

# Drupal Site Success!

---

The eight essential steps to great  
Drupal websites that attract,  
engage and convert

---

**Tom McCracken**

**Drupal**<sup>™</sup>



# CONTENTS

<b>Licensing / Terms of Use .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>So you want to build a new website? .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Technology + Design + Marketing .....	6
<b>Step 1: Redesign with the right vision .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Why a new site? .....	8
Why are you redesigning your website? .....	8
How would you define a successful project? .....	9
Proper goal setting.....	10
The Drupal customization trap.....	11
Goals checklist .....	13
Takeaway .....	13
<b>2: Assure current website assets are properly maintained .....</b>	<b>14</b>
The audit .....	14
What to do with this data? .....	16
The Asset Check List .....	17
Takeaway .....	17
<b>Step 3: Focus your homepage.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Homepage pitfalls .....	18
Pitfall #1 – Forcing your message .....	18
Pitfall #2 – Information overload .....	19
Pitfall #3 – Not optimizing for search.....	21
A better homepage .....	22
Homepage checklist .....	24
Takeaway .....	24
<b>4: Architect your content.....</b>	<b>25</b>
What is content architecture? .....	26
Drupal Rocks Content Architecture .....	26

Getting started with Drupal's content architecture .....	27
Content architecture checklist .....	28
Takeaway .....	28
<b>Step 5: Focus on continuous original content that attracts and converts .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Building extraordinary content.....	30
Engaging visitors .....	32
Content Checklist.....	33
Takeaway .....	33
<b>Step 6: Convert with premium offers .....</b>	<b>34</b>
The Ingredients .....	35
Offers .....	35
Landing pages .....	36
Call to actions.....	36
Drupal conversion recipes .....	37
Conversion Checklist .....	39
Takeaway .....	39
<b>Step 7: Plan for mobile .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Mobile and Inbound Marketing.....	40
The pragmatic approach to mobile .....	41
The Mobile Checklist.....	42
Takeaway .....	42
<b>Step 8: Continually innovate.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Measure .....	43
Learn .....	44
Experiment .....	45
Innovation Checklist.....	45
Takeaways.....	46
<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>47</b>



Learn more .....	48
<b>Sources .....</b>	<b>49</b>

## LICENSING / TERMS OF USE

This ebook is released under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial License \(3.0\)](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/). Your use of this document is subject to this license.

---

You are free:



to Share – to copy, distribute and transmit the work



to Remix – to adapt the work

Under the following conditions:



Attribution – You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).



Noncommercial – You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

- 
- For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do this is with a link to this web page.  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>
  - Nothing in this license impairs or restricts the author's moral rights.
  - Please attribute this work as: "Drupal Site Success! by LevelTen Interactive" with a link to <http://www.leveltendesign.com/download/drupal-site-success>

## SO YOU WANT TO BUILD A NEW WEBSITE?

### Why?

It may be that your current site doesn't look very good. Maybe you want to implement new functionality in the latest version of Drupal. Maybe your site is outdated and your CEO wants to re-do it *just because it's time*.

Ask yourself another question: how is your current website site performing? Is it producing results? Is it generating traffic, engaging users, converting visitors into customers, and does it keep them coming back?

How is your website site performing compared to your competitors? Is it generating its fair share of business or is most of the business going to your competition? Is it generating *any* business?

If you are non-profit: is it driving donations, creating awareness, getting people to volunteer and go to events? If you are a startup is it getting people to use your new widget or app?

Every organization has goals they are trying to accomplish. More and more people are leveraging the Internet to better accomplish those goals.

The conventional wisdom is that everybody must have a website. Savvy organizations know the truth. Just having a website is a waste of money and time. You don't need just another website. What every business and non-profit really must have is a **results oriented web presence**.

You may be rebuilding your website in Drupal for all the cool features or to be able to manage your own content. It is easy to get wrapped up in all the powerful things Drupal can do. But realize that all these features and the ability to directly manage publishing should be just means to an end.

The real question is what does all the Drupal power you are building add up to. Will your new site help you accomplish your business goals?

Drupal is the ultimate platform for building a results oriented web presence. There is practically no limit to what it can do. But its power and flexibility can also be the ultimate distraction. Too often development teams get caught up in all the features and lose the forest through the trees.

That is what this eBook is meant to prevent. Its purpose is to help keep you focused on accomplishing the big picture. There are many great resources to guide you through the technical details of building a Drupal site. They tell you how to build it. This book is about *what* you should build.

## Technology + Design + Marketing

The key to succeeding on the Internet is to combine a great website with great marketing. Marketing is the piece that most people neglect. After all you can look and play with a website. Marketing is more elusive. But if people don't come to your site, what is really the point in having it?

Online marketing can be mysterious and intimidating. Maybe you have tried marketing in the past. Maybe you have hired someone who does something like SEO, social media or paid search. How did it work? Is it still producing results?

If you are like most organizations, those tactics might have worked for a little while, but over the last few years they have become insufficient. They have stopped producing results by themselves.

But there is hope. There is a standard that has emerged for doing effective long term marketing the right way – and a properly built Drupal site is the perfect engine to drive it. It is called *inbound marketing*.

The most effective path to online success on the modern web is to integrate a no-limits interactive CMS like Drupal with inbound marketing strategies.

Inbound marketing is a process for generating site traffic, leads and customers using:

- goodwill content
- search engine optimization (SEO)
- social media
- conversion pages
- calls to action
- lead nurturing (marketing automation)

This eBook is a quick step-by-step guide on how to implement the essential components of an effective website and how to transform your Drupal website into a results generating machine.



## STEP 1: REDESIGN WITH THE RIGHT VISION

The first step towards online success may seem obvious, yet it is missed by most organizations. The critical first step is to set the right vision. This is done by defining proper results-oriented goals.

