Updating the Sign Guy Website

a 4-H Project by

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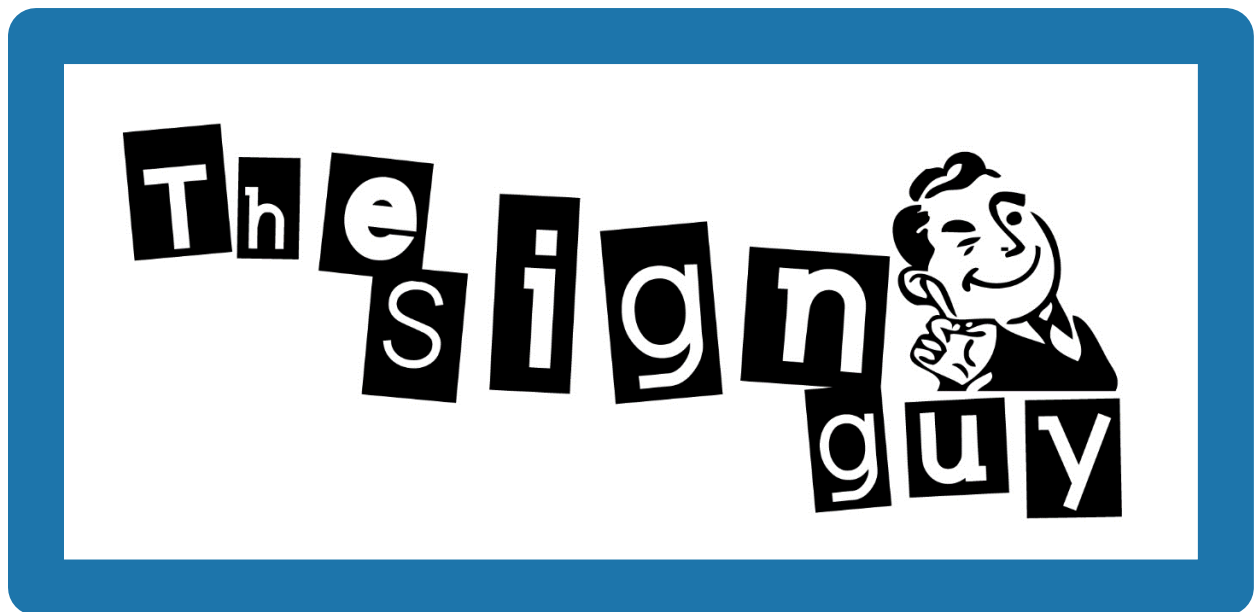
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Introduction

A few months ago, in February of this year, I was doing some work for the business my dad co-owns, The Sign Guy. He needed a few pictures of his signs off of the website, and I was looking in the photo gallery to see if I could find some good pictures of the signs to send him. The first thing I noticed about the website was how few pictures were on the site. There were only a handful of pictures on the site, and there were a couple duplicates, or near duplicates, of almost every picture. I thought that was strange, but I also figured my dad nor his co-owner had much time to take pictures of the signs when they delivered them, so that probably explained the lack of pictures on the site.

However, as I spent more time on the website, I also noticed that the design choices were a bit questionable. The main color of the site was a dark beige, which looks okay on drywall, but doesn't look very good on most modern computer monitors or mobile device screens. On top of that, the colors on the site didn't match the company colors of The Sign Guy in the slightest. If I looked at the website without the logo at the top of every page, I would have no idea what company the website belonged to, which is not something you want to have in a website that customers visit regularly to contact you and see what your brand is about.

On top of not being aesthetically pleasing, the website was missing many things I would consider essential on a business site. There were only four pages of content on the site, which didn't have very much information. There weren't any reviews from any of their customers, or anywhere customers could go to find reviews from satisfied customers. To find reviews from anyone, visitors had to visit Google and look up the business that way. Even then there were only one or two reviews about the company. If potential customers wanted to find anything about the business, they had to either send an email or call the company. Most people don't want to take the time to call someone if they don't know anything at all about the business.

After spending a while looking at the website, I decided that the website definitely needed to be updated to match modern design standards and to have more information that will be useful to potential customers. The site was severely out of date and may have been pushing away potential customers with the poor design and organization of the site. I decided to discuss the matter with my dad, and he agreed to let me redesign the website.

