PrestaShop Designer Guide

The default PrestaShop install offers a neutral theme in shades of gray, enabling sellers to quickly and freely start their activity, whatever their business line.

More than 700 themes are available through the [PrestaShop Addons](#) marketplace. They were created either by the PrestaTeam or the PrestaShop community, and are sold at reasonable prices – some even free.

As a graphic designer/web developer, you too can put your themes up for sale on the PrestaShop Addons site, and earn 70% of the selling price.

Anyone with some knowledge of CSS and image manipulation can create a custom theme for PrestaShop. Provided you know PHP as well, you can build a whole new theme for your shop. Thanks to a tried and tested theme system, any shop can quickly sport a theme tailored to its needs.

Coding a theme

PrestaShop's theme system is based on a template engine, called [Smarty](#), which allows web-designers and developers to easily build their own theme, with little technical knowledge.

> ✅ All web-designers and developers should use the following tools:
>
> - Firefox: [Firebug](#) is a free extension for easy comparison and debugging between your CSS and the output.
> - Firefox/Chrome: [Web Developer](#) adds many handy web developer tools to your browser.
> - Safari/Chrome: [enable](#) the [Web Inspector](#).
> - Opera: [Dragonfly](#), a fully-featured debugging environment.
> - Internet Explorer 8+: [Developer Tools](#) are available through the Tools menu.
>
> Internet Explorer users can also make use of [Firebug lite](#).

## Concepts and technical information

How a theme works

A PrestaShop theme is a set of files which you can edit in order to change the look of your online shop.

Here are a few important tidbits:

- All themes have their files located in the `/themes` root folder.
- Each theme has its own sub-folder, in the main themes folder.
- Each theme is made of template files (`.tpl`), image files (`.gif`, `.jpg`, `.png`), one or more CSS files (`.css`), and sometimes even JavaScript files (`.js`).
- Each theme has a `preview.jpg` image file in its folder, enabling the shop-owner to see what the theme looks like directly from the back-office, and select the theme appropriately.

Here is an overview of the file structure of a PrestaShop theme (here, the default one):
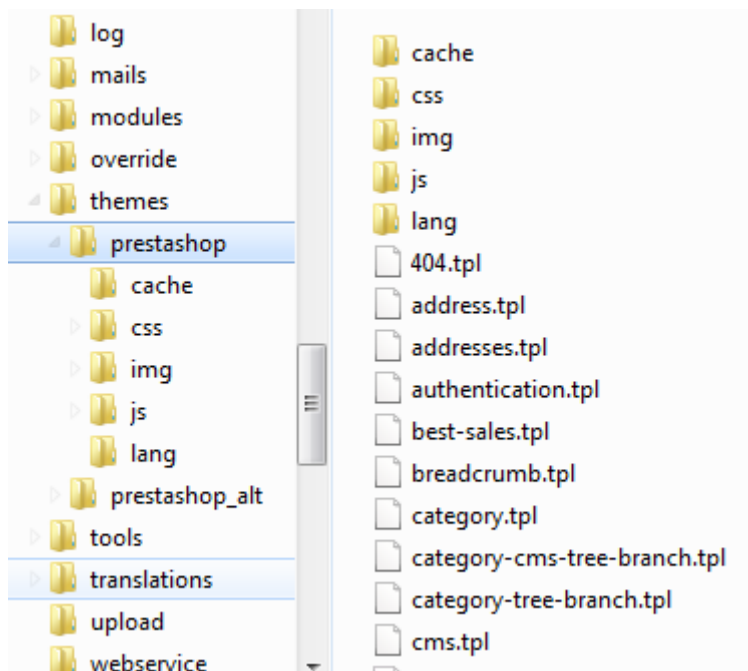
- The `/css` folder contains all CSS files.
- The `/img` folder contains all images.
- The `/js` folder contains all the JavaScript files.
- The `/lang` folder contains the theme's translations. Its access rights should be set at CHMOD 666 (for instance), so that the back-office translation tool can read and write into it.
- The root of the folder contains TPL files only (Smarty files), as well as the `preview.jpg` file.

