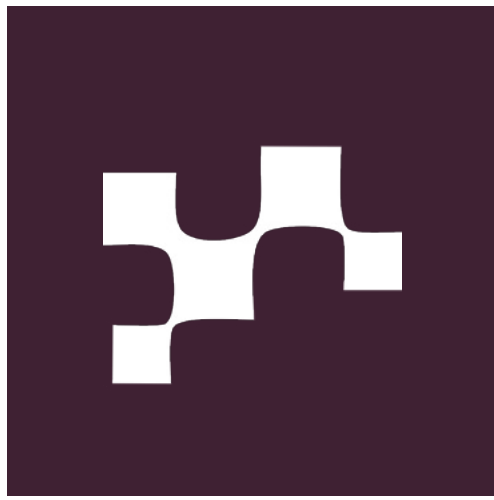# 6

REASONS TO ADOPT GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN

LEAN LABS

6 REASONS TO ADOPT GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN

Here at Lean Labs, we've found that when web design projects are structured to be exceedingly wide in scope, the production process often takes so long that the final product no longer effectively accomplishes what it was meant to. That's why as a theoretical model for work flow, "scaffolding," as it's sometimes called – the idea that ongoing, incremental progress enables stakeholders to build on the lessons learned during the previous steps – makes a whole lot more sense.

This is the principle underlying Growth Driven Design (GDD) methodology, and it is exactly what you want to develop your website and keep it current. Moreover, because GDD allows for ongoing service and priority adjustments, it's also a perfect answer to your needs for maintaining and updating your website over time.

Let's take a look at the reasons why this approach is superior compared to traditional web design project structures.te.
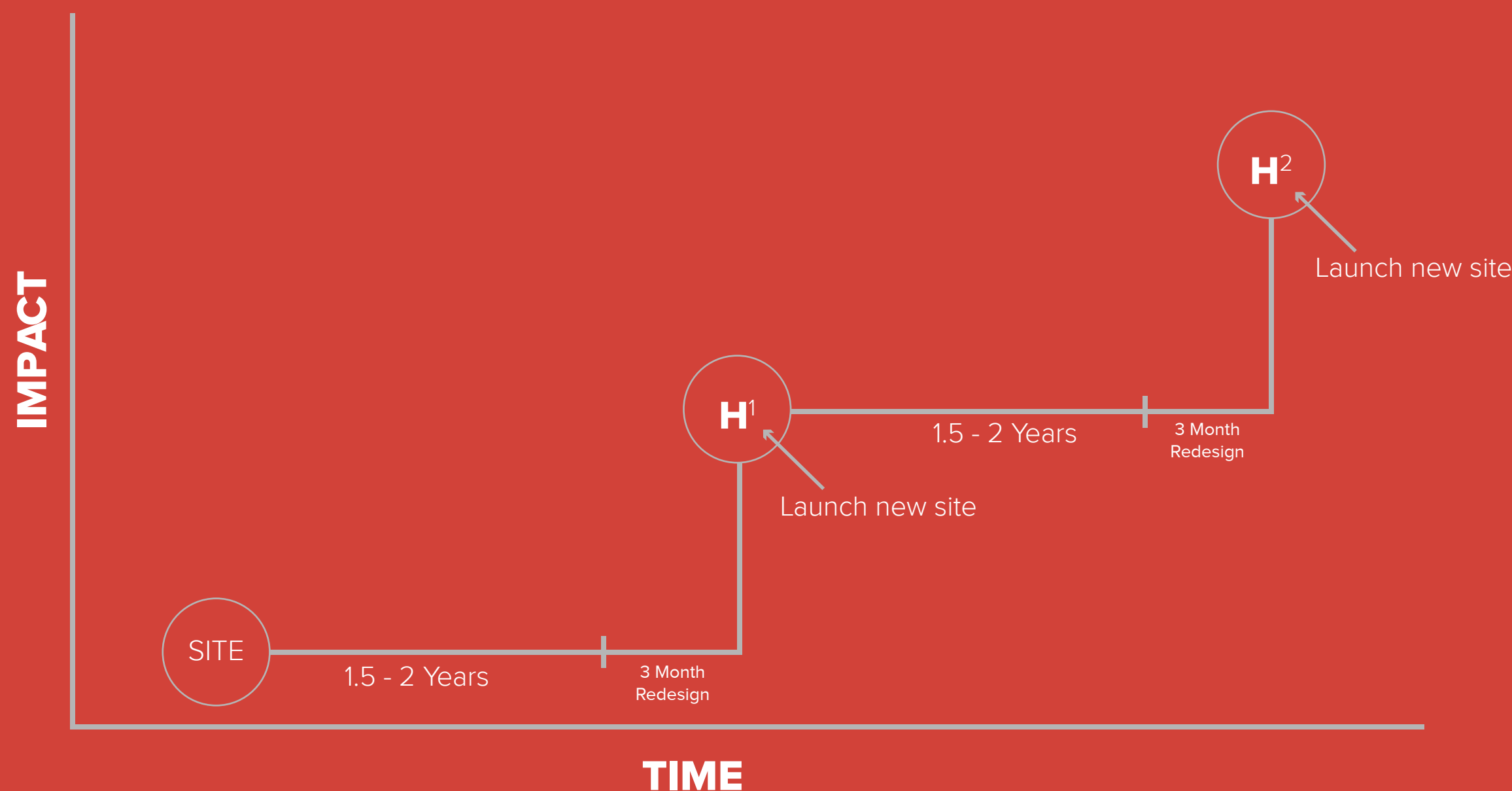
01 TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN METHODS ARE FLAWED