Chapter One: The Redesign

Section One: Color Palette

As I mentioned previously, the color choices of the website weren't visually appealing, nor did they match the company colors of The Sign Guy. Since first impressions are extremely important to visitors and potential customers, I decided the color palette was the first thing I needed to work on. After spending a couple of days looking at color combinations and coming up with some of my own ideas, I settled on a very minimalistic look that fit the logo of The Sign Guy. Since the company logo is black text with an image on a white background, I went with the same colors throughout most of the site. The background of each page is white so the logo background doesn't look out of place, and most of the text is white because it is either on an image or a color background.
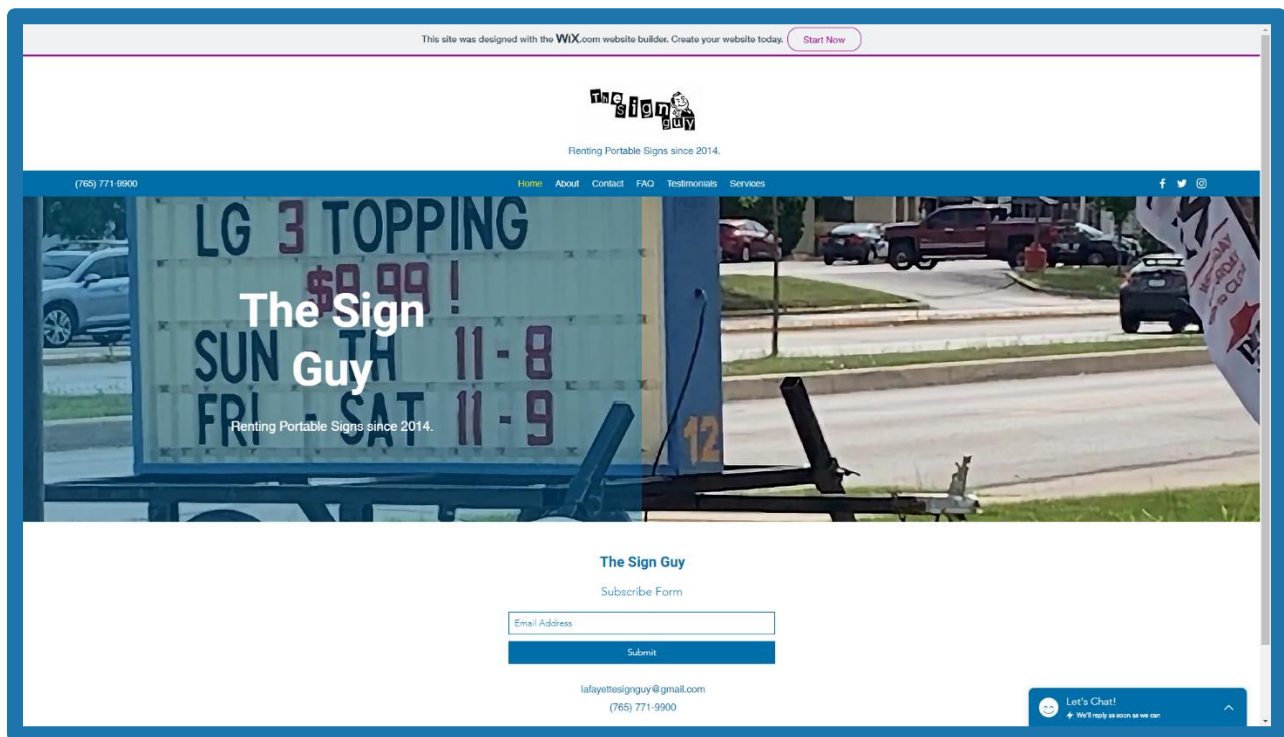
Fig. 1.1.1: The Home page of the site, featuring a minimalistic background with blue highlights

In the initial draft of the site, I didn't incorporate any color into the website at all; I left everything as a white background with mostly black text. Although this color combination matched the logo of The Sign Guy, it didn't match the colors of the company. When people see a blue sign with yellow lettering in the area, they think of it as a Sign Guy sign. In fact, people have called The Sign Guy from a couple

towns over about someone who owns a sign that is a similar shade of blue about reckless driving, because people recognize the color as a signature of the Sign Guy brand.

Because of this, I decided to incorporate blue into the website, rather than leaving it as an extremely minimalistic design with only black and white. I looked up the brand of paint used on the signs, and matched the color code to the website to get a shade of blue that almost perfectly matches the color of the signs in pictures *(see fig. 1.1.1).* Obviously, the color isn't perfect, but when put next to a picture of a sign, it looks pretty close, and is certainly recognizable as the same color.

