

Redefining the Bulletproof Experience

Behind the Design



SYNOPSIS

The Bulletproof Executive has a highly trafficked blog that operates as a library of life-hacking information curated by founder Dave Asprey. They came to DT with the objectives of increasing sign-ups, driving more traffic to their store, and increasing overall reader engagement with their vast amount of content.

We started this engagement by conducting a comprehensive content audit to help create a more structured taxonomy so users could find content more easily. Once we were fully immersed into Bulletproof’s content, and how users were engaging with the site, we brainstormed strategies to push people even deeper into the site. Collectively, we agreed to create experiences out of their most popular content: First-Time Reader and How to Make the Perfect Cup.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Category pages were reimaged to improve search and discovery.
- Blog redesign layout, style and typography.
- Crafted a “New Reader” user-focused experience.

DATA-DRIVEN IMPROVEMENT

Since the launch of new Bulletproof Exec site, email sign-ups on the homepage have jumped approximately 300 percent.

 300%



Introduction:

I Can't Believe It's... Butter?

Ever heard of that butter-in-your-coffee thing? You know, the thing where you put butter in your coffee? Maybe... Back in late 2014, Jimmy Fallon sipped on this concoction with one of his Tonight Show guests, raving about its brainy benefits and energy-boosting properties — his guest even joined in, citing her love for the buttery deliciousness. This is just one of the many celebrity endorsements that drove this coffee trend to new heights that you too may have stumbled upon. Or perhaps you read the “Trend” piece in the NY Times that told the

Bulletproof story, giving it a balanced perspective while still holding true to the notion that Bulletproof has a deep following of believers who really, really advocate for it. Or maybe you live in the L.A.-region and took a field trip to its first brick-and-mortar coffee shop in Santa Monica—it just opened. If you're in the area, try out the body-vibrator-doo-hickey. It's pretty fun.



However you came to be exposed: Do you have any idea how that trend got started? Well, look no further than Dave Asprey, the man behind the Bulletproof revolution. His innovative coffee recipe has taken the world by storm since 2009 when he shared a recipe he discovered while on a hiking adventure in Tibet. There, he drank yak butter tea to power himself through his treks and decided to bring the hallowed recipe stateside—with a few delicious tweaks.

Here's Asprey's Bulletproof Creation Story:

"I first learned about the power of butter at 18,000 feet of elevation near Mt. Kailash in Tibet," explained Asprey on his blog. "I staggered into a guest house from the -10 degree weather and was literally rejuvenated by a creamy cup of yak butter tea. The biohacker in me asked, 'why?' and after a couple years of careful research, that was the genesis of the recipe below, which is today, used by Billboard recording artists before they go on stage, world champion athletes, and some of the world's top executives because it has a massive impact on cognitive function."

And that, my friends, is the gospel truth, according to Asprey, of course.





Foundation & Understanding: Being Bulletproof

Being Bulletproof is more than just drinking butter-infused coffee...

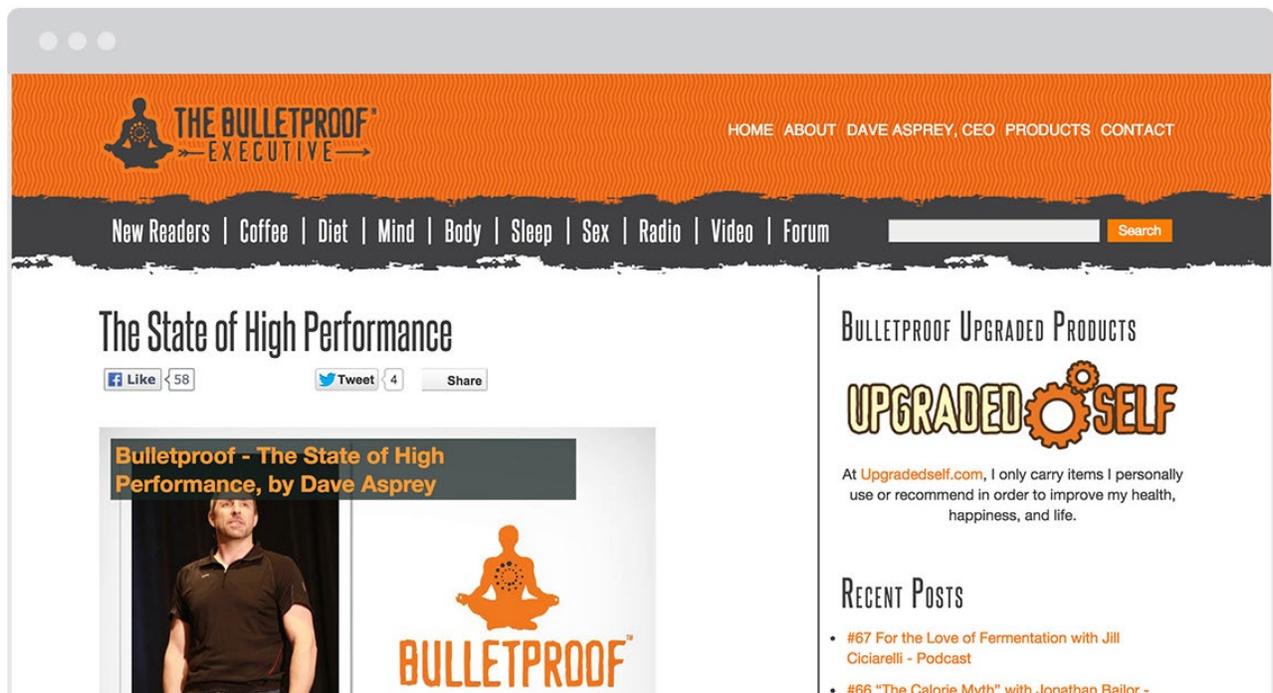
It's a lifestyle.

