

WAITING FOR STARSHOT? DON'T! GET LAYOUT BUILDER WORKING RIGHT NOW

# **OSTraining**

https://ostraining.com

## **Session Description:**

I can't wait for Starshot (Drupal CMS)! Literally - it's going to be awesome - but I can't wait. I have sites to build right now.

"Out-of-the-box" Layout Builder is pretty terrible. This session presents one way of configuring Layout Builder that makes it easier to use with beautiful results that anyone can implement.

You'll come away with a list of recommended contributed modules and configuration settings, and a completed "Startersite" launched with one mouse click.

The Startersite is hosted on Gitpod (I have support videos on the entire setup) and comes with a complete set of styles, pre-set blocks, and more - all without a line of code and without locking into any vendor.

We've been using this approach to convert 30 non-Drupal sites over very quickly, making the content editor's job a LOT easier.

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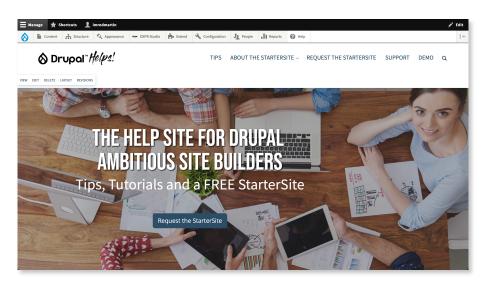
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# INTRODUCTION

This session (and the course at OSTraining - <a href="https://ostraining.com/courses/layout-builder-for-the-ambitious-site-builder/">https://ostraining.com/courses/layout-builder-for-the-ambitious-site-builder/</a>) is the result of the feedback of hundreds of site builders and content editors frustrated with inconsistent site builds coming from developers and agencies and the need for a positive first experience with Layout Builder. So we built a "Starter Site" featuring:

- only core and contributed modules.
- a better "out-of-the-box" experience for our students and site builders in general with just a ton of configuration already done.
- a FREE server environment for training and "quickie" site building.
- A support site <a href="https://drupalhelps.com">https://drupalhelps.com</a>



Better documentation / video support is coming soon.

# A QUICK OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PAGE BUILDERS IN DRUPAL

There are a few choices in the "Page Builder" space in Drupal.

## Acquia Site Studio:

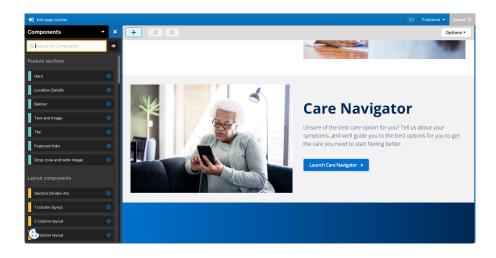
https://www.acquia.com/drupal/site-studio

#### **Pros:**

- Probably the best of them
- · Highly configurable
- · Fairly easy to learn for a content editor

#### Cons:

- Expensive
- Locked into a vendor
- While it can use fields from a content type, most implementations use completely unstructured data (I've trained on more than a dozen of implementations for Acquia)
- · Difficult to configure as a site builder / administrator



## DXPR: https://dxpr.com/drupal-layout-builder

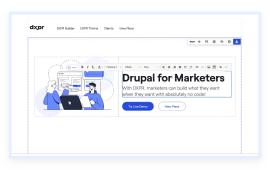
#### **Pros**:

- Clean
- Easy to use
- Has pretty much all the components you'd likely use
- Reasonably priced (<a href="https://dxpr.com/pricing">https://dxpr.com/pricing</a>)
- Works seamlessly with their FREE theme (which I LOVE)
- · More intuitive than Acquia Site Studio

#### Cons:

- Not Free (but not expensive)
- Vendor lock-in
- · Lower tiers offer very limited value
- · Not as powerful or configurable as Site Studio



