growthlabs

The ultimate guide to
B2B website design

Let's be real for a second. There is a trend in the B2B sector that websites should be boring, basic and ugly. Thus, there is an opportunity to break the status quo and develop a website that differentiates yourself from the competition. In this guide, discover how to build a B2B site that attracts, engages, and converts visitors.

Introduction

In the past, websites were little more than online brochures that provided basic information and hoped to influence offline purchase decisions. This approach has become obsolete as the internet, search engines, and buyer behaviours have evolved. Traditional methods of lead generation and sales outreach have lost their effectiveness, and control of the buying process has firmly shifted to the buyers themselves.

Today, an effective B2B website is not just a digital presence but a dynamic tool that significantly influences the buyer's journey. Modern buyers use websites as part of a self-service approach to research and decision-making.

They seek out detailed product information, industry insights, and customer testimonials to make informed decisions without direct interaction with sales teams.

B2B optimised website design

While an effective B2B website must look good, effective web design is about much more than visuals. This guide follows 5 steps to design an effective B2B optimised website:

| Research | Strategy | Planning | Design | Optimisation |

This guide is based on research, practical experience, and real-world results. We've simplified it to make it easy to implement on your website.

Contents

www.growth-labs.co.uk

How to plan a buyer-centric B2B website design

B2B website design best practices
What is a B2B optimised website, and how do you create one?

A truly effective B2B website doesn't just generate leads; it becomes a dynamic engine for growth. Imagine a platform that consistently attracts potential clients, engages them with compelling content, and effortlessly guides them through your sales funnel. With the right design and strategy, your website can become this powerful tool, driving your business toward new heights of success.

Three key criteria optimise for:

Generate Traffic
Make your site discoverable through SEO, PPC, social media, and shareable content.

Engage Visitors
Use compelling visuals, interactive elements, and seamless navigation to retain interest and guide visitors.

Convert
Employ strategic CTAs, user-friendly forms, and persuasive copy to turn visitors into leads or customers. Utilise A/B testing and retargeting to enhance conversion rates

By focusing on these elements, you can transform your website into a powerful asset that not only attracts and engages visitors but also converts them into qualified leads and loyal customers. To best achieve this, you must follow a buyer-centric website design approach.

Research

While creating your new, more effective B2B website requires a different approach, there's still a lot you can learn from the data you already have about your website and your competition. Begin by analysing your existing website with tools like Google Analytics and Search Console to understand which pages perform well and which do not. Additionally, investigate your competitors' websites to identify successful strategies and features that you could implement.

By combining insights from your current site and your competitors, you can create a comprehensive plan for a buyer-centric B2B website design that is optimised for traffic, engagement, and conversion.

Start research here: Your website

Your research should begin with your current website. Ensure that Google Analytics and Search Console have been actively monitoring your site for as long as possible before commencing the planning phase for your new website.

In Google Analytics, identify pages with the highest and lowest traffic. High-traffic pages should remain in your sitemap, while low-traffic pages may be removed. This isn't a strict rule; use your judgment. Low traffic might indicate SEO or navigation issues rather than problems with the page. Be decisive because maintaining unread pages still incurs costs.

Search Console will reveal any technical problems that could be skewing your results in Google Analytics. Address these issues to ensure accurate data collection and avoid similar pitfalls in your new site. Regularly monitoring your Search Console can also help identify trends and potential areas for improvement, making it an indispensable tool in your ongoing site optimisation efforts.

Typical Search Console problems:

- Missing or inaccurate sitemaps
- Crawl errors
- Manual spam actions
- Mobile usability problems
- Broken links
- Page speed issues

Take note of these errors and ensure you fix them.

It is also advisable to install Hotjar on your website. A free account allows you to create a limited number of heat maps and visitor recordings that demonstrate how visitors perceive your site. It provides valuable user insights, such as:

- How far they scroll down each page
- How long they stay on different sections of your site
- Where they spend their time
- Where they click
- What they ignore

