

# THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT HOMEPAGE





## INTRODUCTION

In your home, chances are there are several points people could enter your house from. These entry points include front doors, back doors, garage doors, windows, and so on. However, your guests probably enter your home from one point more times than all of the others combined.

That's how the homepage of your website works, as well. There are several entry points and pages on your website, but more times than not, users find your homepage first.

That's why on a typical website, the homepage has the most traffic and links pointing to it. Why is that? Usually, that's because your homepage is the oldest URL on your website, your homepage typically has the most direct visits, and homepages are the most advertised URL for online and offline marketing channels.

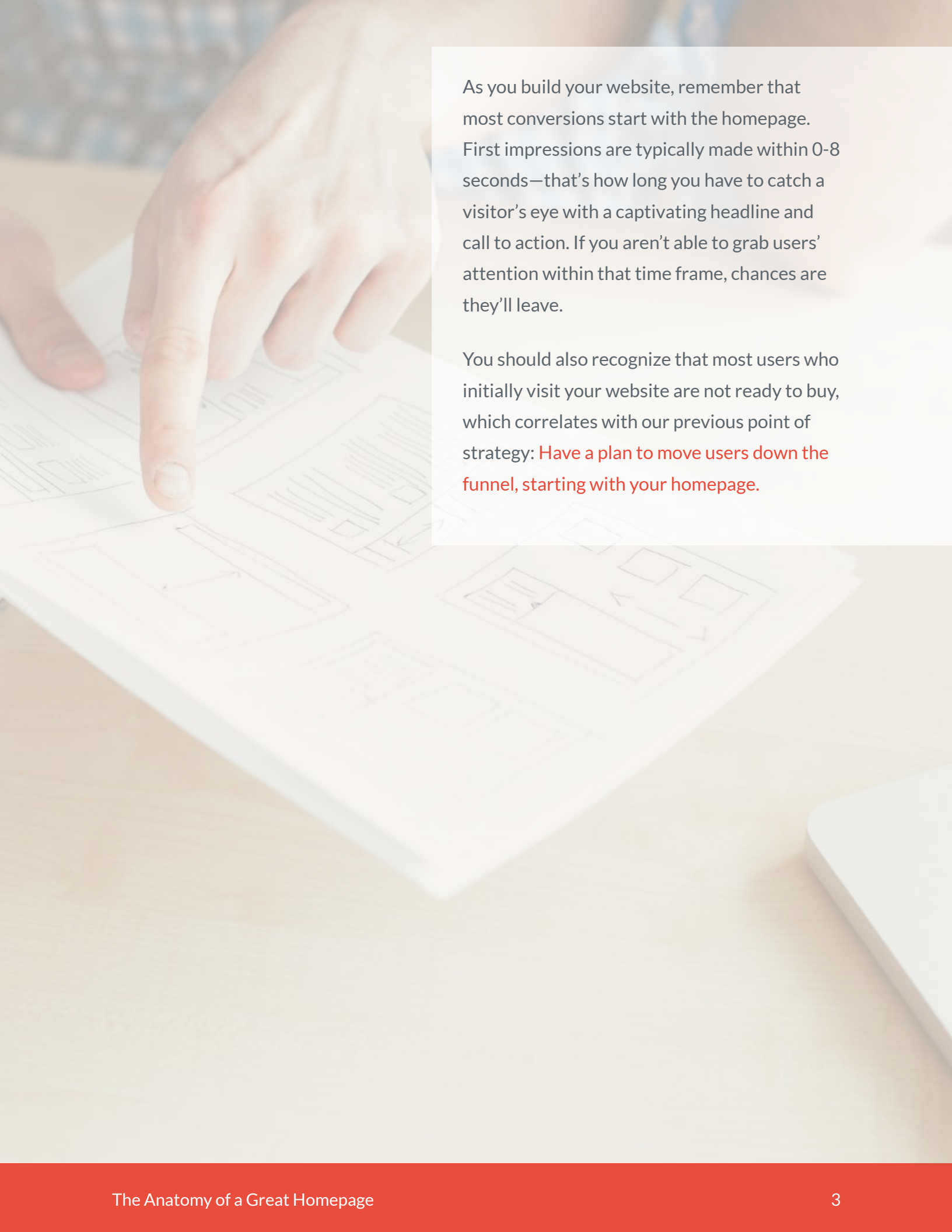
**But what is the purpose of a homepage?**

