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Degree Programme in Design

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DESIGNING A WEBSITE FOR A METAL PROCESSING COMPANY

FOCUSED ON USER INTERFACE AND USABILITY

Bachelor's Thesis 2015

## ABSTRACT

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Designing a Website for a Metal Processing Company

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The subject of this thesis was the gathering of information relating to the needs and requirements of the commissioning company for a future website. The design of the site had to comply with the Company's Visual Identity Guidelines and their deadline of publishing in the first half of 2015. To enable the customer's ease of future use when editing the site, it had to be created on a cloud-based web development platform.

The main goal of this paper was to create a website that would represent metal processing company Megakon. The website had to be a helpful tool, beneficial in building communication with existing clients and in attracting new visitors. Moreover, it had to assist in the growth of the number of customers in the target group and act as a memorable and recognizable feature of the company and of its brand in the future. The last aim was to gain more experience and new knowledge in regard to the fields of web design and in collaborating with clients.

Information represented in this thesis was grounded in different research work conducted by the author for the company during these studies and previously in Seminar Work at Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulu, University of Applied Sciences during 2014. The majority of the studies were based on primary data, which included interviews and questionnaires gathered during communication with company executives.

Secondary data was used from the 2014 Seminar Project, consisting of analysis of the Company's Brand Image and Competitor Analysis. All collected data was analyzed and the documents that played the most important role in these studies are presented in the work or in the appendices.

The main result of the study consisted of publishing the company website, which would establish a new level of communication with clients. The commissioning company is going to continue working with the website by updating it themselves internally and through adding new information as the need arises. Moreover, the author still will be partly involved in the development of the website until the end of 2015.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Technology is continually changing; it is a part of our everyday environment. Usage of the World Wide Web has increased from year to year. Many new services have appeared and continue appearing in the online sector. Some of them make our lives easier and some complicate it further. By means of using internet services, people have an enormous number of ways to communicate with each other. There are new concepts and requirements appearing in the field of website design and in the representation of information; fresh views on web content and other supporting elements such as graphics, colours, typography, all based on sites needing to communicate in a simple and clear way.

The Internet introduced new ways of communicating, working, searching and information gathering. It also brought new thinking to the area of business competition. Nowadays companies have more possibilities to express themselves in the online world than before. Numerous firms have conquered the vastness of the Internet; some of them carry out the majority of their business online, promoting their services and products, and developing new projects. They try to achieve set goals, to make profit and become recognized. However, this field develops quickly and many companies are at risk of being left behind. Firms that predominately carry out their business online, provide services and not tangible products that customers can look at, depend on online branding as they need to make their Company Image evident, promote their Brand and production, build up their reputation and stand out amongst the great number of competitors (Laboon, 2013).

*“The Web is the ultimate customer-empowering environment; s/he who clicks the mouse gets to decide everything”* (Nielsen, 2000). It is no longer enough just to have a great web design, brand consistency and a presence in all possible social medias. Today it is not only the representation of the company that is required, but also effective communication and interaction with users. Information is the main reason why people go to the Internet and spend hours trying to find what they want.

Through its website, a company should endeavor to build conversation and an effective relationship with its clients (Lagorio-Chafkin, 2011). One of the ways to implement this is to create «speaking» content on the website that has a conversational

tone of voice, so it feels as if it is being spoken to the visitor in understandable everyday language.

Therefore, the main question of this paper is, how does one create a website that represents a company and its brand, interacts successfully with clients and helps them to remember and recognize the company in the future?

All presented information in this paper is based on multiple research studies that have been conducted by the author during this and previous works for the company. The majority of the studies came from primary data such as personal interviews and questionnaires with structured questions via email, Skype, phone calls and live discussions, user analysis and visual research. Secondary data was used from the Seminar Project, mainly concerning the brand position of the company and competitor analysis. All collected data was analyzed, interpreted and results reported to the commissioning company. Mostly records were done in the Russian language; however, the most important documents are translated and presented in the appendices.

## 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 2.1 Background of the Company

This chapter explains the background of the commissioning company that will start its business activity under a new trading name in the spring of 2015. Megakon is the new name of the metal processing company 'DSK' in Russia. Basic research on DSK was conducted and analysed in the author's Seminar paper (Brand and Corporate Identity Creation for Metal Processing Company in Russia) written in spring 2014. This section will comprise of a short recap of the previous paper's research related to DSK and introduce the mission statements of Megakon due to their importance in understanding the new objectives and aspirations of the company.

In 2006, DSK was founded in the city of Vologda, in northwest Russia by three businessmen. Since its establishment, DSK continued to develop and grow consistently over the last 9 years. The main objectives of the company were to utilize high technologies available on the market and to provide quality services to their

customers. The range of services consists of: mechanical and control software metal processing (the company's main advantage is their ability to provide plasma<sup>1</sup> cutting services for up to 80mm thick metals), the chopping, cutting-off and welding of elements used in creating prefabricated construction components, structural engineering drawings and the realization of products according to customer specifications. The company operates not only in Vologda, but also in other cities in the northwest region, and meets new competitors. For that reason, DSK constantly continues in its development.

At the end of 2013, the business directors decided to commission the creation of a Corporate Identity as they wanted to state the image of the company on the market. All requirements of this original commission have been met and a new brand was created. It included an abbreviated Style Guide<sup>2</sup>, which contains Megakon's Brand Platform<sup>3</sup> that covers the Vision, Mission and Values of the company. The Platform mainly reports that the company tries to increase the number of opportunities in the metal processing industry by use of high technologies. The company provides the best range of quick and quality services that assists in the development of clients' businesses and the realization of their goals.

## 2.2 Aims and Objectives of the Company

Today, a company website is one of the most common means of corporate communication. It is a necessary and valuable part of each modern company as it represents the firm and is an integral part of the company brand. Through the website a company can communicate its message, represent services and directly interact with the clients. A company can display its brand on the website by means of layout, as

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<sup>1</sup> The plasma cutting process, as used in the cutting of electrically conductive metals, utilizes this electrically conductive gas to transfer energy from an electrical power source through a plasma cutting torch to the material being cut (Hypertherm, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> Prescribed format for each type of written communication that must be followed by all departments and agencies of an organization. It usually covers everything from directional signs to name plates, call cards, office stationery, type font and weight, and standard language and terminology (BusinessDictionary, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup> The Brand Platform identifies the distinctive core of your brand. At its heart is the *brand concept*, the key idea that distinguishes your brand from the competition (DesignCoup, n.d.).

well as written and visual content. Consequently, the first and main aim of the initial Corporate Identity project was the creation of a website for Megakon, through which it could more easily establish strong and dynamic relationships with its customers. The next goals were to establish the company brand online, expand its business opportunities, increase sales and strengthen the company's position among competitors on the market.

In conclusion, the most important purpose of both projects has been to create a strong brand that can be clearly differentiated from others on the market. The newly designed Corporate Identity and the website have aided in increasing awareness of the company and its services. The secondary intention of the author was to experience the whole process of brand creation, and to gain knowledge in the fields of branding, web usability and user behaviour.

### 2.3 Competitive Web Content Analysis

Competition on the Web is not only related to companies in the same area of industry, as the one an organization belongs to. All the competitors in the world are only a mouse-click away, and millions of sites continue to fight for the time and attention of users who, in their turn, expect high standards and great usability from websites (Nielsen, 2000). Companies try to arouse the interest of a large number of users, as it is the users who make an organization and its brand more popular by utilizing its services and spreading the word to others. Clients are an important part in the business chain as they are the ones to whom firms sell their services and products.

DSK's development and ability to establish itself as a resolute and powerful contestant on the unpredictable Russian market could be called a great achievement. The company is confident and courageous in its actions and behavior; it is good at handling a changing and aggressively competitive situation. As Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory stated *"It is not the strongest or the most intelligent that will survive in a competitive environment but those who can best manage change in it"* (Goodreads, n.d.).

Gianni Versace said that *"It is nice to have valid competition; it pushes you to do better"* (Brainyquote, n.d.). This statement is the main focus of this chapter, the evaluation of the weaknesses and strengths of five companies' web content, operating in the



same market as DSK that had been chosen previously in the Seminar Project for general Competitive Analysis. This review was done in order to understand what DSK could do better to enable them to become one of the strongest contenders amongst their competitors and to work out how to best make their website stand out from others in the industry.

The main competitors selected for comparative analysis are all medium sized companies that have an established presence on the market. All the organizations provide a similar range of services and equipment, and they all employ around the same number of personnel. Each of them has a web page that gives information about the company, its services, projects, production, and so forth, though each company presents this data differently. The main distinctions are shown in Figure 1, where the author against a series of criteria has evaluated the user-interface and usability of the sites.

<i>Company</i>	<b>TechMash</b>	<b>Gector</b>	<b>O-Center</b>	<b>Technomor</b>	<b>Prommetal</b>
<b>Features</b>					
<b>Navigation<sup>4</sup></b>	Good	Bad	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
<b>Content Hierarchy</b>	Satisfactory	Bad	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
<b>Context</b>	Satisfactory	Good	Good	Good	Very good
<b>Site Search Field</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Consistency</b>	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
<b>Clarity and Readability</b>	Satisfactory	Bad	Very good	Satisfactory	Very good
<b>Findability of content on the site</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Good
<b>Branding message</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Scannability</b>	Satisfactory	Bad	Very good	Satisfactory	Very good

Figure 1. Competitive web content analysis

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<sup>4</sup> Web site navigation is the science and skill which you apply to a web site that helps visitors move from one page to another (Webdevelopernotes, n.d.)

Post review of the data show that the major threat appears to be Prommetal, because it has the best developed website in terms of content and usability amongst the competitors. It has a rich and highly scannable content; it also has a highly defined hierarchy that arranges information, and therefore makes navigation and search through the website easier. Attention has also to be paid to the Internet presence of Techmash, O-Center and Technomor, as these three companies have well-organized content and navigation. Gector does not pose much of a threat due to its less developed website.

Megakon's primary marketing and sales vehicle in developing a larger client base will be the website, and the level of efficiency and ease of use of this site will act as either a block to clients using the site, or as an aspect that encourages the clients to use the service. Through the website, a company is going to explain what type of services they are willing to provide and what kind of results it is possible to achieve by using these services. Moreover, a website will be one of the main representative materials during the search for partnerships.

In regard to clear site weaknesses, none of these websites has a clear Brand Message<sup>5</sup> and they are lacking 'Site Search' functionality. The absence or low visibility of the corporate identity and brand message on the site may decrease company recognition. The absence of search functionality can reduce the number of search-dominant users visiting and using a site. Search-dominant users go straight to the search field after entering a website as they are task-focused users and are motivated to search for their required information as fast as possible. Mixed-behavior users look for information by means of the search field or they simply navigate through the menu and scan pages. However, it should also be noted that dominant and mixed behavior users can get into difficulties if the site search function is not available (Nielsen, 2000). During a short interview after one of the usability tests, the author raised the question: "Why it is important for you to have a search field on the website?" and the majority of surveyed users had the same answer: "Sometimes it is difficult to find specific information in the large amount of technical data; as there are a lot of details, it is easy to skip what is not needed, therefore it is preferable to have a search field on the website, to type the

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<sup>5</sup> The primary message used to express the brand promise, where a brand promise are benefits and experiences that marketing campaigns try to associate with a product in its current and prospective consumers' minds (BusinessDictionary, n.d.).

key word in and find the sought-for result right away". In this case, the majority of people using this service are task-focused individuals used to working with technology, and therefore search functionality is an important tool to them.

It can be concluded that in order to achieve better results than the listed competing companies, DSK (Megakon), has to provide Web users; firstly, excellent quality of information about its services, products and projects; secondly, to have clear and easy to use navigation and content hierarchy; thirdly, to have Site Search functionality and finally, that clients should be presented with a clear Corporate Image<sup>6</sup>.

