The red hot
VIRGIN TRAINS
WEBSITE BOOK

Virgin trains

What's inside...

Chapter One - Introduction

# Our customers expect our website to be up to date, accessible and easy to navigate on any device.
No pressure…

This book is a basic style guide for the marketing pages of our website. Before you dive in, please read our Brand and Writing books to get the full picture of our brand style and tone of voice.

One quick note: Always remember that these are guidelines – not strict rules. They should never get in the way of creating gloriously effective web pages.

Our website goalposts

Whether it's a complete page redesign or a new module on the home page, all your creations should tick the following five.
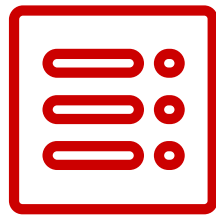
Clear
Always prioritise messaging to make sure the most important is at the top, and the least at the bottom. Keep accessibility in mind (more on this in chapter 5)
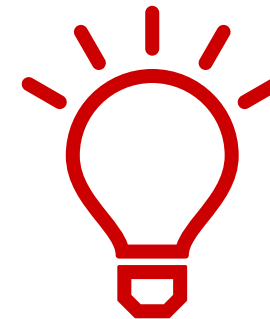
Direct
Our customers want their information quickly, so make sure web pages have just the right amount of information. No more. No less.

Consistent
Use consistent design and tone of voice across the site to make sure that the customer has a seamless user experience.

Creative
Add awesome to your content. Something that no ordinarytrain company would do.

Adaptable
Our audience is on the go, so make sure your page layouts and designs look good on any screen size.

Getting started

Our site is our biggest digital touch point. It acts as a reference point for any customer questions, (occasionally ours too), and is often the first point of contact that consumers have with us.
In short, it's pretty important. Let's break it down.

Multi device

Our customers access our site from a range of devices. Currently roughly 35% of our site visitors access the site from a mobile, so it's important to make sure that all content is optimiased for phones.

Responsive

Our website page layouts respond to the width of the users screen.

Sections

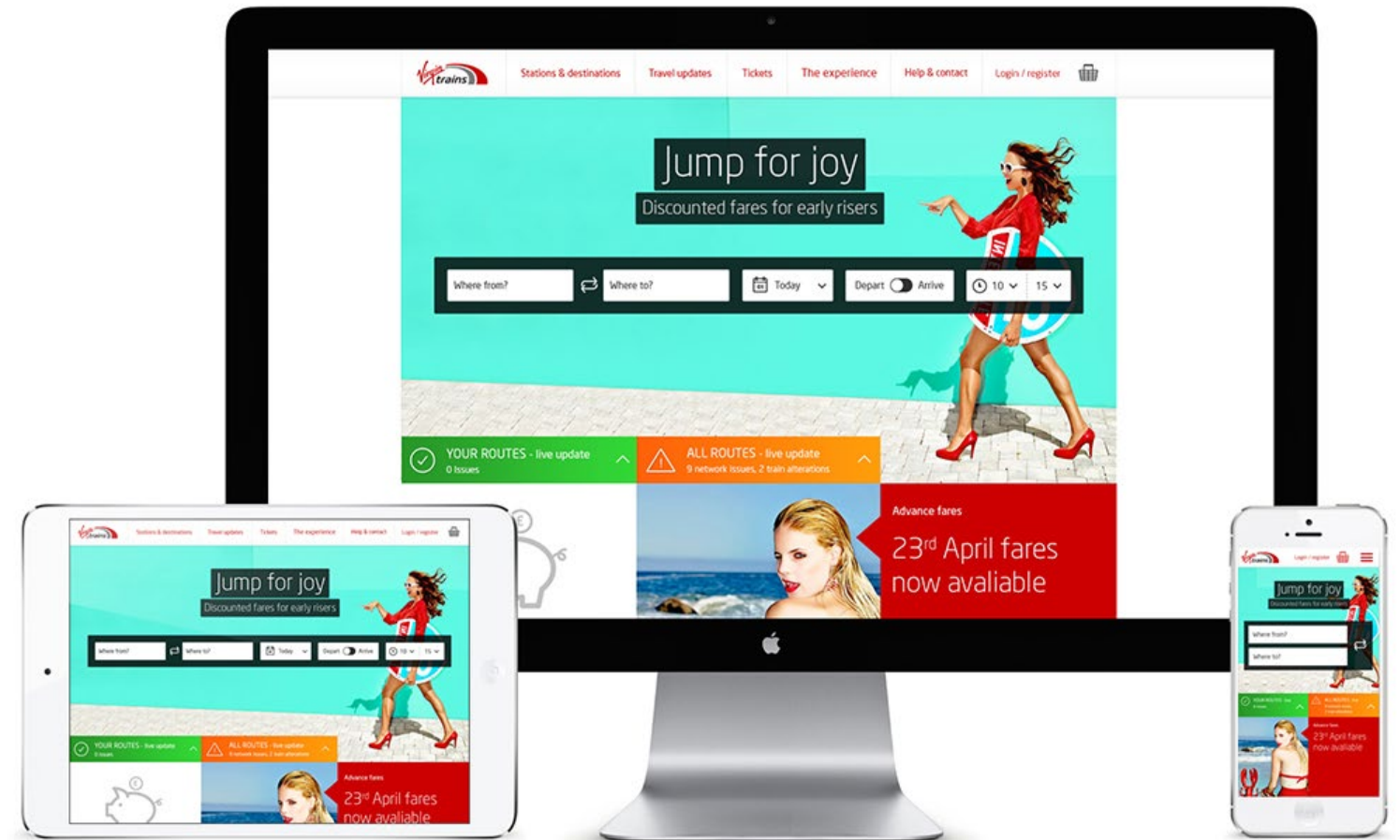We break our pages into the following sections:
Navigation
Header
Body – consisting of various modules
Footer
More on these in the next section

Chapter Two - Modules

Super **Modules**.

Modules are the building blocks that hold our page content. We build pages using the various modules available to us within the content management system (CMS).

We'll cover some of the core modules in this chapter. New modules are being created all the time by our development agency SMT, so if you need details of a particular module please refer to our online technical guide (link here) which is updated regularly.

Consistency is king. Simplicity is the saviour.

When customers land on our site we want them to instantly recognise us and get to where they want to go.

2.1 Primary navigation

Our logo sits pretty on the top left of the screen followed by a clear simple navigation running across the top of the website to clearly signpost each section.

On smaller screens the navigation is indicated by the hamburger icon on the right. This expands to show the primary nav.

Logo   *Sign in*   *Basket*

Primary nav area

Hamburger menu for rest of navigation
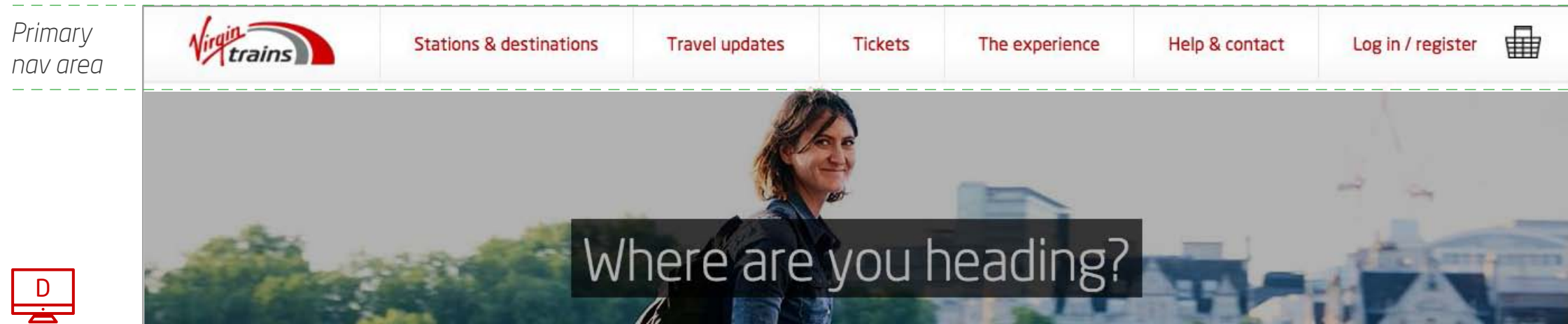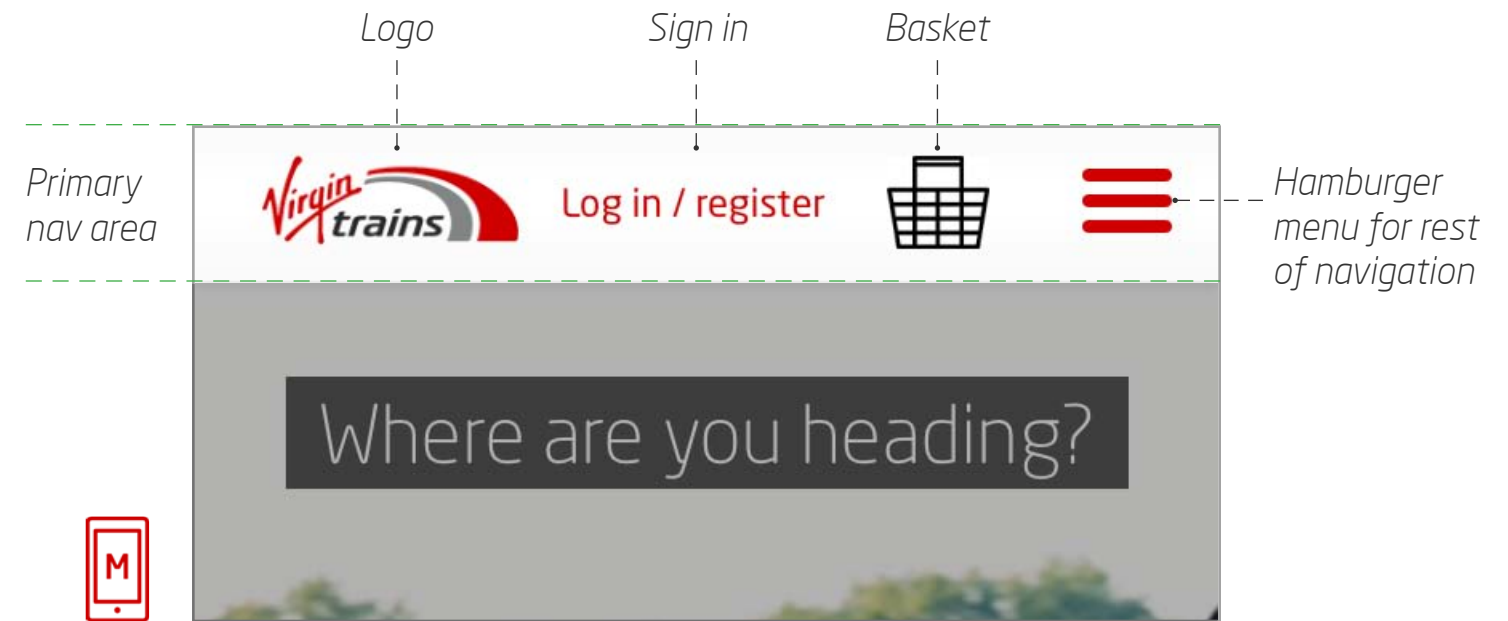
Primary nav area

2.1 Secondary navigation

This is made up of subsections which are revealed by clicking or tapping each menu item on the primary navigation.

Secondary nav area

Expanding concertina menu
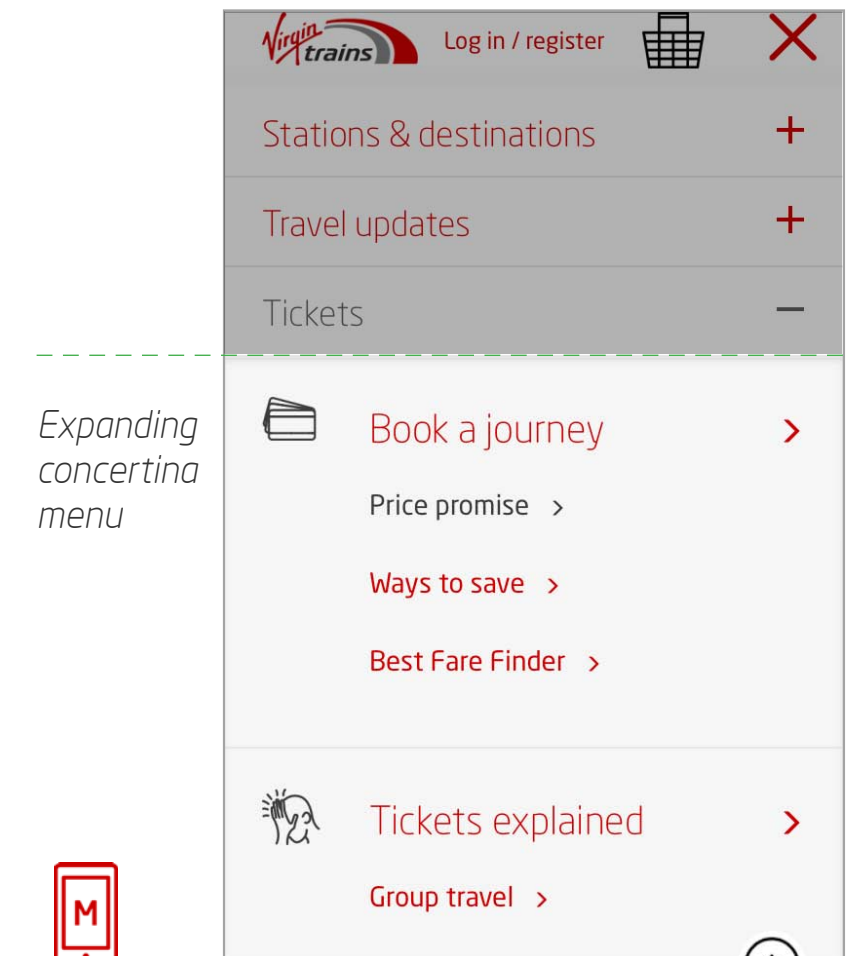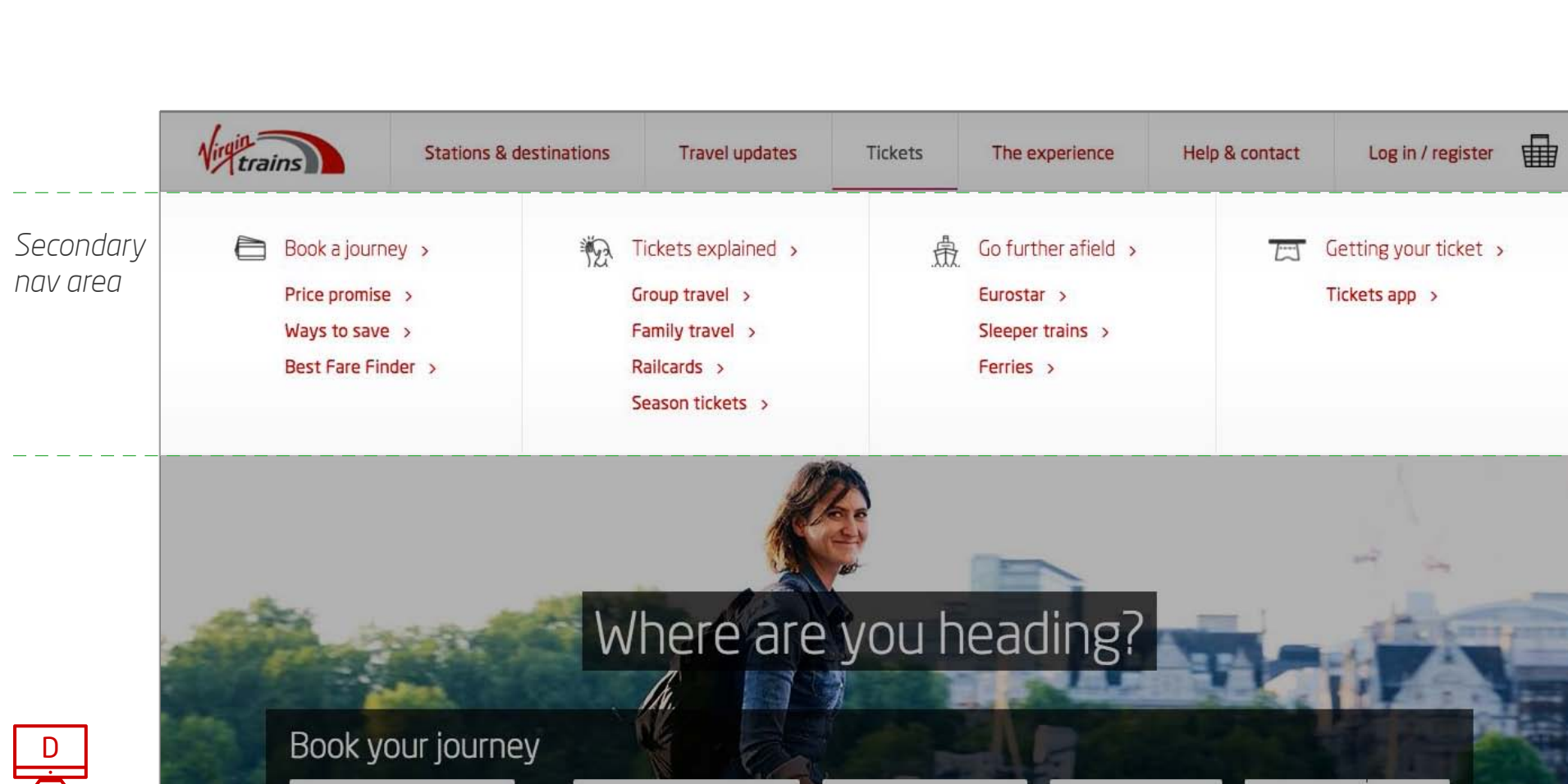
2.2. Headers

Every page needs a **hero**.

We use several different types of header. The most common sit with a Quick Timetable (QTT) for booking tickets easily and headers with a background image and headline copy.

Tip: Choose your background images carefully – they need to be well composed to work with the overlayed elements and take into account the different screen break points. More on images in Chapter 3.3.

2.2.1 QTT header

The aim of this header is to get people booking their next journey, so make sure it's in a prominent position. This is usually in a key page such as the home page and immediately underneath the header.

When expanded, the search module covers the image entirely so the customer can focus on their search without the distraction of a background image.

