



DigitalGrowth
AGENCY



Out With the *Old*, In With the *Bold*.

TRADITIONAL WEBSITES VS CONVERSION-LED WEBSITES

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DISCOVER CONVERSION RATE OPTIMISATION

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<https://www.dgadigital.com.au/grow-conversion-video>

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CHAPTER 1

How It All Began

The possibilities that the world wide web has afforded us are nothing short of astounding. The web opened up the internet to everyone when it was launched in 1991. Since then, it has revolutionised the way businesses engage with customers and sell products or services. Every success story has to start somewhere, right? Online shopping and eCommerce as we know them today exist because of one idea from over 40 years ago that predates the web. Curious? Let's go back to how it all began...



Back in 1979

One day, while out on a walk somewhere in Sussex, a man was grumbling about having to make regular trips to the shops to buy what they need.

Distraught by this realisation, he pondered for a moment and was struck with a sudden wave of inspiration. Wouldn't it be more convenient if you could just order groceries and get them delivered directly to your home?

That man was Michael Aldrich, an English innovator, inventor and entrepreneur. In 1979, Aldrich jerry-rigged his TV to a computer that was designed for processing transactions in real-time via a telephone line. Soon after, he expanded on the idea and built a system that advertised goods on TV, giving viewers the ability to place orders by simply calling a processing centre. Aldrich called this system **"teleshopping"** (History of Information, 2022).

Although it never took off outside of B2B functions due to a lack of infrastructure, teleshopping (along with an early technology called Electronic Data Interchange) developed the **rudimentary foundations for modern-day eCommerce as we know it today.**

The WWW

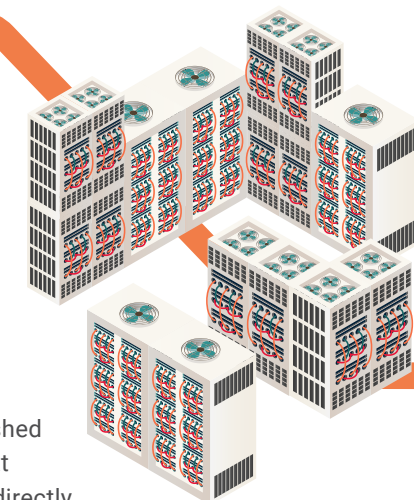
In 1990, Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau joined forces to build something that was about to change the world: **the world wide web.**

Berners-Lee and Cailliau published a proposal to build a "Hypertext project" to link one document directly to another and easily share information with others using the internet. Little did they suspect, their Hypertext project was about to revolutionise the way we share knowledge, communicate and collaborate.

Berners-Lee wasted no time. That same year, he created the very first web server and hand-coded the first web browser. And on August 6, 1991, Berners-Lee made the web available to the public. He then proceeded to further integrate hypertext into the internet, developing the three key ingredients that make up the web: URL, HTML and HTTP.

The popularity of the personal computer, the exponential growth of the internet, and the introduction of the web opened the door to endless commercial possibilities. When the National Science Foundation (NSF) lifted its restrictions in 1991 and began allowing commercial use of the internet, companies and brands quickly saw a way in. Amazon and eBay were one of the first eCommerce websites in the U.S. to start selling products online. Shortly after, hundreds of businesses quickly jumped on the bandwagon.

More people started to become comfortable using the web and making transactions online as new technologies and a security protocol, Secure Socket Layers (SSL), were introduced to work as a safety blanket for users.





Evolution of Websites for Business



Humble Beginnings

As you can imagine, the web pages in the earlier days of the world wide web were, well, pretty basic.

Websites used to simply be an internal communication channel when the web was first introduced in 1991. When Tim Berners-Lee hand-coded the very first website, it was purely text-based - the only splash of colour was the default blue hypertext.

Today, that web page would be perceived as lacklustre and basic. But back in the early days of the web, just getting a page up was mind-blowing all on its own.

The Takeoff

It didn't take long for the world wide web to gain popularity.

In 1993, MTV launched its website and set the standards sky-high for website design. MTV was one of the first companies to adopt landing pages that incorporated images, not just text. Because of how successful they were in engaging visitors, have many others followed suit. By the end of 1993, there were 623 websites.

As you may have guessed, it didn't take long for the web to become overcrowded as more companies and brands started using websites to advertise their products and services. In 1994, WIRED online magazine found a way to break through the noise: with banner ads in their website header.