### Why a new site?

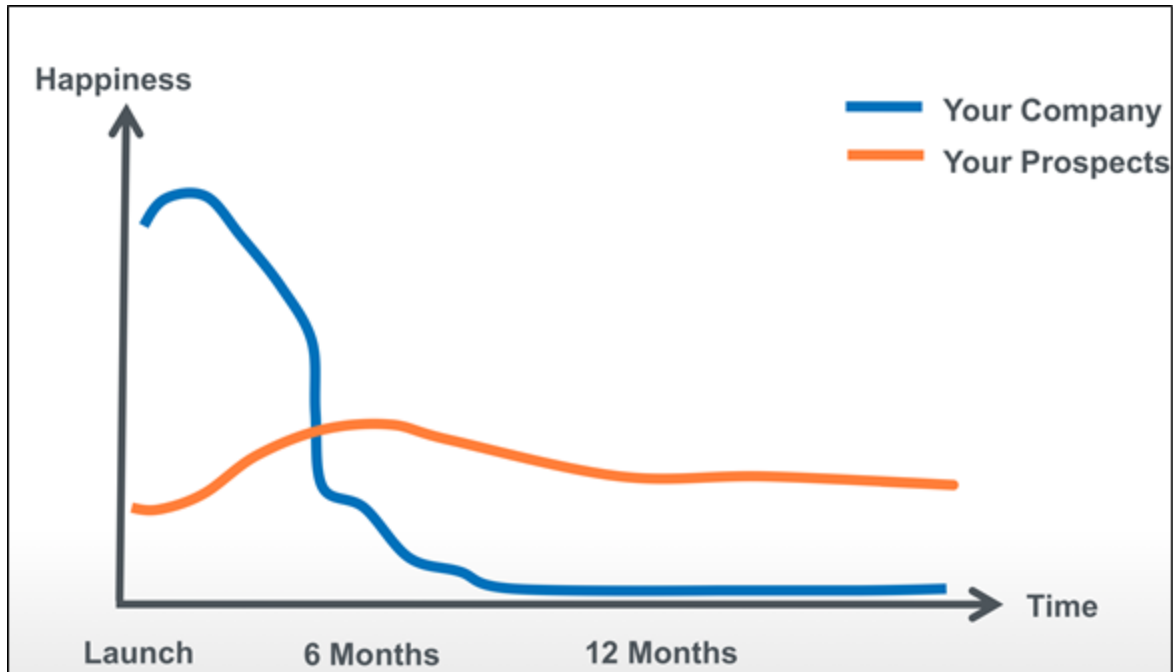
Over the last 13+ years we have asked thousands of people two simple questions when we first talk to them about a website redesign. The first is:

#### **Why are you redesigning your website?**

The typical responses most people give are:

- We need a more professional look and feel
- The site is too confusing
- We need to add section X or we need to add Y functionality
- We need to be able to make changes to the site easily
- We need it to be mobile friendly
- The CEO wants to do it

These are perfectly rational reasons, but do not necessarily lead to a better website. In fact, studies show that stakeholder satisfaction from a typical redesign is short lived:



Source: Hubspot, Webinar Redesign Strategy, 2010

Ultimately, there should only be one reason for redesigning a website: *it is underperforming – and we think we can do better*. Just making your site look better, adding features or making the company stakeholders feel good will not directly lead to online success.

The second question we ask is:

**How would you define a successful project?** (e.g. What are your goals?)

An astonishing number of people are stumped by this question at first. Many have not even thought about their goals. The typical answer is “I’m not sure. We just need a new website.”

With a little more prodding, people will begin to articulate their priorities. The typical goals people come up with are:

- A clean professional looking website
- Being able to manage our own content
- Getting the project completed on time and on budget

The typical goals are around the features of their site - the look and feel, specific functionality, and the project coming in on time and on budget. But even if these goals are achieved, they will not generate value by themselves.

## Proper goal setting

Goals should be around measurements that impact the bottom line:

- increasing revenue
- reducing cost
- building goodwill (future increased revenue)

The reasons for a redesign and how you define success of your Drupal website should be around benefits, not features. Goals should be clearly defined that either directly impact the bottom line or are an intermediate step towards that end.

Furthermore goals should be SMART- specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time sensitive. For example, if your goal is to increase leads - by how much? In what time frame?

For a website focused on inbound marketing, it helps to break goals down into customers, leads and visitors. Start with how much you want to grow revenue and work backwards:

1. Set a revenue growth target
2. Estimate how many customers you will need to generate that revenue
3. Estimate how many leads you will need to generate that many customers
4. Estimate how many visitors to your site you will need to generate those leads

Maybe revenue is not your primary goal right now. If you are a startup, maybe it's registrations. Or if you're a non-profit, maybe it's volunteers. For goals that involve non-revenue growth, simply replace revenue in step one with other objectives and determine the numbers for steps 2 through 4. Use tools like the [Google Analytics module](#) for Drupal to help measure conversions and success.

## The Drupal customization trap

A hundred years after Pareto determined his [famous principle](#), about how you get 80% of the results from 20% of the effort, most Drupal teams are still ignoring this truism.

Drupal's flexibility and seemingly endless extendibility is addictive. Modules act like gateway features. They give you a cheap, easy taste of some cool new functionality. Then you want more. People suddenly want to continually

customize existing features and keep seeking out new and better ones. Too often teams waste a huge amount of effort chasing the Drupal “feature high”.

One thing we like to tell clients is that with Drupal, often features aren’t expensive, but customization is. Drupal offers an incredible amount of functionality in the core download and in contributed modules. This leads to two major sources of project bloat: over-customization and feature complexity.

Often features don’t look and act exactly the way the stakeholders might have envisioned right out of the box. But often they do work pretty well. Too many times the product owner is insistent on bending Drupal around their UX vision. Maybe they saw something similar on Facebook, Pinterest or some other cutting edge site that spends hundreds of millions in development each year.

The other source of bloat happens over time. Implementing modules at the start of a project is normally fairly straight forward. But as more and more modules and features get added and interact with each other, complexity starts to rise. The effort to keep all the features looking and acting consistent will grow exponentially as more functionality is added.

The key for maximizing the success of your website is to think lean. Only do what provides the most value. Only do the 20% that gets you 80% of the results – at least at first.