Guidelines

- Keep your titles and subtitles as short as possible – one liners rule!
- Copy colour for titles and headlines is #ffffff and aligned centre
- Background image dimensions are: 1272px wide by 616px min height
- Guide weight for images is 85kb
- Headline and expanded form background colour is usually #313131 set to 70% opacity unless the page has a specific colour requirement eg Eurostar (#131f44)
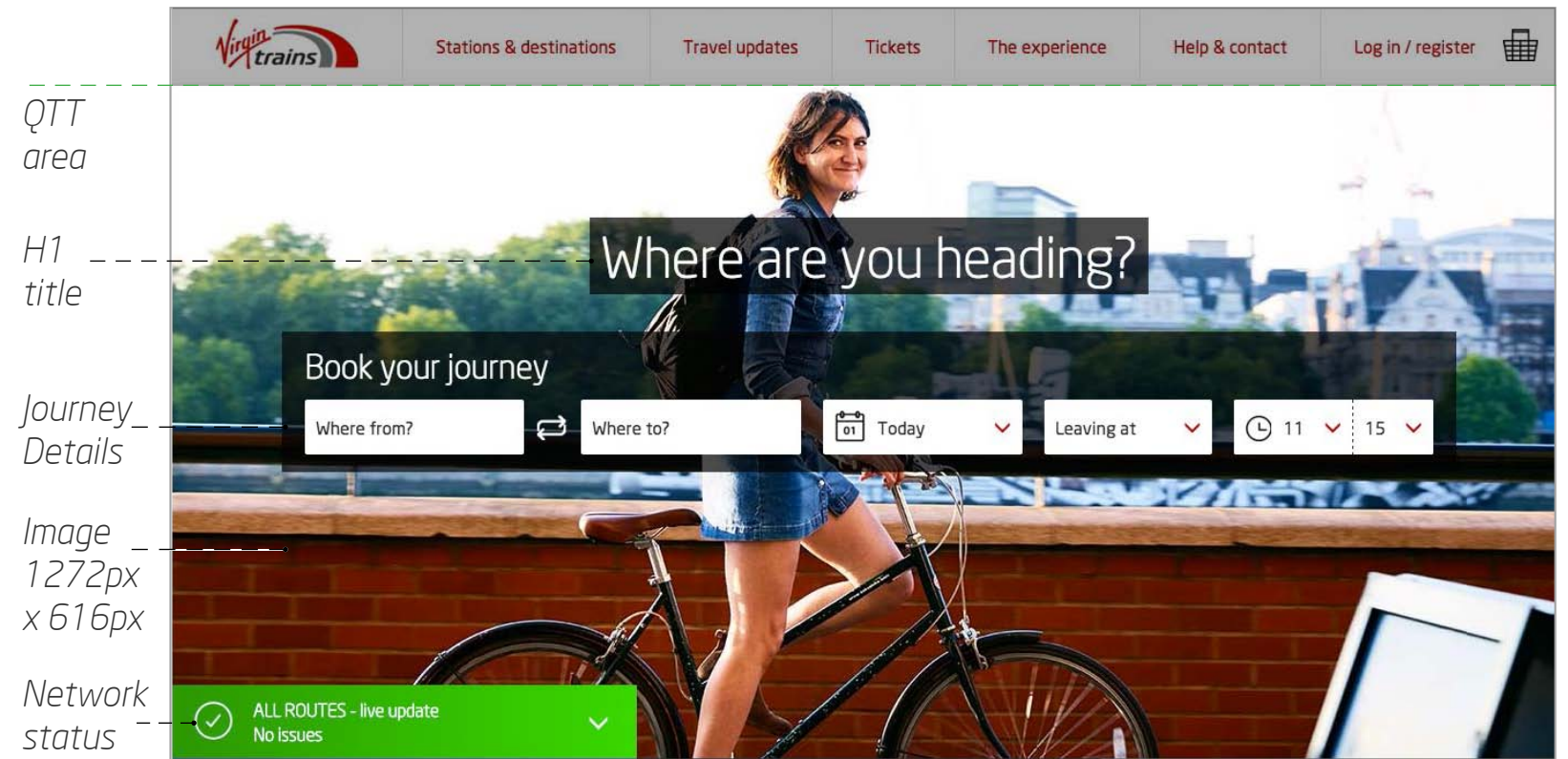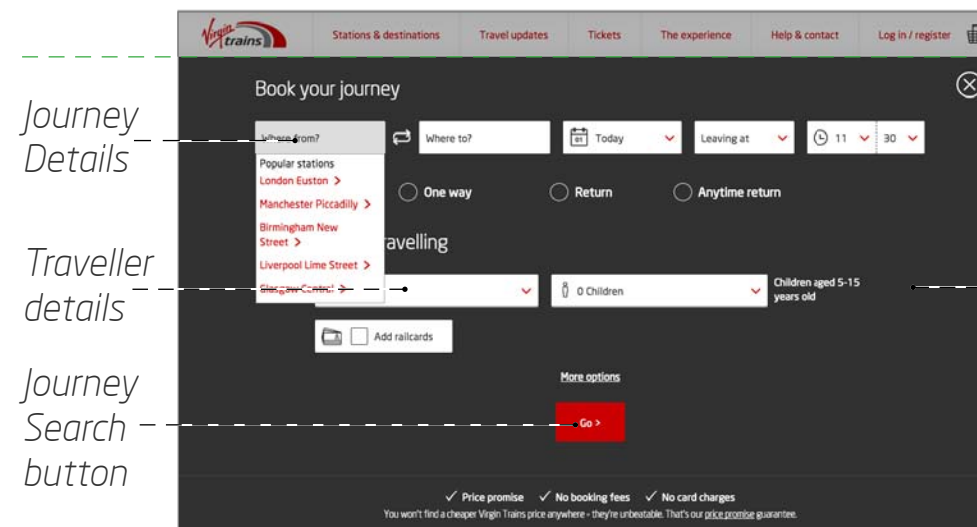

QTT area

H1 title

Journey Details

Image 1272px x 616px

Network status

QTT unexpanded state

Journey Details

Traveller details

Background colour #313131

Journey Search button

QTT expanded state

2.2.2 Header with background image

This is fit for purpose across most pages on our site. A simple line or two for the header (one line if you're including a subheader below) with an image behind.

Guidelines

- As with the QTT keep headers as short as possible
- Copy colour is #313131 and aligned to centre
- Headline background is usually #ffffff set to 90% opacity
- Background image dimensions are 1280px wide x min height 306px
- Guide weight for images is 70kb
- An optional CTA button can be included below the header/subheader

Header area 1280 x min height 306px

H1 title

Body copy (optional) #939393
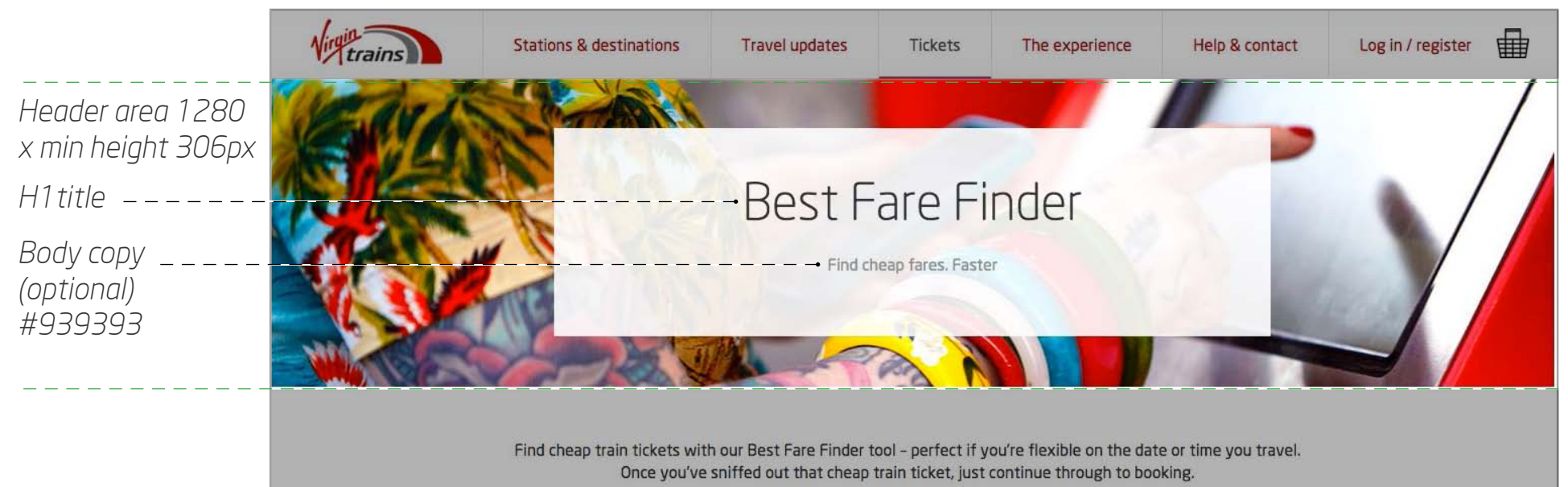
Variations

When you need to give the customer options, include a drop down or two, or include a button for promotions. There is also an option (if you don't have any header copy to have just an image).

Drop down navigation
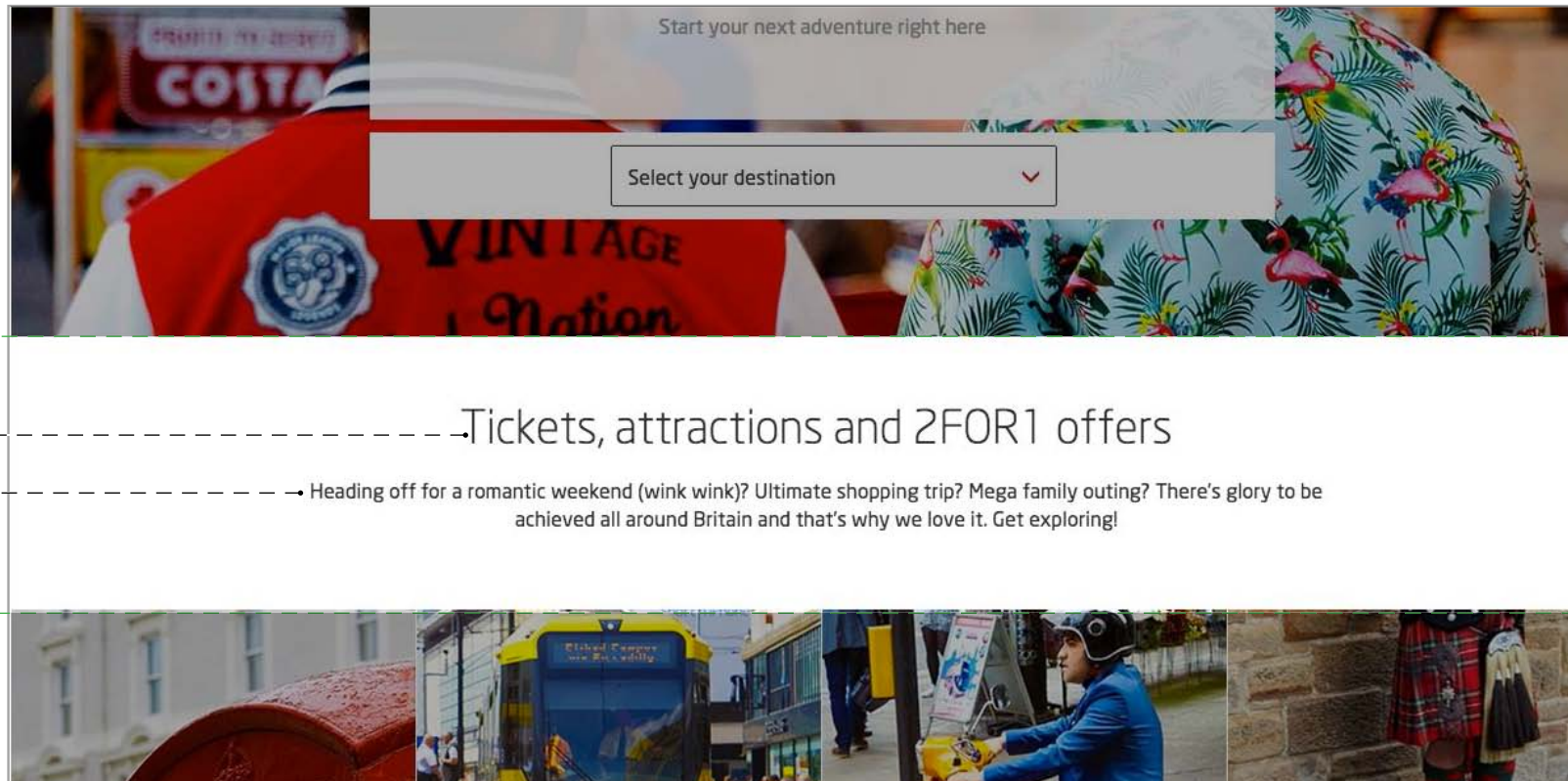

– Button
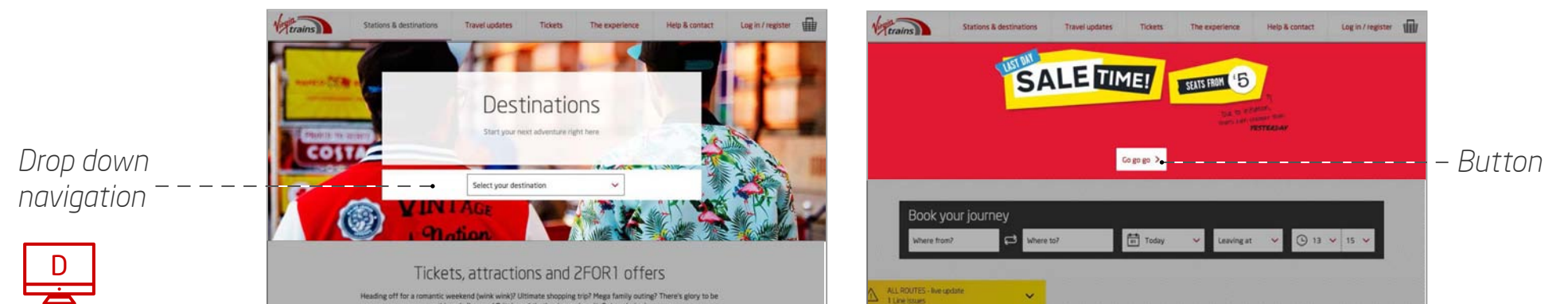
Variety is the spice of life… and copy layouts.

We've got a variety of different combinations for your blocks of copy to keep layouts looking fresh.

The following pages give you contextual examples as a guide to where you can use these modules.
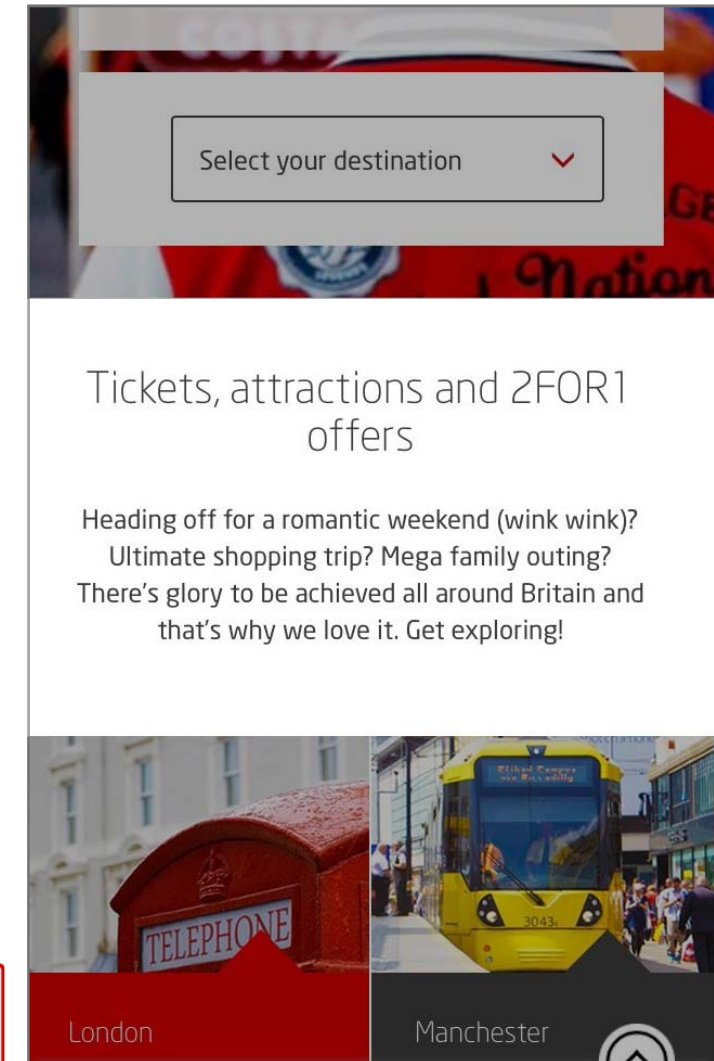
2.3.1 Single column and single heading

Great for placing underneath the hero image for intro text and for breaking up pages with lots of content.

One column
& heading

H2 title

Body copy

Start your next adventure right here

Select your destination

Tickets, attractions and 2FOR1 offers

Heading off for a romantic weekend (wink wink)? Ultimate shopping trip? Mega family outing? There's glory to be achieved all around Britain and that's why we love it. Get exploring!

D

Select your destination

Tickets, attractions and 2FOR1 offers

Heading off for a romantic weekend (wink wink)? Ultimate shopping trip? Mega family outing? There's glory to be achieved all around Britain and that's why we love it. Get exploring!

M

London

Manchester

Column width decreases to fit screen width.

2.3.2 Two columns and two headers

This format is great for getting across two equally important points and sit side by side on wider screens and stack on smaller ones. These are often used below main content or image modules.

H2 title

Body copy

D

Book your journey

To book your tickets enter the password below (you will have received this from ITV):

Enter password here

Book tickets now

Getting the offer:

- This exclusive offer is available for ITV staff and their family and friends, when travelling together.
- Tickets are available to book from 10 April 2016 for travel on Saturdays and Sundays only, between 11 April 2016 – 31 March 2018, inclusive.
- The promotion is available on First Class Advance fares on selected Virgin Trains services between Manchester, Stockport, Wilmslow, Macclesfield, Stoke-on-Trent and London only.

Good to know:

- There is a maximum of 9 passengers per booking.
- Customers must be a staff member of ITV to purchase a ticket. Members must accompany anyone travelling with them for the whole journey. They will need to have their ID pass with them so they can show the Train Manager.
- There are no credit card or booking fees.

ITV T&Cs

Two columns, two headings

Getting the offer:

- This exclusive offer is available for ITV staff and their family and friends, when travelling together.
- Tickets are available to book from 10 April 2016 for travel on Saturdays and Sundays only, between 11 April 2016 – 31 March 2018, inclusive.
- The promotion is available on First Class Advance fares on selected Virgin Trains services between Manchester, Stockport, Wilmslow, Macclesfield, Stoke-on-Trent and London only.