The internet continued to evolve rapidly, and so did web design. Websites started using less text, and more visual elements to engage their users. By mid-1994, there were 2,738 websites. And by the end of the year, there were 10,022 (Matthew Gray, 1996).

In 1998, the internet was starting to take shape as we see it today with the introduction of Flash and Google Beta.

The Online Economy

The year 2000 ushered in new and exciting ways of doing business, and this was when web development started to take off. Businesses started to realise that having a great-looking website was crucial to selling products online.

In 2003, the launch of WordPress made it possible for anyone who had a computer and access to the internet to quickly and easily build a website from scratch with a plugin architecture and a template system.

The Mobile Revolution

When mobile devices and smartphones were first introduced, websites were often frustrating to navigate on smaller screens.

As mobile internet usage increased, mobile design became a priority. In 2010, web designer Ethan Marcotte challenged the way mobile design was being approached. Why create a separate website for mobile? Why not use the same content, but in different layouts and design the page depending on screen size? Et voila, responsive design was born.

The Smart Marketer's Approach

As humans do, we adapted. We became increasingly digital-aware and started to demand less intrusive online experiences over time. We became less receptive to loud online banner ads and pop-ups. This made it harder for businesses to break the ice with prospects.

In 2014 and 2015, smart marketers veered away from marketing at prospects and instead worked toward nurturing leads into customers. How? By offering useful and relevant content, and engaging audiences with visually appealing and intuitive websites. This is now what we call inbound marketing - a people-first, growth-focused approach to creating valuable content that aligns with the needs of audiences and ignites long-lasting customer relationships.

Fast Forward to 2022

Businesses, big and small, understand the need for a strong digital presence now more than ever. More than that, they understand the need for a great website that not only drives sales but keeps customers coming back. However, building a successful website is not as easy as 1-2-3.

Over the years, websites have evolved. And so has the human behaviour that surrounds them.

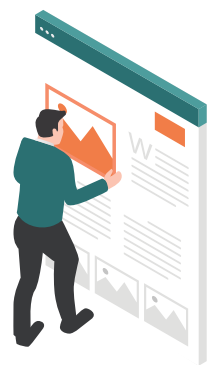
As new technologies emerge and the online marketplace continues to expand, customer needs and behaviours will inevitably change. And they will continue to change over time.

Today, building a successful website requires finesse and strategic thinking, not a one-size-fits-all approach. To be successful in the online marketplace, businesses have to re-evaluate how they engage and connect with customers. They need to think beyond the traditional website and start looking to create a website that is growth-driven and focused on increasing conversions.



Out With the Old: Traditional Websites

Traditional websites are based on the techniques and trends that have worked in the past. Many traditions stand the test of time. But the same can't be said about websites. While a traditional website may have led a business to grow and thrive a decade ago, it most likely would not succeed in today's ever-evolving, highly-competitive online marketplace. **Here's why:**



Static Brochure Sites

Websites that are created using traditional web design practices are purely informational. They are simple sites that act as online brochures that inform users what products or services a business is offering.

Typically, brochure sites use a one-size-fits-all template. This means that the structure of these sites is fairly basic, rough around the edges, and not customised to the business's goals. And most of the time, the content is not tailored to a specific target audience making it almost impossible to generate any traffic and get engagement.

A decade ago, brochure websites may have been successful at delivering the most important information about a business to customers. But today, customers now demand a website experience that not only informs but also excites them. To catch their attention, a static brochure website just won't cut it.

No Long-Term Strategy

Traditional websites follow a set-it-and-forget-it approach. This means that once the website is complete and it goes live, it will be left as it is for a long time.

Business goals and customer needs are never static. Without a solid long-term strategy, a website won't be able to adapt and evolve with the changing needs. It simply won't flourish and may lead a business to fail.

Businesses need to create long-term strategies to grow their websites and encourage their customers to engage and click that "Add to Cart" button or subscribe to newsletters. Remember that websites are a lead-generation tool and, if built against a solid business strategy, they could be a powerful revenue driver.



Out With the Old: Traditional Websites



Poor User Experience

User Experience (UX) is one of the key ingredients of a successful website, something that traditional websites rarely consider.

Most traditional websites add long pieces of content to their web pages to help improve their search engine optimisation (SEO). So, what exactly is the problem? Traditional websites don't carefully consider the customer journey when introducing any content to web pages resulting to poor user experience.

