

# Thinking of Updating your Website in 2019? Here are Some Design Trends to Consider

Your audience, i.e. your members, prospects, and the industry you support, are more distracted than ever. They're bombarded from all angles electronically, and their attention is stretched in many different ways, through websites, email, and social media.



That audience visits your website for a number of reasons, but for the most part, they're doing it to gather information, whether to sign up for an educational program, learn what you do, or understand how to join your chapter.

Many chapters take a one-and-done approach to their web design. They update their websites and then make no changes to it for years and years. To fully engage your audience, a website's design needs to remain just as up-to-date and relevant as its content. If your audience doesn't find your site engaging and easy-to-use, without distractions, they'll go somewhere else to get what they need. If you want your website and your other electronic platforms – think social media and email – to push

you above your competition, photos of people staring off into the sunset will not cut it.

When was the last time you reviewed and updated the design of your web platforms? If it's been more than a few years, it's time. As you close out 2018, consider reviewing and implementing some of the following, which are showing up on lists of major web trends for 2019.

**Mobile friendly design.** Think about where and how you're reading this post. On your tablet? Your phone? Most of us no longer sit at desks to go online. We're doing it on the run. Mobile usage has overtaken desktop usage, and to keep up with this change, chapters need websites that render



correctly on mobile devices, to make it easy for visitors to find exactly what they need.

**Bright colors.** Color is one of the easiest tools a chapter can use to improve communications with its audience. Strategic use of color draws attention to areas, focusing the eye on one area over another. And, there's science to back it up. Studies show that color impacts our emotions, including how we feel, our mood, and our actions. Are there places on your site that could use a little color to drive readers to do what you want them to do? Pick a bright color from your logo or brand standards and utilize it to draw attention to live links or buttons.

**Natural shapes.** In previous years, designers have used a lot of straight lines and sharp edges – think square, triangle, rectangle, etc. But, if you think about it, are there really any straight lines in nature? 2019 will see natural, fluid shapes that are easier on the eye, and they'll be used to better engage and comfort readers.

**Minimalism.** Less really is more when it comes to web design. The less extra "stuff" on a website, the easier it is for the audience to find what they want. But...there's a fine line. Using a minimalist design doesn't mean deleting almost everything from a site and leaving big white gaps on a page. When a site is designed correctly following the minimalist trend, you'll give your audience exactly what they need, no more, no less, and the user experience they want.

The website for the Houston Psychological Association, a StarChapter customer, is a great example of the use of minimalism. Their president-elect, Tyson Reuter, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Psychology Houston, PC, explains why they implemented that trend:

So many aspects of our lives involve internet, social media, and other forms of "screen time." First impressions are everything, especially in a world characterized by lightning fast, snap decisions (think swipe left/right, scrolling through your news feed). There's just so much data out there we're bombarded with every minute, that an individual's experience, whether customer, client, or patient, needs to be clear, concise, and navigable - the first time - because you may not get a second.

Dr. Reuter's comments can really be applied to any of these trends. When used correctly, minimalism, color, etc. all make using your website easier on your audience. Whatever changes you choose, whether the ones we've discussed, or others, don't make them just to do something new and risk losing your audience. Like all good trends, if it doesn't fit your brand or your audience, skip it. A brightly colored design might not work for your audience, but using some fluid shapes might be all you need to draw them in.

