GROWTH **DRIVEN** DESIGN

FORWARD

The traditional web design model is totally broken, it leaves you vulnerable to a number of risks and often does not produce results you had anticipated.

Growth-Driven Design is the new gold standard for delivering results and bringing measurable business value through web design. It is a smarter, more agile and data-driven approach that minimises the pitfalls of traditional web design and produces high-performing websites.

This book is a must read for anyone who has ever encountered a website redesign nightmare or who is not happy with the results they are getting from their current website.

We will break down exactly what is wrong with the traditional web design process and set the stage for a new and better process, Growth-Driven Design. Please invest some time into reading this book, make notes and start to think about how a smarter way to approach web design may help you.

CONTENTS OF THIS GUIDE:

INTRODUCTION

You are probably wasting time and resources on your website!

Since 1997 we have eaten, slept and breathed web design. We have designed built and launched hundreds of websites but just over a year ago we realised that everything we thought we knew about the web design process was wrong.

What we had come to accept as the standard way to approach building and maintaining a website was, and remains, riddled with systemic risk and is probably costing your business time, money and opportunity.

But there is a better way, a new approach designing and building a website that holds tremendous potential for you and your organisation. It is time to take a step back and challenge the assumptions of the traditional web design process.

Our aim in writing this book is that it will help you to understand this new approach and avoid website disasters, produce better results and grow your business.

TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN IS BROKEN

Your website is your biggest marketing asset. It is the centrepiece of all your marketing activities. It is often the first place people go when looking for more information on your products or services. It is the place where we drive our marketing efforts and, it is often the first place prospects gain their first impressions.

Additionally, your website is also your best salesperson. It's been said that a prospect has already moved through 70% of the sales process before reaching out to your sales team. Where are they finding the information before talking to someone? Your website.

As critically important as websites are, the way we approach building and improving them is fundamentally broken.

The Traditional Website Design Process

The look people give us when we ask them about their last website redesign project speaks volumes and it's seldom been an easy process.

Think back to your last website redesign project and ask yourself:

- **How would you describe the overall experience?**
- **What went right and wrong in the process?**
- **How much time/energy/resources did it take to finally get live?**
- **Did it get launched on time or on budget?**
- **After the launch, how much continuous improvement has happened to it?**
- **How excited would you be to undertake another website redesign?**

If you have ever been involved in a website redesign project, it is likely that you did not enjoy the process.

The reason that we have come to accept the fact that a website redesign is one giant headache is because of the approach we have had to take to build them. The traditional website redesign process is filled with systemic risk and headaches.

Risks of Traditional Web Design

Large Up-Front Cost: The average small to medium-sized business/enterprise (SME) website typically costs anywhere between £3,000 - £15,000, a substantial up-front cost for most businesses. Not only is this cost hard to budget for all at once, but it is also paid in full before even knowing what impact the website will have on your business.

Large Time & Resource Commitment: In addition to the up-front expense, the average SME website typically takes three months to complete and requires a great deal of resources and energy from your team.

This amount of time invested, with no business results to show from it until after it launches, is sufficient to make anyone a bit uneasy.

Over Budget, Not on Time and Not Flexible: Even if the budget and time is approved, there are so many moving parts, people and steps involved in a large project, it's extremely difficult to accurately quote the cost and determine how long a project this large will take.

This results in many website projects being delayed and/or running over budget delaying results and, ultimately, a return on the investment made.

Subjective Designs and No Guarantee It Will Improve Performance: At the end of the day, you are being held accountable for a measurable increase in the results obtained from your website redesign.

So the question becomes: after all of the time, money and resources you've put into the website redesign, how do you (or the agency you have hired) know that what you will finally launch is the best possible performing website?