> ⓘ The `/css`, `/img` and `/js` folder are optional, the theme can perfectly work without them, it's up to you to create them.

Handling translations

All of your theme's text string should be enclosed in a Smarty function, like so:

```
{l s='My Text'}
```

This will enable anyone to translate the theme into his own language, using the internal translation tool, which you can find in the PrestaShop back-office, under the "Tools" tab and its "Translation" sub-tab. In the "Modify translations" section, use the drop-down menu, choose "Front Office translation", then click on the flag of the language you wish to translate strings into. All the front-office strings will then be displayed.

h3 Transmitting data to a PrestaShop theme

The following graphic explains how data is transmitted from PrestaShop's core to its theme. Using the `l()` method enables the theme to display its text in the chosen language, if it has been translated beforehand.
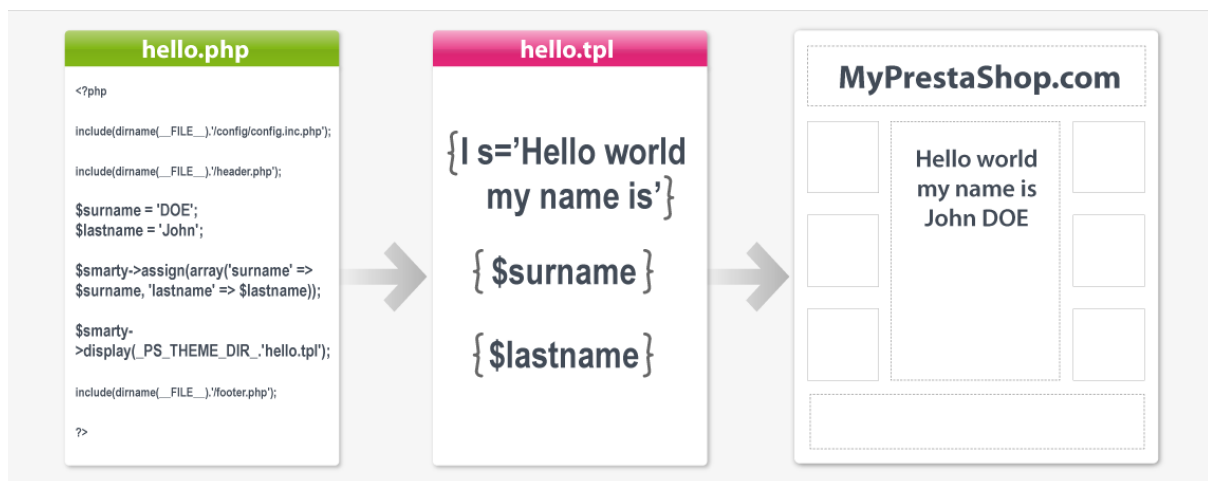
Best practices

Here is a non-exhaustive list of best practices that you should follow when creating a theme:

1. Do not mix XHTML and PHP code.
2. Do not mix XHTML and CSS code; put the CSS code in a separate `.css` file.
3. Always validate your XHTML and CSS code using the W3C validators: [XHTML validator](#), [CSS validator](#).
4. Do not make SQL queries from a PHP controller ({{.php file at the root of PrestaShop); prefer the use of existing methods from the PrestaShop classes, or create new methods for these classes.
5. Always check if a method you need does not already exist in the available classes.

6. Always make sure to produce a clear and readable code, making it easy to maintain for anyone.
7. Do comment your code, in English.
8. When editing the theme on a production site, always first put the shop in maintenance mode via the back-office.
9. Use modern browsers, such as Firefox, Google Chrome or Opera, and make sure your friends do too.
10. Whenever possible, use CSS sprites (follow-up article).
11. If you wish to thank PrestaShop team for its hard work, please consider donating, or spread the good word!