Overall, the purpose of your website is to market your products or services and turn website visitors into leads and, eventually, customers. Your homepage is no different. It should be easy to navigate, easy to understand, and offers your personas information on what they are searching for. In essence, your homepage should answer the question, “Can I help you find what you’re looking for?” You want to help the visitor get from your homepage to page two, because then, they’ve expressed what they are interested in knowing more about.

However, before designing your homepage, you should clearly define goals and strategies for what you want it to accomplish.

These goals could include defining what your website is about and what you want the action step to be for users that visit your homepage. Be sure to associate numbers with your goals. For example, you may want to have a 45 percent click-through rate on your top-of-the-funnel call to action with a 25 percent conversion rate on the associated landing page. Without clearly defined strategies and goals, your homepage can become a jumbled mess that users bounce from quickly.



A hand is pointing at a wireframe sketch of a website layout on a piece of paper. The sketch shows various rectangular boxes representing content areas, with arrows indicating the flow of the user journey. The background is a blurred image of a person's hand and a laptop, suggesting a design or development environment.

As you build your website, remember that most conversions start with the homepage. First impressions are typically made within 0-8 seconds—that's how long you have to catch a visitor's eye with a captivating headline and call to action. If you aren't able to grab users' attention within that time frame, chances are they'll leave.

You should also recognize that most users who initially visit your website are not ready to buy, which correlates with our previous point of strategy: **Have a plan to move users down the funnel, starting with your homepage.**



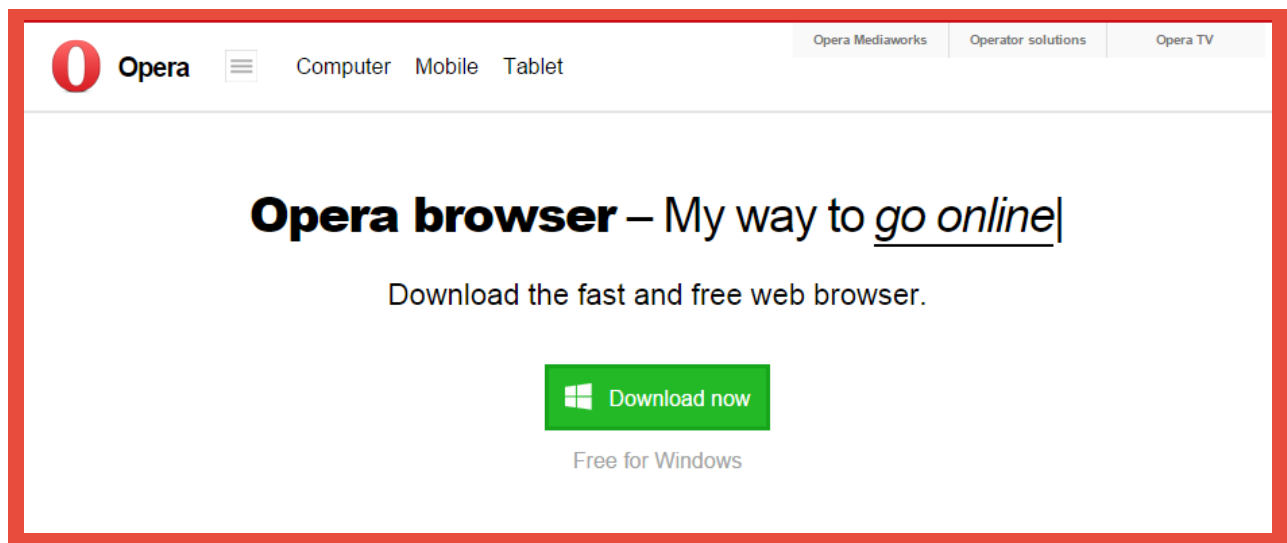
# HOMEPAGE BEST PRACTICES

Just like any other page on your website, your homepage has best practices to move your website visitors down the funnel and to convert. When guests come to your home, what do you want them to do once they arrive? Do you want them to walk right into the bathroom that is attached to your bedroom? Probably not, but without proper guidance, they won't know that. Homepages act in the same way by guiding your visitors with these best practices.

