

PRACTICAL BUSINESS GUIDE

Above the Fold

Explain the three things a visitor needs answered in the first view, and how to check whether the opening screen earns the next scroll.

The Three Questions Every Visitor Asks

Above the fold is the part of a page visible before scrolling. Because screen sizes differ, the practical test is whether the first view gives a stranger enough orientation to continue.

01

Answer what this is.

A visitor can recognise the service category without decoding brand language first.

02

Signal who it is for.

The intended customer or problem is visible before the visitor has to infer it.

03

Make the next action obvious.

The primary link or button clearly looks like an action rather than decoration.

[Use this guide →](#)

PURPOSE

The problem this guide helps you see

MISSION

Explain the three things a visitor needs answered in the first view, and how to check whether the opening screen earns the next scroll.

WRITTEN FOR

Businesses whose home or service pages begin with large imagery, brand statements or general introductions but do not quickly orient a new visitor.

USEFUL BOUNDARY

The opening screen does not need every detail. Its job is to orient the visitor, establish relevance and make the next action obvious.

DEFINITION

Above the fold is the part of a page visible before scrolling. Because screen sizes differ, the practical test is whether the first view gives a stranger enough orientation to continue.

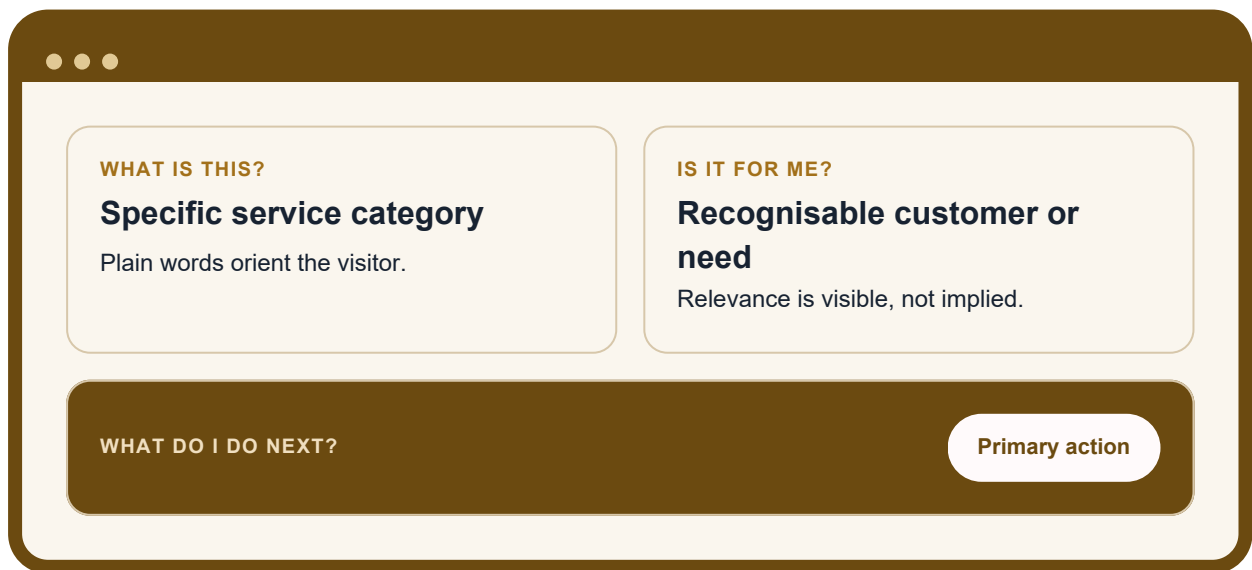
THINK OF IT LIKE THIS

A shop window can look beautiful and still fail if the passer-by cannot tell what the shop sells, whether it is relevant, or how to enter.

MECHANISM

The Three Questions Every Visitor Asks

The useful test is whether the page helps the visitor understand, trust and act - not whether every planned block is present.



First-view test: hide the rest of the page. Can a stranger answer all three questions from what remains?

USEFUL TEST

Test the live page as a first-time visitor on the real device. Judge the decision it supports, not the intention behind the design.

COMMERCIAL EFFECT

Why this changes what visitors do next

Page structure changes how much effort a visitor spends understanding, trusting and acting on the offer.

WHAT CHANGES

Faster orientation

A visitor can recognise the service category without decoding brand language first.

WHAT CHANGES

Lower ambiguity

The intended customer or problem is visible before the visitor has to infer it.

WHAT CHANGES

Action confidence

The primary link or button clearly looks like an action rather than decoration.