An example of a Hotjar heatmap:
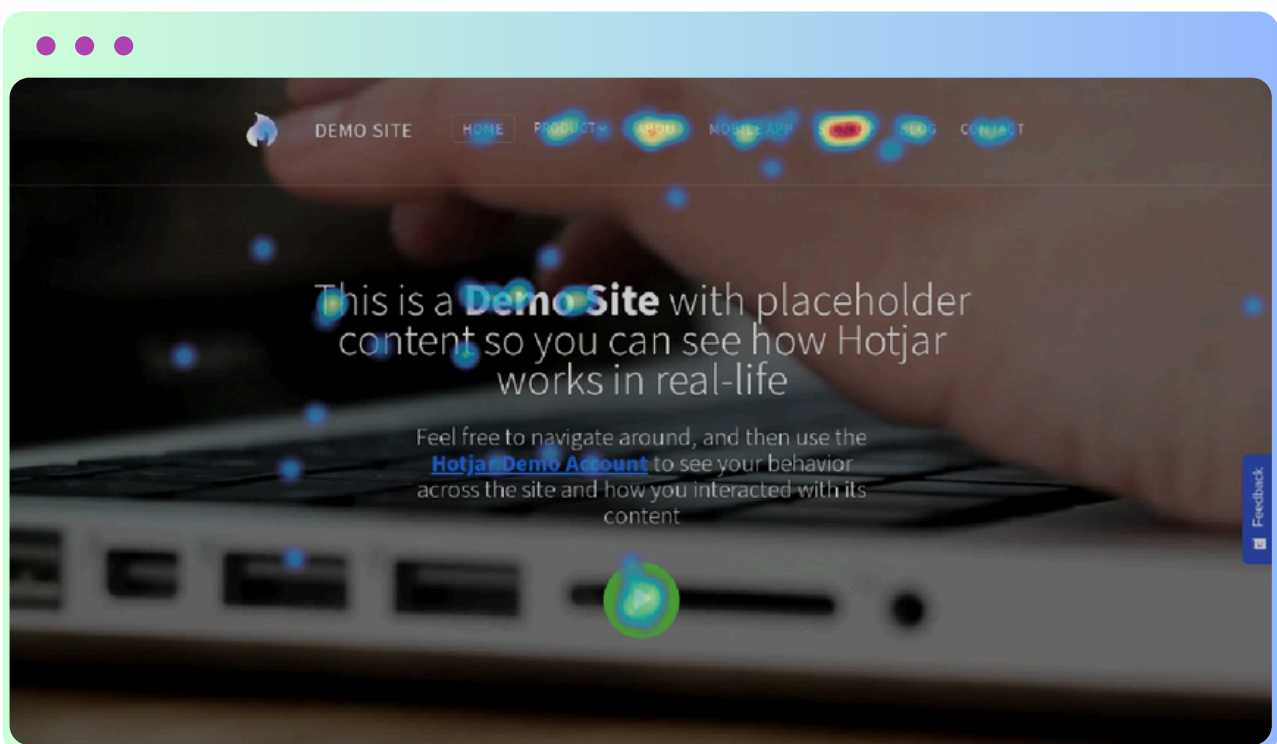
Useful resources:
- Google Analytics
- Search Console
- Hotjar

Look at the competition

Next, examine your competitors' websites. Not only should you observe indicators of what is successful within your industry, but you must also **ensure that your business is distinctly differentiated from the competition.**

Replicating a competitor's website design or deliberately adopting a similar positioning will not result in an effective B2B website. Make sure you are unique.

Competitor research can reveal the keywords that their websites are optimised for. This information can be beneficial for your keyword planning.

We recommend two effective competitor research tools.
- **SEMRush:** Provides comprehensive insights into the organic and paid search performance of your competitors.
- **Ahrefs:** Offers detailed information on any URL's organic traffic and backlink profile.

Thought leadership and trends

Staying ahead in B2B web design is an ever-evolving challenge. Fortunately, a wealth of insightful content is available on Google to help us enhance our strategies.

We can gain invaluable insights by leveraging the innovative approaches of **SaaS companies** known for their data-driven and agile methodologies. These companies meticulously analyse every marketing dollar spent, ensuring their websites are powerful tools for business growth.

Useful resources:
- Medium's study of 100 SaaS websites
- 33 effective SaaS website design examples by Webflow

B2B Website Strategy

Start here – Your Value Proposition

A clear and concise value proposition is essential to effective B2B website design. It connects with visitors immediately and builds trust, starting with clarity about who you are and what you do.

Why is a value proposition important? It plays a vital role in your keyword strategy, sitemap, navigation, and homepage design. It also helps monitor performance and plan improvements, informing site-wide design and copy.

A value proposition clearly explains how your product or service solves a problem, delivers benefits, and why customers should choose you over competitors. It guides all content and design decisions, ensuring your website aligns with your audience's needs, enhances credibility, boosts engagement, and drives conversions.

> ### Read more information on value propositions:
> - What is value proposition?
> - How to Write a Value Proposition

Keyword Strategy

An exceptional B2B website ensures that potential buyers can effortlessly find what they need at any stage of their purchasing journey. This is why formulating your keyword strategy is crucial before diving into website design.

By pinpointing your target keywords upfront and weaving them into your site's structure, content, page names, and URLs, you're setting your website up for success. This strategic foundation not only boosts your chances of ranking higher on search engines but also ensures that your blogging, content marketing, and social media efforts are all aligned. This proactive approach to search engine optimisation is much more effective and efficient than retrofitting keywords into your site after it's built.

