
WEB DESIGN TRENDS: PERSONALIZATION, ILLUSTRATION AND EXPLAINER VIDEOS ROCK!



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Are you struck by the homogeneity of today's long, scrolling web pages with full-bleed stock images and bold headlines? While this mobile-driven trend is here to stay, there is good news for marketers looking for the next new thing. There's a growing trend of using illustration and hand drawn imagery in addition to, and in some cases, instead of stock photography.

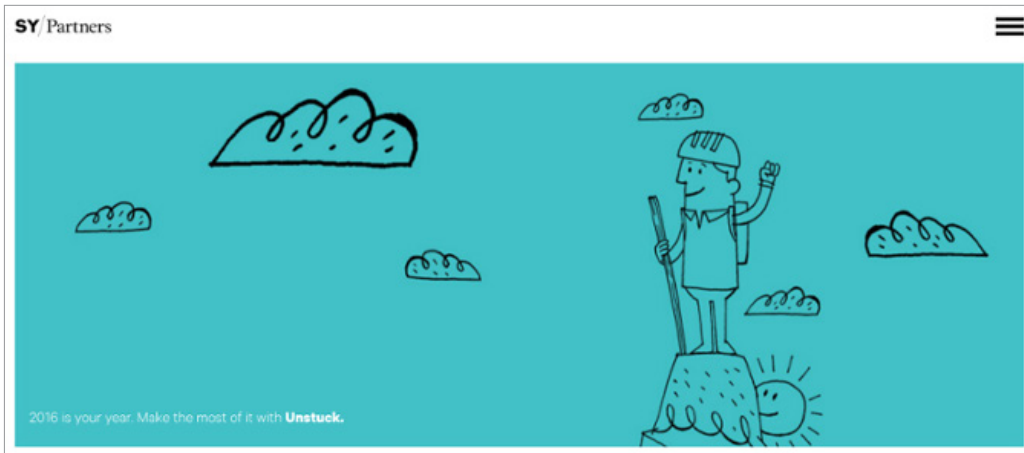
Why is illustration poised for a comeback? Because the web is in the age of **Personalization**. Consumer brands have been utilizing personalization for a long time. The latest and greatest being Coca-Cola, who last year introduced the familiar silver and red cans and bottles emblazoned with people's names and now is introducing **millions of custom, hand-painted bottle designs**; for several months, no two bottles will look the same. Coca-Cola hired artists to create a small number of unique bottle designs and then utilized a computer algorithm to create virtually unlimited variations of these designs.



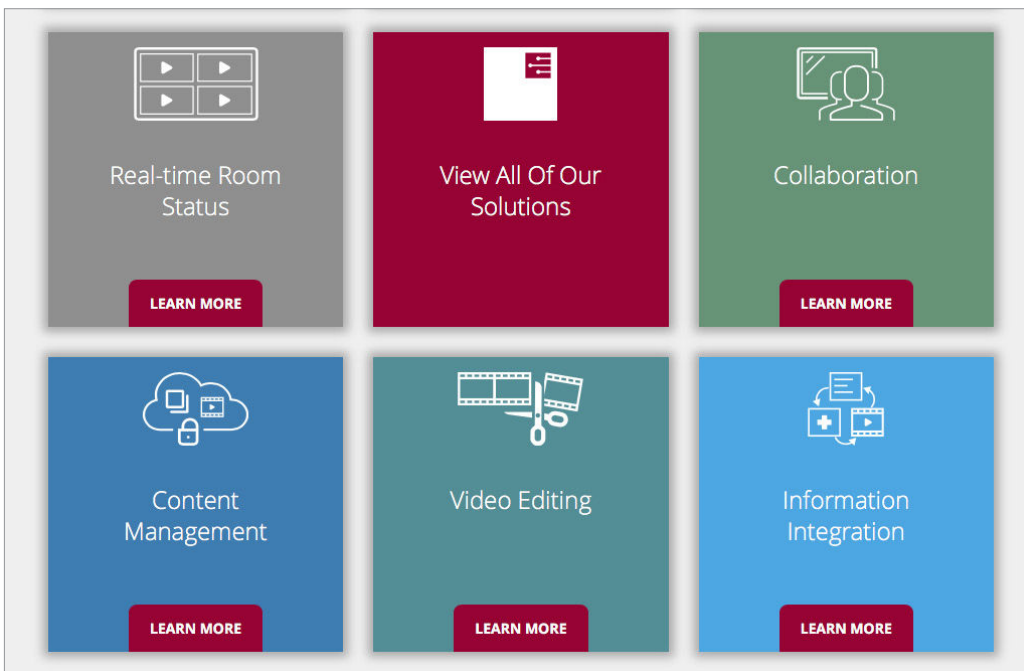
Personalized design is not relegated to the consumer world. B2B web visitors today have also reached the point where they expect information tailored to their needs, presented visually in a non-generic way that makes them feel like the brand understands them — not only on an analytical level, but in a more intuitive, emotional way.

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Below are some examples of how illustration is being used to personalize user experience.



SY Partners, a management consulting firm uses a personalized style of illustration — depicting a happy person that has reached the top of the mountain — to represent a product for helping entrepreneurs get “unstuck” in their quests to innovate their businesses to a successful outcome. The illustration essentially says, “you can do this too!” Hard to imagine a stock photo telling that story in a fresh way.



For our client, **Image Stream Medical**, a medical technology company, we created illustrations representing their various solutions. Some of these are shown above. This visual language can be seen throughout the website and is easily repurposed in collateral, PowerPoints and other marketing communications.



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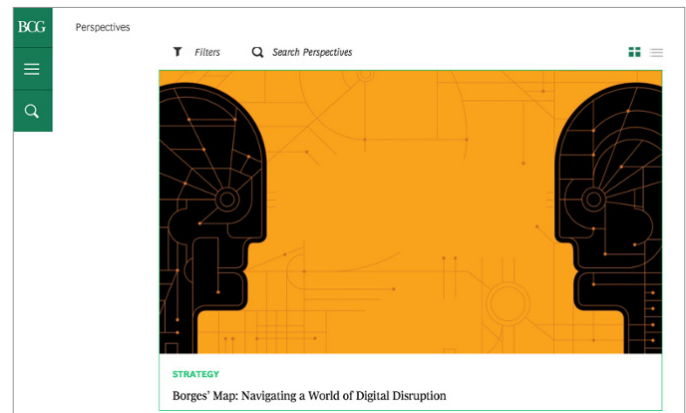
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BCG, a prominent consulting firm, presents “Perspectives,” the thought leadership section of their website, in a mosaic of illustrated “tiles” that convey a feeling about the content of the article each represents on this key landing page. The overall impression is that the content in “Perspectives” has been carefully curated.

Another form of illustration poised to explode over the next year is the “Explainer Video.”

While the use of video on the web is growing at a steady clip, videos are not very flexible and are expensive and often inconvenient to shoot and edit at an appropriate quality level, and forget about adding content or making a change after the video has been shot.

Enter Explainer Videos, animated stories that “explain” a product, company, service or idea, using a voiceover to read a script to which motion graphics and illustrations, in whatever style is appropriate, are choreographed to bring the verbal story to life. Explainer Videos don’t require expensive cameras and lighting equipment, multiple locations, permits, talent that may be unavailable the day of the shoot and so forth. The talent needed is for storytelling, using pictures. At RainCastle we are developing a number of Explainer Videos, which we will feature in an upcoming post. Our clients are loving them and the process of creating them is clear, concise and collaborative. Above is a screen grab from an Explainer Video. Visit this link to see some live examples.



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