Good to know:

- There is a maximum of 9 passengers per booking.
- Customers must be a staff member of ITV to purchase a ticket. Members must accompany anyone travelling with them for the whole journey. They will need to have their ID pass with them so they can show the Train Mana...
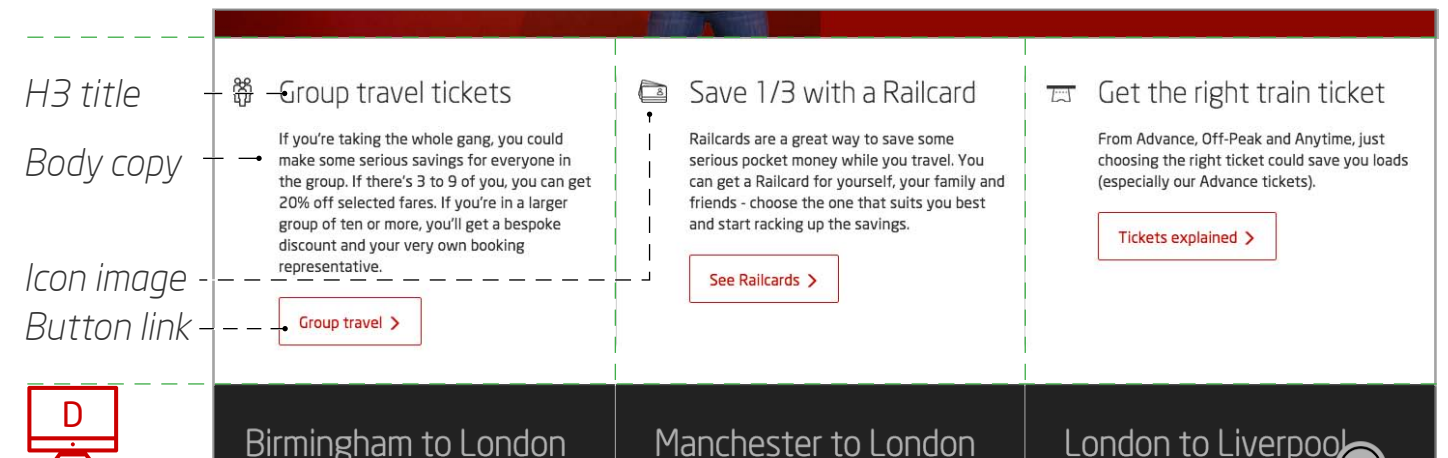
M

Columns stack vertically with copy aligning to the left.

2.3.3 Header and three or four columns

These handy modules are very flexible and have a variety of uses, we use them a lot across the site in the following ways:

H3 title

Text link
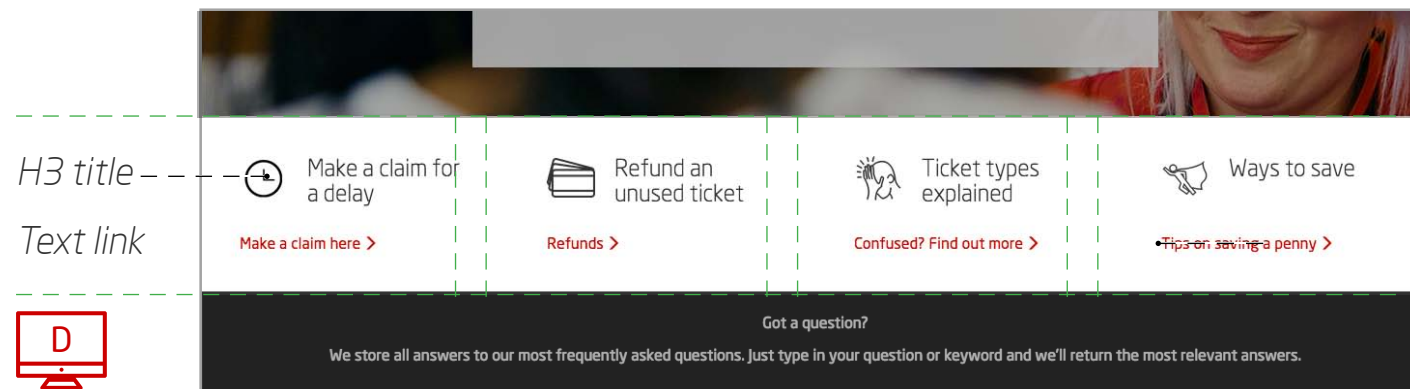
Content navigation to further sections.
These can appear directly below the header module.

H3 title

Body copy

Icon image

Button link

Listing benefits. Normally below some intro copy
or image and copy modules.

H3 title

Icon image

Body copy
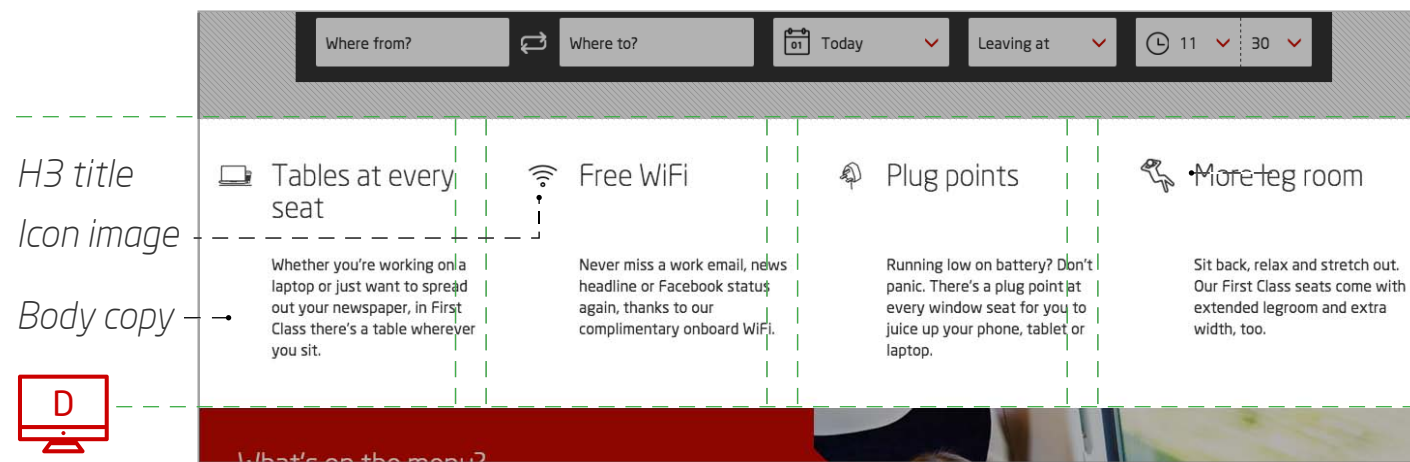
Place short intros and links to other areas of the site near the bottom
of your page just above the marketing opt in or less important info.

Guidelines

- Positioning is flexible but often below or above an image module
- icon size - between 30 x 30px and 50 x 50px
- Align text left
- 250 character limit (including spaces)
- Optional elements: H1 copy, body copy, linked copy, bullet points and buttons

16

A **picture** speaks a thousand **words**. Save yourself some space

We've got lots of options for displaying images alongside your brilliantly crafted copy.
Just remember to keep your text short and to the point.
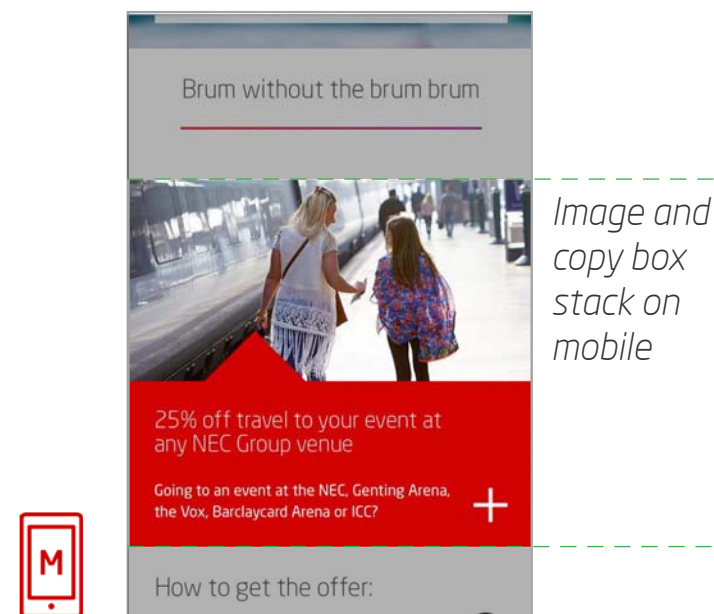
2.4.1 Half width image/ video

Sit your image on one side and copy on the other (stacking on a mobile), that's it more or less.

Guidelines

- These are usually positioned below the main header module either directly or separated by a copy module or two
- Modules can be positioned next to one another but alternate text and images left and right and vary copy background colours (choose from colours in chapter 3.2).
- Recommended image size 640x320px; videos 640x360px
- Align text left
- 300 character limit (including spaces)
- Dark neutral background colours are recommended for video modules
- Embed videos from YouTube

Variations

- Expandable boxes for additional copy
- Expandable content with a table
- Copy with an arrow link
- Copy with a logo

Brum without the brum brum

H3 title -- - - 25% off travel to your event at any NEC Group venue

Body copy - - - Going to an event at the NEC, Genting Arena, the Vox, Barclaycard Arena or ICC?

Expandable content

D

image size 640 x 320px

50% width   50% width

Brum without the brum brum

25% off travel to your event at any NEC Group venue

Going to an event at the NEC, Genting Arena, the Vox, Barclaycard Arena or ICC?

How to get the offer:

M

Image and copy box stack on mobile

2.4.2 Full width image/ video

Most full width images on the site are header images, but occasionally you might want to use a full width image further down, either as part of a gallery or with inset text.

Guidelines

- Include from one to five images
- Navigation appears automatically for more than one image
- Recomended image size 1280 x 514px; videos 1280 x 720px

Full width video

recommended video size 1280 x 720px

Helping make Derek's dreams a reality

warmth and individuality are all qualities we seek in our team members. That's because when we're having fun at work, our customers have fun too.

Four video navigation

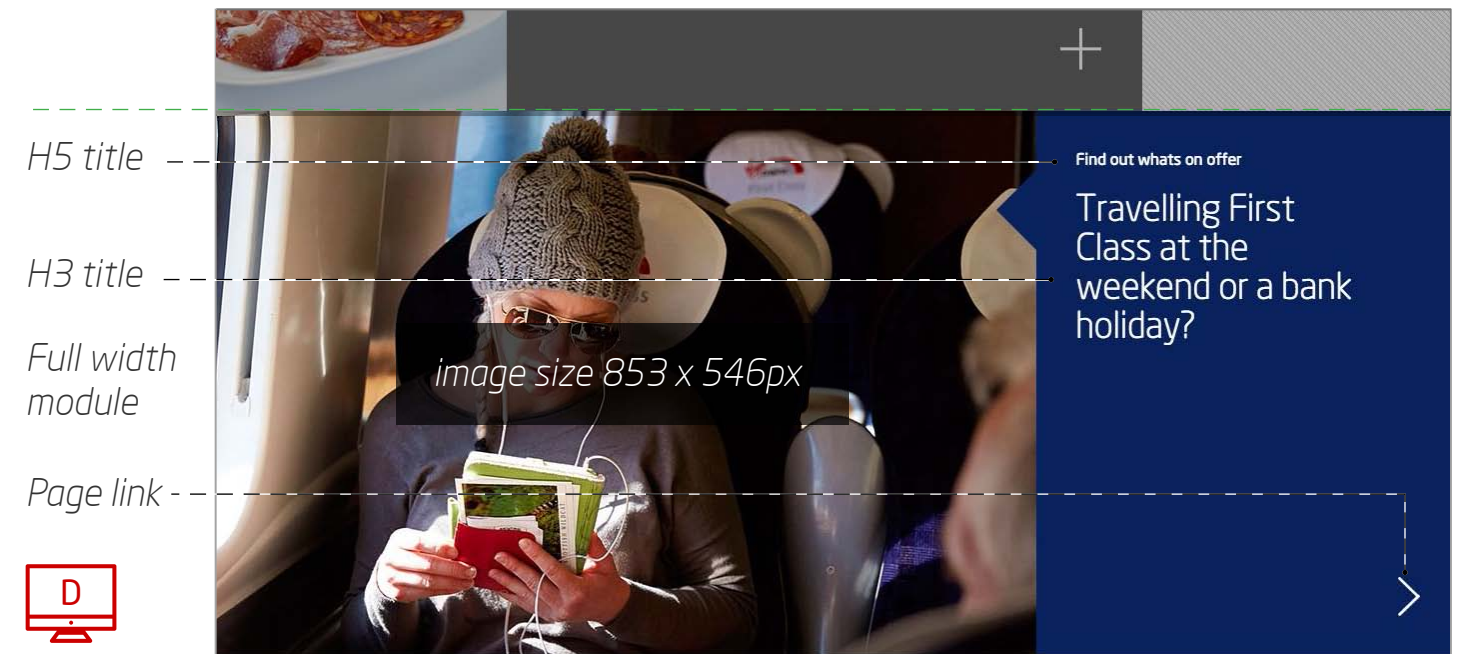| Derek | Ben | Una | Patrick |

D

2.4.3 Box content

Ranging from extra small to big, we have a range of modular boxes combining images with text. Here's what we've got to play with...
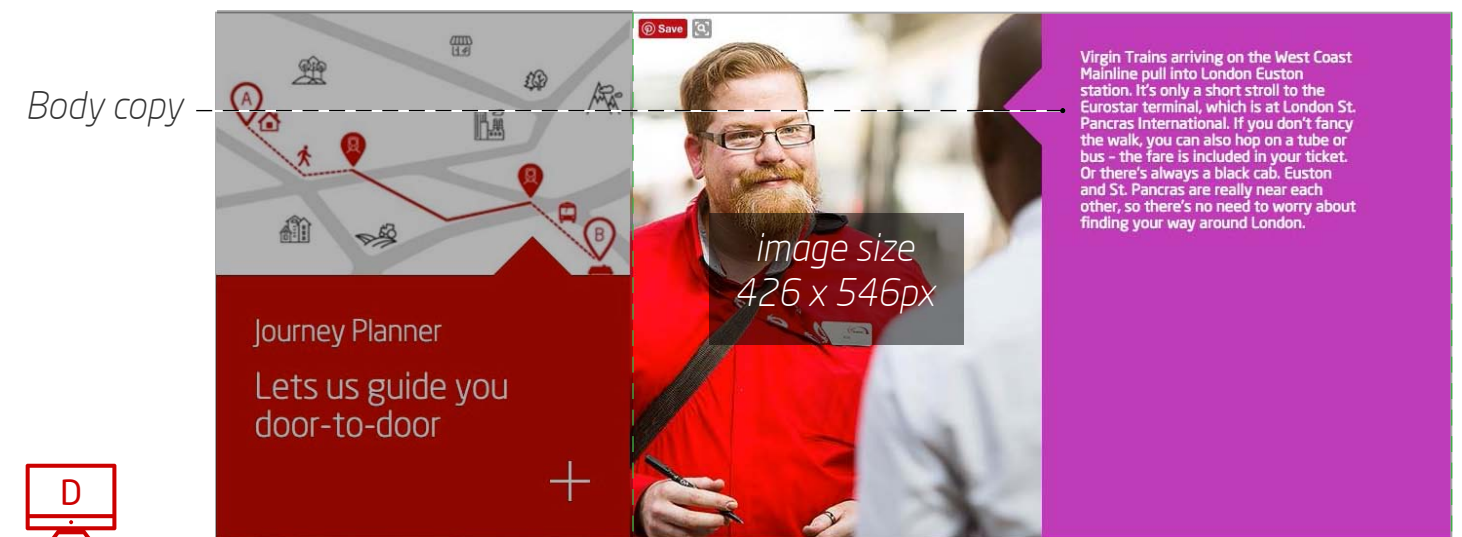
Big boxes

- Position these full width boxes underneath or on top of other content boxes
- Character limit (inc. spaces): 150
- Image size: 853 x 546px
- Optional elements: body copy, links, expandable content

Medium boxes

- Position these with other image and copy modules. They sit nicely alongside a small box or a couple of extra small boxes (coming up next) on desktop and tablet
- Character limit (inc spaces): 50
- Images size: 426 x 546px
- Optional elements: Body copy, H3 title, link

H5 title

H3 title

Full width module

image size 853 x 546px

Page link

Find out whats on offer

Travelling First Class at the weekend or a bank holiday?

