The Premium Website Playbook

The design and conversion principles behind websites that look expensive and still do their job.

A premium website is not a dark background and a serif font. It is the absence of friction, doubt and unfinished detail. These are the principles we apply on every build, in the order they matter.

1. Position before pixels

- Write one sentence that says who it is for and what changes for them. If it needs a comma-spliced paragraph, the offer is not decided yet.
- Choose the single action the site exists to produce: enquire, book, buy, apply. Everything else is support.
- Name the alternative you are beating. Premium pricing is a comparison, and your visitor is already making it.

2. Structure that answers before it impresses

- The first screen must answer three questions: what is this, is it for me, what do I do next.
- Order sections by the buyer's doubt, not by your service list: proof, process, price signal, objection handling, action.
- One idea per screen. If a section needs two headings, it is two sections.
- Put the strongest proof within the first two scrolls. Testimonials buried at the footer convert nobody.

3. Typography and space do the luxury work

- Two typefaces maximum. One display, one text. Set a real scale and stick to it.
- Line length 60 to 75 characters. Line height 1.5 to 1.7 for body copy, tighter only for headlines.
- Space is the cheapest premium signal available. Increase padding before you add decoration.
- Contrast should come from weight, size and colour, not from more fonts or gradients.

4. Imagery with intent

- Every image earns its place: it shows the product, the place, the people or the outcome. Stock atmosphere images are filler.
- Consistent treatment across the set: same crop ratios, same colour grade, same lighting story.
- Compress properly. A beautiful hero that takes four seconds to appear is a broken hero.
- Write alt text as if describing the image to someone who benefits from knowing what it shows.

5. Proof beats adjectives

- Replace 'market leading' with a number, a name, or a before-and-after.
- Case studies should state the problem, the work, and the measured change. Three good ones beat fifteen logos.
- Show the faces and names behind the work. Anonymity reads as risk.
- If a claim cannot be evidenced, remove it. One unverifiable claim discredits the rest of the page.

6. Conversion paths

- One primary call to action, repeated, with a secondary path for people who are not ready.
- Every form field must justify itself. Each extra field costs completions.
- Confirm what happens after submission, and how fast. Uncertainty stops people pressing send.

- Track the action, not the visit. A page view is not a conversion and should never be the KPI.

7. The twelve-point design review

- [ ] **1.** The first screen states what the business does without scrolling.
- [ ] **2.** The primary action is visible on every screen size without hunting.
- [ ] **3.** Headline hierarchy is obvious at arm's length on a phone.
- [ ] **4.** Body text is comfortable at 16px or above on mobile.
- [ ] **5.** Tap targets are at least 44 pixels and not crowded together.
- [ ] **6.** Every link goes somewhere real. No dead ends, no placeholder anchors.
- [ ] **7.** Forms validate kindly and explain errors in plain language.
- [ ] **8.** Proof appears before the first big ask.
- [ ] **9.** Images are compressed and sized, with no layout shift on load.
- [ ] **10.** Colour contrast passes on the actual background, not the design file.
- [ ] **11.** The page still reads well with JavaScript disabled and images blocked.
- [ ] **12.** Nothing on the page is a claim you could not defend to a customer.

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