A secret for staying true to the lean vision is to keep your goals and objectives in mind. Every time a new feature is proposed ask, “How will this feature help me achieve my goals?” Features should be prioritized by the

value they return to the organization. Not by personal preference, no matter how great someone thinks that must have might be. Only features that make the most bottom line impact should be at the top of your project backlog.

Here is a bonus tip: **launch!** Build your site just well enough, then launch! In lean thinking this is called a *smallest viable product*. Figure out what your smallest viable website is and launch that as quickly as possible. After your site is live, make it better. You can then do it more intelligently using real data and user feedback.

## Goals checklist

- ☐ Brainstorm goals you want to achieve with your new website
- ☐ Create measures for these goals
- ☐ Set targets and timeframes for each goal
- ☐ Build a budget for your web project based on the net present value of achieving these goals

## Takeaway

Many website owners feel that a new website design is the marketing push needed to increase awareness of their brand. In reality, most redesigns produce little return on investment. The key to success is redesigning with a focus on results. Those who do it right will unlock the true power of the Internet and reap a windfall of returns.

Start by creating bottom line impacting goals. Then prioritize all features and requirements based on those that make the most impact toward achieving your goals.

## 2: ASSURE CURRENT WEBSITE ASSETS ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED

Often people are so excited jumping into new features and marketing opportunities for their redesign, they forget to protect the assets they already have on their existing site.

Website assets such as content, inbound links, keyword rankings, and conversion tools are critical to a strong web presence. To preserve your web presence, you must keep track of these assets to ensure that they are all transferred in the redesign process.

### The audit

The first step is to conduct a content audit of all the pages of your site. If your site is already using Drupal, then you should be able to easily catalog all site content from the admin interface. You will likely want to export the content list into a spreadsheet format to make it easier to work with.

If your site is not built with a CMS like Drupal, you will either need to build your content audit manually (for a small site), or use automated crawler software to discover all the pages to build the list for you.

The next step is to determine how many visits and hits each page is generating. Hits are when a site visitor looks at a page at any time during their visit. Visits are when a page is the first page they look at, e.g. that page is a traffic generator.

To determine the number of visits, you will want to use a web analytics system. Ideally, you are already using such a system and have built a solid history of page statistics. If not, install Google Analytics or a similar system immediately to gather as much data as possible about which pages on your site are vital. The [Google Analytics module](#) makes it simple to install the Google tracking code on your site.

The next step is to determine which pages have inbound links. Inbound links are when other websites link to yours. Inbound links are critical to achieving high rankings in the search engines. You want to make sure you don't break any pages that are generating "link juice".

Web analytics can help you determine which pages are receiving traffic from inbound links. However, most analytics systems don't report inbound links unless a visitor has actually clicked on it to visit your site.

You need to discover all of your inbound links. To do this, you will need a broader set of tools. Google Webmaster Tools is a good starting place, as it will provide a list of high value links.

The next step is to determine which pages are generating search traffic and for which keywords. Again, web analytics can help by reporting how much traffic is going to which pages and which keywords (sometimes) are being used.

Using keyword ranking monitoring tools can you develop a more comprehensive picture of your keyword rankings.



## What to do with this data?

It is critical to not break pages that are generating traffic and have inbound links during the redesign. If a page is removed by the redesign, visitors will continue to come to those pages only to experience a *404 Page Not Found* error. Eventually traffic will start to trail off and may be lost forever.

There are two strategies to assure this does not happen. The first is to maintain the same URLs from your existing site on your new site. Even when transitioning to Drupal there is a specific URL structure, and using the Path module you can maintain those same URLs.

If it is not possible to maintain the same URLs, you can implement *301 redirects* to let visitors and search engines know the page has moved. The [Redirect module](#) provides an easy interface to setup 301 redirects using the Drupal admin.

When a visitor visits a URL with a *301 redirect*, they are seamlessly jumped to the updated version of the page you specified. Search engines will often transfer much of the link juice of the old page to the new one helping the new page to rank better.

One additional strategy is to implement a custom *404 page*, just in case. A standard *404 page* will tell a visitor that page is not found and provides no recommendations on what to do next. This is a very damaging user experience.

You can create a custom *404 page* that provides a recommended list of next steps. Drupal will allow you to create basic 404 pages. You can use the [Search 404 module](#) to create more advanced dynamic *404 pages* using a custom search string.

## The Asset Check List

- ☐ Determine how many website pages you have
- ☐ Figure out which pages are most popular/powerful
- ☐ Determine how many inbound links you have
- ☐ Establish where these links are coming from
- ☐ Look up which interior pages have inbound links
- ☐ Figure out which inbound links are most popular/powerful
- ☐ Determine which keywords you rank for before the move
- ☐ Figure out which keywords are the most effective

## Takeaway

If you already have a website, your current pages may be more important than you think. Taking an inventory of these pages, the traffic they receive and the keywords that attract the traffic is vital to the continuation of your web presence. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of the new website begins with maintaining these statistics and assets from the current site.

## STEP 3: FOCUS YOUR HOMEPAGE

The single most important page on your website is your homepage. It is the one place where most of your customers will be exposed to your brand for the first time. It is critical to make a great first impression.

### Homepage pitfalls

Your homepage is where most people will first enter your site. It is also the page they will come back to the most, like the often-used home button on an iPhone or iPad. Unfortunately, many homepages are over-engineered and cluttered with too much information, which is the exact opposite from what most visitors want.

The primary thing your site visitors want from your homepage is simplicity. They are coming to your website to find the information *they want*. Not to wade through a maze of brand messages and self-serving navigation.

#### **Pitfall #1 – Forcing your message**

Too many homepages try to force-feed a multitude of messages that the site owner wants the visitor to read. This tendency stems from traditional corporate communications philosophies that assume the organization is in charge and must control the engagement.

