

Font size: 90px / 5.625em | Line height: 120% | Tracking: 0px

AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA
00 #12467	700 #344054	800 #102939	900 #101828

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00 #F56D9	700 #6941C6	800 #53389E	900 #42307D

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AA	AA	AA	AA
00 #92D200	700 #B42318	800 #92D016	900 #3A271A

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00 #39855	700 #027A48	800 #05603A	900 #054F31

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Introduction

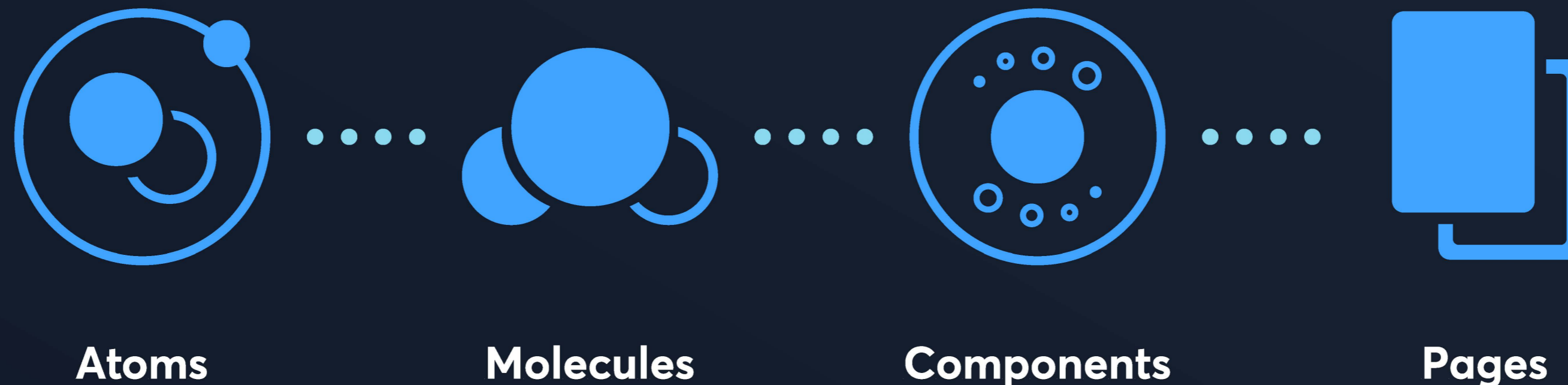
Website design systems are essential. They exist to align website teams, speed up design processes, and improve brand governance. However, the fact of the matter is that some design systems perform better than others in specific business situations. This guide explains why the atomic design method is the best design system for fast-growing SaaS, Blockchain, and FinTech companies.



A Quick Overview

Atomic design is an approach to creating user interface design systems. Introduced by Brad Frost, it consists of five phases: atoms, molecules, organisms, templates, and pages. Harnessing a 'building block' approach, basic brand elements—the atoms—are combined to form larger assets: the molecules, organisms, page templates, and eventual pages themselves.

As this guide explains, we've simplified Brad's approach in our own design processes, using "components" in place of organisms and templates. We'll show you how to take colors, typography, and other basic brand elements (examples of atoms) to build a website page that allows teams to test, augment, and launch pages for standout results.



- 32px
- 40px
- 48px
- 64px
- 80px
- 96px
- 128px
- 160px
- 192px
- 224px
- 256px

AAA 600 #475467	AAA 700 #344054	AAA 800 #1D2939	AAA 900 #101828
AA 4.96 600 #7F56D9	AAA 700 #6941C6	AAA 800 #53389E	AAA 900 #42307D
AA 4.82 600 #D92D20	AA 6.60 700 #B42318	AAA 800 #912018	AAA 900 #7A271A
AA 3.74 600 #039855	AA 5.44 700 #027A48	AAA 800 #05603A	AAA 900 #054F31



Atoms

Unsurprisingly, atoms are the most basic building blocks of an atomic design system. Starting with the most basic building blocks (text, spacing, colors, etc.) of a web page allows teams to quickly identify gaps or points of improvement in a design system.

Arguably the most important phase, designers will constantly refer back to the list of atoms for any current and future building blocks they may need for a web page.

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Font size: 38px / 2.375em | Line height: 120% | Tracking: 0

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Font size: 20px / 1.25em | Line height: 140% | Tracking: 0

Text lg Regular Text lg Medium Text lg Bold

Font size: 14px / 0.875em | Line height: 140% | Tracking: 0

Text sm Regular Text sm Medium Text sm Bold



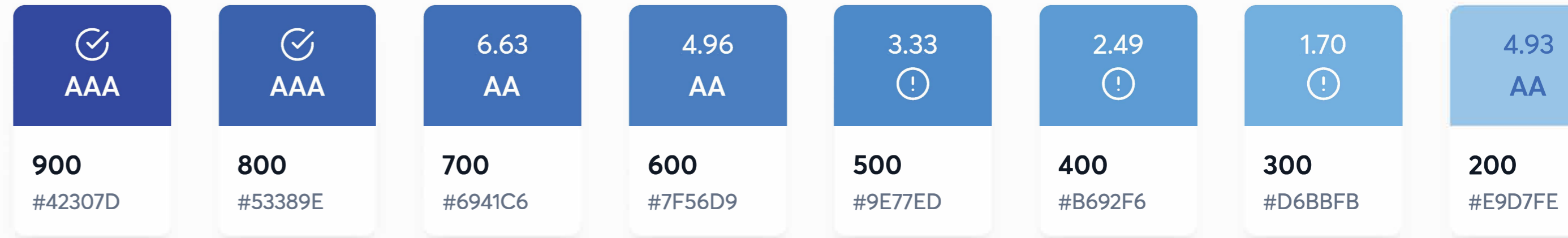
Colors

An atomic design system's first atom isn't that surprising: a brand's colors.

Having access to a formal color palette that takes search engines' readability rules into account allows designers to quickly find, optimize, and add brand colors to other assets, like a website's typography (another atom, discussed next).

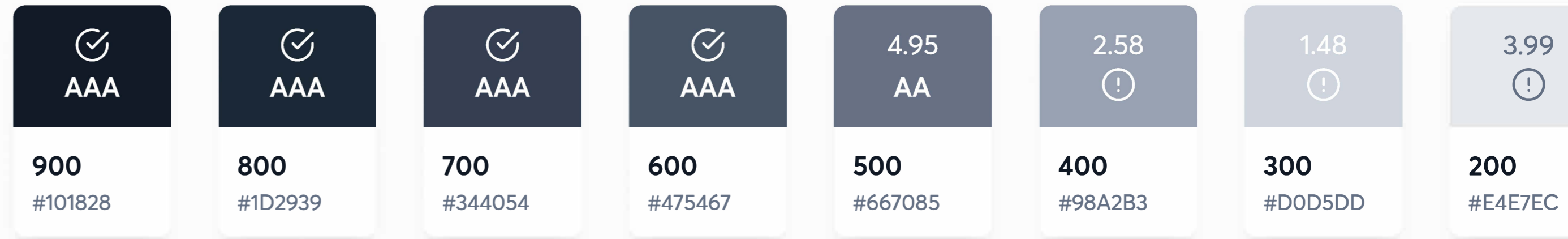
Primary

The primary color is your "brand" color, and is used across all interactive elements such as buttons, links, inputs, etc. This color can define the overall feel and can elicit emotion.



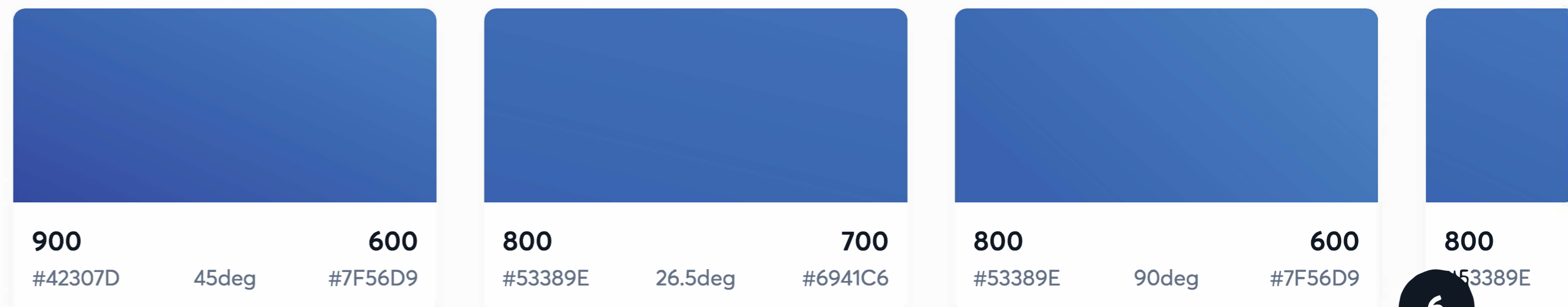
Gray

Gray is a neutral color and is the foundation of the color system. Almost everything in UI design — text, form fields, backgrounds, dividers — are usually gray.