## State Your Value Proposition

As already mentioned, you don't have a long time to capture your users' attention, so you must clearly state your value proposition on your homepage. Visitors should clearly see the value of doing business with you.

An example of a homepage with a clearly defined value proposition and a call to action is Opera.com.



As you can see, Opera lets you know that it is a web browser, then also informs you that it's fast and free. Just below that, there is a call to action to download the browser, with a reminder under the CTA that it is free.

## Your value proposition should answer these questions:

1

What is this company/webpage?

2

When I'm on this website, what am I able to do?

3

Does this website help solve any problems for me?

4

Why should I choose this company/website over any others to solve my problems?

Without a value proposition clearly stated, your website visitors can get lost on/bored with your website and never convert.

### Persona-Focused Design and Copy

When you think about marketing materials in general, whether they are mailers, brochures, billboards, and so on, the design and copy of those materials should be catering to the audience that they are trying to attract. Your homepage is no different.

After you have defined your personas' pain points, your homepage's design and copy should offer solutions. If you are able to, personalize your homepage to the specific person that is viewing your website. HubSpot's Smart Content enables you to do just that. As you learn more about your visitors, you'll be able to adjust the content of your website to be more personalized and relevant. With HubSpot's Smart Content, you can customize content for first-time visitors, or customize it based upon where they are located, what devices they are using, or if they are a part of a HubSpot list. The opportunities with Smart Content are endless.

Remember, you don't have a website for you—you have it for those you are trying to sell your product or service to. Delivering a positive experience to your desired audience makes sense, and that starts with persona-focused design and copy on your homepage.

## Navigation

Your homepage's navigation is possibly the most essential aspect of your website. Deciding what to include in your homepage's navigation could be the difference in somebody becoming a customer or leaving your website immediately.

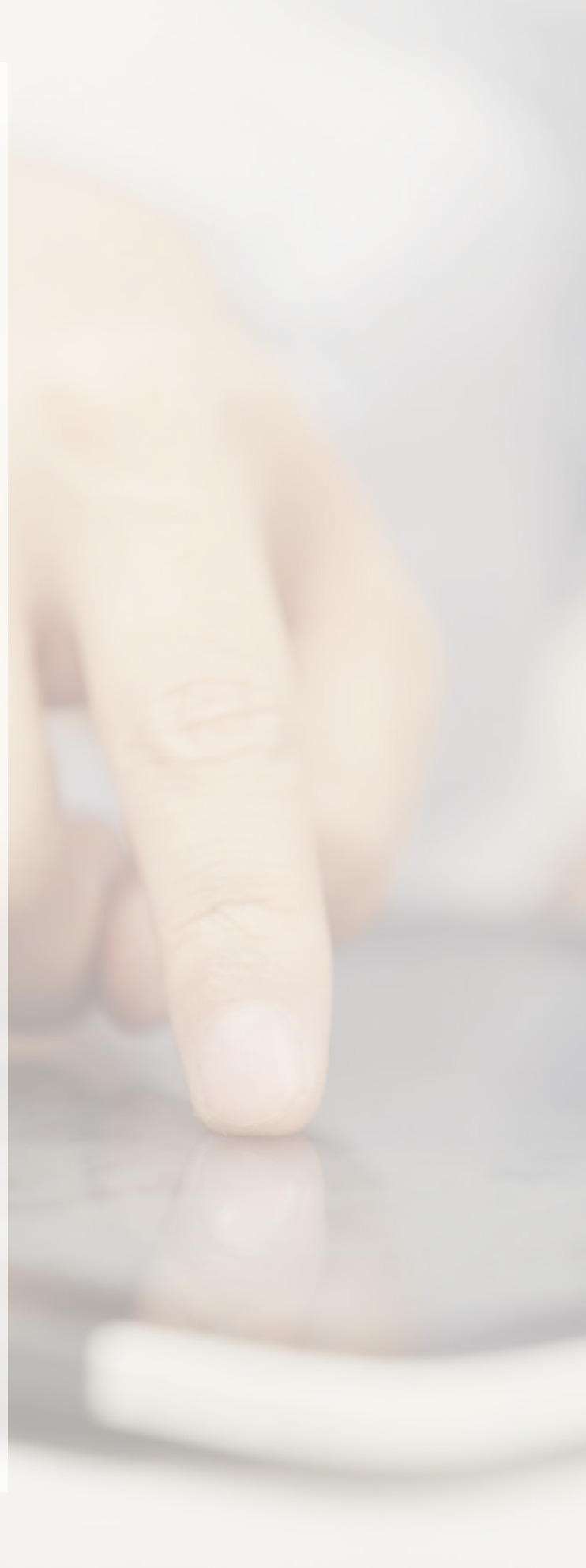
First and foremost, your navigation menu should be user-friendly. A menu that is hard to navigate or click is an instant turnoff for a potential customer, who then may be inclined to leave your website. A few tips to keep your navigation user-friendly are:

- Limit the number of top-level navigation items.
- Keep dropdown menus to one level.
- Limit the height of the header.
- Denote dropdowns with visual cues.
- Make sure it is responsive for different-sized devices.

Choosing the pages you wish to display in your navigation can be a tough call, but a good rule of thumb is to at least include:

- The homepage
- About Us
- Contact Us
- Blog

Remember, your homepage's navigation can be the difference between a customer or not, so do not overlook it in your design process.



A hand holding a pen, writing on a document. The background is a light beige color with a subtle pattern of overlapping circles. The hand is positioned on the left side of the page, holding a dark pen and writing on a white surface.

## Calls to Action

When somebody reaches your website, it usually was for a certain reason: to find more information on a topic, to research a certain product, and so on. Your homepage should include effective calls to action that help move website visitors down the funnel in their buying process. Types of calls to action that should be on your homepage are:

### Awareness CTAs

These calls to action should link to a landing page offering a piece of content that helps your website visitor gain more information on a certain topic. Examples of awareness pieces of content are ebooks and white papers.

### Consideration CTAs

These CTAs generally link to pieces of content that help solve problems that your website visitors have already defined. Examples of consideration pieces of content are testimonials and case studies.

### Decision CTAs

Decision CTAs link to something such as a demo or a free trial of a product or service. Website visitors who have already decided on a solution strategy to their problems are trying to narrow down their list of vendors; decision CTAs highlight how you can help.



CTA placement is also important on your homepage. Your primary CTA should be “above the fold.” This just means that your homepage visitors should be able to see the CTA without scrolling down the page. This does not mean that you should clutter all of your CTAs at the top of your homepage, but your primary CTAs should go there. CTAs “below the fold” are OK if your content goes farther down the page.

## Links to Popular Content

When visitors are new to your website, a great way to help them learn about your organization is by having links to popular content on your homepage. This allows you to help solve questions/problems that visitors have when they visit your website. Types of content you can link include:



Popular  
blog posts



Videos



Resources



Multiple  
other formats

The key to linking to popular content on your homepage is to build trust and credibility with your website visitors in hopes that they will become leads and, eventually, customers.





## Colors

Many homepages and websites offer great content but fall victim to a chaotic color scheme that instantly turns off website visitors. Although using different colors is good to make certain aspects of your homepage pop out, do not attempt this with every single element: The opposite will happen and nothing will stand out.

Standard practice is to pick two to four colors for your website and marketing materials and not deviate from those. A simple, elegant color scheme goes a long way in your homepage design.

## Responsive Design

What is a responsive website design? Simple:

It's a website that is designed to adapt to whatever device a visitor is using. It allows for easy reading and scrolling without constantly adjusting your screen. Responsive designs are able to adjust to any moves you make (i.e., flipping your phone from vertical to horizontal). A responsive design is not just recommended, but should be mandatory.

