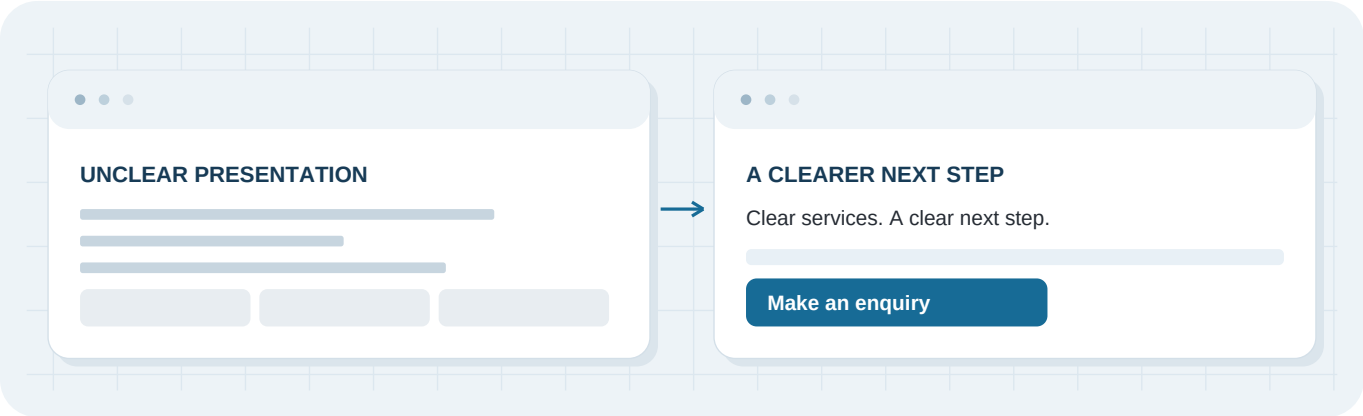
CLARITY / EVIDENCE / CONFIDENCE

First Impressions: Trust & Website Design

Make a professional first impression by reducing uncertainty, not adding decoration.



ILLUSTRATIVE DESIGN / NOT CLIENT RESULTS OR PERFORMANCE DATA

What you will take away

Help visitors answer three practical questions: Is this for me? Can I believe it? What happens next?

Start here

01

Read the first screen without scrolling. Is the service obvious?

02

Find one piece of evidence that supports a claim.

03

Try the next step on a phone and with a keyboard.

A polished design cannot compensate for inaccurate information, weak evidence or a broken contact route. Presentation and substance must work together.

THE PRACTICAL CHECKS / PART 1

Make the first screen useful

Lead with relevance, not a slogan

Use a specific headline explaining the service and intended customer or area. Follow it with a short explanation and one primary next step. Leave detailed background further down the page.

FIRST MOVE Replace a slogan with a clear explanation of the service.

01

Make the content comfortable to use

Use readable type, clear headings, sensible spacing and sufficient contrast. Avoid text over busy images. W3C recommends visible labels and not relying on colour alone to communicate meaning. [1,2]

FIRST MOVE Check headings, contrast, labels and keyboard focus.

02

Show evidence a visitor can evaluate

Use real project photos, accurate team information, customer feedback used with permission and qualifications you can substantiate. Identify demonstration work and illustrative outcomes. Never invent scarcity, endorsements or client results.

FIRST MOVE Choose proof that a visitor can genuinely evaluate.

03

IS THIS FOR ME?

CAN I BELIEVE IT?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

THE PRACTICAL CHECKS / PART 2

Support confidence with substance

Explain the process before asking for commitment

State what happens after an enquiry, what information you need and how pricing or scope is agreed. Distinguish an enquiry from a purchase and a booking request from a confirmed appointment. Avoid response-time promises you cannot keep.

04

FIRST MOVE Explain what will happen after an enquiry.

Make every interaction consistent

Keep button labels specific, navigation predictable and forms clearly labelled. Make error messages useful, preserve entered text where possible and show a clear confirmation. Test keyboard use and contact delivery as well as visual appearance. [2,3]

05

FIRST MOVE Complete the journey and check the confirmation.

In practice / illustrative example

Illustrative copy change: instead of "Exceptional solutions for modern living", a gardener might use "Garden maintenance for homes in Reading", followed by the services offered, real work examples and "Request a garden quote". This demonstrates clearer copy, not a measured client result.

A CHANGE TO TEST / NOT A MEASURED RESULT

Generic slogan → Clear local service → Request a quote

A PLAN YOU CAN USE

Turn insight into a next step

1

LOOK - Check the first screen

Ask someone unfamiliar with the business to explain the offer and next step. Record where they hesitate; do not turn this into an invented conversion statistic.

2

VERIFY - Check the supporting evidence

Remove demo details, expired offers and unsupported claims. Match reviews, project descriptions and team information to the real business.

3

ACT - Complete the journey

Try the primary action on mobile and with a keyboard. Fix unclear labels, unreadable text, errors and dead ends before adding decorative effects.

Your working brief

What should a visitor understand first:

Evidence that genuinely supports our offer:

Uncertainty to remove from the next step:

Mobile / keyboard test owner and review date:

KEEP THE NEXT STEP USEFUL

A confident design needs credible information.

Talk through your website with Joseph

Share the page you want to improve and the customer action it should support. Joseph can discuss focused design improvements before a full rebuild.

Start a conversation with Joseph >

A useful decision, not a bigger to-do list

Choose one issue you can evidence. Agree the next action and who owns it. Review an outcome relevant to your business rather than treating a visual refresh as proof of better results.

Research notes and further reading

[1] W3C WAI: Designing for accessibility
https://www.w3.org/WAI/tips/designing/

[2] W3C WAI: Labeling controls
https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/forms/labels/

[3] W3C WAI: Form instructions
https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/forms/instructions/

Research checked 25 October 2026. Examples and diagrams are illustrative, not client results. This guide is educational, not a full technical, accessibility or legal audit. Outcomes depend on the business, implementation and market.