Next, look at the competition

We recommend trying out tools like Ahrefs and SEMrush to develop your keyword strategy. These tools will help you see where you currently rank for specific search terms, as well as the search volume and competition for those terms. A solid keyword strategy blends these insights to **create a list of keywords that are both desirable and achievable.**

The 3 essential metrics for an effective keyword strategy

1. Current search ranking
2. Keyword search volume
3. Keyword difficulty

Utilise these tools to determine which keywords your site ranks well for and evaluate their attractiveness based on visitor quality and volume. Additionally, conduct research on new keywords through a combination of buyer persona analysis, online suggestion tools, and informed estimations to enhance your strategy.

Once complete, your keyword strategy becomes a master document. A list of SEO best practices that underpin the most effective B2B website designs.

Once you've nailed down your keyword strategy, think of it as your website's secret sauce. It's like having a cheat sheet for SEO success that guides your B2B website design to be both user-friendly and search engine-friendly. Standardise your keyword strategy throughout your website.

Tools we recommend:
- Ahrefs
- SEMRush

Planning Your B2B Site

Sitemap

The role of the sitemap in effective B2B website design is to provide a detailed record of the pages you want to build and where they'll live on your site. Your sitemap should embody the findings of the research you've done thus far and contain the **pages that align with your keyword strategy and your buyer's decision process.**

Buyers don't visit your website to spend lots of time reading about every nuance of what you do. They have a specific goal, so make it easy for them to achieve it.

Focus on **providing content for each stage of the buyer's journey.**

For example, key pages for a professional services business might be homepage, services, case studies, and a consultation offer. Whereas a SaaS business might opt for homepage, features, pricing, and a demo or trial offer.

Your sitemap should also include:

- Business-essential pages, like terms and conditions/privacy
- Blog and blog post pages
- Landing pages
- Thank you pages

Canva is a great beginner friendly tool for producing and updating sitemaps. Its slick flowcharting templates make it easy to create your sitemap while also allowing you to:

- Share the sitemap in a variety of formats
- Leave comments
- Make changes

An example of a SaaS website sitemap created in Canva colour-coded by **delivery phase**:
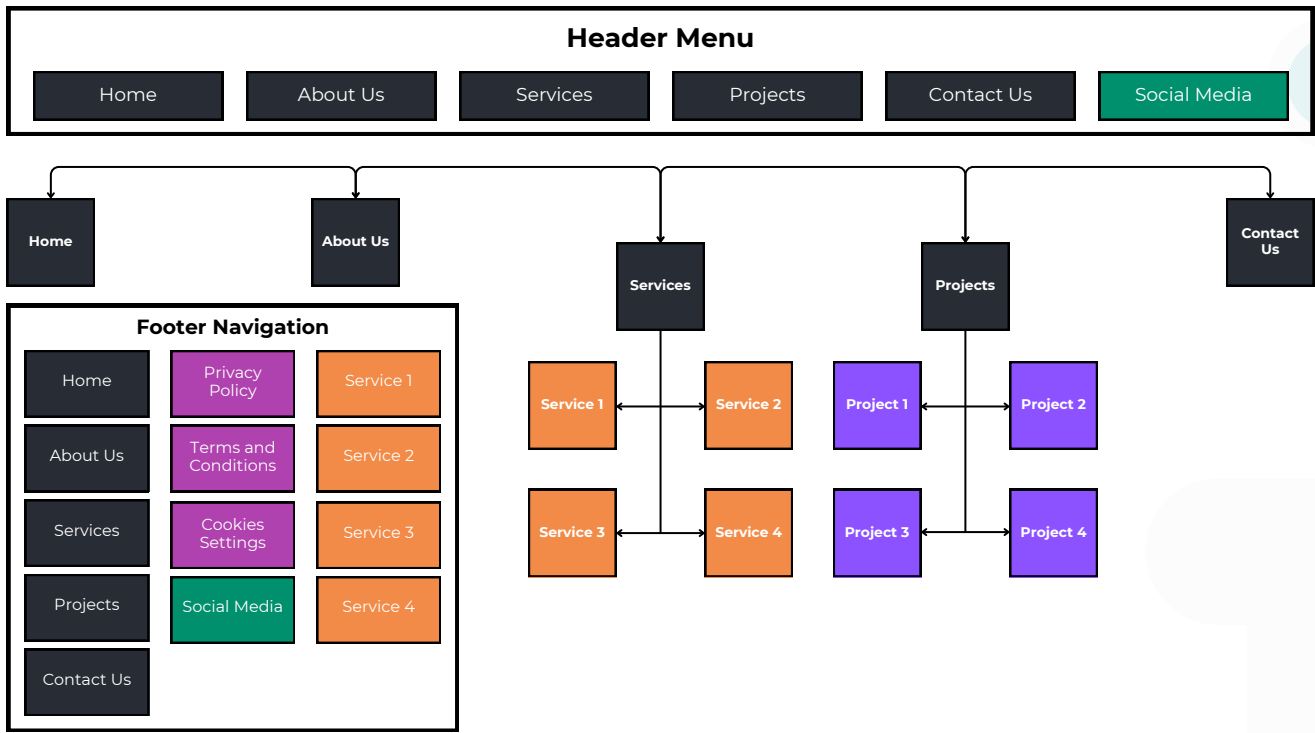
Navigation

People often overlook the impact of the main navigation on a website visitor's experience.