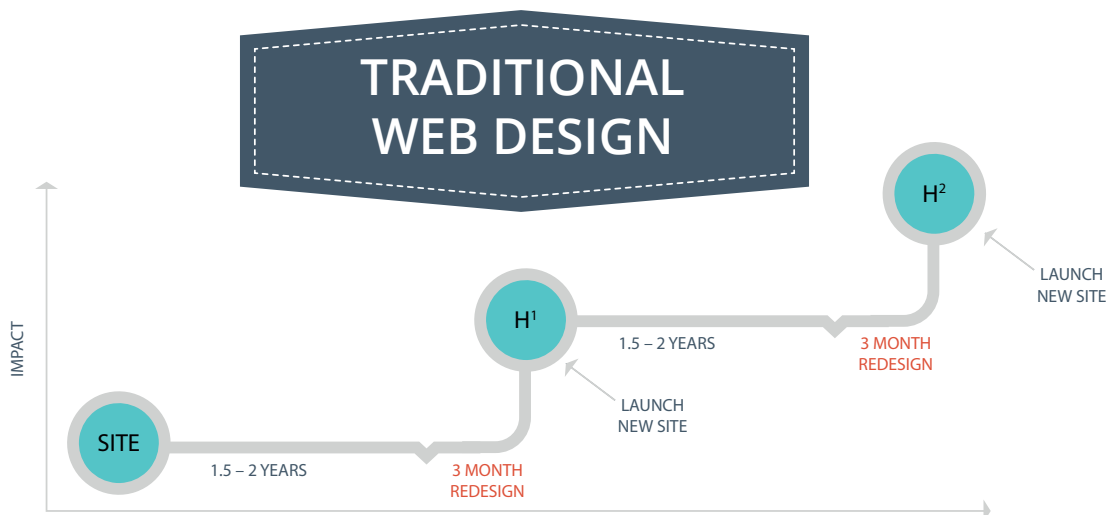The answer is you can't, it's impossible.

All you can do is look through all your usage data, perform some user research and formulate a hypothesis of what you believe to be a high-performing website. Then this hypothesis is launched and never validated to see whether what we thought was in-fact correct.

We have all heard horror stories of a website being launched and then the website's performance tanking for one reason or another.

After launch, a website typically sits with no major updates for 1.5 to 2 years.

Whatever the reason - lack of time, no budget, other priorities, etc. we let our website, our #1 marketing asset and best salesperson, sit relatively unchanged for years. This is clearly not an ideal way to maximise website performance, yet we continue to do it.

Yes, there may be some small updates or improvements, along with adding blogs or landing pages to the site, but the core and vast majority of the site remains untouched.

TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN

IMPACT

SITE

1.5 – 2 YEARS

3 MONTH REDESIGN

H¹

LAUNCH NEW SITE

1.5 – 2 YEARS

3 MONTH REDESIGN

H²

LAUNCH NEW SITE
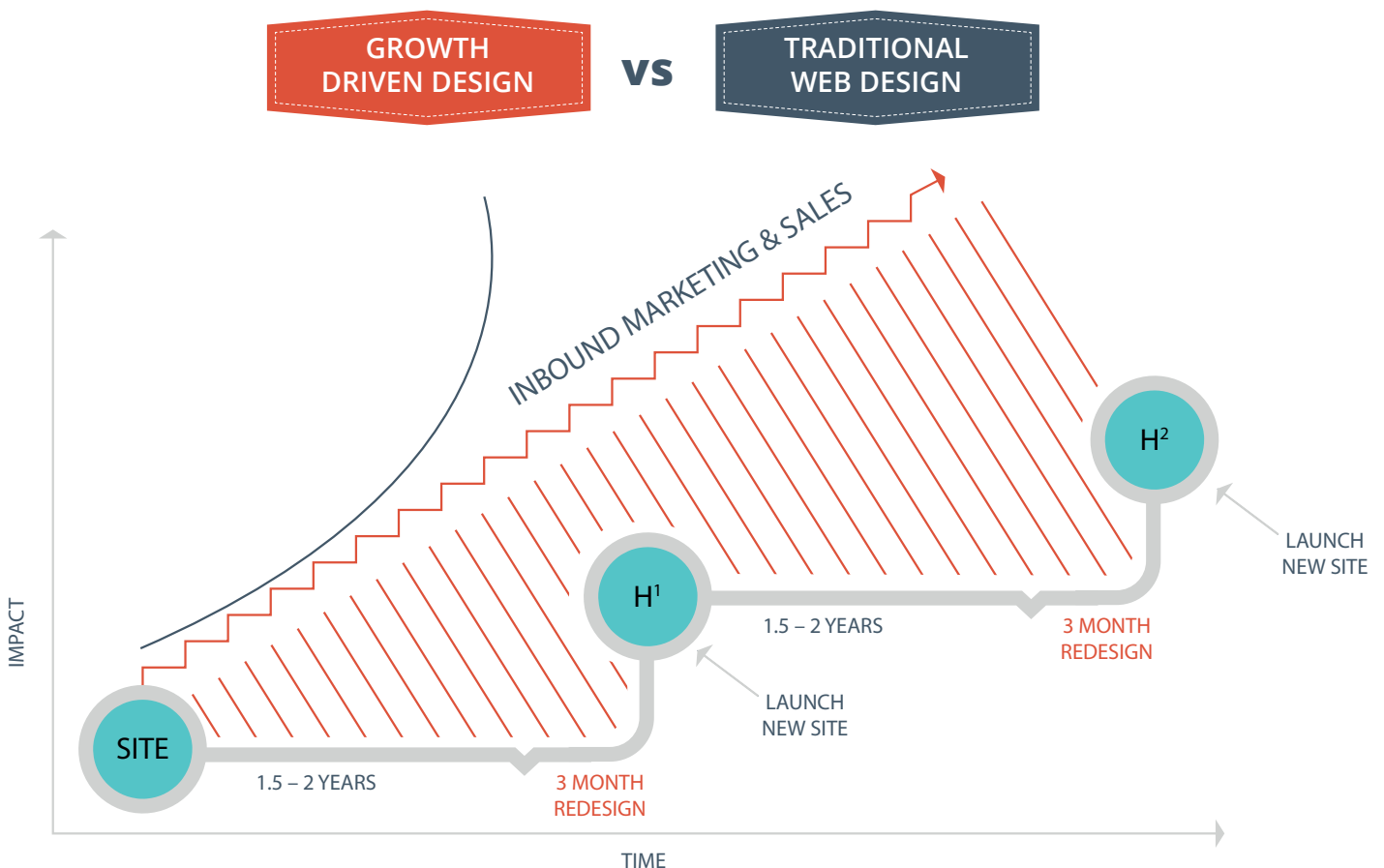
THE SHIFT MARKETERS NEED TO MAKE

It is now time to take a step back and look at how we can approach the website redesign process from a different angle.

We need to find a more efficient method that avoids all of the risks we outlined in the traditional web design process and produces a peak performing website. A web design process that is quick, agile and produces better results and delivers a measurable ROI.

What is that process? –
it's called **Growth-Driven Design**.

A Smarter Way to Think About Web Design

Growth-Driven Design is a completely new approach and way of thinking about building and growing your website.

GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN **VS** TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN

INBOUND MARKETING & SALES

IMPACT

SITE

H¹

H²

LAUNCH NEW SITE

LAUNCH NEW SITE

1.5 – 2 YEARS

3 MONTH REDESIGN

1.5 – 2 YEARS

3 MONTH REDESIGN

TIME

THE THREE PILLARS OF GROWTH-DRIVEN DESIGN

(1) **Minimize risks associated with traditional web design.**

We work to avoid the risks of traditional web design by taking a systematic approach to shorten the time to launch, focusing on real impact and continuous learning and improvement.

(2) **Continuously learn and improve.**

We are constantly researching, testing and learning about our visitors to inform on-going website improvements. Through continuous improvements we can reach peak performance.

(3) **As you learn, inform marketing and sales (and vice versa).**

Growth-Driven Design is tightly integrated with marketing & sales. What we learn about visitors helps inform and improve marketing & sales strategies and tactics (and vice versa).

10

STRATEGY

WISHLIST

LAUNCH
PAD
WEBSITE

THE GROWTH-DRIVEN DESIGN PROCESS

The Growth-Driven Design process is broken up into two major phases:

Strategy

Much like the traditional website design process, the first stage of Growth-Driven Design is the strategy stage.

