

Design and Style Guide

Brent Stone Creative

Small Business Owner

Collette



Age: 37

Location: Albany, NY

Education: MBA, University of Wisconsin

Focus: International Relations

Owner: Envision Me Now, LLC

Salary: \$85,000, but varies.

Key Characteristics

- Upbeat practical business person who loves people
- From a rural county, she values down-to-earth qualities

"I want a website that informs, engages to better run my business."

Collette has owned her business for three years. Her consulting firm "Envision Me Now" persuades people to create a better image for themselves as they interview with potential employers. She has collected data on 20 key traits that businesses are looking for in new hires. Using these key traits, she personalizes and creates a professional plan for each client. She has traveled extensively checking out worldwide markets with little success.

Collette is looking to expand her business, and thinks that getting a web presence would be a good advertising move. She has a relatively small budget and wants to get the most for her money. She is looking for a web designer that understands the most current trends in website appearance and functionality but can be affordable. She has an idea of what she wants in a website, but needs help with the details. Like many clients, she has no idea how much work goes into designing and building a website. Going with a smaller website building company, she hopes to get personalized service and attention just like she offers her own clients.

Collette is a working mother with a stay-at-home husband who takes care of their two teenage girls. Because she is the breadwinner in her family, she feels the pressure to perform and keep making money. With a high level of stress, she needs a web site design company that won't hound her for details all the time on how to build her web site.

Goals

- Grow her company by getting a basic website on the Internet
- Keep the website information heavy
- Build a potential client base through social marketing

Questions

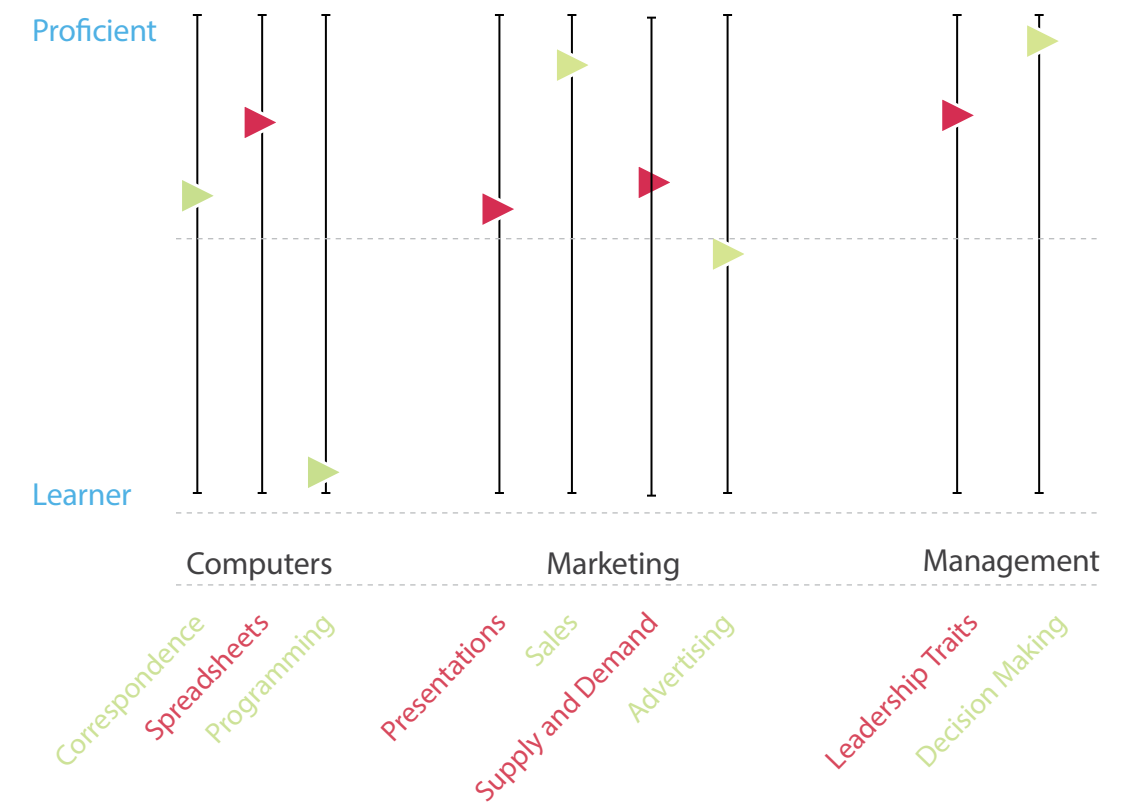
- How big of a website do I need?
- What in the world is SEO?

Influencers

- Advertising in an effective way
- Data driven and fiscally sound
- Peers who say a website is an absolute necessity
- Freedom to build a dream web site that's inviting like a good country home

Frustrations & Pain Points

- Past companies that have ripped her off by unclear deadlines and budgets building a web site for her and not delivering a working website
- Dealing with another person who is incompetent. (She doesn't have time or extra money for that.)
- Just found out her youngest daughter has heart murmur so she needs more revenue to pay for her medical bills.



MBA College Student

Jonathan



“I need to get the kind of presence that can only be found on the web.”

Jonathan began his college career as a biology major, but switched midway through his sophomore year. After taking a public speaking course, he found he really enjoyed getting up in front of groups and persuading them to his point of view.

He has one semester left in his MBA degree, where he will be pitching his business idea at the Business Resource Center G2M (Go To Market) training program. Jonathan convinced a long-time friend Thomas to become his business partner in his new venture.

Jonathan plans to own his own business one day and believes the resources available through the Utah Valley University Business Resource Center will afford him such. He discovered through a Small Business Development Center counselor that he can get a web site for a competitive rate through the student employees at the Rapid Development Center, also housed in the Business Resource Center. Yet he still wants to see if another place or independent designer can build a site for him at a similar rate.

Age: 26

Location: Orem, UT

Education: BA, Utah Valley University

Focus: MBA, marketing emphasis

Employer: Protection 1 Security Solutions

Wage: \$10/hour

Key Characteristics

- Young and energetic, he believes he’s unstoppable.
- With a great work ethic he learned from his father, he can work through all the tedium starting a business brings.

Goals

- Increase his advertising reach by getting a web site that isn’t built using a drag and drop web building service
- Have an aesthetically-pleasing web site to improve his image.
- Have a logo created to begin branding himself.

Questions

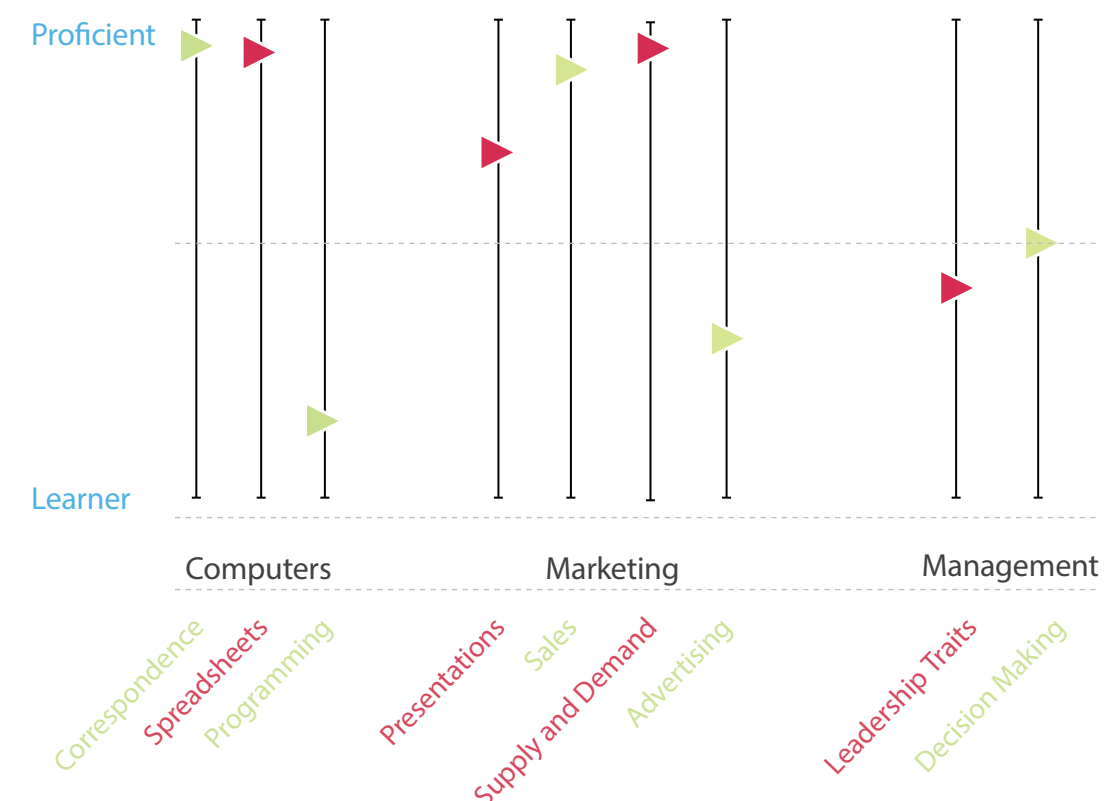
- Can I get a website that I can update on my own?
- Can I pay for my web site as I go instead of a lump sum up-front?