BEFORE THE EMERGENCE OF GDD

Before the emergence of GDD, companies that wanted to periodically implement new functionalities, content sections, features or aesthetic elements, essentially needed to commission one-off site redesign projects every two years or so – and that was in the best-case scenario. Often, the process was so daunting that businesses preferred to delay redesigns for as long as possible, allowing sites to fall dangerously out of date.

TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN

IMPACT

H[2]
Launch new site

H[1]
1.5 - 2 Years   3 Month Redesign
Launch new site

SITE
1.5 - 2 Years   3 Month Redesign

TIME

For the most part, though, project-based redesign was a matter of staying au courant with website fashion, as it were – making sure that the interface remained visually appealing in the context of trends, as a means of inspiring consumer trust. Of course, the redesigned website also needed to function at least as well as the previous versions of it. The real problem with this approach was the time lag between when the website needs to be updated and when it actually is ready for the public.

01 TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN METHODS ARE FLAWED

BEFORE THE EMERGENCE OF GDD

Before GDD, measuring site performance over time could never be correlated with changes, since each rollout involved entirely new solutions. Periodically replacing an entire website with a newer, shiner version means that you are essentially guessing what will work best. Without testing the integration and effectiveness of each part of the new site as a component unto itself, you're fully dependent on the tastes, vision and skills of your design team, and there's no wiggle room for error and improvement.

It also means that your new site is likely to be outdated before it even goes live, because the issues that bothered you most when you closed on the project scope are unlikely to be the issues that bother you most by the time the project is complete.

02

EXECUTE IMPROVEMENTS IMMEDIATELY AND OFTEN

INSTEAD OF WAITING THE TWO YEARS

Within a few weeks, you will be in a position to begin making changes, and the website you just launched, even partially at first, will serve your business that much better for it.

Landing page call-to-action (CTA) experiments and clickthrough rates (CTR)

Homepage content performance for driving internal page engagement and eventual lead capture

Onsite visitor behavior on all internal pages, as measured by analytics, mouseflow cursor tracking and heatmap click location tracking tools

Matching sales funnel stages to content pages with optimized performance

Identifying search engine keyword opportunities based on dynamic shifts to rankings

Evaluating the effectiveness of your persona profiles and how they relate to onsite activity

Involving site visitors in this process by collecting low-friction, minimally interruptive user feedback

Then the assessment cycle begins again — evaluate your site for quality of content, navigation, appearance and features, and begin to make the changes you see as preferable.