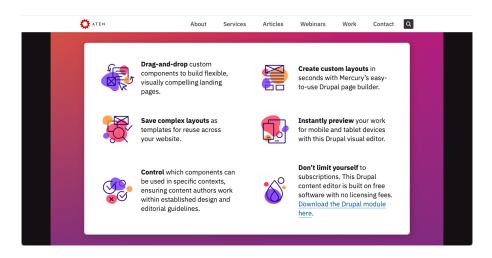


## **ATen Design Group: Mercury**

https://atendesigngroup.com/mercury-editor

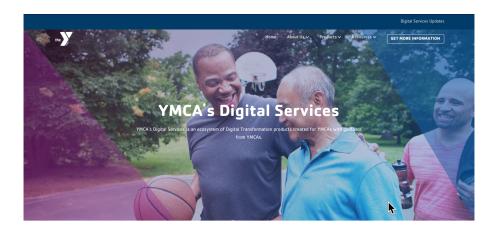
This is more of an advanced editor experience (more like Gutenberg than a layout builder - though it has elements of both.

Pricing is not available without a demo.



#### Open Y - YMCA

## https://www.drupal.org/project/openy



The Open Y platform is a content management system that uses Drupal 8/9 functionality and useful modules from YMCAs and digital partners. It's easy and free to use—everyone is welcome to implement Open Y and run Open Y projects.

#### Pros:

- · Open Source free to use.
- https://ds.ymca.org/ have put over \$1,000,000 into the project
- Very well developed.
- They can provide cloud hosting for YMCA franchises but you can use it too.
- HUGE ecosystem around the distribution <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/openy/ecosystem">https://www.drupal.org/project/openy/ecosystem</a> (this is bigger than you think at first glance).

#### Cons:

• Distribution - so all the cons that go along with that.

#### **Provus from PrometSource:**

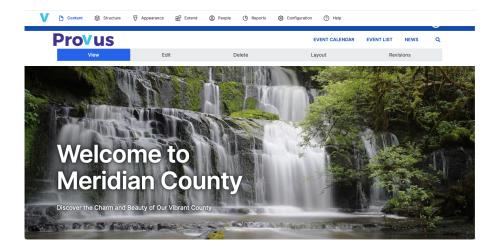
https://www.prometsource.com/provus

#### Pros:

- Available as a distribution: <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/provus/">https://www.drupal.org/project/provus/</a>
- · Built on Layout Builder and contributed modules
- Currently free (though they are working on a paid version mostly for government sites)
- It's really good at what it offers.

#### Cons:

- Not upgradable (at this time)
- Not configurable by a Site Builder you need to work with PrometSource for that.
- Like all of these you're locked in once you start using it.



# PROGRESS FROM DRUPALCON / EXPERIENCE BUILDER INITIATIVE

https://dri.es/evolving-drupal-layout-builder-to-an-experience-builder (April 23, 2024)

## **Progress Report:**

"After thorough analysis and discussions with key stakeholders, including Automattic's Gutenberg team, the Drupal Core Committers decided the best approach is to expand the Layout Builder while also incorporating the best elements of Paragraphs."

"I feel strongly that a unified Experience Builder is one of the most important initiatives we can undertake right now."
(I can't agree more...)

https://www.drupal.org/about/core/blog/working-toward-anexperience-builder (April 23, 2024)

When this initiative becomes a reality - I'm hoping that much of this session will be obsolete! But let's face it - how far off is that really?:)

**Status Updates**: <a href="https://www.drupal.org/about/starshot/">https://www.drupal.org/about/starshot/</a> initiatives/experience-builder.

June 19, 2024 Update - <a href="https://youtube.com/watch?v=IPBwqiZZczU">https://youtube.com/watch?v=IPBwqiZZczU</a> (really worth watching)

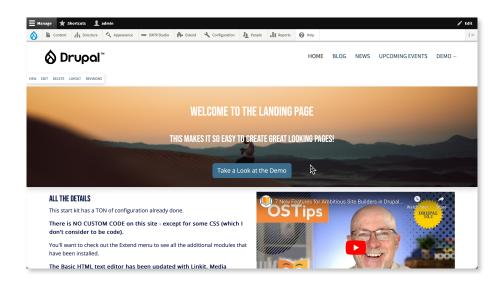


# A STARTER SITE YOU CAN USE

You can follow along and even build sites with Rod's "Starter Site". It's a site that is fully configured with everything we talk about today (and a LOT more), and it's free to use in any way you'd like.

https://rodsurl.com/startersite (username/pw: admin)

It's built on a <u>gitpod.io</u> repository, so it's completely self-contained and works in a browser (this is how we do all our training). **You'll need a GitHub account to use Gitpod.io.** This is **not** a Drupal "starter kit" or Recipe.