Primary Gradients

The primary color is your "brand" color, and is used across all interactive elements such as buttons, links, inputs, etc. This color can define the overall feel and can elicit emotion.



Typography

Typography is the process of arranging text in a way that makes copy legible, clear, and visually appealing for users. The typography of a design system can contain many fonts for different purposes.

It's common for teams to build a typographic scale that includes type fonts, weights, line-heights, and other features.

Doing so ensures that the correct typography is being used for any color combination or other combination with an existing atom to create a molecule.

Inter

Ag

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789 !@#\$%^&*()

Font size: 48px / 3rem | Line height: 60px | Tracking: -2%

Display Regular	Display Medium	Display Bold	Display Black
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Font size: 24px / 1.5rem | Line height: 32px | Tracking: 0px

Display sm Regular	Display sm Medium	Display sm Bold	Display sm Black
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Font size: 18px / 1.125rem | Line height: 28px | Tracking: 0px

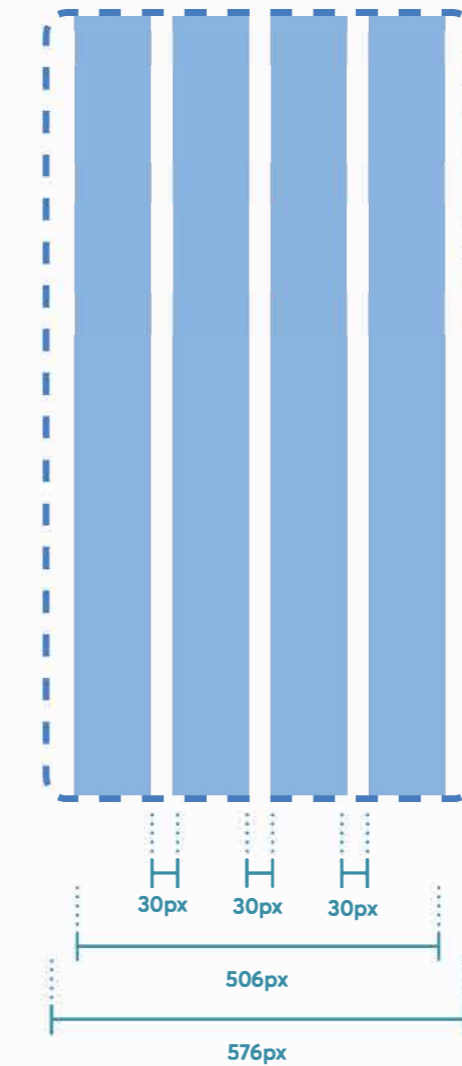
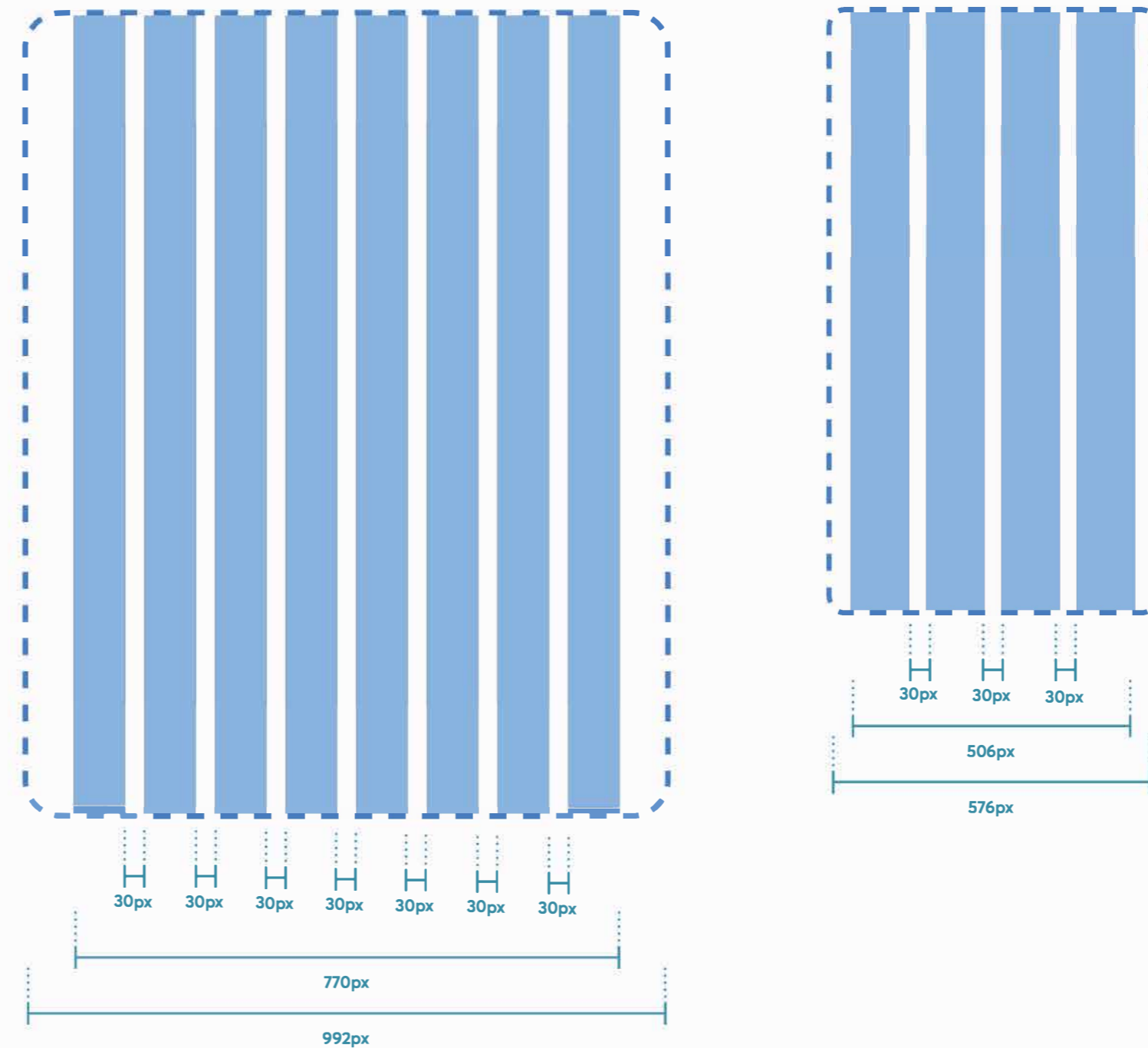
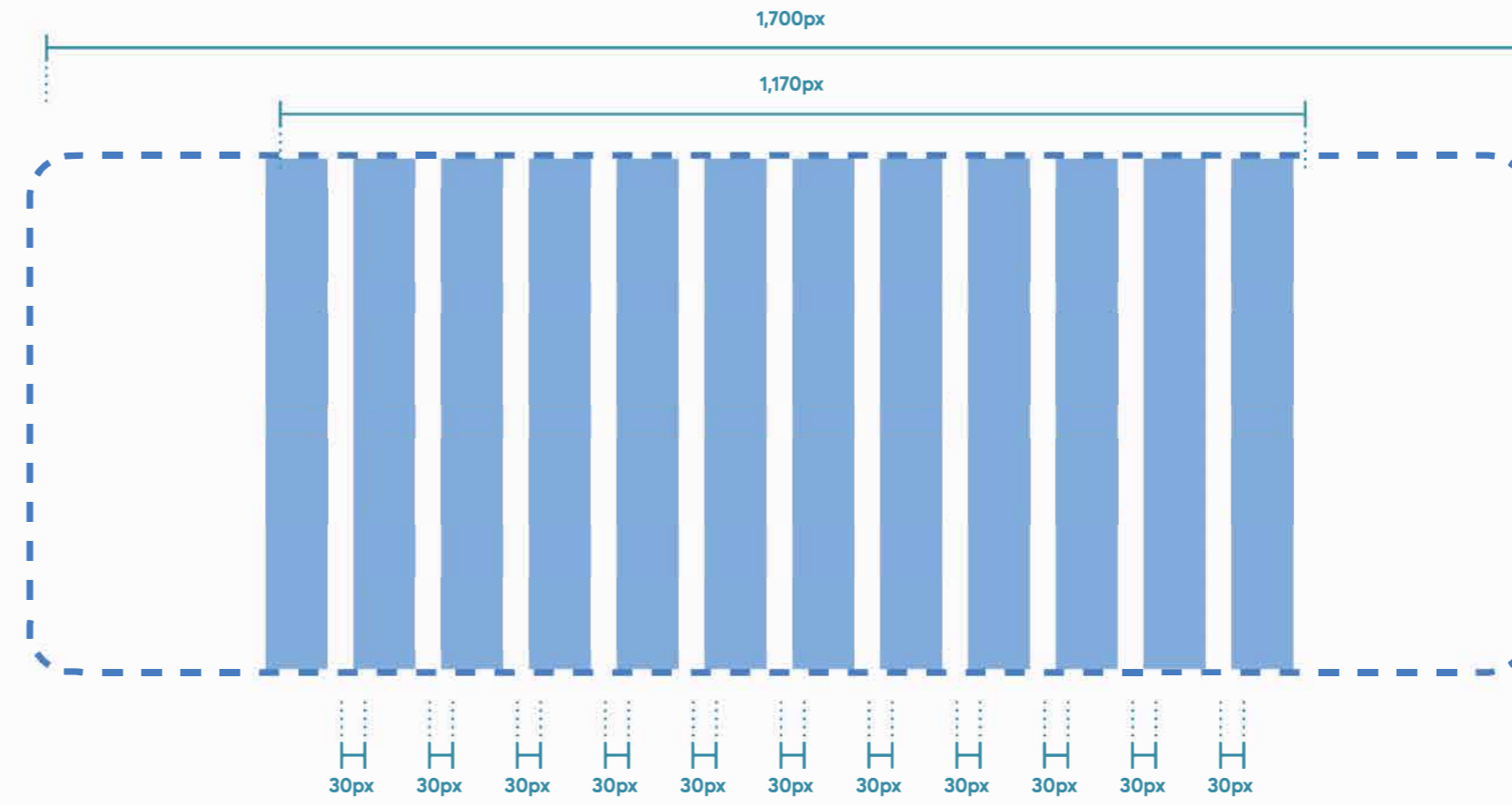
Text lg Regular	Text lg Medium	Text lg Bold	Text lg Black
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Font size: 14px / 0.875rem | Line height: 20px | Tracking: 0px