### 3 WEB DESIGN

#### 3.1 Company and Users' needs

In spite of all Web designers' diligences and creativity, users continue to be impatient and would like to get access to everything at once. This behaviour is caused by a stunning number of choices and easy mouse movement on mouse pad. Website visitors appreciate convenience. They would like to be able to find information quickly and easily (Hoffman, 2011; Brooks, 1999). Nielsen (2000) claims that if users cannot comprehend how the website operates during the first minute or so, they infer that any further actions on this Web page will not be worth their time. And eventually they leave.

As the Internet is based upon providing information and communication technologies, it enables easy and rapid interaction between customers and businesses (Geoff, Brychan and Yann, 2008). Every business that has a web page seeks to attract users to their source of information. The aim is to provide clients with a positive experience, so that they would use the website again in the future, perhaps recommend it to others and, for example, save it in their bookmarks<sup>7</sup> for quicker access (Garrett, 2003).

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<sup>6</sup> Mental picture that springs up at the mention of a firm's name. It is a composite psychological impression that continually changes with the firm's circumstances, media coverage, performance, pronouncements, etc. (BusinessDictionary, n.d.)

<sup>7</sup> Internet browser feature that allows a user to go back to a previously visited website by clicking on the saved link - without retying the site's address (BusinessDictionary, n.d.).

Companies make their websites effective, comprehensive and visually pleasing, so as to avoid consumers' frustration and to meet their expectations (Zang and von Dran, 2000).

All users need significant and visible content that is easy to scan, therefore enabling quick location of necessary information. If they find it faster, without complicated steps or reaching, it means that the web designers have created the proper environment and conditions to allow focusing on and achieving high task performance (Chiew and Salim, 2003). In other words, businesses, which wish to keep and raise the number of their website users and to enhance awareness of their company, should create the right atmosphere and focus on increasing website usability.

### 3.2 Online Branding

Recently the Web has become one of the main channels not only to inform and offer services, but also to establish a relationship with stakeholders<sup>8</sup> and influence their attitudes and behavior. In other words, the Web becomes more and more an element of the widespread and full-scale network of communication, interaction and information that aims at influencing the minds of people and ultimately, creating or strengthening a brand in the global society (Muller and Chandon, 2003 cited in Bolchini et al., 2009).

An online business has a greater chance of success if those who buy its products and services recognize its brand. A recognizable brand also makes the site more attractive to potential advertisers and partners. Branding online is quite similar to branding offline, the main difference being that the representation is shrunk to a screen instead of a billboard or printed promotional materials. The opportunities for messaging in all other ways are the same (AllBusiness, 2012).

Radosevich (1997) highlights that "*The initial point of contact with a company is often through its website*". This is the first impression that clients get. Hence, the web-

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<sup>8</sup> A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in an organization (BusinessDictionary, n.d.).

site should be the foundation of a company's presentation and a marketing "weapon" (Hoffman, 2011).

One study has proved a link between usability and brand perception; that better usability resulted in better perception of the Brand Image<sup>9</sup>; and that the worse the experience of using a site, the more negative the users' perception of the brand became (Bolchini, Garzotto and Sorce, 2009). Moreover, usability affects not only the perception of Brand Image, but also the user's productivity. If the usability is good then it creates loyal customers and increases the perceived value of the company, its products and services.

### 3.3 Website Usability

Website usability has to be highly developed and it is extremely easy to explain why it should be so. According to Nielsen (2000), the Web "inverts the picture". Internet provides a service for finding information on the websites. The users experience a site at the first second of entering it before they have committed to using it. However, when one traditionally buys, for instance, a service from a retailer, s/he experiences the service only after the purchase.

Unfortunately, companies often design their Web sites with marketing and business objectives in mind, rather than their customers' needs and perspectives (Chiew and Salim, 2003). It means that key decisions are often made without consideration of usability in web design (Radosevich, 1997). Usability makes the system, service or product easier to use. It is the extent to which they can be used by clients to achieve certain goals with effectiveness and satisfaction. As an example, high level of usability in web design can be reached by means of making interactive objects more obvious, giving a visual feedback after certain actions that were implemented by the user, including a clear visual hierarchy and navigation. Usability can increase level of performance by reducing the amount of time it takes to achieve the goal, decreasing the frequency of errors and a growth in levels of satisfaction when using the site (Usability First, 2014).

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<sup>9</sup> The impression in the consumers' mind of a brand's total personality (real and imaginary qualities and shortcomings) (BusinessDictionary, n.d.).

Web usability includes various parameters that play a huge role in a website start-up. The most important design and development streams are concentrated around future customers, to make sure their aims, requirements and mental models are met, so as to create a rational, efficient and easy in usage product (Idler, 2013). The main principles concerned in achieving these aims are; accessibility through design, identity and design, navigation and content. Detailed information about these subjects is provided in the next sections.

### 3.4 Accessibility, Design Usability and Navigation

Accessibility is the extent to which a user can acquire a product or service at the time when it is needed, there has to be an easy way to do this. The creation of an accessible website might require time and patience, it can be a simple or complex task due to several factors, such as the type of content, the website's complexity or size, and also, due to the applicable development tools (Shawn, 2005). General issues that impede access to information are lingering server time, broken links<sup>10</sup>, improper content design in the form of poor text-to-background contrast, font sizes, line length or the usage of excessive bandwidth for animations, videos and audio, etc. (Meyers, 2014).

User web experience involves person's perception and emotions about using a certain system or service. Companies have now realized that it is essential to provide a high quality user experience, as only then the visitors' attitude will be more positive. Moreover, their readiness to use the system or service again will increase. User web experience is concerned with the elements that make up the interface of a website, including layout, visual design, text, sound, interaction and brand demonstration. Usability coordinates these elements to allow for the best possible interaction between the users and the system.

Design is an act of communication that requires a profound understanding of the person with whom the designer wishes to communicate. A good design forms a better connection between the creator and the user, because all the communication happens through the appearance of the product. The look of the product has to provide all

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<sup>10</sup> A broken link is a link that doesn't work, often resulting in an error page. A broken link happens when the link points to a web page that has been deleted or moved (NetworkSolutions, n.d.).

essential clues demanded for its correct operation. A poorly designed object, or in the case of the website examined for this paper, is going to be frustrating and hard to use. This is because it does not provide any operational clues, or worse, creates false ones, which in their turn snare the user and put the viewer's interpretation upside down (Norman, 1998). The majority of users subconsciously look for a sense of order, but not necessarily for the fact of it.

To build an outstanding web presence, a developer can be creative and innovative as long as s/he makes sure the site is still usable (Krug, 2014). Idler (2013) states that the core of usability is clarity. Obscurity leads to a greater amount of time being used to achieve an initial goal; it brings negative user experience and destroys any intention of coming back. Krug (2014) claims that clarity trumps consistency; therefore, sometimes it is better to make things slightly inconsistent to reach clearness. Well-considered design make content visible, transparent, and fosters communication and interaction between the parties involved, moreover, it does the transaction process easier and provides users an opportunity to obtain the desired directly at any point (Corritore et al., 2003 cited in Jun and Jaafar, 2011).

Having been given general information about the company, the next priority for users is a clear path to the content that interests them (Meyers, 2014). Ideally the web site structure should follow established standards because Internet users are very familiar with common design formats that are used on the Web. They already have certain expectations about patterns of usage and the location of content on a web page. When users recognise the layout structure, it is easier for them to navigate because everything seems familiar (Idler, 2013). Moreover, functionally alike systems are simpler to learn, therefore making the process of information searching much faster. The layout must invisibly guide the consumer to the required content, resulting in the whole interface feeling intuitive. In practice, it is possibly to say that users seek for the absence of disorder, as much as the presence of order. Therefore, to create a simpler interface one needs to get rid of the sense of disorder (Vinh, 2011).

Important content should never reside more than two clicks away. Every step that makes sense to the user, following naturally without thought from the previous one, is a sign of quality (Nielsen, 2000). All pages should be self-evident, obvious and self-explanatory. The user should be able to understand what the page is about and how to

use it without making too much effort. Website navigation<sup>11</sup> has to clearly inform of what its consistent parts are. It has to reveal the content, guide and indicate the location. Good navigation always shows where to start and what choices are available. Furthermore, it installs confidence in the users about the company and affects the decision making process in regard to coming back to that source of information again, or not. Therefore, it is evident that a well thought out website navigation plays a major role in creating a good impression (Krug, 2014).

### 3.5 Content Usability

Content is the key component of a website. Publishing on the Web affects the type of content presented, and this in turn influences the customers. To have a satisfied user, one should make sure that website content is fit for purpose. After all, consumers visit websites for the content, it is what they look at when they load a page. Everything else, as already mentioned in the previous section on design usability, is just background or tools that help to express the content (Nielsen, 2000).

Norman (1998) claims knowledge has to be in the world. There should be no requirement to retain all knowledge in one's head. When it comes to content, a designer must pay attention to human psychology and to the capacity of a person's memory, specifically the amount of information that can be remembered at once. Because if there is too much information presented and too many navigational steps involved and they are difficult to understand, then in this case it is most unlikely that a user will remember them all.

Content has to be oriented in the direction of providing quick answers and being useful to the visitor (Nielsen, 2000). In the online world as in the offline, users have a particular aim. It is really complicated to find the sought-for information if there are a huge number of texts, pictures, videos, and advertisement banners, etc., acting as a distraction. The main process for the seeker will be scanning<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, it is important that each page and even paragraph begin with the assumption that one

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<sup>11</sup> Website Navigation: Navigation is both the system(s) that a visitor can use to move around a website and the visual manifestation of such systems (Motive Glossary, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Scanning: is reading a text quickly in order to find specific information ( British Council BBC, n.d.).



should present the most important material up front, so that users can tell at once what the page is about and what is possible to get achieve from it.

Content is the soul of a website, it provides meaning and emotion. Moreover, it works as a tool for building a relationship with potential clients. The importance of content increases day by day and there are two perspectives that describe why. The first is concerned with search engines<sup>13</sup>. These hunt for content and particularly for quality content, as this feature is the most valuable in the process of website classification. With any given set of keywords, search engines try to find the best and most useful content on the Internet for the good of users. Secondly, it is people themselves that look for valuable and qualitative information all over the Internet. They always have two aims: to collect basic and advanced knowledge on a subject. However, only high quality content can be of benefit to users of both types.

## 4 BUILDING THE MEGAKON WEBSITE

### 4.1 Idea Creation

Each project starts with a plan. It does not matter if it is a thought or a plan already on paper; the expectations have to be defined, so as to be sure of the project's success (Cranford Teague, 2009). The main expectation was to create a properly working website, which would reflect the brand, represent the company and its services, capture the attention of the target group<sup>14</sup> and attract new clients. Firstly, the plan consisted of research that would lead to the creation of concept drawings. Information was gathered through interviewing the client and sketching out ideas. From this, ultimately, would appear a complete digital prototype of the concept, which would then be implemented by means of wireframes<sup>15</sup>. The final version of the web site would be

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<sup>13</sup> Search Engine: Computer program that searches databases and internet sites for the documents containing keywords specified by a user (Business Dictionary, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup> Target Group: Particular group of people, identified as the intended recipient of an advertisement or message (Business Dictionary, n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> Wireframe: It is an important design and visualization tool used in web development for presenting proposed functions, structure and content of a Web page or Web site. A wireframe separates the graphic

constructed on wix.com, a cloud-based Web development platform<sup>16</sup> with a 960 grid system<sup>17</sup> that facilitates the creation of HTML5<sup>18</sup> desktop and mobile device compliant web sites, through the use of their online drag and drop tools.