D

two thirds width — third width

Body copy

Journey Planner

Lets us guide you door-to-door

image size 426 x 546px

Virgin Trains arriving on the West Coast Mainline pull into London Euston station. It's only a short stroll to the Eurostar terminal, which is at London St. Pancras International. If you don't fancy the walk, you can also hop on a tube or bus – the fare is included in your ticket. Or there's always a black cab. Euston and St. Pancras are really near each other, so there's no need to worry about finding your way around London.
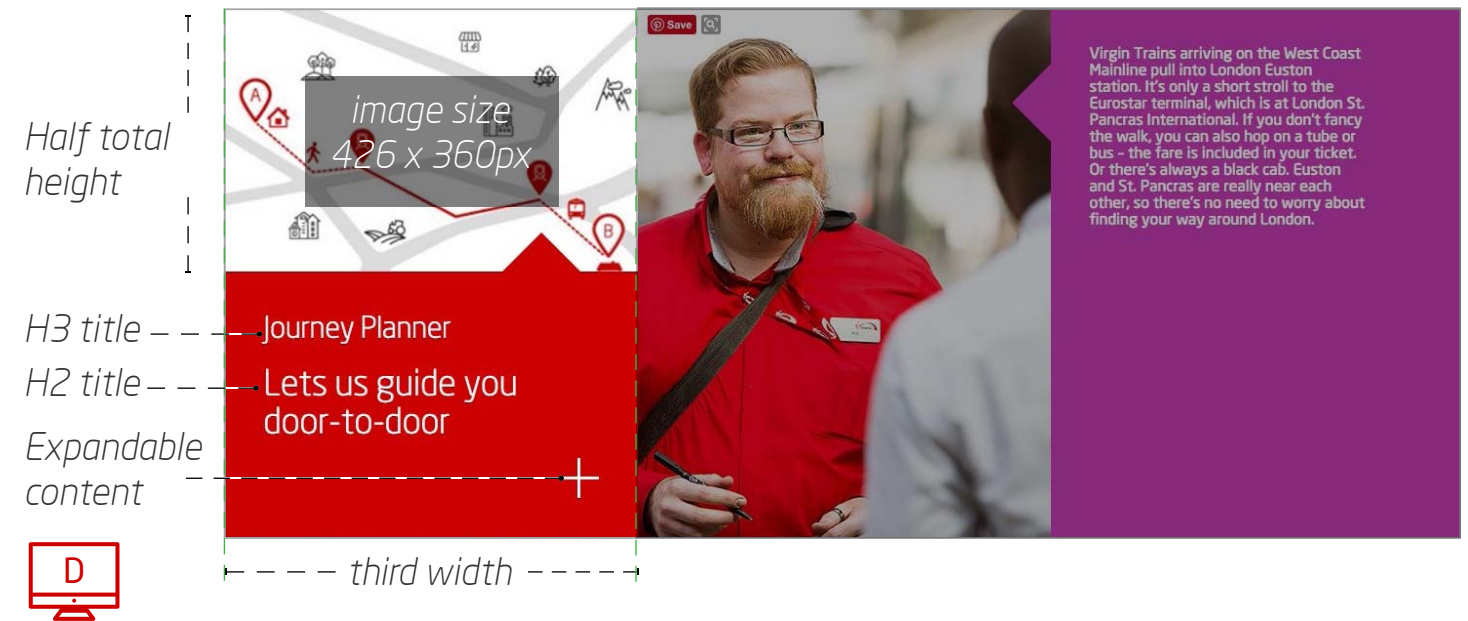
D

third width — third width
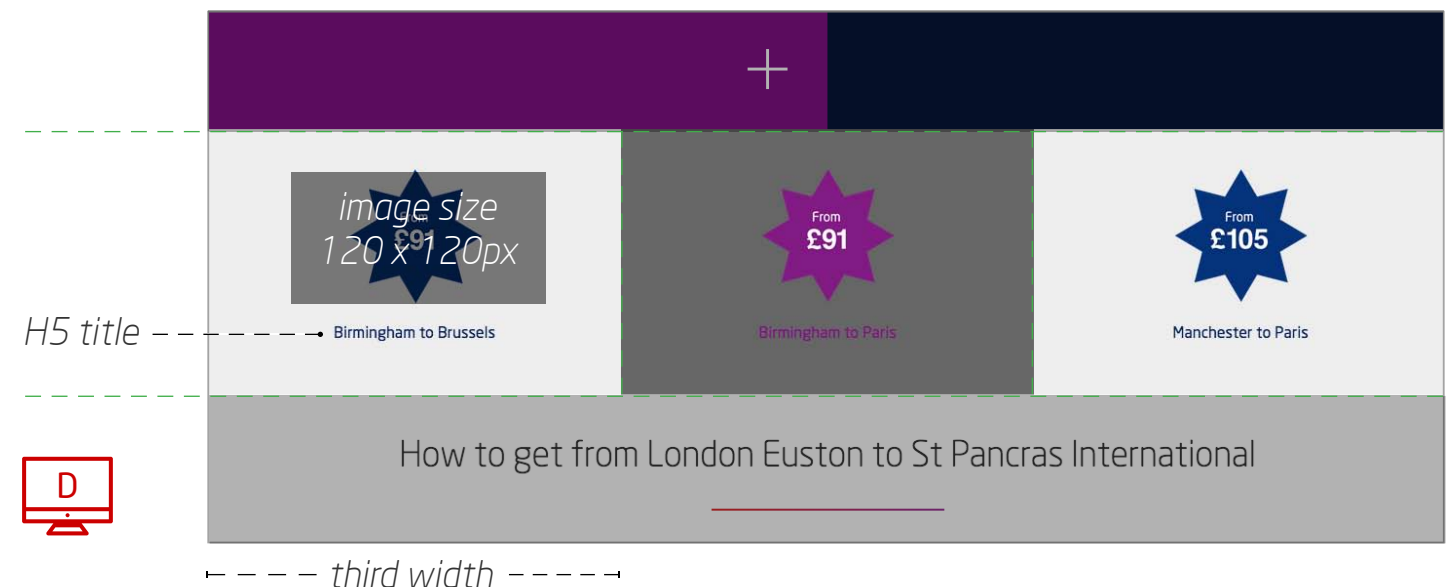
2.4.3 Box content

Small boxes

- Position these with medium boxes or sit three in a row (desktop and tablet) they work well as multiple rows (homepage) as well as singly (Eurostar) and work well on a page to break up copy heavy sections with white backgrounds
- Character limit (including spaces): 50
- Images size: 426 x 360px
- Optional elements: Body copy, H3 title, link

Half total height

H3 title — — Journey Planner

H2 title — — Lets us guide you door-to-door

Expandable content

image size 426 x 360px

Virgin Trains arriving on the West Coast Mainline pull into London Euston station. It's only a short stroll to the Eurostar terminal, which is at London St. Pancras International. If you don't fancy the walk, you can also hop on a tube or bus – the fare is included in your ticket. Or there's always a black cab. Euston and St. Pancras are really near each other, so there's no need to worry about finding your way around London.

D

— — — *third width* — — —

Extra small boxes

- Best for containing an icon and a one line link. They can sit three in a rowas shown, or stack next to a medium box
- Character limit (including spaces): 20
- Images size: 120 x120px
- Optional elements: Body copy, H3 title, link, icon

image size 120 x 120px

From £91

From £105

H5 title — — — — Birmingham to Brussels

Birmingham to Paris

Manchester to Paris

How to get from London Euston to St Pancras International
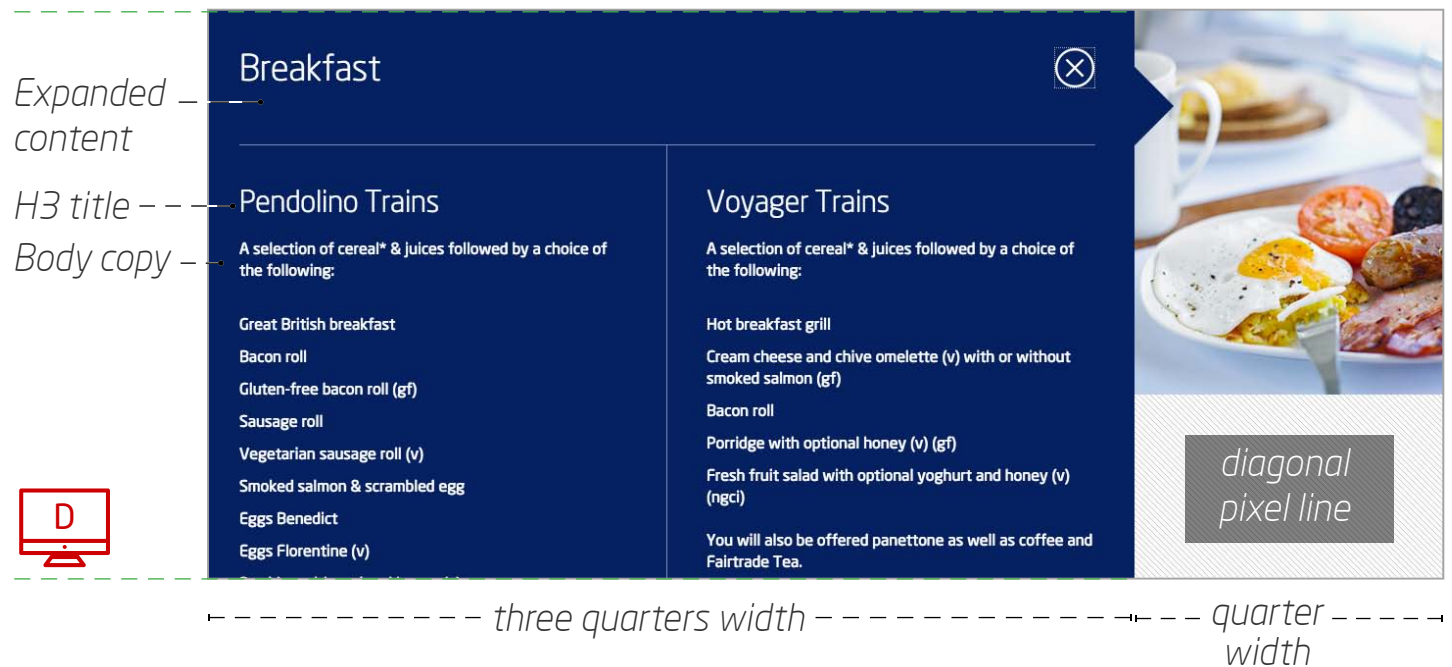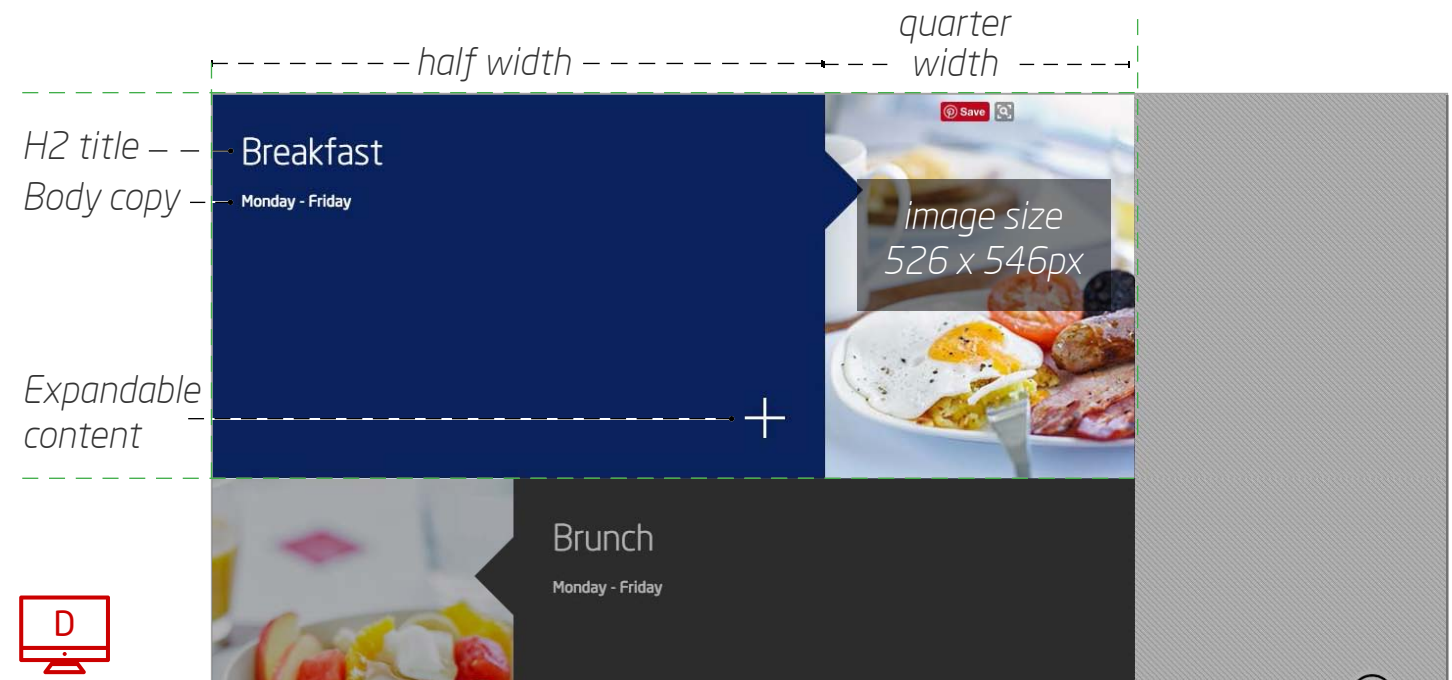
D

— — — *third width* — — —

2.4.4 One quarter image with two quarter text

When you have a lot of content to include it makes sense to dedicate more space to it and include an expandable content area. When closed the entire module takes up three quarters of the width of the page, extending to full width when the box is expanded.

Guidelines

- Stack these one on top of each other, alternating alignment left and right
- Character limit (inclusing spaces): 50 when unexpanded – unlimited (within reason) when expanded
- Images size: 426 x 546px
- Optional elements: Body copy, icons. links

quarter width

half width

H2 title – – Breakfast

Body copy – Monday - Friday

image size 526 x 546px

Expandable content

Brunch

Monday - Friday

D

Expanded content

Breakfast

H3 title – – –

Pendolino Trains

Body copy –

A selection of cereal* & juices followed by a choice of the following:

Great British breakfast

Bacon roll

Gluten-free bacon roll (gf)

Sausage roll

Vegetarian sausage roll (v)

Smoked salmon & scrambled egg

Eggs Benedict

Eggs Florentine (v)

Voyager Trains

A selection of cereal* & juices followed by a choice of the following:

Hot breakfast grill

Cream cheese and chive omelette (v) with or without smoked salmon (gf)

Bacon roll

Porridge with optional honey (v) (gf)

Fresh fruit salad with optional yoghurt and honey (v) (ngci)

You will also be offered panettone as well as coffee and Fairtrade Tea.

diagonal pixel line

D

three quarters width

quarter width

2.4.5 One quarter image with text

Great when you have four or more items to link to which have visual imagery to go with them. We use these to show attractions on our destinations pages as well as titles we're showing on BEAM.

Guidelines

- Stack these in rows and columns, paying attention to the rules around background colours (see chapter 3.2)
- These modules are often further down the page as they contain more specific info.
- Character limit (including spaces): 25 (title and optional body copy) we recommend keeping titles short
- Images size: 320 x 218px
- Optional elements: Body copy, links

Variations

There are also expandable version of these modules which have different sized images 318 x 284px.

At Virgin Trains we love a good offer, who doesn't? We continually work with other organisations to create partnerships that give our customers amazing deals and discounts. Check back regularly because, just like in the playground, we make new friends all the time.

image size 320 x 218px

Half total height

H4 title — NEC Group venues — TicketQuarter — The Ticket Factory — Virgin Trains Escapes

Page link

D

quarter width

image size 318 x 284px

Bold Street — International Slavery Museum — Liverpool Biennial — Liverpool Echo Arena

Body copy-button link- small icon-

Located on Albert Docks, Liverpool's International Slavery Museum will certainly strike a chord. You'll walk a mile in the historical events that led up to, during and after slavery, uncovering untold stories from many forgotten lives, as you learn all about historical and contemporary slavery from across the world.

Find out more

The closest station is Liverpool Lime Street

Need a little help getting to and from the International Slavery Museum?

Why not try Journey Planner - your personal travel assistant.

1 pixel divider #ffffff
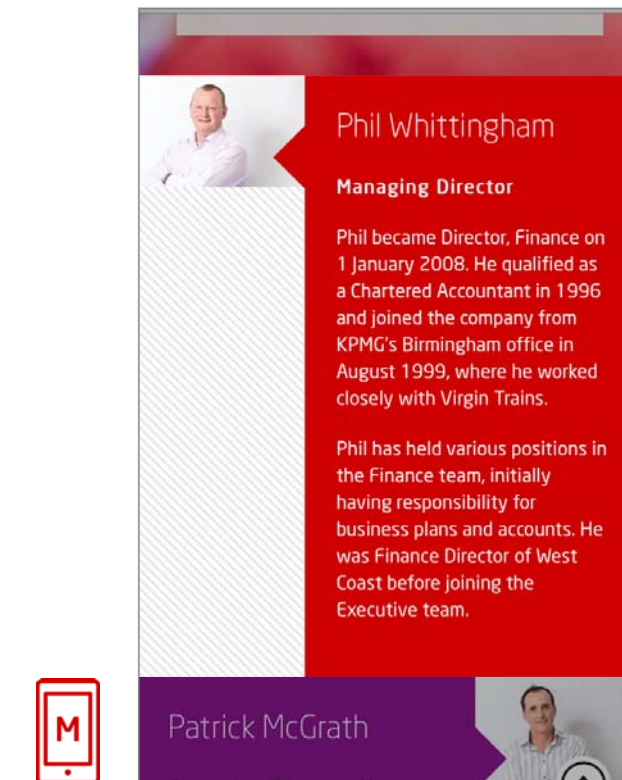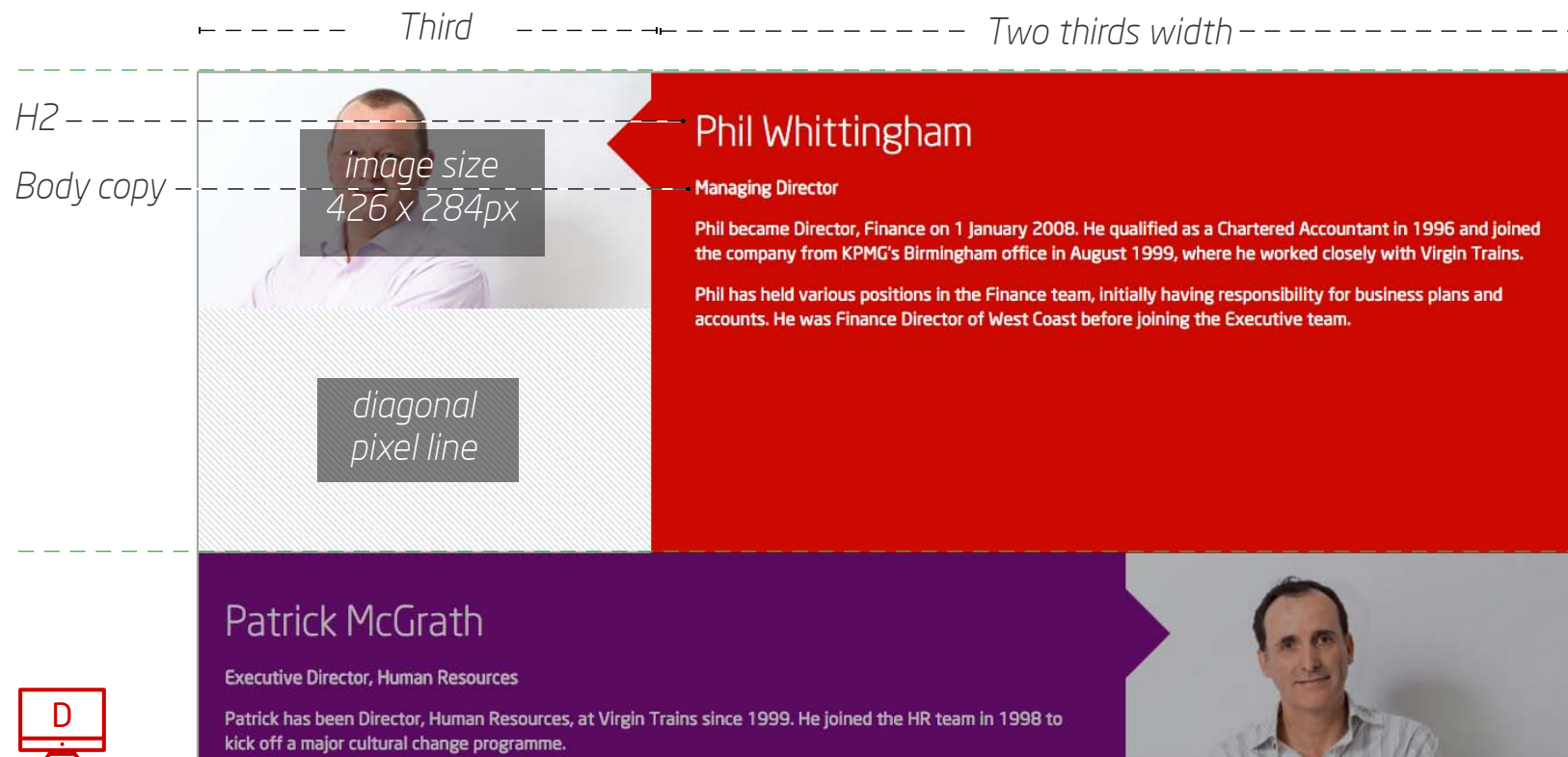
close expanded area

D

full width expanded area

2.4.6 One third image with two thirds text

Another module format for displaying medium lengths of copy. Alternate these modules aligned left and right.