Customizing the default theme

Follow the following steps to create your own theme out of the PrestaShop default theme.

1. Copy the default theme

1. Locate the `/themes` directory in your PrestaShop install, and create a copy of the default `../themes/prestashop/` directory.
2. Rename the duplicate.
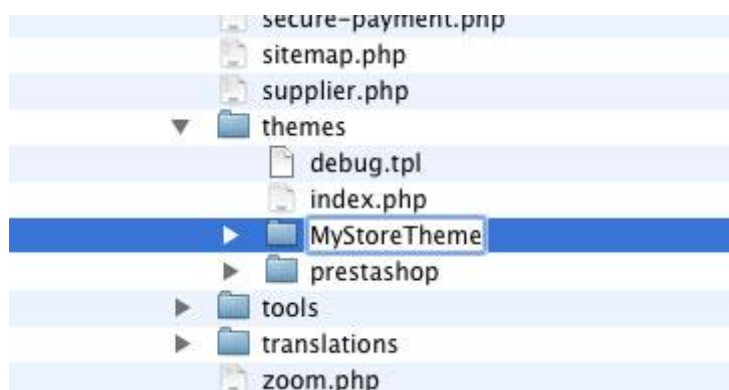
2. Modify the CSS sheet

- In the customized theme folder (e.g., `/themes/MyStoreTheme/`), locate the `/css` folder.
- Open the `global.css` file and change it according to your needs. This is where you are only limited by your creativity – and your knowledge of CSS.
  Note: the `maintenance.css` file, located in the same folder, controls the layout of the Maintenance Mode page.
- New or modified images must be placed in the new theme's `/img` folder (e.g., `/themes/MyStoreTheme/img`).

✅ **Tips from the PrestaShop development team**

- Where possible, use CSS instead of HTML (e.g., only use tables for tabular data, not for layout).
- Validate your XHTML and CSS code using the W3C tools: [HTML validator](#), [CSS validator](#).
- Reduce images and pictures size by using compression. Yahoo!'s [SmushIt](#) is an excellent tool for that.
- Test your theme on several Web browsers, not only Internet Explorer. [Mozilla Firefox](#), WebKit browsers ([Apple Safari](#), [Google Chrome](#)) and [Opera](#) are all to be considered, but you should most of all check that it works well the browsers your website is mostly visited with. If your website has not launched yet, [have a look at your country browser stats](#). For instance, [here are the browser stats for France, from 2010 to 2011](#).
- Keep filenames in lowercase.
- Remember that the homepage text and logo are modifiable directly via the Back Office. Go to the back-office, "Modules" tab then "Themes" sub-tab.

3. Create a preview screen shot

Once your customized theme is ready, you must place a file representing the theme, called `preview.jpg`, in the theme's root folder (e.g., `/themes/MyStoreTheme`). This file must be a 100 × 100 pixels `.jpg` file.