Time is precious. If users can't navigate a website efficiently, they leave and look for a much better experience elsewhere. To keep up with user demands and rise above the competition, user experience needs to be kept top of mind when building a website.



A Guessing Game

Most traditional websites are based on assumptions. They are created without any data to back the decisions made around structure and content. Without proper research, testing and tracking, traditional websites are deemed to underperform, failing to engage customers and meet business goals.

More than that, it's a painful risk to invest hundreds if not thousands of dollars on a website that does not guarantee results. Taking a traditional web design approach is a guessing game you don't want to play.



Think Beyond the Traditional

Long gone are the days of ho-hum traditional websites that don't drive revenue. To cut through the noise and rise above the competition in a complex digital landscape, businesses need to think beyond traditional web design practices.

Good news: there's a more modern, data-backed approach to web design aimed at optimising performance. The best part? It drives guaranteed results.

In With the Bold: Conversion-Led Websites

A conversion-led website is exactly what the name suggests - it's a website that uses tried-and-true design principles to encourage users to convert, and to take action on the site. First and foremost, what is a conversion? A conversion is an action taken by a web visitor in response to a call to action (CTA) - to download an ebook, make a purchase, or watch a video, for example.

A high-performing web design is the cornerstone of a successful online presence in today's marketplace. And your website is often the first experience customers have with your brand. Don't get lost in the maze of one-size-fits-all website templates and content. First impressions matter, so why not make them count? Adopt a conversion-focused website design to guide users towards your unique business growth goals more efficiently. **Here's how:**



Data-Driven Decisions

What makes conversion-led website design so different from the more traditional approach? The layout, colour, text and images on the site are all informed by user data to achieve high conversion rates. There's no guessing game involved - that's a win if you ask us.

Data is the most important element in building a conversion-led website. If interpreted correctly, data can help guide the process in the right direction. It can tell you a lot of information about your target audience, their likes and dislikes, and what motivates them to engage with a website.

There are several methods to obtain the right data including customer surveys, web analytics, heat mapping and A/B testing.

Tracking for Performance

Once your website goes live, your efforts shouldn't stop there. You need to add regular web tracking to your to-do list to help optimise your web pages, fix bugs, improve user experience and, ultimately, achieve the highest possible conversion rates.

Make sure you are tracking the metrics that are the most important to your business. Depending on your goals, here are a few metrics that you can start tracking using free website analytics tools:

- ✓ Track and measure web traffic with Google Analytics
- ✓ Track and measure user behaviour and improve user experience with Clicky
- ✓ Track and measure ad campaign performance with Facebook Ads



In With the Bold: Conversion-Led Websites



Craft Compelling Content

Whether you're selling diamonds or drills, your audience needs to be compelled to stay on your website and engage with your content to encourage them to buy your products. How?

You can start by mapping out the user journey using persuasion architecture. Persuasion architecture is the method of leading web visitors along a clear path toward a conversion using visual and textual cues. Essentially, this method allows you to step into your users' shoes and lets you identify where, when and how content should be placed on your website to get the best possible results.

Then, you need to highlight the benefits or the value-add of your product or service. Make sure you communicate why customers should choose your product or service over the competitors.

The next step is to tailor the content to your target audience. Leverage user data to understand who you're talking to and create content that speaks to them. You'll quickly realise that different audiences will require different types of content. For example, experts such as software developers need content that includes technical information, while the managerial audience such as a marketing director will need more strategic, value-based messaging.

When crafting content, make sure to use consistent messaging throughout and make it easy for users to digest the content using graphics, on-brand colours, typography principles and whitespace. Identify what your key unique selling propositions are and hammer them home to your target audience.



BUY NOW

DOWNLOAD

BOOK A CALL

Powerful Call-to-Action

Call-to-action (CTA) buttons are the core principle of a conversion-led website. The rest of your web design will focus on getting users to respond to your primary calls to action.

Implement CTA buttons that make it easier for visitors to execute the action you want them to take. Do this by choosing the right colour, and making the buttons bigger and bolder than the rest of your content so they look inviting and clickable. You also need to make sure that your primary CTA button design and secondary CTA button design are consistent throughout your website.