Text sm Regular	Text sm Medium	Text sm Bold	Text sm Black
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Grids & Spacing

Just like the color scale, working from a defined spacing system allows designers to work faster and more consistently because the limited set of options eliminates guesswork while designing and developing.



- 256px
- 224px
- 192px
- 160px
- 128px
- 96px
- 80px
- 64px
- 48px
- 40px
- 32px
- 24px
- 20px
- 16px
- 12px
- 8px
- 4px

Others

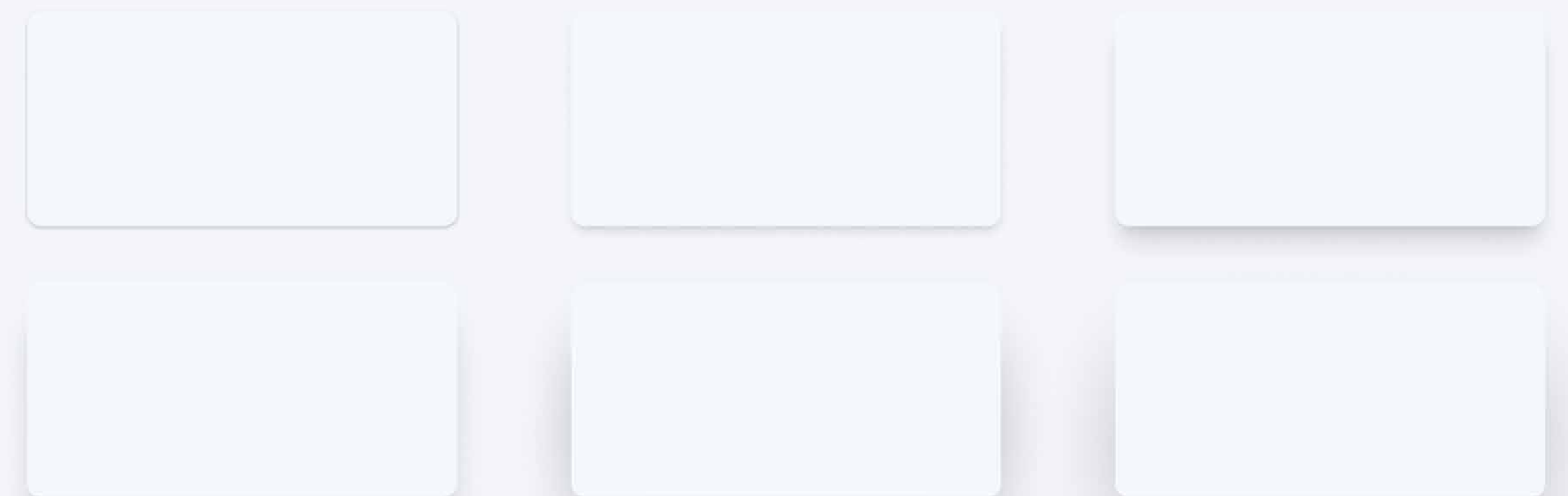
Icons

Having a library of website icons only makes updates easier when the icons are used across the website. Including icons that will never be used interferes with brand consistency.



Shadows

Shadows add depth and realism to designs by positioning elements on Z-axis. By having multiple variations of a shadow, teams can mix and match the depth of a shadow with other existing elements in the design system.



Buttons

Buttons are the most important aspect of a marketing website and are created by combining the typography, color and icon atoms.

Therefore, color, size, and icon variations are needed for different situations. Atomic design systems help designers quickly recycle existing button molecules or create new, brand-consistent molecules from the system's library of atoms.

This keeps designers confident, speedy, and on-brand when under pressure.

Color style: primary/600 | Contrast: AA standard

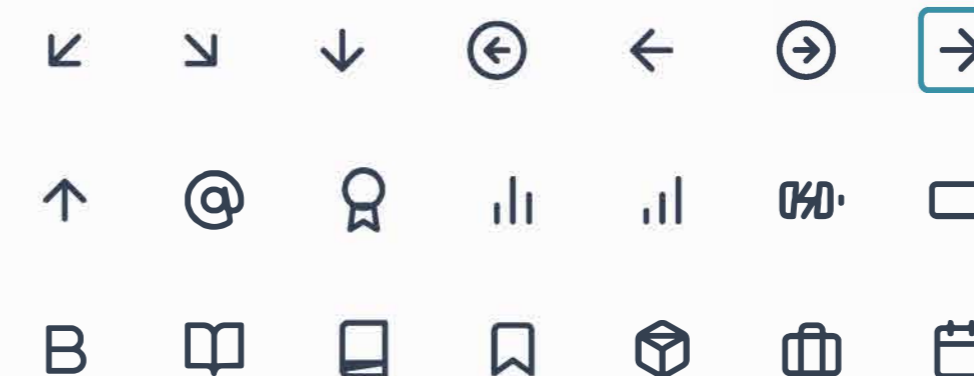
4.96
AA
600
#7F56D9

Text lg

Font size: 18px / 1.125em | Font Weight: bold



Button Size: large | Hierarchy: primary | State: default | Icon: trailing



Icon: arrow-right

Inputs

Input fields are everywhere—search boxes, lead generation forms, subscription boxes, and conversion panels.

They're made from the color, typography, and icon atoms, and their varied nature makes them difficult to govern.