4. Test your theme

1. Go to back-office's "Preferences" tab, then its "Appearance" and its "Themes" section.
2. Select the new theme and click Save..
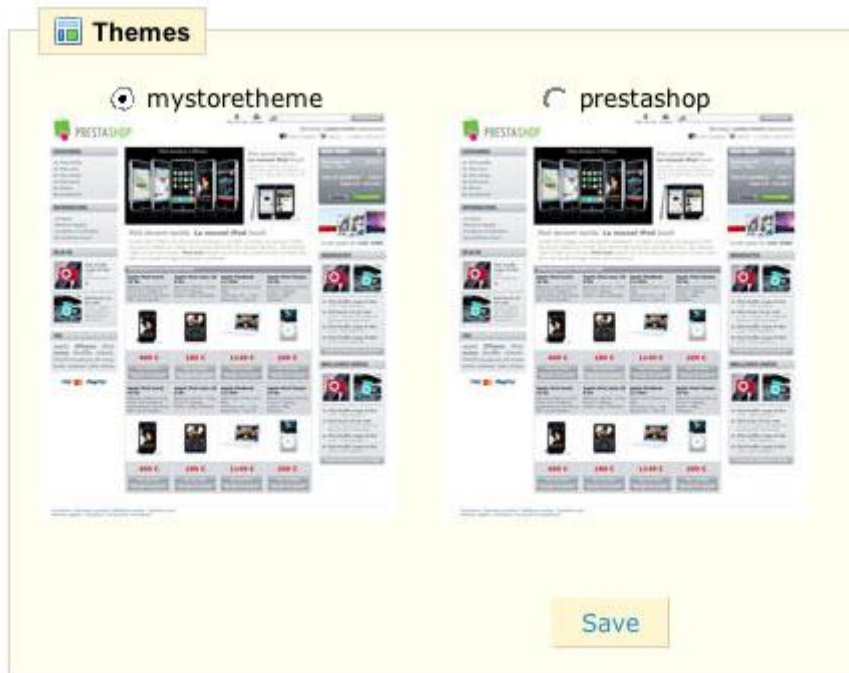
Share your themes!

Show off your hard work, get feedback, and build your reputation by sharing your theme in the Themes section of our Forum!

You can also sell your theme to PrestaShop users through our Addons website!

Creating your own theme

PrestaShop's default theme

The default theme was conceived in a neutral style, and as such can be use for just about any type of shop, independent of the industry. Moreover, this theme does its best to conform to web standards, as established by the W3C, and has been optimized to display efficiently in all major browsers.

That being said, you might want to have a theme that is really tailored to your website or online activity, rather than having the same theme as thousands of online shops. This is were you need to build your own theme – and the easiest way to do it is to use the default theme as a solid groundwork, or at least as inspiration.

First step towards your own theme

All currently-installed themes are found in the `/themes` folder, where your own will soon be too. The default theme is located in the

`/themes/prestashop` sub-folder. This is the folder from which you will build your own theme.

That being said, it is **highly discouraged** to directly change the files for the default theme, the reason being that this could introduce news bugs and no way to go back. You need to keep the default theme intact, so that you can switch between your theme and the default one in order to find out if the issue you are seeing is tied to your theme, or to a bug in another part of PrestaShop.

The first step will therefore be to make a copy of the `/prestashop` sub-folder, and give that copy a unique name, for instance the name of your own theme or website. This way, the default theme remains intact.

File structure for a theme

When creating a theme, you have to think up front of all the various pages and pieces of information that your theme has to handle correctly, in order to offer a complete experience to your customer. Here again, the default theme is a good way to get inspiration, both in the variety of files it features and behaviors it caters for, but also in its code, which you can dive into in order to better understand how a theme works.

File or folder	Description
preview.jpg	This image is used as a preview in the "Theme" selector in the "Preferences" > "Appearance" sub-tab. This image is mandatory, as without it the them cannot be selected. It should obviously reflect the theme's design, and not its logo or designer's name...
404.tpl	Used when the requested page is not found (HTTP error 404).
address.tpl	Used when adding or editing a client street address.
addresses.tpl	Used when listing a client's street addresses.
authentication.tpl	Used when identifying a user, or creating a new user account.
best-sales.tpl	Used to list all best sale.
breadcrumb.tpl	Used to find the navigation path, or breadcrumb trail.
category.tpl	Used to list all products in a given category.
category-tree-branch.tpl	Used only by the Category block.
category-cms-tree-branch.tpl	...
cms.tpl	Used for informational pages ("Tools" > "CMS" sub-tab).
contact-form.tpl	Used by the contact form.
discount.tpl	Used when listing all discount tickets for a single