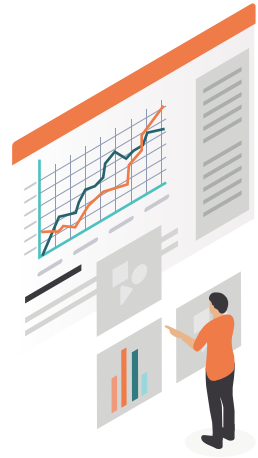
Effective calls to action get straight to the point and use compelling, valuable and actionable copy - have fun with it but try not to go overboard! Moreover, place your CTA buttons above the fold to quickly draw the user's attention without having to scroll too far down the page.

Your efforts shouldn't stop at design and copy. Align your calls to action with your customers' interests and needs. To achieve this, you need to leverage user data, personalisation and dynamic content. Experiment with and A/B test your CTAs to know what design, copy and placement work best.





In With the Bold: Conversion-Led Websites



Analyse Your Content

When done right, quality content can be an effective tool for building an engaged audience. Quality content is authentic, relevant, engaging and optimised for search. More importantly, it's catered to your audience's needs and wants.

Use quality content to create a unique narrative around your brand, and to talk to your audience about the solutions you can provide. This will help expand your reach, boost conversions, create trust and build loyalty.

Once they're published, slice and dice your copy, images, videos, blogs, and any other content on your website to see what is working and what isn't working. Use online metrics, data analytics and customer reporting to identify any gaps in your tracks that stop you from making an informed decision.

Conducting a detailed analysis allows you to answer any questions and flag issues that are otherwise left unaddressed. Do you have any drop-offs or lost leads? Are there gaps in your content strategy? What should you add or remove to get better, higher-quality leads? Analysing and re-evaluating your content can help solve conversion rate issues, SEO obstacles and any snags in performance, and find opportunities for improvement.



Build Trust

Whether it's online or in-person, any interaction a business has with customers should be about building trust. No one would approach anything they don't trust, let alone buying from a website that isn't trustworthy.

But brand trust doesn't come easy. Trust is built over time. It must be earned. How? By creating real and authentic human connections. Authenticity builds trust. And over time, trust increases consumer receptiveness and drives conversions.

A conversion-focused website takes a user-centric approach with the aim to build a series of yeses from customers that lead to brand trust and loyalty. The website is created for your specific target audience and catered to their needs. If you can provide solutions to their problems, they will look to you for answers. They may even tell their buddies about you!



In With the Bold: Conversion-Led Websites



Test for Change

There are a number of tests you can run to ensure that your website is healthy and functioning properly.

One that you can start conducting right off the bat is navigation testing. Are your web pages easy to use? Are elements such as buttons, shapes and text fields usable? Is there access to the main menu from all pages?

Regular content testing can also benefit both your users and your business goals. Are there grammar and spelling mistakes? Are images and videos placed in the right spots? What about the colour palette and typography - are they optimised and on-brand? Is your content informative, easy to understand and structured well? Are you performing A/B testing to identify what's working and what isn't?

Don't forget about mobile-friendly testing. Mobile internet usage is at an all-time high. Test your website on mobile to avoid any drop-offs and lost leads. Is your website adopting responsive design? Is it compatible with smartphones and tablets? How fast do the web pages load on mobile? Are buttons and fields large enough and accessible? Are the sizes of your images and videos optimised? Do your web pages look and feel overcrowded on mobile?

Evaluating your website and testing for change is essential to creating an exceptional online experience for users. When a user has a great experience using your website, chances are they'll come back for more!

What's Next?

Since their inception, websites have given businesses new opportunities and allowed them to reach audiences in ways that would otherwise be impossible.

The eCommerce landscape is constantly changing. So are customer needs and preferences. Online users are not only becoming more adept at navigating the web, but they are also getting smarter as online shoppers. Their changing demands continue to disrupt the way eCommerce is done, forcing businesses and marketers to evolve with them to meet their needs.

To be successful in today's highly-competitive eCommerce landscape, businesses need to move away from traditional web design principles. A website with an outdated design will fail to effectively communicate key value propositions and make authentic customer relationships, inevitably holding back your business.

So, what's next? The online marketplace will continue to expand and evolve with time. Use that as fuel for growth by adopting conversion-focused web design that is less risky than the traditional approach. Build a conversion-led website that is adaptable, data-driven and built with users in mind to future-proof your business for long-term success.

If you don't have the time or resources, you can get a third party to run a conversion audit to thoroughly assess the customer journey on your website. At DGA, we specialise in conversion optimisation to help businesses like yours grow and prosper. Don't hesitate to reach out to our team to **get a free webpage audit today.**



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