WISE

WEB

DESIGN

How the Growth Driven Design methodology will generate you more leads and make you more sales.

M. Davies

Introduction

Hello and welcome to "Wise Web Design" - a guide on how the Growth Driven Design methodology will generate you more leads and make you more sales.

In this guide you will learn the following things:

▸ Why traditional web design does not work

▸ What Growth Driven Design is and why you need to use it

▸ Why the Growth Driven Design process gets you more leads

▸ How to launch a website in a fraction of the time of a traditional website design

▸ How to spread your costs and still get a peak performing website

▸ The differences between traditional web design & Growth Driven Design

Purpose

I wonder how important your website is to your business? For the vast majority of businesses their website is a critical part of their marketing. It is their digital shop window. It is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It is the most cost effective way of marketing an offer to an audience. Websites are crucial to help the modern buyer who is most likely to look an offering up online before they make contact with the businesses that offer it.

According to an article by the Consumer Executive Board (CEB) the average purchase decision is 57% complete before a prospect even makes contact[1]. How do you think these prospects find the information they need before talking to someone? From your website.

What is surprising is that even though websites are so essential to the modern business, many businesses spend so little time working on developing their websites to become 'peak performing'.

It is common for a website to be launched and then left for 2-3 years with little or no improvements.

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[1] "5 Customer Buying Trends You Can't Ignore", 8th July 2015, Markika Krausova: www.cebglobal.com/blogs/5-customer-buying-trends-all-sales-professionals-should-know/

Technology has opened up a way which is revolutionising how we build websites. A way which allows teams to build and improve websites over time in an almost 'scientific' way to ensure that the key marketing tool for the modern business (their website) is at its optimum and doing the job it should be doing: Generating leads for the sales team to close into customers.

The purpose of this guide is to review the old broken methods of the past and take a look at new best practices that will help you produce a website which generate more leads and makes you more sales.

About the author

Matt Davies is the Creative Director and founder of Attitude Design - a branding and digital marketing agency based in Nottingham UK. For the last 15 years Matt has personally been involved in designing and launching hundreds of websites for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

If you would like to connect with Matt, he'd love to hear from you.
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01

Why traditional web design does not work

Why traditional web design does not work

A typical, traditional approach

When a business owner or marketing manager realises their website is not working for them the usual process is for them to write a short website brief and send it out to a selection of web design agencies.

The problem with this is that they don't actually want a new website. They think they want a website but what they really and truly want is more leads.

After reviewing the offers from the various agencies one is selected to begin the long process of designing the website. A large up-front cost is typically attached to the engagement.

It's a hard long slog. Inevitably the next five or six months are spent focusing on the strategy, features, design, coding and content generation of the new site. There will be frustrations over budget and scope. From an agency perspective, new requests from the client are viewed as "feature creep"; whilst from a client perspective these requests have just been assumed to be part of the package at the outset. Negotiations take place and further budget has to be found.

The marketing team will be forced to shift focus from their normal activities with time sapping design issues - in response to which all they can often do is offer an educated guess as to how best to hit business goals for the site. The agency's design team will make hundreds, if not thousands, of little assumptions as to the best way to put together the user experience and the structure of the website. Content generation will take up a huge amount of time, even if there is a copy writer on the agency team.

Typically, due to unforeseen elements and the difficulty to plan and find the time needed, the project overruns the deadline. A huge push is completed towards the end to get this monster of a project out of the door.

After a massive amount of effort by all involved the site goes live. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief and then the site is left to sit. Typically a site may not have any major updates for 2-3 years - small improvements may happen with elements of content being added such as blog posts and landing pages but the vast majority of the site remains untouched.

Yes. Our number 1 market asset and best salesperson now sits gathering dust for years. In 3 years time the business owner and marketing team take a look at the site and decide the site is not working for them. They then proceed to write a short website brief and send it out to a selection of web design agencies. The process starts all over again.

This traditional way of producing websites is broken. Why is it broken? Because it in no way maximises the website's performance. It is all based on the false premise that what is wanted is a new website – not, in fact, what is really wanted. More sales leads.

