Profit ACADEMY

MODULE 13

SEGMENT 3

Joyanne Sloan: Welcome back to How to Build a Profitable Website and Use It Powerfully. In session three we're going to go into how to customize your website and we'll talk specifically about style sheets and customizing your theme's default fonts, covers, headings, and so forth. We'll also cover branding your website and how to add your logo and header to personalize your design. We'll discuss customizable themes and learn to work with optional theme controls without writing any code. Remember, all parts of your theme can be edited, but such changes may require a professional coder.

The benefits to you in this session are that you're going to save a lot of time because you'll learn how to quickly identify the extent to which your themes allow customization using the dashboard tools. You'll keep your branding consistent. You'll be able to install a theme that lets you use colors, headers, and logos that match your current business branding. Finally, you'll also save big money when you know how to achieve the look you want without hiring a web designer. You can keep all that money in your pocket; sweet.

How much can you customize? Every theme includes something called a style sheet. Style sheets are part of the background code that runs your website. They're also called cascading style sheets, or CSS. CSS dictates fonts, colors, margins, line spacing, backgrounds, and much more, therefore you will not find the same kind of formatting tools in WordPress that you're used to in Microsoft Word. Unless you know how to edit CSS or hire someone who does, you'll need to work with the default style sheet that comes with your theme.

Let's go ahead and take a look at a sample style sheet right now. Here we are back at the WordPress [00:02:00] themes directory tag filter page and I've done just a simple search here for some simple themes and here are my results down below. Now let's go ahead and look at what a style sheet looks like to the end user by clicking on the theme's name here, which is Decemberable. Again, all we have to do is click on Preview, and if we scroll down the page a little bit we can start seeing examples of what the cascading style sheet dictates for this particular theme. Here's some information talking about CSS. Here are the settings for headings one

through six. This is what a paragraph would look like with a paragraph heading and paragraph text.

This theme is also capable of doing different types of lists, including ordered lists and unordered lists with bullets. This theme also allows you to do different kinds of forms and form elements so you can add text fields, text areas, even dropdown menus and radio–style buttons or checkboxes. These are some unusual elements that aren't included in all themes. This theme is also capable of delivering tables, so you can use the theme directory to give you a sense of exactly what any particular theme will look like ahead of time and the elements that are dictated and fixed by the CSS.

I've always believed that it's really important for small business owners to be empowered around their websites, so I'm going to show you this as a little bit of an FYI. If you're under the appearance menu, you'll see at the very bottom here there's something called "Editor." Now if you're new to web design, this is probably an area that you're never going to use. This is an area where somebody who's a programmer [00:04:00] or coder would be able to access the full style sheet. Now if you look at this it may seem quite daunting to you because it's all in code, but don't worry about this. I simply wanted you to know where it was and that you don't need to be afraid of it because as you can see, there are lots of ways to customize your site using something called the Customize Tab, which we'll look at next.

I just want to make one quick note that just like people, no two themes are exactly alike, so in terms of the degree to which you can customize them they're all going to be unique, one from the other. Let's go back to our demo site and see what that means in the real world. We're going to go back to the user–friendly version of our style sheets here and see what we can do to actually customize the scene. Under 'Appearance' we're going to click on 'Customize' and this will show us basically the end–user view of our website, or what we call the front end.

Then on the side panel we have a new little table that pops up to allow some customization. If you click on any one of these down arrows it's going to open up some different

options. This is where we would give our site a title, and in this case we're going to use How to Stick to a Diet, and our tagline will be Get Thin ... Let's capitalize that ... and Stay Thin. We can choose a different background color by clicking select color, and let's just experiment here. We'll go ahead and use the slider to go up to the blue.

Now I want you to notice something here. The header for How to Stick to a Diet is already set to blue and it doesn't look like we can actually change that, so if we were to use a similar color, the site name actually [00:06:00] starts disappearing the darker we go. That's something good to take into account as we're choosing a color. Since that's blue, maybe we want to look at a complementary color, so let's go ahead and click on yellow ... That's a little bit too bright ... and you can just play around with these subtle variations. I actually rather like that orange and the blue together, but it's a little bit much so let's go a little lighter. It's a little more flesh colored. That's kind of nice. It's peach, but it'll be fine. Then we can go ahead and save that. This will actually give you what's called the hex value of this particular color.

Now we'll go to background image and if we just click on select image, it's going to take us immediately to the media library and any images that have been uploaded for this particular website. If we wanted to pull up something from our own computer we could go to 'Select a File' here. One thing I want to point out is that sometimes when a site allows you to put in a custom background image or a custom header ... The background image would be here and a custom header would be up in this top portion ... it'll usually give you the dimensions, exact pixels wide and high, that your image needs to be. In this case, we're not going to upload a background image.

Again, we've already covered the custom menu here, but this again gives you one more option to set that custom menu. We'll spend more time in the next video talking about and installing widgets, so I'm not going to go into that too much here, but it was just an option here. I'm just going to click it and open it so you can see some of the different options that are available to you. There's Search, which we can see is already in place, Text, Recent Posts. We might add our pages

[00:08:00] and we'll call that Title, and then we'll say, "Add widget."

Now, you can see what happened when I did that over on the right here. This added a new item in our side bar, which we called Pages, and it's basically repeating our same page menu that we have at the top. It gives you a little bit of sense of how widgets can start filling in your side bar. Again, if you wanted to change the static front page to the most recent post, this would allow your site to be created dynamically, but because this site is new and has no posts yet, we're going to leave it on a static front page.

Then finally, Save and Publish. As you follow along these tutorial videos, you're getting a sense for just how important the theme is, and I wanted to add some extra value to this session so I went and did a little bit of homework for you. I wanted to show you 10 very appealing themes that have recently been recommended by the WordPress developer community because they have a professional, eye-catching design. They adapt themselves to viewing on mobile devices, which mean they're responsive, they can be highly customized to your needs, and they're all free. Yes, free.

Let's take a look at these themes right now. Here we are over at the WordPress developer community website and I'm going to just show you these 10 responsive free themes that have been recommended by them. They really are excellent. Here's this first one called Webalizer, and in each one of these you can either download it directly or go to a demo site. The next one is called Squirrel, and this one has a featured video right there on the homepage, which it's a really nice engagement device. [00:10:00]

The next one is RoadFighter. This looks like it's ideally set up as a portfolio website, if you have a good fashion eye or interior design or other kind of photography business. Next is BizSphere, Clearly, which is a nice, open, uncomplicated design, then Mantra, Flat Bootstrap, and that's extremely paired down, Harrington, Dynamic News Lite, and finally, Customizr. Just click on the demo button and you can see what your site might look like with this particular theme installed. Some nice little elements here of animation, some

things to make it kind of pop and be a little bit different, and that's it.

Wow, you've just taken a huge step forward. You just learned what a style sheet is and how it affects many of the design elements in your website. You also learned how to add your own branding by uploading your logo and header to personalize your design. You know where to find customizable themes that give you even more of what you want at zero cost. Coming up in the next section, you'll learn how to put together the various pieces of your website puzzle.