Atomic design systems provide defined-yet-flexible boundaries that designers can work within, whether recycling input fields for a new form or page variant, or quickly designing a new molecule for a new segment experience.

In this example, the input field forms part of a larger instance of a website that includes an icon, typography, and the input field.

Font size: 18px / 1.125em
Font Weight: normal

Text lg

Input Field: default | Icon: none

Input Field: filled | Icon: none

6.16
AA

50
#F9F5FF

Color style: primary/50
Contrast: AA standard

Input Field: focused | Icon: leading

Icon: mail

Others

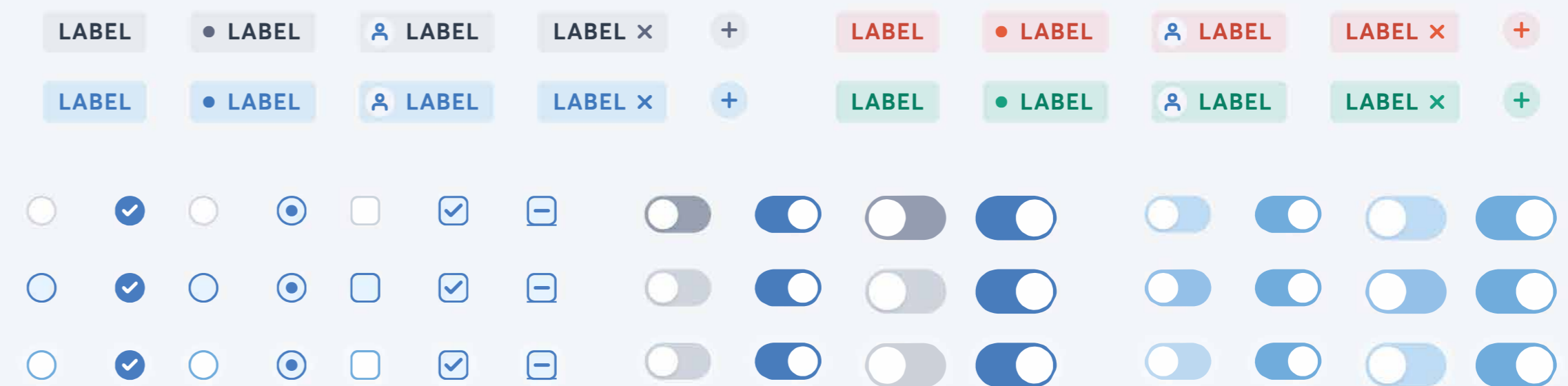
Cards

Cards are used as content containers and feature headers, subheadings, buttons, icons, and other atoms depending on the use case. The two cards displayed below serve different purposes: one is for case studies and the other for a blog listing page. These cards are universal and are built to serve a specific need.



Badges, Checkboxes, and Toggles

Having an inventory of badges, checkboxes, and toggles is crucial for a great user experience. In some cases, checkboxes might work better than toggles and vice versa. Having a library of these molecules allows teams to use and reuse them in different ways across the website.



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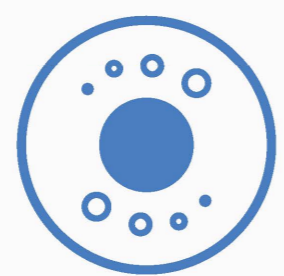
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Components

Components are built by combining multiple molecules to form larger aspects of a website page. This is the final step before building a fully responsive website page.

A library of components, designed from a library of molecules, provides a team of designers an aligned and foundational source of truth as well as a deep well of brand assets so they can design with speed and confidence.

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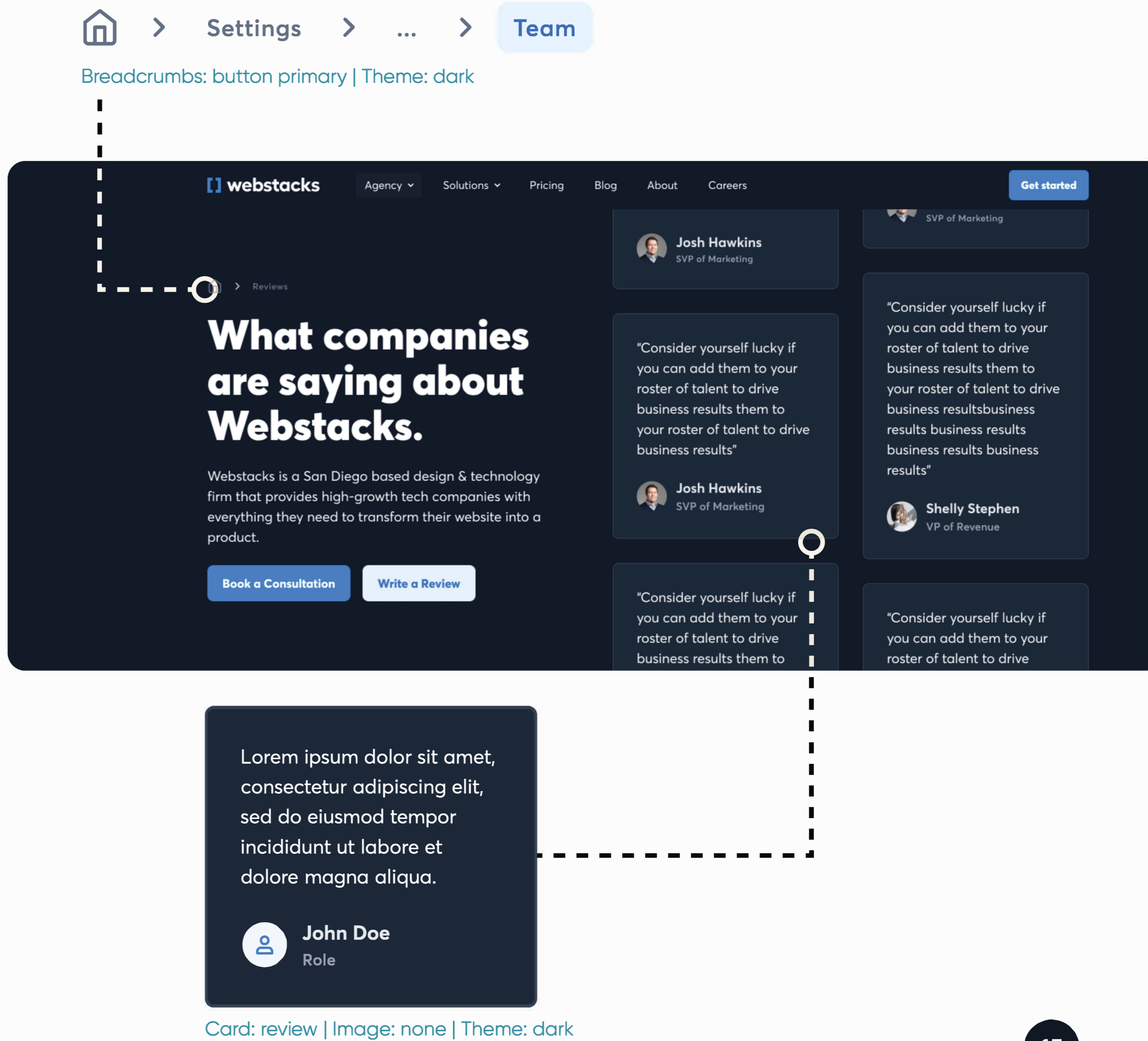
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Hero

Hero components are a key asset for driving action on website pages and can be created from a variety of molecules.

With an atomic design system designers can, for example, quickly recycle existing hero components for a new offering page; mockup variations of an existing hero component for A/B testing; or easily create net new components for a new collection of audience-specific landing pages.

In the example, we've highlighted two molecules we brought in to build one of our hero components.