The work process began with interviews and surveys of DSK's needs and requirements for the website, concerning its function and appearance. After that, website creation was studied and a literature review carried out on optimizing web usability and web design. Books and magazines about Web design were a good source of written information throughout the project; however the Internet itself provided many visual examples that helped in building the website appearance. The Internet provided the possibility of analyzing different types of layout used by the company's competitors. The author analyzed such layout aspects as:

- Structure and design of the pages
- Placement of the logo/name of the company, main and sub menus, tagline, search field and so forth;
- Content and typography;
- Imagery and colours.

Based on this research the author was able to create the most suitable type of site for the client. A sample of research is presented on Figure 2.

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elements of a Web site from the functional elements in such a way that Web teams can easily explain how users will interact with the Web site (Webopedia, n.d.).

<sup>16</sup> Web development platform: A term that refers to applications, services or resources made available to users on demand via the Internet from a cloud computing provider's servers, where cloud computing is typically defined as a type of computing that relies on *sharing computing resources* rather than having local servers or personal devices to handle applications (Webopedia, n.d.).

<sup>17</sup> The 960 Grid System is an effort to streamline web development workflow by providing commonly used dimensions, based on a width of 960 pixels (960GridSystem, n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> HTML5: is a World Wide Web Consortium specification that defines the fifth major revision of the Hypertext Markup Language (Webopedia, n.d.).

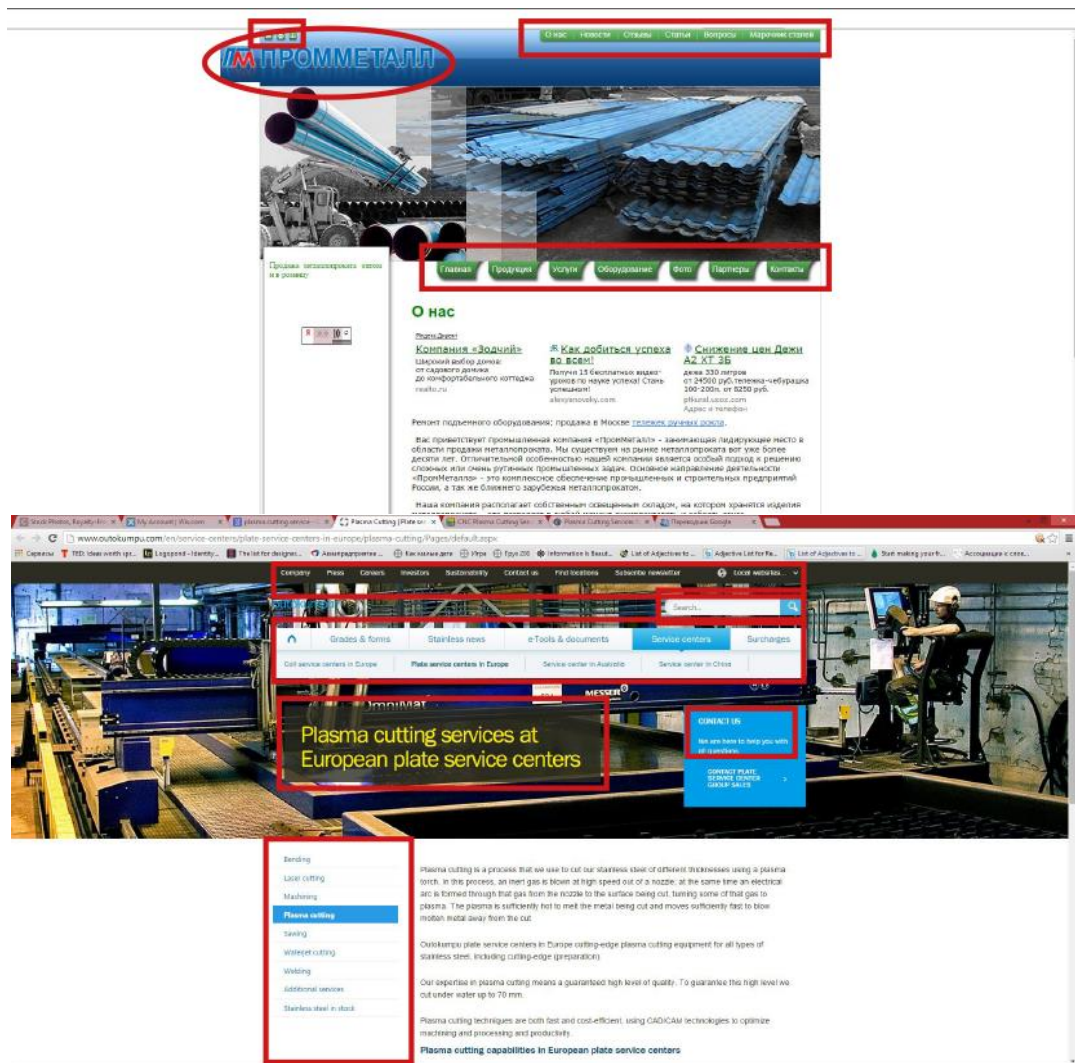


Figure 2. Analyzing metal processing companies' websites.

The main considerations affecting the decisions made during the creation and development of the idea came as a result of interviews with the company executives. A combined copy of them is presented in Appendix 1 INTERVIEW WITH COMPANY EXECUTIVES. The reason of this research was to gain an understanding of their objectives for the site: to introduce the company and its brand via online media to the target group, and to expand the company's network and client base. Moreover, all these actions had to bring the company to a new and higher level on the market and make it more competitive.

The next step was to understand the main competition in the market and the target group. As the most important competitors had already been established during the previous seminar research, there was only the need to analyze their online promotions

at this point. All results of the Competitor Analysis are presented in section 2.3 Competitive Content Analysis (p. 8-10) of this paper. The inference of the studies was that Megakon had to have a clear visual positioning of its brand on its website. This was backed up further by findings garnered after the target audience analysis, which subsequently resulted in the development of user persona<sup>19</sup> profiles, as represented in Appendix 2 USER PERSONAS. This exercise helped the author to understand what kind of people were in the target group, what their needs were, how they behaved online and what they wanted to find on the site.

After the key research was done, the author began exploring solutions by sketching. Everything started from rough drafts in a notebook. The main point of these initial sketches was to explore ideas that might work for the company and its clients. There were many versions, however, later on in the process the number of iterations was cut down and only a few were developed further. After several discussions with company executives one design was chosen, from which point onward all successive alterations were made.

Figures 3a, 3b and 3c represent development process of sketches.



Figure 3a. First sketches

<sup>19</sup> The purpose of personas is to create reliable and realistic representations of your key audience segments for reference (Usability, n.d.).

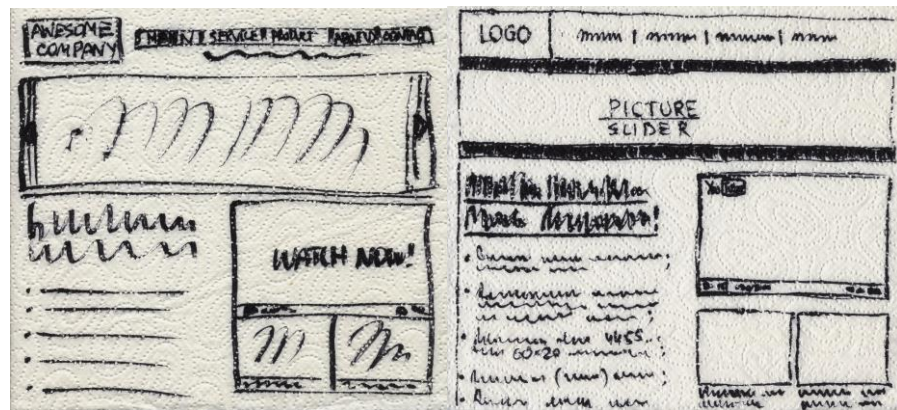


Figure 3b. Napkin sketches

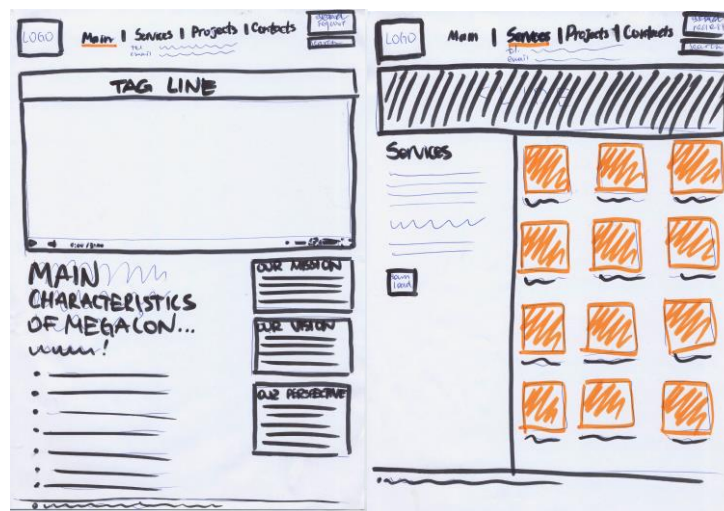


Figure 3c. Development of the ideas

The Megakon brand has its own unique visual elements that work together to create a distinctive and sharp look. The consistent use of these elements in all promotional materials aims to construct a strong level of recognition among current and future customers. The online resource might be the most commonly encountered representation, and therefore, it should have all the necessary visual brand characteristics present, not only the mission statement, values and perspective, but also graphics, including logo and corporate colour palette. It should reflect the company's character. The website's atmosphere and layout design, which follow the brand's rules and are formed by both the content and structure of the information, subsequently affect customer attitudes, behaviors and willingness to continue working with the site (Chen et al., 2012; Eroglu et al., 2001; Liu et al., 2008; Karimov et al., 2011; Koo and Ju, 2009; Mummalaneni, 2005; Yen and Lu, 2008 cited in Wu et al., 2013). In the beginning, in order to understand what kind of feeling or atmosphere would be most suitable for the website, a



combination of company logo, tag line and possible imagery was collated together to create a mood board, which is presented in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Mood Board

When all the general characteristics of the future website were defined and applied in the sketches, the final task was to identify specific requirements in structure, functionality and content, this would complete the whole design ready to be implemented into actual pages.

#### 4.2 Main Principles of Structure

The perception of a website's visual appeal results in diverse judgements. However as it is known opinions differ. The research paper by Lindgaard et al. (2006) stated that a relatively small number of people within a total could reach distinctive agreement on the visual layout of online pages. Accordingly, it is therefore more important to build usable sites than "cool" ones, since companies would like to provide convenient customer service, make great sales and manage their business successfully (Radosevich, 1997).

Megakon's website has a great amount of technical data. The representation of technical information is much easier to achieve if carried out in a simple way, without

any decorative elements to act as a distraction. However, if there is an original or complicated concept to be presented, it has to be self-explanatory and require only a little thought to understand it (Krug, 2014). The appearance of Megakon's website, its layout, colour, typography, the names of headlines, etc., have to work together to create a sense of nearly effortless understanding.

The main principle behind Megakon's website design is the KISS principle; it is an acronym that means, "Keep it short and simple". The idea of it is to create a simple and strict design with clear and focused on the topic content and easy navigation, for a better representation of the technical data. Steven Nelson says that "*You can do a lot with simple design that looks good but does not get in the way of finding information*" (Radosevich, 1997). An additional principle is of quality, represented in the design by not focusing on how many steps a process takes, but on whether each step makes sense to the user and whether it follows naturally from the previous step.