Influencers

- Persuasive speaking and print media
- Becoming more independent
- The constraints of a college budget

Frustrations & Pain Points

- College life getting in the way of building a business more efficiently
- A business partner who is not as enthusiastic as he is about the business venture



Inventor

Porter

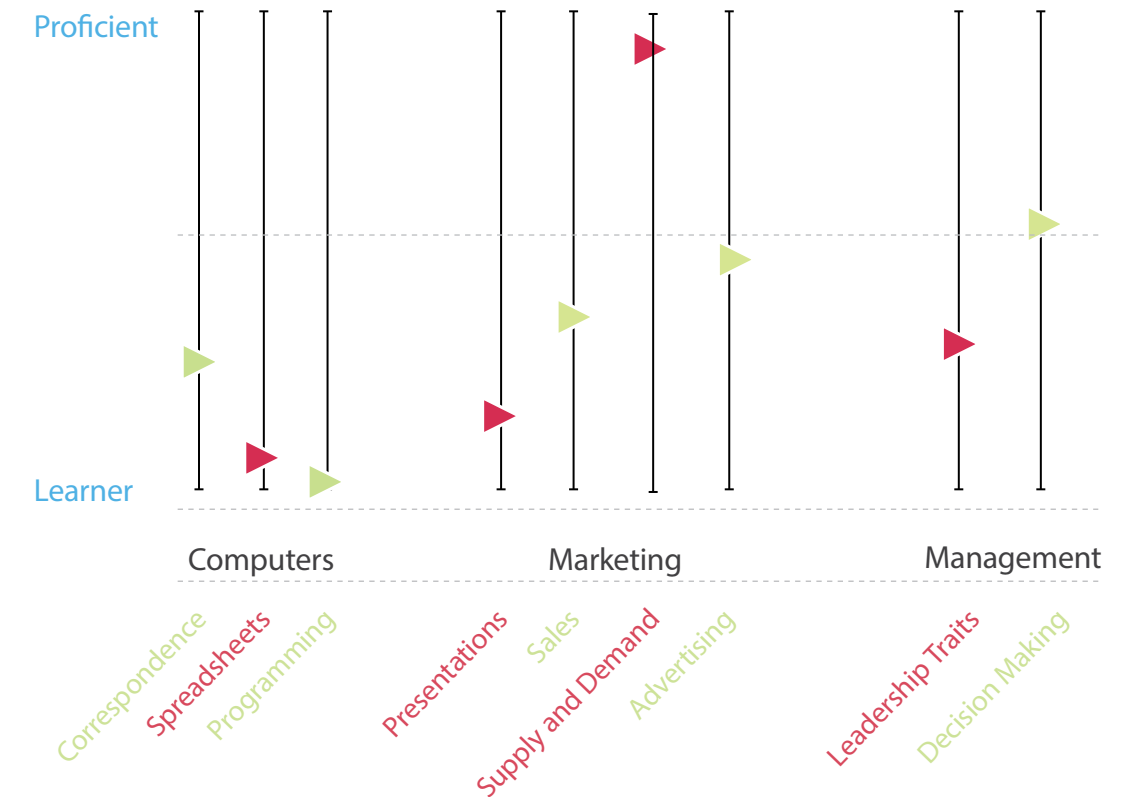


“I know I need a web site, but I have no idea where to start.”

Porter was born in a good home with a hard-working father and stay-at-home mother. His military tour in Vietnam brought him to the reality that life is really short. He didn't want to live his life punching a time-clock, so he went into business for himself selling tires. He enjoyed providing a product that people really needed and learned some business sense at the same time. He eventually branched out and began designing accessories for automobiles. Though his ideas were brilliant, he didn't have the resources to produce or market them.

Porter put off his building of inventions as he continued to sell tires. He showed signs of progress when he opened up another tire store in a nearby town. He made no direct-marketing efforts, but his customer service was so good that his customer base grew by word-of-mouth. Still, after two decades, he grew weary of selling the same thing over and over again.

He learned a lot about the basics of business, principles like supply and demand and taking care of customers even after their purchase.



Age: 66

Location: Charleston, NC

Education: High School Diploma

Military Tour: Vietnam

Employee Status: Retired

Key Characteristics

- Full of street smarts
- Has a knack for seeing needs where others don't see them
- No nonsense feel for real value

Goals

- Get a simple web site for his survival gear products.
- Advertise his products outside of his circle of friends and acquaintances.
- Sell enough of his product to buy a nice RV and travel around the country to trade shows to advertise his products even more

Questions

- Will my friends be put off by having to visit a web site first?
- Will my money be used wisely in having a web site built?

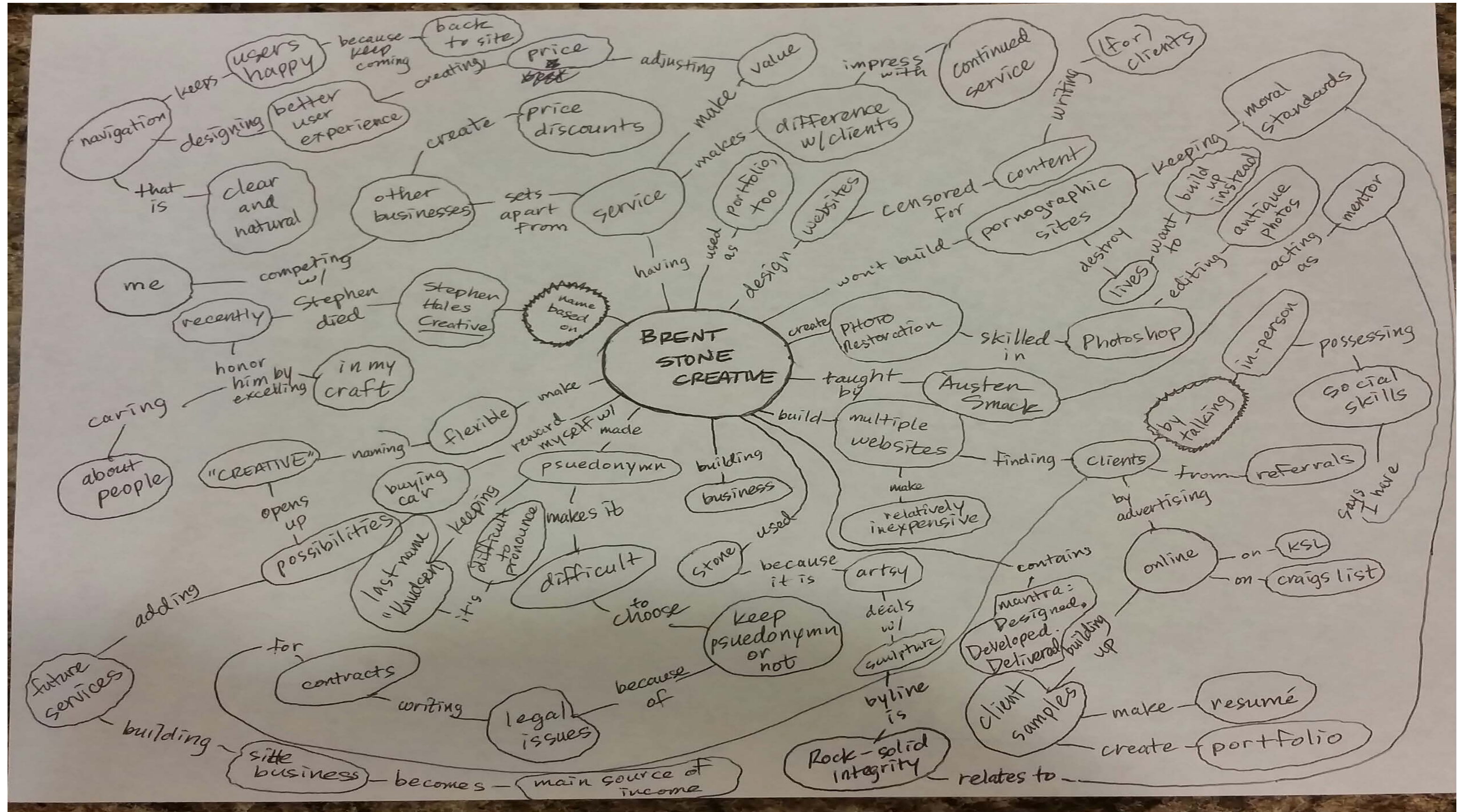
Influencers

- Grandchildren who are tech-savvy
- Has had the internet for two years
- Friends who are in the military who say he needs a web site.

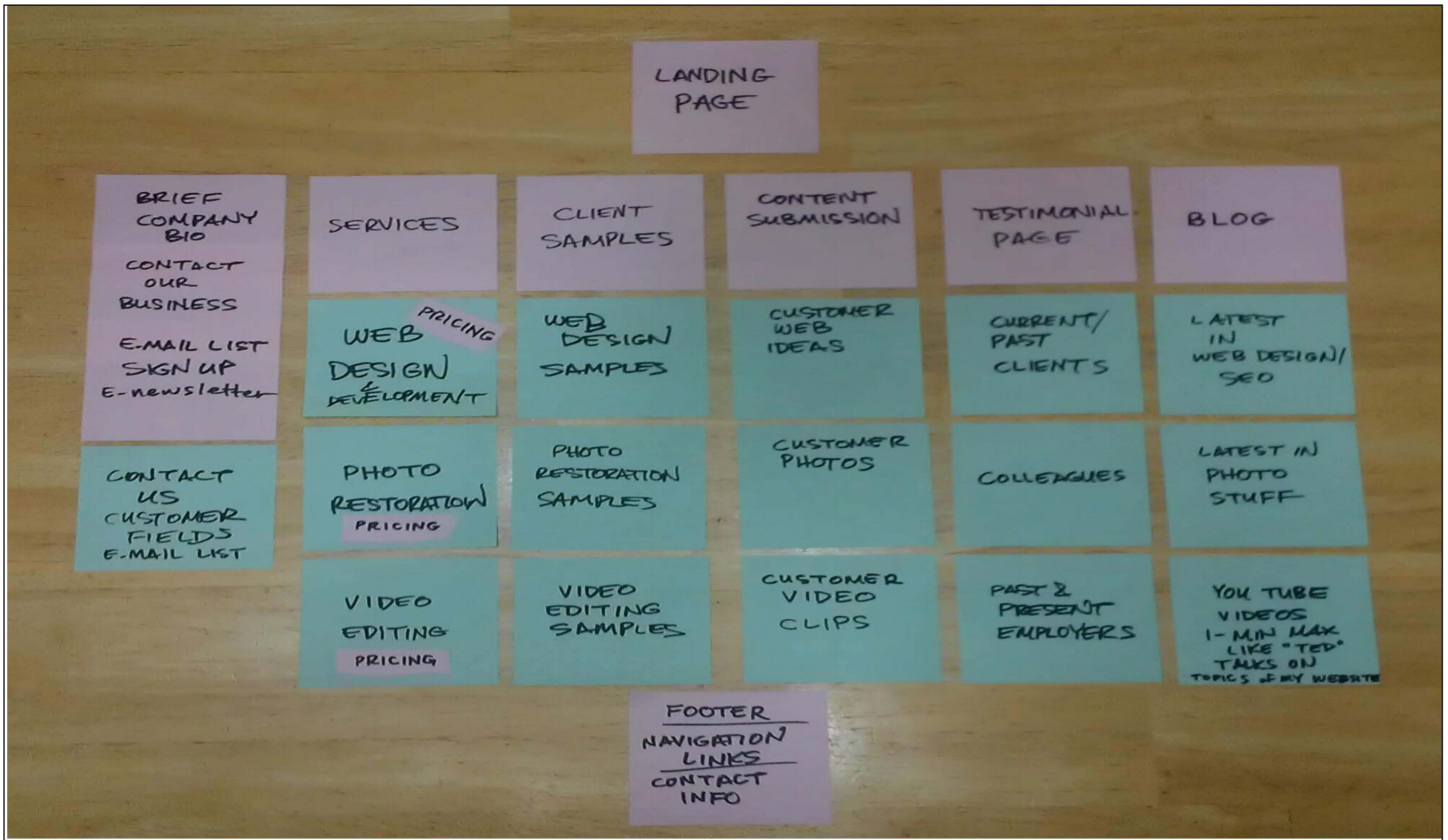
Frustrations & Pain Points

- retirement savings that are dwindling faster than he thought
- realizing the world of the web is leaving him in the dust
- learning internet technologies
- asking questions all the time because he doesn't understand what this computer stuff means

