Niya Sisk Seminar Outline

The 7 Elements of Professional Looking Blog Design

1. **Introduction**
2. **Seminar Structure**
3. **HIGH LEVEL VIEW of branding related to Typepad blog/website**
   a. **Seamless branding advantages;** perception, ease of use,
   b. **Consolidation**; The stat for how long people will stay on a page is 2 seconds average. If your audience is forced to chase you around to get all of your talk points and business touch points you have likely already lost them. But if your anchor room; your hub is consolidated and organized visually and interactive in the precise way you want to be grokked, you will have a grateful and engaged audience. You are also telling them that you care about your business by spending this time. Which translates into you caring about their business, their problems.
   c. **Distinction of content.** When each page a different channel on your television show you have more breadth, depth, exposure and interaction possibility with your brand. Social Media and live TV on the home page while e commerce, community networks, and static can be stacked and presented visually in reference to their meaning in time, use and brand promise.

5 ELEMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL LOOKING BLOG/SITE DESIGN

1. **COMPOSITION.** The organization of content that sets up the reader for what is important to be seen and the order of importance. The layout of the page will set up expectations and lead the reader.
   a. **Examples:**
      1. **Natural Beauty Workshop** – Eye is pulled to the center. Background to the page that resembles the packaging of a bar of soap, nice brand unity. And the pages on the right instead of the top which communicate that this is be read from the center.

2. **PR Pirate**—People are most important. Size of photo and not much else distracting. Header is custom but black-recedes. And the color of the header bottom is in accordance with type color—neutral.

3. **Discovering your Inner Samurai**—Example of lots of great information and but visual hierarchy is too even and crowded for the eye to sort out what's first.

4. **Seth Godin –**Left column for gravity which ground the reader on the body text. Upper do hicky feels like a handle to grab and pull. Its 3-d—and it has no function except to frame you at the top. I would make it not 3-d for interaction function and consistency.

2. **VISUAL ANCHORING.** Building a world that visually frames the content in a meaningful way. When content shifts, the visuals need to support it and express that shift for percept-ability. A new business initiative, a new day post, a new event, etc. Examples below.

   a. **Lipsticking.** Mirroring. What is happening in the header that offsets and centers our eye? Why this works.

   b. **LoveLife.** Don't be afraid of black space. Using negative space and color to allow our eye easy access to the foreground.

   c. **Niyas Place.** My creative writing blog. The use of circle shape offsets. Circles to squares as contract. This allows the eye a non-even surface and more access to what's in between.

3. **CONTEXT** Every page, every space on the page has referential information around. We are taught what to do by what it shown to us. When a page has out of context content it feels junkie and confusing. Here are some examples of clean context and not so clean.

   a. **Unique Motivations.** A blog I designed for my client. The curve of the header at the top to create a arc and invite readership. Her photo to express

the spirit of wellness. The color palette is reflective of water and the Florida environment where she works with clients. In Context.

b. **Artpark:** Clean color palette and the taxi driver yellow incites an inspired response. The list on the header on the right looks like links but they aren't links so it takes us out of context with the info. The links at the top suggest a site. It is an art site with lots of photographs when clicked you need to use the back button. Better to create a seamless brand frame and swap the photos into the middle esp. because it is an art site that would create the bridge between the content and the brand.

c. **Ink on my fingers.** Nice context design here. The center stage elements are larger than the sides. The sides do not have widgets moving and distracting. Although busy, the visuals are grounded and meaningful which reinforces context and focus.

d. **JUNK OUT.** Eliminate widgets that are not relevant to the page or content on the page. Too distracting and undermines your business credibility. You are promoted simply by easing use and increasing focus and meaning.

4. **BALANCE**. Elements Size. Proportion, Header Graphics, The elements on the page balancing one another is very important for a professional looking website/blog.

a. **Oh Joy**. Perfect balance and elegance. Nothing is distracting, no elements compete for the same space. We want to live here. We want to take a bath here.

b. **Whimsical Bohemian.** Header is too large for a portable computer. And she has fabulous content, always something to announce and great ideas. Her header dominates.

c. **The Merlin Dialogues.** A custom header I designed for a client. The imbalance here is the large header and then all typography below. We have a split. This is not balanced. It needs more visuals within the posts

themselves, accented by interesting side context to frame the context of the posts.

5. **DRAMA/STAGING**. Typographical and color logic. Consistency and orchestration of graphical elements to stage what is important to any given context. Motion graphics. Be conservative. Accents. This type of treatment can really make you stand out when done well.

   a. **Heather Bailey**. Drama. Are we at all confused when come to this page what she's all about? This is a Typepad Pro site. The shadow behind her stage is a nice drama touch. Her product is large. Her bio photo is of her eyes mostly, which expresses her artistically. And the links on top are a custom font that create a nice professional image.

   b. **Motion Graphics**. **Seth Godin.** The Dipping Guy. Nice. I wouldn't go beyond this in animation. The space for the typepad blog is clearly spec'd out in a grid. When you get too much motion going it gets hard to pay attention to the information. Often the animation has a 200 pixel space to live in. Small real estate, so keep it simple.

   c. **Donna Downey**. Accents. Script Font done well. Not to mention color.

   d. **Bunny Bisous**. White space expresses invitation and openness while easily framing content.

7 GOLDEN RULES OF PROFESSIONAL LOOKING BLOGS/SITES

1. Think about your brand and organize the visual representation of your content according what is hierarchically important to brand perception and brand promise.

2. Contextually center your info. Ask yourself how to frame your information so that the visuals support what you want read first.

3. Use design to set up expectations of functionality and interaction.

4. You gain more credibility by having a well thought through visually organized blog/site than having a lot of promotional info. Ease for the audience = gratitude and relationship.

5. Don't be afraid of White Space or Drama. Clear and focused staging of information is sexy and suggests a high quality brand that speaks to its audience.

6. Be consistent with color logic and typographical choices. 2-3 color leads and 2 fonts is best, with varying supporting accents.

7. Be bold, be creative and utilize all of Typepad's affordances. They have great tech support. Sketch out your page and ask them how to do it. They are very smart, responsive, patient and creative.