These rules were especially chosen for several reasons. The website is like a retail store where such aspects as layout, colour, decorations, and so forth, are important in differentiating the corporate brand from its competitors in a positive way (Kumar I., Garg, R. and Rahman, Z., 2010 cited in Wu et al., 2013). These are a part of a company's overall branding strategy. The Megakon brand has an individual stamp, its own signature, severity and brevity. Moreover, this simple form of presentation provides more subconscious information to the target audience about the company, and consequently impacts on the viewer's responses during a site visit (Wu et al., 2013).

The creation of online prototypes helped to discover how site elements would eventually work together. Working from the preliminary sketches, there was only a need to transform drawings and pictures with minor scale and position adjustments into Web pages and to see how it would work. Figures 5a and 5b present an online draft of the home and service pages.

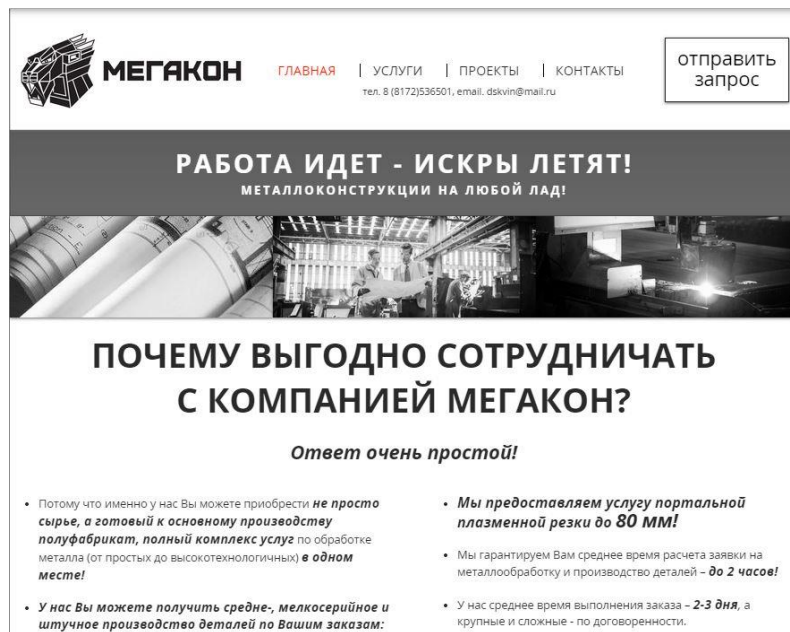


Figure 5a. Screenshot of homepage

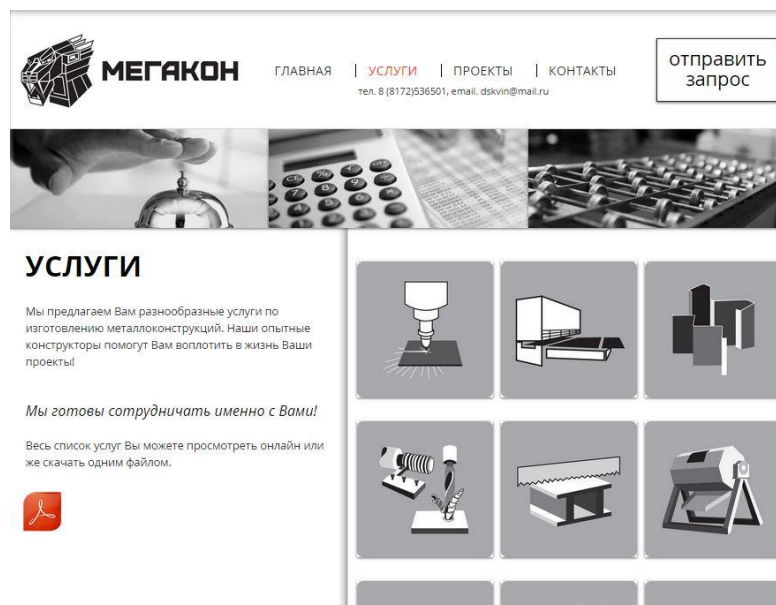


Figure 5b. Screenshot of service page

In order to understand how users would move through the content, it was beneficial to create an organizational and navigational scheme, this is commonly referred to as the information architecture of a site. To make it easily identifiable the site was developed with the users' perspective in mind. This is known as a top-down approach, meaning that the author started by separating the content into the broadest categories and after that dividing these into logical subsections (Garrett, 2003). The website's information architecture scheme is shown in Figure 6.



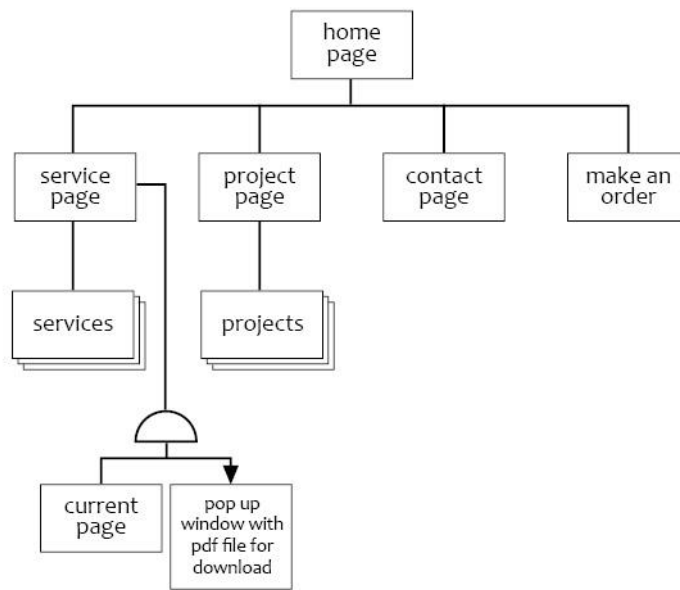


Figure 6. Megakon's information architecture scheme

Once the sketches and schemes best represented the desired result, the next step was to create wireframes (Figure 7). These help when planning the structure of pages, as they are simplified representations of the page layout without the distraction of visual design elements. The wireframes were needed not only to ensure the correct building of the site on the web development platform, but also for future developments such as site improvements or coding if the company should be interested in it (Cranford Teague, 2009). Appendix 3 WIREFRAMES FOR WEBSITE presents the series of wireframes created for the Megakon website.

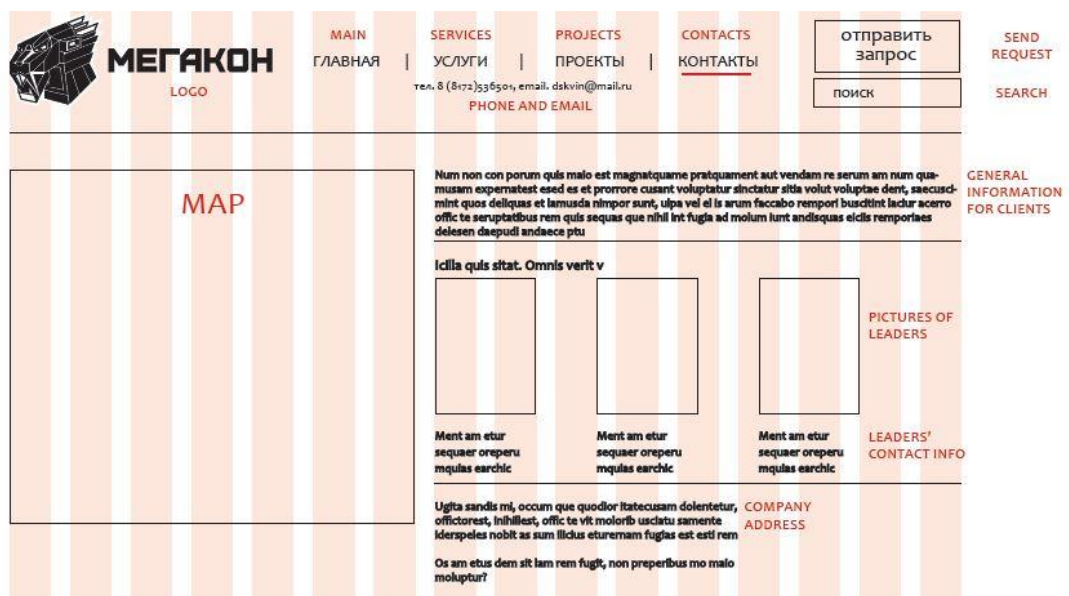


Figure 7. Contact page wireframe

### 4.3 Design Usability and Navigation of the Megakon Website

The design of the website should be natural and intuitive and any necessary restrictions and instructions have to be easy to understand. If a design follows the visibility rule then all additional explanation should be unnecessary. “*The visibility rule says that the correct parts must be visible, and they must convey the correct message*” (Norman, 1998). For example, screen reading is much more difficult than reading from paper, therefore people tend to scan, and they quickly decide which areas of the page to focus on and which areas to ignore. Therefore, in order to make the right parts visible, the page has to be divided into clearly defined areas. Only an initial glance is then needed in order to decide which part of the page is likely to have useful information.

Commonly each web page is divided into three sections: the header, body and footer. This division is needed for ease of design and several other parameters. As an example, it is simpler to build a hierarchy of web content and therefore make it easy for scanning. Visitor will focus on the important fields of information and navigate smoothly through the website. However, if a visitor does not have a particular aim, the main focuses will be on advertisements, pictures, photos with faces and bright colours. However, if a user has a specific goal in mind then all previously listed points will go under banner blindness<sup>20</sup> (Nielsen, 2000).

The main points of focus in the header area are the company name, logo<sup>21</sup> and navigation menu. A company's identity is visually expressed through its logo, which along with the company's name is a predominant feature in making a business memorable. The best position to locate the logo is in one of the first focusing points on a page - the upper left corner (Figure 8). As the header is generally the same on every page of a website and this is a highly visible hot-spot the possibility of customers remembering the logo is higher, and therefore, increases company recognition. Additionally, the logo is often used as a button to return the viewer to the main page if they had not entered the site from the home page initially. The close location of the navigation menu

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<sup>20</sup> Banner blindness is the tendency of people to ignore banner ads on web sites (Rouse, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Recognizable and distinctive graphic design, stylized name, unique symbol, or other device for identifying an organization (Business Dictionary, n.d.)

to the logo enables the user to find all the sites main categories and chose the next possible destination of their search. The choices made from the menu bar have to be visually distinctive; therefore the name of the category that is currently open is colored differently from the unselected options, in this case the corporate shade of red (explained in the Colour Section). The menu options on the Megakon web site are each separated by a vertical line, this increases their delineation from one and other (Figure 9). “As they are difficult to mistake for anything but navigation, they create an obvious-at-a-glance division between the page content and main navigation” (Krug, 2014).



Figure 8. The placement of the company's logo on the webpage.




Figure 9. Menu bar

The homepage is designed differently from the remaining pages because of its important role. The immediate goal of the home page is to answer first-time users' questions such as "Where am I?" "What is this site about?" and "What can I do in here?" (Nielsen, 2000). The purpose of the site should be understandable from its design, and should make the user focus on the most interesting parts of the site, and explore it further. Moreover, the Megakon home page does not have an introductory paragraph in the style of happy talk<sup>22</sup>, because most of the company's customers do not have time for small talk, wanting to get right to the point of their visit (Krug, 2014). On the contrary, Megakon presents one of the main statements of its brand platform depicting the company's ambitions and the future plans of the organization, so to make an overview and to explain briefly to the new visitors what to expect.