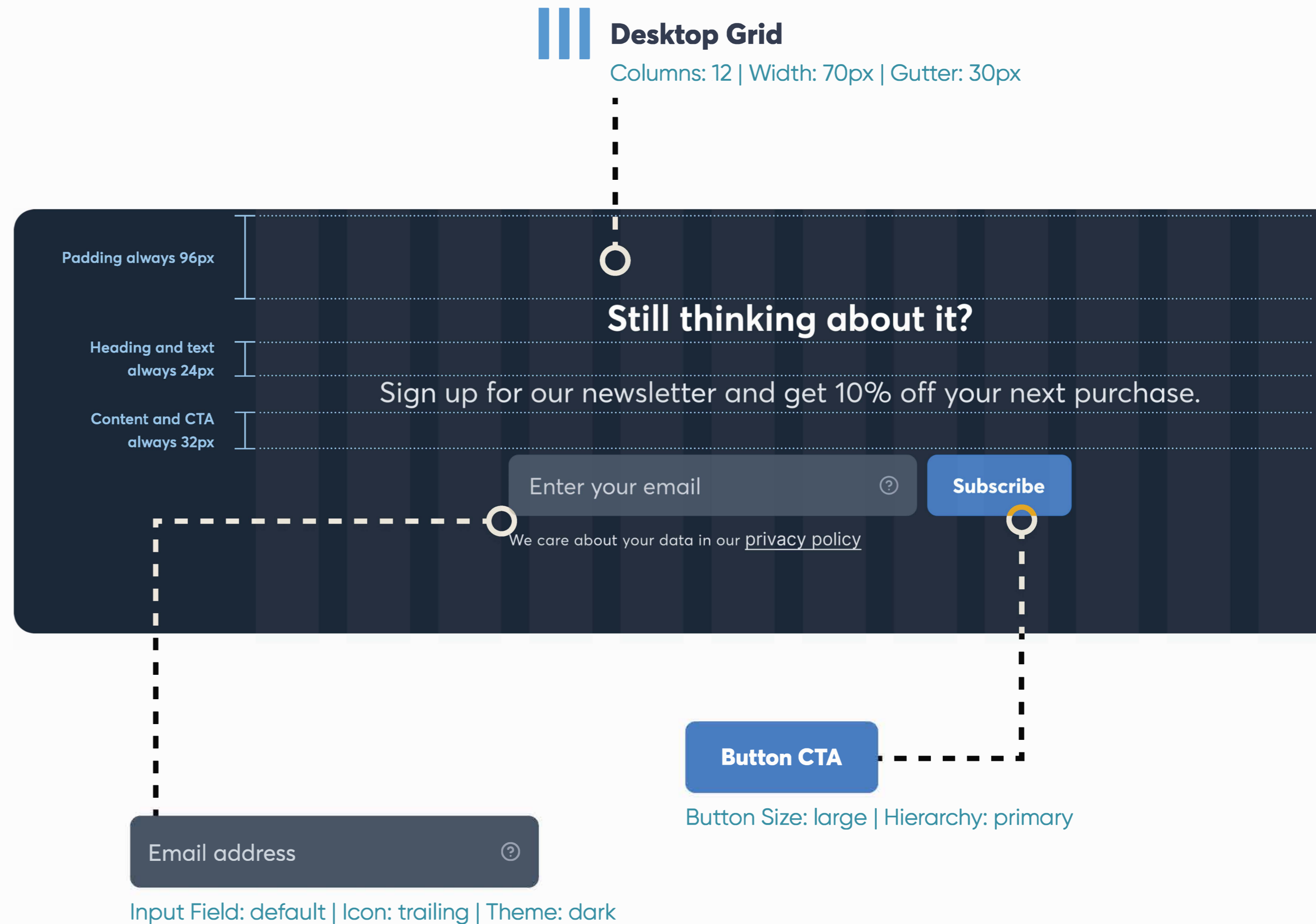


Card: review | Image: none | Theme: dark

Conversion Panel

This component is sprinkled once or twice on a page to drive action. Conversion panels should be continuously tested and ever-evolving to increase conversion rates.

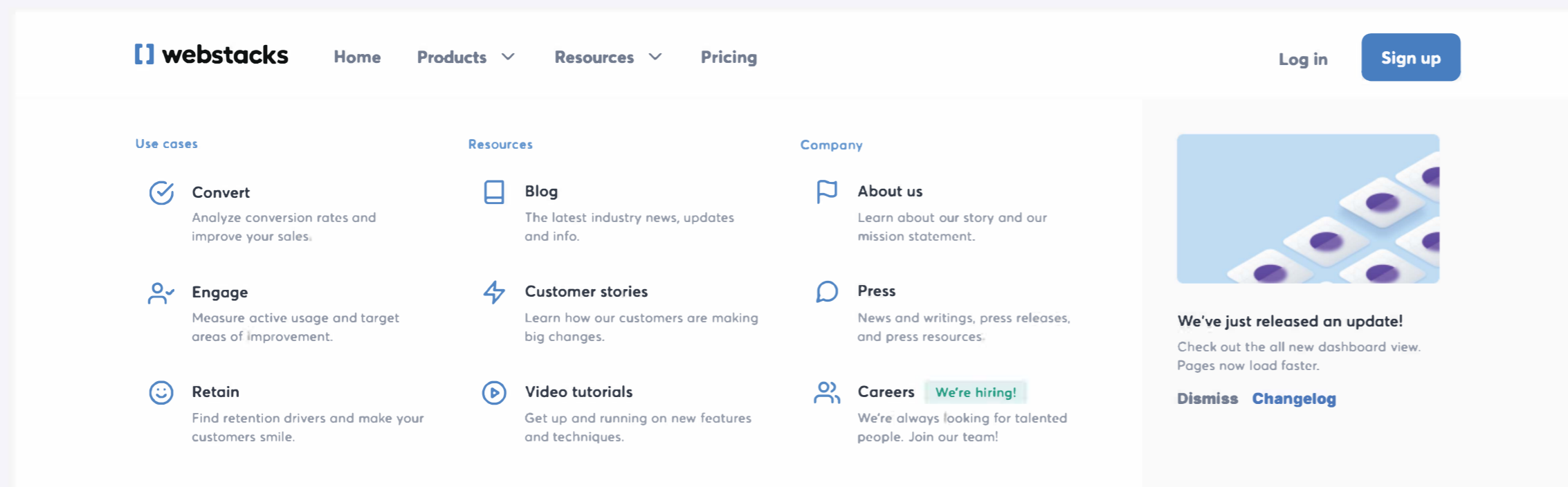
Atomic design systems help designers quickly spin up variations of existing conversion panel components for nonstop A/B/C testing or create new, brand-consistent components from the system's library of molecules and atoms.



Others

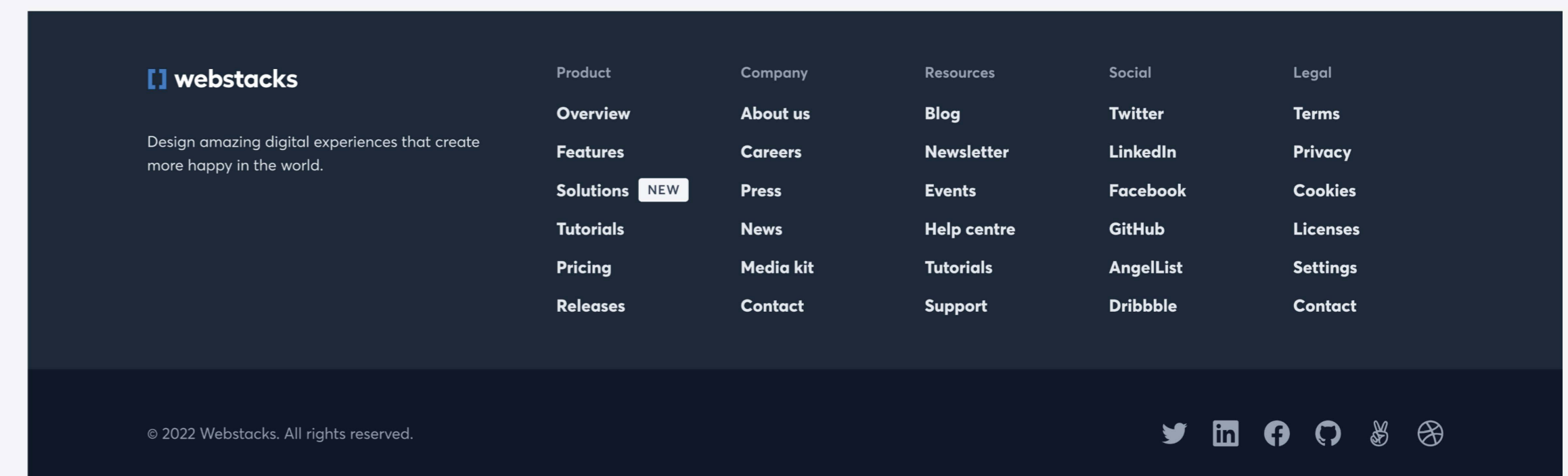
Global Navigation

The global navigation is used at the top of every website page. Also known as the navigation bar, it's composed of atoms and molecules that are identified in the previous steps. The navigation is the knot that ties all live website pages and must be accessible to website visitors. Therefore, it's typical for the navigation to always remain the same in terms of look or feel.