It's a methodology.

It's ritualistic.

And to understand all this was integral to improving their growing online community which had a healthy mix of new visitors in addition to their fiercely loyal repeat visitors. Which brings us to the trouble points, or friction, that brought Bulletproof to Digital Telepathy: they had outgrown their site and now had a unique mix of visitors that they needed to speak to more clearly—and distinctly.

What they had online was a single homepage with Asprey's blog showcased. The blog boasted more than 200 posts in its archives, so there was a lot to work with. Unfortunately, they also had an overwhelming taxonomy of categories that was just too much for their least-savvy readers to navigate.



This phase of understanding provided us with a solid foundation for the client’s objectives—this was an integral step in unraveling the project’s strategy. Bulletproof’s marketing team stakeholders, Zac Garcia and Justin Dudek, informed us that, beyond the blog friction, they had several other pain points. They revealed that new users reported a cluttered experience and poor first-time understanding of what Bulletproof is and means. This then contributed to a level of skepticism for the products and brand as a whole—which then caused users to bounce off the site too often. It was a snowballing effect. So, how do we remedy this?

[Above] Before we redesigned the homepage, we learned that first-time users to the Bulletproof Executive site reported that the content was confusing and left users scratching their heads as to what Bulletproof was as a brand, a product or a lifestyle.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:



Zac Garcia

Bulletproof Marketer



Justin Dudek

Bulletproof Marketer



Nate Sonnenberg

Senior Strategist



Brian Stieler

Lead UX Designer



From Strategy to Implement: Makin' Small Wins

To help ease search and discovery, we used an in-house Card Sorting Exercise to re-organize Bulletproof's blog posts into new categories that were pared down and refined. During this process, we surfaced insights that showed the blog's content wasn't as masculine-leaning, as we were led to believe—in fact, it was pretty gender neutral. This informed our decision-making in terms of the aesthetic we landed on for the specific colors, as well as the intensity of the colors on the site. Although their brand and marketing team handled the *big* brand updates, we helped drive some of the subtleties of the visual



identity. For instance, we incorporated a nice blue hue into the category button design. This was an unexpected strategic benefit of doing the Card Sorting. We were trying to merely solve the blog's categorization dilemma, but ended up gaining insights that improved the overall experience.

Once the Card Sorting was all done, we still felt like the new readers deserved more. Brian Stieler, lead designer, and Nate Sonnenberg, senior account strategist, worked with the Bulletproof team to tackle the overarching blog friction regarding the obstruction of search and discovery. Readability became the second focal point for improving this experience. Giving the blog improved readability meant changing out the typeface from a super condensed Steel Fish, to an open Montserrat. Brian noted that leaving the side gutter open for marketing or advertising their e-comm store was to stay the same. Once we had a better design for long-form content we felt confident we could move on.

[Above] In order to understand Bulletproof's content library, we used a Card Sorting Exercise to categorize the content, as well as gain insights into the brand's audience personas.