Consistency in design minimizes any sense of disorder and makes it easier to scan pages for items of interest (Vinh, 2011). All pages, with the exception of the home page, have been designed in the same style and with the structure of a 16-column grid that is made up of 40 pixels increments. The width of margins that are on the left and right of each column is 10 pixels, and they create gutters between columns, which are 20 pixels wide. This can be seen in the wireframe shown in Figure 6 or in the Appendix 3 WIREFRAMES FOR WEBSITE. The service and project pages share a modular pictorial grid interface, as is shown below in Figures 10a and 10b, as they both have a number of choices to view. In both cases there are additional sub menus, also in grid form, on the right side of page enabling users to navigate between service options or projects without going back to the introductory page for that category. A fragment of the services side menu is presented below in Figure 10c.

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<sup>22</sup> It is the introductory text that is supposed to welcome people to the site and tell them how great it is or to tell them what they are about to see in the section they have just entered (Krug, 2012).


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## УСЛУГИ

Мы предлагаем Вам разнообразные услуги по изготовлению металлоконструкций. Наши опытные конструкторы помогут Вам воплотить в жизнь Ваши проекты!


*Мы готовы сотрудничать именно с Вами!*

Весь список услуг Вы можете просмотреть онлайн или же скачать одним файлом.







Плазменная резка




Резка листового проката




Гибка и вальцовка листового проката



Нарезание резьбы / Сверление отверстий




Поперечная резка



Обработка поверхностей


Figure 10a. Service grid


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## ПРОЕКТЫ

Мы с удовольствием хотим предложить Вам посмотреть проекты, осуществленные нашей компанией!


*Надеемся, что Ваши проекты появятся на этой странице в скором времени!*




**Производственное Помещение**  
Вологодская область, Вологда.  
2014-2015



**Животноводческий комплекс на 1195 голов**  
Вологодская область, Грязовецкий район. 2014



**Крытая Автостоянка**  
Вологодская область. 2014



**Гараж под лесовозную технику, ЗАО «ВАГАИНВЕСТ»**  
г. Вельск, Архангельская область

Figure 10b. Project grid





Figure 10c. Fragment of side grid

Another important aspect in the setting up of a website is the creation of the domain name<sup>23</sup>, as it is an essential part of the branding effort. Users should be able to remember and write the name correctly, as it has to be written in the Latin alphabet. In Russian, the company spells its name “Мегакон”. There are two ways of approach; converting it into the Latin alphabet either by means of transliteration<sup>24</sup> or translation. The first one is more logical for Russian people because of the visual similarity between the letters “к” and “k” - “Megakon”, so therefore it might be easier to remember. The second option is the correct translation of “Megakon”, which means “Mega Constructions”. After consideration and a short discussion with the company executives, the transliteration method was chosen.

<sup>23</sup> Domain names are used to identify one or more IP addresses (Webopedia, n.d.).

<sup>24</sup> Transliteration is the process of converting words or letters in one script to another script (Loquate, n.d.).

#### 4.4 Colour Palette

Another element that influences the user perception of a website and of a company itself is colour. The use of colour helps to stimulate certain emotions or associations within visitors and can contribute to the recognition of a brand. Colours reflect a company's image and its personality, they help to send a message and reach the target audience (Boyle, 2001).



Figure 11. Hex #FF1F00

The principle colour pallet of the Megakon website consists of black, grey, white and a tone of red Hex #FF1F00 (Color-Hex, n.d.) (Figure 11). These colours are specified for various media in the Megakon Style Guide, and were chosen due to their associated characteristics. Black is the colour of the company logo (Figure 12) and is associated with power, strength, and authority. It is a colour connected to prestige that evokes strong emotions. Grey and black have a couple of features in common; they introduce formality and sophistication into the design. However, grey is a much more balanced colour than black, it is emotionless and represents eternity. The phrase “grey matter” refers to brains, intelligence and intellect. White is used as a background colour, because its main task in this particular design is to distinguish elements and give contrast to text and images, which are mostly in a black and gray scale in this theme (Ambrose and Harris, 2006) (Figure 13).



Figure 12. Megakon Logo



## ПРОЕКТЫ

Мы с удовольствием хотим предложить Вам  
посмотреть проекты, осуществленные нашей  
компанией!

*Надеемся, что Ваши проекты появятся на  
этой странице в скором времени!*

Figure 13. Black text, gray scale picture and white background.

The whole composition has one pulsing accent colour- red - the colour of fire. Red was chosen as it can be associated with the flying sparks produced during the processes of plasma cutting and welding. Moreover, red is affiliated with strength, leadership, courage, vigor, willpower, excitement and determination. This colour stimulates, it is a call to action, increasing enthusiasm and confidence. For this reason it was used as the selection marker colour for when one needs to click on a button or when choosing an option for a particular service, or to download a file (Figure 14a and 14b).



Figure 14a. Button for downloading the file, send button, choosing option and menu.

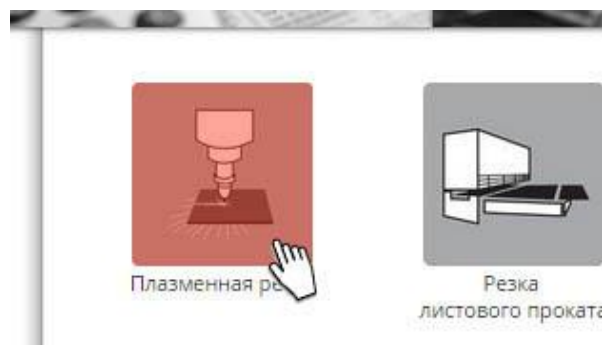


Figure 14b. Highlight color when choosing a service or project.



#### 4.5 The Imagery of the Megakon Website

Web designers use images to attract the user's attention, to communicate the key messages of the site effectively and to leave a memorable impression. This is due to the fact that images are often the first element visitors' notice. In fact, nearly every website uses pictures in its design as when visitors scan a page it is quicker to convey an idea through photography or pictures and words, than words alone.

To build a connection with visitors is one of the biggest challenges of Web design. The brand is always a priority and a leading influence in the design of a website. In the case of these studies, the images follow the rules of Megakon's Brand Guidelines, in order to support the personality and vision of the company where text alone could not accomplish it. The main rule for image use is: use black and white or de-saturated pictures. There is an exception for the use of orange-red colours (due to their colour relationship to the flying sparks seen during the metal work processes) where they will represent directly services and/or products of the company, or create an appropriate mental or emotional association with the debated topic. In general pictures should be related to representations of metal work, construction and business meetings; the mood should be progressive and businesslike. For instance, the page that represents plasma cutting services contains photos of a plasma-cutting machine that is used by the company, images of the process of plasma cutting, examples of the end results and other additional material (Figure 15).

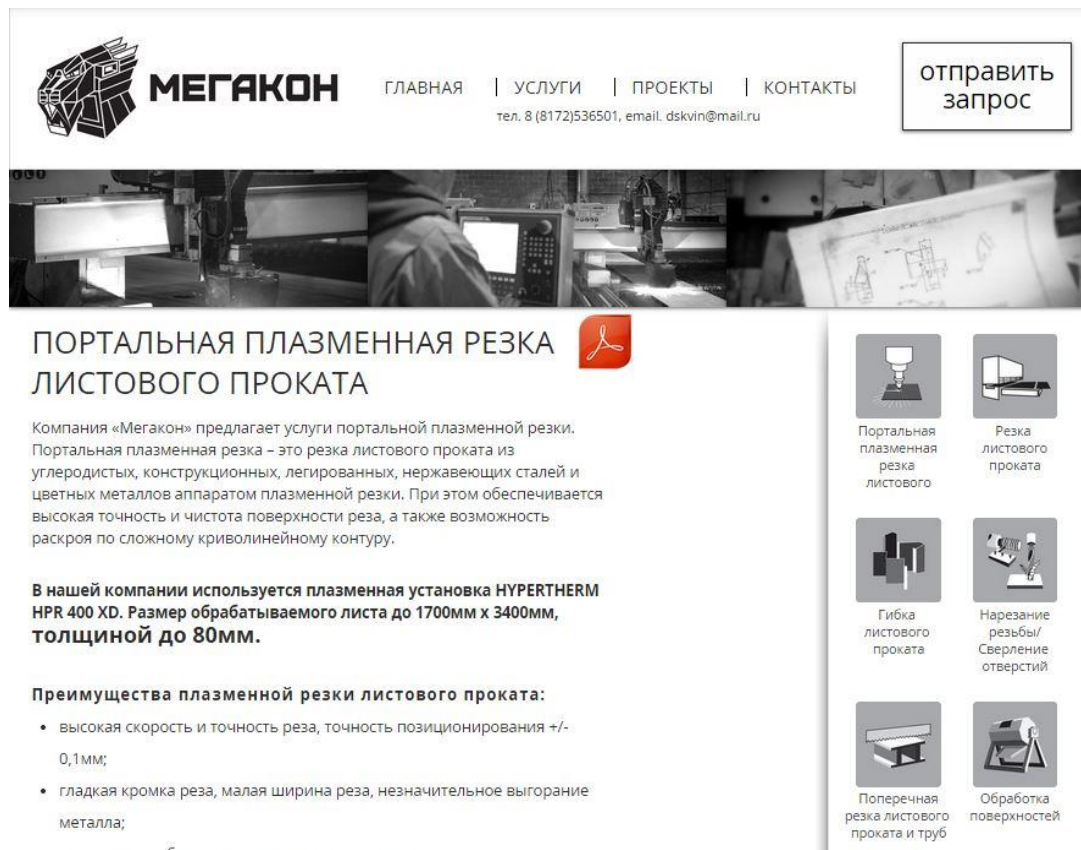


Figure 15. Screenshot of plasma cutting service page

As Megakon offers many different services, there are images throughout the site that represent each of them and the outcomes of their use in the form of certain products, from small details to the construction of buildings. This is done to illicit trust and confidence in the company. Moreover, there are general photos intended to create associations with the topic on each page.

#### 4.6 Content Usability on the Megakon Website

Consistent and well-organised content is what users are looking for. Content is the voice of the website, and therefore of the company itself. Sometimes clients request that a lot of information is placed on their Web pages; however this can make finding important data difficult. Therefore, it is best to cut down the quantity of information, ensuring that nothing of value is lost, careful consideration must be made to select the most important data and to present it (Nielsen, 2000 and Krug, 2014).

As copywriting was also included in the project, all research that was conducted and

considered as valuable was applied to the writing process. The website's total content consists of text, images and video. The last two areas were covered in sections 4.4 and 4.5 therefore the focus of the rest of this chapter is on the copywriting process.

Megakon is a metal processing company, therefore, all information that is presented on the website relates to various services in metal work or to the company itself. Each page contains only relevant information, which is divided into similar topics: general information is presented first in an introductory paragraph and then specific information, usually as a bulleted list.

The largest block of data is located in the Service category. The material on each page of this section is divided in the same way: first the introduction and definition of the service, secondly a description of the equipment that is used in its implementation, then the advantages of this service and the equipment owned by Megakon, finally any additional information is listed. As the same format is applied to all the data in this section, it makes it easy to remember, and subsequently, the process of scanning and searching speeds up. Conversely, this section contains quite a lot of technical data, which can be difficult to focus on for long periods if a person reads it on screen. Frequently users prefer to print out Web pages; hence it is best to provide them with a separate downloadable print file, such as a PDF, of all Megakon services from the home or other service pages (Nielsen, 2000).

The titles of each page and its subheadings are known as 'microcontents' and have to act as pearls of clarity that the viewer can follow. Each heading consists of around 40 characters in order to explain what the viewer will find on that page (Nielsen, 2000). These titles contain words and phrases that match the task or current concern of the viewer. Each page has several subheadings that inform the visitor of what each section is about. They help in decision making regarding what parts of the page to read, scan, or skip. Highlighting key words and phrases also help to attract a visitor's attention. For example, on the home page there are several key terms that have been highlighted in bold text that might interest a customer (Figure 16). To further attract the user's attention, it is useful to involve trigger words<sup>25</sup>, which, as Krug (2014) says, are hard-

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<sup>25</sup> Words that initiate a process or course of action (The Free Dictionary, n.d.)

wired into the human nervous system. The trigger word that appears on the home page and on each service page is the word “discount”.