	client.
errors.tpl	Used when displaying errors. Potentially called by all of the pages.
footer.tpl	Page footer.
guest-tracking.tpl	Used when a visitor has no know account on the site, but wants his order to be tracked – and therefore needs to create an account or log in.
header.tpl	Page header
history.tpl	Used when lsiting the order history of a client.
identity.tpl	Used when a client edits his/her personal information.
index.php	Blank file, prevents visitors to view the content of the folder.
index.tpl	Welcome page.
maintenance.tpl	Used when the site is in maintenance mode.
manufacturer.tpl	Used when listing all products from a single manufacturer.
manufacturer-list.tpl	Used when listing all manufacturers.
my-account.tpl	Welcome page for a client's account.
new-products.tpl	Used when listing the products that were last added to the cart.
order-address.tpl	Used during the order process: Step 1, choosing the addresses (delivery, billing).
order-carrier.tpl	Used during the order process: Step 2, choosing the carrier mode.
order-confirmation.tpl	Used during the order process: Last step, confirming the order (after payment).
order-detail.tpl	Used to display the content of a client's order.
order-follow.tpl	Used when a client needs to ask for a product return.
order-opc.tpl	...
order-opc-new-account.tpl	...
order-payment.tpl	Used during the order process: Step 3, choosing the payment mode.
order-return.tpl	Used to display a client product return details.
order-slip.tpl	Used to display a client's credit slips.
order-steps.tpl	Order process progress bar.
pagination.tpl	Used by all pages that list products. Displays the pagination button, enable to skip to the next/previous page of products.
password.tpl	Used when a client needs to change his password.
prices-drop.tpl	Used to list all current promotions.
product.tpl	Used to display details for a single product.
product-list.tpl	Used by all pages that list products. Displays the actual products list.

product-sort.tpl	Used by all pages that list products. Displays a menu enabling to sort and filter products.
products-comparison.tpl	...
scenes.tpl	Used to display a scene's details within a product category.
search.tpl	Used to list results from a search query.
shopping-cart.tpl	Used to list products in a client's cart.
shopping-cart-product-line.tpl	Used to display from a single cart row.
sitemap.tpl	Used to display the site map.
store_infos.tpl	...
stores.tpl	...
supplier.tpl	Used to list all the products from a single supplier.
supplier-list.tpl	Used to list all suppliers.
thickbox.tpl	Used to zoom a product's picture.
/cache	...
/css	Contains all style sheet files for the theme. The `global.css` file deals with the layout for most of the site. Unless you know exactly what you are doing, you should leave these files alone.
/img	Contains all of the theme's images. You should replace these images with your own adequate creations. If you do not know what to make of it, you should leave the original files.
/js	Contains all of the theme's JavaScript files. Unless you know exactly what you are doing, you should leave these files alone.
/lang	Contains all translation files. These are generated by the back-office translation tool, and should not be edit directly. If a translation needs editing, go to the back-office, "Tools" tab, "Translation" sub-tab, "Modify translation" section, and choose "Front office translations".

A few advices

Firebug, **Dragonyfly** et al.: your work as a front-end developer can greatly helped with the right tools at hand, provided you test your design in a modern browser that provides such tools, either through a module (Firefox's [FireBug](#)) or directly embedded (Opera's Dragonfly, Chrome & Webkit's Web Inspector). Learn to master them, and you will quickly be amazed by their usefulness.

JavaScript: all JavaScript files should be stored in the theme's `/js` folder.

preview.jpg file: Once your design is complete, you can create the preview image file. Take a screen shot, then resize it to 180px width in order to use it instead of the default `preview.jpg` file. You can either used the screenshot tool provided by your OS (Windows' Snipping Tool, OS X's Cmd+Shift+4 key combo), or install a browser extension, such as Firefox's [FireShot](#) or [Screengrab](#).

Integration: where the hooks and modules are

One of the key point of integrating content within a PrestaShop theme is to know where said content is displayed, and therefore where the various hooks and modules are located.

