

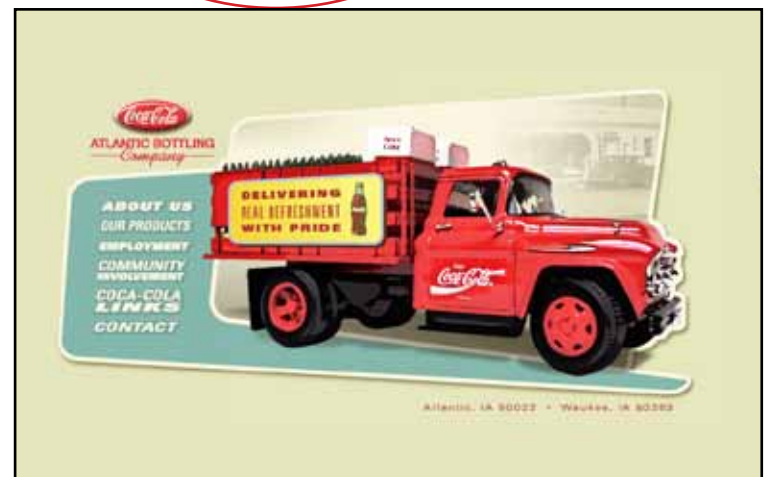
Unity

The Goal for a Unified Look: In any type of design, whether it be art, print or web, the goal is for the composition to be unified. This means that the design works as whole rather than separate pieces. There are several ways to accomplish this - one is what we already worked on is using a grid to align elements. Here we will look at other techniques to unify your design.

Proximity: Grouping components is an easy way to make individual objects work as a unified whole. In the Charm City Cakes site, the requirement on the home page was numerous images of varying cakes. By grouping the images together (in a grid) along with the aligned header and text, the unit works as a whole.



Proximity is again demonstrated in the home page layout for Atlantic Bottling Company. Although the illustration is composed of numerous elements, the closeness, overlapping and grouping of all the elements unifies the design and works as a single visual component.





Grid: Use of a grid in layout design will automatically create a unified design. When components are placed within a grid structure components will align with each other, and spacing between components will be equal.

Repetition: This design component also uses the concept of repetition. Although the actual images are different - repeating the same size, outline, and color adds unity to this design.

Repetition is used on the inside layouts to add unity to the entire site. The color, type treatment, header, and side ads are repeated on the inside pages.



Continuance: Is similar to eye movement - describing the visual flow. When components are aligned, our eye automatically follows the implied path or line. In this example, the eye travels down the left sidebar reading all elements within the same visual path.



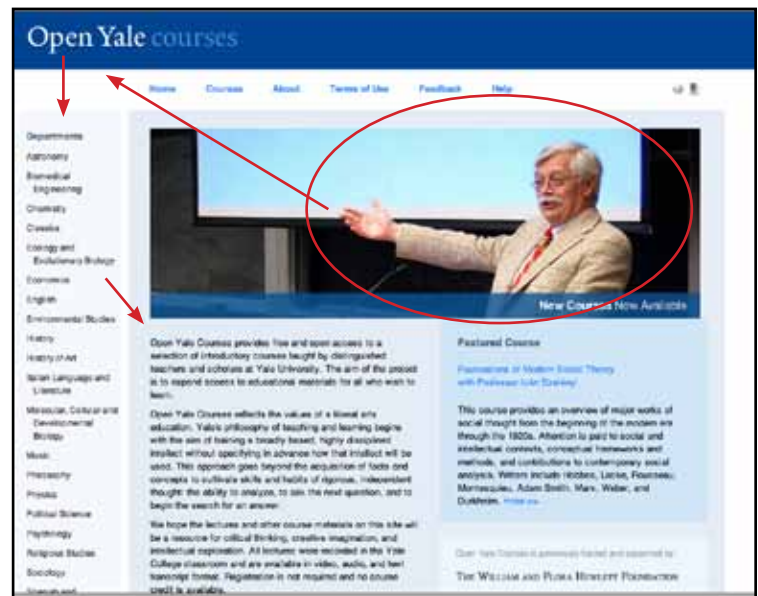
Emphasis

Using a Focal point and eye movement. When planning our design, we need to think about what will be the **focal point** - the **FIRST** element you want the viewer to see. The focal point should attract the attention of the viewer, then draw them into the remaining components of the design. Without a focal point, the view is left confused as to what to look at first. The design then becomes a jumbled mess (in the eyes of the viewer). This is also known as **visual hierarchy**. Think in terms of one, two, and three. The **ONE** = the focal point, **TWO** = the second component the focal point leads to, and **THREE** the smaller elements of your design.