**HUGE thanks to Ofer Shaal** (<a href="https://www.drupal.org/u/shaal">https://www.drupal.org/u/shaal</a>) who (along with others) created the Drupal Gitpod workflow.

He's one of my Drupal heroes!

# You can see a fully functional version at <a href="https://drupallayoutbuilder.com">https://drupallayoutbuilder.com</a>.

Some of the features other than Layout Builder in the Starter Site:

- Uses the DXPR Theme (which I love and it's free)
- Updated Text Formats with Media, Linkit, Button styles, and removed image upload
- The Google Map block uses simple\_gmap to turn a oneline address into a Google map without needing an API Key.
- Media Manager is enhanced watch the video at <a href="https://imrodmartin.com/drupal/ultimate-guide-media-drupal-nedcamp-2022">https://imrodmartin.com/drupal/ultimate-guide-media-drupal-nedcamp-2022</a>
- A bunch of styles for background colors and text colors were added via config and CSS in **Asset Injector** - yes - I use Asset Injector:)

# LAYOUT BUILDER BASICS

Documentation: <a href="https://www.drupal.org/docs/8/core/modules/layout-builder">https://www.drupal.org/docs/8/core/modules/layout-builder</a>

Add-on Modules: <a href="https://www.drupal.org/docs/8/core/modules/layout-builder/additional-modules">https://www.drupal.org/docs/8/core/modules/layout-builder/additional-modules</a>

https://ostraining.com/courses/drupal-8-layout-builder/ (membership required)

https://www.specbee.com/blogs/layout-builder-in-drupal-9-complete-guide (older but still applicable)

# THE ADD-ON MODULES

- · Bootstrap Layout Builder
- · Layout Builder Blocks
- Layout Builder Styles
- · Layout Builder Restrictions
- Layout Builder Reorder
- Section Library
- Layout Builder Modal
- Layout Builder Direct Add
- · Layout Builder Save and Edit

#### Honorable Mentions

- https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_boolean
- https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_browser (the only reason I like Direct Add better is because you have to configure every block type you add to show up in the browser though this is much more attractive. Direct Add is automatic.)
- See the Alternatives point in each module for more.

What are yours?

# WHY I CHOSE THE ONES I DID

Where there are no options (ie Bootstrap Layout Builder for Bootstrap styles), it was a "no-brainer".

Where there were options (such as LB Styles) I chose the ones that worked best for my personal style/preferences.

If a module didn't work "out of the box" (Layout Builder + for me) I chose something else. That doesn't mean that they weren't good. I just chose to use **what worked with as little friction as possible**.

I'm a fan of "best practices" in Drupal of course, but again, I went with what works and incurs less friction (i.e. the use of Asset Injector for additional CSS instead of integrating it with the theme - it's just so much easier - you can move the CSS/JS into your theme later).

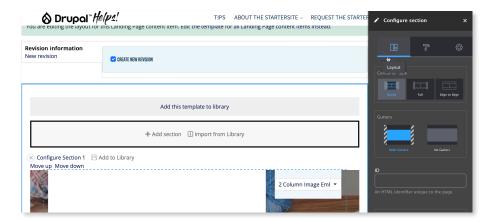
Lastly, while some organizations require modules to adhere to the security policy AND have full releases, several modules to not meet that criteria.

# **BOOTSTRAP LAYOUT BUILDER**

Link: https://www.drupal.org/project/bootstrap\_layout\_builder

**What it does**: Adds responsive grid support, with major UX enhancements to Drupal's core - Layout Builder module. Currently, this module supports Bootstrap 3/4 and 5.

#### Screenshot:

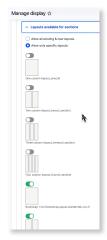


## Configuring:

You have a bunch of configuration options, however it's pretty much ready out of the box.

One configuration you'll want to do is at the Content Type (and possibly Block Type if you use them) Manage Display.