- Потому что именно у нас Вы можете приобрести **не просто сырье, а готовый к основному производству полуфабрикат, полный комплекс услуг** по обработке металла (от простых до высокотехнологичных) **в одном месте!**
- У нас Вы можете получить **средне-, мелкосерийное и штучное производство деталей по Вашим заказам:** закладные детали, крепежные элементы конструкций, соединительные и опорные детали **и многое другое!**
- Мы готовы **встраиваться в Вашу производственную цепочку!** Мы несем ответственность за поставки по согласованному графику.
- Наше **металлообрабатывающее оборудование расположено на одной площадке со складским комплексом.**
- Мы предоставляем **услугу портальной плазменной резки до 80 мм!**
- Мы гарантируем Вам среднее время расчета заявки на металлообработку и производство деталей – **до 2 часов!**
- У нас среднее время выполнения заказа – **2-3 дня**, а крупные и сложные - по договоренности.
- Мы **принимая в работу эскизы и чертежи «от руки».** Специалисты Мегакона сформируют документацию в AutoCAD.
- Мы предоставляем возможность **обработки давальческого сырья.**
- При расчете стоимости заказа предусматриваются **скидки** в зависимости от суммы заказа!

Figure 16. Highlighted key terms and trigger words.

#### 4.7 Typography

Typography is the visual component of the written word. It involves the arrangement of type within a set design, defined by the selection of a typeface<sup>26</sup>, its size, letter and line spacing, colour and style (bold, italic, all caps etc.). Type should collaborate with other elements on the page such as pictures, decorative elements, and illustrations (Cranford Teague, 2010). All these elements should support each other and engage, guide and ultimately persuade the readers.

Typography in cooperation with the written word takes center stage in conserving one of the most valuable resources for a web site – the reader’s attention. Sometimes this is hard to achieve, especially, when the text is devoid of adjectives or dialogue and the whole document is based on technical data. It is simply not interesting to read. If a person searches for specific information, it should be easy to find. This can be reinforced through the use of typography to emphasize the message within the text and therefore make it more effectively noticeable. Typography that consolidates the meaning of text is a success even if it is aesthetically unpleasant (Butterick, 2013).

---

<sup>26</sup> Typeface is a collection of characters, which have the same distinct design (Ambrose and Harris, 2011).

The Megakon website aims to achieve several goals: to represent the company, to reach the target audience and to provide information about its services. As the services are all related to metal work, the data on the site contains a lot of details concerned with figures and measurements. If these are not presented in a readable and easy to scan way, the client will not be able to find the desired information. Therefore, a key design requirement was the obligation to have a legible and non-distracting typeface. The best option found by the author was Open Sans (Figure 17), “*a humanist sans serif typeface created by Steve Matteson, Type Director of the Ascender Corporation. The version selected for use on the site consists of an 897-character set, which includes the Cyrillic alphabet. Open Sans was designed with an upright stress<sup>27</sup>, open forms and a neutral, yet friendly appearance. It was optimized for print, web, and mobile interfaces, and has excellent legibility characteristics in its letterforms*” (Google Fonts, n.d.).

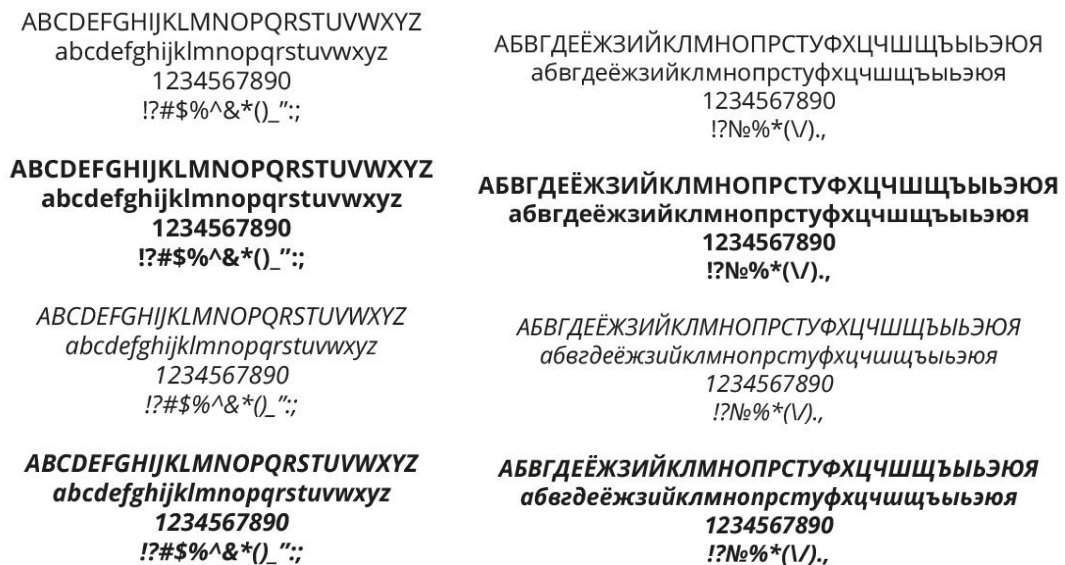


Figure 17. Open Sans: Latin and Cyrillic alphabet and signs.

Online reading is not the most enjoyable experience and may actually be considered painful and irritating (Nielsen, 2000). So to make the process easier, the body copy and headers are set in different sizes on the page. One of the general rules of thumb is that the largest header font should be roughly twice the size of the body copy or larger. In case of the Megakon design the header is always two or three times as large as

<sup>27</sup> If a line is drawn through the thinnest part of the curved strokes of a letter, the stress is the direction of that line (YearBooks, 2015).

the body copy, which is set at 12px or 14px (Figure 18).

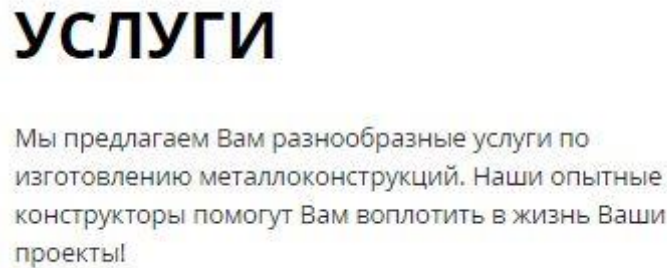


Figure 18. Text size (header 36px, body copy 14px).

Another typographic rule to consider is referred to as “breathing room”. This relates to the text – line height<sup>28</sup> (Figure 19) and column width, both of which should increase the comfort of reading. Lines of text should neither be spaced too far apart nor too close together as this impedes the viewer’s reading. The best way to achieve it is to have a line height 20 to 50 percent larger than the font size (Cranford Teague, 2010). The line height is different for headlines<sup>29</sup>, body copy<sup>30</sup> and bullet lists<sup>31</sup>, so to make text more scannable. The line height for website headlines is 1,3em, for bullet lists is 2em and as the main font sizes for body copy on Megakon website are 12px and 14px, the most convenient line height is 1,5em<sup>32</sup>. It means that the text has a line height of 130 percent, 200 percent and 150 percent of the font size respectively. In the case of column widths, the human eye is most comfortable when it reads 60-80 characters per line; therefore, if a line exceeds 80 characters, the reader will have problems following the text to the next line (Vinh, 2011).

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<sup>28</sup> The line height or leading is the space between lines of text in a text block (Ambrose and Harris, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Headline is a phrase for any written material indicating the subjectmatter, usually larger and heavier type (Dictionary, n.d.).

<sup>30</sup> Body copy is the main text part in publications (BusinessDictionary, n.d.).

<sup>31</sup> Bullet list is any of a number of items printed in a list, each after a centred dot, usually the most important points in a longer piece of text (Dictionary, n.d.).

<sup>32</sup> An em is a unit in the field of typography relative to the font size of the element, for exmaple, 2em means 2 times the size of the curret font (W3schools, n.d.).



Figure 19. The line spacing (headline 1,3em, paragraph 1,5em, bullet list 2em).

As web users tend not to engage themselves in reading through a lot of material, it is important to start each page and paragraph with a summary. Moreover, the setter of the text is best advised to separate paragraphs with an appropriate space between them and aim for each paragraph to focus on only one key idea. The final formatting choice to be considered is that of the text alignment<sup>33</sup>. By having a consistent starting point for the eye on the page, the user can read much faster. In European languages the convention is for the body text to be aligned to the left (Figure 20). This creates white space on the right edge, which softens the overall appearance of the page (Nielsen, 2000; Cranford Teague, 2010).



Figure 20. Paragraph spacing and left-aligned text.

<sup>33</sup> Alignment refers to the position of type within a text block, in both the vertical and horizontal planes (Ambrose and Harris, 2011).



## 5 CONCLUSION

Technology is rapidly changing all the time; as a result it is sometimes very difficult for us to follow its fast evolution and emerging trends. Today nearly everyone uses the Internet, which has given us a great number of new possibilities, especially in the fields of communication and information search. All that is needed is to have a computer and an Internet connection, and with the click of a browser button the world of web pages and fingertip information appears.

Each company or individual, who owns a web site or page, tries to present it in the best possible way to attract users. After the creation of the Corporate Brand, the Megakon executives decided to extend their business reach from the real world market to an online presence, aiming to further promote their company and to increase their recognition amongst their target group. Their main goal was to begin an interaction between themselves and their clients via the Internet, as this was seen as an easier way to promote the company and share a larger amount of information about their business than by the more expensive TV or newspaper route.

Communication with potential customers through the means of a well-designed website can expand a company's contact net and hopefully bring additional success to said company. However, as has been shown in this paper, to achieve a decent result, usability should always be kept in mind. Website usability is a complicated and multifaceted topic. It involves various fields of study; however this thesis concentrates on the main three aspects of Design, namely Usability, Navigation and Content Usability.

When considering on the one hand website creation in terms of visual design and technology, and on the other hand the aspects of design usability, navigation and content usability, the main point is to keep all of these aspects in balance. It was important during this project not to get too creative; instead the author focused on keeping everything simple and carrying out the process in a calm but effective way. Usability had to be considered throughout the whole work, just as a needle and cotton work through a textile and sew it all together into one simple and useful piece so usability provided the framework by which the site's success was measured.



Through following the rules concerning visual branding in the Megakon Brand Guide, the website has its own definitive style; the appearance and character are inherent only to Megakon and of course, to its executives. Moreover, it reflects the inner working style and atmosphere of the company. Megakon's voice is revealed through its content, which is a structured combination of text and pictures, thus creating the right impression of the company. In addition, all text on the website projects a conversational tone, the company talks with its visitor, shares the information about itself and invites them to continue communicating via email, phone or a live discussion. The final bridge between the design and content of the site is the logical way the navigation operates. It shows the best way to reach the desired end, like a bus traveling along a road stopping at each important station for the user.

Another key aspect of this project was its focus on simplicity as a design objective. Simple words, simple design and simple navigation for people, who produce multi-level constructions, build houses and use heavy machinery, who work in the world of technical information and drawings. They are used to seeing structure nearly everywhere, and therefore, the website had to project a strong inner scheme to be perceived as useful. Nevertheless, the website is pleasant to read, with typography and imagery that support the text and make it enjoyable for the users.

At this point the company has a working website now. They are already on the way to making their business more recognized and increasing the number of clients among their target group. Currently there is a growing virtual connection with their visitors, which they can continue to build upon by updating their site; adding new information about projects they have completed and new services they will introduce, as well as other news about the company.

