An Evaluation of Law Firm Websites:
A Proposal for their Effects on Obtaining Clients

Prepared for:
Elwood & Elwood, P.C

Prepared by:
Reveley Web Design, Incorporated

April 29, 2019

Elwood & Elwood, P.C.
201 High Street
Farmville, VA 23909

January 15, 2019

Emily Jones
Principal Consultant
Reveley Web Design, Incorporated
315 West 3rd Street
Farmville, VA 23901

Dear Ms. Jones:

Subject: Evaluation of law firm websites

In the last ten years, there has been a strong correlation between the online presence of law firms and the number of clients they acquire per year. Due to increased use of the Internet, clients are able to search law firms across broader areas instead of relying on only the ones in their communities. We at Elwood & Elwood, P.C. wish to increase the quality of our website to attract a larger number of clients to our firm, as our website has not been updated in the last four years.

As we discussed on December 30, 2018, we would like to commission your web design team to evaluate three existing attractive law firm websites from the surrounding area. These websites will be used in the reconstruction of our current website to inspire our new design. We would like you to develop evaluation criteria that take various demographics into account, as we provide law consultation for various areas of practice.

We would like to have our website updated and ready for clients' viewing by May 18, 2019. To meet this deadline, we must receive your report by April 29.

We look forward to receiving your report. If you require any further information, please feel free to contact James Brown at (434) 123-4567, ext. 890.

Yours Sincerely,

David Jenkins

David Jenkins
Attorney at Law

Reveley Web Design, Incorporated
315 West 3rd Street
Farmville, VA 23901

April 29, 2019

David Jenkins
Attorney at Law
Elwood & Elwood, P.C.
201 High Street
Farmville, VA 23909

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

Subject: Law firm website evaluation completed

This report is evaluating law firm websites to use as models for the reconstruction of your own website that you requested in your letter of January 15, 2019.

We have recommended three websites from the surrounding area that provide relevant information in an organized and concise manner:

- **Elder & Watkins, P.C.**
- **The Law Office of Khalil W. Latiff**
- **Allen Allen Allen & Allen**

We are confident that these sites represent useful visual and informational tactics to attract potential clients.

We have enjoyed working on this report. We would like to thank James Brown for assisting us in developing a set of evaluation criteria relevant to the desired design of your website. If you have any questions or comments about the report, we will be happy to meet with you. I can be reached by phone at (434) 987-6543, ext. 3210.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Jones

Emily Jones
Principal Consultant

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Executive Summary

The attraction of clients to law firms with strong online presences has led Elwood & Elwood, P.C. to the decision to upgrade their web presence. Their website has not been updated in the last four years, and they are not drawing in their desired number of clients.

With the growing number of law offices in the surrounding area, it is important for firms to have a strong online presence to encourage potential clients to more seriously consider which company they will choose to represent them. Elwood & Elwood, P.C. has asked Reveley Web Design, Incorporated to recommend three legal firm websites that provide commendable demonstrations of content.

Reveley Web Design, Incorporated's commission was to retrieve websites with alluring and distinct information that potential clients could easily access and navigate. Overall aesthetic design, ease of navigation, and detail of services offered were all evaluated as a part of the analysis with the end goal of increasing the number of clients receiving legal consultation at this firm.

Each website was analyzed and rated using the following criteria:

- **Overall Aesthetic Design**: appealing colors, professional presentation, clean layout
- **Ease of Navigation**: obvious menus, minimal external linkages, complete search directory
- **Detail of Services Offered**: attorney contact information, types of counseling offered, client reviews or testimonies

The following three law firm websites were chosen from the surrounding area on which to base our analysis:

- Elder & Watkins, P.C.
- The Law Office of Khalil W. Latiff, and
- Allen Allen Allen & Allen

The focus of this report is to provide Elwood & Elwood, P.C. with innovative and creative examples to incorporate within their new website. We at Reveley Web Design, Incorporated are extremely confident that our analysis and recommendations will not only enhance the Elwood & Elwood, P.C. website, but also significantly increase their number of potential clients.

