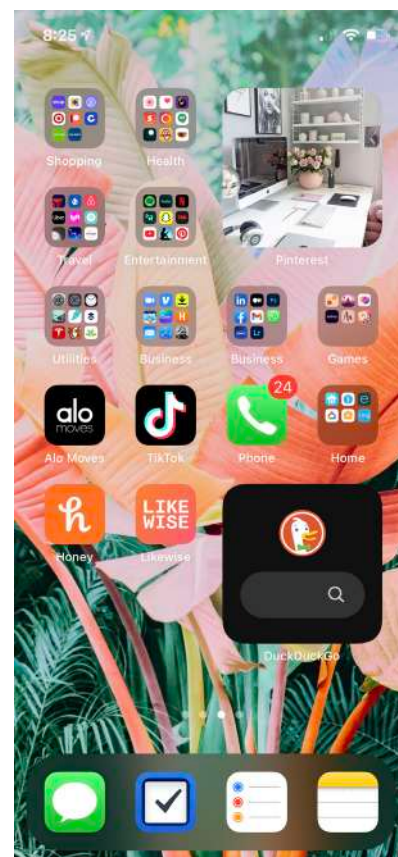
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1   Vignola, Nicole. "Biohacking your ADHD Brain." Instagram. Last modified April 11, 2022. https://www.instagram.com/p/CcNzACuqGLD/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=.

First Screen: Empty or Pinterest View Window
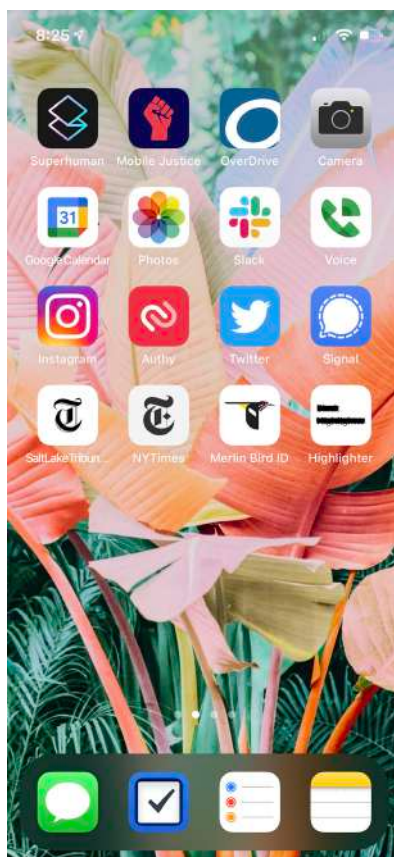
Second Screen: Your most used apps, keep this curated.

Third Screen: All other apps and widgets.

1. Organize Your Phone Screens

Some of this may change with the upcoming release of iOS 16. This article refers to Apple iPhones running iOS 15.

- Calm Photo Lock Screen
- First Screen: Empty or Pinterest View Window
- Second Screen: Your most used apps, keep this curated.
- Third Screen: All other apps and widgets.

Calm Photo Lock Screen
Choose a calming and simple photo for your lock screen. You'll look at this all the time, and you may as well start organizing at the front door.

First Screen: An empty screen or curated Pinterest view
Before iOS released the Pinterest widget, I set the home screen to have no apps on it. This allows me to still access the apps I use most on the bottom bar, but

serves as a reminder that the phone is a tool. When I first changed the screen to have no apps I was surprised by the number of times I'd open my phone, look at a nearly blank screen, then realize I just picked it up because I was bored/tired/hungry.

Now I use a Pinterest widget that rotates through images curated to a selected pinterest board. I created a board called iPhone 2022 where I put images that I find inspiring and calming.

Second Screen: Your most used apps. Prune this list.
Keep your most used apps on the next screen, but be ruthless with what you allow. I try to keep the list to 12 or 16 to have a nicely filled out grid.

Third Screen: All other apps and widgets.
Put everything else in folders on the last screen.