Update the "Layouts available for Sections" to only include BLB sections (I usually just set 1 to 4 columns).



You can configure what blocks are available in each column to provide total control.



To add colors to the Background and Typography areas, go to admin/config/bootstrap-styles/settings, add the classes there,



and then add the CSS (I did it in Asset Injector - available in

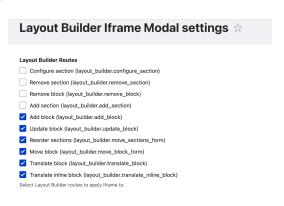
admin/config/development/asset-injector/css)

## How it integrates:

Once configured, it adds bootstrap styles to the **section** chooser.

If your theme supports full-width layouts (DXPR does), then BLB can provide sections that are fully responsive, full-width, padded, with or without gutters. It also adds the ability to set the background color, image or video, typography (colors, justification), spacing (padding, margins), borders (all kinds), shadows and animation (which is pretty cool).

**As of May 2024**, it uses Layout Builder iFrame Modal (instead of Media Library Theme Reset, now deprecated) which requires the following configuration: (<a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/">https://www.drupal.org/project/</a> bootstrap layout builder/issues/3325151)



# LAYOUT BUILDER BLOCKS

Link: https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_blocks

**Issues:** No relevant issues

Alternatives: None

What it does: Adds Bootstrap styles (as above) to individual blocks. Very customizable via CSS (see Asset injector on the

Starter site)

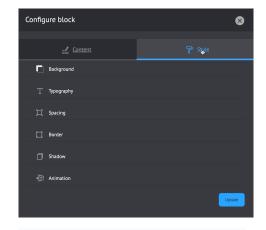
## Screenshot(s):

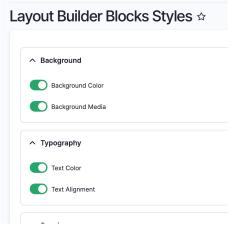
## **Configuring:**

admin/config/layoutbuilder-blocks/styles - You can select which styles to use and restrict them by block type.

## **How it integrates:**

Seamless with BLB.





# **LAYOUT BUILDER STYLES**

**Link:** https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_styles

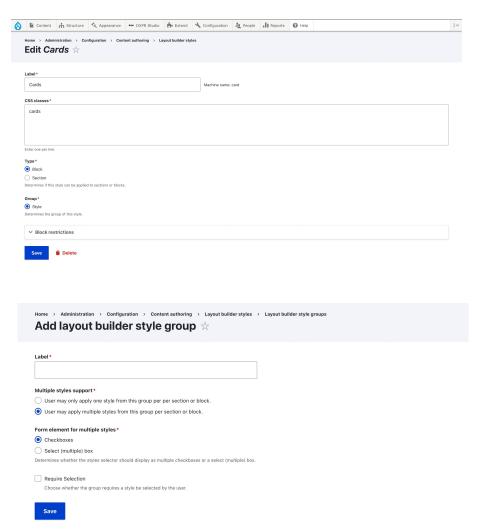
**Issues:** Nothing major

**Alternatives:** <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/">https://www.drupal.org/project/</a> <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/">layout\_custom\_section\_classes</a> - provides a lot more detail and customization but can be confusing for content editors without training.

**What it does:** This module allow site builders to select from a list of styles to apply to layout builder blocks and layout builder sections.

- Create multiple style "groups", allowing site builders to select a style from each group for the same block or section.
- Enforce a selection of no more than 1 style, or allow any number of styles to be selected.
- Optionally restrict styles to only be available on specific block types and section layout types.
- Styles and style groups are config entities and can therefore be exported/imported as any other configuration.

## Screenshot(s):



## **Configuring:**

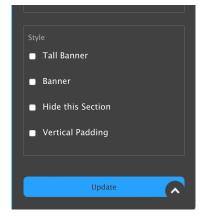
- Styles can be added for sections or blocks (see above).
- Classes can be anything you want (just make sure it isn't already being used in your theme).
- You can group styles in your own groups

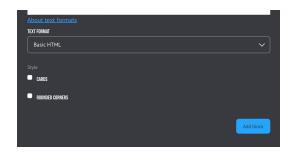
- Selecting a style can be with checkboxes or select box and can be restricted to one style or several.
- The actual CSS for the class needs to be added to your theme or using Asset Injector.