02

EXECUTE IMPROVEMENTS IMMEDIATELY AND OFTEN

INSTEAD OF WAITING THE TWO YEARS

Instead of waiting the two years before you redesign your site, DGG allows you to start identifying what you'd like to improve on your site, as soon as you launch – or relaunch, as the case may be.

You're likely to quickly notice aspects of your site that deserve improvement, either as a matter of taste, or because your performance measurement tools are pointing to user experience flaws. Today's online businesses have access to so much valuable data regarding onsite engagement patterns and offsite audience acquisition trends that business leaders need to have the ability to act on insights quickly, on an iterative, lean and agile basis.

If you aren't immediately certain where you'd like to improve your site once its various components start rolling out, consider testing the following elements to assess the quality of the current design:

Your website is likely to be where your potential customers first encounter your brand. It's here that you make your first impression on audience members, either welcoming them into an immersive world where they'll want to stay or giving them the feeling that they belong elsewhere. For this reason, optimizing your site for performance on an ongoing basis is imperative, and GDD makes this process as straightforward as it can be.

Granted, what is considered "ideal" for your website is not only potentially subject to change – it is necessarily going to change, as people's online experience is not static. The constant striving to improve is essential to your business. If you redesign your site every two years without spending time optimizing it for performance, then you're simply not advancing your brand experience. You're redecorating your site but using the same approach as last time.

03 CONTINUOUS REFINEMENT TOWARDS PERFECTION

MAKE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION ON AUDIENCE MEMBERS

CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION (CRO)

Do you offer enough opportunities for visitors to register as leads? What user paths is the site currently optimized for, and might it be worthwhile to experiment with alternative paths? What do the top performing call-to-action button texts have in common, and what new variations should you implement? How are you expressing your solution's value proposition, and what new ways are there to split test new variations of it?

USER EXPERIENCE (UX)

How can your site's navigation be simplified, enriched and made more transparent or usable? What changes to your page layouts might serve your business and your visitors better? How can you make your website better for mobile users?

PERSONALIZATION

What analytics data points from the past site version might suggest opportunities for serving up different content to different types of visitors? What devices and geo locations are visiting our site lately, and what can you do to tailor the experience to the people who use these devices and hail from these locales? By tracking individual visitors' preferences for content covering different specific interests, what can you do to promote additional content on these topics to the people most interested in them?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW ASSETS

What kinds of useful interactive tools can you roll out to provide more value to the people you want to engage? What premium content offers make sense to publish and offer as downloads next? How can your "resources" content — FAQs, knowledge base sections, learning centers and the like — be improved? What landing pages are attracting the most referrals from search engines, and what can you do to improve their performance?

04

MANAGEABLE YET THOROUGH SECTION-BASED AUDITS

IT'S POSSIBLE TO AUDIT YOUR ENTIRE SITE REGULARLY

During month four, take a look at the content designed to advance prospects along the funnel by educating and building brand equity via education. For month five, take some time to identify gaps that can be filled with new pages that address concerns that arise along the customer's journey. Finally, for the sixth month of the cycle, evaluate your site's more dynamic resource sections. Your goal, of course, is to optimize your site to attract traffic and capture and nurture leads.

GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN

MINIMIZE THE RISK	CONTINUOUSLY LEARN & IMPROVE	INFORM MARKETING & SALES

Through this ongoing process of review, you are never recreating the entire website all at once, and you are always current and fresh. Fundamentally, that amounts to less effort and more return.

04

MANAGEABLE YET THOROUGH SECTION-BASED AUDITS

IT'S POSSIBLE TO AUDIT YOUR ENTIRE SITE REGULARLY

With GDD, it's possible to audit your entire site regularly, so you'll know that the whole property is primed to serve your business well. Even the most rabid GDD adherent, however, will want to limit the scope of these audits, since content-rich, dynamic websites can quickly grow to a volume of pages that makes a thorough audit into a highly cumbersome process. We recommend splitting your site's page roster into themes and tackling them on a rotation basis.