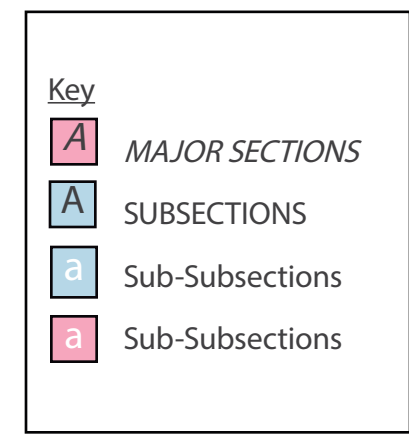
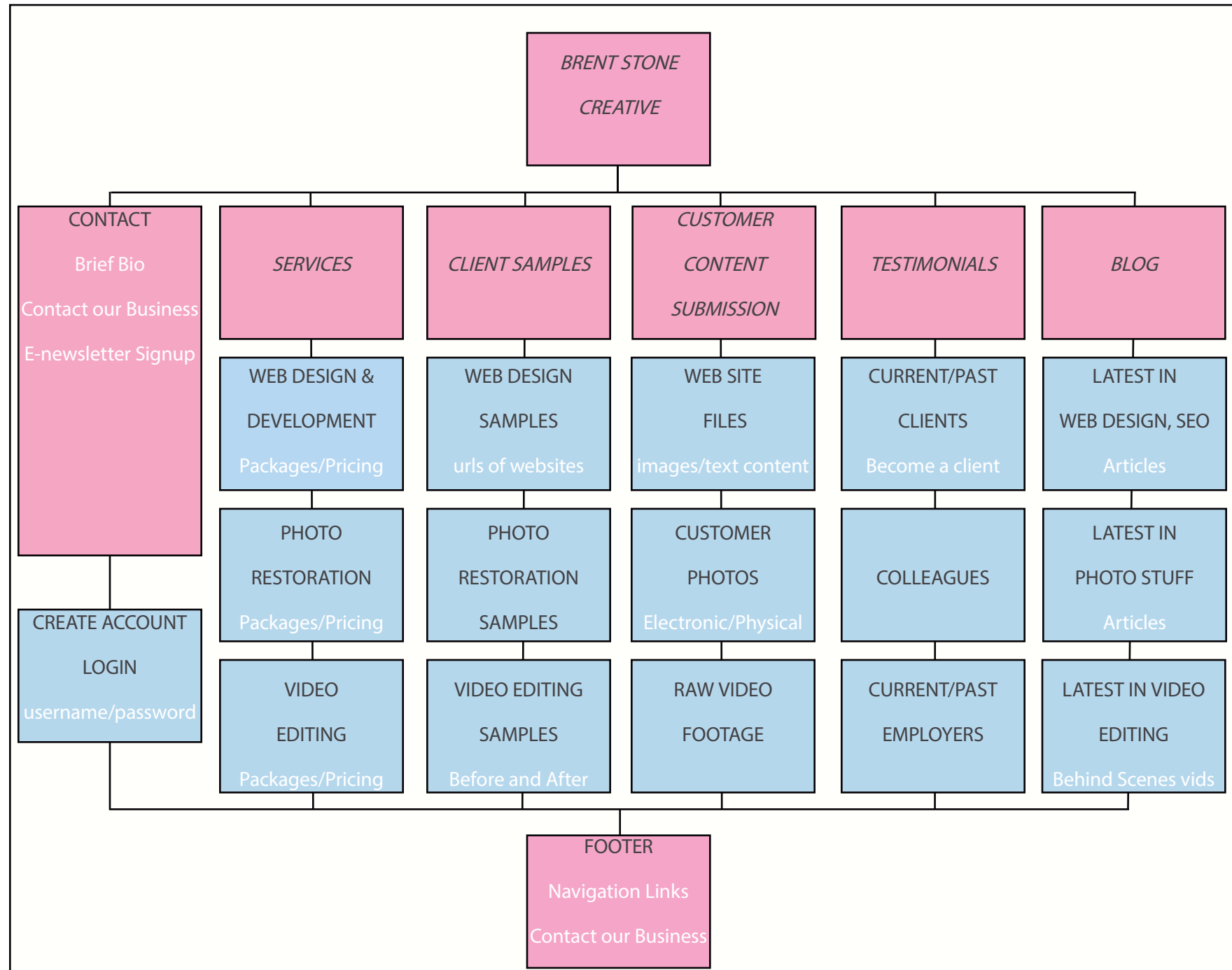
SKETCHED CONCEPT MAP for BRENT STONE CREAT



INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE SITE MAP (Sticky Notes) LAYOUT for BRENT STONE CREATIVE



INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE SITE MAP (Based on Sticky Notes Layout) for BRENT STONE CREATIVE



I have designed my site map around the topics of web design and development, photo restoration and video editing services. I plan on having web design and development as my main service. I've included a blog as a public relations portion of my site. This will demonstrate my outreach efforts to be more than a site that sells services. It will be a site that informs as well to show that I'm involved in my cyber community.

I considered adding a page to complete financial transactions, but a product cart doesn't make much sense. I can't just package up a website and ship it via UPS. There's back and forth communication as the product develops and so there would be a place to pay for the service online as I wrapped up the project before delivering it, but I haven't figured out where that page would fit in the site map. Illustration 8.1 to the left has the majority of the pages listed.

Illustration 8.1

METHODS

In class, I began making my first information architecture layout using sticky notes on the computer desk. I got the landing page and a few of the main pages (navigation links) posted. I based it on the current working web site I own and its site map.

That evening, I created another iteration on my kitchen table. I posted a landing page and created five topics. For each topic I created subtopics, limiting myself to three. I kept three sets of subtopics parallel to one another--variations of these subtopics: web, photo and video. For example, under "services" it was listed as "web design & development", "photo restoration", and "video editing" while under "content submission" it was listed as "customer web ideas", "customer photos", and "customer video clips".

I rearranged topics by what a user would most be interested in to least interested in. After looking at the arrangement, I added a sixth topic, a blog.

REASONING

I wanted to create a brief bio because few people care about your company's history. And on the same page I wanted to include contact information and a place to sign up for a newsletter. Then under that a place to create an account. I chose to keep that part of the site fairly condensed.

The other topics from services to blog encompass the services I offer and a portfolio of my work. The blog was included for a few reasons: to keep the site "living" and to show the customers that I was evolving as a web site designer, photo restorationist and video editor as well as a message that I wasn't just there to make money but to provide free, useful, and interesting information related to my services, too.

I also added photo restoration because my wife saw a photo I restored as said I ought to do that in addition to building web sites.

OUTCOME

I ended up with a decent iteration, but there are still some other design decisions I want to make in condensing some of the web pages and renaming some of the pages to more accurately define their purpose.