Introduction

Elwood & Elwood P.C. Law Firm, please take heed to this analysis and our recommendations. Throughout this report we analyze design, accessibility/navigation, and the available services listed on your website. We did this by comparing and contrasting your company website to three successful law firms. As listed in our letter of transmittal, the following websites are:

- Elder & Watkins Associates
- Khalil W. Latif Law Firm
- Allen, Allen, Allen, & Allen Law Firm

In doing so, we also took up an anonymous survey from Farmville Residents to gather a consensus perception of your company's website. We asked the following questions:

- Is the website easily accessible?
- Is the overall design appealing?
- Are details of services or areas of practice stated clearly?

We will include the results from the survey in the report, give you recommendations, and explain to you why your web design needs to be improved in the following areas. We will also discuss how professional web design increases customer retention and success. We did research by reading other web design peer-reviewed studies. According to Bassan Hassam:

> websites that are informative, visually appealing, easy to navigate and use seem to enhance users' involvement with the site and are less likely to instigate feelings of irritation among users (Gao & Wu, 2010). In contrast, a messy and poorly-designed website drains users' attention, requires more effort and cognition to use, and evokes negative feelings that may cause irritation among users because they are unable to navigate the website, find products, or complete a purchase task (Azeem, 2012, Chen and Wells, 1999, Gao and Wu, 2010). (2.1 Perceived Irritation)

First, we will analyze each website and describe why their websites are successful along with survey results. Second, we will provide recommendations. The recommendations are based off of research guidelines produced by the International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction and Computers in Human Behavior Journal. Third, we will summarize the results with the changes you need to obtain to your company's website.

Analysis of Elder & Watkins, P.C.

https://elderwatkins.com/

Overall Aesthetic Design

Elder and Watkins, P.C. website design consists of many great features and portrays professionalism. The home page has a video that plays behind what seems like their slogan "Representing businesses and individuals throughout Southside Virginia". The video contains photos of different business buildings throughout Southside Virginia and this appeals to logos and ethos. By having the photos of the multiple buildings throughout the Southside, it shows proof that their slogan is true, reinforcing that they are credible and supply facts.

The home page is very well laid out. It is quite simple, with a lovely contrast in colors. The white background and black text decreases strain on the eyes. The photos are clear images and also are easy on the eye when contrasting with the white background. When the website is listing criteria or areas of expertise, they use an orange contrast so that it may stand out more, making the list easier to see.

The home pages larger lettering and simple, broken up sections allows for the viewer to easily navigate this website. "Our Philosophy", "Our Firm", and "Areas of Practice" are all in bold so that the viewer may see these sections easier and to provide a clear statement of what is in the section below the title. There is a dropdown menu that contains links to the home page, areas of practice, a list of Attorneys, their philosophy, news about their practice, a list of offices, and contact information.

Ease of Navigation

Elder and Watkins website is easy to navigate due to the simplicity of the details on the website. There are easily configured sections that describe what information can be found there. Also, the Elder and Watkins logo links back to the home page when clicked on from anywhere in the web page.

The home page has most of the information a viewer would need. However, when using the dropdown menu, "Attorneys", "Philosophy", "News", "Offices", and "Contact", they take you to a different page with detailed and refined information pertaining to each of those topics. When arriving to each page of each topic, the pages are very simple and easy to understand. The information is laid out in a way that is effortless to find.
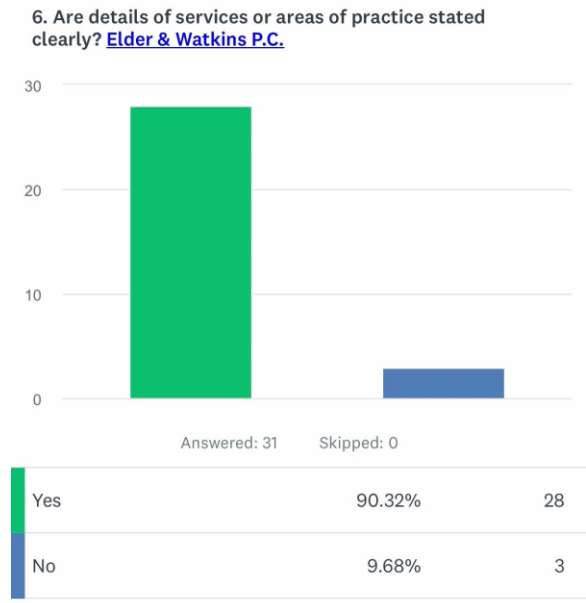
Detail of Services Offered