Guidelines

- Character limit (including spaces): 50 for the title
  and 500 for body copy
- Images size: 426 x 284px
- Optional elements: buttons, links

2.4.7 Tables

Made for things like train timetables – these are essential on certain areas of the site. They can also be used with an expandable half width content and half width image module.

Guidelines

- Maximum columns: 5
- Maximum rows: 10
- Table background and dividing lines colour: #313131
- Table cell background colour: #424242
- Character limits per cell: unlimited (but be sensible please)
- Optional elements: Header, body copy, links

Table rows and columns

| | Departures ⬤ Arrivals | | Need to check another station? | 🔍 Search for a station | › |

Service	Destination	Platform	Status	Operator
10:28	Chester	1	🟠 10:30	Merseyrail
10:30	Preston	4	🟢 On Time	Northern
10:33	New Brighton	1	🟢 On Time	Merseyrail
10:33	Wigan North Western	2	🟢 On Time	Northern
10:34	Birmingham New Street	8	🟢 On Time	London Midland

∧ Earlier ∨ Later ↻ Refresh ☐ Virgin Trains only   Check travel alerts ›

D

——— *Full width table* ———

Departures ⬤ Arrivals

Need to check another station?

🔍 Search for a station ›

Service	Destination	Platform
10:49	Buxton	10
🟢 On Time		Northern

M

Column heading is truncated

Table row is split over two rows

2.4.8. Pricepoints

In case you hadn't heard, our job is to sell train tickets. Being up front with our price tags using the following format is a sure fire way to get the sales rolling in.

Guidelines

- Maximum columns: 5
- Maximum rows: 10
- Table background and dividing lines colour: #313131
- Table cell background colour: #424242
- Character limits per cell: unlimited (but be sensible please)
- Optional elements: Header, body copy, links

Variations

There is also an option to have a full width price point that can be shown along with a 640 x 320px image.

We also sometimes vary the background colour of price point boxes for specific promotions such as seat sales

Seat sale price points

2.4.9 Single button component

When you need a button – and nothing else. These are full page width and usually appear near the bottom of the page just below any related content.
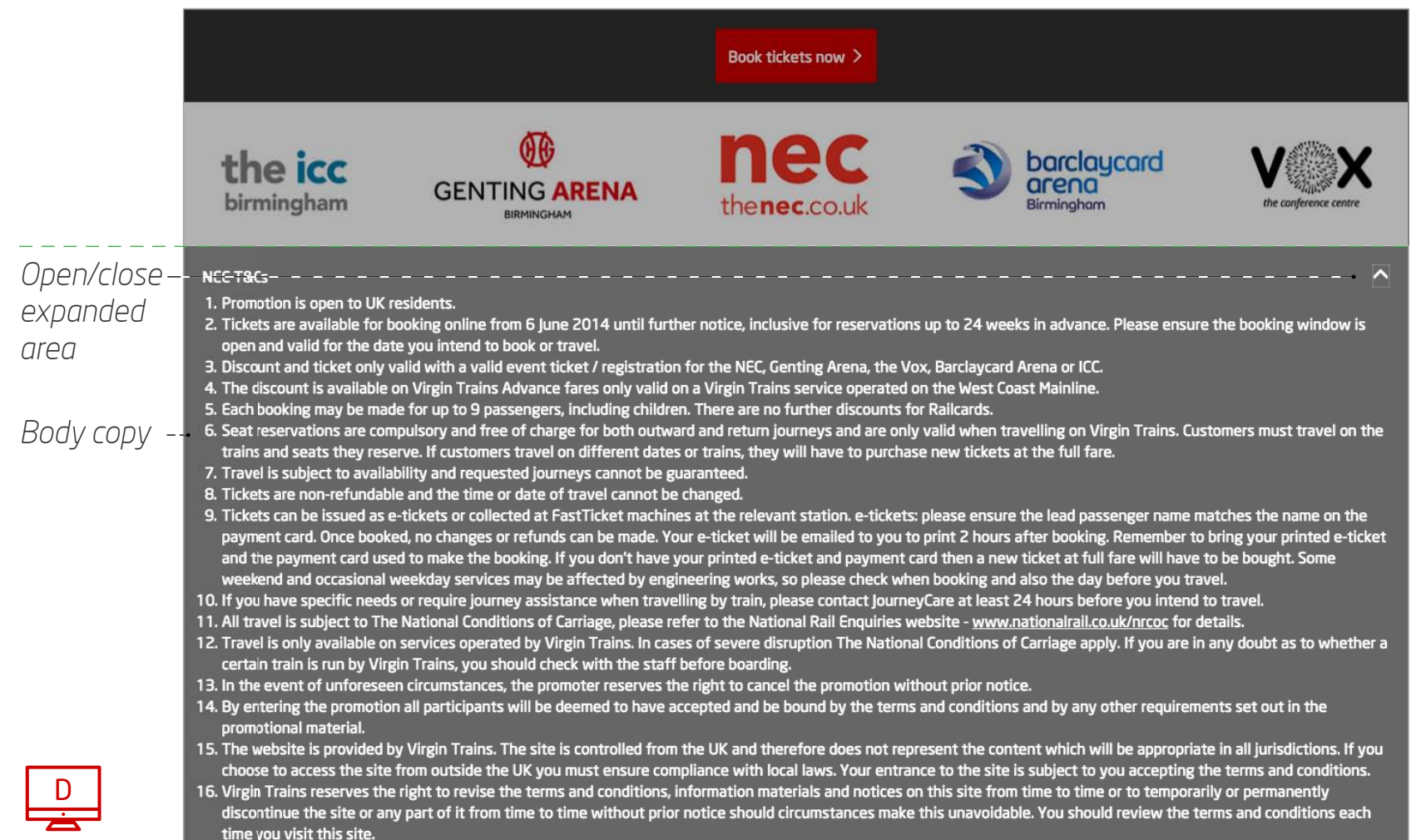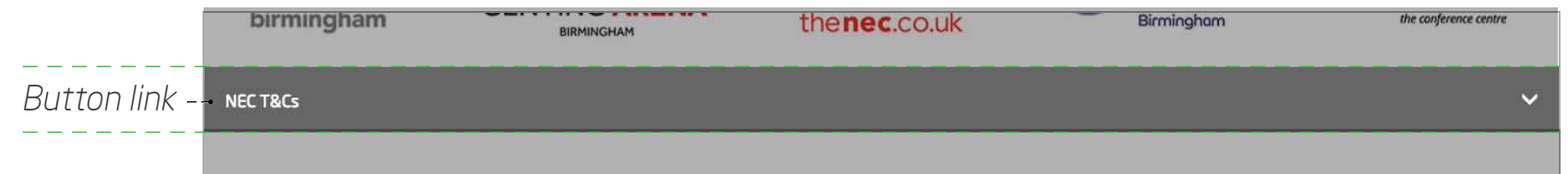
Guidelines

- Background colour: #313131

2.4.10 Text drop down container

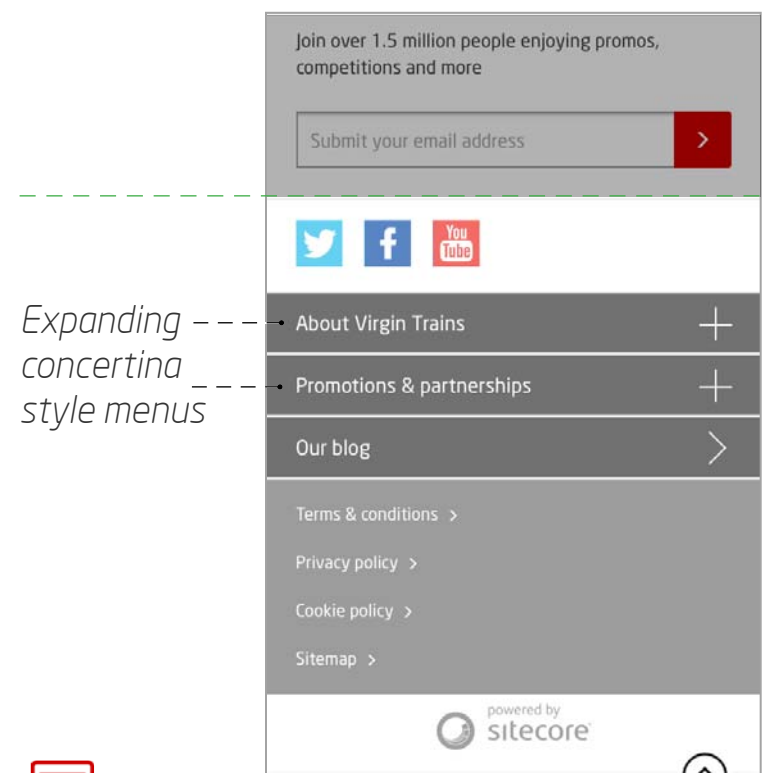Ideal for lengthy sections of copy, like Terms and Conditions. Now you see them, now you don't.
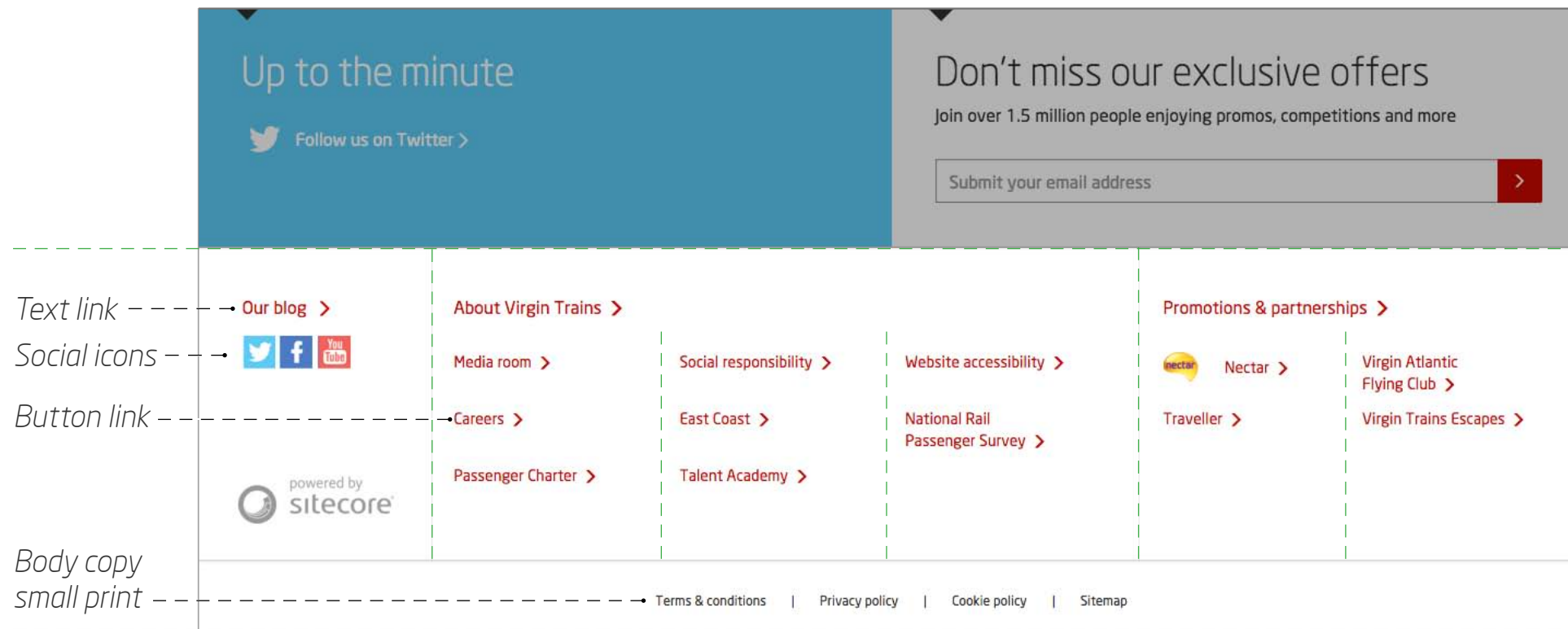
Guidelines

- Character limit (including spaces): 10 title with unlimited for expanded
- Background colour: #939393 or #313131
- Optional elements: Body copy, links

Button link

Open/close expanded area

Body copy

NEC T&Cs

1. Promotion is open to UK residents.
2. Tickets are available for booking online from 6 June 2014 until further notice, inclusive for reservations up to 24 weeks in advance. Please ensure the booking window is open and valid for the date you intend to book or travel.
3. Discount and ticket only valid with a valid event ticket / registration for the NEC, Genting Arena, the Vox, Barclaycard Arena or ICC.
4. The discount is available on Virgin Trains Advance fares only valid on a Virgin Trains service operated on the West Coast Mainline.
5. Each booking may be made for up to 9 passengers, including children. There are no further discounts for Railcards.
6. Seat reservations are compulsory and free of charge for both outward and return journeys and are only valid when travelling on Virgin Trains. Customers must travel on the trains and seats they reserve. If customers travel on different dates or trains, they will have to purchase new tickets at the full fare.
7. Travel is subject to availability and requested journeys cannot be guaranteed.
8. Tickets are non-refundable and the time or date of travel cannot be changed.
9. Tickets can be issued as e-tickets or collected at FastTicket machines at the relevant station. e-tickets: please ensure the lead passenger name matches the name on the payment card. Once booked, no changes or refunds can be made. Your e-ticket will be emailed to you to print 2 hours after booking. Remember to bring your printed e-ticket and the payment card used to make the booking. If you don't have your printed e-ticket and payment card then a new ticket at full fare will have to be bought. Some weekend and occasional weekday services may be affected by engineering works, so please check when booking and also the day before you travel.
10. If you have specific needs or require journey assistance when travelling by train, please contact JourneyCare at least 24 hours before you intend to travel.
11. All travel is subject to The National Conditions of Carriage, please refer to the National Rail Enquiries website - www.nationalrail.co.uk/nrcoc for details.
12. Travel is only available on services operated by Virgin Trains. In cases of severe disruption The National Conditions of Carriage apply. If you are in any doubt as to whether a certain train is run by Virgin Trains, you should check with the staff before boarding.
13. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the promoter reserves the right to cancel the promotion without prior notice.
14. By entering the promotion all participants will be deemed to have accepted and be bound by the terms and conditions and by any other requirements set out in the promotional material.
15. The website is provided by Virgin Trains. The site is controlled from the UK and therefore does not represent the content which will be appropriate in all jurisdictions. If you choose to access the site from outside the UK you must ensure compliance with local laws. Your entrance to the site is subject to you accepting the terms and conditions.
16. Virgin Trains reserves the right to revise the terms and conditions, information materials and notices on this site from time to time or to temporarily or permanently discontinue the site or any part of it from time to time without prior notice should circumstances make this unavoidable. You should review the terms and conditions each time you visit this site.

2.5 Footer

Like the top navigation bar, the footer is consistent across the website. It contains links to our blog and social media channels as well as other useful areas of the site. There is also a section of the footer that has important links to various policies as well as the sitemap. The structure and links have been carefully chosen so it's best to leave it as it is.

Please note the colour and style differences between the desktop and mobile footers.
These have been styled specifically for these devices.

Wow them and make them want to read on. It's easy when you know how.

A stunning image plus a dash of wit are key ingredients to engage visitors. Take your pick from our selection of website photos for that all-important header image – here's how to make sure it's unmistakably Virgin...

Word up. Say hello to Neo Sans.

Our core font for all our branding is Neo Sans. From its subtle and refined lightest weight to its impactful bold, this awesome all-rounder keeps everything we do distinctly us.

3.1. Fonts

We only use light and regular for html copy on virgintrains.com. Here's a breakdown of all the sizes we use:

DESKTOP - 1280 x 960 pixels

h1 - Neo sans light 50px

h2 - Neo sans light 36px

h3 - Neo sans light 30px

h4 - Neo sans light 28px

h5 - Neo sans regular 16px

Body copy - Neo sans regular 16px

Body copy small print - Neo sans regular 12px

Text link - Neo sans regular 16px

Button link - Neo sans regular 14px

TABLET LANDSCAPE - 1024 x 768 pixels

h1 - Neo sans light 40px

h2 - Neo sans light 36px

h3 - Neo sans light 30px

h4 - Neo sans light 20px

h5 - Neo sans regular 14px

Body copy - Neo sans regular 14px

Body copy small print - Neo sans regular 12px

Text link - Neo sans regular 14px

Button link - Neo sans regular 14px

3.1. Fonts

TABLET PORTRAIT - 768 x 1024 pixels

h1 - Neo sans light 40px

h2 - Neo sans light 30px

h3 - Neo sans light 22px

h4 - Neo sans light 18px

h5 - Neo sans regular 14px

Body copy - Neo sans regular 14px

Body copy small print - Neo sans regular 12px

Text link - Neo sans regular 14px

Button link - Neo sans regular 14px

MOBILE - 640 x 960 pixels

h1 - Neo sans light 50px

h2 - Neo sans light 40px

h3 - Neo sans light 36px

h4 - Neo sans light 26px

h5 - Neo sans regular 22px

Body copy - Neo sans regular 24px

Body copy small print - Neo sans regular 16px

Text link - Neo sans regular 24px

Button link - Neo sans regular 24px

Add a splash of **colour** to break things up a bit.

We're Virgin which means we're red. We wanted to be instantly recognisable, but not vvoverpowering. So we've come up with a complimentary palette of colours to bring our site to life in awesome technicolour.