Section Two: Site Layout

After choosing the color palette of the website, it was time to decide how I wanted to layout the website. I wanted it to be easy to navigate and be organized in a way that made sense. Because of this, I decided to layout the website in several separate pages, each with a different purpose. I wanted it to be clear where to go for each reason someone might be visiting the website. I also wanted new visitors to be able to find everything they want to know about the business easily without having to look through a lot of information to find out what they want to know.

Fig 1.2.1: The navigation bar at the top of the website.

Each page on the website has a limited amount of information; essentially, I only included the necessary information on each page of the site to limit the amount of text visitors would have to scroll through. This prevents people from being overwhelmed from a large amount on one single page. Hopefully, this choice in design will help potential customers be able to understand more easily what the business is about and how they can start advertising with The Sign Guy.

Chapter Two: Site Information

Section One: Copying Information Over

After figuring out the design choices for the website, it was time to put the information needed on the site into place. The first thing I did was look at the old website and see what information I could pull into the new website. As the website

hadn't been well managed over the years, there wasn't much I could use from the old site to put into the new one. However, I was able to take some of the basic ideas from that site and use them in the redesigned website.

Fig 2.1.1: The Home page of the old Sign Guy website

Even though there wasn't much useful information on the old website, I did like the look of the About page, in terms of the information provided. I decided to incorporate the information into a new section on the About page of the new website *(see fig. 2.1.2).* Although the old About page didn't include much information about the company itself, I did like the inclusion of a couple reasons to rent a sign from The Sign Guy.
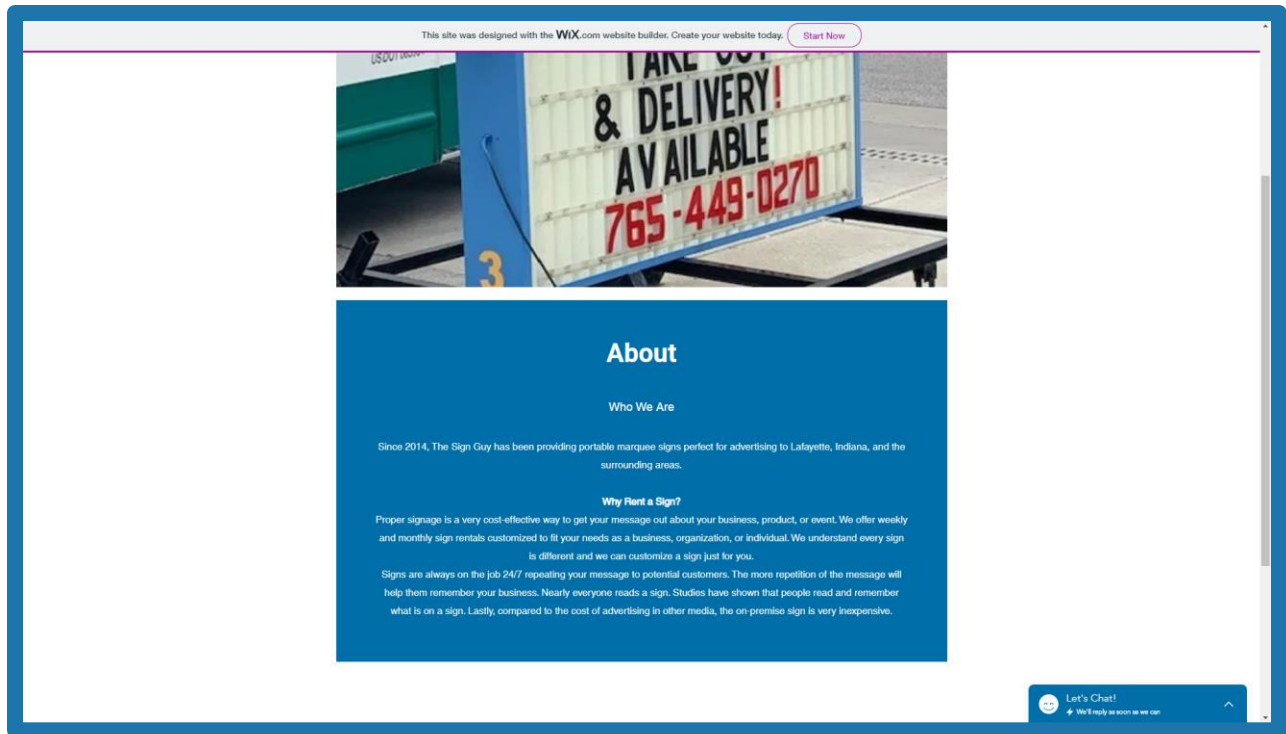
Fig. 2.1.2: The About page of the site, featuring a section about why signs work