In this stage we will develop a solid foundation from which we can build our Growth-Driven Design process using the following steps:

Goals: What are the performance goals that we are trying to achieve with our website? How have we historically performed, where would we like to improve and how will this impact the overall goal of the marketing department?

For help with setting and tracking goals, **download HubSpot's free S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) marketing goals Excel template.**

Personas: Next you will develop detailed persona profiles for the different types of groups visiting the site.

A persona is a fictional representation of your ideal customer. You can create different groups of personas based on common characteristics your audience shares. This could be a point of pain, industry, job title, etc.

As you will learn later in this book, Growth-Driven Design centres around the user, so it is critically important to fully research and develop your persona profiles in the beginning, as they will set the stage for all future activities.

To learn how to create personas for your business, **download HubSpot's free buyer persona PowerPoint template.**

11

Quantitative Research - Website & Analytics Audit: It is time to start digging into the data. Perform a quantitative audit of how the existing website is performing, reviewing what is, and is not, performing well, where users are dropping off, etc.

As you complete your website audit, you will start identifying where there is opportunity for improvements for future development work.

> *"Our users are constantly telling us what they like and don't like about our websites and apps through the actions they take. Quantitative research is when we listen to our users by collecting data for these actions, and interpret in aggregate what the data means about our user base or product.*
>
> *Through interpreting our quantitative data, we can create a hypothesis around what we can improve, how we can improve it, and relatively how much impact our improvement can have. We can then test our hypothesis with an experiment, and use our quantitative data to measure the results.*
>
> Matthew Rheault
> Sidekick, Growth Team - Lead Developer

Qualitative Research - User Research: User Research: Once you have identified some of the areas of opportunity via your audit, the next step is pro-actively researching your existing user base to learn more about them, gain a better understanding of who they are and find ways to improve their experience.

As you are collecting new user research, it will help you validate the assumptions you put in your original persona profiles and will provide additional information to include.

> *"Through qualitative research, we're able to observe the user's goals, motivations, and pain points in action. This helps us to develop an understanding for the human behaviors that are tied to the quantitative data points that we've collected.*
>
> *As a result, we can begin to empathize and design for the human on the other side of the monitor, thus improving our user experience and moving the needle on key performance indicators like conversion and retention."*
>
> Austin Knight
> HubSpot - UX Designer

Fundamental Assumptions: Using what you have learned in all of the previous steps, you can now start forming some fundamental assumptions about your users.

Some examples of fundamental assumptions include:

- Value propositions for each product, service and offer

- The various locations and devices users will be using to access your website.

- What information your users are seeking

These fundamental assumptions will help you explain the behaviour and motivations of your users and will be influential in both the global and page strategy and also future Growth-Driven Design cycles.

Global & Page Strategy: The last step in the strategy phase is to develop both a global strategy for the website as a whole and a specific page-by-page strategy for each major page on the site.

Both the global and individual page strategies should incorporate all of the previous steps and lay out a detailed strategy of exactly how to best engage and influence the user to best attain your goals.

PHASE 1

STRATEGY

WISHLIST

LAUNCH PAD WEBSITE

Your Wishlist

TThe next stage in the Growth-Driven Design process is developing your wish-list. Taking what you have learned in your strategy planning, gather your team together and identify every impactful, creative and innovative idea that you would like to include on the site.

The key is to come into this session with an open mind and not to refer to the existing website. Think about what items should be on the list to achieve your goals in an ideal world if money, time and development skills were not an issue.

This includes ideas such as:

• Key impactful website sections and pages

• Marketing assets, tools and resources

• Specific features, modules and functionality

• Design elements

• Changes in experience based on devices, country, etc.

After a few hours you will have a list of 50-150+ ideas for the new website. Not all of these items will be implemented right away, however. But it is important to flesh out as many ideas as possible at this stage.

Your wish-list will be used both to determine the initial action items for implementation on the new site, but it is also an agile and flexible list that you will continuously be adding to (and subtracting from) as you are re-prioritising items over time.

STRATEGY

WISHLIST

LAUNCH PAD WEBSITE

Launch Pad Website

In the traditional web design process we think of the launching of the website as the finish. In Growth-Driven Design it is the complete opposite.