DESKTOP SKETCH for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

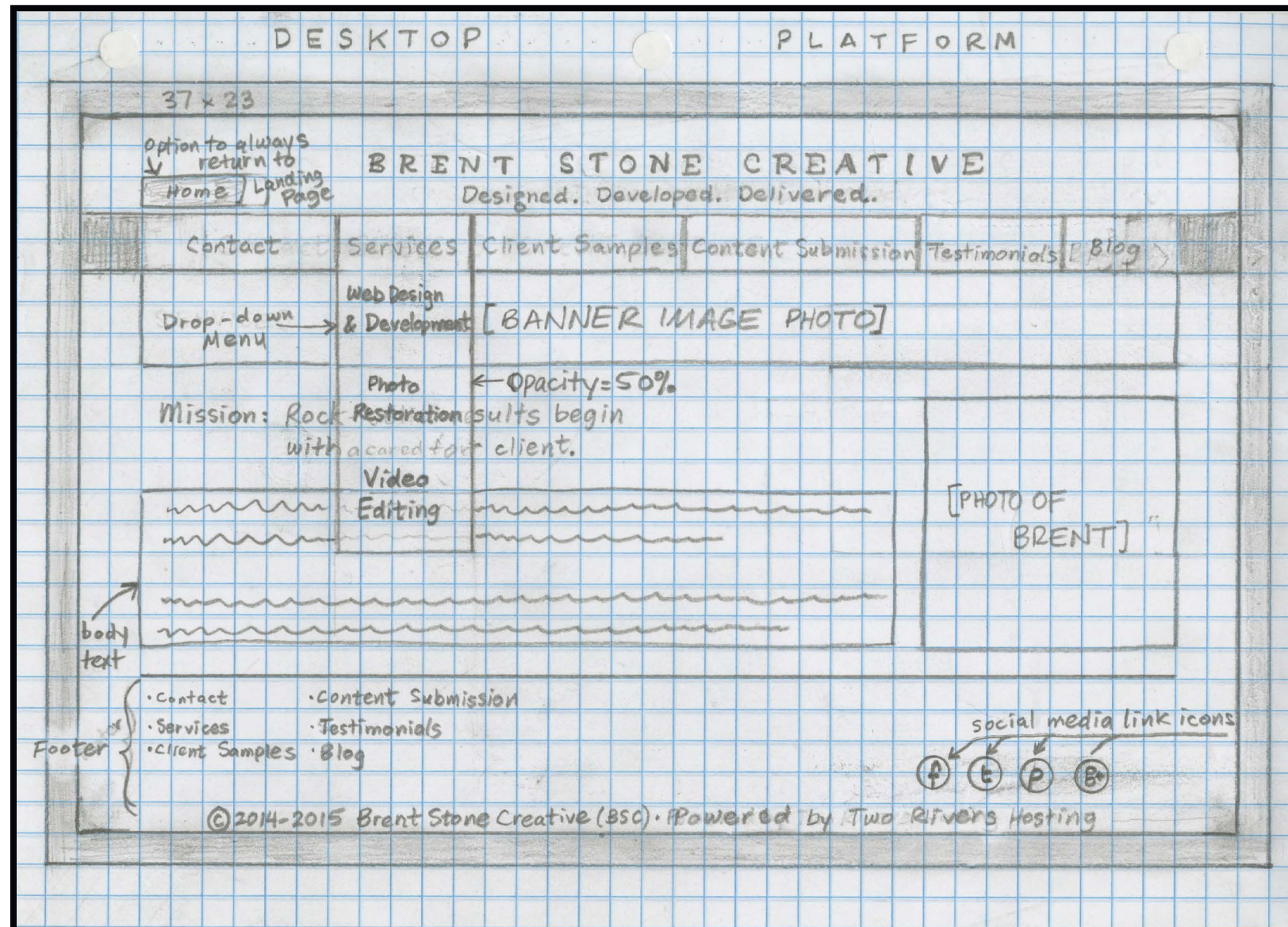


Illustration 10.1

DESKTOP

According to my sketch, the desktop platform for my web site is the least visually stimulating of the three platforms. It consists of images, but most of it is body text. This will be modified on future iterations. The sketch represents a web page with all its core elements from the header to the footer. So, the sketch, in a sense, is not how the actual web page would appear on the screen. Contrary to the sketch, the footer wouldn't be found until the user scrolled to the very bottom. (See Illustration 10.1.)

The header consists of the business name with a three word slogan underneath it. Below those are a horizontal arrangement of navigation links. Continuing down, there is a banner image below that. The sketch shows one of the navigation links with a drop down menu coming off it. It has around a 50% opacity so that the banner and body text behind it is still partly visible.

The largest portion of the page is dedicated to body text on the left and an image of the president of the business (me) on the right. If the sketch were scrollable, there would be more images below next to body text which would alternate from right to left and left to right.

MOBILE SKETCH for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

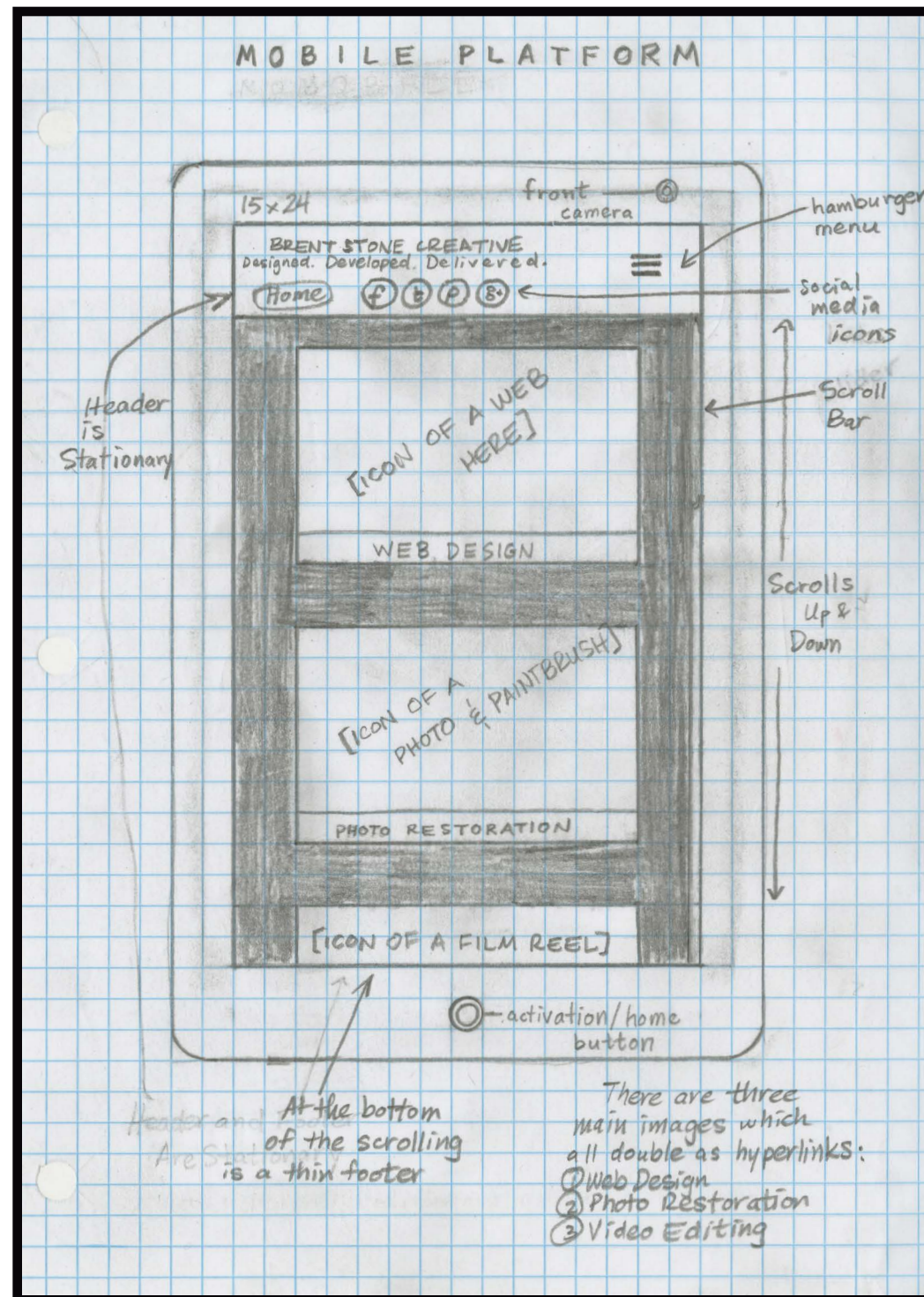


Illustration 11.1

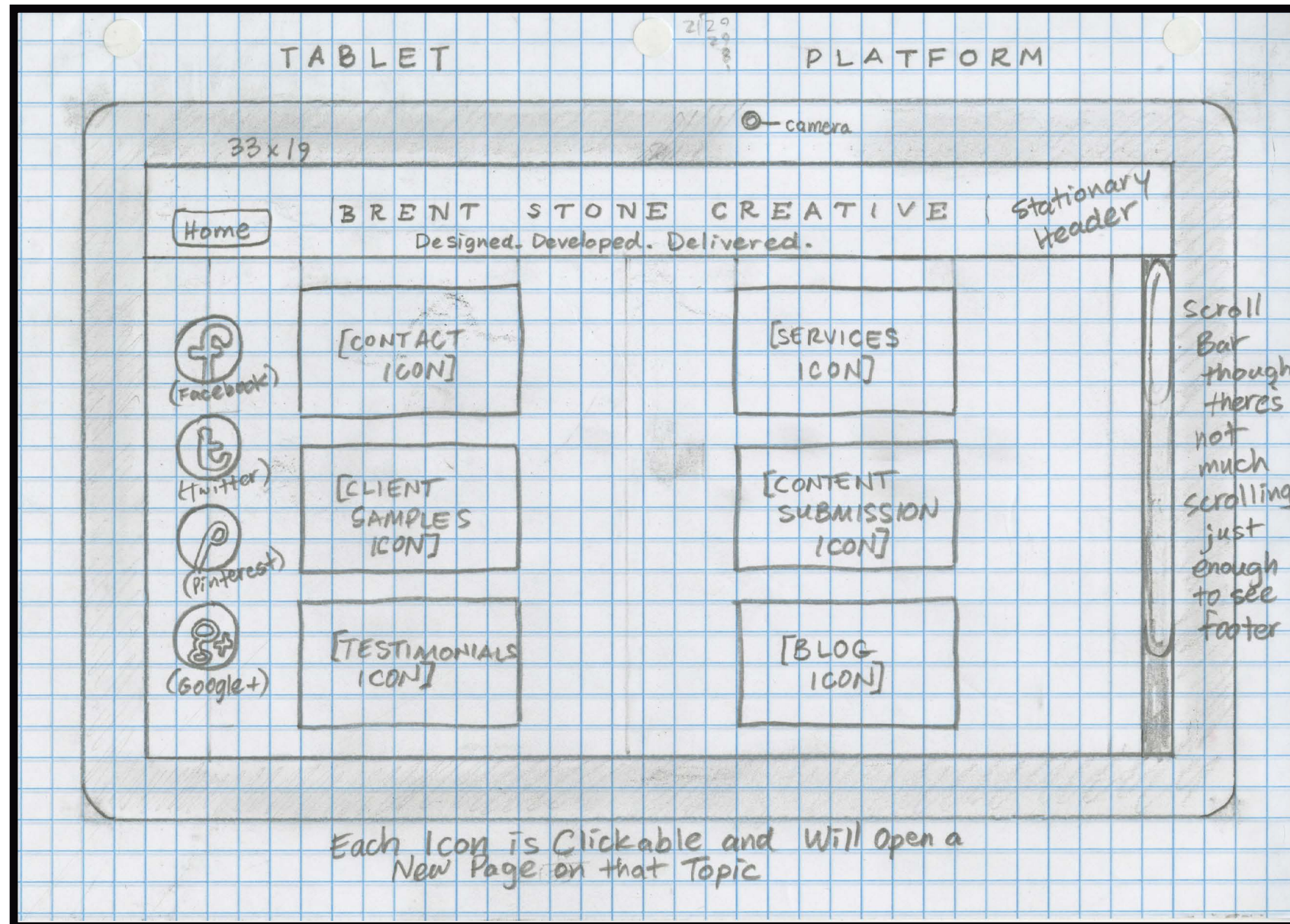
MOBILE

According to my sketch, the mobile device platform for my web site has a truncated version of the desktop's navigation in the form of a "hamburger" menu. This is to the right of the business name and three-word slogan. The header is stationary. Underneath, on the left is a "Home" button so the user always has a link back to the landing page. To the right of the "Home" button are four tappable social media icons: "facebook", "Twitter", "Pinterest", and "Google+".