The home page holds the areas of practice for this firm and they are well laid out so that viewers can easily see their area of expertise. They provide a photo that pertains to the practice, the title of the practice, and bullet points underneath explaining what that area does. They deal with real estate, criminal defense, business law and formation, estate planning, personal injury, and family law. While this area of the website is straightforward in providing the viewer with information about the areas of practice, there could be links embedded in each title that takes the viewer to a page within the website that goes more into detail about that specific area. Instead there is only about four bullet points describing each one. While that is good to have on the home page to

provide a brief overview, there should be more information about each one on various pages within the site.

The overall design and details of the website give customers a simple framework to follow. The most important information being in larger or bolded letters make navigation easy as well. This design is professional and easy on the eyes. The plethora of photos and video on the home page make this website user friendly and inviting to all viewers. The website has a great design, is easy to navigate and has simple yet defined information about areas of practice. Below are the survey results:

4. Is the overall design appealing? Elder & Watkins P.C.

	Answered: 31	Skipped: 0	
Yes		70.97%	22
No		29.03%	9

5. Is the website easily accessible? Elder & Watkins P.C.

	Answered: 31	Skipped: 0	
Yes		90.32%	28
No		9.68%	3

6. Are details of services or areas of practice stated clearly? Elder & Watkins P.C.

	Answered: 31	Skipped: 0	
Yes		90.32%	28
No		9.68%	3

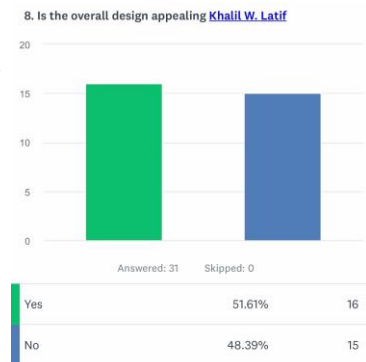# Analysis of The Law Office of Khalil W. Latif
http://www.kwlatiflaw.com/

Overall Aesthetic Design

The overall design for website for The Law Office of Khalil W. Latif comes across as professional without being overbearing. The pages on the website have dark blue backgrounds with white font. This color scheme is fitting because it complements content that is skimmed. Clients who are looking for legal representation are more likely to skim the website's content, and light writing presented on a dark background makes information stand out without straining the eyes while skimmed.

The rotating photos on the homepage reflect symbols relevant to law and justice, such as a gavel and a courtroom. This is a clever way to have eye-catching images without running the risk of the photos becoming outdated. There is a link on the page for a video detailing the experience of the attorney, which would be a nice personal touch if the link actually worked.

The words are laid out in a blocked format. Each subject is in an invisible rectangular textbox that has a subtitle in bold font, with the content un-bolded underneath. This way of blocking out the sections is an easy way to separate the information for the eyes without requiring the viewer to scroll down a long webpage.

According to our survey, only about half of the participants agreed that the overall aesthetic design of this website was appealing. This website was analyzed in the same survey as the other two websites, so it is possible that participants were comparing the aesthetic design of this website to that of Elder & Watkins, P.C. or Allen, Allen, Allen, and Allen.

8. Is the overall design appealing Khalil W. Latif

	Answered: 31	Skipped: 0
Yes	51.61%	16
No	48.39%	15

Ease of Navigation

The website for The Law Office of Khalil W. Latif is very easily navigated. There is only one main menu on the screen, with four tabs listed in a grey bar at the top of the page. The first tab – the home tab – and the final tab – the contact tab – include the company's contact information

9. Is the website easily accessible? Khalil W. Latif

	Answered: 31	Skipped: 0
Yes	74.19%	23
No	25.81%	8

such as address, email address, two phone numbers, a fax number, and business hours. The company's phone number is always included in the header, so the viewer may access it from any location on the website. There is also a "share" section at the bottom of each page, so clients may share this website on their personal social media outlets, making them additional sources of advertisement. According to the survey, three-quarters of responders indicated that this website is easily navigable.
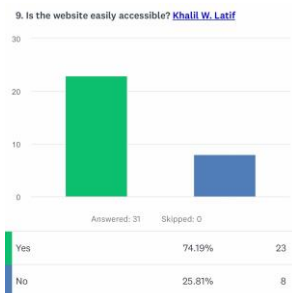
The second tab, titled "Criminal Law," includes information about the services offered by this law firm. There is no outlinking included in this page. This is important information for the clients to access, so the fact that a page is dedicated to this information is a major upside to this website.