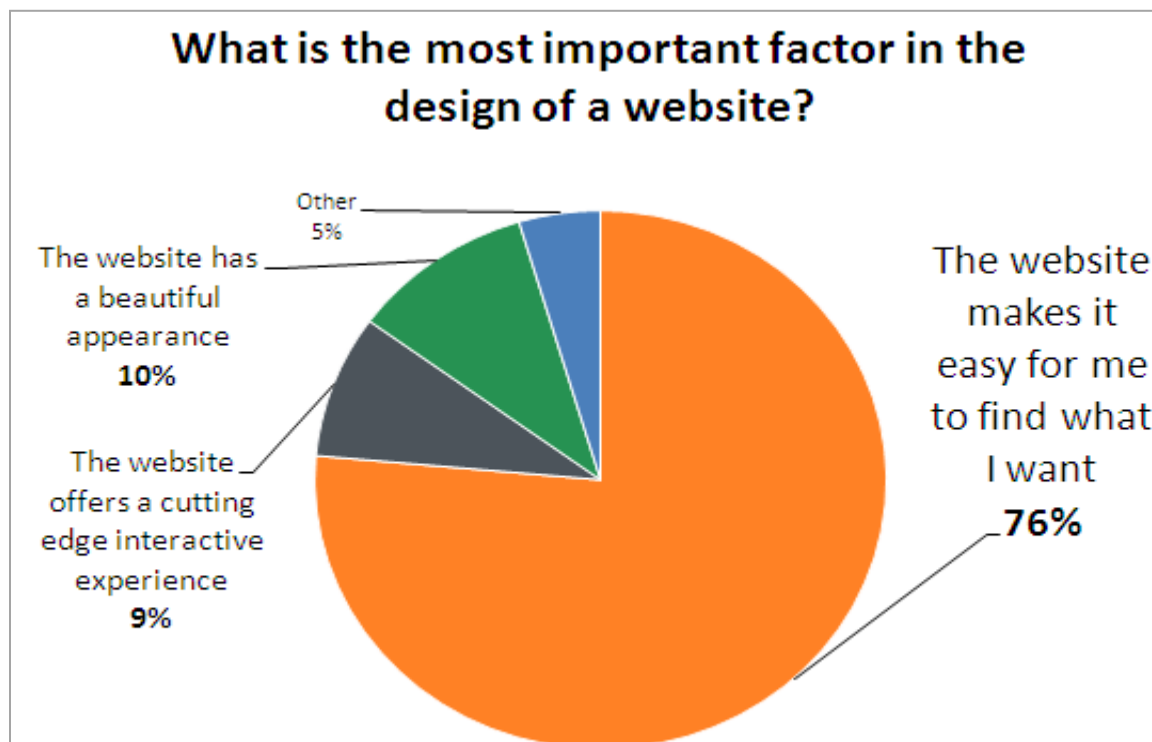
*You are not in charge. With all of your competitors just a search engine click away, the visitor is in charge.*

The primary thing your homepage needs to do is build trust. Overwhelming visitors with your agenda does not build trust. Connecting with the visitor and helping them get to what they want does.

## Pitfall #2 – Information overload

Many site owners try to wow their visitors with flashy multimedia elements and advanced features. The more-is-better mentality takes over, leading to dozens of messages and actions all competing for mind share.

Often these features are well intentioned and come out of an honest attempt to build a better user experience for the visitor. Most often they just end up being overwhelmed. What users really want from a website is simplicity, not more features – at least not during their first homepage experience.



Source: HubSpot, The Science of Website Redesign, June 2011

There is a time and place for animation and multimedia. Features that drive interaction and engagement are great – when the visitor is ready for them. When they are first coming to your website, help them get their bearings.

Make your homepage simple to comprehend. Think of making it like a quick start guide you might get with a computer or complicated piece of electronics.

Your homepage should be a simple guide to this complex machine that is your website.

### ***The Panels sniff test***

[Panels](#) is a Drupal module that allows you virtually unlimited control of the layout of a page. Its original purpose was to enable the main content area to be subdivided into smaller blocks, although it can do much more than that now.

It is common for home pages and other section head pages to use complex layouts featuring a matrix of content blocks. Panels makes this easy. (at least easier than programming it yourself). Unfortunately, too often this power is misused to create gangly pages overloaded with information.

Whenever you use Panels, or its alternative [Display Suite](#) to create a subdivided page, do a quick check. Ask yourself: how experienced are the users coming to this page? How will they react to a complex page? Is all the content really needed?

If less experienced users are coming to the page, keep the content as simple as possible.

### **Pitfall #3 – Not optimizing for search**

Before you can impress your visitors, you have to get them to your site. The most effective method for generating new, qualified visitors to your site is the search engines. The page with the most potential to rank well and drive high quality traffic is your homepage. Yet, most homepages are not optimized to make the most out of this powerful opportunity.

A few paragraphs of keyword-optimized content on your homepage will go a long way. Many homepages shun any text in favor of a highly graphical layout. Some homepages, following the more-is-better approach, have too much text covering too many topics to rank well for targeted keywords. Rarely are the page title and the body copy properly optimized around the high value keywords.

By assuring your homepage is following the search engine best practices the rest of the pages of your site are using, you can transform your homepage into an invaluable traffic generator.

#### ***SEO helpers***

LevelTen has created a suite of modules to help you optimize your site around high-value keywords called [SEO Tools](#). The suite will first help your install and configure all the modules essential to make you site fully search engine friendly.

The suite includes several other modules. The [Keyword Research module](#) will help you discover and prioritize valuable keyword directly inside Drupal's admin. [Alchemy](#) and [Content Optimizer](#) will help you analyze and optimize on-page content for targeted keywords.

## A better homepage

There are 4 steps to an effective homepage:

- Connect - Create a favorable emotional connection with your visitors
- Be relevant - Provide hints of what you offer
- Help - Direct people where they want to go
- Rank – Optimize for search

Humans are programmed to make quick assessments of new situations. When a person comes to your website, they form their initial assessment based on non-textual information. The first impression will be based on the look of your site and use of friendly, familiar cues.

You have six seconds to convince them to stay or click away.

A clean, professional look and feel is important. More important is making an emotional connection. The look of your homepage should communicate, “we get you, welcome, come on in”.

After a new visitor has formed their judgment of your site based on visual ascetics, they will look for cues of relevancy. They came to your website looking for something. Can they easily see clues that they will find what they are looking for on your site?