As mentioned previously, a positive user experience on your website is a must. With mobile website users now having surpassed desktop users on the Web, a non-responsive website would be a pain for them to experience. Aside from that, a responsive design is preferred for SEO because it creates fewer pages for Google to crawl (than if you had an entirely separate mobile site), which also creates less of a chance for on-page SEO mistakes. A responsive design also helps your website adapt to future devices that have not yet even hit the market.



### HubSpot COS Makes It Easy

If you haven't heard about responsive design, or you are worried that your website host doesn't offer those capabilities, do not fear. HubSpot's COS (Content Optimization System) comes out-of-the-box optimized for mobile with responsive design on your homepage, other website pages, landing pages, blog, and more. It is the only COS to come integrated with responsive design.

# EXAMPLES OF GREAT HOMEPAGES



## Value proposition

Clearly stated: “Effortlessly manage your cash flow, budgets and bills from one place.”

## Navigation

Simple, not cluttered, and to the point.

## CTAs

Primary CTA is above the fold, with secondary CTAs placed with the content that goes down the page.

## Links to popular content

Ability to click on “Tools & Tips” along with “Learn More” and a link to chat directly with somebody in customer service.

## Colors

Simple color scheme with design elements that make a select few features pop.

## Responsive Design

The website has a responsive design and is optimized for mobile.



*Quality*  
**HANDCRAFTED BEER**  
EST. 1998 · ESQUIMALT BC



### Value proposition

Clearly stated: “Quality Handcrafted Beer”

### Navigation

Simple, offers high-value pages, not cluttered.

### Links to popular content

Links to “The Beer” and “Growler Line Up” so that you can learn more about the organization and the type of beer that they sell.

### Colors

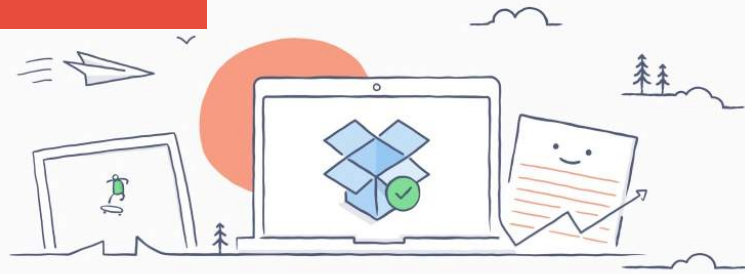
Simple color scheme that fits the brand.

### Responsive design

The website has a responsive design and is optimized for mobile.



Dropbox.com



Good things happen when  
your stuff lives here

Dropbox keeps your files safe, synced, and  
easy to share.

First name	Last name
Email	
Password	
<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to <a href="#">Dropbox terms</a> .	
<a href="#">Sign up</a>	

### Value proposition

Clearly stated: “Dropbox keeps your files safe, synced, and easy to share.”

### Navigation

Very simple. Several pages are only shown on the navigation menu at the bottom of the page. This is a tactic similar to hiding the navigation menu on landing pages. Dropbox’s homepage basically acts as a landing page for signing up for an account.

### CTAs

There are three CTAs above the fold, with the primary CTA, “Sign up,” popping out.

### Colors

Simple color scheme with design elements that make a select few features pop.

### Responsive design

The website has a responsive design and is optimized for mobile.

## Request a Free Website Consultation from SmartBug Media

HubSpot's Content Optimization System (COS) is changing the game for other content management systems. By focusing on content optimization, personalized experiences, and automatically programmed responsive designs, you can be sure your website will be first in its class.

### A Free COS Website Consultation Includes:

- A breakdown of the COS's core functions and what they can accommodate
- Walkthrough of features, including personalized and Smart content
- Website analysis and takeaways for how your homepage and website could drive more visits, leads, and customers
- Recommendations for what the next best step is for your company

Whether you are considering moving your website to the COS, redesigning or building an entirely new website, or simply want to know if your business would be a good fit for the COS, SmartBug Media can help!

[Request a Consultation Now](#)

