



Top Left Design



A whole different kettle of fish

What every website needs to be, do and have

Prepared by Keren Lerner from Top Left Design

1

Your site should be built in WordPress

Ok, not EVERYONE's site HAS to be but there is a reason this is the most popular CMS around. It's incredibly flexible and easy to use. This allows you to have a completely bespoke design, or a high quality premium theme. You can edit and keep up to date all the different pages in your website. At TLD, we specialise in bespoke customised WordPress sites. This means we don't, for the most part, use templates, but instead create completely bespoke designs and when the site is built we make sure that each page and also each area of each page is updatable by our clients with via WordPress's easy to use admin area.

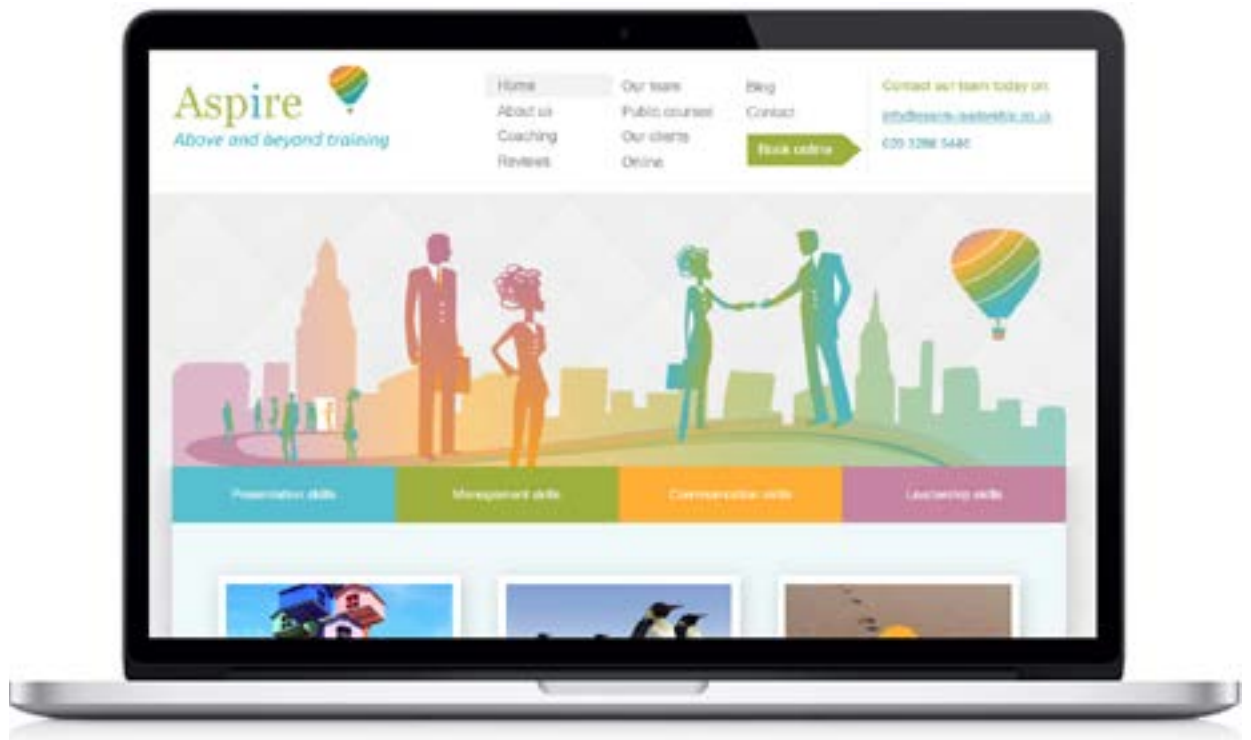
It takes an hour and a half training session and then clients are able to make all the updates themselves, aside from design changes which they come back to us for (or sometimes they attempt to do these themselves with varying degrees of success!