We can do better. We must do better. That's where Growth Driven Design comes in.
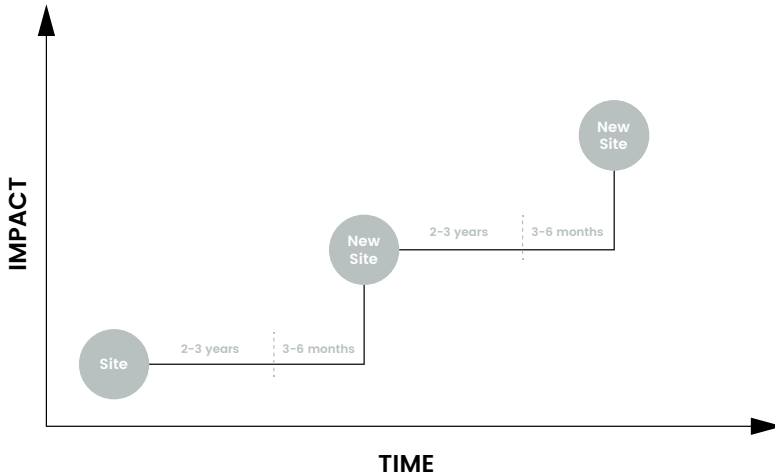
The traditional web design process is broken for these reasons:

- Huge and risky up front costs

- Massive time commitments and effort

- Often run over budget with unforeseen requirements

- Ideal deadlines often not able to be met

- There is no guarantee that the final website will be high performing

- No major improvements are done for 2-3 years

- Every decision is subjective and based on assumptions

02

What Growth Driven Design is & why you need to use it

What Growth Driven Design is and why you need to use it

What is the solution?

Having established that the traditional website design process is broken I'd imagine the burning question you want to ask is: what is the solution?

The solution is a smarter way to approach the way we redesign websites. It's a process which produces a quick and agile website which can then be built up in an intelligent way. A solution which utilises user data to inform decisions. A flexible system which is centred around one thing: maximising the website's performance.

What is this methodology? It's called "Growth Driven Design".

What is Growth Driven Design?

Growth driven design utilises technology to swiftly launch a website which typically has all of the high value web pages within it. Heavy tracking scripts are added to the site which enable us to begin to collect data.
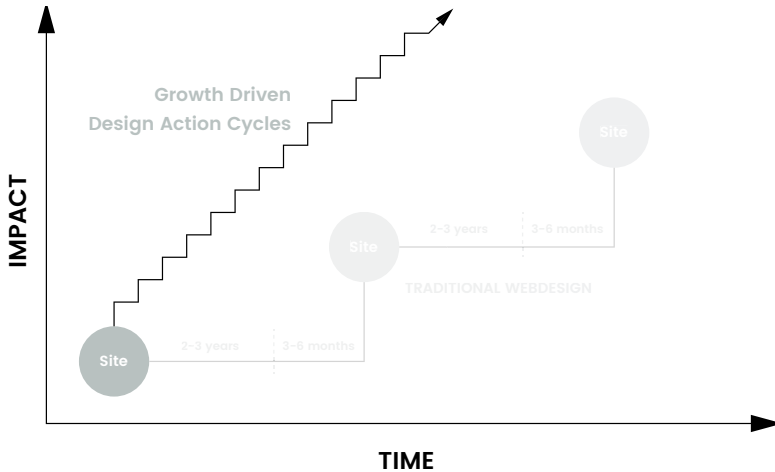
Once the initial launch pad site is in place, a systematic approach to improving it is employed. Cycles of work take place to ensure continuous learning and improvement. Any work completed is scientifically tested to check the impact of the work and to ensure it is helping the site reach its goals. By constantly researching, testing and learning about visitors we can carry out ongoing improvements. It is through these continuous improvements that we can reach peak performance.

As we learn, we can enrich the business' marketing and sales teams with insights into how website users are interacting with the site. For example the sales team might be interested to know that most visitors to our website are initially most interested in a specific solution, this may help them in how they reach out to prospects. The sales team will also have insights from their day to day dealings with prospects which will need to be taken into consideration as we continually build specific areas of the site. With Growth Driven Design these data driven conversations can take place in an organic and structured way to ensure the website is performing to the maximum.

The great thing about Growth Driven Design is that it minimises the risks associated with traditional web design. Instead of a huge upfront cost, there is a much lower ongoing fee spread out over time. Because the initial focus is on getting a basic site up - which will then be continually improved, you are able to launch a website swiftly - giving results that impact the business much more quickly. Because the methodology and every decision that is made is based on data, you can demonstrate return on investment. No longer will wild assumptions be made, instead a 'scientific' reasoned approach is employed with decisions based on user data. Instead of a massive amount of stress and effort required to launch a website, a much calmer more intelligently focused process is employed. Lastly, the site will never be left to gather dust for years. It will be continually reviewed, improved and looked after.

Never look back. The old approach has broken down. Let's be smarter and look forward to having a website in place which is driven to grow.