If you pass the first two qualifiers, your visitors will want to move to a deeper level of understanding. The details they are looking for are rarely on your homepage; they will need to navigate somewhere else. Can they quickly find what they are looking for? Your content needs to be organized and

architected around the way people think. Proper navigational aids such as search boxes need to be implemented. Confuse your visitor and you lose them.

The remaining vital component is to optimize your homepage for the search engines. We list this last to emphasize that your homepage should be designed to appeal to humans first, search robots second. However, without traffic, there will be no audience to witness the great user experience you have crafted.

You can start by following a few essential best practices to help to drive search traffic. Design your layout to integrate at least 200 words of text into your homepage. Then optimize the page title and body copy for high value keywords.



## Homepage checklist

- ☐ Develop personas for your site visitors and focus your homepage through the eyes of your most important users
- ☐ Develop a look and feel that emotionally resonates
- ☐ Provide the essential information they want to see
- ☐ Provide intuitive navigational aids to help them get to more in-depth information quickly
- ☐ Limit the number of choices the visitor must make
  - If you offer 25 services, put those 25 under 4 overarching umbrella services so consumers will not be overwhelmed
- ☐ Determine the most important keywords with which you want your website to be found
- ☐ Optimize your homepage copy around those keywords
- ☐ Show the human and goodwill side of your organization by integrating social media links, blog posts and other social content into your homepage layout.

## Takeaway

The first page of your Drupal website is most often your first chance to impress anyone who visits your page. Keep in mind most users want a simple design that offers a clean user experience. This page should also lead the visitor to your services, your contact information and how to connect with you.

## 4: ARCHITECT YOUR CONTENT

On most websites, web pages are treated similar to a collection of word processing documents or magazine pages. Text, photos, media and layout all are meticulously laid out into a single flat document. This traditional approach is quickly becoming a liability in the “anytime, anywhere and any device” demands of the modern world.

To keep up with mobile using the typical model, you will quickly find yourself replicating this process for a multitude of devices, creating multiple variants of the same content. If you need to support multiple languages, you will find this problem quickly multiplies out of control.

New search engine algorithms and the accelerated use of semantic markup are enabling people to narrow in and find specific elements of a page such as the time and date of interesting local events, or the hours of operations of a business. Proper content marketing necessitates the re-use and re-mixing of content components.

Great inbound marketers publish regularly and use a variety of means such as blogs, videos, Twitter, and Facebook. The need for highly effective organic content is pushing organizations towards new publishing roles and workflows.

These trends are forcing organizations to look at content differently. Not as words and photos laid out on a fixed page, but as orchestrated structures of discrete data that can dynamically change. Savvy organizations are taking a content-first approach by developing and maintaining a comprehensive adaptive content architecture.

## What is content architecture?

At its essence, content architecture is about breaking content down into essential semantic components. Content is first broken down by type - blogs, events, videos, press releases, white papers and so on. Then each type is further refined into elements. For example, an event content type may be broken down to a description, time and date, location, and price for the event.

Each piece of content is given a resource locator (URL) as a home; however parts or all of the content can be integrated anywhere. Ideally an API is provided to enable other systems to use and act on the raw content and its elements.

Content architecture also incorporates publishing workflows. Great content is authored by subject matter experts. But often these people are not strong natural writers. That is where an editorial review process becomes invaluable. Implementing a content workflow involving defined roles, permissions and editorial states helps assure everything you put out is top quality.

## Drupal Rocks Content Architecture

If you are already using Drupal, you probably take content architecture for granted. It is built into Drupal 7 core. Drupal's standard way of doing things naturally reinforces a solid foundation for great architecture.

You also don't think about the challenges of publishing different styles of content like videos and events. Drupal makes that easy too.

The narrative of Step 3 is for those of you who are coming from a static website or a more basic CMS. It is for those that have not already experienced Drupal's elegant way of dealing with content architecture.

Drupal provides a remarkable system for architecting content. You can create an unlimited number of content types. Content components can be segmented using fields. These content types and fields can be displayed in virtually any format using display modes and [Views](#). Add on Drupal's robust taxonomy system, roles based permissions and flexible publishing workflows via the [Workbench module](#) and you have an unmatched platform for adaptive content architecture.

And all of this can be done without having to write code. This is one of the main reasons why Drupal rocks as an inbound marketing engine.

### **Getting started with Drupal's content architecture**

Drupal gives you lots of power and flexibility when it comes to architecting content. This can be a little overwhelming if you are new to Drupal. To help get you started, LevelTen has created several [content apps](#) as example starting point for common content types like [blogs](#), [events](#), [locations](#) and [images](#).

You can install these apps in any Drupal 7 website and you will automatically get a content type, essential fields, list views, related blocks and even some demo content to try out.

## Content architecture checklist

- ☐ Conduct a content audit
- ☐ Group all your content into types
- ☐ Break each type down into elements
- ☐ Apply taxonomies where needed
- ☐ Assure proper semantic tagging of content elements
- ☐ Define URL patterns for each content type
- ☐ Create RSS feeds for all appropriate content
- ☐ Define content workflows for each type

## Takeaway

The path to success on the modern social web is through content: all kinds of different content and lots of it. To further manage your content for all the ways end users prefer to consume it, you need to implement a well thought out and componentized content architecture. Starting out this way will save you time and pain down the road. Drupal gives you all the tools to do this, but it is still up to the team to make sure it is done right.