3.2. Colour palette

The following key colours are used across the site. More on the following page on how they should be used alongside each other.

We've also got some special colours and gradients here, for use on specific areas of the site.

Standard colours

graphite #313131	grey darker #666666	blue darker #0d1424	red dark #ac2224	pink dark #a92a60	purple dark #831186
black transparent #000000 (alpha 0.7)	grey dark #939393	blue #07225c	red #cc0000	pink #c62d64	purple semi dark #7a419d
	grey #bbbbbb	blue light #48509b	red light #fd4752	pink light #dd2c6c	purple light #b122a4
	grey light #ededed		red semi light #ff3c45	pink semi light #c8275d	purple semi light #c13cb1

White
#ffffff

Special colours and gradients

first class graphite #3f3f3f	grey booking fees #262626	eurostar blue #131f44	red seat map #c90000
	first class grey #b4b6b8	first class blue #08225d	
	first class light grey #eeeeee		

yellow alert gradient
location 50%
#f1cf32 ------------ #f7e627

orange error gradient
location 50%
#e06623 ----------- #e8a025

green info gradient
location 50%
#229729 ---------- #337837

Diagonal pixel line
#c9c9c9 on #ffffff

Diagonal pixel line is used for blank spaces.

3.2. Module colour use

We're quite particular about how our coloured modules are arranged. Make sure that adjacent background colours are substantially different and consider how the modules respond at different break points.

DESKTOP - 1280 x 960 pixels
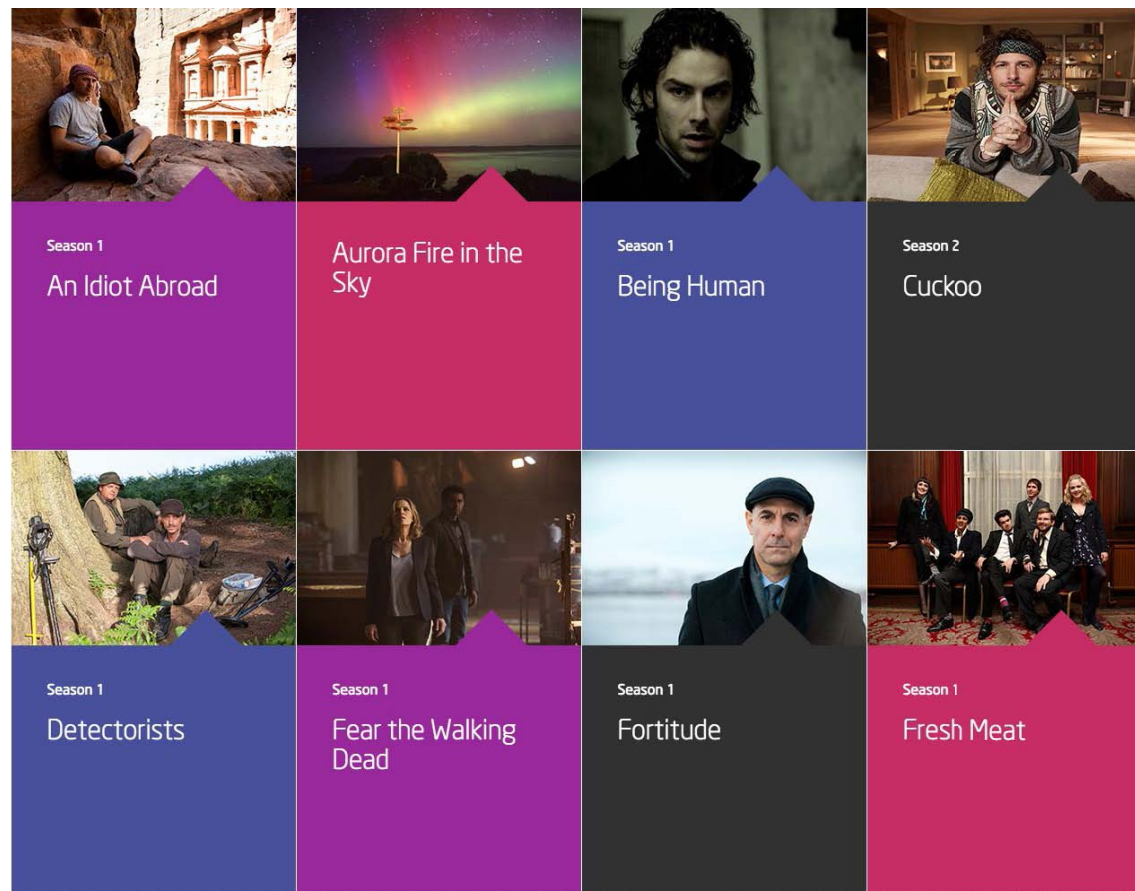
| Season 1 | Season 1 | Season 1 | Season 2 |
| An Idiot Abroad | Aurora Fire in the Sky | Being Human | Cuckoo |

| Season 1 | Season 1 | Season 1 | Season 1 |
| Detectorists | Fear the Walking Dead | Fortitude | Fresh Meat |

MOBILE - 640 x 960 pixels

Season 1
An Idiot Abroad

Aurora Fire in the Sky

Season 1
Being Human

Season 2
Cuckoo

GOOD practice colour combination

#99289b	#c62d65	#48509b	#b122a4
#48509b	#99289b	#939393	#c62d65

BAD practice colour combination

#99289b	#c62d65	#313131	#48509b
#c62d65	#48509b	#313131	#99289b

36
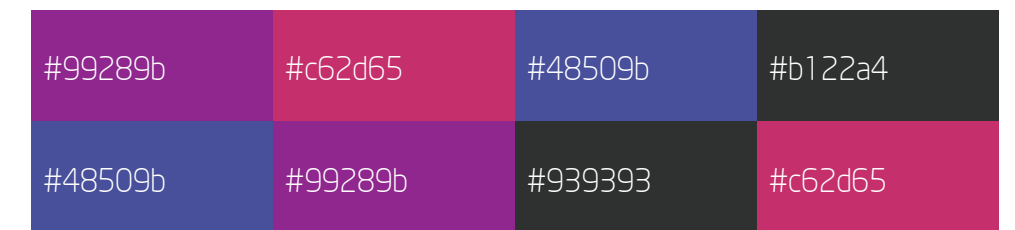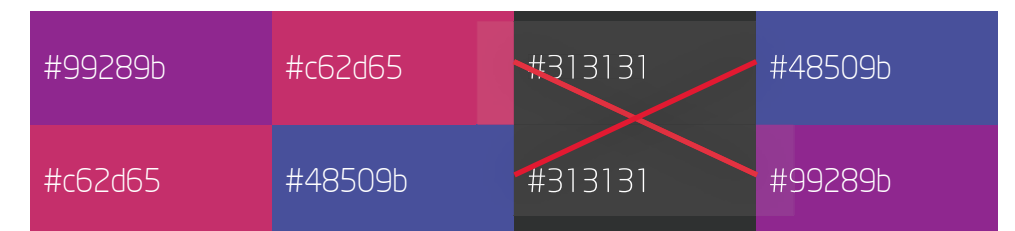
3.2. Text and icon colours

We only use white or graphite (#313131) html text on the site to ensure high contrast with our coloured backgrounds with the exception of body copy in the header area (#939393).

Icons mostly follow the same rules but occasionally we use coloured icons on a contrasting background. Here's a handy guide to which to use on each different coloured background. If in doubt contact the brand team.

Text/icon colour

#313131

#ffffff

Background colour

white #ffffff	grey light #ededed	grey #bbbbbb	grey dark #939393	black transparent #000000 (alpha 0.7)	first class grey #b4b6b8	first class light grey #eeeeee

grey booking fees #262626

grey darker #666666

blue darker #0D1424

blue #07225c

blue light #48509b

eurostar blue #131f44

first class blue #08225d

red dark #ac2224

red #cc0000

red seat map #c90000

red light #fd4752

red semi light #ff3c45

pink dark #a92a60

pink #c62d64

pink light #dd2c6c

pink semi light #c8275d

purple dark #831186

purple semi dark #7a419d

purple light #b122a4

purple semi light #c13cb1

Background gradients and patterns

yellow alert gradient #f1cf32 - #f7e627

orange error gradient #e06623 - #e8a025

green info gradient #229729 - #337837

Text over orange or green gradients can be white or graphite.

Diagonal pixel line #c9c9c9

Our pictures tell a **story**. About **us** and our **customers**.

The following pages give an overview of the style of images but there are also technical considerations too. The file sizes of images affect how quickly pages will load which in turn affect UX and Search engine optimisation (SEO - more on that in Chapter 6) File naming is also important.

3.3. Images - technical details

File sizes

- Save photographic images and logos on a background for web as JPEGs, somewhere between 40% and 70%. The table below is a rough guide to the weight of popular image sizes on virgintrains.com.
- Export images with transparent background (eg logos and icons) as PNG files
- Further compress your outputted web files using ImageOptim to remove uneccessary metadata.

File naming

Also good for SEO is the name you give the file – it also makes it clear for a colleague to quickly identify it. Here's the general rule:

Descriptive name + image ref no (if relevent) + w x h image dimensions + 'compr'

Separate these as shown in the examples below with '-'s

WEBSITE IMAGERY SPECS	SIZE (PIXELS)	RECOMMENDED WEIGHT	FORMAT	NAMING CONVENTION
Header background - QTT	1272 x 616	85 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-1272x616-compr
Header background	1280 x 306	70 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-1280x306-compr
Header background - stations	1272 x 512	85 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-1272x512-compr
Body images - large	640 x 320	50 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-640x320-compr
Body images - medium	464 x 272	35 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-464x272-compr
Body images - small	317 x 284	25 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-317x284-compr
Menu images	318 x 394	35 Kb	Jpeg	descriptive-name-318x394-compr
Icons	50 x 50	15 Kb	PNG	descriptive-name-50x50-compr

Sometimes a larger size for icons (400x400 px) may be required, but will be specified on request.

3.3.1. Photography

Nothing adds that warmth and human-ness like a good photograph. We use photography liberally across our site. And whether we're showing people, destinations or our handsome trains, we have a few rules to make our photos as engaging as possible.

When it comes to images, you can choose from our bank of brand photography or use a carefully selected stock shot. You may also be supplied an image to use from a partner brand.

Know what's right

Our images are natural, relaxed, dynamic, fresh, and contemporary. Use focus and cropping to make them more interesting.

A splash of red
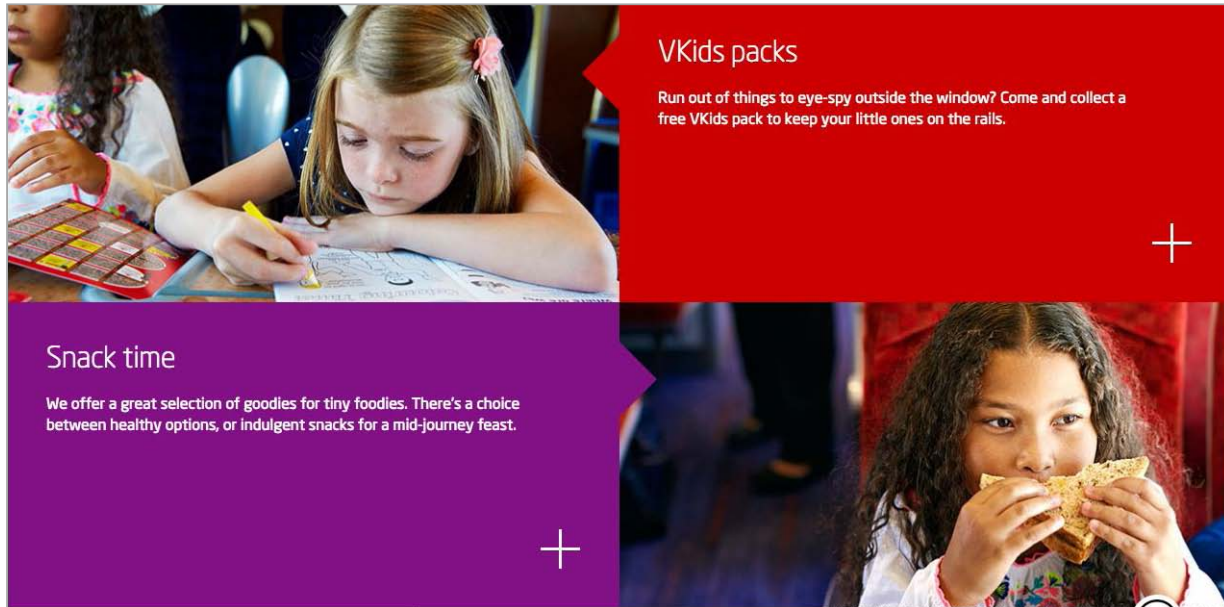
We love a bit of red, so try to use photos with a splash of it. If this isn't possible you can always incorporate it another way such as using a red background next to your image in a module.

Overlaid header copy

If you're using a header image – consider any overlaid copy boxes or QTT fields. Try and make sure the composition of your image works in harmony with these elements.
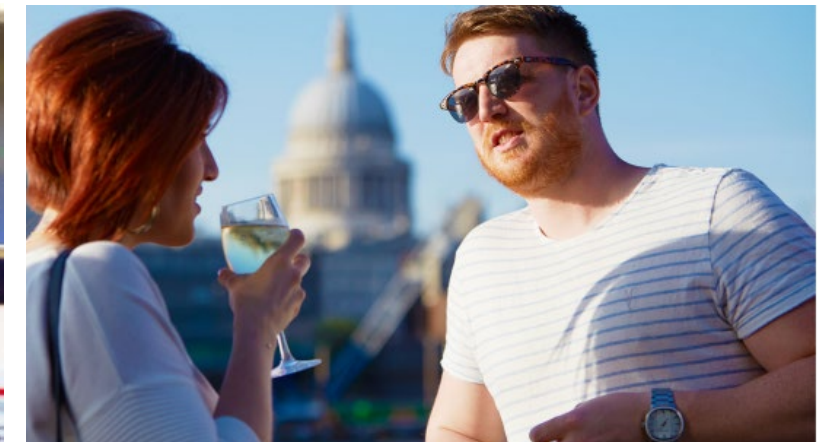
3.3.1. Photography - in use

VKids packs

Run out of things to eye-spy outside the window? Come and collect a free VKids pack to keep your little ones on the rails.

+
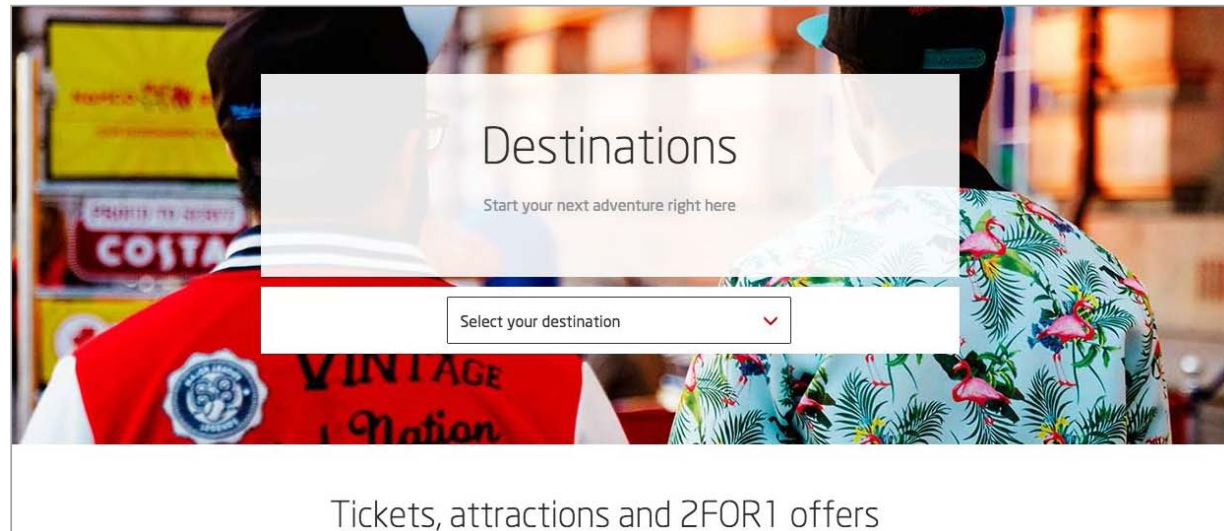
Snack time

We offer a great selection of goodies for tiny foodies. There's a choice between healthy options, or indulgent snacks for a mid-journey feast.

+

Advance

Feeling organised? Booking your tickets in advance can save you a lot of money.

+
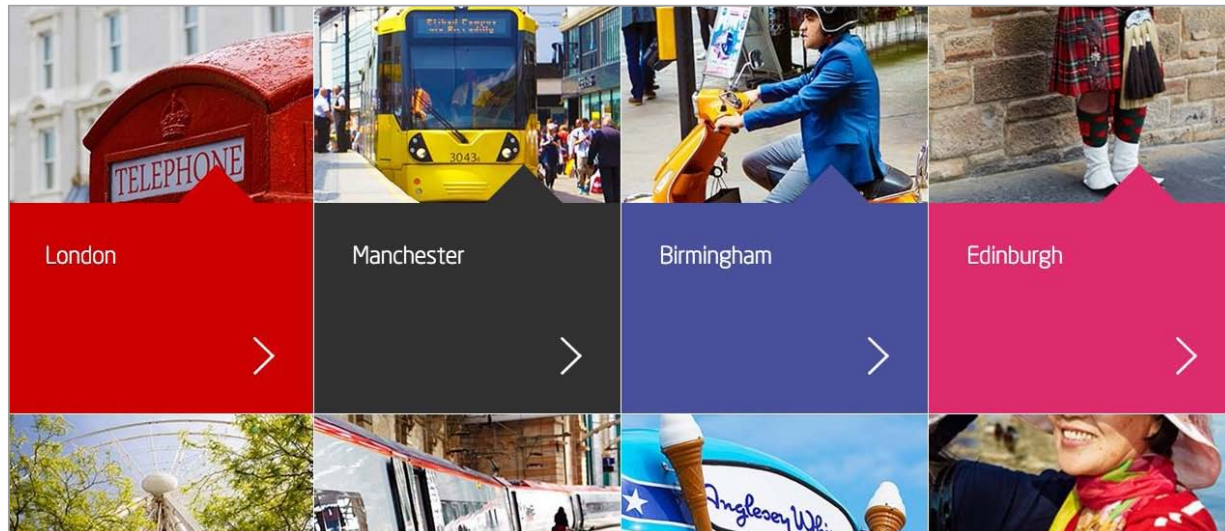
Anytime

Easy come, easy go.