Eye movement describes the visual path your viewer will take.

In this home page design the **focal point** is the image. Our eye is naturally drawn to images of people - especially faces. Notice the **placement** of the image - near the top and just right of center. Viewers typically look in the center of a design first. The fact that the image contains color that is not in the rest of the composition also attracts attention.

The extended arm extending to the left **draws our eye** to the top header, and then to the left sidebar.

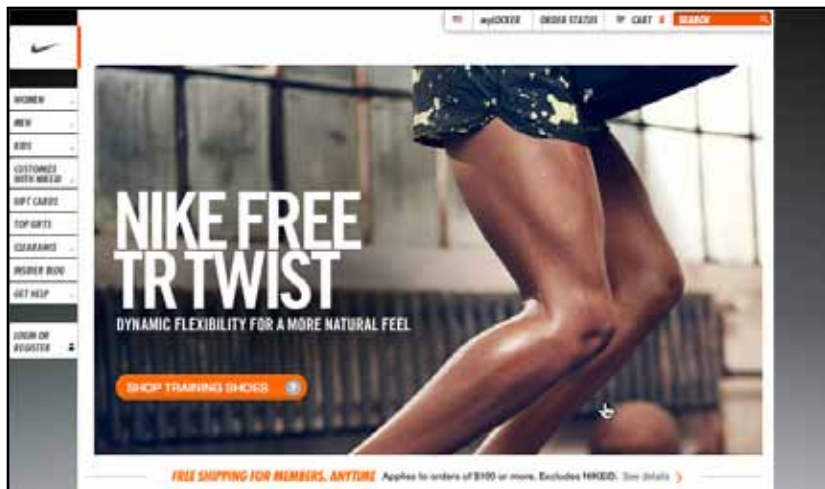


Another example here shows the image, placed center and top, and the "Special Occasions" as the focal point. The contrast in color of the type draws our eye in, then the type moves our eye over to the banner. The arrow shape of the banner moves our eye down to the copy.

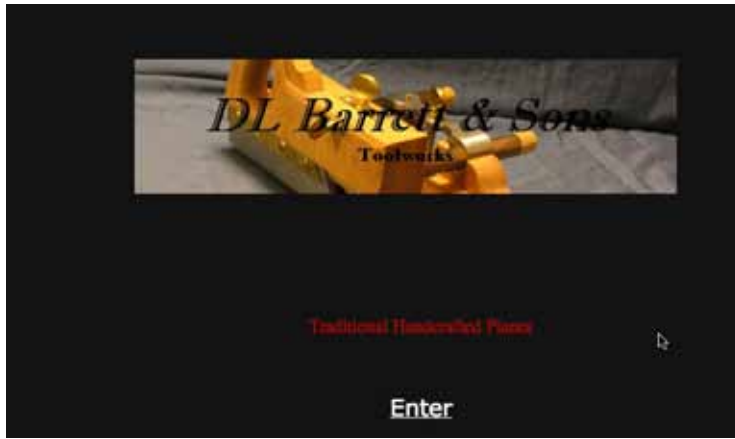


Contrast is another excellent way to show emphasis and provide the viewer with a focal point. Contrast is simply making two components opposite in one way or another. The greater the difference between two components, the greater one will stand out. Contrast can be achieved by opposing color, size, and value.

This site used contrast in several elements: the image is much larger than the other components, making the face and image stand out. Contrast is also achieved in color. The white person is contrasting the dark background.



Nike uses contrast in size to make the image the main focal point against the much smaller navigation. The use of the contrasting bright orange attracts the eye to important smaller components.



Isolation can also be used to show emphasis. Here the image is isolated on the page - standing apart from the other, much smaller components.



Proportion can also play a role. Reversing expected proportions of elements is a nice design trick. Our logical expectations tell us that a wine glass is smaller than a building. Reversing that expectation in design creates interest.



In Adobe's site the numeral 5 stands out because it is proportionally larger than other components on the page.