Section Two: Frequently Asked Questions

One page I felt was really needed on the website was a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. I get so many messages about The Sign Guy with questions that can be answered in one or two sentences on a website. Some questions are similar to "What services do you offer?" I feel that these questions need to be put on an FAQ page *(see fig. 2.2.1),* rather than being answered by myself or my dad every time the question is asked. This can save us time and make it a lot easier for customers to have their questions answered. Although there are only a few questions on the page at the moment, this page can be expanded upon as more questions are frequently asked.
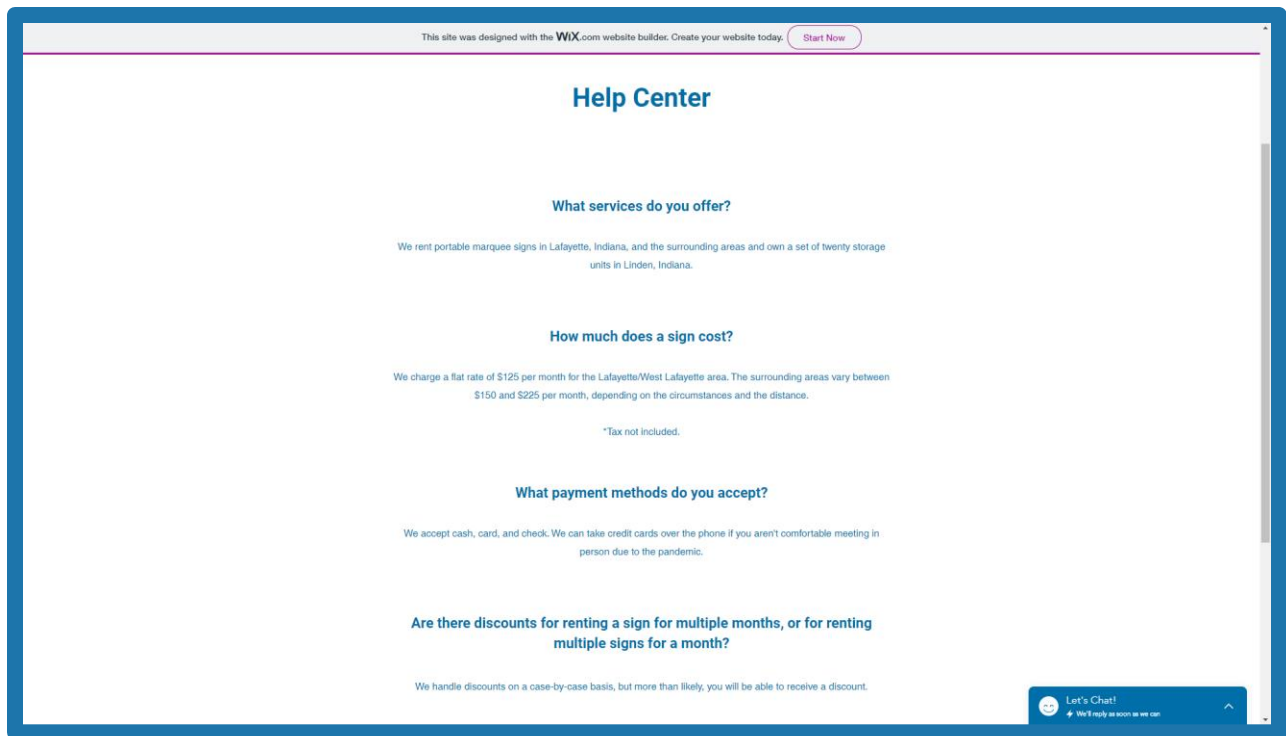
Fig. 2.2.1: The FAQ page of the site, featuring some questions that are frequently asked

Section Three: Testimonials

One thing I felt was absolutely crucial to running a business is a place for customers to leave their reviews of the company. At the moment, the only place to leave reviews of the company is as a Google review, which isn't linked to the website or any social media accounts. To solve this issue, I added a Testimonials page *(see fig. 2.3.1)* where reviews from customers can be showcased so people can see reviews of the company from satisfied customers. This will help visitors and potential customers see that people are happy with The Sign Guy, making them more likely to rent a sign.