## **How it integrates:**

Once configured, check boxes or select boxes will appear beneath the relevant section/block:

Section Blocks





Whatever CSS you've added for that style will be applied.

# LAYOUT BUILDER RESTRICTIONS

**Link:** <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_restrictions">https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_restrictions</a>

**Issues:** This module may not be necessary for much longer. This functionality may be added to core but no date/release is set.

Alternatives: none

#### What it does:

This module provides a configurable UI for restricting blocks and layouts. Sites can allow all options from a certain provider, or restrict all options by provider, or specify individual allowed blocks & layouts.

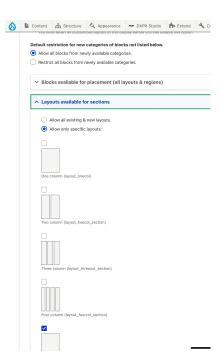
#### Screenshot(s):

## **Configuring:**

Wherever you're using Layout Builder, restrictions will appear in the dropdown as seen in the image.

Typically, I only allow a 1, 2, 3 and sometimes 4 column bootstrap section.

You can further restrict blocks by section (which is brilliant!) providing tight control over what can be placed by an editor (if desired).



## **How it integrates:**

Once configured, a builder/editor will only be able to select sections and blocks that have been pre-authorized according to your style guide/design rules.

# LAYOUT BUILDER REORDER

Link: https://www.drupal.org/project/layout builder reorder

**Issues:** None

Alternatives: None

**What it does:** It allows sections to be re-ordered by clicking an "up" or "down" link for each section. This is a huge time saver! Without this module, you would have to delete sections and start over if the order changed.

## Screenshot(s):



**Configuring:** None. Though I added some CSS to improve the spacing.

**How it integrates:** Clicking the up or down link will move a section one position in the order.

# **SECTION LIBRARY**

Link: https://www.drupal.org/project/section\_library

#### **Issues:**

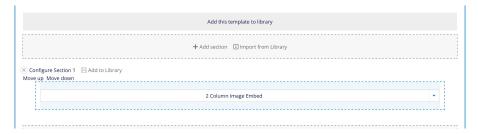
**Alternatives:** Layout Builder Library (though it does actually add functionality as well (<a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_library">https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_library</a>)

#### What it does:

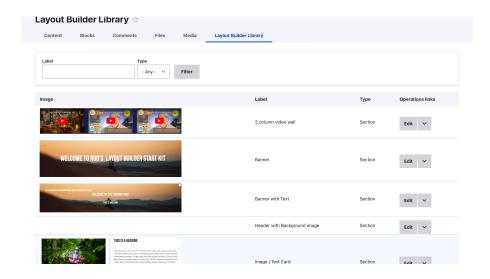
One of the best features of Acquia's Site Studio and Promet Source's Provus, is the ability to add sections and complete layout templates to a library that can be re-used at the click of a button. Well, that's what this module does and it's really cool!

You can add thumbnails as you save them for easier locating.

## Screenshot(s):



Saved sections and templates can be reviewed at Content->Layout Builder Library.



## Configuring: None

## **How it integrates:**

Saved **sections** may be recalled in any layout. Editing the contents of the blocks will NOT impact the saved version. (I usually fill the blocks with sample data/images and replace as needed).

Saved **templates** will insert all the sections and blocks saved to that template. A very fast way to build marketing pages that need to be formatted similarly. (I use it with a "home page" formula for new sites).

# LAYOUT BUILDER MODAL

Link: https://www.drupal.org/project/layout\_builder\_modal

**Issues:** none

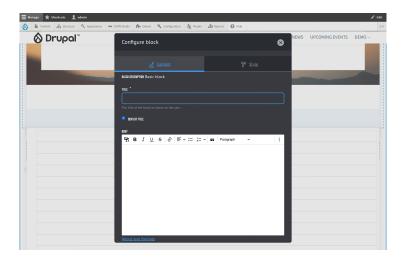
In a text-area (body) field, when switching to code view the window shrinks to one line. (this may be fixed on a new site). Frustrating but not a deal breaker.