In the past, the standard approach was to have a main navigation that included every category and every page of content so that the visitor could find exactly what they were looking for. This led to convoluted navigation menus with many options and huge dropdowns or 'mega menus', both of which are bad for website effectiveness.

Visitors are time-poor. You've only got seconds to engage them. If they click on a nav item and a huge dropdown with dozens of options appears, they're probably going to leave. It's your job to know what content they're looking for so you can present them with the minimum number of options.

People often underestimate the impact of effective main navigation on a website visitor's experience. Historically, the approach was to cram every category and page into the main navigation, making it easy to find specific content. However, this led to overly complex menus and massive dropdowns, both detrimental to a website's effectiveness.

Today's visitors are pressed for time, giving you mere seconds to capture their attention. When they encounter a navigation item that triggers an overwhelming dropdown with countless options, they're likely to leave. It's crucial to **anticipate what content they seek and present it** with the fewest possible options for a streamlined, user-friendly experience.

A good resource to follow is ChartMogul, which studied SaaS homepages.

> "Simplicity is king! An overly-complex site navigation will leave your visitors confused like a tourist in a city without a map."
>
> **- ChartMogul**

A well-crafted customer journey through your site ensures that visitors find what they're looking for without frustration. It showcases your understanding of their needs and reinforces confidence in your offerings.

While drop-downs aren't entirely off-limits, they must be kept simple to avoid overwhelming users. An exceptional alternative is strategic **calls to actions (CTAs)** that guide visitors seamlessly through your site.

For instance, one of our clients, LGS, exemplifies streamlined navigation with well-placed CTAs and a compelling value proposition:
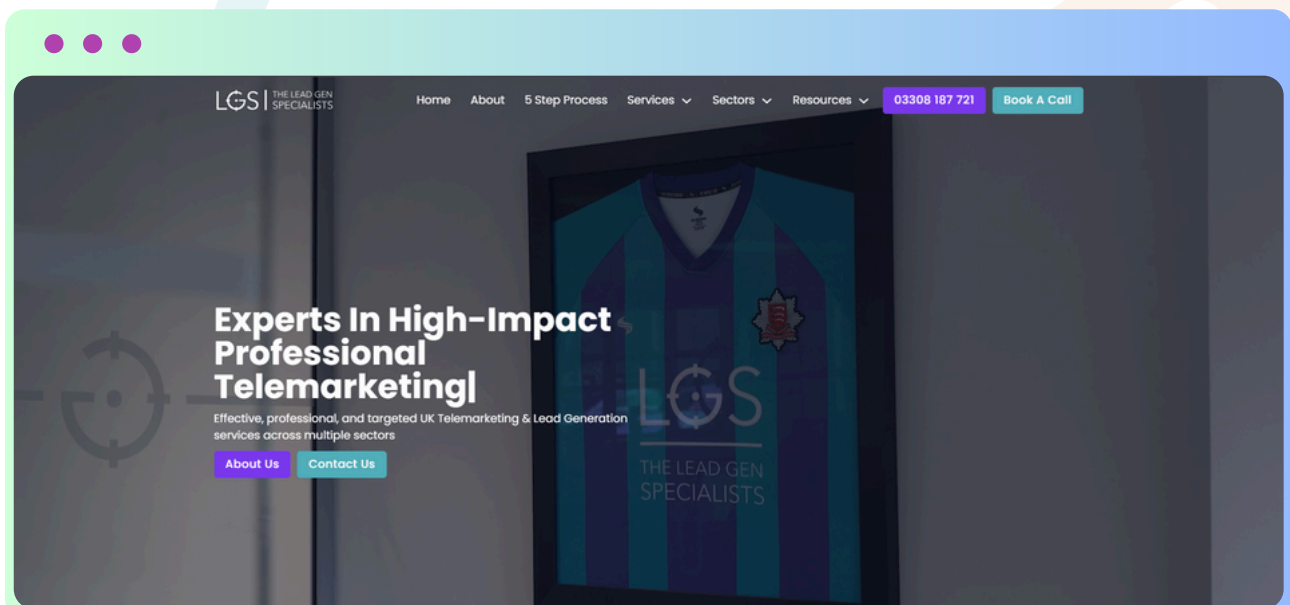
If you've already embraced a streamlined main navigation, consider using the **footer for more detailed navigation links**. This strategy resonates well with visitors who, having journeyed through your page, seek the next steps at the bottom rather than at the top.