In the scrollable portion of the mobile screen is a vertical single file of three images labeled "WEB DESIGN", "PHOTO RESTORATION", and "VIDEO EDITING". They sit on a very dark gray (almost black) background so the three images stand out more on a smaller more mobile screen. When tapped, each of these will expand into more hyperlinks dealing with each of those three topics. On the right is a scrolling indicator to see how far it is to the bottom or top of the screen.

The hamburger menu, when tapped, will open up to reveal a vertical drop-down list of the navigation links found on the desktop platform: "Contact", "Services", "Client Samples", "Content Submission", "Testimonials", and "Blog". (See Illustration 11.1.)

TABLET SKETCH for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

TABLET

According to my sketch, the tablet platform is mostly visual in nature. Everything is larger on the screen, including the four vertically listed social media icons. Toward the middle of the screen are large icons (I hope to make them into more photo-like images in future iterations) that represent each of the navigation links in a two by six grid: "Contact", "Services", "Client Samples", "Content Submission", "Testimonials", and "Blog". Like the mobile platform, the header is stationary and includes a "Home" button to the left of the business name and three-word slogan. (See Illustration 12.1.)

I see the tablet layout as a good hybrid of the desktop and mobile layouts. The background color is white or very light gray to keep the feel light and the screen bright.

Illustration 12.1

DESKTOP WIREFRAME for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

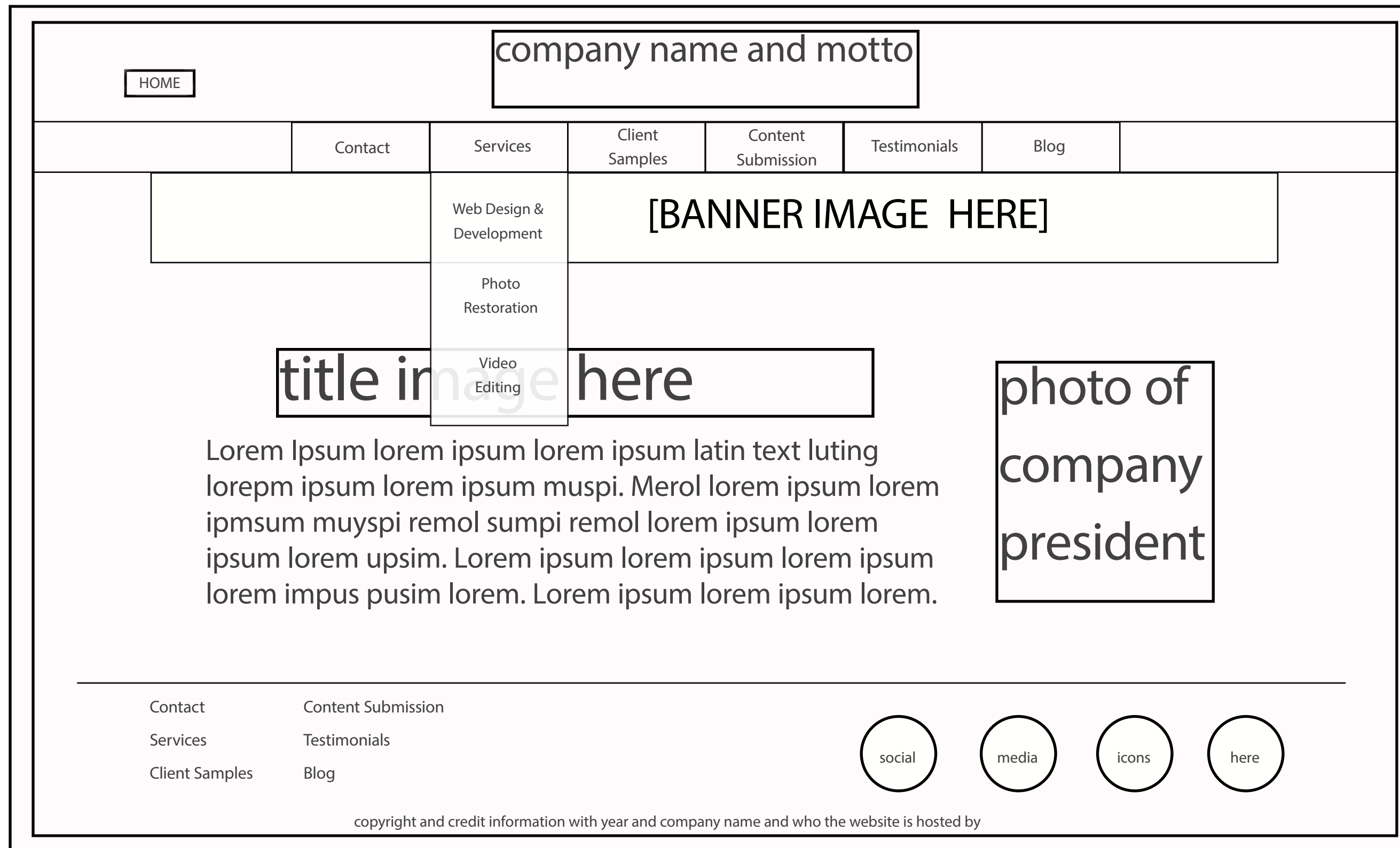


Illustration 13.1

MOBILE DEVICE WIREFRAME for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

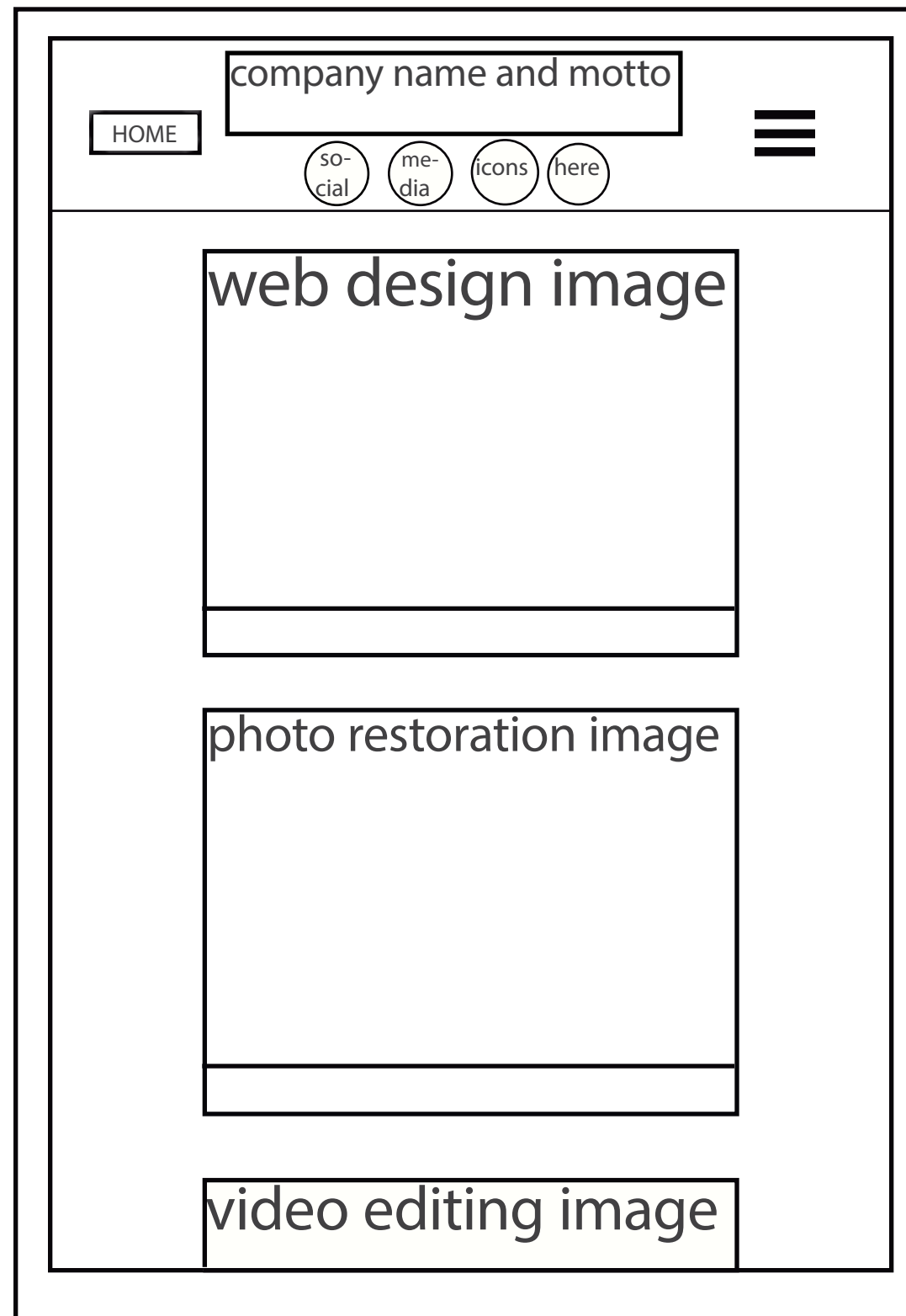


Illustration 13.1

DESKTOP WIREFRAME

The desktop wireframe (as well as the mobile device wireframe and tablet wireframe) has a “home” button in the top left, which is part of a stationary header, and it always gives the user a way to return to the landing page (See Illustration 13.1.) The header remains at the top regardless of scrolling. The name of the company will be underscored by the motto.