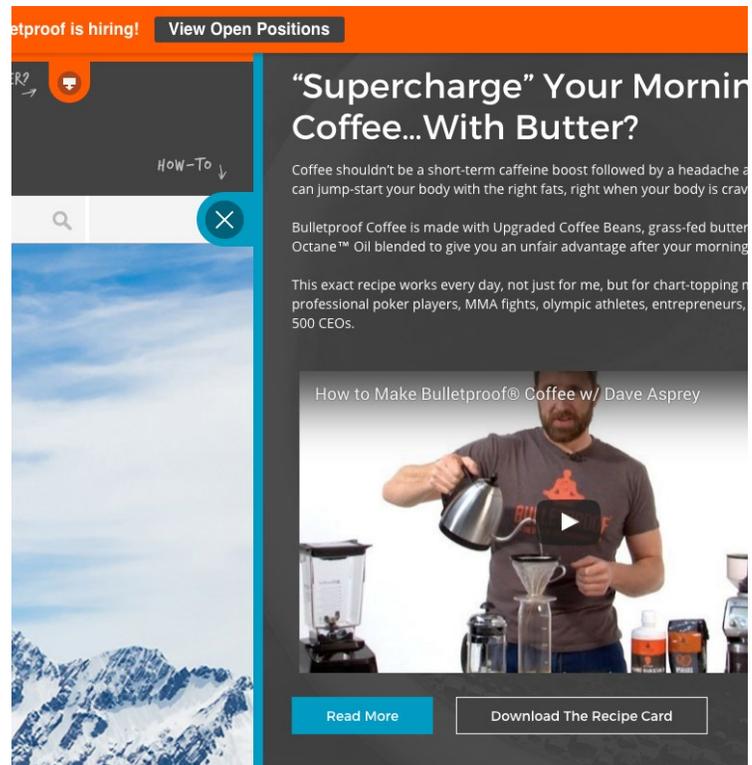
Implementing Small Wins:

Homepage, Top-Downs & SideCars

We knew that surfacing content in a more organic way was key, and of course, so was providing a clear path for new readers to get introduced. Brian and Nate strategized how to give those newbies the option to first learn the basics of biohacking versus going headfirst into taking supplements and changing your lightbulbs—let’s keep it simple, so we don’t scare anyone off, right? Nate called this his “small win” strategy, whereupon he and the team tackled one pivotal portion of the user journey and experience, then improved it, and moved on to the next small win. Moving on...

Now, the homepage is a place where you can make magic happen. As noted previously, one of the strongest pain points for Bulletproof was that first-time visitors were previously experiencing a cluttered layout and too much aggressive content (remember that body vibrator thingy I mentioned before?). We recommended more welcoming content that could bring newbies gently into the fold.

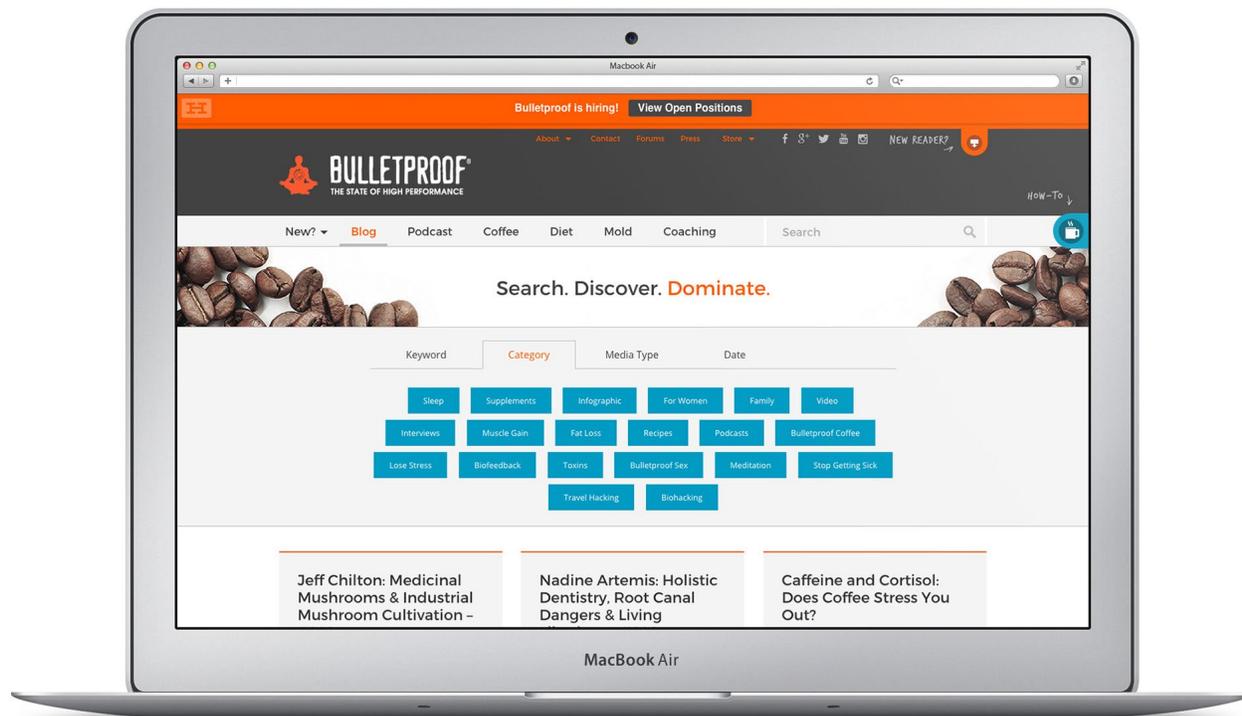
We designed three engaging interactions to surface content to new readers, these included: a “New Reader” drop down and “How To” coffee sidecar available on every page, as well as expandable content areas for first-time visitors to Category pages.