Footer

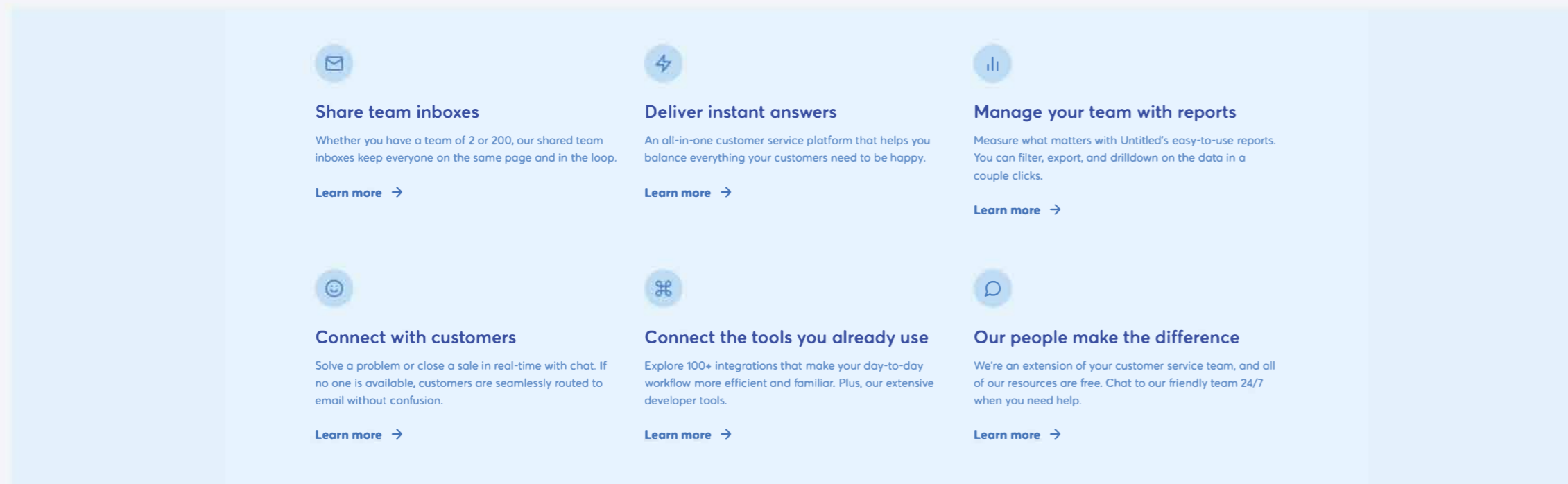
Like the navigation bar, the footer also remains consistent throughout the website but is positioned at the bottom of every page. The footer contains links to pages on the website, contact information, cookie settings, and the privacy policy. The footer can also contain social icons, reviews, and download links for third-party application stores.









Others

Feature Grid

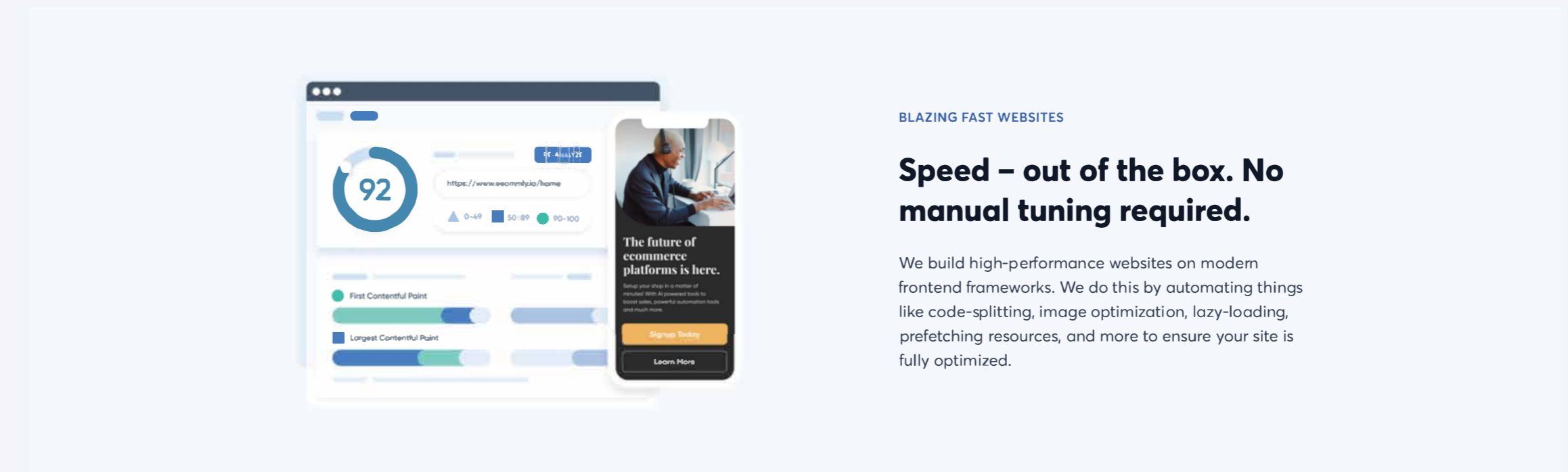
Grids are components that can contain multiple atoms and molecules like icons, CTA buttons, or other elements identified in the previous phases. The below example is a three-column grid layout that consists of three groups of content. The general use of this component is when a product or service requires more detailed explanations to help sell the idea or product.



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Switchback

A switchback is a section on a page highlighting features of a product or service. The content typically consists of headline copy, body copy, bullet features, CTAs, forms, or conversion content such as a trust bar and reviews. The switchback can be used on multiple pages and pair well with custom illustrations like 3D elements or stock images, depending on the use case.



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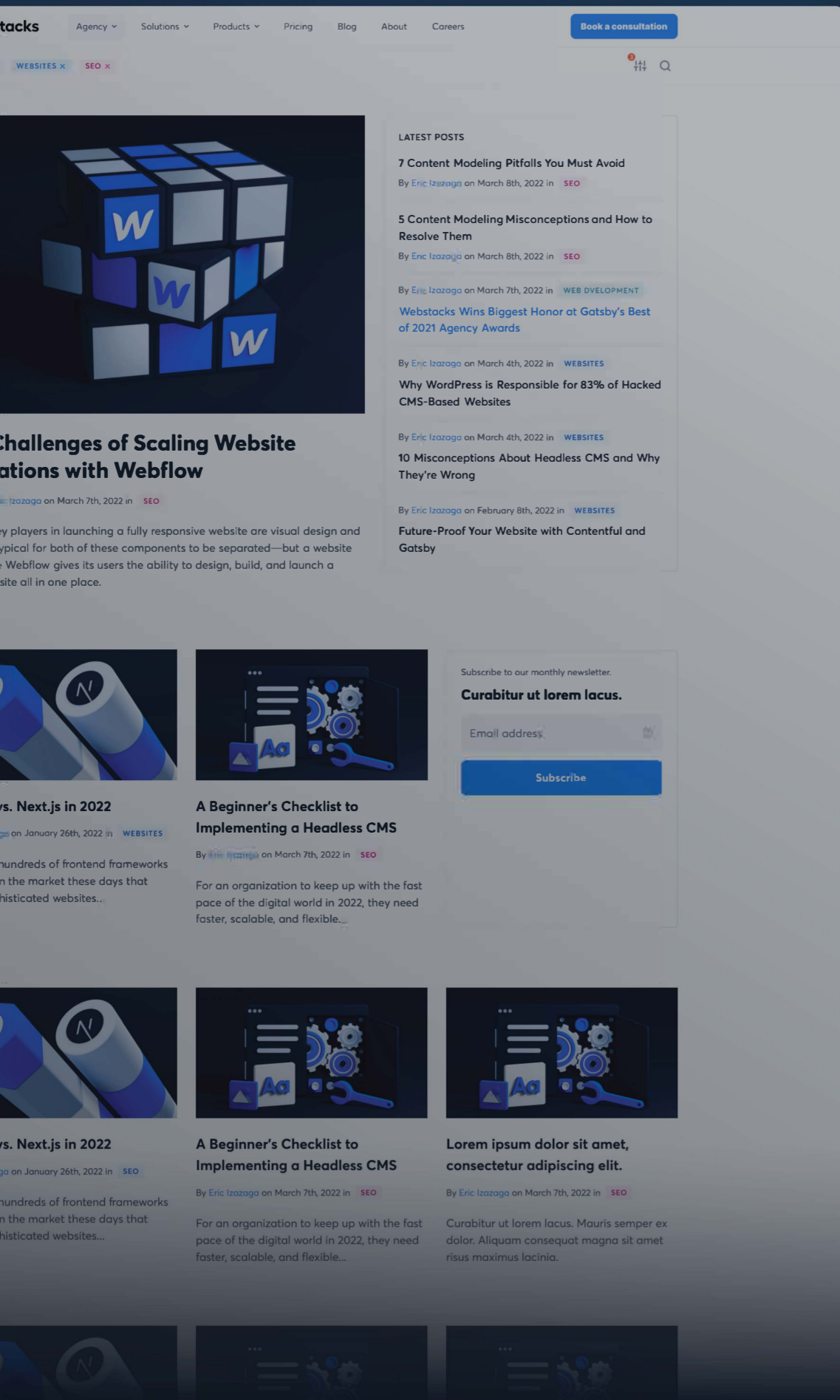
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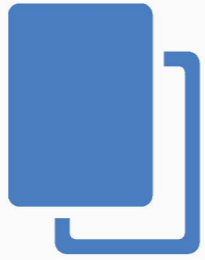
CASE STUDY