The third tab is titled "About Us," and gives a very brief background of Attorney Khalil Latif. It is very important for clients to be able to access background knowledge on the attorney they will be hiring, as well as any certification he or she has obtained. The downfall of this website is, though, is that Attorney Latif's description is only three sentences long, and is very unspecific.

The final "Contact Us" tab includes an online form where clients can request further information by filling out their name, email address, phone number, comments, and state of residence. The form is submitted through the site, which makes reaching out more accessible and convenient than copying down the information to contact at a later time.

Detail of Services Offered

With a variety of areas of legal practice that attorneys can specialize in, it is important for clients to be able to easily locate the services offered through the specific firm. The Law Office of Khalil W. Latif's website logo indicates that Khalil Latif is a defense attorney. This firm's website includes a tab for a page that lists services offered in a bulleted list, and this page outlines examples of charges that he defends.

A subtitle on this page advertises "Aggressive legal representation for all felonies and misdemeanors." The use of the word "aggressive" draws in clients who may feel desperate to receive representation. The website never goes into any depth about how the defense provided is aggressive, and there are no client testimonials to back up this claim.

On the "About Us" tab, there is a section describing how the firm offers private investigation services. This tab may not be the most logical location for this information, but it is still readily available. The description for these services also promises strict confidentiality, which is something all clients deserve.

10. Are details of services or areas of practice stated clearly? Khalil W. Latif

The survey indicated that about 60% of those surveyed found the detail of services offered on this website to be sufficient.

Answered: 31	Skipped: 0	
Yes	61.29%	19
No	38.71%	12
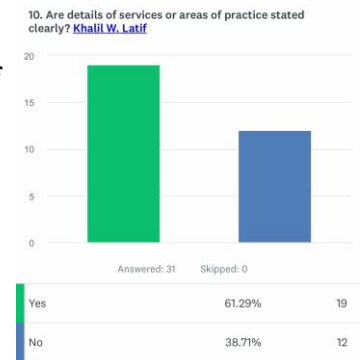
Analysis of Allen Allen Allen & Allen

https://www.allenandallen.com/

Allen, Allen, Allen, & Allen Law Group's website design, consists of many textures. The home page features a rhetorical video playing behind the company's title. The video includes rhetorical skills that appeal pathos and ethos. The video features a family hiking, and the intent is to emphasize the protection of their law firm under their Personal Injury Lawyers.

The founding date of the establishment and the phone number are both visible above the video as well. Below the video are three links titled, "I need an an attorney, I am a existing client, and I am an attorney". The links are red and they are in bold for clients or potential partners to see. Below the links, there are two boxes below that explains the company's mission statement and community mission. The first box on the left explains their community engagement and the second box to the right is the mission statement.

Underneath the two statements, there are the areas of legal practice bolded along with photographs. The photographs are appealing design elements that help partners and clients associate the picture with the area of practice. Although Allen, Allen, Allen & Allen provides 17 areas of injury law practices, the website design does not list all of them on the home page. A link is provided which helps with parallelism and spacing.

Then video links were placed underneath practice areas, in order to introduce each lawyer and their ideas behind the company. The videos transitioned as a slide show encouraging customer participation. Following were four links for customers to read under, "our values guide our work". This encourages customer participation and below are links of successful cases, ratings, and community outreach listed in newspapers.
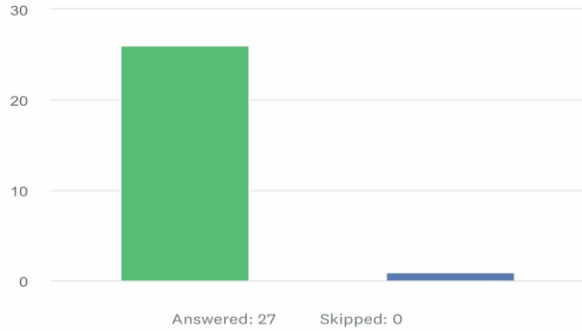
 The design element is helpful because the home page gives customers and partners a simple layout along with the most important details in bold. The design is professional and sleek. The design is also technologically sound and it has no technical difficulties with the videos. The structure is very parallel and efficient. The text itself is very visible and bolded white. Overall, this website has a great design, easily accessible, and a clear detailed list of the services they provide. Below are the survey results:

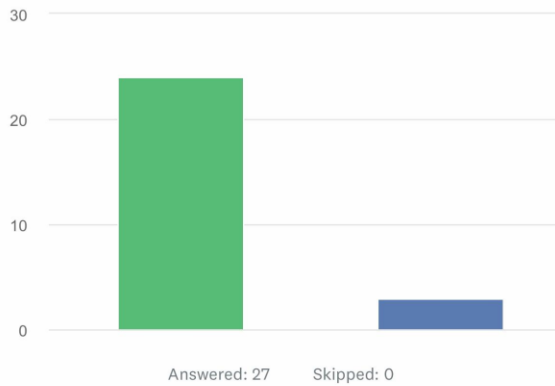**1. Is the overall design appealing?** [Allen Allen Allen & Allen](#)
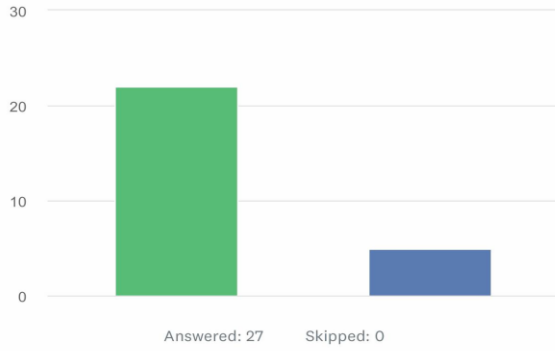
Yes	81.48%	22
No	18.52%	5

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0

2. Is the website easily accessible ? [Allen Allen Allen & Allen Law Firm](#)

Yes	96.3%	26
No	3.7%	1

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0

3. Are details of services or ares of practice stated clearly? [Allen Allen Allen & Allen Law Firm](#)

Yes	88.89%	24
No	11.11%	3

Answered: 27   Skipped: 0

Visual Design — $H_1 (-)$ → Perceived Irritation

Navigation Design — $H_2 (-)$ → Perceived Irritation

Information Design — $H_3 (-)$ → Perceived Irritation
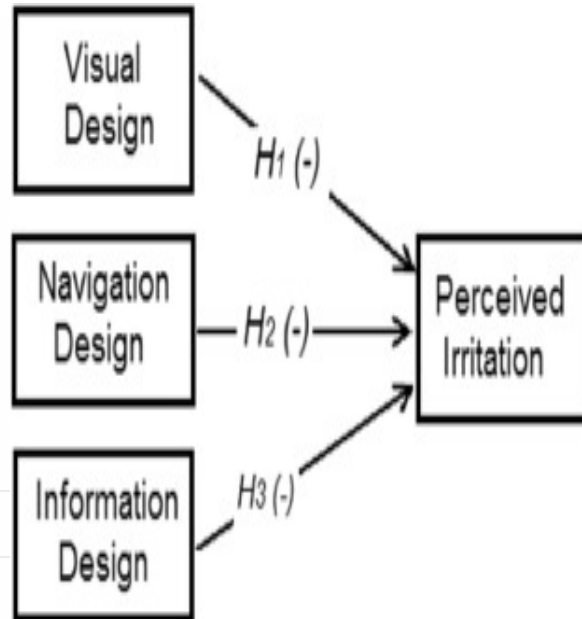
Conclusions and Recommendations for Elwood & Elwood Law Firm

Overall Design

There is a blurry picture in the background of trees which is a distraction from the home page information. The home page also scrolls up and down displaying information on top of a white page. Parallelism is key element in appropriately allowing customers to decipher information clearly. This is lacking in the since of a map being placed beside a paragraph of information beside it. The map should be placed underneath a tab of content in the menu rather than on the center of the first page. Parking should be a sub-tab underneath the "Our Locations" Tab.