A simple language of communication through words or design makes everything usable. Through the whole work, I have been trying to talk with imaginary visitors of this website. Since the scratch on the paper, I have started to ask myself "Will it be understandable?" "Is not it too much?" "It is clear for me, but is it clear for others?" The process of understanding what is important for the company and what actually users want, took a quite a while but resulted in an idea of what we need to build. The process of actual creation in the cloud-based platform has been amazing and difficult at the same time due to changes in design, suggestions from the company and material

not delivered on time. All was well worth though, because one of the goals was to achieve the result that we wanted and not solely to put together something quickly. To make the website usable means to make it reliable and memorable. To make it usable means to make it for everyone.

Albert Einstein said, “The only source of knowledge is experience”. If asked myself, if I gained any experience, then I would definitely say, “Yes, I did”. Gathering a large quantity of material required plenty of work, involving the making of analyses, extracting results out of all the data and, in the end, to create what I have created. It was a great adventure and I got the most out of it.

Some technologists and writers have argued that the Internet is destined to become the most important tool for cultural exchange in human history. It has brought changes in the way we build our businesses, communicate, and search for the new. Web pages, emails, and blogs have created an environment for social media and these all build a company or an individual’s reputation and ranking. Each piece has its own status and place on the popularity scale. However, “*Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication*” (Leonardo da Vinci) and the glory of expression (Walt Whitman). Simplicity makes everything usable and thereby creates an easier way to deal with things in our everyday life.

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Megakon website is temporarily available at: <http://creativemindandtalk.wix.com/megakon>

## APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW WITH COMPANY EXECUTIVES

1/4

\*Combined interview with company leaders.

\*The interview was done in Russian and after that translated in English

Address: 160026, Vologda, Okrugnoe shosse 2a
Email: dskvin@mail.ru
Phone/Fax: 8(8172)536501

### 1. What is the purpose of this site?

Please check off the ones that apply to you.

- ✓ Explain your products and services
- ✓ Bring in new clients to your business
- ✓ Provide your customers with information on a certain subject
- Deliver news or calendar of events
- Create a blog that addresses specific topics or interests
- Sell a product or products online
- Provide support for current clients

Add more, if needed: Promote the company and its brand.

### 2. Please list the names of two or more of your competitors and describe how are you differ from them?

- 1) TechMash
- 2) Gector
- 3) O-Center
- 4) Technomor
- 5) Prommetal

**3. What is your deadline for completing the site?**

January 2015

**4. What kind of visitors are you expecting on your website (income, interests, gender, age)?**

User persona. Appendix X.

**5. Why do you believe site visitors should do business with you rather than with a competitor? What problem are you solving for them?**

It's better to do business with us because we have good equipment, one of the best plasma cutting service in our region (cut up to 80mm), fast order processing and order implementation. We would like to present clear content about our services and basically general information. Everything should be simple and easy to find because quite often, when one searches something on websites that are related to metal work, it is very difficult, time consuming, and there is a lot of irrelevant information, there is simply too much... We want it shortly and clear. What we are and what we do.

**6. What action(s) should the user perform when visiting your site? Please check off all that apply.**

- ✓ Call/email you
- ✓ Fill out a contact form
- ✓ Search for information
- ✓ Download files
- Fill out a quote form
- Sign up for your mailing list
- Purchase a product(s)

**7. What are you offering? Make a list of all the sections/pages you think that you'll need.**

Page	Content Notes
Main	Some videos and pictures
Services	Our services
Projects	Our projects
Contacts	Our address, phone, map, email, working days and hours
About us	About the company and our brand
Contact form	Contact form where client can write what kind of order s/he wants to make
Images	Different images of our services, projects, products and buildings

**8. Do you have the written content and images/photographs prepared for these pages?**

- ✓ No
- Yes

**\*If not, will you need copywriting and photography services?**

Maybe photography service will be needed. Maybe copywriting as well.

**9. People are coming to your new site for the first time. How do you want them to feel about your company?**

They should feel good, safe and confident about us. They should understand immediately that we are serious company and not fake. Maybe the feeling “Oow! Something new!” because we want an outstanding and different design than people usually see on these types of websites. They want to call and make an order!

**10. Are there corporate colours, logo, fonts etc. that should be incorporated?**

Yes, as we have our brand guide, you should follow it. So, basically, the logo and tagline should be on website. And black and white theme. Business look.

**11. What features should be used on your website (contact form, pictures, video, etc.)**

Well, definitely pictures and we would like to have short video about our company, like a promotion of our services, maybe around 30 - 40 seconds. Contact form to make an online order.

**12. What do you NOT want on your site in terms of text, content, colour, graphic elements?**

We don't want mess, many sectors and bright colours. Cannot say anything about graphics, do not really understand much about it. But about text, we don't like “blah blah blah” talks; everything has to be clearly and precisely.

User Persona 1 – Andrey Aleexeevich Bashmachnikov**Basic demographics such as age, job, family, hobbies and interests**

He is 47 years old, works as a leading engineer of building company. He has wife Elena Nikolayevna Bashmachnikova (we will not mention her age, because it is not our business), who works as an administrator of a clothes shop. They have two kids: son Dmitriy, 24 years old and daughter Svetlana, 19 years old. He likes the business that he does. He has a good salary, and his status in the society is average. Andrey likes to go with his wife to vacation, for example, to Turkey. However, he likes to travel with couple of his friends as well. He smokes 1 pack of cigarettes per day and likes strong alcohol or beer when he has free time and mood for that. Andrey loves to skiing and fishing. But the most what he likes is the combination of these activities.

**What a typical day looks like**

After having a good breakfast and reading couple of columns from the fresh newspaper that he bought yesterday, he gives a kiss to his wife (this action is more a part of an everyday routine than something special), he leaves the flat, which is in the high-level bedroom suburb, he goes into his 3 years old Land Cruiser and drives to work. He has to be there at 9 am but he is usually 5 minutes late because of the traffic. His responsibility is to check the building process, as he is an engineer by his education. So he gives orders, works with documentation, talks with leading builders, check the plan and how it is followed, communicates with companies, which involved in the process. Time schedule is uncertain sometimes, even if the work day until 6pm. But usually he is back home at 7pm or so. He has dinner with his wife, children might not participate because of their own lives, and watches TV at the same time, usually news/sports/stand up comedy/talk shows, though wife does not like first two “because these type of programs have a bad influence to digestion”.

**Common tasks in relation to Internet**

The main purpose, why Andrey uses the Internet, is to get Russian and worldwide news, rate of exchange of ruble to other currencies, read some articles about politics, find companies for collaboration, contacts and other everyday information. He is not a person who would book a flight/trip via Internet or he is not going to pay online because he does not trust any operations that are related to money and online services. Even if it is about ordering pizza, he might find a website with all needed information, its number but he will call a friend and ask him/her about this pizza company and of course pay to the deliveryman by cash.

**Major frustrations when trying to achieve goals related to Internet**

The main problem for Andrey is trusting to the online information. He judges it by the content and mostly by the text, which is on the website. As he is an engineer he needs precise information about certain services and processes. One of his life principles is “Person can write anything about itself or its company, and I will not know is it truth or not till I personally will check it via the live conversation and ordering some services.”

**What the person likes best about Internet**

Well, usually it is fast and convenient data search. It is easy to get the basics about the company or service.

**Skill levels relating to tasks as well as technology**

He has quite good skills in Internet technology, however the lack of time does not give him a full possibility to improve and be more relaxed with it.



**Goals, attitudes, beliefs**

He wishes the best for his business and family. He would like to improve the company and have more good contacts with other organizations. He wants to have a choice and different ways to achieve the main goal. Sometimes he is a bit scrupulous but he knows what he does and generally gets what he wants sooner or later.

User Persona 2 – Michail Alexandrovich Kozlov**Basic demographics such as age, job, family, hobbies and interests**

Michail is 33 years old, he has just started a company with several companions, which offers services in construction works, though he likes economics and finance and it is actually his speciality. He is not married but he has a girlfriend (let us say long-term relations). He likes different sports that have, as he says, “action”, therefore football, basketball, winter sports, etc. Moreover, he plays guitar and drums. One important addition, he loves to play with his little 5 years old cousin (sister's son) and I could say that he loves kids generally (hope his girlfriend noticed that).

**What a typical day looks like**

As they just began this business (just couple of years), he is working a lot. Days start half past 8am. He does a lot of documentation because his main task to deal with finances, salaries and searching companies, which they could do business with and where the prices and quality correspond to each other. So, he usually sits in the office in front of a computer or goes to bank, tax office or to negotiation with other companies about offers and services. His day ends when everything, what was planned, is done. Sometimes there are no free weekends and he has to be in the office, but the phone rings and there is a picture of a sad girlfriend's face (however, the face depends on how long he will not answer the call/message). So he really tries to be with family or friends during the weekends.

**Common tasks in relation to Internet**

The main tasks are online banking, emailing, searching information, etc.

**Major frustrations when trying to achieve goals related to Internet**

He does not really have any frustrations about working via Internet. However, of course, as he said, it is nice to find information in an easy way, when everything is visible and no need to think where some link leads.

**What the person likes best about Internet**

Easy and fast access. Michail is always online, just in case to check the mail or any messages from clients. The whole company is in the state of not to lose any possibility and take every chance.

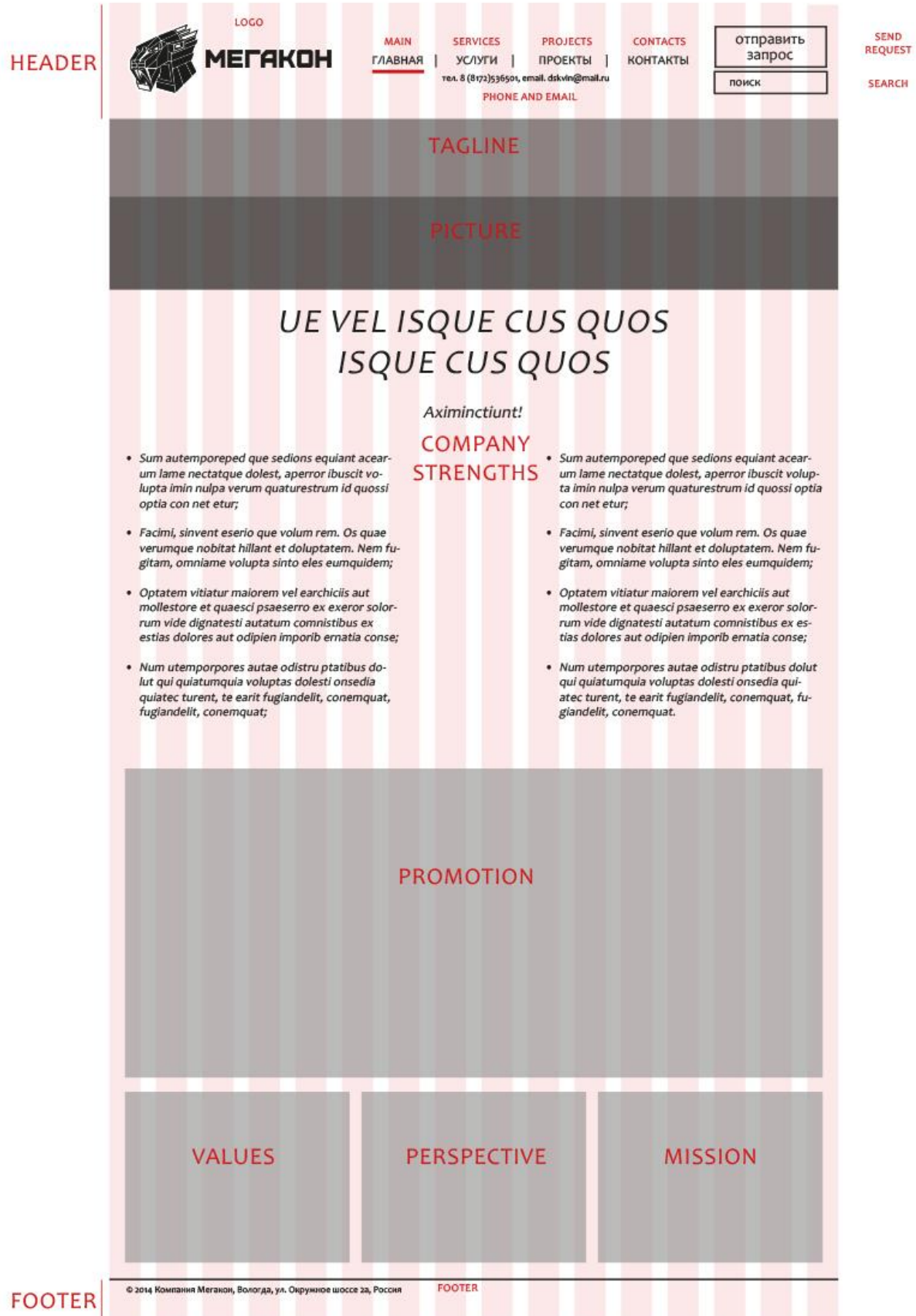
**Skill levels relating to tasks as well as technology**

Michail knows computers and takes an active part in an online business and communication.