2

Your site should be “responsive”

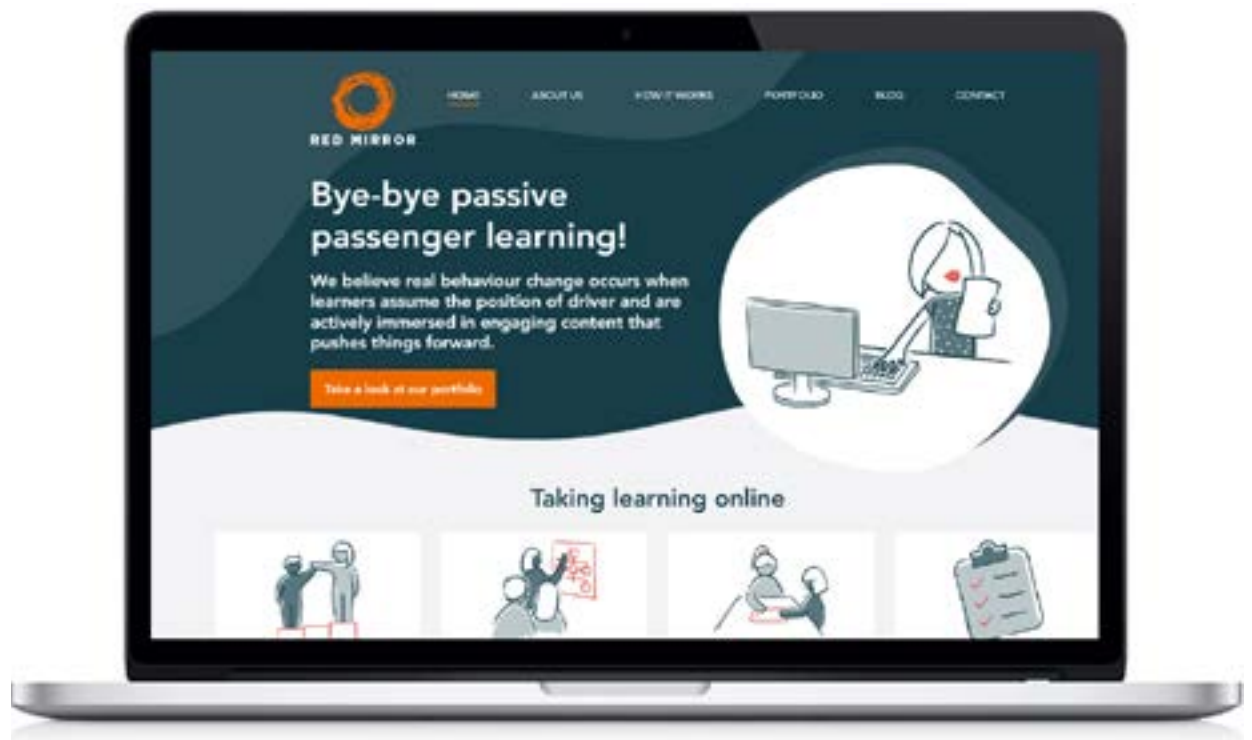
More and more people are browsing on the go and if you aren't planning to make your site easy to see and read on their devices you are falling behind. All our websites are built in a responsive way. This means that instead of just being a mini version of itself on mobile phones and l pads, the information reformats to be easily seen and read on those devices. In some cases, this means the navigation “stacks” – so each link is on top of each other. On a mobile phone, the site shows up a single column and text, images and information are easy to read and see.



3

Your website should look fresh and in keeping with “the times”

Has it been more than 12 months since you had your site designed? Older design trends like drop shadows, bevels and gradients now look extremely dated. Excellent use of typography, flat design, simple use of colour, longer pages with visuals all along the way, more prominent use of video, and better use of white space all lift and modernise your website. The quality and “freshness” of your website design does depend on the skills and talent of your designer but stakes are higher and settling for mediocre design isn't going to do you or your business any favours!