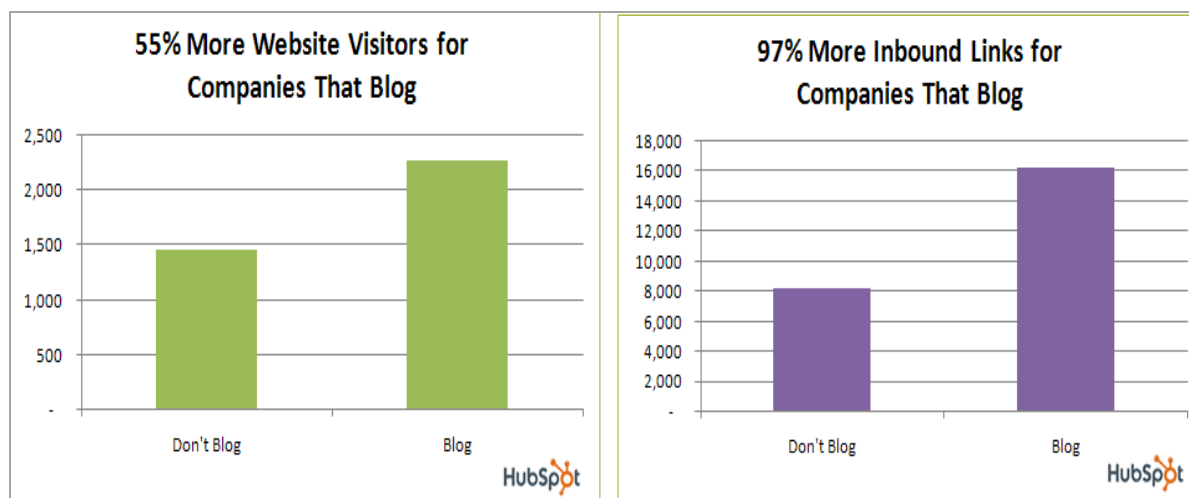
## STEP 5: FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS ORIGINAL CONTENT THAT ATTRACTS AND CONVERTS

The key component that fuels the inbound marketing engine is fresh, engaging content. Creating a blog on your Drupal site a great way to get started building your goodwill content.

Blogging increases the number of pages indexed by search engines and the number of keyword ranking opportunities. Search engines love fresh content and reward those who provide it with higher rankings. Additionally, blog content provides a basis for building and engaging your social media following.

Key benefits of blogging<sup>i</sup>:

- 55% increase in website visitors
- 97% more inbound links
- 2 times as many Twitter followers



source: HubSpot, 100 Awesome Marketing Stats, Charts and Graphs for You, 2011

Blogging should form the foundation of your content base. As you advance in your content marketing strategy, you will want to mix in other types of content, such as:

- Video (YouTube, Vimeo, Blip, private content delivery networks)
- Audio/podcasts (iTunes)
- Photos (Flickr, Pinterest)
- Presentations (Slideshare)
- eBooks & whitepapers
- Forums
- Wikis

...just to name a few.

## Building extraordinary content

The ubiquitous battle cry for online marketers is “*content is king*”. However, traditionally most content generation is focused on quantity over quality. The idea is to churn out volumes of cheaply created web pages optimized to exploit search engine algorithms. The web is littered with this search engine spam.

Anyone who wants to maximize the long-term value of inbound marketing must be oriented at the other end of the spectrum. You must be focused on building remarkable content that delights users and search engines alike.

There are four keys to building extraordinary content that gets long-term results:

- Relevant
- Engagement
- Optimization
- Continuous

First your content must be relevant. It should be well correlated to what you offer and what users want. It must speak to specific user needs, pain points, wants and desires. All your content should pass the “what’s in it for me” test.

A unique advantage that content on the web has over more traditional formats, such as magazines and books, is that it is interactive. Move your readers from only passively reading your content to interacting with it.

To maximize site traffic, all of your content needs to be optimized for search. For each piece of content, select a targeted keyword phrase. Then optimize the title, body and other page elements around that keyword phrase.

Producing content frequently is vital. A steady stream of content assures you always have something fresh and interesting for your site visitors. Frequent posting is also a traffic multiplier. Regular posting enhances your search engine rankings, gives you more social media mentions and drives your followers to come back regularly.



## Engaging visitors

You first want to create great content to attract visitors. Once they are on your site you want to get them engaged by providing interactive features.

One of the most common ways of engaging visitors is to enable commenting. This is a common feature in blogs and has built in support in Drupal. However, we recommend implementing an enhanced widget based commenting engine that offers built in spam control and social authentication. [Disqus](#) is the one we use recommend and use on the [LevelTen blog](#), although there are other good options.

Social sharing widgets are also a must have. They not only get people interacting with your site, they get them sharing your content with their communities. The LevelTen-created [Social Media module](#) provides an easy way to integrate social sharing and follow buttons on your site along with other widgets to integrate your site with social media. To see how easy it is check the [Socialize Your Drupal Site in 5 Easy Steps video](#).

Drupal offers a range of more advanced content engagement features you might want to add to your site including:

- [Ratings](#)
- [Flagging](#)
- [Tagging](#)
- and [Subscribing](#)

## Content Checklist

- ☐ Add a blog to your website
  - Add additional content types as needed such as video, podcasts, events, press releases
  - Make sure your blog and other goodwill content includes essential engagement features like commenting and social sharing buttons
- ☐ Generate a list of topics for posts
  - Review the target audience for your site. What would they be interested in? What are their questions and pain points?
  - Do keyword research. Select topics based on quality keywords
- ☐ Build an editorial calendar around topics and key events and plan to post twice a week
- ☐ Craft engaging headlines for each of your posts
- ☐ Optimize each post to place well in the search engines
- ☐ Share your content on social networking sites
- ☐ Give your audience ways to engage more with your content such as related article links, commenting and ratings
- ☐ Add social sharing links to your content to easily enable readers to share with their friends

## Takeaway

Search engines love fresh, original content in all its forms. Creating good content starts with organization, research on what visitors are searching for and placing that content in front of an engaged audience. Knowing your audience and building content that converts is the optimal way to keep healthy interaction on your website.

## STEP 6: CONVERT WITH PREMIUM OFFERS

If you have effectively implemented steps 1-5, you now have a lot of happy visitors coming to your bustling Drupal site. It's time to start doing some business. It's time to start converting.

Ideally it would be great to convert visitors directly into customers. Unless you have an e-commerce site, it is unlikely you can be this direct.

Most organizations have to nurture prospects through a sales process, having to build trust each step of the way in order to earn their business.

A conversion is anytime a site visitor takes a significant step towards achieving one of your bottom line goals. For companies, a conversion is anytime a visitor becomes a customer, or takes a step towards becoming one.

For non-profits, conversion might be a donation or signing up to volunteer. For startups and social sites, a conversion might be registering for an account.