A mission statement tab or statement is also missing from the home page and that should be a tab as well. Operating hours are stacked on the home page instead of under the "why us tab" or at the end of the page. Then there is a huge picture of the location in the middle of the home page as well that should be under the location tab. No lists of services are listed on the page, only the pictures of each lawyer. This makes the consumer on your website have to dig deeper into each lawyer instead of the services being presented. This causes consumer irritation and could possibly encourage the client to seek out your competitor. "It has been shown that poorly-designed websites irritate their users and impede navigation of the site, finding products, and purchase behavior" (Gao and Koufaris, 2006, Gao and Wu, 2010, Huang, 2008, Wells et al., 2011). In that case, the picture of the parking lot should not be in the center of the home page because it creates a clumped design. Information is lacking and the images are not rhetorically provoking. In other words, the images do not help for clients to assume what services you provide. As a result, customers may feel uniformed or they will have negative assumptions of your business. Consider this statement, "studies have shown that perceived irritation had negative effects on online consumers' attitude, satisfaction, word of mouth, intention to return, perceived ease of use, and purchasing behavior" (Hausman and Siekpe, 2009, Huang, 2008, Jere and Davis, 2011, Thota, 2012).

Ease of Navigation

The links providing services are located at the bottom of the page making consumers scroll to the bottom of the page. More information is needed under the "Why us" Tab. Pictures should not be main focus of navigation. The numbers one, two, and three are not links to the following paragraphs of information when they should be.

The "careers" Tab has no links to possible online applications. In 2019, partners are essential to business success. Career options seem limited due to a lack of navigation of information. Pictures are again taking up a major amount of space where a application link or job information could be located. The map of Virginia could also be on this page to lists possible listing of jobs and the map could light up encouraging consumer participation.

A tab to schedule appointments should be made in order for potential clients to schedule appointments. On the last page of locations, the list of the holiday schedule should not be present. Instead we recommend that placing the hours of each underneath each separate location tab. When you click on the name of your company, the website goes to another page that does not include the home page information or come from another tab. Organization of your website

is key so customers can re-track where they got the information from. The navigation and titles of each tab needs to be corrected.

Detailed of services offered
We recommend that each location have their own website for each location has a different lawyer and services that could be provided. As mentioned above, there is an abundance of information for each location on one website. For Farmville, VA, there should be set a link or a page on the menu displaying what the Farmville office specifically provides. For example, underneath the Services tab, there is a banking law practice area available; however, the Prince Edward County/ Farmville location is not listed. The two attorneys presently available to provide these services are located in Victoria, Virginia and Kenbridge. Services need to also be matched with community service and community involvement. There is no mission statement to help guide the purposes behind your firm's practices. Community Service also allows customers to see that you are willing to take on pro bono case work or help the community in some shape of form. You should also provide a scheduling link or a link displaying winning cases for clients to see your service potential.

We recommend that Elwood & Elwood Law Firm apply the strongest design components of all three law firm websites. Those specifically include:

- Organizing images: Making sure that the pictures are parallel and not taking up the entire page.
- Using Rhetorical appeals through images: Pathos, pictures appeal to the emotions of the audience. Logos, the pictures fit the services that you provide.
- Listing services appropriately: Have services highlighted on the home page.
- Bold Titles: Helps ease of navigation and reading of information.
- Bright and Professional Colors that do not distract the audience's eyes.
- Simplistic navigation tabs or links for ease of navigation.
- A Philosophy or Mission Statement needs to be presented on the home page or on a separate tab.
- Create a public service or case success page to persuade audiences of your involvement in the community.

Overall, we hope that you take heed to our recommendations and that you adhere to the following research.

Appendix A: References

Hasan, Bassam. "Perceived Irritation in Online Shopping: The Impact of Website Design Characteristics." *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 54, 2016, pp. 224–230., doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.056.

Appendix B: Website Analysis Survey

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CD6CGY5

4. Is the overall design appealing?Elder & Watkins P.C.

○ Yes

○ No

5. Is the website easily accessible? Elder & Watkins P.C.

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Are details of services or areas of practice stated clearly? Elder & Watkins P.C.