IMPACT

Growth Driven
Design Action Cycles

Site

2-3 years   3-6 months

TRADITIONAL WEBDESIGN

Site

2-3 years   3-6 months

Site

TIME

< Diagram
representing
the Growth
Driven Design
compared to
the traditional
web design
process

Why you need to use
Growth Driven Design :

▸ Low upfront costs

▸ Less reliant on huge time commitments
  and initial effort

▸ Will never run over budget

▸ Swiftly gets a website up and running

▸ Utilises continual learning which informs all
  parts of your business (and visa versa)

▸ Continuous improvement cycles ensure
  the website is high performing

▸ Every decision is based on data

03

How to launch a website in a fraction of the time of a traditional website design

How to launch a website in a fraction of the time of a traditional website design

The two phases of Growth Driven Design

There are two key phases to the Growth Driven Design process. The first phase is to produce a "launch pad" website as swiftly as possible in order to generate data that can be used to continually enhance the site. The next phase is to plan and execute cycles of work to ensure the site grows.

Let's now walk though the first phase in a bit more depth, showing how you can launch a website in the fraction of the time it would take to launch a traditional website design.

Phase 1 - the launch pad website

How do we launch a site swiftly? By having a logical process that can be executed speedily. Usually a well considered launch pad website can be up and working well within 2 months - that's 4 months quicker than a typical web build. Will it be the complete end site? No. But that's the point. You use the launch pad site to gather data to inform the decisions which enable the site to grow.

Within this initial phase we have to complete three major tasks. The first is to work out our strategy. Next is to develop a wish list of what we would like on the new site. Finally, these tasks are used to inform us about the smartest way of actually moving on to building the new website.

Task 1: work out the strategy

In this step we develop a rock solid vision for our launch pad website which will enable us to build our Growth Driven Design process upon. Within our strategy we need to work out the following steps. Many of these steps would be done in team workshops and brainstorming sessions as well as some more customer focused research.

▸ **Goals** - what are the performance goals that we are trying to achieve? For example, if we want more leads from the site then how many leads? What does success look like? Ideally goals should be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound).

▸ **Personas** - who are our ideal buyers? As we go on, all of our decisions will be built around our users and so it is essential we understand and can talk about them easily. Personas are semi-fictional representations of our ideal customers. We need to document who these are, what motivates them, why would they buy from you and what is your value to them.

▸ **Research** - if we have a current website with any kind of current data tracking on it, we can use this to identify what is working and what is not. We can use this stage to proactively reach out to users, see how they use the site, find out from them what they might like the site to do better.

- **Assumptions** - using what we've learned in the previous steps we can now document and build fundamental assumptions about our users. For example we can produce value propositions for our offer. We can think about the places, devices and times each user persona is likely to use our site. We can consider the information that each persona is looking for.

- **Strategy document** - the final step is for us to simply document and report on each step we have undertaken so far. From this, guiding recommendations for how the website will proceed into the future can be given on the subjects of:

  1. Overall global strategy for the site and the basis for its continued existence

  2. Page-by-page strategy for each major page on the site.

  3. How to best engage with and influence the user to attain your goals.

Task 2: produce a wish list

The next task is for an initial wish list to be produced.

This wish list will contain every idea that we'd like to include in the new site. This list should be organic - it will be added to with new ideas as time goes on. From design elements, to features, resources, widgets, tools, web pages and downloads they all get documented within the wish list.

Typically there would be around 50-150 ideas within a wish list. Not all of the ideas on the list will be implemented immediately but the list gives us a pool of ideas from which to draw in the future.

Task 3: launch pad website

The final task in the process is to build a launch pad website. In the traditional web design process the website is launched at the end of the project. In the Growth-Driven Design methodology we launch websites straight away. The size of the launch pad site varies from project to project but typically this will be a site consisting of around 8 pages.

So what is built and how do we decide what not to build at this point? This is done by reviewing the wish list to determine what are the "must have" items for the site to fulfil its basic purpose. In other words, what is the irreducible minimum that has to be on the site. Usually this can be done by conducting an 80/20 analysis on the wish list items. The 80/20 rule says that 20 percent of items on the wish list will produce 80 percent of the impact. This enables a streamlined site to be produced which has the key ingredients for success but which will certainly need to be developed into the future.

The key thing to appreciate about this step is to remember the launch pad website will be imperfect. Yes it will improve your current website (or it will be better than nothing if you have no site already) but it is not the final end website. It is a starting point on which to continuously improve.