The most common type of conversion is when someone gives us permission to contact him or her by submitting a form. Diligently building a permission-based marketing database is the often neglected cornerstone required for unleashing the true power of inbound marketing.

So we want to get people submitting lots of forms!

## The Ingredients

To drive form submissions you will want to build a framework around three components:

- Premium offers
- Landing pages
- Calls to actions

### Offers

The first step is the offer. You need to create strategic offers that are so compelling people are happy to give you their closely guarded contact info.

Offers can be practically anything that a visitor might find valuable:

- Discounts and coupons
- Samples
- eBooks and whitepapers
- A free consultation
- Webinars
- Software trial
- Swag

If you are a thought leader in your market, one of the best ways to create offers is using premium content such as an eBook, whitepapers and reports. Well-crafted, relevant premium content is very sought after. There is no reoccurring cost to deliver it and it is a highly effective way to re-enforce your thought leadership position.

## Landing pages

Landing pages are where you will provide your premium offers. A landing page is designed to be a one page sales pitch for your offer. You are giving someone a premium in exchange for their information and permission to contact them.

Architecturally, landing pages are comprised of a pitch and a form to fill out to receive the offer - and not much else. They are designed to be simple pages uncluttered with distractions. They are focused on guiding your visitors to do one thing - take action on the offer.

Landing page tips:

- ✓ Leave out any website navigation
- ✓ Keep the description of the offer clear, simple, and concise
- ✓ Use an enticing graphic to capture the imagination
- ✓ Keep the form above the fold (visible without scrolling down)
- ✓ Use social sharing widgets on the thank you page to enable the visitor to share the offer
- ✓ To maximize efficiency, consider these questions:
  - How fast can you launch a new landing page?
  - Can one person do it in 15 minutes?
  - What is the cost of experimentation?

## Call to actions

The best way to get people to your landing pages are calls to actions (CTA). They most often take the form of a graphic or stylized text box similar to

banner ads. Calls to action should grab your visitor's attention and be relevant to the content on the page.

Every page on your site should have a call to action leading people to one of your great offers. CTAs should be at the bottom of every blog post and other goodwill content. A sidebar block above the fold is best for standard web pages.

Placing your calls to action on other sites can be a highly effective way to expand your audience. There are many opportunities to do this such as Google AdWords, Facebook Ads and banner ads.

## Drupal conversion recipes

The [Webform module](#) is a powerful tool in your inbound marketing arsenal. It enables admins to quickly build submission forms using any number and types of fields. Submissions get emailed to designated people and saved to a simple database inside of Drupal that can be exported to Excel.

You should start by adding a webform to your contact us page. You might even want to add a contact webform to all the pages on your site as a block.

To create a landing page, simply create a basic page and add the webform as a block. You could also use [Block Reference](#) to help streamline adding the webform.

On a landing page you want to remove any distractions, this includes menus and other navigational elements. If your menus are setup as blocks, you can use the block system to remove your main navigation on landing pages.

You will want to create a separate thank you page for the form submission to redirect to. It would be handy if the content type you use for your thank you page has a file field to enable you to directly upload the premium content offer. You could use a basic page and with the file field added or create a new “thankyou” page content type.

As you get more advanced in your lead nurturing strategies you will likely want to implement some type of marketing automation. Marketing automation enables you to develop logic driven workflows to stay top of mind with prospects and intelligently nurture leads towards becoming customers.

A great place to start is [MailChimp](#). While not a true marketing automation platform, it provides the basics for a very affordable price. It is fairly simple to integrate the service via the [MailChimp module](#).

If you need to get more sophisticated, [HubSpot](#) offers a great service with [easy Drupal integration](#). HubSpot provides full marketing automation at a competitive mid-range price.

## Conversion Checklist

- ☐ Brainstorm some potential premium offers
- ☐ Work towards building a collection of offers that aligns with your offerings and the content on your site
- ☐ Implement a landing page for each premium offer
- ☐ Add calls to action for relevant offers on all pages on your site
- ☐ Look for effective opportunities to place CTAs on other websites

## Takeaway

If you're in tune with the "how" and "why" visitors are coming to your website, you can create applicable offers and calls to action that will generate interest. Once you have their attention, landing pages create a doorway to convert them into leads.



## STEP 7: PLAN FOR MOBILE

It is no secret that the mobile web explosion is on us. Nearly half of all U.S. adults use a smartphone, up 11% in just the last year. 90% report that they regularly check email and surf the web on their phone.<sup>ii</sup>

A growing segment of the population is now using only mobile devices to connect online. As of June 2012, 31% of Americans who access the Internet from a mobile device say that's the way they always or mostly go online—they rarely or never use a desktop or laptop computer.<sup>iii</sup> If you do not have a mobile site, you are missing out on a significant part of the population.

### Mobile and Inbound Marketing

Social media and content publishing are cornerstones for inbound marketing success. Increasingly these are being consumed using mobile devices. People check their Twitter and Facebook feeds on their smartphones while standing in lines. Flipboard and similar mobile content front ends have become the modern day newspaper, where people find their daily news and insights.

Mobile devices and data services have reached a price-per-performance tipping point that is enabling a growing portion of the population to forsake traditional computers altogether, opting to do all their Internet activities on their mobile devices. And this trend will continue to grow.

Despite the proliferation of social and content apps, the hyperlink is still the ever-resilient common connector. Even if you start with a native app, at the click of a link, you are whisked away to a mobile website experience. Email

read on phones and tablets link you back to the mobile web. Without a proper mobile strategy you are breaking the user experience for a significant and growing number of visitors.

## The pragmatic approach to mobile

It is vital that companies become more mobile savvy. In the short history of the smart phone, many companies have approached web and mobile development as two separate initiatives. While websites continue to use standard desktop friendly technologies, the focus for mobile has been around device native apps (e.g. apps from Apple's App Store or the Google Play store).

However, there are several trends making this approach obsolete. With the growing number and diversity of devices, it is becoming increasingly expensive to develop and maintain native mobile apps. HTML5 has quickly matured to enable rich mobile websites capable of delivering app equivalent features and interfaces. *Write-once-deploy-everywhere* platforms have emerged, enabling development of native mobile apps that leverage ubiquitous web technologies across all mobile platforms from a single codebase.