ServiceTitan grows demos

CASE STUDY

ServiceTitan grows demos

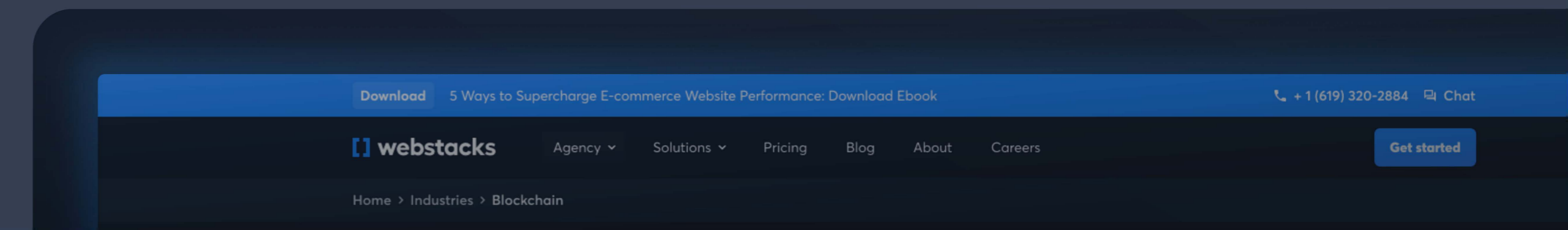
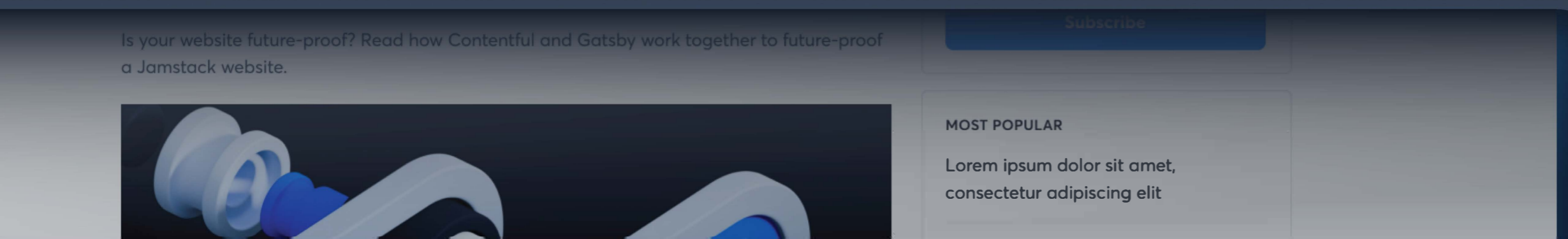
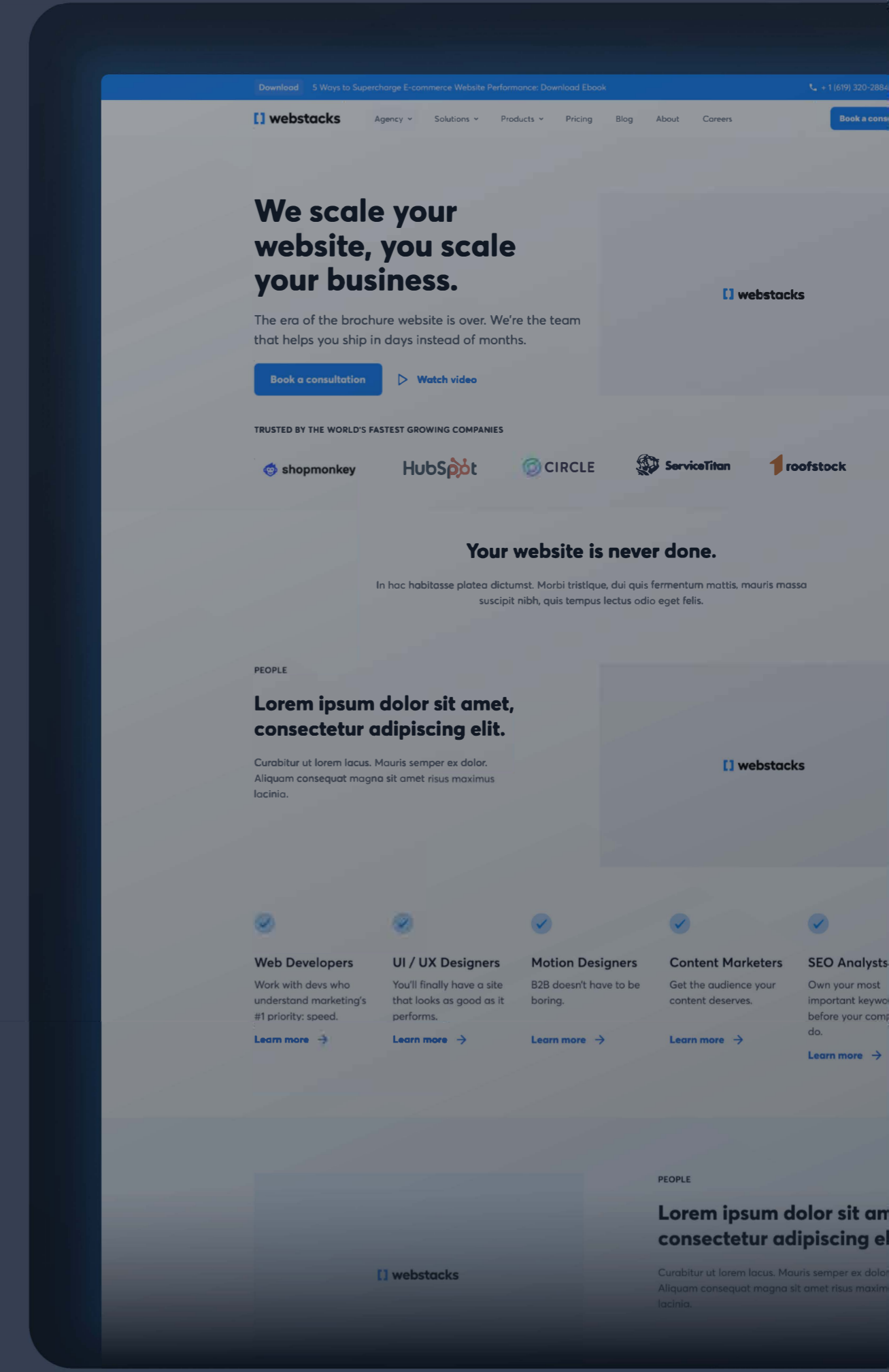




Pages

We've done all the grunt work. If you follow the previous steps correctly, then you should have all the components to build any page.