If you have been having work done on reviewing your brand's look and feel, then the launch pad website is a great opportunity for any new identity and story to be positioned

to your audience. There is nothing worse than having done some work on an exciting new brand narrative, only to find it cannot be utilised for 6 months due to a monster website needing to be built. The launch pad website will be created and designed to be in accordance with your brand story, visual language and current look and feel.

Within the launch pad website heavy tracking scripts are added which allow us to begin to see how many visitors are interacting with the site and enable us to test out the results of our build cycles in the next ongoing phase of the Growth Driven Design methodology. Key to this will be to set up data collection around the areas of the website strategy - including the goals and assumptions of the website. This way we can begin to see if the site is doing what it is supposed to be doing.

What if I have a new website already?

If you have a website that is performing well, or maybe you have just built a website and you want to implement the Growth Driven Design and continuous improvement model then no problem! Your current site could be used as the launch pad website and you can move right on into Phase 2.

04

Why the Growth Driven Design process gets you more leads

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Growing your site

The real value in the Growth Driven Design methodology is the cycle of continuous improvement. Building upon what has previously been done, each cycle of work adds to and improves the value of the site - getting it closer and closer to peak performance.

Phase 2 - Continuous improvement

The second, repeating, phase of the Growth Driven Design methodology is to implement work cycles to build and develop a site based on user data.

As we mentioned previously, most companies jump from wanting more leads to automatically wanting a new website. The focus of the leadership team is then on the website and the original goal and requirement (that of getting sales leads) is forgotten.

Teams get bogged down in the intricacies of systems, wireframes and content types. The truth is that some of these things will have little or no impact on whether the website generates leads or not. Are the hours of time being spent on these things the best use of our energy? Probably not.

The system of Growth Driven Design not only eliminates the time sap of trying to figure out every eventuality of a particular aspect of the new website all in one go, it also enables teams to make decisions based on data they have collected. It's smart.

Before each cycle of work a logical decision making system is followed. This ensures that the most impactful items are being built in that build cycle. Not only this but hypothesis statements are developed based on the data already available. Finally every build cycle is measured and the hypothesis tested.

The cycle is then repeated. This process allows for and adapts to new user trends. Sites evolve rather than stagnate. Value is continually being added. The website continues to grow around its users so that the site can work harder for you and generate the leads you need for success.

There are four tasks to each build cycle. Here is a bit more detail about how each cycle typically works.

Task 1. Plan

Each new cycle starts with a rigorous planning step. It begins with research into current user behaviour and a check to see how the last couple of cycles have improved the performance of the site. Learning from the marketing and sales teams can also help to determine what may be a priority for this particular build cycle and so any information shared by these teams is reviewed. Next, with this information in mind, the wish list is reviewed and ideas are added to. Depending on the length of the cycle, relevant action items are selected based on the impact they will bring us in achieving the goals for the site. As a general rule it is usually best to choose less items and do them really well than have too many. Hypothesis statements are created for each action item so that the actions can be measured once completed.

Within each action item the various steps are considered, planned in and assigned to the members of the project team. These would include things like; creation of content, wireframes & designs, user experience (UX) testing, development and quality assurance & testing. It would also be normal for meetings to be arranged during this planning stage where the next cycle of action items is discussed and agreed upon.

Usually action items relate to one of four key development areas; boosting conversion rates, improving the user experience, the building of marketing assets and general website updates.

Task 2. Execute

This is where the action items for the cycle would be completed. When each item is completed the data can begin to be collected to see how impactful it has been.

Once an item has been launched we can also develop a mini marketing campaign around that specific area to drive traffic to it and measure the results.

Task 3. Learn

After we have collected enough data around each action item we can move into the learn phase. In this phase we review the information that has been collected about how the website visitors have interacted with the action item we have built.

Based on this information we can validate or disprove the hypothesis statements set out in the planning phase. Did this action have the impact we had hoped? If not why not? What other things could we do to make it better? Do we need to add it back into the wish list to enhance its usefulness in any way? What have we learnt about our users from this action?

All of these questions and more should be answered and documented in a small report around each action item. This ensures that going into the future these actions can be reviewed and shared.

Task 4. Transfer

The final phase of the process is to take the learning and knowledge gained from the action cycle and ensure it gets fed to other parts of the business. For example if we discovered that one specific product was most popular with first-time visitors amongst the eight on offer, it might be helpful for the sales team to know this to inform how they initially approach new prospects.

During the transfer phase, a meeting of representatives of the business can be held to inform and educate the wider team. It is also a great time to listen in and gather ideas for the next cycle of action items.

