

KRTutor Website Redesign: Big Possibilities for Small Business



Role: Product Designer

Background:

Through the design company Phlint, I was given the task of redesigning the landing page for a small tutoring business in the Midwestern United States.* The KR team specializes in college essays and tutoring for preparatory exams such as the SAT and ACT.

The website was out of date, and they needed a design update as well as a visual and technical audit of their current website. They seeked a designer who could interpret and bring the company values to life with strong branding and UI.

*Prompt and project not sponsored or commissioned by KR Tutor.

Process:

Overview:

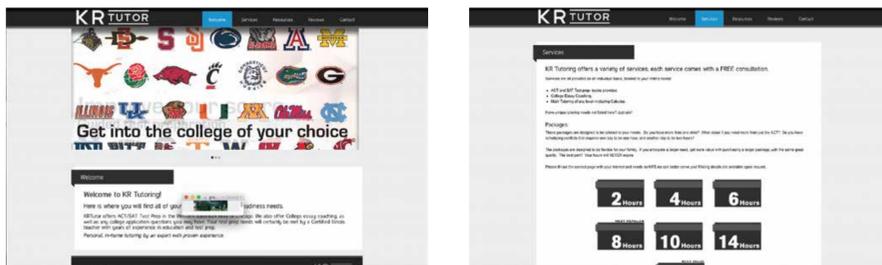
My process followed the following structure:

Explore, Understand, Evaluate, Sketch, Expound

(Based on Susan Verba's **Sponge, Filter, Voice**)

Explore:

I first examined the current website, and did a comprehensive visual and technical overview, so I had a deeper understanding of how to explain the issues in my writeup.



KR Tutor Screenshots, April 2017

Some of the salient discoveries included:

- The website was not responsively coded or designed, This makes viewing on mobile devices difficult; that is significant, since 2 of every 3 minutes spent online are on mobile devices. *
*Source: comScore via Hubspot.
- There are three typefaces in the Impresa Wordpress theme. This is visually distracting, and doesn't add to the practical value of the site.
- Contact information is not available anywhere on the website, which will drive away 44% of website visitors. *
According to 51% of people, this is the most important element missing from many company websites. *
*Source: KoMarketing, via Hubspot.

(Full visual and technical audit can be available by request.)

Understand:

There is no user-centered design without the user. Next I had to understand who KR Tutor's clients were.

KR Tutor's clients are parents in the midwest seeking college preparatory tutoring for their high-school age kids. Because data from KR Tutor was sparse, I did outside research in order to make educated, statistics-based conclusions.

SAT tutoring in the Western Suburban area of Chicago costs \$55 per hour on average *, so I inferred that the users are likely to be middle-class income families, which implies a median household income of \$54,726. ** Given that the parent that is using the website is likely to be working as well, that results in a short viewing period, leaving not a lot of time for successful conversion.

*Source: Thumbtack (<https://www.thumbtack.com/p/sat-tutoring-cost>)

**Source: Best Places (<http://www.bestplaces.net/economy/zip-code/illinois/addison/60101>)

After studying the common user painpoints and the website, I crafted design principles based on company values.

Evaluate:

I carefully compiled a list of the values that KR Tutor possessed and presented as a company as seen on their website:



When I studied KR Tutor's website content and factored in user pain points, detractors, and aspirations, I drafted the following design principles.



Holistically, I knew that it was crucial to redesign the website to display all the crucial onboarding information (success statistics, contact form, and types of services) on the homepage to maximize the chances of repeat site visitors.

After making holistic design principles to follow based on company values, I crafted deliberate and precise design decisions to bring those principles to life. I researched the psychology of website design, current design trends, and cognitive psychology findings so that the design would appeal to the modern audience but also be accessible to parents in their 40s and 50s who would be the end-users.

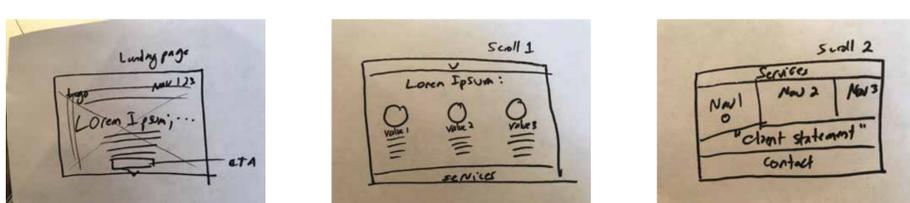
Some key decisions included:

- Hero images, catch phrases, and sections that either end above the fold or give the user obvious cues to keep scrolling.
- Following the Gutenberg Diagram-- which says that users will read from top-left to bottom-right, given no other visual hierarchy-- I chose to adopt the repeated z-pattern (zigzag pattern) to keep the user engaged for every screen.
- Utilize a grid layout that is heavily influenced by mobile design and will easily convert (both in terms of design and in terms of code) to mobile design sensibilities.

Sketch:

After considering the design decisions, I researched competitors to get a stronger sense of information architecture and site flow. I noticed that successful business websites utilized vertical scroll to minimize page reload and not losing users because of apparently missing key information. I decided on a landing page flow consisting of hero image, call to action, company values, service packages, customer recommendations, and contact information. Structuring the website so the main content is one layer is a typical business tactic for both transparency and for user retention.

Here are some low-fi wireframes:



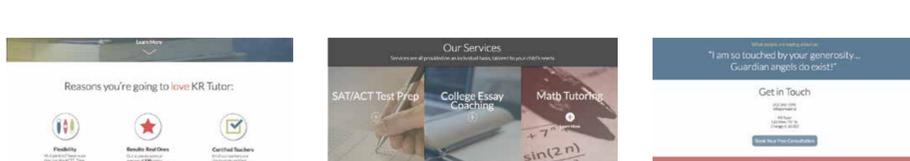
Expound:

After developing a skeleton for the website design, I utilized color theory, color psychology, and flat design to develop the color scheme, typography, and general visual design. Here were my key decisions:

- Using one typeface with many weights has the benefits of simplicity, which will better ensure that the parents stay on the website longer; it also has the benefits of varied typography through use of different font weights, to help ensure clear visual hierarchy. I chose Lato for all of these properties.
- Blue communicates reliability and trust
- Red communicates excitement and action--hence the intentional use of red as the background color for all calls to action on the webpage.
- I chose the color palette based on the intersection of men and women's favorite colors. Blue and green were both cited as top three favorite colors for both men and women.

After determining the visual design, I chose hero images and added modern features such as gradients and drop shadows to add visual hierarchy and a sense of modernity.

Final Design



Next Steps:

If I were to continue on the project, I would conduct in-depth user testing next, and validate or invalidate my assumptions about site usability and user delight. I would then evaluate the results, and translate those results into quantifiable design decisions to be implemented. Then we would go live and collect data on user activity, and test and modify the website as needed until desired user retention and conversion rates were achieved.