**Alternatives:** Layout Builder + (see comments above for why I didn't use this)

#### What it does:

It moves Block configuration to a modal pop-up. Works on desktop and mobile.

## Screenshot(s):



Configuring: admin/config/user-interface/layout-builder-modal

## **How it integrates:**

This module eliminates the add block layout on the right side and brings it into a modal pop-up. This works well on desktop and tablet (mobile).

# LAYOUT BUILDER DIRECT ADD

Link: <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/lb\_direct\_add">https://www.drupal.org/project/lb\_direct\_add</a>

**Issues:** None

Alternatives: https://www.drupal.org/project/

layout builder browser (see the listing on page 12 for the reason I

chose this one)

#### What it does:

Rather than clicking Add Block->Add Custom Block->selecting the block, this module adds a drop down in each section / column. Huge time saver! The only downside is that if you create a lot of custom block types, the list gets a little long.

## **Screenshot(s):**

Basic block	
Button	
Card	
Google Map	
Heading	
Image Embed	
Large Image Embed	
Stat Card	
Two Column Image Embed	
Video	
More	

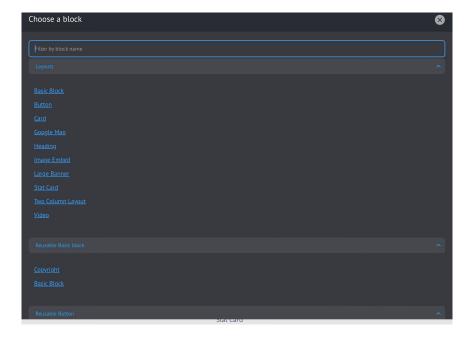
Configuring: None - it just works

## **How it integrates:**

Once installed, it provides a list of the custom block types that can be added to a section. It does **not** list pre-built blocks or views, there's a "More..." button at the bottom of the list.

If you have a LOT of custom block types, then LB Browser is likely a better choice. You can create categories or groups, customize the icons, it automatically lists any re-usable blocks (including views) and it can open in a modal if you'd like.

There is no "upload" image option however - you need to provide the path - likely in your theme folder or media folder. It just takes more configuration to get it working.



(in a modal, no images)

# LAYOUT BUILDER SAVE AND EDIT

Link: <a href="https://www.drupal.org/project/">https://www.drupal.org/project/</a>

layout builder save and edit

Issues: None

**Alternatives: None** 

#### What it does:

I'm a huge fan of Save and Edit buttons in Drupal. I add the Save and Edit module for content editors on every site I build. This does exactly what it says for Layouts. You click "Save and Edit" and instead of leaving the layout, you can continue editing. A new revision is created on every Save.

## Screenshot(s):



## **Configuring:**

You can select the Node types, auto un-publish nodes on click and hide any of the default buttons. I typically add all Node types and leave everything else as is.



## How it integrates:

At the top of a layout, the Save and Edit button appears next to the built in Save button.

# CUSTOM BLOCK TYPES (WHY AND WHAT KINDS)

All of the page builders reviewed earlier can use Components to add features. What we've tried to accomplish in this session is functionality with zero code.

The "secret sauce" to this whole endeavor is custom block types that can be created, styled using Layout Builder Styles and inserted into Layout Builder.

## In the Starter Site we created the following Block Types:

- Basic Block (build-in)
- Card
- Files List
- Google Map (simple\_gmap module)
- Heading
- Image Embed (a large selection of image styles built with Focal Point)
- Large Banner Centered Text
- Large Banner Text on Side
- Stats Card
- Two Column Layout (in a two-column section, this can provide a two-column layout in the left or right column)
- Video (100% responsive)

## What's missing:

- Buttons There are 9 button styles built into the WYSIWYG editor - so no need for a block on it's own.
- Slideshow
- FAQ style accordions
- Flexible Card layouts (these can be created with the above, just takes a little more work).

## **Creating and Styling Block Types**

For training purposes, I'm only going to cover the "Large Banner with Text on Side".