WHAT CHANGES

Meaningful imagery

Photography supports the offer instead of carrying the entire explanation.

WHAT CHANGES

Consistent page story

Major pages reinforce the same proposition rather than making visitors start over.

WHAT CHANGES

A better sequence

The first view earns attention; proof, detail and depth follow afterwards.

Evidence boundary: structure can change comprehension immediately. Commercial effects still depend on the traffic, offer and the rest of the live journey.

FAULT REGISTER • 1 OF 2

What I would flag

Severity reflects customer impact. Each fault is paired with the visible consequence and what it costs.

CRITICAL**None of the three questions is answered**

The opening view uses space without stating what the business does, who the page is for or what action is available.

Visitors spend attention decoding the page before they know whether continuing is worthwhile.

MAJOR**The business name leads the message**

The hero assumes the visitor already knows the brand and recognises its category.

Unfamiliar visitors receive identity before relevance.

MAJOR**A large image has no supporting answer**

The visual is expected to communicate the whole proposition on its own.

Visitors can admire the image and still be unsure what is being offered.

FAULT REGISTER • 2 OF 2

What I would flag

Severity reflects customer impact. Each fault is paired with the visible consequence and what it costs.

MODERATE

The action blends into decoration

The button has similar weight, colour or styling to non-action elements.

The visitor knows what they want to do but cannot identify where to do it.

MODERATE

Different pages imply different answers

Homepage, service and campaign pages describe the offer or audience inconsistently.

Returning visitors reconcile conflicting messages instead of building confidence.

READ NEXT

Section Hierarchy

Once the opening earns the scroll, decide what the visitor should see next.

Read next →

CORRECTION

The assumption that keeps this problem alive

COMMON MYTH

A striking visual is enough to hook someone.

Better framing: A visual can earn attention, but attention is not orientation. The first view still needs to answer whether the page is relevant and what the visitor can do next.

WHY IT PERSISTS

Taste leads

The hero is judged as a visual composition before it is tested as an explanation.

WHY IT PERSISTS

Brand familiarity

Internal teams already know the category, so missing context is hard for them to notice.

WHY IT PERSISTS

Everything competes

Trying to fit the whole page into the first screen weakens the few answers that matter most.

WORKING CONTROL

Name the thing

Use a plain service or category statement.

WORKING CONTROL

Name the relevance

Make the customer, use case or problem recognisable.

WORKING CONTROL

Name the action

Give one primary next step distinct visual weight.

Useful boundary: Reduce uncertainty for the visitor before adding visual sophistication.

STANDARD

What a working version looks like

This describes the condition to reach. The exact implementation depends on the page, customer and offer.

AREA	FAILING PATTERN	WORKING PATTERN
Offer	Brand-led headline with an unclear category	A stranger can state what the page offers
Audience	Visitor must infer relevance	The intended customer or problem is recognisable
Hero image	Carries the meaning alone	Supports clear explanatory copy
Action	Looks similar to decoration	Primary action is visually distinct
Consistency	Major pages tell different stories	Core proposition stays coherent
Sequence	Everything competes for first-screen space	Orientation comes first; proof and detail follow

QUICK SELF-CHECK

- A stranger can state what the page offers without scrolling
- The intended customer or problem is recognisable
- The image supports rather than replaces the answer
- One primary action is visually obvious
- The message agrees with deeper service pages
- The first screen does not attempt to contain the whole page

RELEVANT FOLLOW-UP SERVICE

Website Snapshot

Use this when you want the live customer decision tested on the actual page and device.

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DUE DILIGENCE

Five questions worth asking whoever maintains the page

Clear answers should describe the current live experience and the customer decision the page is designed to support.

01

What would a stranger say this business does after seeing only the first screen?

02

Which words tell the visitor the page is for them?

03

Which element is the primary action?

04

Does the mobile first view answer the same three questions?

05

Do the major pages tell one coherent story?

WHAT A USEFUL ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

Ask what the visitor can see and do now on the current page and device - not what the design was supposed to achieve at launch.

The Three Questions Every Visitor Asks.

Answer what this is. Signal who it is for. Make the next action obvious. Make the visitor's next decision easier to understand and take.

PRIMARY NEXT STEP

Section Hierarchy

Once the opening earns the scroll, decide what the visitor should see next.

[Continue →](#)

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Want help applying this to your business?

Bring me the page where the opening screen feels impressive but not quite clear. I can show which of the three questions is still being left to the visitor.

[Discuss the task →](#)