At the top of the homepage there now sits a fun bit of UI. Embedded into the top navigation is the aforementioned drop-down feature labeled: “New Reader?” which guides the eye to the icon. Upon clicking, a panel drop down showcases: “Live The Bulletproof Life,” an intro article, and a selection of other “Great Posts To Get You Started.” There’s also a side-gutter “pop-out,” or sidecar, as we call it, that guides users to the Bulletproof coffee experience with a “How-To” placed alongside an active icon of a steaming cuppa Joe. Upon clicking, visitors are given instructions to “Supercharge Your Morning Coffee...With Butter;” a how-to article and video. The butter-

[Above] Shown here, (where the blue “X” is showing), is the sidegutter pop-out that we call a sidecar. This UI feature helps welcome new site visitors into the Bulletproof fold a bit more gently than some of the biohacking tips that caused new users to bounce.

“Bulletproof has a dedicated following and we didn’t want to make things harder for them, so we made the introductory content section on category pages collapsable. A solution to welcome new readers, while also respecting a return-visitor’s desire to dive into content”



coffee-thing is their bread-and-butter so why not make it part of the entire experience? It works great, has all over the counter ingredients, and coffee is part of most people’s morning routine. If we can improve this one small pivotal moment in your day, imagine what else we could do? These new elements are available throughout pretty much every page of the site, so no matter what page a search engine sends someone to, they can get a warm introduction.

We love how these features panned out; they really deliver on the client’s wish that new readers be given more opportunities for discovery. “Bulletproof has a dedicated following and we didn’t want to make things harder for them, so we made the introductory content section on category pages collapsable. A solution to welcome new readers, while also respecting a return-visitor’s desire to dive into content,” Nate noted. Once they’re no longer “new,” these hover states disappear, but they’re always available if the user selects the dropdown indicator—you know, if they want a refresher of sorts.

[Above] For category pages, we created an experience where a first-time visitor is presented with a description of the category and suggestions of some introductory blog posts related to that category. Below this is a typical listing of most recent posts within that category. We thought this was a great way to give new readers deeper insights to Bulletproof’s approach to things like, coffee, diet, exercise, etc.