In this stage we will be building and launching what we call a Launch Pad website. This Launch Pad website is the starting point from which all of your other Growth-Driven Design activities and improvements will develop.

The Launch Pad website should be go live quickly and will not be perfect. We want to avoid getting stuck on analysis, features or content while building our launch pad website. It may not be perfect on launch, but no website is. It will be a big improvement to your current website and give a starting point for the GDD programme of development.

The size and complexity of the Launch Pad website will vary depending on what you have on your wish-list and what type of website you have. However, it is extremely important that you are able to define the essential 20% that will make an impact and launch quickly so you can continue to learn about your users and improve the site.

Run an 80/20 Analysis on Your Wishlist

In the wish-list phase you will have compiled a long list of all the action items that you would ideally want on the site. Now it is time to start sorting and prioritising them to determine which are the first ones to be implemented.

Review the list with your team and identify the 20 percent of items that will produce 80 percent of the impact and value for your website's users. Once you have identified the core 20 percent of items, undertake some additional filtering by asking yourself, is this action item a must have or actually a

nice to have? If you answer nice to have then it will return back to the main list.

Then with the remaining items ask:

- **Is this absolutely necessary for the initial Launch Pad site, or could we build it into the site in month two or month three?**

The goal of asking these additional questions is to really narrow your focus to just the core, Must Have action items that will provide the most impact. It is essential to narrow the list of action items to ensure a quick launch.

Hypothesis Statements for Each Core Action Item

Once we have narrowed down our list of action items for the Launch Pad website down to the core 20% most impactful, must have items, you will then create a hypothesis statement for each one of the action items.

The hypothesis statement allows us to gain clarity on how each action item relates back to the goals you are trying to achieve, the persona you are focusing on and the expected impact this change or update will have.

Here's an example hypothesis statement:

ACTION ITEM 1	Hypothesis Statement

For [MARKETING MARY] visiting the [PRICING PAGE], we believe changing [ENTERPRISE PRICING] into a [REQUEST A QUOTE] will [BOOST MQL CONVERSION BY 10%]

We believe this to be true because [RESEARCH OR PREVIOUSLY VALIDATED ASSUMPTION]

Expected Impact + Effort Required + Metrics Measured + Definition of Complete

At the bottom of each statement, there are four important items:

Expected Impact - The impact value should be a single number based on the value the visitor will get from the action item and the impact that will have in moving toward your goals.

Effort Required - The effort required should also be a single number that represents the combination of the number of hours, resources and difficulty to implement that particular action item.

Metrics Measured - What specific metrics will you need to measure to test this specific action item and evaluate if your hypothesis was correct? The more specific the metrics are that you list, the better.

Definition of Complete - What are all the steps you need to complete in order to consider this action item complete? Defining this up front is important because it will erase any grey areas that may arise later down the road when reviewing results or efficiency.

Web Process Steps

Once you have identified the most critical action items you must include on your Launch Pad site, you can run those items through the standard website implementation process, including:

• Messaging & Content

• User Experience (UX) & Site Architecture

• Inbound Marketing Strategy Alignment

• Wire-frames

• Designs

• Development

• Quality Assurance and Testing

Set Up Data Collection

The last step of the Launch Pad website is to set up qualitative and quantitative data collection around:

• Your goals defined in the strategy phase

• Each of your fundamental assumptions

--and--

• Each hypothesis statement of your action items implemented in the Launch Pad website.

Setting up data collection is an important step, as it allows you to start learning about your visitors once your Launch Pad site is live.

JUST LAUNCHED A NEW WEBSITE?

Have you recently launched a website but want to implement the Growth-Driven Design continuous improvement model? No problem!

You can use your existing website as your launch pad website and move right to phase 2, the on-going cycle of Growth-Driven Design.

THE GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN CYCLE

Continuous Improvement

Once your Launch Pad website has gone live, it will be time to start your on-going cycles to continuously experiment, learn and improve on your website.

You will still have a long wish-list of impactful items that you would like to implement on the site, it should be an agile list and should be updated on a regular basis.


This Revolves Around the Persona

This entire cycle starts with and revolves around the personas who are coming to your website.