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Is the overall design appealing Khalil W. Latif

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Is the website easily accessible? Khalil W. Latif

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Are details of services or areas of practice stated clearly? Khalil W. Latif

☐ Yes

☐ No

Website Design and Customer Trust

1. Is the overall design appealing? Allen Allen Allen & Allen

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Is the website easily accessible ? Allen Allen Allen & Allen Law Firm

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Are details of services or ares of practice stated clearly?Allen Allen Allen & Allen Law Firm

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix C: Weekly Meeting Minutes

Reveley Web Design, Inc.

Weekly Progress Meeting

Grainger 116

Monday, April 15, 2019, 4:30 PM

AGENDA

I. **Call to Order**- 4:32 PM
   a. **Present**-Heather Brockwell, Justice Griffin, Michaila Hyne
   b. **Recording Secretary**: Heather Brockwell
II. **Approval of Agenda**: Heather moved, seconded by Justice. Passed unanimously.
III. **Previous Minutes**
   Approval of minutes of last meeting. Heather moved, seconded by Michaila. Passed
   unanimously.
   a. Items arising from Minutes (if any): None.
IV. **Heather's Report**
   Heather reported that the letters of transmittal and authorization are complete. She prompted
   the group to read them on the Google Doc.
V. **Justice's Report**
   The survey is being completed. It will be published on Friday by 11:59 PM.
   a. Justice asks group members to distribute the surveys to their peers via social media.
VI. **Michaila's Report**
   The analysis of Elder & Watkins is almost complete.
VII. **Other Items**
VIII. **Next Meeting**
   Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17th at 4 PM.
   a. We will be meeting with another group to do Usability Discussion of Formal Reports
   b. Heather will have the Executive Summary finished, and will provide printed copies of the
      current report for the members of the other group.
IX. **New Business**
   There was no new business.
X. **Adjournment**
   Justice moved that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously. Meeting
   ended at 5:15 PM.

Weekly progress meeting

Facetime meeting

Friday April 19, 2019

Agenda

I.   Call to order – 5:00pm
        A. Present – Michaila Hyne, Heather Brockwell, and Justice Griffin
        B. Recording Secretary: Michaila Hyne
II.   Approval of Agenda: Michaila moved, seconded by Heather. Passed unanimously.
III.   Previous Minutes
        Approval of minutes of last meeting. Michaila moved, seconded by Justice. Passed unanimously.
        A. Items arising from Minutes (if any): None
IV.   Designers report (All)
        We all reported what we had finished and what still needed to be complete. Recommendations and Conclusion need to be finished. Along with the Table of Contents.
        A. Table of Contents will be one of the last things finished.
        B. Recommendations and conclusion also will be finished within the week.
V.   Programmers report (Justice)
        She gave us the results of the surveys and sent of screenshots of the results so that we could add them to our analysis on our websites.
VI.   Other items
VII.   Next meeting (All)
        Another facetime meeting will be held the day before our presentation, Wednesday, April 24, 2019.
        A. We all agreed to do facetime meetings due to our schedules conflicting with one another. The easiest thing for us to do was facetime one another and talk about the presentation.
VIII.   New Business
        Make sure we are prepared to present.
IX.   Adjournment
        Michaila moved that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 5:37pm.

Appendix C: Work Log

Team Members	Tasks	Total number of hours	Signature of all members
Heather Brockwell	Created logo, created title page, wrote the letter of authorization, wrote the letter of transmittal, wrote the executive summary, wrote the analysis on The Law Office of Khalil W. Latif, created the Presentation PPT (with input from Justice and Michaila), did final proofing and editing	4.75	*Michaila Hyne* *Heather Brockwell* *Justice Griffin*
Justice Griffin	Created and dispersed survey and then collected the results, Worked on intro (with some help from Michaila), Wrote the analysis for Allen Allen Allen, and Allen, Wrote the conclusion and recommendations	4 Hours	*Michaila Hyne* *Heather Brockwell* *Justice Griffin*

Michaila Hyne	Put documents into the final formal report, worked on the table of contents, created the analysis of Elder and Watkins, P.C., worked on proof reading each other's work, worked on powerpoint for our presentation, made teamwork log,	4.30	*Michaila Hyne* *Heather Brockwell* *Justice Griffin*