Destinations

Start your next adventure right here

Select your destination

Tickets, attractions and 2FOR1 offers

London

Manchester

Birmingham

Edinburgh

D

Tip: When cropping images, key elements should be in the centre. Read our brand book for more advice on photography

3.3.2. Partner logos

We always partnering up with businesses along our route to give their staff or customers special discounts for travelling with us. Naturally, we'll include our partners logo on our site and we've got some guidelines on how we do this...

Give their logo a chance to shine

Usually we'll include our partners logo as a module image in a two column module. Most logos look best on a white background, but to lift the module from the website background we use a container image with a very slight gradient as shown.

Logo with copy

Occasionally if we need to reference a partner logo we'll include it at the bottom of a copy module as shown here.

Logo in the header

If the logo doesn't need to show prominently at all screen sizes, it can be included in the header image.

⚠ *Please note that this will only be visible on larger screens.*
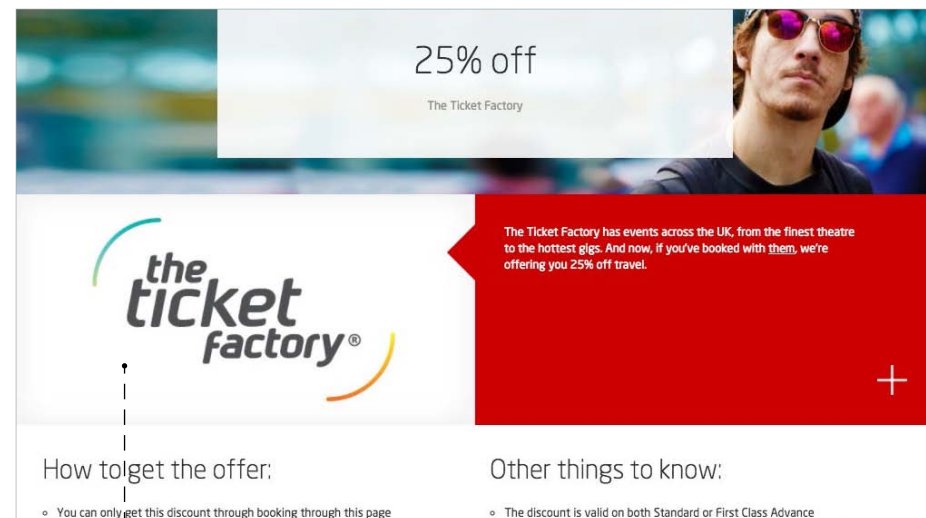
Most logos are placed on a white background with a slight gradient at the edges
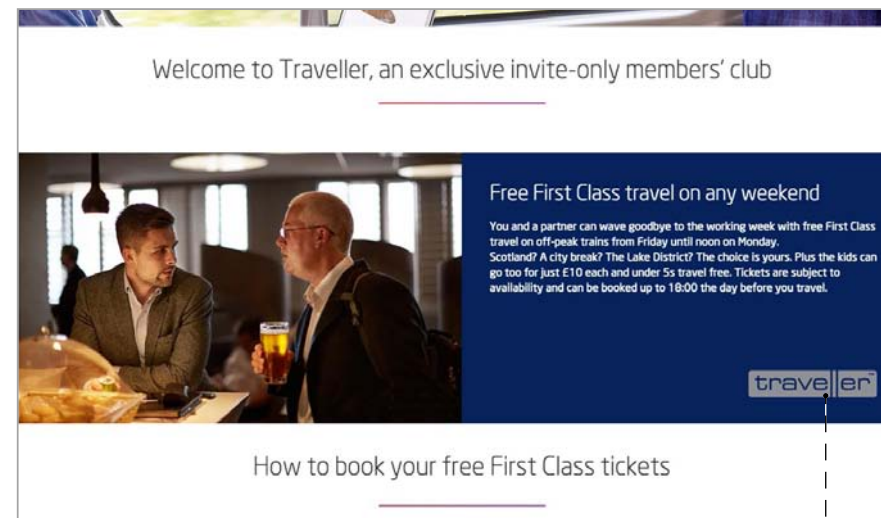
Small logo placed bottom right of the copy area.
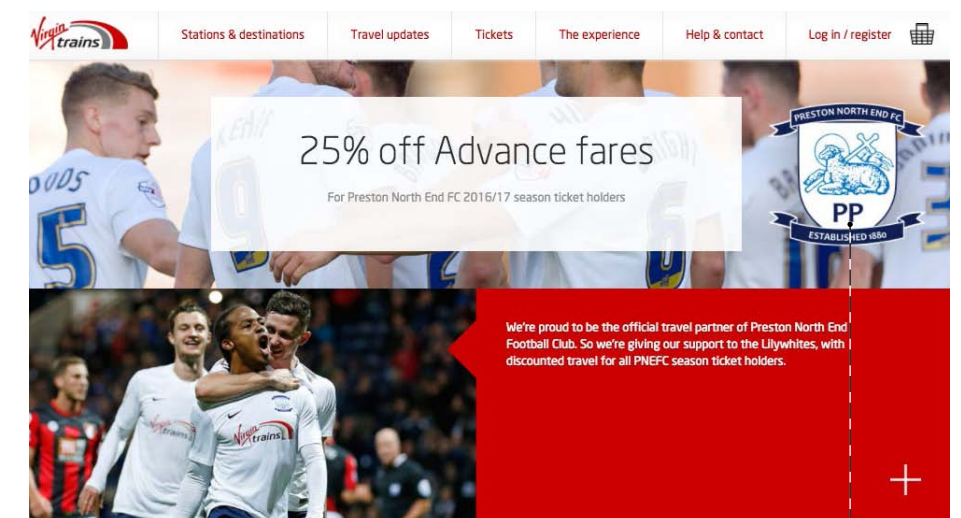
Logo as part of header image, placed either on the left or the right of the copy window

3.3.3. Other imagery

Occasionally a photo just won't do the job, especially if the topic is related to a specific campaign (think seat sale or above the line ad campaign). In these cases it makes sense to adapt an image from the campaign style. Easy.
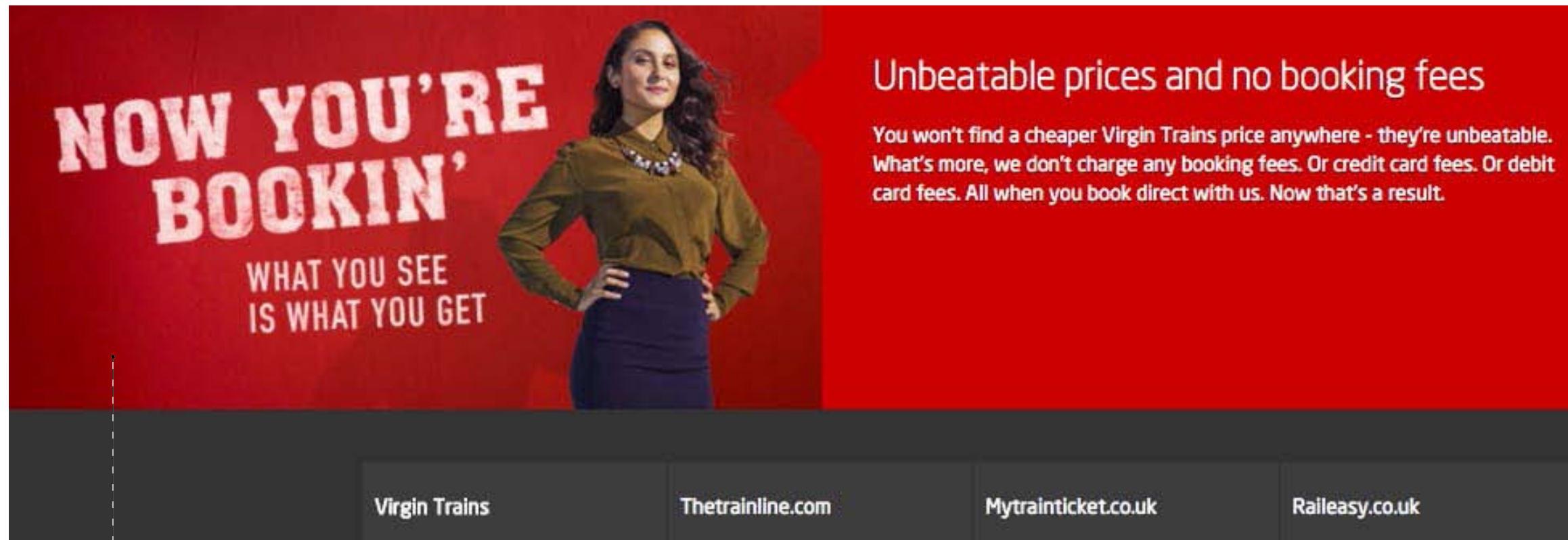
Campaign image adapted to website image spec

Nothing beats the power of a **moving image**.

Everyone loves a story. Video is the perfect medium to tell one and engage your audience.

3.4. Video styles

Whether it be a 'how to' guide or testimonial from a happy customer, we have different styles to suit your message:

'How to' guides

These have been specially created in a flat graphic style with a limited colour palate. With our signature humourous wink we've brought dry topics to life using the power of animation.

Supplier stories

We like to show off our locally sourced produce that we serve onboard our trains. A straight forward documentary style format is perfect for this.

Promotions

If we're promoting something specific, we'll often go for an eclectic mish mash of video with bold graphic overlays, along with a mixture of music and spoken word.

Travelling with a bike on Virgin Trains

Meet our local suppliers - Thistly Cross Cider

Discover great family breaks in the UK - #ParentingLikeaBoss with Virgin Trains

These styles are by no means mutually exclusive. If you're involved in creating some video content for the site please give the brand team a shout and we'll help you hit the right mark with your video.

If it's fun to **write**, it'll be fun to **read**.

We've got a whole guide to writing and tone of voice, so make sure you read before you start typing. Naturally, the same tone applies here, but for the web there's the small matter of search engine optimisation (SEO) to consider.

3.5. Tone of voice

Use these check points to get that oh-so important tone spot on and to get customers where they want to be on site. Remember, we're a Virgin company, so we're expected to talk and sound a little different from your usual business.

Human-ness

You're a human, right?! So write like one. No buzz words or railway jargon, please. Just nice, straightforward, honest language.

Playful

We're a breath of fresh air in a notoriously stuffy industry. Familiar human quirks or words that raise a smile of recognition, always speak volumes.

Keep it positive

Always keep things friendly. And never bring out the negative. There's no need to lie, just find a positive spin, and celebrate the goodness.

Wink

Use your gloriously intelligent wit. Whip it out when you think it's right. Our sense of humour is always clever and confident - just don't overdo it.

Go bold

We're self-assured and bold. But not arrogant. Be humble and down-to-earth, within reason. Don't brag or needlessly pick on competitors.

What we're not

There's charm offensive. And there's offensive charm. We're always the former. We're never rude or crude, we don't do 'ha ha' slapstick and our humour is never forced.

3.5. Writing style

It's the web. Attention spans are short. So keep your copy concise and to the point. Here are some tips:

- Break up long paragraphs into shorter ones - this makes for easier on screen reading.
- Follow the formatting styles illustrated in the typography section (chapter 3.1) they are there to make it easier for you.
- List out key points where possible, this will make your copy more digestible.

Key words for SEO

We want our site to reach as many people as possible, so the higher we rank with search engines the better. Try and include a few related keywords in your copy (around 3 – 5% is recommended), but make sure it still reads well. More on SEO in chapter 6.

Aim for paragraphs that are much shorter than this

Use bullets or numbered lists where possible

Use modules with images to break up copy into sections

Chapter Four - Website elements

The devil is in the **detail.**

Great things come in small packages, and the smaller elements on our website are as important as any other. So keep them consistent, and get them right.

Our **logo**, ladies and gentlemen...

It's our mark. It's our heart. Treat it with respect. There are specific rules to protect and look after it which you'll find in our brand book.

Forms, buttons, and all that jazz.

Most of our pages contain a button or a link of some description. We also have a few forms across the site. We want people to tap, click, and go forth to book a ticket. Here's how we make them stand out...

4.2. QTT UI elements

Primarily we're here to sell train tickets, so we have clear styles for our booking form, which are consistent across the site.

Checkboxes

Unselected   ☐ Add railcards

Selected   ✔ Add railcards

Radio buttons

Unselected   ◯ Text here

Selected   ● Text here

Buttons and links

Unselected   **Go >**

Hoverstate   **Go >**

Inactive and hoverstate links   **More options**

Module links (eg Master text)

Inactive   **One link only >**

Hoverstate   **One link only >**

Journey fields

Book your journey fields

Where from? ⇄ Where to? | 📅 Today ⌄ | Depart ⬤ Arrive | 🕐 17 ⌄ : 15 ⌄

Passenger details fields

👤 1 Adult ⌄ | 👤 0 Children ⌄ | Children are 5-15. Under 5s travel free.

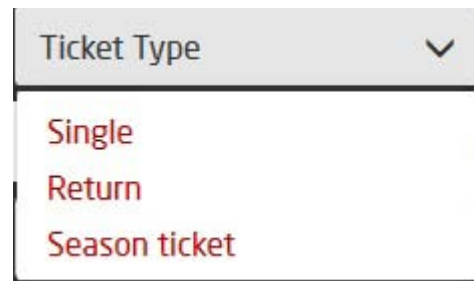✔ Add railcards | What type of railcard? ⌄ | How many? ⌄ | ✖ Remove card

4.2. Form UI elements

When customers need to send us information we use forms. Styles are similar to the QTT form but may include other elements.
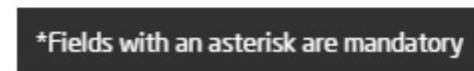
Dropdowns and fields

Dropdowns

Ticket Type	⌄
Single	
Return	
Season ticket	

Mandatory fields

Email *	Contact number *

Field comments

*Fields with an asterisk are mandatory

Inactive and hoverstate links

Or type your address manually ⌄
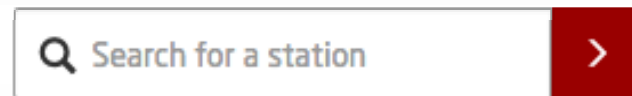
Search box buttons

Inactive

🔍 Search for a station | >

Hoverstate

🔍 Search for a station | >

Primary call to action

Inactive

Submit >

Hoverstate

Submit >
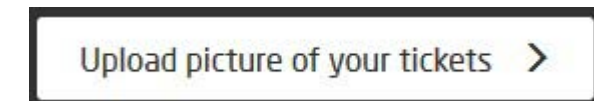
Secondary call to action

Inactive

Upload picture of your tickets >

Hoverstate

Upload picture of your tickets >

4.3. Errors and alerts

Mistakes happen. We help you fix them. Whether you've put in the wrong URL, there's a problem with our trains or a form field that's not filled in, we'll alert you to it in a particular way. Here's how...

404 error page
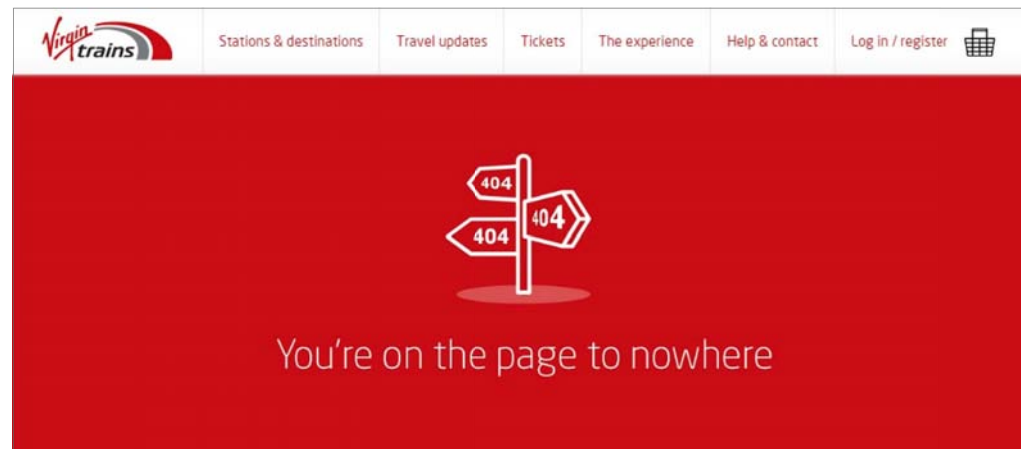
Alert: service issue
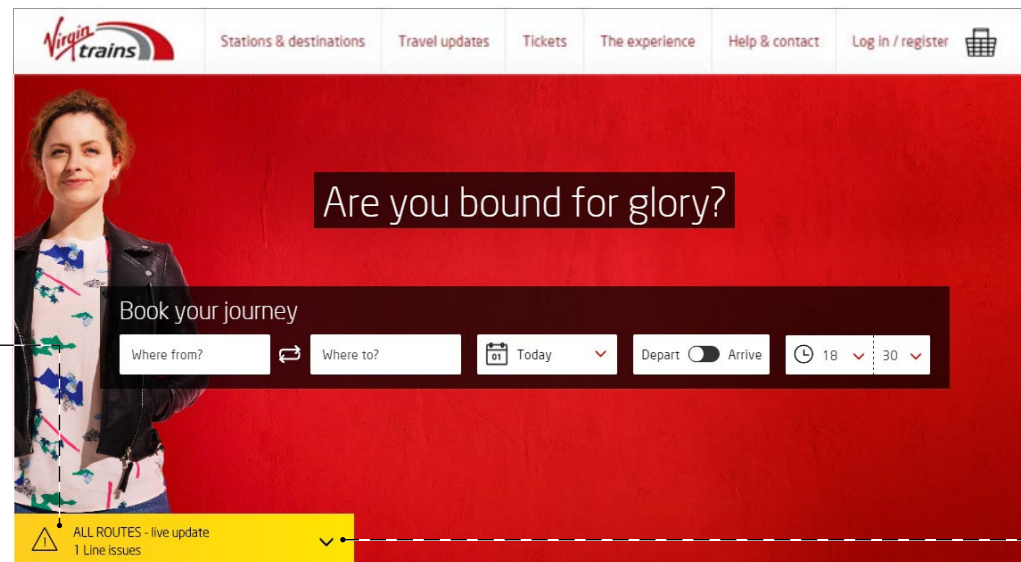
Service alert shows green (ok) or yellow (issues)