The navigation initially has six links. However as each of the six links are clicked on, a drop-down menu appears with an opacity of 90%. An example of this is shown under the “services” navigation link. The opacity allows the user to still see what it would have otherwise covered up.

Below the navigation link is a banner, followed by a title image for and the body of text to the left with a photo of the president of the company. This photo has the option of being changed out for something else, as having a photo of oneself seems a little bit like self-aggrandizement.

The footer has all six of the navigation links that were on the top in the lower left. To the right are four social media icons to share the web site. Finally at the very bottom is what I call the copyright and credit information. The page would be longer than it is, but I wanted to include it on the wireframe so whoever needed to could see what it would look like.

MOBILE DEVICE WIREFRAME

The mobile device wireframe (as well as the desktop wireframe and tablet wireframe) has a “home” button in the top left, which is part of a stationary header, and it always gives the user a way to return to the landing page (See Illustration 13.1.) The header remains at the top regardless of scrolling. The name of the company is underscored by the motto: “Designed. Developed. Delivered.”

To the left is a sandwich menu, which when touched will reveal all six navigation links found on the desktop wireframe. Below the company name and logo are four social media icons to share the web site. Scrollable icons are vertically aligned below that representing the three areas of service that “Brent Stone Creative” provides. They will be on a black background or very dark gray to help them stand out in low-light settings. The three main services from top to bottom in the caption area on the wireframe will be web design, photo restoration, and video editing, which will go out of frame to visually represent that vertically stacked images can be scrolled through. Each of these three images can be tapped to open a new page.

TABLET WIREFRAME for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

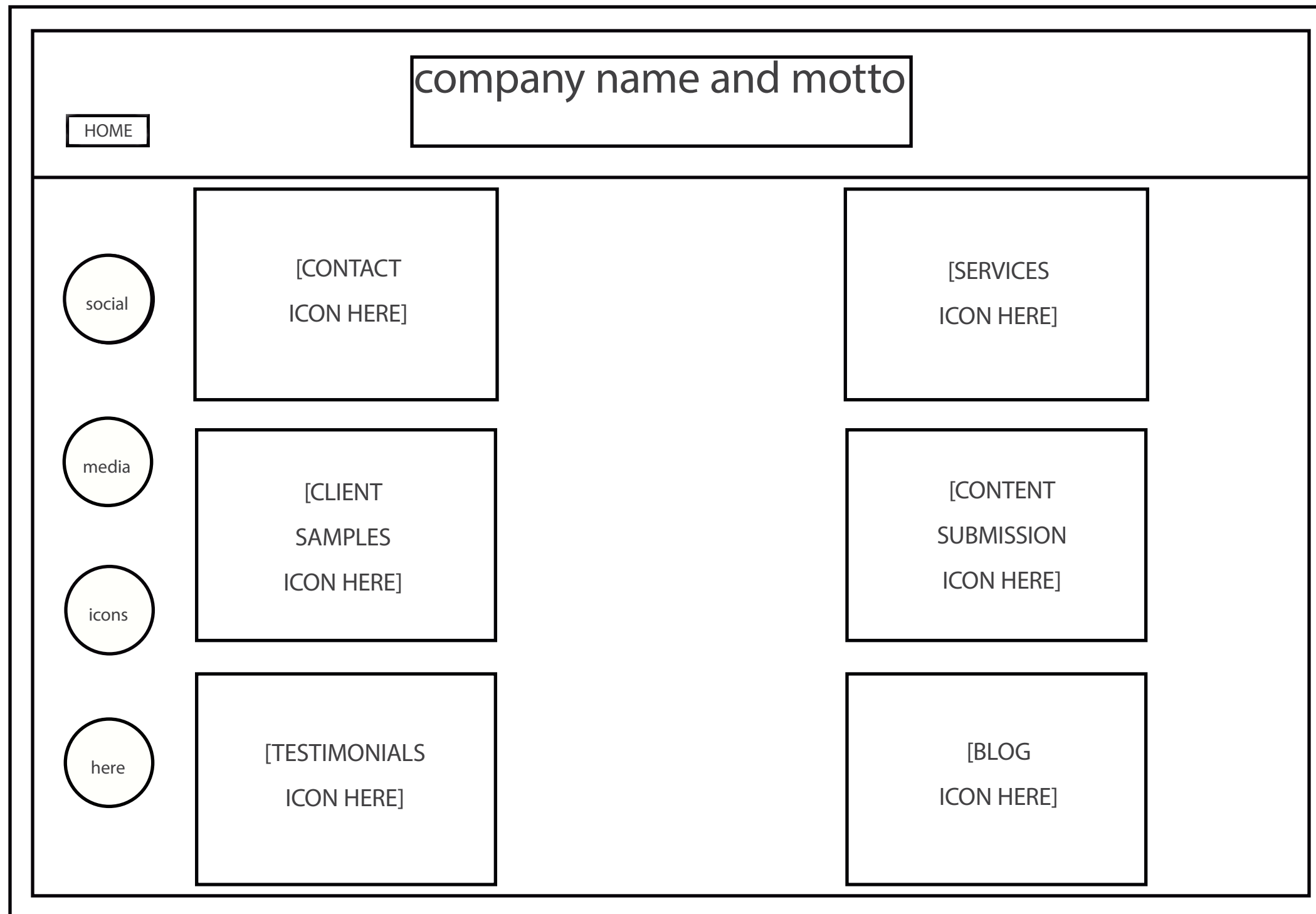


Illustration 15.1

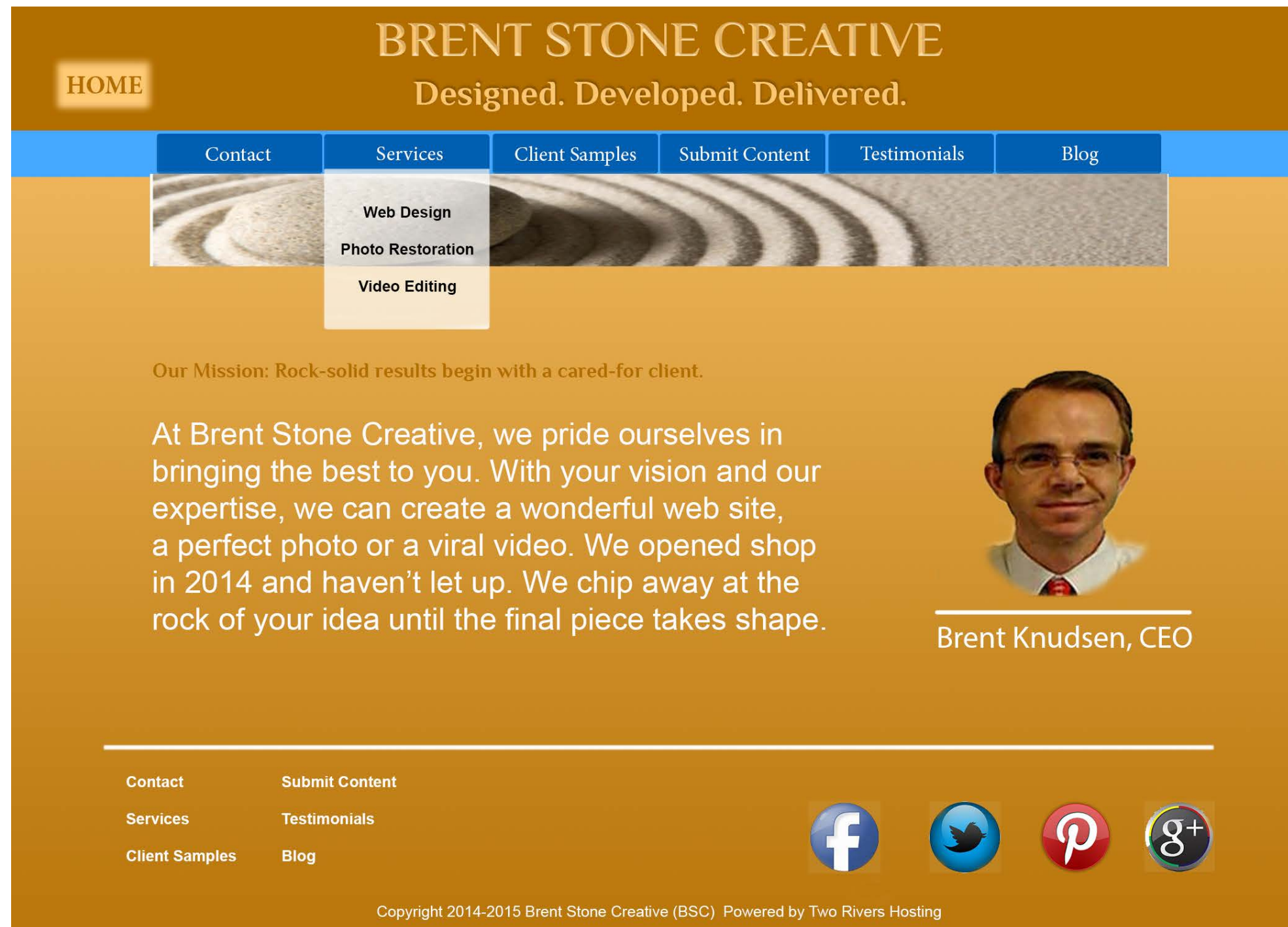
TABLET WIREFRAME

The mobile device wireframe (as well as the desktop wireframe and mobile device wireframe) has a “home” button in the top left, which is part of a stationary header, and it always gives the user a way to return to the landing page (See Illustration 15.1.)

The social media icons (which are clickable) are located prominently on the left side in a relatively large format. In fact, everything on the tablet is relatively large or appears to be because of the amount of whitespace.

Each of the six navigation links (found on the desktop wireframe [see Illustration 12.1]) is laid out in a tiled format (similar to the Windows 8 opening screen design). Icons representing each of the navigation links will be placed there later.

DESKTOP SURFACE COMPOSITION for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

DESKTOP SURFACE COMPOSITION

I chose a complimentary color scheme for the surface composition, blues and oranges (browns). (See Illustration 16.1.) It is accented by white font for high contrast. The logo lettering is its own font, taken from a website I built in Fall of 2014. The body copy is Arial font. The navigation buttons including the “Home” button are done in a serif font to set them apart.