At each stage of the cycle, we must continuously ask ourselves how this relates and provides value to the personas visiting your website.

At any point if it ever becomes unclear how an action item provides value to, or relates to the persona, you must take a step back and re-evaluate what you are working on.
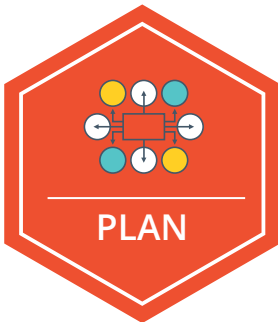
PLAN

The first step of the Growth-Driven Design cycle is planning. At this step you will be identifying the most impactful items at the current moment and planning to implement the top ones into the current cycle.

There are a number of steps to go through in the planning phase:

Performance vs. Goals: Review the current performance of the website and contrast that to the goals you are trying to achieve. This will inform you of where there is opportunity to improve.

Additional Data or Research: Coming out of the last cycle and while reviewing your performance vs. goals, there is often additional data and research you may need to do in order to help clarify what action items you should add to your wish-list.

Here's an Example ...

The marketing team may have written a blog on a particular topic that exploded in popularity and resulted in a great number of organic and social visitors.

We've now learned that this topic is important to your personas. How can you take that knowledge and add new items to your wishlist to influence your Growth-Driven Design program?

Learning from Marketing & Sales: Connect with the marketing and sales teams and see what key items they learned about the user since your last cycle.

This information can hold golden nuggets of insight that you can transfer to your action items you are implementing in your Growth-Driven Design program.
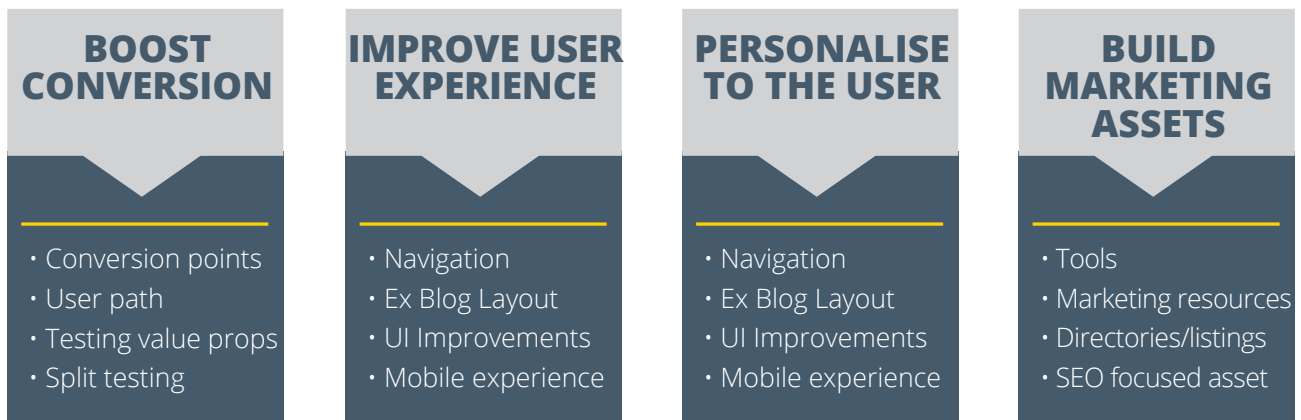
Brainstorm and Prioritize Wishlist: Based on all of the new data, research and learnings you have had up to this point, you will now have another brainstorming session to determine any new action items to add to the wish-list.

Generally speaking, your action items will fit within these buckets:

BOOST CONVERSION	IMPROVE USER EXPERIENCE	PERSONALISE TO THE USER	BUILD MARKETING ASSETS
• Conversion points • User path • Testing value props • Split testing	• Navigation • Ex Blog Layout • UI Improvements • Mobile experience	• Navigation • Ex Blog Layout • UI Improvements • Mobile experience	• Tools • Marketing resources • Directories/listings • SEO focused asset

Boost Conversions: The first bucket of wish-list activities are those that are directly related to conversion rate optimisation.