For example, you can spend the first month of your multi-month GDD audit cycle reviewing the buyer's journey, with a focus on page performance. For the second month, review the homepage and spiff it up however possible, from its content to its branding. For the third month in the cycle, focus on your landing pages and thank you pages.

05

IMPROVEMENTS DRIVEN BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS

TODAY'S WEB-INTEGRATED COMPANIES

Today's web-integrated companies are seeing increased collaboration between marketing and sales teams, as these roles evolve and share the onus for business growth. The best websites are those that empower prospects to educate themselves to the point of sales-readiness, and it's up to personnel from both marketing and sales to define what set of criteria render leads qualified for sales. Ideally, all members of both teams should have intimate understanding of the role that your site plays in the nurturing journey, as the performance of each team is dependent on the nurturing effectiveness of the site's content.

TAs a result of everyone's investment in website performance, it's likely that your sales and marketing reps have opinions and insights regarding the site's weak points and opportunities for improvement. Because GDD production cycles are so short and so performance-oriented, the perspectives of these departments can enable you to improve the site in ways that address sales and marketing needs, which nearly always correlate with improved business.

05

IMPROVEMENTS DRIVEN BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS

TODAY'S WEB-INTEGRATED COMPANIES

By the same token, by focusing on your website's ongoing improvement, sales and marketing people can hone their own skills and refine what they need to be doing for maximum efficacy. This kind of vigilant attentiveness to website perfection is analogous to your physical health in that if ignore it, you'll risk decline, but if you invest in its ongoing maintenance, you can be successful for a very long time.

	RISK			
TRADITIONAL WEB DESIGN	$15,000 - $100,000	Three Months	Only a Hypothesis	Redesign Every 2 years
	(out of scope, over budget, late)			
GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN	$2-6k Monthy	Launch Pad Website	Validated Results	Continuous Improvement
	(agile, on time & on budget)			

06 PROCESSES THAT INSPIRE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

CRAFTING A WEBSITE THAT DRIVES YOUR COMPANY

Yes, a website alone can bring you to promote and effect improvements in company communication, culture, team training and customer support. Don't underestimate the potential for influence that exists in a website that you maintain consistently and regularly.

As the primary hub of the impression your company makes on the general public, your site also drives how you position yourself in the market. The design, functionality, structure and content of your digital presence drives your marketing, even offline, and can heavily impact how you sell. It can lead improvements to your company's culture, training methods, in-house communication and how you support existing customers.

With GDD, you're crafting a website that drives your company practices where you want them to go. Instead of engineering the evolution of your organization first and then updating your site accordingly, GDD allows you to sync both trajectories.

Iterating Constant Enhancement with Growth-Driven Design

Your company's website might be in need of a major design update, and you probably already have some superb ideas for how to go about improving it. Just don't make the mistake of stopping there. The best ideas are worthy of revisiting and refining over time.

PROCESSES THAT INSPIRE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

CRAFTING A WEBSITE THAT DRIVES YOUR COMPANY

This is why websites like those for Mint, Apple, Amazon and CNN are constantly making incremental interface changes. It's all about ongoing evolutionary (as opposed to revolutionary) processes that put them in the best possibly position to attract new, relevant audience members while simultaneously continuing to strengthen connections with loyal fans.

In a nutshell, GDD methodology is attractive because it allows companies to perfect their websites over time, leveraging data-driven insights in manageable increments, via rapid rollouts that are limited in scope.

It protects your business from the need for major overhauls that are extremely taxing, and it liberates you from being stuck with a website that's outdated, not optimized and doesn't represent who you are. In GDD, you may find a pain-free path to the most sophisticated website that will serve your immediate and long-term needs well.

6 REASONS TO ADOPT GROWTH DRIVEN DESIGN

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