Below the “Services” button is a drop-down menu to demonstrate that if the main navigation buttons are clicked on, one of those types of menus will appear. The drop-menu has about 50% opacity rather than solid white. This serves to indicate that it is subservient to the main navigation button and maintain the importance of the web site. Each of the navigation buttons has this drop-down menu feature.

The footer has the same links as in the navigation bar so that the user, regardless of how far down they scroll, will always have access to what I consider key links. Mainstream social media icons are clickable to share the site with friends. At the very bottom of the footer are the copyright, company and credits information.

Illustration 16.1

MOBILE DEVICE SURFACE COMPOSITION for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

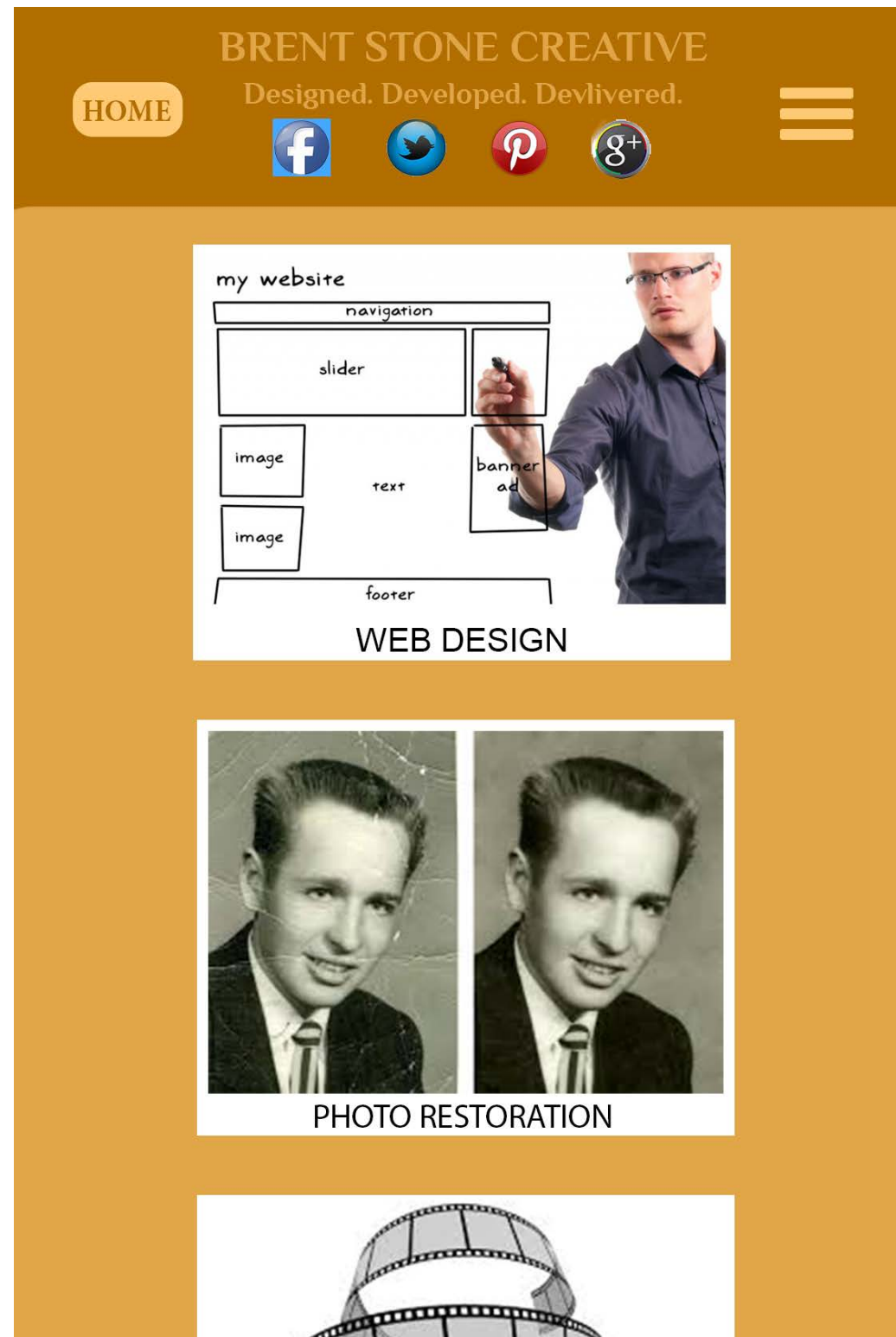


Illustration 17.1

MOBILE DEVICE SURFACE COMPOSITION

The primary navigation source is the hamburger menu in the top right. (See Illustration 17.1.) When tapped, the hamburger menu opens to reveal the six main navigation links available on the desktop and tablet versions.

Three vertically-aligned images in the center are the secondary navigation. There are three images, one for web design, another for photo restoration and yet another for video editing. The one for video editing will be in complete view once the user scrolls down to the bottom where a footer will also show. When tapped on, each of these open up more menu options on additional pages.

The caption for each image is in Arial font to make it easier to read for someone with a mobile device who may be moving around or in low-light settings. The home button is in the same Minion Pro font as the tablet and desktop for external consistency.

The header area is stationary just as it is in the tablet version so the user can always get back home and have the hamburger menu available. It includes social media icons to share the site.

TABLET SURFACE COMPOSITION for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

TABLET SURFACE COMPOSTION

I went with a simpler design for the tablet. (See Illustration 18.1.) The background color for the header is the same as the desktop surface composition. I kept the same gradient for the rest of the background. The “Home” button is still prominently placed so the user can always return to the landing page. The header is stationary so the user always has a way to return to the home page.

I used the bolded version of the Minion Pro font to caption the tiled icons. (Minion Pro Regular is also used for the “Home” button.) In the tablet version, each of the six navigation buttons on the desktop surface composition has been morphed into a tiled icon. I made the clickable tiles large, and kept internal consistency by making all the images grayscale for a classic touch.

Clickable social media icons are vertically aligned on the left. Sharing this site via social media is very

Illustration 18.1

COLOR SCHEME for BRENT STONE CREATIVE

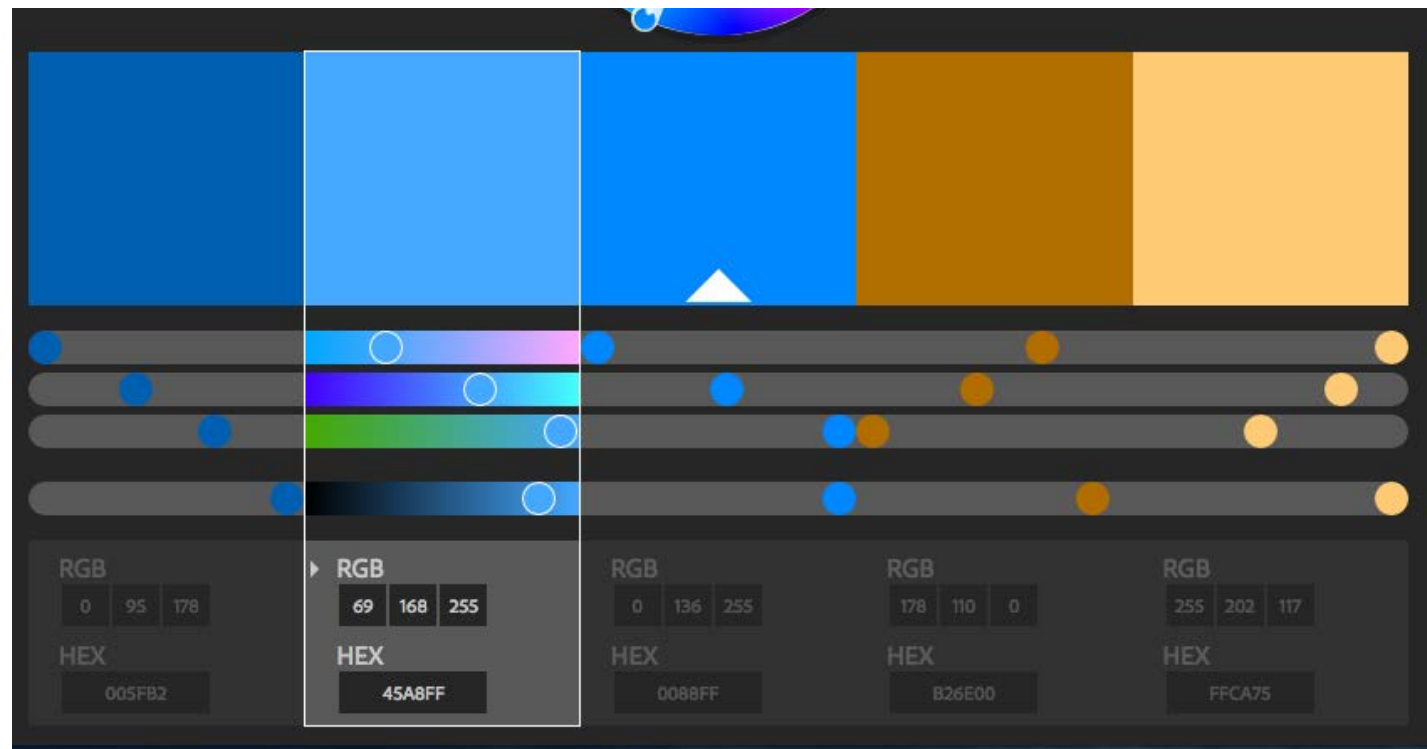


Illustration 19.1

COLOR SCHEME

The color scheme is based on earthy tones (oranges and browns) because of the theme of a stone taken from the name BRENT STONE CREATIVE. (See Illustration 19.1.) These are complemented by blues. There are two earthy shades and three blue shades. The RGB and hex values are clearly stated so when creating more elements it is easy to match colors with exactness.