One of our clients, Fulle Metal Finance, demonstrates this by utilising their footer to offer access to valuable content that, while not essential to immediate purchase decisions, enriches the user's experience and engagement.
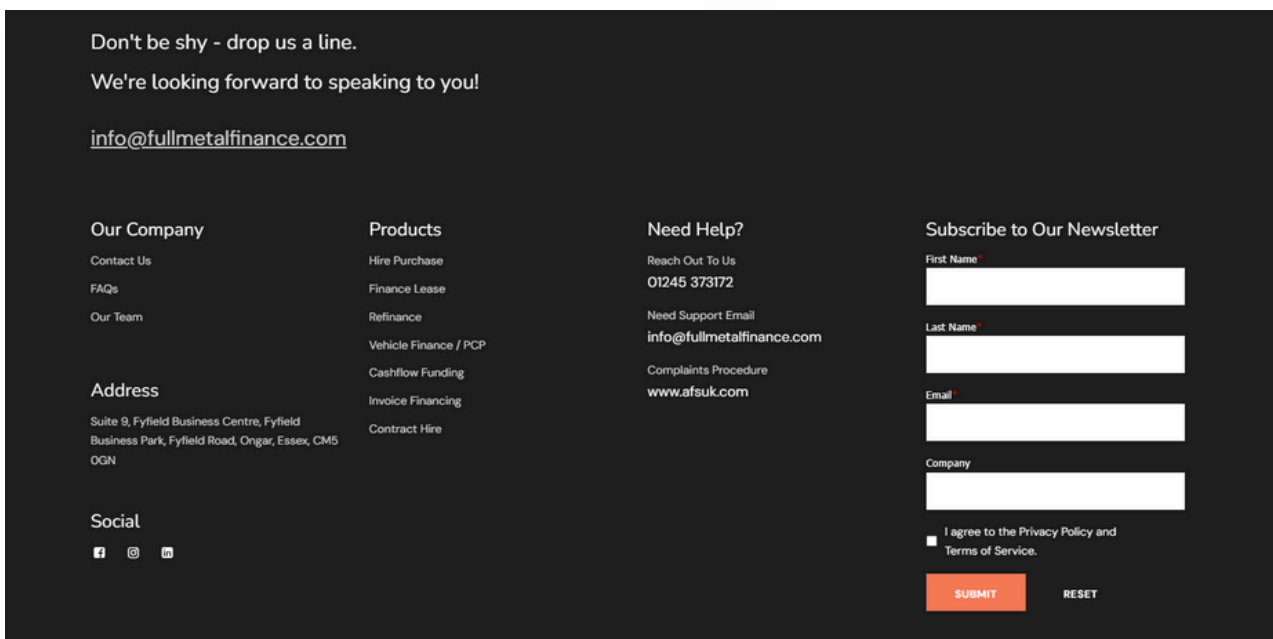
To sum up, **when planning your navigation, focus on including only the most crucial pages** that support the buying process and save the rest for the footer.
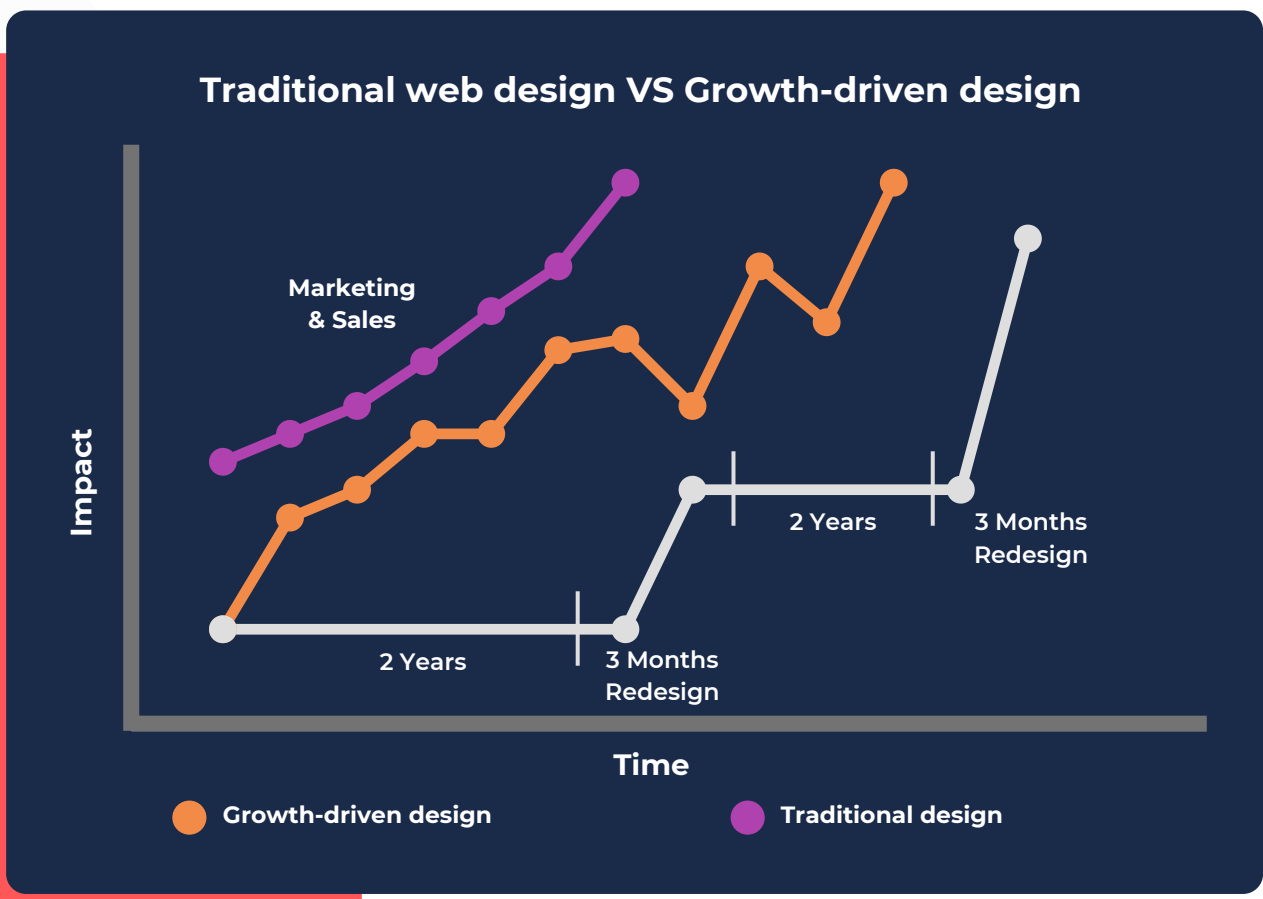
It's important to remember that your sitemap and navigation plan are distinct entities, though they can be related. For an optimal outcome, craft your site's navigation with deliberate intent – and while it can be helpful to keep your sitemap and navigation plan in the same document, ensure they serve their unique purposes without confusion. Utilising tools like Canva for navigation design can streamline this process, ensuring clarity and coherence. The same principle applies to your footer navigation links.