Rinse and repeat

With one cycle complete it's time to go back to the start and begin the next cycle. We repeat the process all over again, each time improving the site and ensuring it is getting you more leads and helping you reach your goals.
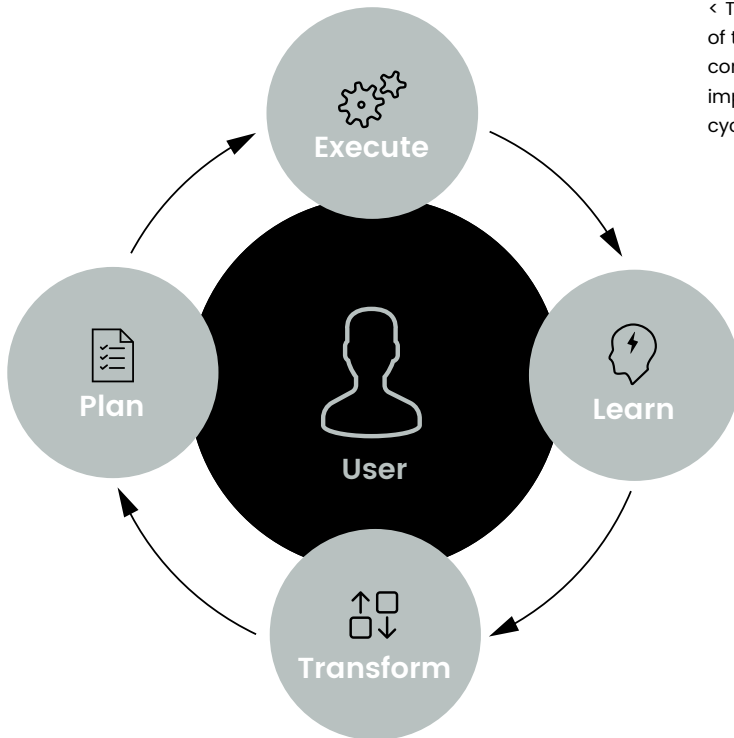
How to spread your costs and still get a peak performing website

How to spread your costs and still get a peak performing website

The traditional flat rate web design would get you a new website. With Growth Driven Design the result will also be a new site - but in addition your website will be continually improved over time - ensuring the site constantly adapts to the modern user.

The difference between the two is the quality of the end product and the amount you pay.

The upfront traditional website could typically cost around £6000-£10,000. For a Growth Driven Design website, depending on your goals and how swiftly you want to move, you may be paying around £2000 per month for an agency's fees - which, over the course of a year is more in the long run. However the quality and usefulness of the website will be greatly improved because decisions will be made in collaboration based on user data. This is opposed to decisions being made based on assumptions and mainly by web developers.

In the end you will have a more valuable marketing asset. A website which develops over time to be a user-friendly, high-converting site that visitors love. You will also be going through a process which informs all areas of your business.

The good thing about Growth Driven Design is that the costs of it are spread out, meaning you do not have a scary monster of an investment to make upfront. Your costs are diffused and you get a peak performing website enhanced over time.

06

The differences between traditional web design & Growth Driven Design

The differences between traditional web design & Growth Driven Design

The difference between the traditional website design process and Growth Driven Design is huge. Wherever you look there is a difference - a difference in delivery times for a launched site, a difference in how you pay and most of all, a difference in methodology.

Due to the fact that, as a client, you are building a site which you imagine should do a great job for a few years, the traditional process is set up so that the new website can be as close to perfect as possible. This inevitably means it will take months of planning and resources to get the site ready for launch. On the other hand growth driven design deliberately launches a site which is not perfect. It is the irreducible minimum in terms of what is required but that is the whole point. The launch pad site is used to gather data. This is then used to continually optimize the website and analyse where the most impact can be made to produce desired results over time.

To summarise we have set out below the two options side by side:

Traditional web design	Growth Driven Design
Upfront costs	Costs spread over time
Huge resources & time	Predictable resource / time - quick launch
Decisions based on assumptions	Decisions based on data
Static for years	Continuous improvement
Feature creep & over-budget & late	Value adding, agile on time & on budget

Reach for the stars.

Go grow your website

So - now you understand a bit more about Growth Driven Design we wish you the best of luck in undertaking your next website adventure and hope you have found the information in this guide useful.

Growth Driven Design is indeed fast becoming the golden standard in producing successful websites. Through this smarter approach we hope your redesign will be easier and you will have more confidence in the process than with the old traditional model.

If you like what we have had to say please tweet about it using the hashtag **#wisewebdesign** and include our twitter handle **@AttitudeDesign**.

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