FONT SELECTION for the DESIGN GUIDE and BRENT STONE CREATIVE

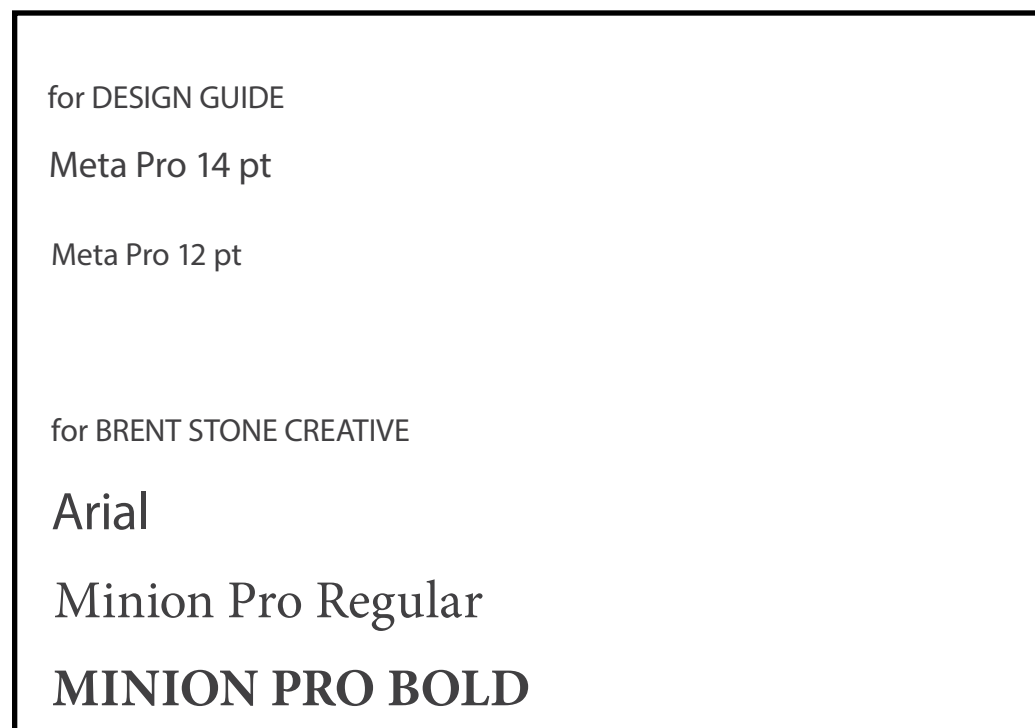


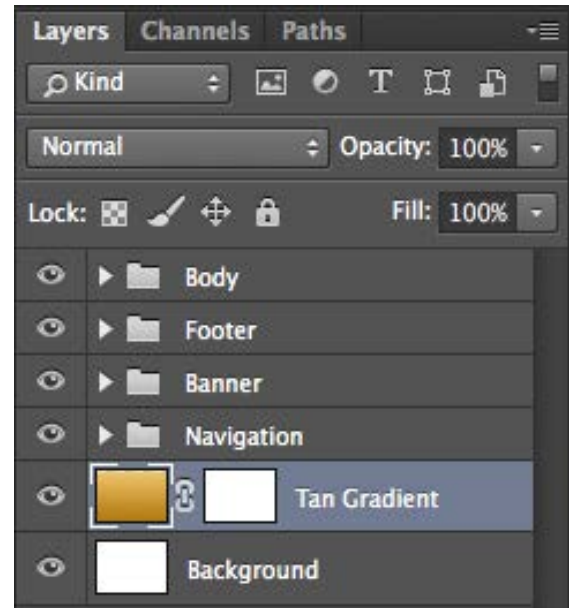
Illustration 19.2

FONT SELECTION

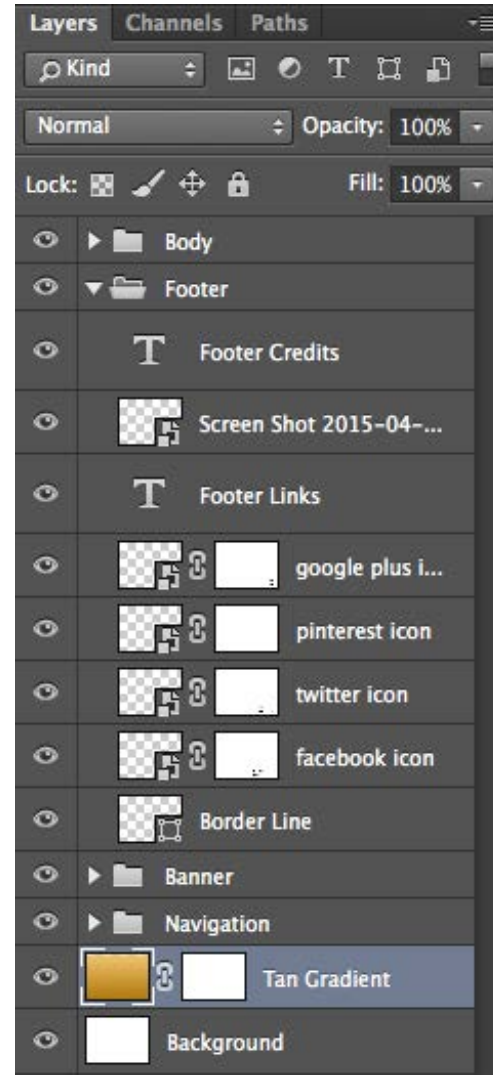
The font for the design guide is Meta Pro. (See Illustration 19.2.) It is sans serif and clean-looking to make for better readability. The headings for each page in the Design Guide are at 14 point size while the headings for the sections are at 12 point size. The text in the blue bars on the top and bottom of the page are 14 point size. The title page and persona have much larger fonts.

The font for the web, mobile, and tablet include three different fonts--one for the header, one for the body copy and one for navigation elements. The header font is Philosopher taken from Google fonts. The body copy is a simple Arial font. The navigation font is Minion Pro Regular and Minion Pro Bold.

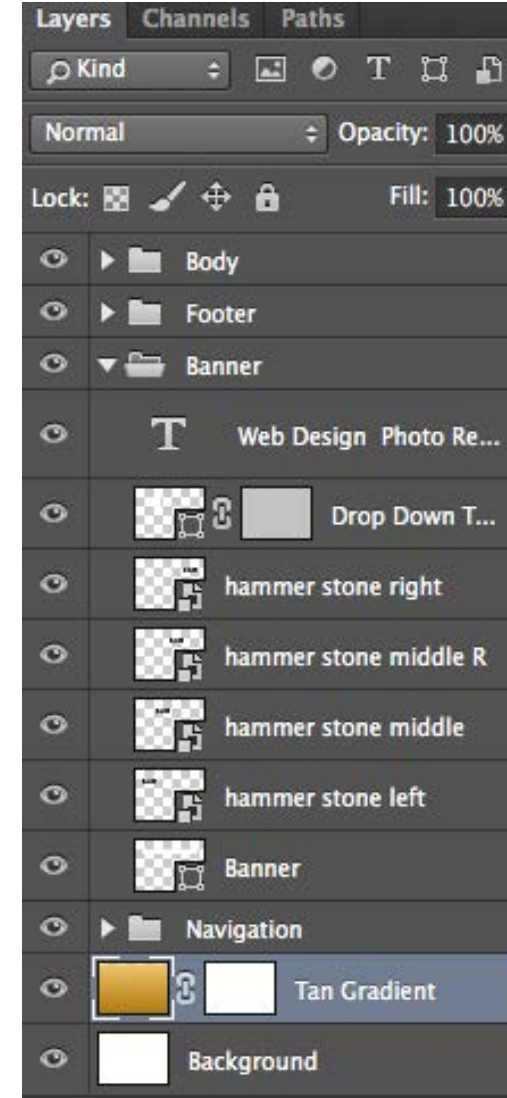
PHOTOSHOP ETIQUETTE LAYERS for BRENT STONE CREATIVE DESKTOP SURFACE COMPOSITION



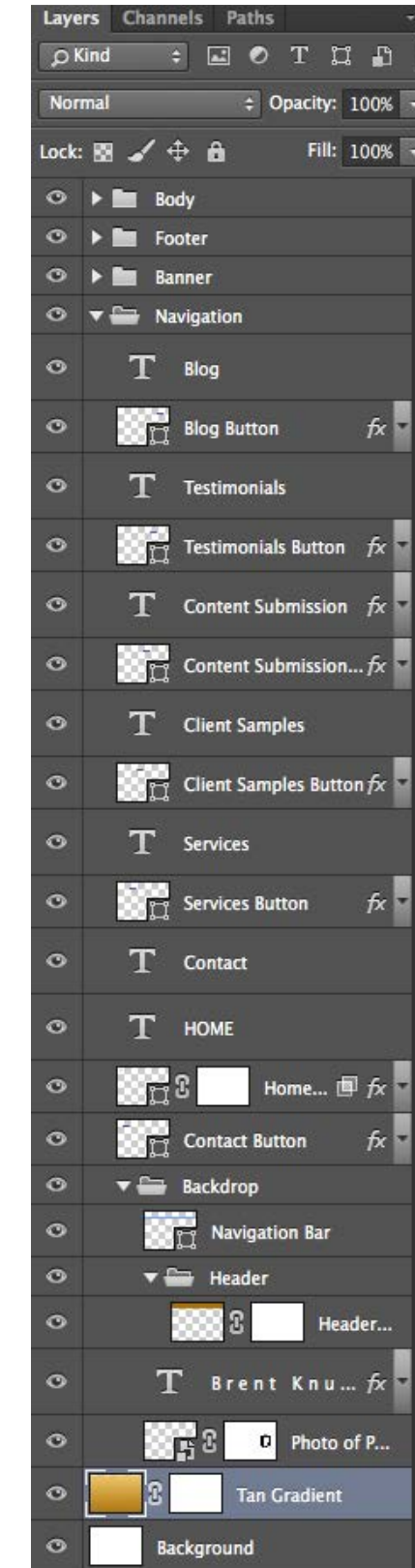
Main Folders



Footer Folder Expanded



Banner Folder Expanded



Navigation Folder Expanded

PHOTOSHOP ETIQUETTE LAYERS

From left to right, we have a screen shot of all the folders collapsed, the footer folder expanded, then the banner folder expanded, and lastly the navigation folder expanded. Each of the folders are clearly labeled as are the layers themselves to provide information for another person working on the project to easily find the layers. All these layers are for the desktop surface composition. The mobile and tablet surface compositions have similar layer structures.