Agile delivery

At Growthlabs, we passionately advocate for the **Growth Driven Design (GDD)** approach to B2B website design and development, pioneered by the innovative Luke Summerfield at HubSpot.

GDD revolutionises how we build websites by replacing rigid, traditional methods with a dynamic, agile process. Instead of locking into an exhaustive plan that takes months to execute, GDD breaks the journey into short, impactful sprints. Each sprint delivers prioritized, high-value chunks of the website, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptation.

Traditional B2B website design versus Growth Driven Design – the orange line symbolizes the adaptable, ever-ascending path of GDD.

Traditional web design VS Growth-driven design

Marketing & Sales

Impact

2 Years

3 Months Redesign

2 Years

3 Months Redesign

Time

● Growth-driven design   ● Traditional design

Why spend months meticulously crafting every single page of your website before you even launch it? This outdated approach does nothing to optimise your site's effectiveness. Instead, it only increases your initial investment of time and money without guaranteeing a swift return. Embrace a more dynamic strategy that maximises impact from the get-go.

In traditional web design, you launch with no feedback as to whether your design works or not. This increases the likelihood that your market, buyers, product, or strategy will have changed by the time your new website is ready.

Building and launching a 'minimum viable product' quickly allows for subsequent improvements over time. By doing this, 20% of pages that perform 80% of the work can go live promptly, and the insights they generate can inform future updates.

The first step in agile website development is to prioritise pages and features. A simple way to do this is to colour code your sitemap to indicate which pages you require before anything goes live, and which can come one or two phases behind.

After you've successfully launched your first batch of pages, you can plan the next phase and be on the lookout for issues or opportunities presented by user behaviour on your site.

Design

Wireframes and copy

Before diving into the design, ensure you fully wireframe and draft the initial pages that form your agile website plan's first phase. Working with wireframes and actual (though not necessarily final) copy allows you to map out a seamless customer journey.

Wireframes are your blueprint for an effective website, letting you tweak and perfect the layout without getting stuck in a design that doesn't work. Remember, it's far easier and more cost-effective to update copy and layout at this stage than to redo a finalised design.

Whether your wireframes are low-fi or high-def, starting with a simple version is usually best. Add more detail as you gain confidence in the content. Creating wireframes in [Sketch](#), [Photoshop](#), or [Illustrator](#) can speed up the design phase. If these tools aren't available, [Canva](#) is a fantastic alternative that simplifies the process.

Homepage design

The homepage is the most essential element of any B2B website design and will frequently be discussed during the initial meetings and throughout the design process.

Homepage design is challenging because
- It's the first page many visitors see.
- Visitors can be at any stage of the buying process.
- Visitors determine whether to remain on a site or leave within a few seconds.