2. Triage Your Email

- Use Filters & Labels
- Watch for Automated Messages
- Use Filters & Labels

In Gmail/Google Workspace you can choose to filter messages as they come in. You can also label the messages with a color code. This is a great way to skim your inbox for what you need to do. I can quickly see different colors for each client and a specific color for all requests that come in via Jira Service Manager.

Watch for Automated Messages

Defend your inbox from spam and mailing lists, keep it simple and focused. One of the best ways to watch for automated messages is to use a filter, and label messages with 'automated' if they contain the word 'unsubscribe'.

Use Superhuman

The best method that has helped me tame my inbox is using Superhuman. It's an email program with smart key commands and a beautiful interface. When you clean out your inbox you get a big, beautiful photo. This is a visual representation of being finished with your task, and it evokes a calm and satisfied feeling.

When you swipe down in Superhuman it loads the search bar—most apps will reload your email. They did this deliberately and have explained it in a blog post. They want you to be intentional with your interactions, so if you swipe down they cue you to be searching for something, not just refreshing. Tinder called Superhuman, "a productivity tool on the surface. But for the people who use the product everyday, Superhuman is closer to a wellness product".

3. Look at Unsplash Wallpapers

Studies show that looking at nature has some of the same benefits of being out in nature. Specifically, pictures of flowers, green plants, and wooden materials have positive effects[2] on cerebral and autonomic nervous activities.

Enter: Unsplash Wallpapers. I use these in two places: the background of every new tab I open in Chrome (via the Chrome extension), and as the background of my computer set to refresh daily. Both of these wallpaper functions are available through Unsplash.

4. Use Night Mode for Quitting Time

Working from home means the lines have blurred even more between work and life. This tip comes from Emma Rankin Wilson on Twitter: If you have a hard time keeping track of when it's knock-off time, set your display to go to night mode at your designated finish time.

2   Jo, Hyunju, Chorong Song, and Yoshifumi Miyazaki. "Physiological Benefits of Viewing Nature: A Systematic Review of Indoor Experiments." International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 16, no. 23 (2019), 4739. doi:10.3390/ijerph16234739.
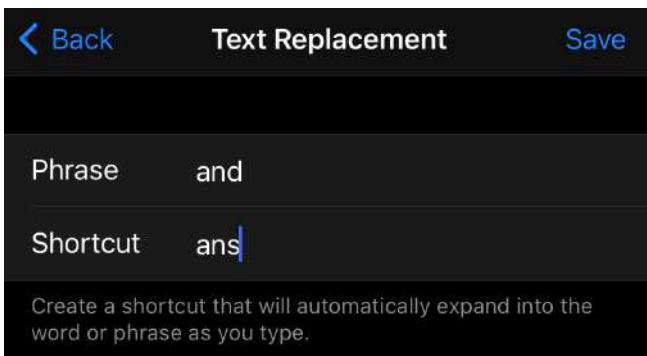
5. Use Text Replacements

Go to Settings › General › Keyboards › Text Replacement. Here you can enter a shortcut and a phrase. There are a few uncommon uses for this:

- Spelling Issues
- Information Quick Fill
- Shortcut terms

Spelling Issues
Do you have a word that you always fat finger and misspell? Mine are thabks, ans (for and), and te (for the). At some point my phone stopped correcting them, so I entered each into Text Replacement, with the misspelling as the shortcut and the correct spelling as the phrase.

Information Quick Fill
We're always typing in email addresses and physical addresses. Set these up so you can use a unique conversation of three letters for your shortcut, I use 'eaa', and have it expand into a full email address, in this case typing 'eaa' gives me the option to use explore@anchoralpine.com. I also have it set so that when I type in the first four digits of my address, it automatically fills in the rest.