Here is a graphical representation of where they are, for each page. You will find:

- The name of the block.
- The block's id, in order to target it with CSS.
- The block's folder or template file, if you need to make changes to it.

Hooks

Main content areas

Top of pages

Left column

Right column

Homepage

Footer

Modules

Header section

Currency block
(id: currencies_block_top
folder: blockcurrencies)

Language block
(id: languages_block_top
folder: blocklanguages)

Permanent links block
(id: header_links
folder: blockpermanentlinks)

Quick Search block
(id: search_block_top
folder: blocksearch)

User info block
(id: header_user
folder: blockuserinfo)

Homepage blocks

Tag block
(id: tags_block_left
folder: blocktags)

Categories block
(id: categories_block_left
folder: blockcategories)

Manufacturers block
(id: manufacturers_block_left
folder: blockmanufacturer)

CMS Block
(id: informations_block_left_1
folder: blockcms)

Advertising block
(id: advertising_block
folder: blockadvertising)

Home text editor
(id : editorial_block_center)

Featured Products on the homepage
(id: xxx
folder: homefeatured)

Cart block
(id: cart_block
folder: blockcart)

New products block
(id: xxx
folder: blocknewproducts)

Specials block
(id: special_block_right
folder: blockspecials)

Stores block
(id: stores_block_left
folder: blocstore)

Category central column

Category description
(id: cat_desc
folder: to be filled in the BO)

Scenes
(id: scenes
folder: scenes.tpl)

Sort form
(id: productsSortForm
tpl: product-sort.tpl)

Products list
(id: product_list
tpl: product-list.tpl)

Comparison buttons
(id: /
tpl: products-comparison.tpl)

Product page

Account forms & order steps

Order steps
(id: order_step
tpl: order-steps.tpl)

IDENTIFIEZ-VOUS

Résumé   Identifiez-vous   Adresse   Frais de port   Paiement

CATÉGORIES
- iPods
- Accessoires
- Portables

DÉJÀ VUS

iPod Nano
Nouveau design. Nouvelles... »

FABRICANTS
- » Apple Computer, Inc
- » Shure Incorporated

Tous les fabricants

INFORMATIONS
- Livraison
- Mentions légales

Créez votre compte

Entrez votre adresse e-mail pour créer votre compte.

Adresse e-mail

Créez votre compte

Déjà enregistré ?

Adresse e-mail

Mot de passe

Identifiez-vous

Mot de passe oublié ?

Account creation
(id: create-account_form
tpl: authentication.tpl)

Authentication form
(id login_form
tpl: authentication.tpl)

Aucun

Expédi
Total

Pani

NOUV

iPod N
Nouv
fonct

iPod s
iPod s
plus p

MacBo
MacBo
ultra

MacBo
MacBo
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iPod t
Interf
révol

Account creation form

CATÉGORIES
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DÉJÀ VUS

iPod Nano
Nouveau design. Nouvelles... »

FABRICANTS
- » Apple Computer, Inc
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Tous les fabricants

INFORMATIONS
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Account creation form
(id: account-creation_form
tpl: authentication.tpl)

Vos informations personnelles

Civilité ○ M. ○ Mme

Prénom

Nom

E-mail   sandrine.thiebaut@prestashop.co

Mot de passe   •••••••••   (5 caractères min.)

Date de naissance   -   -   -

Votre adresse

Prénom

Nom

Société

Adresse
Rue, adresse de boîte postale, nom de compagnie, c / o

Adresse (2)
Appartement, suite, l'unité, bâtiment, étage, etc

Code postal

Ville

Pays   France

Informations complémentaires

Vous devez enregistrer au moins un numéro de téléphone

Téléphone domicile

Téléphone portable

Donnez un titre à cette adresse pour la retrouver plus facilement   Mon adresse

* Champs requis

S'inscrire

Order blocks

Order steps
(id: order_step
tpl: order-steps.tpl)

Last product added
(id: cart_last_product
tpl: shopping-cart.tpl)

Order content
(id: order-detail-content
tpl: order-detail.tpl)

vouchers
(id: cart_voucher
tpl: shopping-cart.tpl)

Addresses
(id: order_delivery
tpl: shopping-cart.tpl)

Addresses

Terms & Conditions and carrier choice

Payment module choice

Payment choice module
(id /tpl : depends on the payment module.
Presented here : Moneybookers)
Warning : the last block's border is
hardcoded in the JavaScript code.