Expandable area to show details of issues

Form error messages
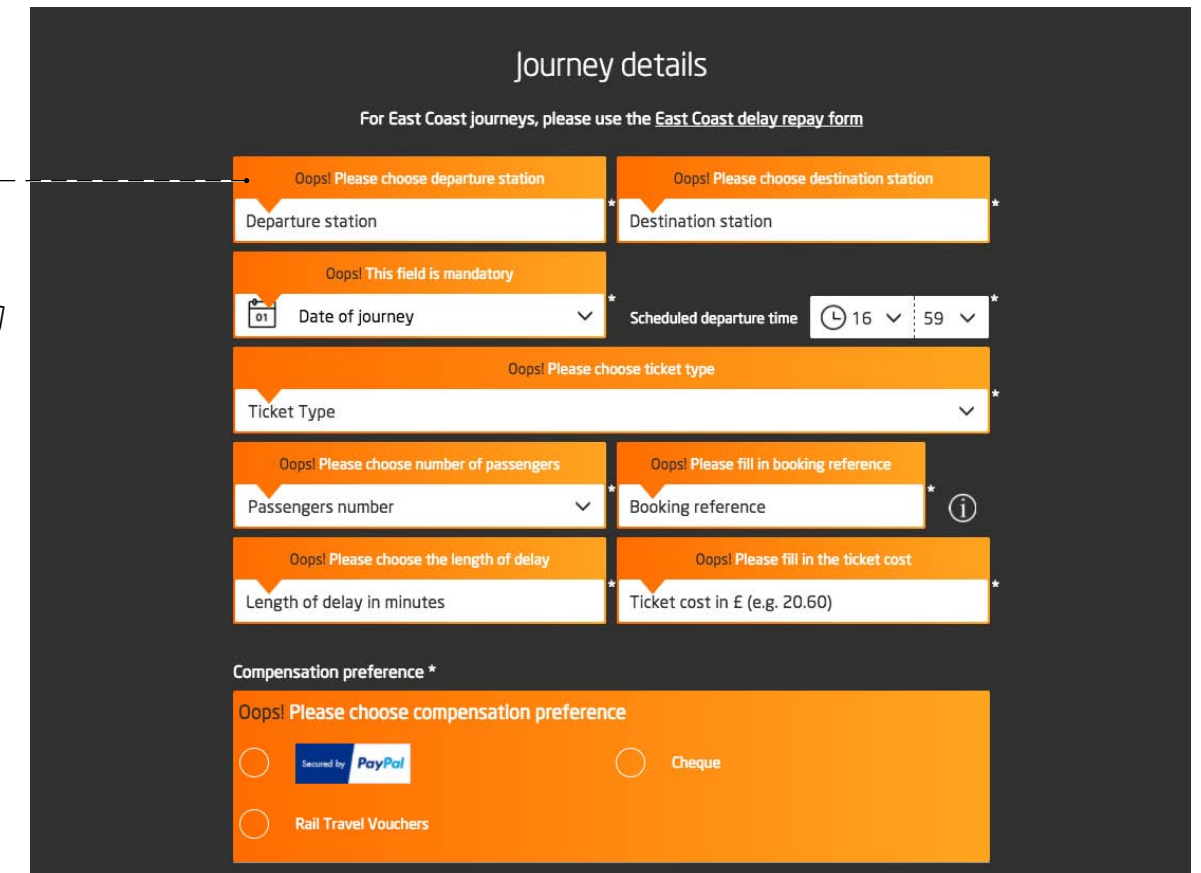
Error message pops up in orange next to the field that needs correcting

For more serious service issues a larger yellow box appears above the navigation area across the site.

Be **iconic**.

We use a lot of icons across our site as they're a clear, simple way of signposting and illustrating a topic. We have a whole bunch designed especially for us (you can find these in our brand book) so any new icons should follow the same style.

4.4. Icons

Our icons are part of our visual language. While they need to be functional and easy to understand, we can still add in a bit of that Virgin wink to make them unique.

We have a master document containing all the icons designed specifically for us. New icons should follow the same style. Please contact the brand team if you need help creating a new icon.

Our icons

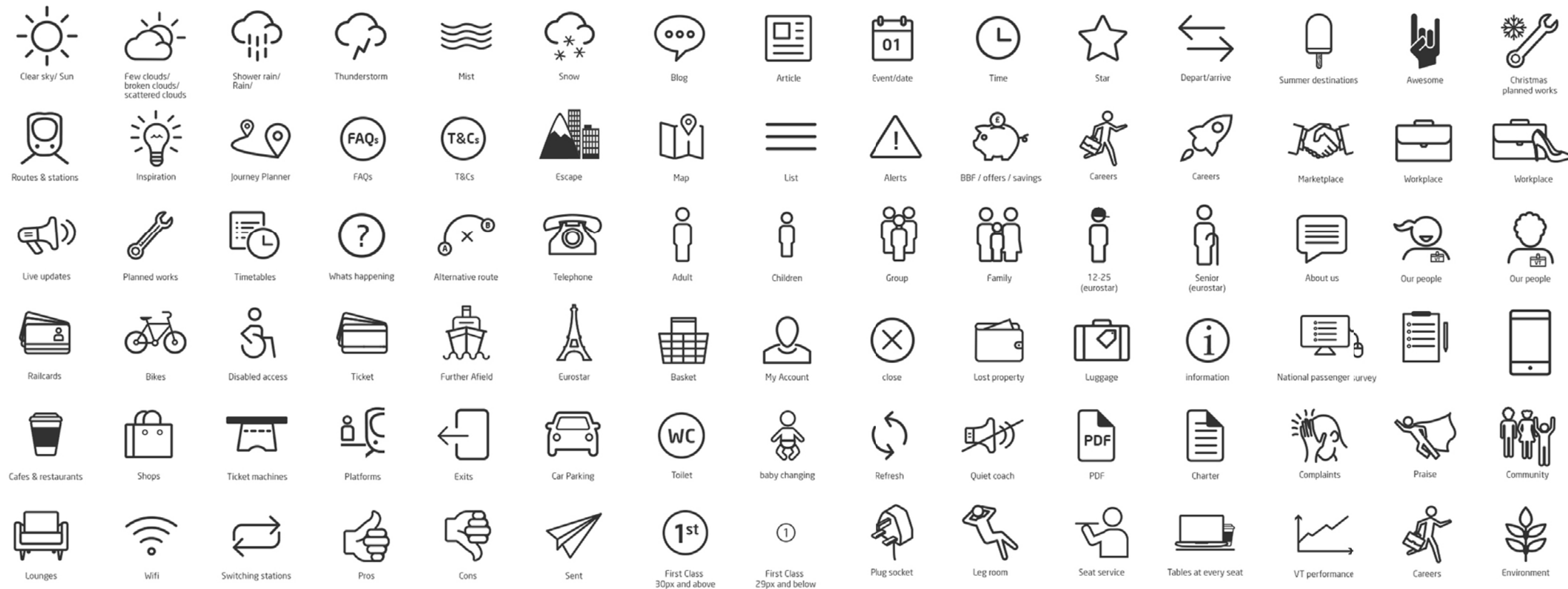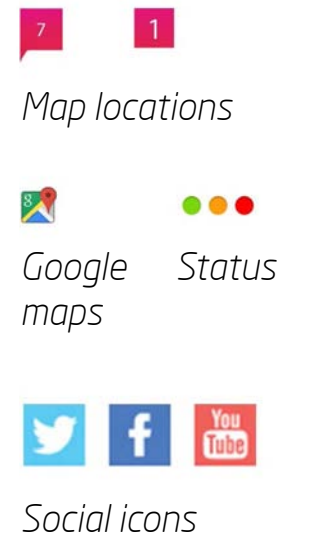|														
Clear sky/ Sun	Few clouds/ broken clouds/ scattered clouds	Shower rain/ Rain/	Thunderstorm	Mist	Snow	Blog	Article	Event/date	Time	Star	Depart/arrive	Summer destinations	Awesome	Christmas planned works
Routes & stations	Inspiration	Journey Planner	FAQs	T&Cs	Escape	Map	List	Alerts	BBF / offers / savings	Careers	Careers	Marketplace	Workplace	Workplace
Live updates	Planned works	Timetables	Whats happening	Alternative route	Telephone	Adult	Children	Group	Family	12-25 (eurostar)	Senior (eurostar)	About us	Our people	Our people
Railcards	Bikes	Disabled access	Ticket	Further Afield	Eurostar	Basket	My Account	close	Lost property	Luggage	information	National passenger survey		
Cafes & restaurants	Shops	Ticket machines	Platforms	Exits	Car Parking	Toilet	baby changing	Refresh	Quiet coach	PDF	Charter	Complaints	Praise	Community
Lounges	Wifi	Switching stations	Pros	Cons	Sent	First Class 30px and above	First Class 29px and below	Plug socket	Leg room	Seat service	Tables at every seat	VT performance	Careers	Environment

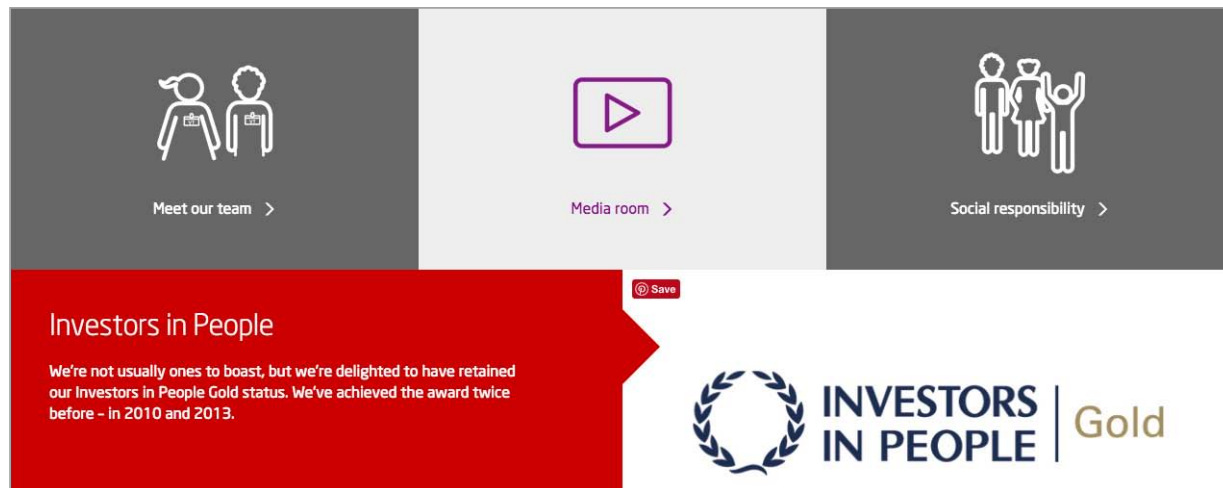## Extras

Map locations
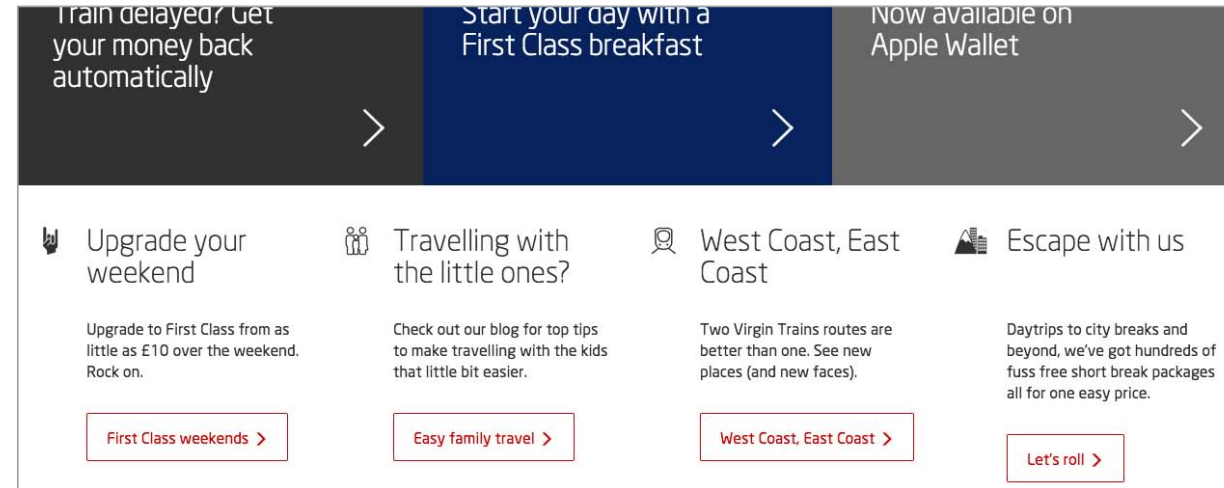
Google maps   Status

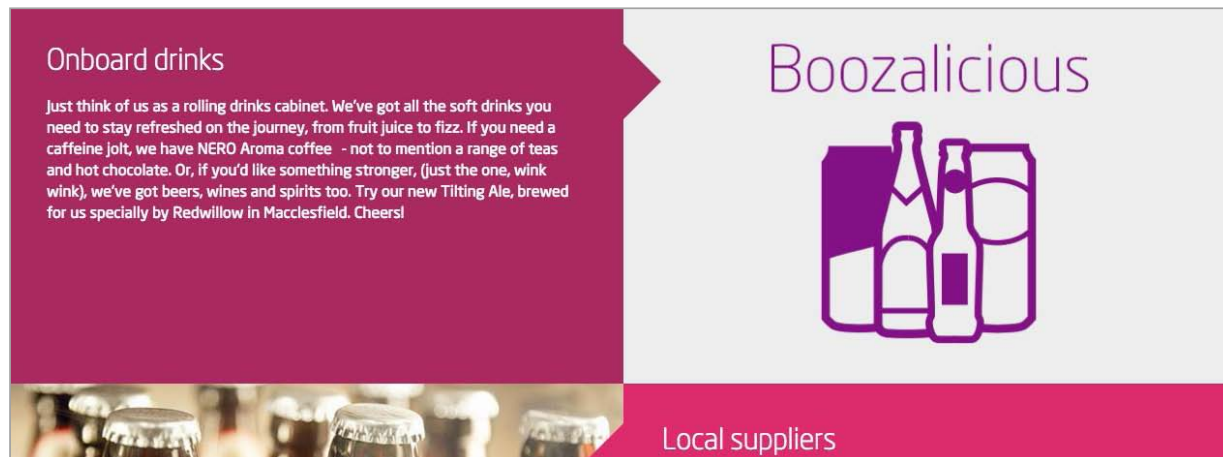Social icons

4.4. Icons in situ

We use icons in a variety of different ways across the site. They can either be small next to a subheader and block of copy or much larger in an extra small box module with an explanatory line of copy underneath.
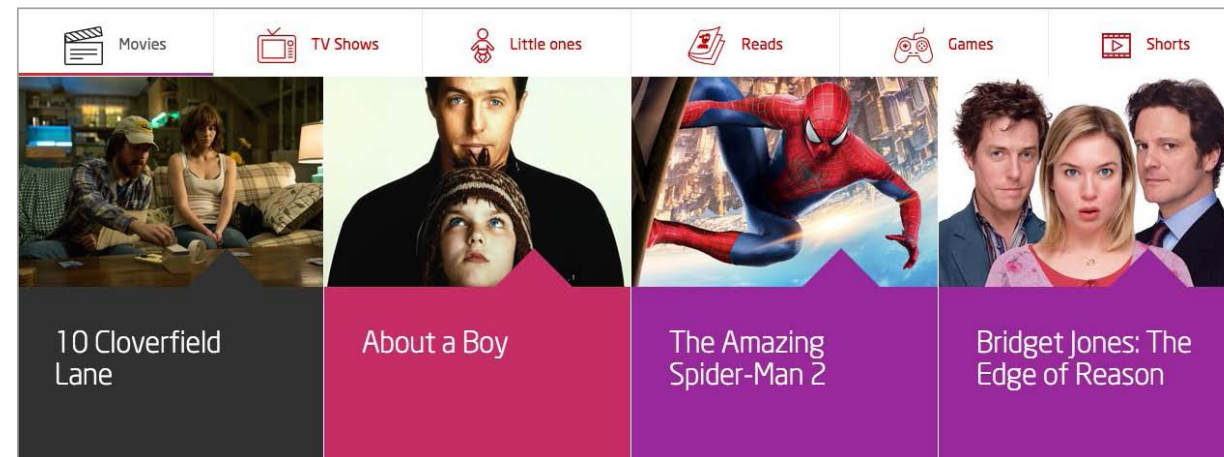

Extra small boxes with large icons

Four columns with small icons next to H3 titles

Module image with oversized icon composition

BEAM contents navigation with small icons

Chapter Five - Accessibility

A website fit for **all**.

We want our website to reach a wider audience as possible. This means that it
needs to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidlines (WCAG) set by the
Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

5.1. Accessibility

Our current aim is to bring the marketing pages of the website to 'A' accessibility rating, which is currently the lowest level of accessibility from WCAG 2.0. More on accessibility can be found here: w3c.org/TR/WCAG20.

Make sure your design and content:

1. Uses high contrasting adjacent colours
2. Has correct code structure and tag levels
3. Is screen reader friendly
4. Has labelled iframes if used
5. Has correctly labelled tabular data
6. Has a tab index can be used to move through the site
7. Enables keyboard short cuts to be used
8. Has labelled form fields with the correct attributes
9. Has captioned images and videos if used
10. Has descriptive links
11. Has accessible CAPTCHA fields if used

For a handy and more comprehensive checklist on Level A rating visit wuhcag.com/wcag-checklist.

Chapter Six - Search engine optimisation (SEO)

Up that **ranking** and get more site visitors.

We want to make sure virgintrains.com ranks highly in search engine results pages (SERPs) – it's key to driving more traffic to virgintrains.com and improving user experience. Here's how we do it...

6.1. SEO best practice

It may seem like a dark art, but SEO is a combination of many factors which can be split into roughly three areas:

Onsite

Ensure your website content is fresh, up-to-date and conforms to SEO best practices – these include:

- Having a mobile or responsive website and making sure that relevant content is also available for mobile
- Selecting and using relevant keywords in your html copy to a sensible degree that still makes the content easy to read and relevant.
- Featuring a primary keyword in the H1 tag
- Ideally place body copy towards the top of the page so that search engines don't have to crawl through too much code to get to this content

Offsite

The more external links in to virgintrains.com the better. Make sure they are:

- From reputable sources
- Relevant to our business

Technical

The bits of the site that the user can't see unless they look at the source code. Make sure that:

- Site information architecture is good and conistent
- URL structure is not too long, features a keyword and is consistent
- Pages load quickly – make sure that all page assets are optimized effectively (more about optimising images in chapter 3)
- Page titles are keyword friendly and aren't too long
- Meta Descriptions are unique, feature Keywords and aren't too long
- Website is correctly configured and uses 404 errors and 301 redirects
- Images have ALT and Title tags
- Duplicate content is prevented with Google tags

Chapter Seven - The last stop

That's all folks!

We've now come to the end of our journey and you can go forth and create some stunning web pages. Any questions, please don't hestitate to contact us at...

7.1. Contact us

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