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TIPS

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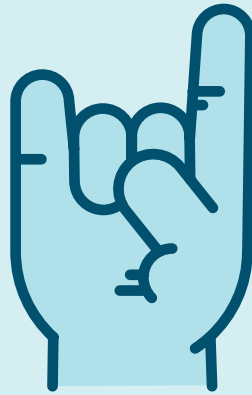
BUILDING

A

BADASS

DESIGN

AGENCY



Whether you're just starting to build your agency or simply looking to up your game, we've got 10 tips that will help you rise above the noise and build a badass design agency. Ready? Let's rock and roll.

01 Develop a magical mission statement

Your agency's mission statement is truly one of the most important parts of your business. It's become the [text equivalent of the elevator pitch](#), revealing the spirit of your agency in a single piece of text. It should guide your agency's every move and action, while also convincing customers that you're the agency that's right for them. No pressure, right?



“The best mission statements strike an important balance — catchy but meaningful, pithy but not too simple, relatable but interesting enough to grab someone’s attention.” – [Michael Champlin, Layout](#)

If you have a mission statement already, does it still speak to your agency's energy? Or has the translation gotten lost along the way? If there's a disconnect, no matter how small it is, it's time to revamp that statement.

To uncover that magical mission statement that's right for your agency, do a little soul searching with your team. Ask yourself these questions:

- **Who do you like to work with?**
- **What does your agency do?**
- **How do you accomplish your goals?**
- **Why does your agency exist?**

Developing a mission statement won't happen overnight, but thinking about these questions will help you get to the core of your business so you can create an outstanding statement that resonates with clients.



02 Create an awesome agency website

If you want your agency to stand above the rest, you need to have an awesome website. It's easy to dive straight into new projects with new clients and forget about your own website, but giving it a little TLC before you get too busy will pay off in the long run.

Take a look at your site – how do you feel about the design? Does it feel like your agency, or is the branding a little off? Is it updated with your greatest portfolio pieces, or is your best work hiding in folders on your desktop?

“Once you’ve developed your dream site on paper, you can determine a plan for making it come to life online.”

Start making a list of everything you'd like to change, pages you'd like to add, or anything that needs to be removed. Once you've developed your dream site on paper, you can determine a plan for making it come to life online.

Looking for a little inspiration? [Check out these awesome agency websites.](#)

03 Exclusively onboard the coolest clients around

Have you ever noticed that sometimes, you just really jive with a certain client? Not only are they great to work with, but you find yourself really caring about their business. You're not just their designer, but also a mentor, a partner, a friend. You pour your heart and soul into their projects, because you truly want them to succeed. Wouldn't it be great if those were the only clients you worked with?

Turn out, they can be. All you need is a strong onboarding process that will help you sort out the clients you'd love to work with from those you wouldn't enjoy as much. And then (this is the tricky part), commit your agency to exclusively onboarding only those clients you'd love to work with.



Especially if you're still growing your agency, saying "no" to clients can be a scary thought. But by choosing the best projects for your team, and only those projects, you'll strengthen your portfolio and ultimately, set both yourself and your clients up for success.

04 Collect a treasure trove of tools you love.

When you're running a badass agency, time is important. The more you can streamline your process, the better. So while every client will have their own unique requirements for a site, you might want to consider creating a toolbox of tools that you use on a regular basis.

For example, are there any plugins you install on every WordPress site you create, such as [Jetpack](#) or [Yoast SEO](#)? Create a (well-organized) folder and store all of the zip files for these plugins in it. Then, the next time you create a site, you can click, drag, and install your go-to plugins super quickly.

As for themes, when you find certain templates that are easy to customize or companies that offer stellar support, add them to the toolbox, too. Then when a client comes to you needing an eCommerce site, instead of digging through the thousands of themes out there, you can turn to your curated list to simplify the process.

“The toolbox is meant to be a guide, not a limitation.”

Once you create your toolbox, don't forget to update it periodically. If a new

version of a plugin is released, make sure you update the zip file in your folder. If you run into problems with a theme, take it out of the toolbox so you don't repeat the same issues. And as you discover new products that you love, be sure to add them so you can install them for a future site. The toolbox is meant to be a guide, not a limitation. Keep it fluid and allow the tools inside to change over time.



05 Manage multiple WordPress sites like a pro

Managing multiple WordPress sites can be tricky. It's a good problem to have (because that means you're growing your business), but being responsible for so many sites can also quickly cause you to fall behind on your workload if you're not prepared.

Luckily, if you plan ahead and set some practices in place now, managing multiple WordPress sites can be a breeze. To keep your clients happy and scale your business, start here:

- **Keep everything organized.** When managing multiple WordPress sites, you'll deal with multiple usernames, passwords, plugins, themes, credentials, logos, brands...and the list goes on and on. Not to mention that some of those items should really be securely stored, instead of just laying around on a Google Sheet. Before you do anything else, find an organization system that works for your agency.
- **Have a really great planner.** As you begin to manage more WordPress sites, you'll begin to work with more clients. And, like Spiderman teaches us: with many clients come many responsibilities. You'll have site updates to perform, new features to roll out, redesigns to complete, and onboarding meetings with new clients to attend. Buy a planner (or calendar) and start using it religiously.
- **Stick to one host.** If you currently deal with multiple hosting companies, that's just one more difference that you have to keep track of for each site. Why not simplify your life a little and move all of your sites to one host? If you move to Flywheel, we'll even [migrate all of them for you, for free.](#)
- **Be prepared for updates.** While necessary, updates can be a real hassle. For each site, you have to make a backup copy, install the update(s), and then perform a quality check to make sure everything updated correctly. In other words, if WordPress releases an update and you're not prepared, you might find your entire workflow thrown off for days. Gather your team and make a plan so you can always stay on top of updates. (Another example of a task Flywheel handles for you!)
- **Have a support strategy.** It's not fun to imagine worst-case-scenario situations, but to successfully manage multiple WordPress sites, you'll want to be as prepared as possible when something goes wrong. Let's say a site goes down; who do you call? (Hint: If you have to think about the answer, you should probably go figure that out.)