Site map

Site map
(id : sitemap_content
tpl: sitemap.tpl)

Contact form

Design tips

Thinking ahead

Before opening PhotoShop, GIMP or any other graphic editor, you should sit at a desk with a pen and a sheet paper, and think of your shop's

sitemap, making it as flexible as possible (not all shops have the same amount of categories, or of products per category).

A complete PrestaShop them requires at least 30 pages or page sections:

- Home page
- Category page
- Product page
- Product comparison page
- Search results page
- "My Account" and its inner pages:
    - My vouchers
    - Orders history
    - Personal information
- "My Cart"
- Authentication page
- Account creation
- Checkout pages:
    - Addresses list
    - Shipping costs
    - Payment choice (check, bank transfer)
    - One page checkout
- Address creation
- Delivery page
- Maintenance page
- Manufacturers list and single manufacturer page
- Suppliers list and single supplier page
- The 404 page ("Page not found")
- "Best sales" page
- "New products" page
- "Current promotions" page
- "Forgotten password" page
- Legal notice
- Sitemap
- Stores page
- Contact form

Please do take all these into account, so as to not forget any of them. Failing to take some page into account may result in an incomplete theme, and thus a bad experience for your users.
To get a better sense of the page you should take into account, dive into the

Once you feel good about your sitemap, make a few sketches of the interface, in order to get a feel of where the various elements will be placed: new products, promotions, pictures, text, etc.). Also, include the important details, such as the various mentions on the product's page: on sale, promotion, new product, stricken price...).

Of course, these are just general tips; some professional might prefer to do it all directly in PhotoShop, then jump right into PHP, HTML and CSS.

Technical recommendations

In order to ensure that you can easily share your creation with others (designer, integrators, client), we advise you to save them as a PhotoShop file (RGB, 72 dpi, non-flattened).

You should work with the 980px width resolution in mind.

Layer arrangement

You can use several methods, depending on your preferences:

- A folder for every text layers, so that integrators can easily access the design itself.
- A folder for each design blocks (New products, Best sales, etc.)

Colors

Do not use the CMYK color model, as it is only adapted to printing. Always use the RVB color model.

Fonts

Do not use atypical fonts! Keep it readable at all times!

Standard text (title, sub-title, regular text) should be limited to the followed fonts, in order to insure that all visitors can see the same thing:

- Arial
- Verdana
- Helvetica
- Georgia
- Tahoma
- Times News Roman

Keep the number of fonts to the bare minimum, for fear of making your website confusing and unreadable.

Units

When designing for the Web, the basic unit of measurement is the pixel. Do not measure in picas, points or centimeters.

Text size

Always keep in mind that the user has the final say on the text say, as modern browser can expand or reduce it at will. As a matter of fact, you should test your website with various browser variations, see how easy it is break your design... and therefore rework your design in order to avoid such easy breakage.

That being said, you may start off with a handful of basic text sizes:

- 10 to 12px for regular text
- 14px for sub-titles
- 18px for titles
- etc.

Transparency

Transparent images do not work well with older browsers, particularly with Internet Explorer, so you should stay away from 24-bits PNG images. As for GIF images with transparency, use the over a plain background to ensure they work properly. Avoid 50% opacity by using the same matte color as the website's background color.

Misc.

- Test your theme with all of PrestaShop's options activated, so as to see how the theme reacts.
- Edit a product in order to see how the various options influence your design... if does at all.
- Make sure to have an homogeneous style for your shop.