There is only one field: Body

On the Manage Layout tab, click Layout Builder then manage the layout and add a two-column section. Place the body field in the left column.

This produces a class: "block-inline-blocklarge-banner-text-on-side" that you can style.

The following CSS was added in Asset Injector (Layout Builder Styles in the StarterSite):

```
.block-inline-blocklarge-banner-text-on-side { padding-left:
15%; padding-right: 15%;}
.block-inline-blocklarge-banner-text-on-side h2 {color: #fff;
font-size: 4em; text-align:left; padding-top: 80px; line-
height: 1.0em; text-shadow: 2px 2px 4px #0000000; }
.block-inline-blocklarge-banner-text-on-side p {color: #fff;
font-size: 1.1em; text-align:left; line-height: 1.1em;}
.block-inline-blocklarge-banner-text-on-side h4 {color: #fff;
font-size: 2.0em; text-align:left; line-height: 1.0em;}
.block-inline-blocklarge-banner-text-on-side { height: 420px;}
```

Implementing this block type is simple:

- Create a new 1-column section Edge to Edge with No Gutters.
- 2. Click on the Paint Roller icon and add an image in the background. Click Add Section.
- 3. Add a "Large Banner Text on Side" block.
- 4. The Title will produce large text with a shadow. The body will be white by default and slightly compressed.

5. You should keep this short - the max height of the block is 420px.

The 2-column block uses Layout Builder in the Manage Display of the block! (yes - you can embed a layout inside a layout) and is, of course, 100% responsive.

# **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

(not necessarily LB related)

- √ OSTraining: <a href="https://ostraining.com">https://ostraining.com</a>
- ✓ Layout Builder Course: <a href="https://ostraining.com/courses/layout-builder-for-the-ambitious-site-builder/">https://ostraining.com/courses/layout-builder-for-the-ambitious-site-builder/</a>
- ✓ Remote development: DDEV on Github (<a href="https://github.com/">https://github.com/</a> <a href="mirrodmartin/ddev-gitpod">imrodmartin/ddev-gitpod</a>) - HUGE thanks to Ofer Shaal (<a href="https://www.drupal.org/u/shaal">https://www.drupal.org/u/shaal</a>)
- √ <a href="https://rodsurl.com/ostips">https://rodsurl.com/ostips</a> (Weekly Drupal Tips on YouTube)

## **Layout Builder OSTip Videos:**













## CONCLUSION

You've probably picked up that this is not a "perfect" solution - it's definitely a work in progress.

I'm particularly excited about Experience Builder. My hope is that this solution will become pretty much obsolete in 12-18 months. Since we're using only core and contributed modules - there \*should\* be an upgrade path.

As mentioned in the introduction, we're using this Starter Site to save hours at the beginning of every site build. We've taken the feedback of hundreds of site builders and content editors and integrated it into an easy to install starter site. Moving it to a live server is straightforward - <a href="https://rodsurl.com/move-gitpod-to-server">https://rodsurl.com/move-gitpod-to-server</a>.

Layout Builder is definitely still in the "beginner" stages of being useful. That said, with a little configuration and creativity, it can serve the needs of a LOT of Drupal site builders and content editors without locking into any vendor or system - other than Drupal itself!

For more information, head over to <a href="https://drupalhelps.com">https://drupalhelps.com</a>.

# **ABOUT YOUR TRAINER**

## **ROD MARTIN**

Rod holds two masters degrees and has been training people how to do "things" for over 30 years. Originally from Australia, he grew up in Canada and now resides just outside Cincinnati, Ohio.



Rod began teaching Drupal in 2011 and has travelled hundreds of thousands of miles speaking and training all over the world. Through his live, online and video training (Acquia Academy, LinkedIn Learning, OSTraining, YouTube), he's introduced around 50,000 people to Drupal.

Rod plays ice hockey a couple of times a week and rides his Goldwing motorcycle pretty much everywhere he can. (https://imrodmartin.com)

You can find his courses in our Drupal and Joomla sections (<a href="https://ostraining.com">https://ostraining.com</a>) and his OSTips videos on the OSTraining YouTube channel: <a href="https://youtube.com/@Ostraining">https://youtube.com/@Ostraining</a>.