The Sign Guy was an awesome company to work with! They brought out a great sign to put on the road in front of our school to advertise a Family Fun Night and 5K! They brought the sign exactly when we asked for it and it had the right advertising. I really believe that it helped increase the number of our participants. Thank you to The Sign Guy!

Noel C.

We used The Sign Guy to advertise a position available. It was the easiest and least expensive advertising we could find. We found someone ... that person is still a valuable employee. Thank you Sign Guy!

Jennifer N.

As an avid garage sale shopper, The Sign Guy not only directs me to the sale, but they also give customers a month to advertise so that I can plan out my garage sale schedule.

Angela O.

I used a sign from The Sign Guy to give away some puppies. My phone rang off the hook all afternoon on the first day the sign was put up. These signs really work! And it was really cheap!

Don A.

Fig. 2.3.1: The Testimonials page of the site, featuring reviews from satisfied customers

Section Four: Services

One thing I felt wasn't made very clear on the original website was the services offered by The Sign Guy. Although I included this in the FAQ page, I felt it was necessary to add a page dedicated to the offered services *(see fig. 2.4.1)* in case someone only wanted to know what services were offered. Many people have questions about what The Sign Guy does other than rent portable signs, so I decided to add a page dedicated to answering that question.
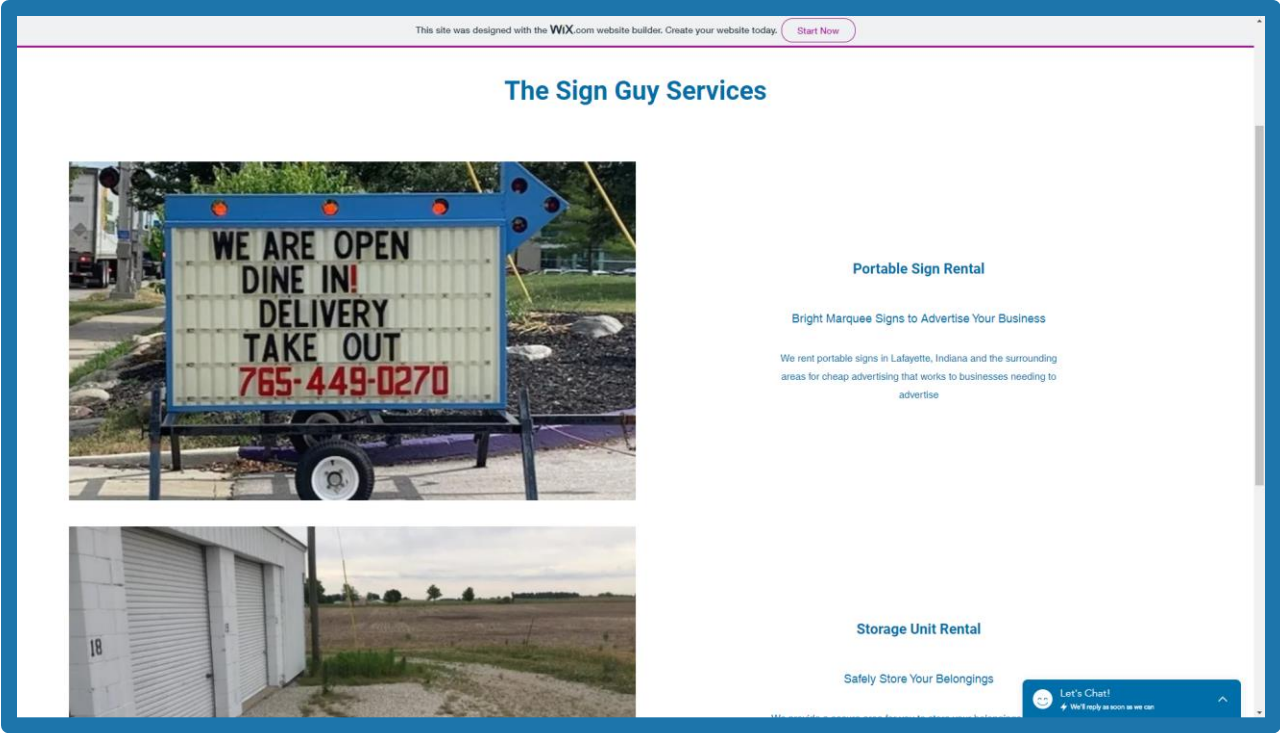
Fig. 2.4.1: The Services page of the site, featuring the services offered by The Sign Guy