Improve User Experience: Improvements to the website that give the user a better experience and make it easier for them to navigate, find what they are looking for and solve their problem(s).

Personalize to the User: Adapting the site, calls-to-action, content offers, etc. to the specific visitor based on the data we know about them. This includes, but is not limited to, tailoring based on interests, persona, device, geolocation, referral source or previous actions on your site.

Build Marketing Assets: Marketing assets are items that hold great value for your marketing program such as email lists, social accounts, your blog, etc.

Build new marketing assets into the website such as tools, in-depth resource sections, online training, directories, etc. -- any item that will provide great value to both the end user and your company.

General Website Updates: Of course, there are going to be general website updates that come up from time to time and can be added to your wish-list as well.

Prioritize Your Wishlist

Once you have all the new items added to the wish-list, you will then prioritise all the action items based on the (High / Medium / Low) impact they will have on the goals of the website and value to the user.

Plan sprint cycle: With an updated and prioritised wish-list, you can then pick the most impactful action items that you want to implement in this cycle.

The number of items you pick will depend on how long the cycle is. You are better off picking fewer items and focusing on doing your best work with them. If you happen to complete them early, you can always go back to your wish-list and pick more.

CYCLE STEP 2

Develop

Moving into the develop phase of the cycle, you now have the most impactful action items to work on and it's time to start implementing them on the site.

This is where the work begins as everyone on your team gets together to start completing each action item that you selected in the planning phase.

Each action item that you implement should be considered an experiment to see the impact it has on the performance of the website. To measure your experiments you must set-up validation tracking around the metrics outlined on the action item.

After your experiment is pushed live, you may want develop a marketing campaign (social, PPC, blogging, etc.) specifically to drive traffic to that section of the site so you can start collecting data.

During the develop phase of the cycle you will build and schedule that marketing campaign while working with your marketing team.

Learn

LEARN

After your experiments have had enough time to run and collect data, you can then move to the learn phase. In the learning phase you are going to review what information you collected about your website visitors.

Based on the information you collected, you can then validate or disprove your hypothesis on your action item card. Did your change have the impact you expected and why? Based on the results, what did this teach you about your visitor? What did you learn about them that you did not know before?

Once you determine whether your hypothesis was correct and laid out what you have learned about your users, then you will want to publish this information in a central location for everyone within the organisation. Having a structured system for publishing your findings is also a great reference for the future if you ever need to look for trends or look up previous experiments.

"Every website or application has a unique subset of users that share common traits. It is a primary goal of Growth-Driven experiments to answer questions about our unique subset of users.

Let's imagine that we have a food blog and want to know how to best engage our readers. Take a look at the following learnings we've had through running quantitative experiments:

- *We learn that our users want comfort food in the winter, but want to lose weight through the rest of the year.*
- *We learn that our users are more likely to read an entire piece of content if our first paragraph contains less than 120 characters and is preceded by a full width image.*
- *We learn that our users are most engaged with our content at 9 am on weekdays.*

These learnings all compound on one another and help us to hone in on who our users are and exactly what works best to engage them. With these three key learnings, we will know what to write about seasonally, how to format our content, and when to send out our newsletter.