The first element you must nail on your homepage is the header section—this is the initial glance new visitors will take before choosing to stay or leave. **To captivate the right audience, clearly communicate what you do and who you do it for** – this is your value proposition.

Businesses often overlook the importance of the first-time visitor when designing their homepage headers, neglecting to clearly articulate their value proposition. It might seem too straightforward to say, "We do X for Y," but nothing beats this clarity for passing the blink test.

Slack's homepage value proposition is a prime example of simplicity and effectiveness. They bypass sliders and swiftly address differentiation, social proof, and calls to action:
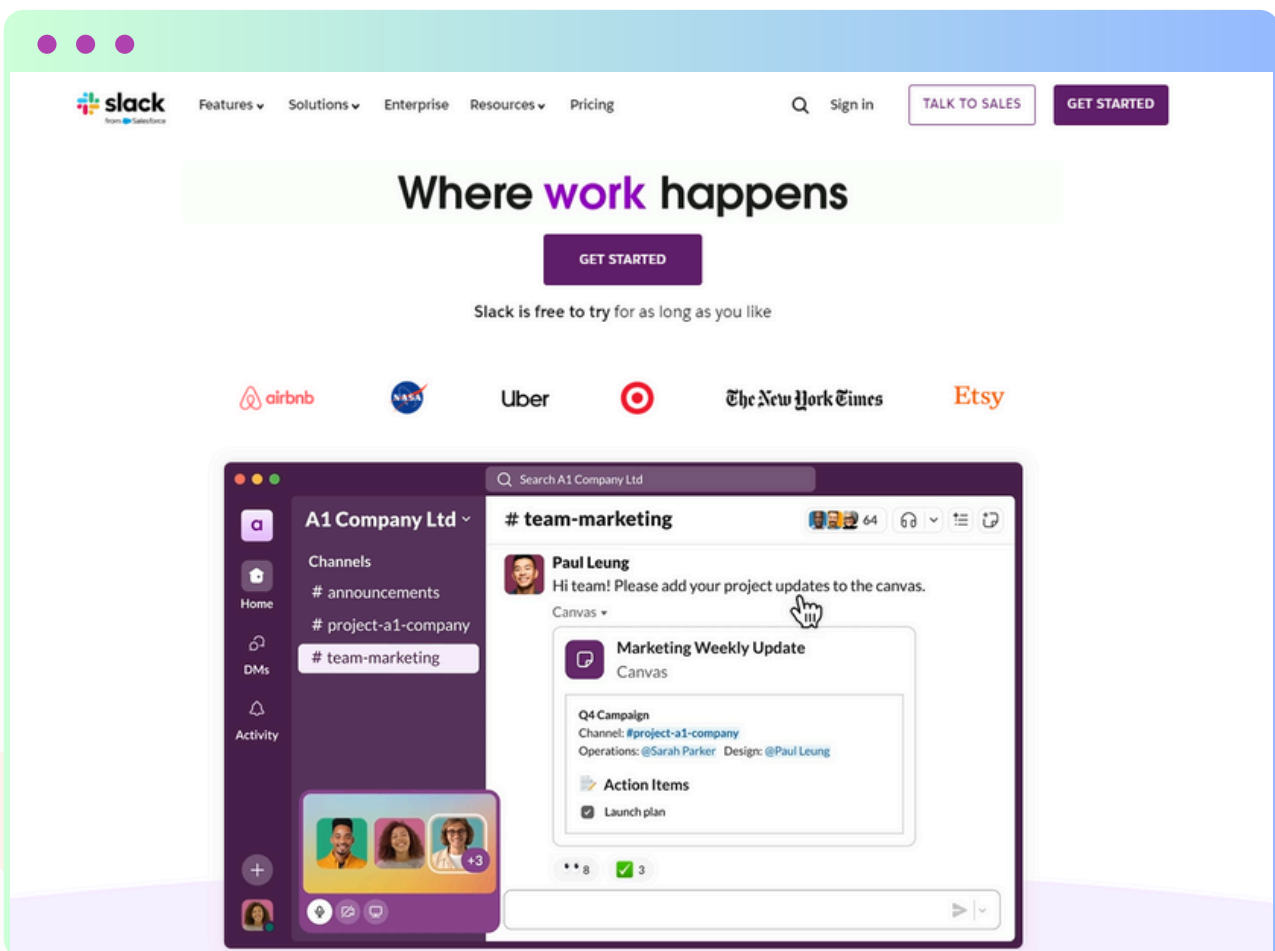
Sliders, or carousels, can actually harm the effectiveness of your homepage. Research has shown that sliders are detrimental to both SEO and the user experience. **They also undermine your ability to clearly communicate your value proposition**.

Including a slider on your website forces you to come up with multiple top-line messages, which can dilute the impact of your main value proposition. Instead of focusing on what's important, websites with sliders often end up displaying alternative versions of their value proposition, along with company news or product launches. But these don't address the primary goal of convincing a first-time visitor that they're in the right place. That's what the other pages of your site are for.

