Design And Deploy Guide

How Clickflame designs and ships local business websites, from the first idea to the week after launch. Public edition, free to use.

Clickflame, Long Beach, California. Version two, November 9, 2026. Written by Anthony Limpert with the Clickflame build team.

How We Made This Guide

Since late October we added design rules from about fifteen places. Our own best sites. A teardown of top agency sites. A study of modern browser features. A study of twenty four strong small business sites. The design teacher Marcelo Cedeno. Notes on every first screen that looked weak. By November the rules lived in four different spots, and they did not all agree.

Then we ran a study of designers who shared their own sites in a Facebook group. 95 sites came in. We studied 27 in depth and rebuilt 42. The lesson was plain. Phone speed and one clear next step beat decoration every time.

One site won outright. Elmir Mammadli built deslop.elmir.dev, a free tool that opens a site in a real browser and flags everything that makes it look AI made. It was the only site in the study to score 100 on the phone test and 100 on access. His rules are an open skill under the MIT license on GitHub, and this guide uses them with credit.

We read his rules line by line against ours. Most matched. A few fought things we do on purpose. On November 9 Anthony settled the fights in three calls, and this guide is the result.

The Three Calls

1. Title Case stays on headings, buttons and menus, main words only, the way we have done it for twenty years. Small words such as a, an, the, and, or, of, to, in, on, for, at and by stay lower case unless they come first.
2. A site may keep up to three of his flagged looks on purpose, and only with a written reason tied to the real business. Glass on a car that is the product is a reason. Glass because it looks premium is not.
3. Short three word slogans are out. Our own home page line changed to We Make Local Businesses the First Call on Google.

Which Looks We Allow

Group	Looks
Always Fine	Plain readable fonts. An open now dot when the hours are real. One small label over a heading every three sections, holding a real fact such as a place, a price or a license. Numbers on real steps where order matters. Dark shading on a photo so the words on it can be read.
Kept On Purpose, Up To Three	Glass or frosted panels on the real product. Glow. Buttons that pull toward the pointer. Grain. Gradient backgrounds used for looks. Each one needs a written reason before any page is built.
Never	Pill tags. Fancy italics. Squeezed letter spacing. Extra divider lines. Colored stripes on cards. Fake diagram labels. Repeated notes. Code style labels. Decorative 01 and 02 numbering. Pictures made of keyboard characters. Card corners over 8 pixels. Typewriter fonts. All caps labels. Periods at the end of headings.

Copy and honesty get no allowance at all. No stock words like seamless or elevate, no hype openers, no emoji, no exclamation marks. No number without a source, no proof nobody supplied, no invented people, no fake urgency, no link or form that goes nowhere, no placeholder text.

The Pill Rule

We counted the pill shaped chips and buttons on two of our own live auto repair demos. One showed 21 on its home page and the other showed 17. Most were the same facts said twice, or a long row of choices nobody reads. Now a page shows six pill shapes at most, buttons included.

1. Rating, license and hours chips in the top screen become one plain line of text, such as 4.9 on Google, 42 reviews, 15 years hands on.
2. Badges that repeat the top screen come off. Each license shows once, as an icon with plain words.
3. A picker with more than four choices becomes four large tap rows with an icon, plus Something Else that opens a text box.
4. Town chips become one sentence naming the towns, with a Check Your Town box for anywhere else.
5. Each screen gets one main button. A second choice becomes a text link with an arrow. Two buttons that do the same thing become one.

The Nine Steps

Step 1. Look Before You Build

- Check what you already know about the business and the trade before you research again.
- Buy the domain at regular price and keep one host per site.

Step 2. Facts First

- One facts file holds the phone, hours, prices, license and service area. Every page reads from it.
- The Google Business Profile is the source for name, address and phone.
- Every number, rating, award and review gets a source. No source means it stays off the page. Two sources that disagree means publish neither and ask.

Step 3. The Design Brief

- Name the one object on the first screen and where its light comes from.
- Point at one site you admire and say what you take from it.
- Write three directions that differ in layout, pick one and say why.
- Take the colors off the logo. One accent. A light base unless the brand is truly dark.
- Write the exact headline, offer line and two button labels.
- Write the Kept On Purpose line, up to three looks, each with a reason.

Step 4. The First Screen

- Build it before anything else and do not move on until it holds up.
- Full bleed video or one big real object, with real footage first.
- One headline, one offer line under 20 words, one loud button and one quiet button.
- A moving detail that shows the real product, and it must still look finished with motion off.
- The phone gets its own layout, with both buttons above the bottom bar.
- No stat row, no logo strip, no menu over a photo.

Step 5. The Rest Of The Page

- Change the layout from one section to the next so no two look alike.
- Proof is word for word quotes, real photos and links to the source.
- Every lead form asks for a phone number and reaches a real person. Send a test lead.
- A map on every page. Nothing scrolls sideways. No pop up before the visitor has read a word.

Step 6. Copy

- Grade 9 reading level or lower. Answer first, then the detail.
- Title Case headings, typed that way in the text.
- Swap every adjective for a fact the owner can stand behind, such as a time, a price, an area or a name. With no fact, cut the line.
- Page titles lead with the place and the service, then the phone.

Step 7. Finish The Build

- Structured data that parses on every page.
- A fix so the page does not shrink into a strip on very wide screens.
- A cookie notice only where ad pixels run.

Step 8. Check Before You Ship

- Look at the first screen at 1440, 375 and 3440 pixels wide.
- Every text on its background at 4.5 to 1 contrast or better, nothing under 14 pixels.
- Run the look, copy and honesty lists. Looks at zero or on the keep line. Copy and honesty at zero.
- Click every link, button and form at desktop and phone width, and write down where each one went.
- A phone Lighthouse score of 90 or more on the home page.

Step 9. Ship And After

- One deploy per round. The http and www addresses send visitors to the https bare domain.
- Look at the live page at all three widths.
- Submit to Google Search Console, Bing and IndexNow. Watch the first calls and forms that week.

Credits

Look and copy rules adapted from AI Deslop by Elmir Mammadli, MIT license. First screen method from the teaching of Marcelo Cedeno. Everything else from building local business sites at Clickflame since 2004.