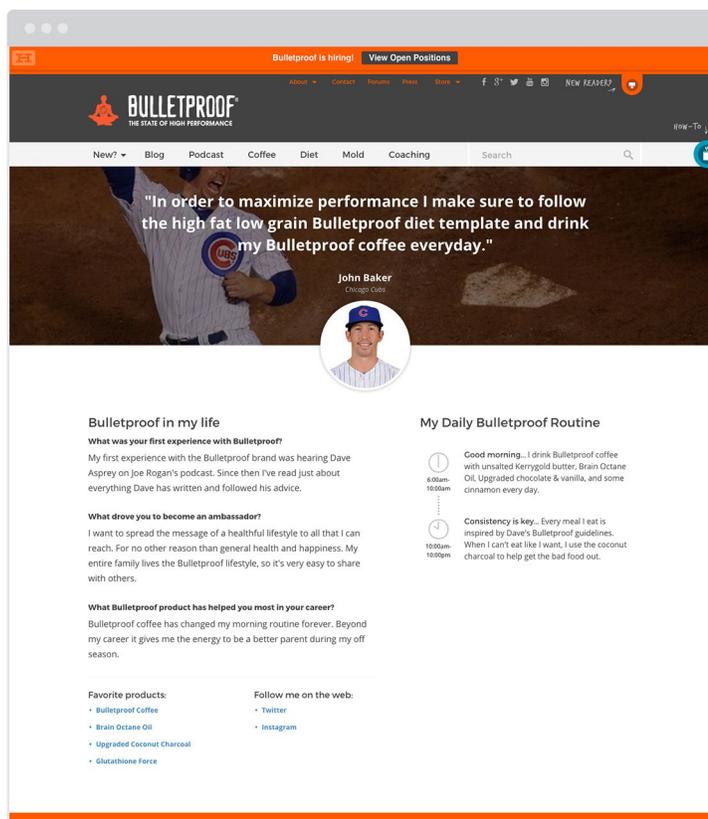
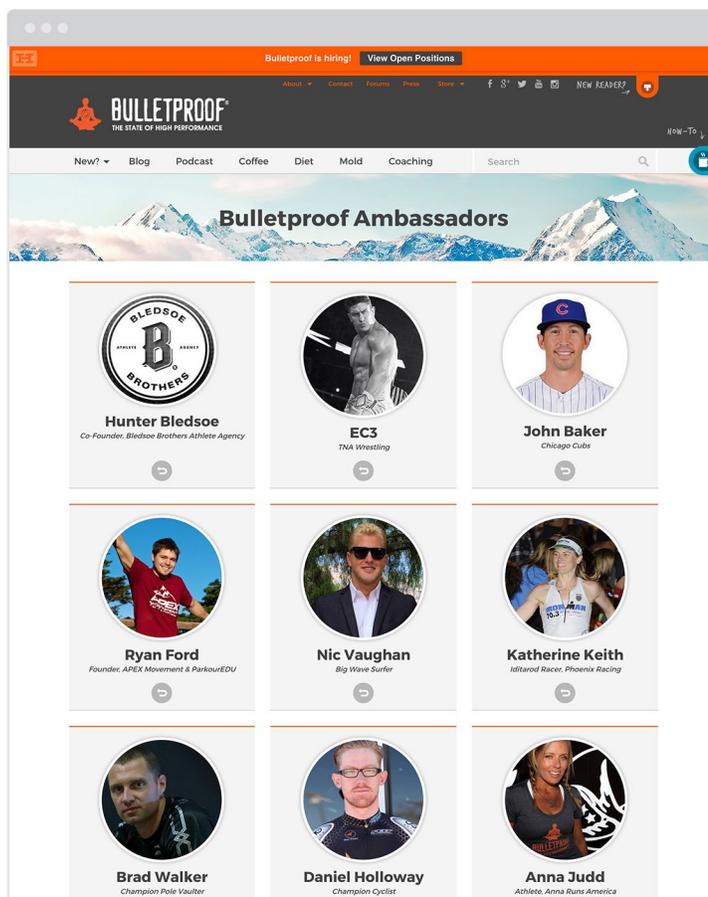
Implementing (More) Small Wins: Famous Face Value