So, do yourself a favor – ditch the slider and create a truthful, concise, and compelling value proposition for your homepage.

Your homepage should also include:

- **Points of differentiation:** Once a visitor passes the blink test, tell them why you're the best choice for them.

- **Social proof:** Evidence goes a long way toward building trust and preference. Share customer logos, testimonials, or case studies to demonstrate your credentials.

- **Calls to action:** A strong CTA guides visitors at all stages of the buying process towards the next step.

Interresting Articles

- [10 Top Ways That Content Marketing Can Attract and Convert Leads](#)
- [Great B2B Social Media Marketing Strategies 2024](#)
- [3 Tips For Creating Thumb-Stopping Social Content](#)

Optimisation

Conversion optimisation

For your website to truly shine, it must transform anonymous visitors into engaged leads, promising opportunities, or loyal customers.
Most websites rely on a single contact page, which, in our experience, can be a dead end for prospects. Perhaps it's the ambiguity of "contact me" – such a vague and open-ended request – or the extra step of navigating to another page that deters them. Whatever the reason, we've rarely seen a contact page that consistently generates leads.

The remedy? Multiple, enticing c**onversion points scattered throughout your site**. Each must clearly state what the buyer will receive in return for their contact details – options like "request pricing," "book a demo," or "try it free" are far more effective than a generic "contact us."

Strategically place these conversion points to align with each stage of the buyer's journey, ensuring they appear exactly where potential customers are most likely to notice them. A conversion point could be a compelling call to action leading to a dedicated landing page, or an embedded form that's seamlessly integrated into the content.

When these elements come together, they create a dynamic and engaging user experience that not only attracts but also retains and converts visitors.

Contact form tip

Placing a contact form in the footer can make it more convenient for visitors to ask general questions from any page on the site. **This approach has been observed to be more effective than using dedicated contact pages.**

Use a contact footer form instead of a traditional contact page, like our website:

While some buyers might pick up the phone and call, most won't. To turn visitors into leads, you need a mix of strategically placed forms and a robust marketing database. Here are our top methods for achieving this:

- **Strategic Placement of Forms:** Embed forms throughout your site, especially in high-traffic areas and points of interest.
- **Diverse Call-to-Actions:** Use a variety of CTAs that cater to different stages of the buyer's journey, such as "request pricing," "book a demo," or "try it free."
- **Dedicated Landing Pages:** Create landing pages for specific offers or content to provide a clear and focused path for visitors.
- **Lead Magnets:** Offer valuable resources like whitepapers, e-books, or webinars in exchange for contact information.
- **Lead tracking:** Have lead tracking software to see exactly what digital marketing channels are driving leads. Then optimise those channels. We use Datascope.

Search Engine Optimisation

Once you've designed and built your B2B website, it's time to supercharge it for organic search traffic by:

- Crafting unique meta titles for each page that spotlight the keywords you're targeting.
- Writing compelling meta descriptions that not only match the title but also entice users to click.
- Fine-tuning the H1 tag and body copy to naturally incorporate those crucial keywords.
- Seamlessly linking pages to one another using target keywords to weave a cohesive and powerful web.
- Incorporating image alt tags with relevant keywords wherever possible.

SEO is a vast ocean - too expansive to cover entirely here. But remember, the golden rule is essential: always adhere to your keyword strategy. Deviating even slightly can hamper the effectiveness of your B2B site dramatically.

Think of your website as a pyramid

At the top is your homepage. You want this to rank for your most attractive, and probably most competitive, target keywords.

The layers beneath represent the layers of content in your website. In SEO terms, the role of each page is to help the pages above it rank for their target keyword.

Propping this up is your blog. This is where you have a high volume of pages on a wide range of topics, all internally linked to help site pages rank for their target terms.

Joost van de Valk effectively encapsulates this methodology in his blog, "Using Cornerstone Content to Enhance Your Site's Ranking":

> *"Sites don't rank: pages rank. If you want to rank for a keyword, you'll need to determine which page is going to be the page ranking for that keyword."*
>
> **- Joost van de Valk**

For more info on relevant SEO topics, read

- OpenAI's SearchGPT: What We Know and How It Works
- Growthlabs – What is a GA4 Metric and Dimension?
- How to Optimise Your Website for SEO: A Beginner's Guide
- Choosing the Right B2B Marketing Agency – Ultimate Guide
- Our Secret to Growth Marketing

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Conclusion

Congratulations on making it this far! Let's do a quick recap of the essentials:

Always keep your customers in mind when designing your website. Dive into thorough research and planning, crafting a strategy that aligns with your keyword approach and value proposition. Draft wireframes to visualise your plan.

Remember, your website doesn't have to be perfect at launch—start with the most critical pages and use analytics to guide the development of the rest.

Finally, prioritise SEO and conversion optimisation to drive success.