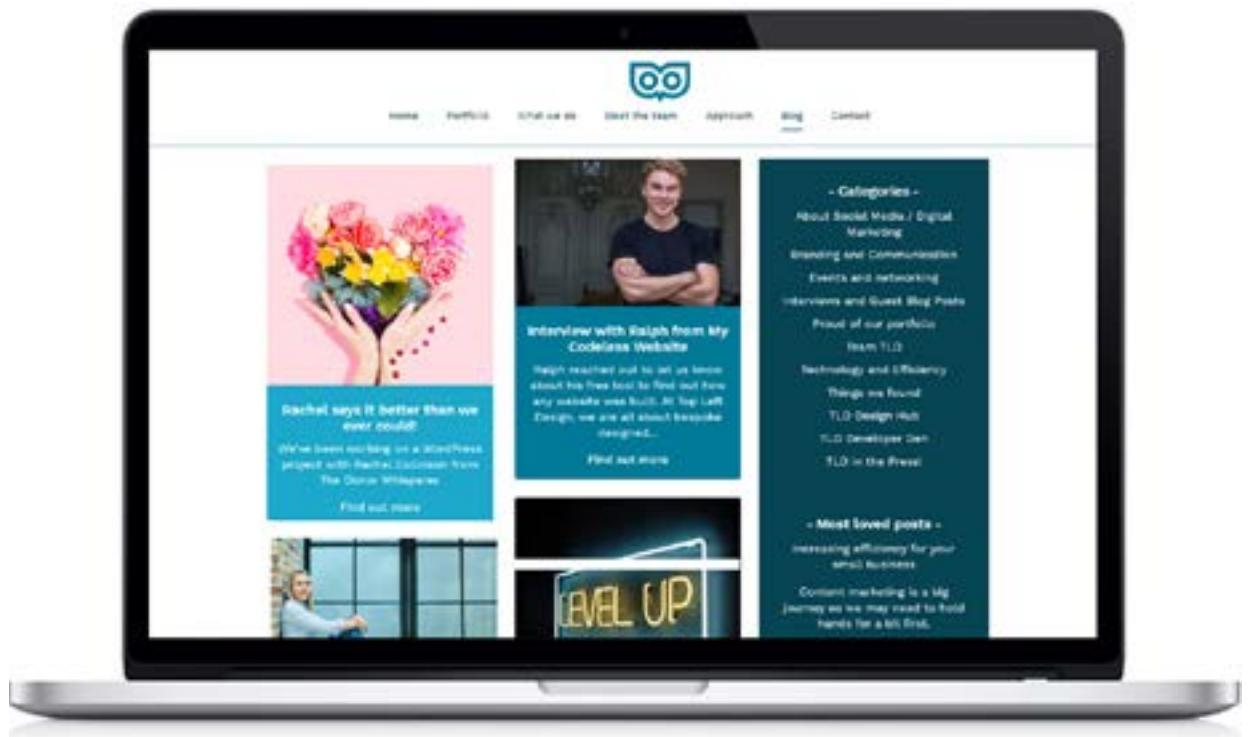
4

Your website should have a blog

This is (meant to be) where the action happens. There are lots of people who have a blog on their site and then they don't keep it up to date. Having a blog on your site is a commitment, but the rewards far outweigh the drawbacks – and it's really just how you look at it.

Your blog allows you to raise awareness of your brand, show your expertise, and educate your audience. You can attract relevant traffic and you can exercise your marketing muscles. There is really no excuse to wait any longer!

TIP: make sure your blog is integrated into your site, so it's part of the main navigation and not an external entity. It's more professional and it encourages people to look and see the rest of your site if they start off on a blog post you wrote – or vice versa!



5

Your website (and you) should embrace content marketing

For some, it means changing your website and your marketing plan so you have the right tools (a blog, social media channels and a content marketing plan). It also means going back to marketing basics – defining your audience and the key messages you want to communicate to them, as well as what you want people to believe about your business and feel about your brand, and then planning a mixture of educational content, stories and sharable content to distribute regularly across the channels your audience is on. Your content needs to show personality, be consistent and varied at the same time. It's not a piece of cake, but with a bit of practice and observing how others do it, it can become easier. Plus – we can help!



6

Your website should integrate social media

And no, I don't mean just sticking a Twitter icon on your homepage.

There are people who do this, and they don't even check that the link works (sometimes the social media icons just go to the homepages of the social media channels! Unbelievable but it happens!)

Any social channel that you link to from your homepage should be making the right first impression. So, check out your own profiles. See your latest updates, and think – what impression does this make? Is the channel designed and setup properly? Do I look like I am talking to people or only talking about myself? Are the updates high quality, interesting, and sharable? Are they frequent enough, but not too frequent?

Social media is an extension of your brand. If you cannot keep up with the expected activity and behaviour, it's better to hide that icon on your website (controversial, I know).

But if you can, embrace the opportunities, and enjoy creating content and sharing it as well as being content curator, connector and communicator. If you do have a lot of great stuff going on your social channels, then you can do more on your website and blog than just link to the channels from social media icons.

You can include Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest feeds, Facebook commenting features, as well as social sharing buttons on your blog. And you can cross fertilise your social media activity with your blog and other content – by curating information from your social media community, interviewing people you meet online and featuring them, trying out the different support tools out there for statistic reviews and curation, and much more.



Don't be overwhelmed

Eek! This probably is a lot to do, for 98.7% of you.

However, you're in good company (hence the high percentage mentioned in the previous sentence. Just work towards the changes above – we all have to make changes and improvements this year to keep up – and you will see – it's so worth it! And if you need help – call/email/message us! Details at the bottom of this page and on our website www.topleftdesign.com

A year from now,
you'll wish you started today.