At this stage, teams have an inventory of components that can be used to assemble an entire website or build specific pages for new marketing campaigns or to simply test.



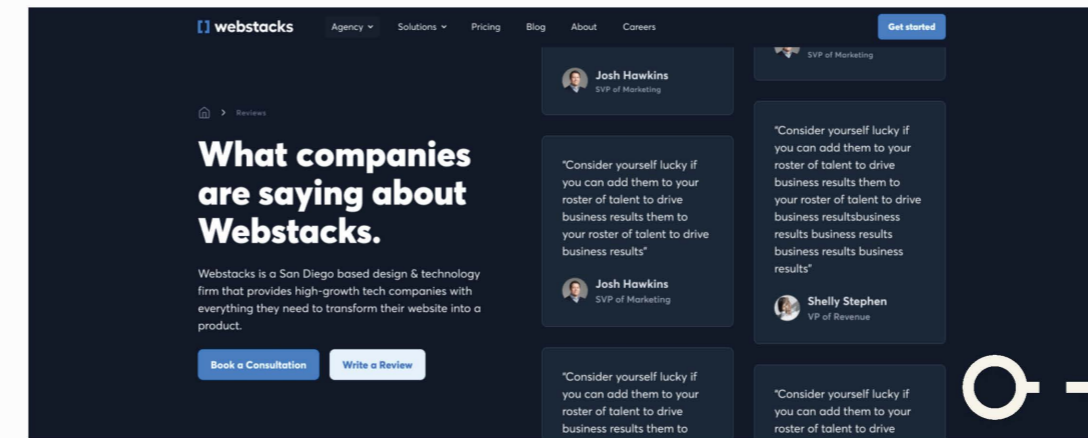


Building a Page

Using the components we built in the previous section, we were able to assemble the webpage on the right in minutes.

As you can see, we used the hero, switchback, conversion panel, feature grid, and footer components. All designed using an aligned library of atoms, molecules, and components to source inspiration from.

When teams have the right building blocks as design elements, they are free to build whatever they want. Doing so empowers teams to build at their own pace and not have to rely on development resources as it always goes.



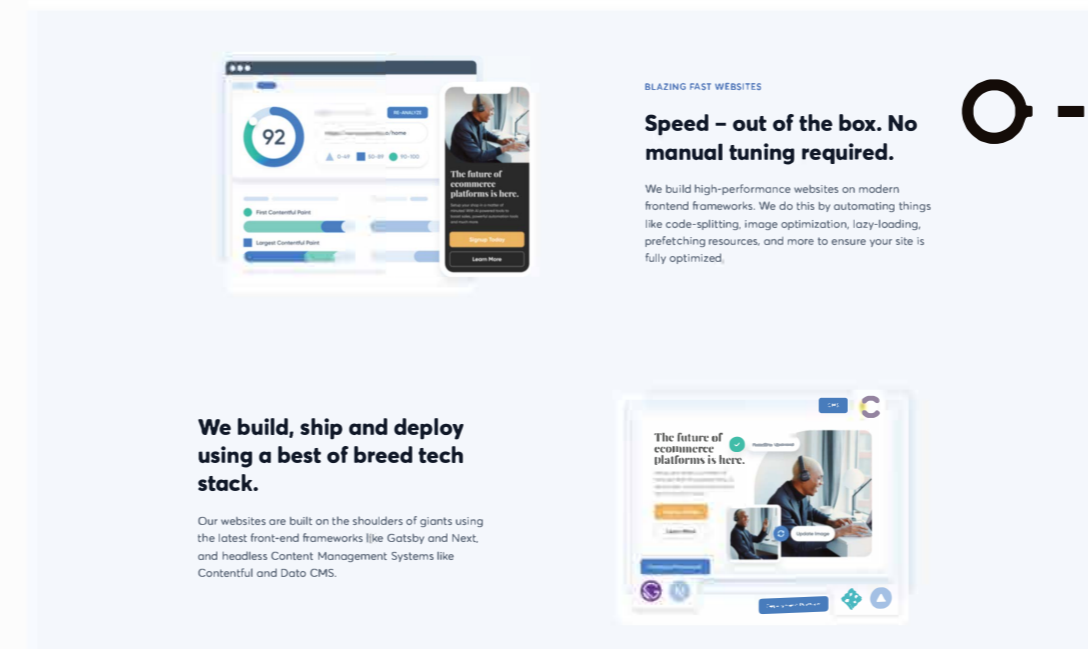
Hero

Type: testimonials | Theme: dark



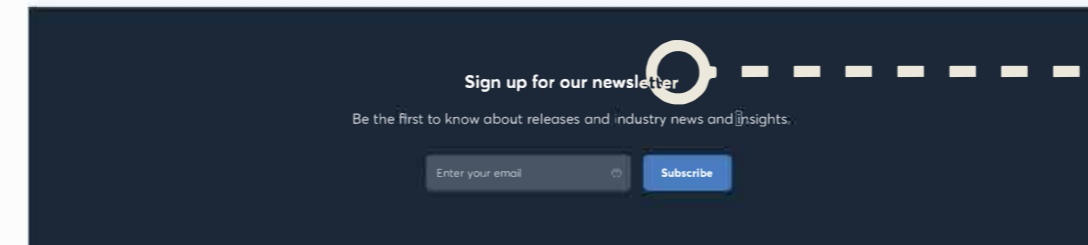
Switchback

Type: default | Layout: image-left



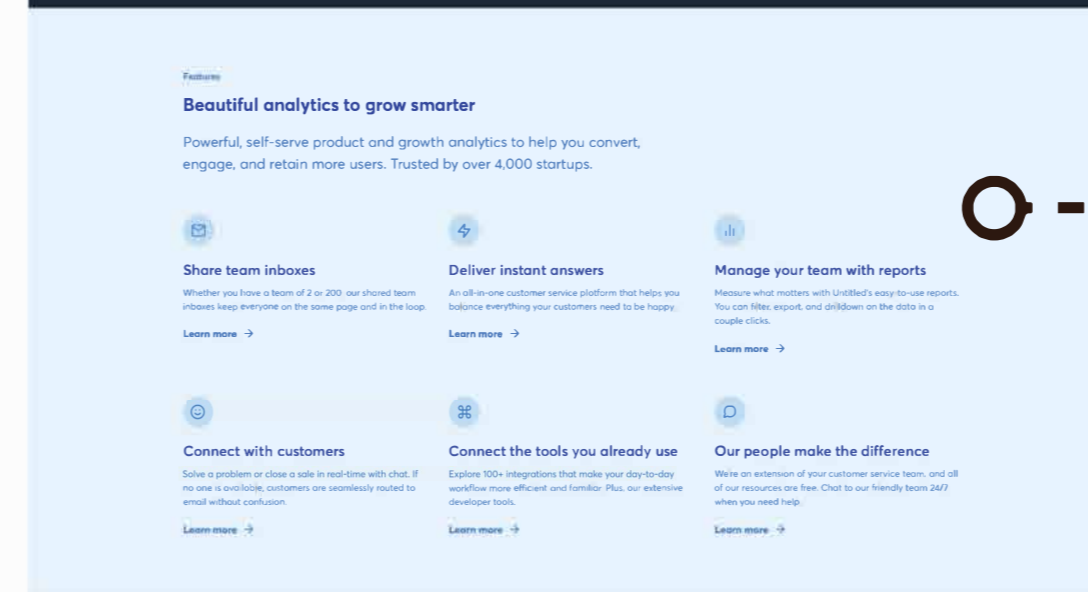
Conversion Panel

Type: email-capture | Theme: dark



Feature Grid

Type: icons | Rows: 2 | Theme: primary light



Footer

CTA: true | Theme: light

The Wrap-up

If you have an existing website with all the elements that we covered, then you're in a great position to expand on your current design system.

If you're not quite there yet, don't fret! Following the iterative atomic approach makes it easier for teams to understand the design elements that exist, what is missing, and more importantly, how each will be incorporated into a design component.

About Webstacks

We help technology companies in SaaS, Blockchain, and FinTech break through their growth ceiling by building flexible product teams to make it easier to scale website operations.

[Read about Calendly's design system](#)