“Flywheel will migrate all of your sites for you, for free!”





Managing multiple WordPress sites means more than just caring about servers. From managing servers to struggling with security plugins, these non-billable burdens are pieces that you and your team don't have to manage.

In this free ebook, we'll cover everything from easily migrating hundreds of sites (for free) to scaling intelligently with Flywheel's workflow tools as your client base grows. Get back to doing what you love and [learn how to grow your agency with Flywheel!](#)

06 Step up your social media game

As an agency, you're not only juggling your own social media strategy, but often your clients' as well. It can be a lot to handle, but if you take the time to do it right, people will notice. The first key to a successful social media strategy is to share excellent, consistent content.



“The content you share from your business’ profile should be intentional. It should further your mission and solidify the relationship you have with your audience.”

– [Lauren Bonk, Layout](#)

Think back to that magical mission statement. In one way or another, everything your agency does should relate back to that – even your silliest tweets.

The second key to an organized, efficient, and successful social media strategy is relying on a handful of well-selected apps, software, and browser extensions designed to make day-to-day management incredibly easy. We've compiled a list of 25 of our favorite social media tools for you to pick and choose from. [Check 'em out to find the perfect social solution for your agency!](#)



07 Design for a niche

It's a scary thing, to consider positioning yourself as a designer for a specific set of people, and not everyone else. But before you write the idea off, here are just a few benefits of establishing a niche.

- **Clients will know exactly what you can offer them.** This takes some of the guessing out of the relationship, as they don't have to wonder how you'll perform designing for your first bakery, wedding, corporation, or whatever their business may be.
- **Your voice can be extremely consistent.** You won't have to worry about explaining the basics; you can expect that your clients already have a certain level of understanding in a specific interest. This allows you to get the conversation with clients to a more meaningful and productive place, saving you time, and ultimately, money.
- **You can template things and maximize productivity.** Contracts, emails, invoices, you name it – with a niche, you can use common language for all your clients. This will save you a lot of time and will help you get back to tasks that are more important than typing out 20 unique emails.

“This allows you to get the conversation with clients to a more meaningful and productive place.”

08 Find opportunities to make recurring revenue

Onboarding the coolest clients in town is great, but sometimes, it can be short-lived. Once you finish their website, what happens next? If the answer is “nothing” (until they want a redesign), your agency has a large opportunity it should be taking advantage of: recurring revenue.



Basically, think of other services or products you can offer that don't require much work. These could be things like:

- **WordPress support or updates.** You're probably already offering some level of support, right? Put a price tag on it. For a monthly fee, say you'll handle all updates, site issues, and be available for any questions the client has.
- **Online courses.** You could teach clients about branding, WordPress, basic design concepts – whatever you'd like! The best part about this: once you've developed the course (whether it's made up of emails, videos, or some other medium), you can reuse it.
- **Ebooks. Grab your copywriter, create a stellar ebook, and then sell it on your site.** Clients (and even non-clients) will find this content helpful, and it'll add a nice little boost to your bank account.

09 Have the most helpful client hand-off ever

All too often, agencies and designers don't think this far into the process. Instead, they'll plan the entire project with the idea that the handoff is the end; that they can just give the client the final files and give themselves a pat on the back. The relationship - and design - you've worked so hard on could be at risk simply because of an unsuccessful handoff.

If you take the time to flush out your hand-off process, however, you'll easily set your agency apart from the other guys and leave your clients with an incredible last impression. Plus, you'll set both your client and your agency up for success. Ideally, your client will have less questions after everything's said and done, which frees up your time to onboard new clients.

Looking for a few tips to improve your hand-off process? [This ebook has 10 tips for a seamless hand off.](#)



10 Take the time to collect client testimonials

We both know that by now, you've built a pretty badass agency. The last key to the puzzle? Making sure potential clients know it, too! And one of the easiest ways to do that is to sprinkle a little "social proof" around your website and onboarding materials.

If you don't have any yet, take the time to reach out to past clients and ask them about their experience with you. Then, start a Google Doc specifically for testimonials, and update it any-time you receive new feedback. You'll quickly build a "library" of quotes and case studies to pull from for use on your site, social media, or during the onboard process.



JOHN MEYER

"Our portfolio is loaded with images, so it's important that our site would be fast. Flywheel takes out all of the stress and pain. If I can have my team focusing on what we do best, I'll take that all day."



JAMI MAYS

"I can't say enough great things about Flywheel. I'm still shocked these guys are offering migrations for free!"



JOE OLSEN

"The reliability, speed, and support are all amazing – but where Flywheel really shines is their deep understanding of the needs of agencies and design firms."

If you follow these 10 tips, your agency will easily be at the top of its game and will quickly become a crowd favorite. You'll reach badass agency status in no time!



Let Flywheel help you scale your agency

Flywheel is a delightful platform that empowers designers, developers, and digital agencies to focus on what they do best — building beautiful, functional sites for their clients. We make it a breeze to create and develop WordPress sites, handle hosting, manage projects, and ultimately scale your business.

Stop wasting time on server management, security plugins, caching, and all those other boring repetitive tasks that take your focus away from growing your business and jeopardize your relationship with clients. Get Flywheel and get back to doing what you love.

CONTACT SALES

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