

The Stupidest Website Design Mistake You Might Need to Fix RIGHT NOW

Tell people, in the simplest terms you can, what you do. Say it so a busy visitor gets it in five seconds flat.

Say What You Do in Plain English

Open with a simple promise. Not poetry. Not insider buzzwords. Just clarity.

- We make your yard look great.
- We fix bad teeth.
- We make your home warmer in winter.
- We save you money on auto repair.
- We provide good food.

But don't say it exactly like that. I'll show you why in a second.

Why This Even Needs Saying

I've been doing website design since 1994. I've seen all the trends. I also have a weird talent for spotting the tiny thing that's off — usually in under a minute. Awesome when I'm auditing, annoying at dinner. When I hit a website and can't figure out what they actually do, it jumps out. That's the mistake.

Why do sites miss it?

- **They get cute.** Clever headlines that don't communicate.
- **They brag.** "Award-winning solutions for..." instead of solving the user's problem.
- **They talk to themselves.** Org charts, history, inside baseball.
- **They bury the lead.** The value is three scrolls down.

Visitors land with one question:

"What's in it for me?"

Answer that. Fast.

The Twist That Makes It Work: Make It About *Them*

Turn your "we" statement into a "you" outcome. Same idea, different focus.

Before ? After

- **We make your yard look great.**
You get a yard you're proud of — without spending your weekends doing lawn work.
- **We fix bad teeth.**
You'll love your smile again with comfortable, lasting dental care.
- **We make your home warmer in winter.**
You stay warm all winter and lower your energy bill.
- **We save you money on auto repair.**
You keep your car running longer and pay less over time.
- **We provide good food.**
You eat well tonight — fresh, fast, and fairly priced.

I did this earlier today for a client. They sent a big “about us” phrase. We flipped it to an outcome their customers actually want. It instantly felt clearer — and more useful.

Build Your 5-Second Message

Use this quick formula to write a hero headline and subhead that pass the “5-second test.”

Formula:

You get [primary outcome] without [common pain], thanks to [simple solution or proof].

Examples:

- *You get tax-ready books without spreadsheet chaos, thanks to our weekly cleanup and CPA review.*
- *You book more qualified jobs without wasted ad spend, using our local SEO playbook.*
- *You launch faster without technical headaches — design, build, and support in one place.*

Add a clear CTA (call to action)

After the headline and subhead, give them one thing to do:

- **Get a Free Estimate**
- **See Pricing**
- **Book a 15-Minute Call**

Where to Put This Message

- **Hero section:** Big headline (outcome), short subhead (how), one CTA.
- **Navigation:** A tight tagline can live near the logo for constant clarity.
- **Page titles/H1s:** Make each page's H1 say what the page helps the visitor do.
- **Meta descriptions:** Summarize the outcome to improve click-through from search.
- **Above the fold proof:** Add 1–2 trust badges or a short stat (e.g., “1,200+ roofs repaired”).

Common Copy Traps

- **Vague verbs:** “Empower, enable, innovate.” Use concrete language your buyer uses.
- **Inside language:** Acronyms and internal product names on the homepage.
- **Wall of text:** If it can’t be skimmed, it won’t be read.
- **Multiple CTAs:** One primary action beats four competing buttons.

Quick Checklist:

1. In five seconds, can a new visitor say what you do and who it’s for?
2. Does the headline promise an outcome the visitor wants?
3. Does the subhead reduce risk or explain how?
4. Is there one obvious CTA above the fold?
5. Is there a proof point (reviews, numbers, logos) visible early?

Copy-Paste Templates:

Grab one, fill in the blanks, ship it:

1. **You get** [primary outcome] **without** [big pain], **thanks to** [how you do it].
2. **[Audience]** get [outcome] in [timeframe] with [your offer]. **Start:** [CTA].
3. **Stop** [pain]. **Start** [outcome]. We handle [key tasks] so you can [benefit].

Make it simple. Make it about them. Put it where they can’t miss it. That’s how you avoid the stupidest website design mistake.

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