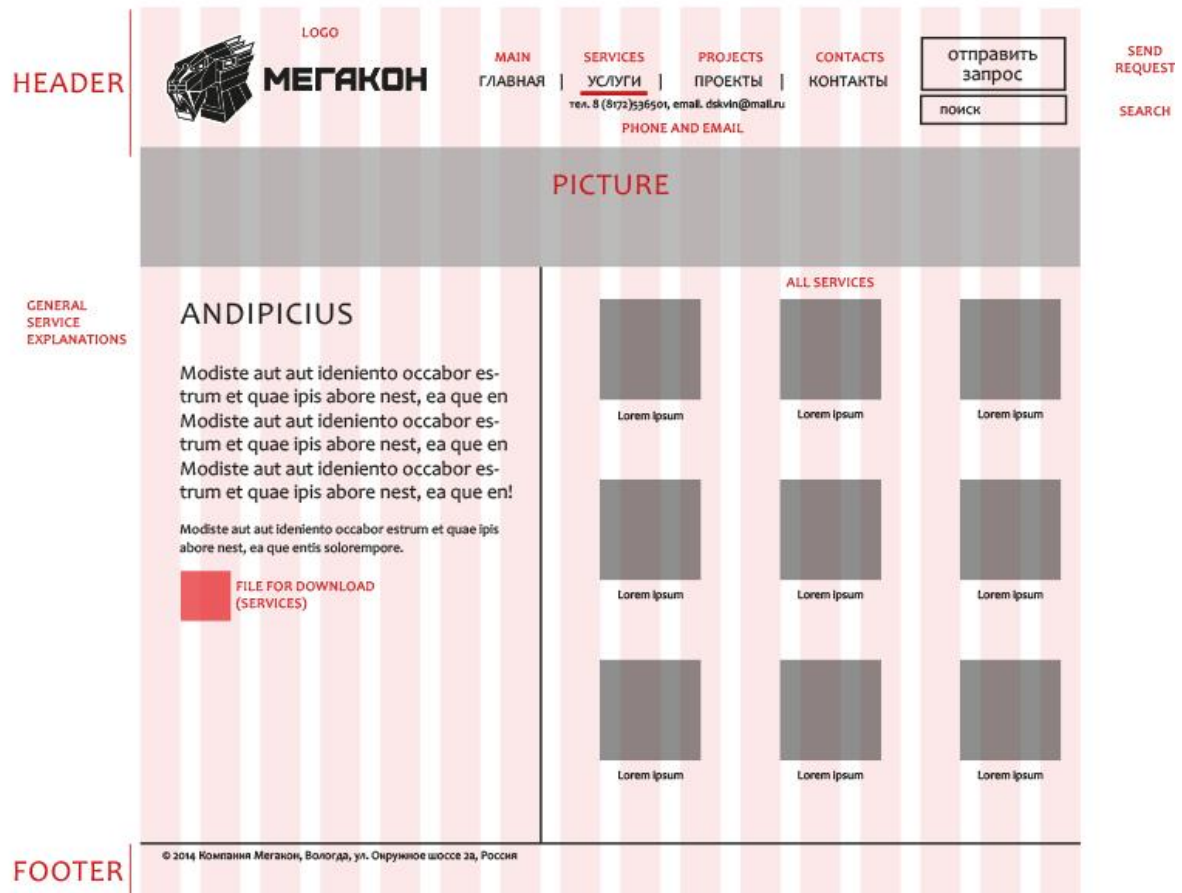
**Goals, attitudes, beliefs**

Their company does not have a website yet, but really looking forward to do that soon because they consider that it is a great opportunity to promote themselves via Internet as nowadays the whole society is online. He would like to build a strong business but for that company needs support, more knowledge and contacts with other companies.

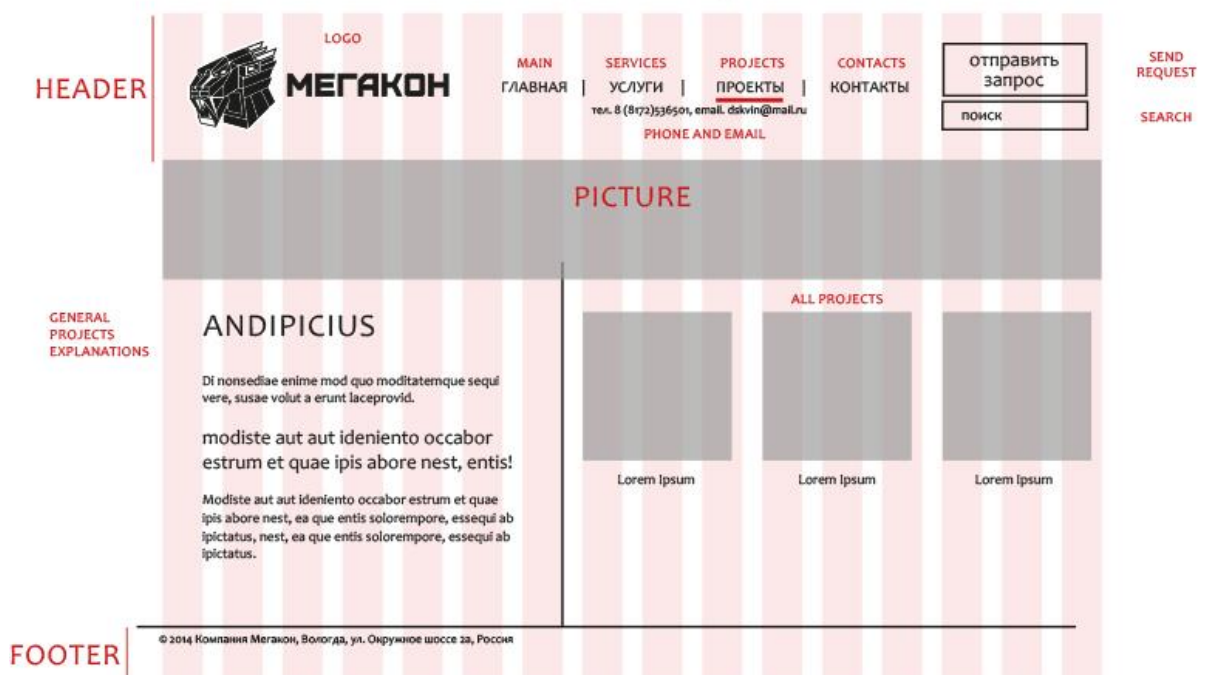
## Home Page



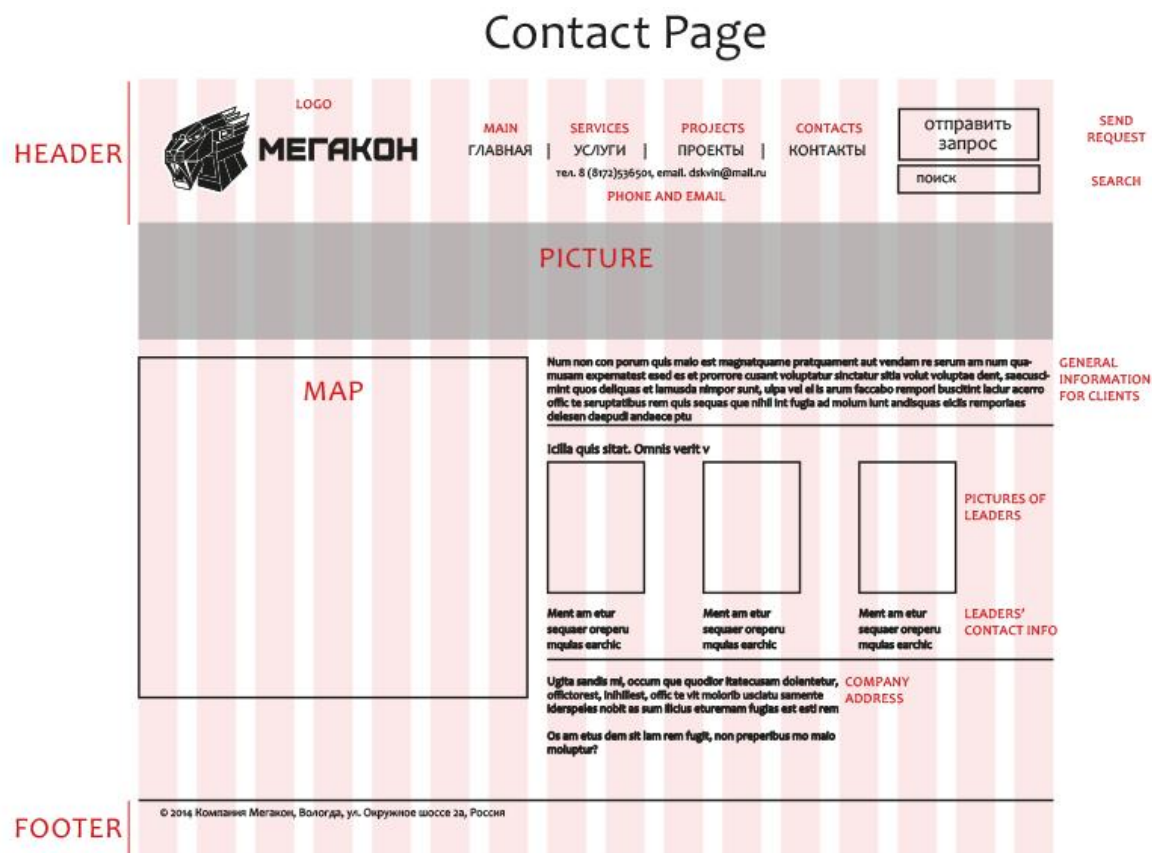
## Service Page



## Project Page








# Request Form Page

HEADER

LOGO



MEGACON

MAIN

ГЛАВНАЯ

SERVICES

УСЛУГИ

PROJECTS

ПРОЕКТЫ

CONTACTS

КОНТАКТЫ

отправить  
запрос

поиск

SEND  
REQUEST

SEARCH

PICTURE

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CONTACT FORM

REQUIREMENTS  
FOR CERTAIN  
INFORMATION

FIELDS

SEND BUTTON

FOOTER

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