Shortcut terms
If you have a phrase you use all the time (for me it's 'on my way' and 'let me find my headphones'), you can set up a shortcut for that. I use omw and it updates to 'On my way!' with capitalization and punctuation. When I type lmf I get 'Let me find my headphones!' with some emoji's sprinkled in for good measure.
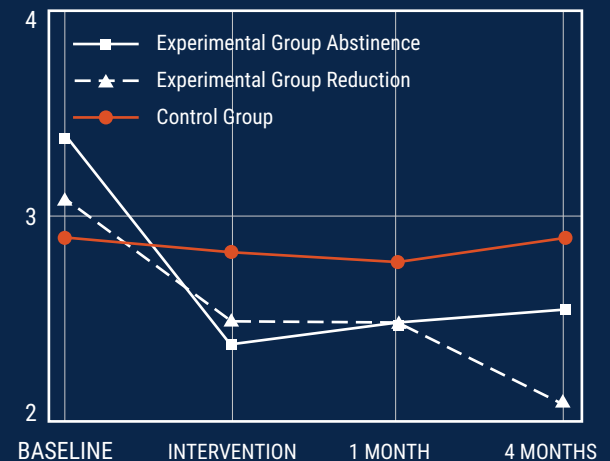
Studies show that reducing your smartphone usage by 1 hour per day, after 4 months people were happier, less anxious and depressed, and had healthier lifestyles[1,2].

Life Satisfaction
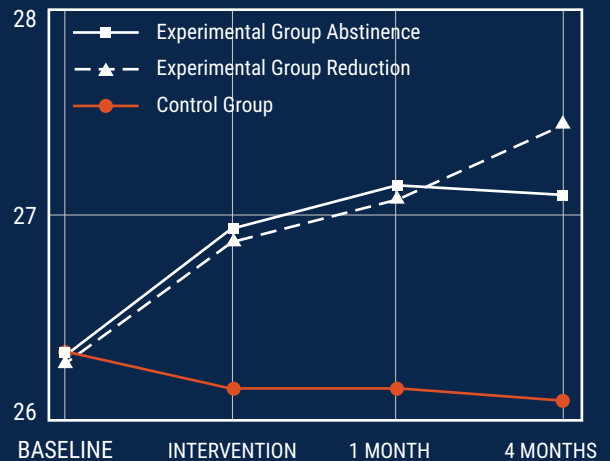
Anxiety Symptoms

Less Smartphone — More Well-Being
Selected graphs from *Finding the "sweet spot" of smartphone use: Reduction or abstinence to increase well-being and healthy lifestyle?! An experimental intervention study*

1. Grant, Adam. "Reducing your smartphone use is better for your well-being than stopping cold turkey." Instagram. Last modified April 10, 2022. https://www.instagram.com/p/CcLAYEuLH5n/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=.

2. Brailovskaia, Julia, Jasmin Delveaux, Julia John, Vanessa Wicker, Alina Noveski, Seokyoung Kim, Holger Schillack, and Jürgen Margraf. "Finding the "sweet spot" of smartphone use: Reduction or abstinence to increase well-being and healthy lifestyle?! An experimental intervention study." Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 2022, 14. doi:10.1037/xap0000430.

3. Jo, Hyunju, Chorong Song, and Yoshifumi Miyazaki. "Physiological Benefits of Viewing Nature: A Systematic Review of Indoor Experiments." International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 16, no. 23 (2019), 4739. doi:10.3390/ijerph16234739.

4. Rankin Wilson, Emma. "If you have a hard time keeping track of when it's knock-off time." Twitter. Accessed June 28, 2022. https://twitter.com/emmrankinwilson/status/1398208797961711618?s=12.

5. Vignola, Nicole. "Biohacking your ADHD Brain." Instagram. Last modified April 11, 2022. https://www.instagram.com/p/CcNzACuqGLD/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=.

A logo, some colors, and a font are great, but it takes a bit more to create a robust brand that is ready to be put to rigorous use.

We love when we get to work with clients to bring a new brand to life via their website or UI/UX project. We've been fortunate to work with amazing branding companies this past year, including Pentagram and Innovatemap. We love taking their work and putting it through its paces to create fresh and focused projects.

When we kick off your website or UI/UX project, we want to avoid costly delays associated with an incomplete brand. We will need enough branded assets to carry through a complete working website. Stepping back from the original timeline to shore up a brand ends up eating the budget for more fun things—like motion graphics or additional website components.