Usability

We won't delve into complex human–computer interaction theories here, but rather try to make sure that your shop is accessible to as many potential customers as possible. Your ultimate goal should be to have visitors trust your shop enough so that they star buying.

Every time a visitor stumbles upon a usability problem, your site loses their trust. Ultimately, if the trust reaches a low point, frustration comes and the visitor leaves your site, without buying anything of course. Such is the importance of usability in the e-commerce world.

When design your shop's theme, keep in mind that its mission (in addition to selling goods, of course) is to show your visitors that your website is managed by serious and competent people.

The home page

This is **the** most important page of your shop, the one where it is "hit or miss". This is the page where the visitor will get a general opinion of your shop, and decide if she should trust you with her money.

You should make sure to make your shop easily recognizable, and have your catalog be the first thing people see.

The website's header is where you will be able to put the most recognizable details: logo, name, unique image... It should be not be higher than 250px, so that your visitors can reach your catalog without resorting to scrolling down the page. In other words, your main content should never be [below the fold](#).

The visual aspect of your website is of course very important (hence our "Thinking ahead" section above): you must find way to put your products forward with overloading the page. Moreover, you should use homogeneous colors and layout within a page and between pages. For instance, if a button has an interaction effect on one page, make sure to apply that effect to all other pages on the site.

The search engine must be easy to find. Visitors often know what they came for, and don't want to browse through categories and sub-categories in search for it.

Still, when building your website's content, think of the user who browse categories, and make them simple and intuitive.

You can reinforce the perceived trust by displaying logos or mentions of your partners (banks, carriers), and your rating from a known e-commerce institution, such as FIA-NET in France.

Do display your contact details, such as phone number or chat system, if available. It will show you are real, and that can make a huge difference. Of course, do not use your personal phone number: they need to feel they are calling a company's support team, not disturbing you while you cook.

Clearly display your Return Merchandise conditions, your general T&C and other applicable laws that you respect.

The product page

A visitor only comes to the product page if she's interested by said product, and wants more details. There should therefore be aplenty of those.

Make the "Add to Cart" button clear and visible. It must distinguish itself from the rest of the layout, by both its size and color – but do keep a homogeneous design: if the button is too far off from the general design, the visitor can just as easily not see it, in the same way people have trained themselves not to see ads on the Internet.

Make sure to display all the relevant labels: "New product", "Promotion", "Voucher", etc. Also, do not forget to add the delivery delays.

The conversion funnel: "My Account" and related pages

The [conversion funnel](#) is where your visitors become client (hence the use of "conversion", or sometimes "transformation"). If these pages are badly designed or structured, this can mean the loss of many potential clients, and therefore all the order they would have made on your site.

Account creation / "My Account"

The default PrestaShop theme comes with an account form that gives a very good transformation percentage. But it might still not suit your own site's needs. Hence, here are a few tips to follow if you intend to update the form.

- Be basic, keep the essential only. The visitor must concentrate on the account creation, and the purchase. See how Amazon does it.
- Reduce the number of steps. The user must know how many steps she still has to go through before she can actually finalize her purchase.
- Clearly display any mistake the user makes, right next to form field. Errors should be displayed in a distinct color (red is a favorite), and mandatory fields should indicated (with an asterisk *, for instance).

Payment

The visitor has created her client account, great! But it's still not over yet, she must now go through the purchase itself.

Same as for the account creation form:

- Reduce the number of steps (delivery address, payment page).
- Display the errors in a distinct color.
- Payment page:
  - if the visitor uses a credit card, warn them that they will be redirected to your bank's secure server. For instance, add a little padlock icon, with an explanation
  - if she chooses to pay by check (or any other offline payment method), clearly mention what to do next: amount, address, etc.

All these usability tips are just part of the whole story, but they can bring you a solid ground on which building your theme, in order to improve your shop.