Matthew Rheault
Sidekick, Growth Team - Lead Developer

Transfer

TRANSFER

The last step in the cycle is to now transfer any impactful information you have learned in your cycle to other parts of your business.
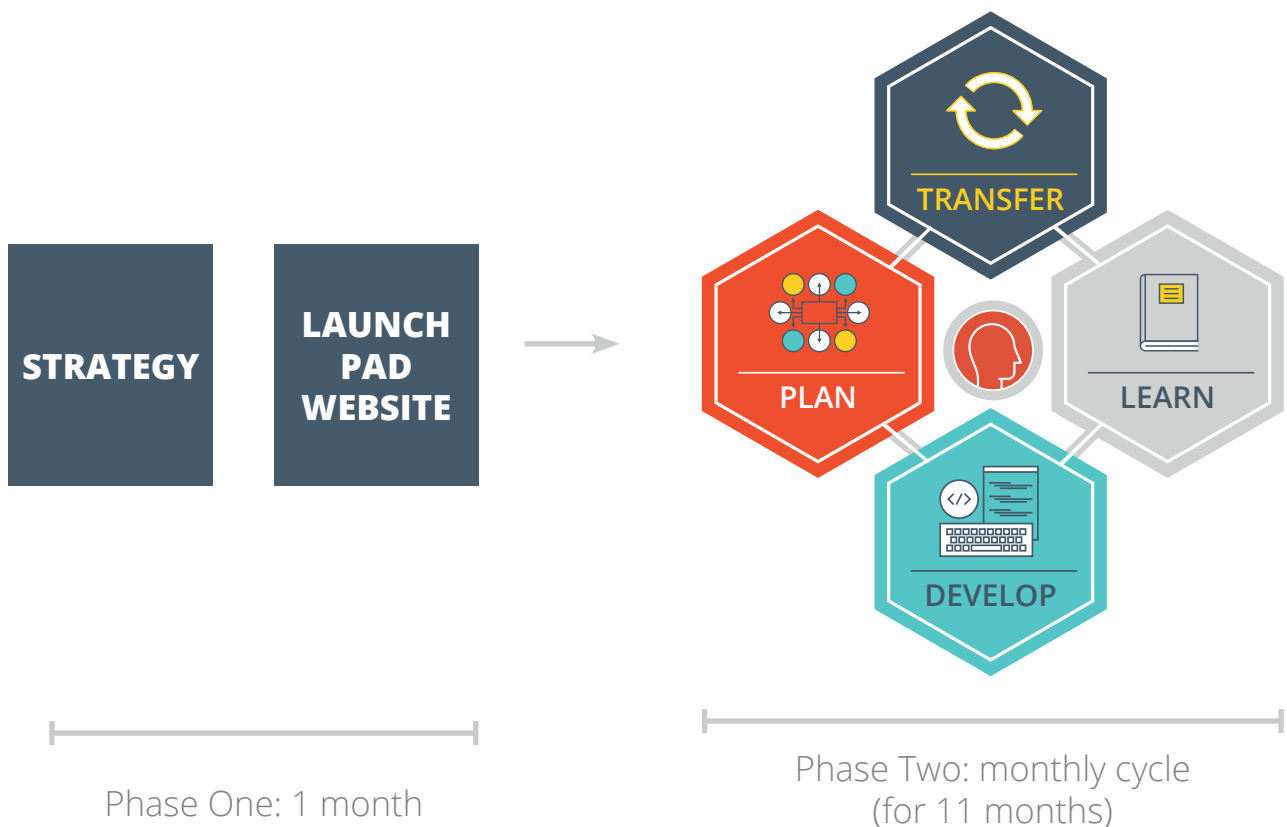
Take time to review what you have learned from each completed action item and brainstorm how this may be usual for others. Review previously completed action items to see if you can find any patterns about your users.

Once you have put together your recommendations for others within the organisation, host a meeting to educate them and brainstorm ways they can integrate and transfer these ideas into tactical action items within their department.

Here's an Example ...

Let's say that in your experiment you were testing two different landing page variations. One variation used social proof as the independent variable and the second variation used authority.

After running the experiment, you reviewed the data to find out that for your users coming to your website, social proof was a much more influential factor leading to conversions.

Now that you've learned that social proof is a better trigger for your audience, you can inform your other teams to start incorporating social proof into other parts of their marketing and sales activities such as email or sales scripts.

Then, Repeat

Once you have completed the cycle with a set of action items, go back to the beginning and start planning your next cycle.

And so the cycle repeats itself over and over again each time with a better end result and more learning about your visitors. The more cycles you can complete, the more impact your website is going to have.

STRATEGY

LAUNCH PAD WEBSITE

TRANSFER

PLAN

LEARN

DEVELOP

Phase One: 1 month

Phase Two: monthly cycle
(for 11 months)

FINAL THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

If you have read this far into the book, you have most likely experienced some of the risks and pitfalls with the traditional web design process and have just come to expect it as part of the redesign process.

The reality is that these types of nightmares are completely avoidable by simply taking a step back to re-evaluate both the way you are approaching your existing website and how you approach future redesigns.