In addition to providing your brand guide, here are some additional elements we will need to make your brand shine, as well as pointers on how you can ensure that your project is successful.

Color Accessibility

Ensuring that we meet accessibility standards with your brand colors are our priority. What does that mean, exactly? We follow the WGAG Accessibility Standards, and when it comes to colors and typography the three things to keep in mind are:

Most text needs to have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5 to 1 (written 4.5:1)

Large text, at least 18pt text or 14pt bold text, needs to have a contrast ratio of 3:1

This does not include text in logos—but if it fails accessibility tests, it will be hard for some people to see. We have a color-blind person on our team and he consistently has a hard time with some colors.

To test this, you take your background color, set it against the color you want to use, and run it through an accessibility checker. There are many contrast checkers online, but we use the Able plugin for Figma.

BRANDS IN USE   ✗ CONTRAST: **1.3:1**

BRANDS IN USE   ✓ CONTRAST: **10:1**

BRANDS IN USE   ✓ CONTRAST: **15:1**

Color Usage

Somewhat related to color accessibility is color completeness and usage. We need more than your primary brand color—we need your secondary colors and any specific usage guidelines that you have for them (for example, if purple is only used for a single product and you use green for the other product).

We need colors that work for headlines, links, and buttons. Every link on a website has five possible states and five possible colors:

- **Link** - what you see before you click. In the olden days these were always blue.

- **Hover** - the color that shows up when you hover over the link, often with an underline.

- **Visited** - this used to always be purple, but now we can choose any color.

- **Active** - some links and buttons change color only when you are pressing down on them.

- **Disabled** - usually a 'go away gray' color that indicates a button's action cannot be taken.

LINK

HOVER

VISITED

ACTIVE

DISABLED

Give us enough colors to work with, including good colors for UX—a solid green for go and red for stop—that match your branded colors.

Web Fonts

Back when we started creating websites, we only had about a dozen fonts to choose from. The 2010s brought us web fonts and eventually the ease-of-use of Google Fonts. If your new brand doesn't include free and easy to use Google Fonts, your fonts must be licensed. That's totally fine with us—we love a high-design font—but hold onto your butts when it comes to the cost.

Typical font licenses are driven by traffic numbers per-month, and how many designers need a 'seat license' to use the fonts. We've had two projects with fonts spec'd from Klim and the cost for use was around $4,000 for each project.

Iconography

Everyone needs some iconography these days. We're more than happy to create it, but including your icon styles in your branding will save you time and money on your web project.

Company-specific Photography

Do you have photos of your building, headshots of your key staff, and pictures of your organization getting together? We'll need several of these company-specific photos to help make About Us and Career pages sing. Remember to get model releases if you use images of your employees.

Photography Styling

Nearly all projects will use stock photography. While we understand there is a range of bland and clipart-looking stock, there are also some great assets out there. Before declaring, "we can't use stock", make sure your budget includes time and costs for photoshoots.

If your photos have a specific styling, that should be part of your brand guide.

Brand Fitting

Modern brands should work across a range of applications, from websites, to embroidery, to signage. All brands should work in a circle or a square—think social media avatars. Having logo options that are sturdy enough to withstand usage across a variety of media will set you up for consistent success with your brand recognition.
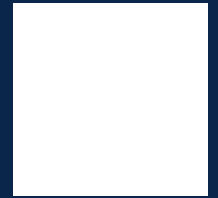
Tone of Voice / Craft Messaging

Make sure your brand not only looks like you, but sounds like you. A Tone of Voice guide and sample messaging will help us deliver a targeted website. Include things like the exact write-up of your name, and how you refer to your customers (are they customers, clients, fans, users, or something else?) Decide on your pronouns: is the company "we" and the customer is "you"? Or is the company an "it" entity and the customer is "me/my"?

This guide also usually gives us a list of quips and phrases that we can use as we design the website.

Need help beefing up your brand? Give us some time and money and we'll get 'er done.

anchor & alpine