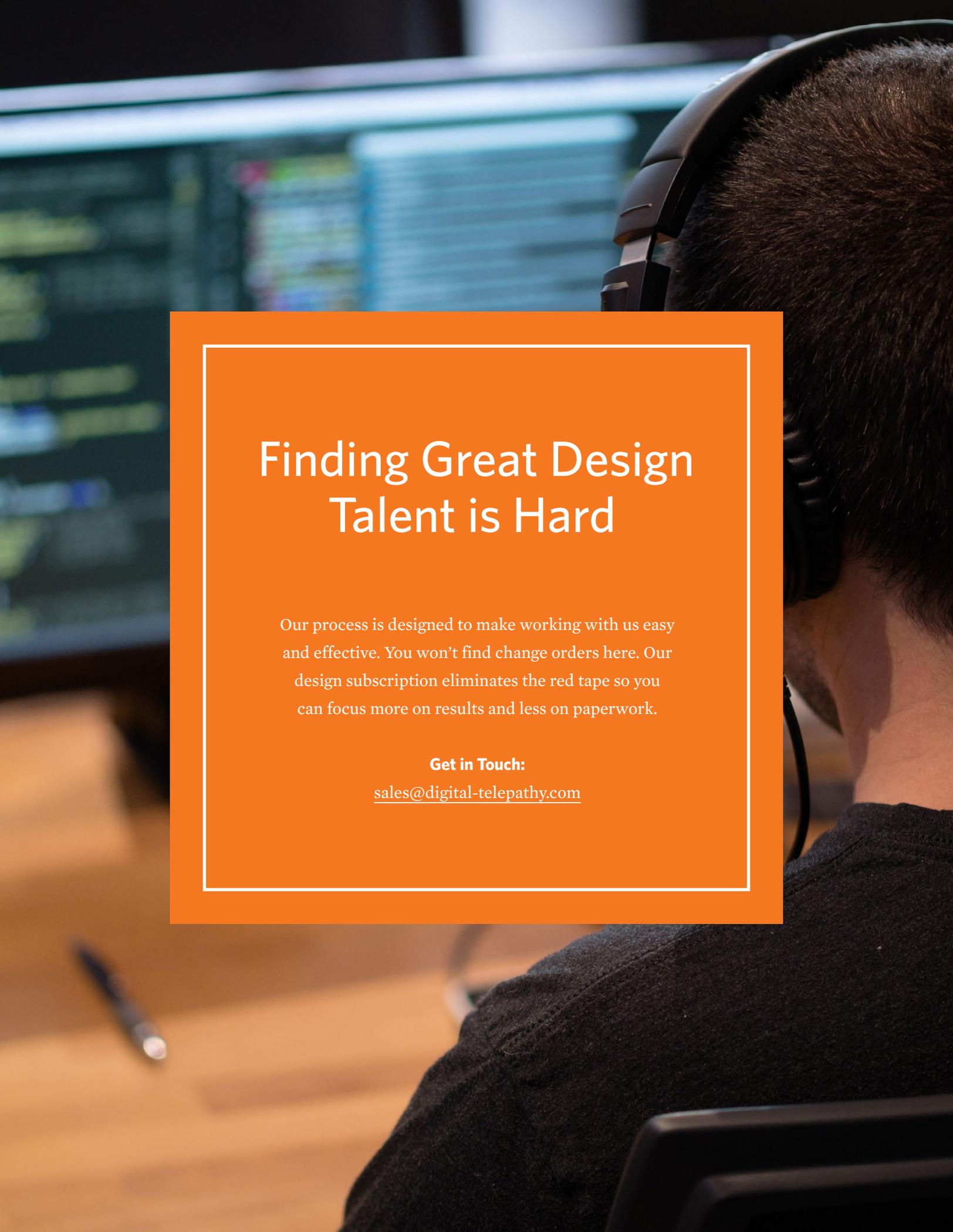
You might have heard the old adage, don't take someone at face value. Well, sometimes that doesn't ring true—especially when it comes to celebrity endorsements. Those famous faces can help any business and are a valuable form of social proof. Bulletproof, has relationship with a few famous faces who are fans of the coffee, as well as their other products and supplements. When Nate and Brian heard that, a little (well-designed) light bulb shined over their heads. They started to work with the Bulletproof team to develop an Ambassador program. Nate and Brian thought it would be great to feature these famous

faces in their own type of “Ambassador” experience on the website.

Over time, Bulletproof has garnered support from a number of personalities from all walks of life—runners, triathletes, MLB players, MMA fighters and more—who are active advocates of the Bulletproof lifestyle, and most importantly: they were recognizable. When using this newfound content, Brian designed a unique Ambassador page that interacted with users like baseball cards. You turn them over for the stats on the back. There you’ll find a quick bio/testimonial, a look at their day and what Bulletproof products they actively use daily and when.

As we worked further on this single-pager, we realized it would be another great opportunity to infuse some of the Bulletproof products into the user’s journey. For instance, wouldn’t it be cool if you could buy a Bulletproof product package that mirrored your most-beloved Ambassador’s daily Bulletproof program? Yeah, we think so, too. We still continue to work with Bulletproof to iterate on all these ideas. Check out their site often for improvements, updates and overall awesomeness.





Finding Great Design Talent is Hard

Our process is designed to make working with us easy and effective. You won't find change orders here. Our design subscription eliminates the red tape so you can focus more on results and less on paperwork.

Get in Touch:

sales@digital-telepathy.com