The more modern approach is to develop a single *responsive* theme that dynamically changes layouts and user experience (UX) elements based on browser screen widths and device capabilities. Typically, five transition points are implemented so that a single theme will layout favorably on the desktop along with various size phones and tablets in landscape and portrait modes.

Often the user experience from a well-crafted responsive theme is so good that there is no need for a dedicated mobile app. However, sometimes a

mobile app can make a great accessory to enhance your marketing and branding.

With a properly built responsive theme, the website can be easily reused as the foundation and content for a mobile app.

Drupal has some great base themes for going responsive. Two of the best are [Omega](#) and [Twitter Bootstrap](#). Check out this blog posts to [learn more about these Drupal responsive themes](#).

## The Mobile Checklist

- ☐ Determine your mobile traffic and look at growth trends
- ☐ Plan to implement a responsive theme and select a responsive base theme/framework for your theme
- ☐ Design what your site will look like using 5 widths: phone portrait & landscape, tablet portrait and landscape & desktop
- ☐ Determine if you should build a mobile app around your website

## Takeaway

Those who neglect mobile in their redesign will alienate an increasing number of visitors and find themselves missing out on more and more opportunities. At the same time the growing diversity of devices has skyrocketed the cost of mobile support using traditional technologies.

Rapidly evolving best practices are driving more integrated web and mobile initiatives. A balanced, pragmatic approach of using responsive design around well-architected content will provide a favorable mobile user experience while minimizing costs.

## STEP 8: CONTINUALLY INNOVATE

Great Drupal websites are not built in a single project. They are the result of a deliberate effort to consistently improve. Great websites are continually learning, trying new things and proactively innovating. This is how sites get to the top and stay ahead of the competition.

A website that can out-improve and out-innovate their competition will quickly find themselves industry online leaders.

### Measure

To truly understand what is happening on your website and what improves results, you have to measure every significant online event:

- Site visits
- Pages hit
- Video views
- Email opens
- Conversions
- Referrals
- Keyword traffic and rankings
- Mentions on blogs and social channels
- New fans and followers

You also need to determine and setup measures for valued events. Valued events are any actions that you feel provide significant value. Contact

requests, phone calls, form submissions are all examples of typical valued events.

The goal for your analytics is to create a closed loop system where you can closely study cause and effect to link changes in results with site modifications and new tactics.

Again, Google Analytics is a great tool to start with and can quickly be integrated into your Drupal site with the Google Analytics module.

## Learn

Online leaders are voracious learners. Truly exceptional teams are not only great individual learners, they excel at organizational learning.

The web is still relatively young and continues to evolve quickly. Everything from technical standard and tools, to UX trends and marketing strategies are continually evolving at dizzying speeds. You and your web team must keep up. Knowledge truly is power.

Understanding web and Drupal best practices will help you be efficient, effective and avoid costly mistakes. Staying abreast of emerging trends will help you be first to market and make sure your competitors don't to beat you to that new must-have technology. Perhaps most importantly, your dedication to learning will uncover hidden nuggets that will set you above the rest.

## Experiment

A critical process for improving your online presence is empirical-based experimenting. There is only so much you can learn from others. To break out you have to discover those things that work best and that are uniquely yours.

The proper way to setup your web experiments is to follow the scientific process we all learned in middle school:

- Hypothesize
- Devise an test experiment
- Analyze
- Revise

Start by hypothesizing a better, or simply different way of doing something. For example, try an alternative headline on a landing page. Test by serving various versions to different visitors. Analyze by reviewing your web analytics to determine which converts better. Use that information to permanently select the best option or revise the experiment based on the new information.

## Innovation Checklist

- ☐ Setup web analytics
- ☐ Setup search engine ranking reporting
- ☐ Setup social monitoring
- ☐ Setup online reputation monitoring
- ☐ Setup and score goals in your analytics
- ☐ Read a couple of relevant blog posts each week
- ☐ Read a relevant book (eBook) once a month

- ☐ Start a book club with your team
- ☐ Review industry statistics and reports at least every six months
- ☐ Think of ways of improving your website (hint, you are doing a lot of learning above)
- ☐ Setup at least one experiment each month to test ways to improve your website
- ☐ Keep a prioritized backlog of new initiatives for your site
- ☐ Dedicate time to regularly implement the most valuable initiatives from your list

## Takeaways

A proper website build is not a *project* but a continual *process* in reaching an audience and converting them to your expected results. Measurement, monitoring and metric reporting are helpful in determining strengths and weaknesses of your site. Education and experiments help your site stay interesting and relevant to those who are visiting.

## CONCLUSIONS

The key to online success is not about having a website. The typical website produces well below average results. It's about having a **results oriented site** that blends website best practices with inbound marketing.

There are 8 essential steps building a high performing results oriented website:

1. Set a vision for success. Create results-oriented goals to continually strive towards.
2. Protect your existing assets. Your current website has likely generated some traffic, inbound links and search engine rankings. Make sure you don't destroy these assets in your redesign.
3. Focus your homepage on what is most important. Successful websites will achieve many things, but don't try to do it all on your homepage. Simplicity is key. Be disciplined to know what to leave out.
4. Architect your content. Breaking apart your content into well-structured types and elements makes your content assets more maintainable and ensures you can deliver those assets in any form to any device.
5. Publish often to generate traffic and goodwill. The key to generating traffic on the modern web is to publish quality, relevant content on a regular basis. Make sure your site has effective publishing tools, plan your content calendar and start posting.



6. Convert, Convert, Convert. The crucial step to transform visitors into customer is conversion. Develop quality giveaways, build effective landing pages and entice visitors with attention grabbing calls to actions wherever possible.
7. Assure you deliver a solid mobile experience. A responsive theme is a pragmatic approach that strikes a solid balance between effort and user experience.
8. Continuously innovate. Regardless of how well thought out your upfront strategy is, no great website was built in a single project. Online leaders are committed to continuously evolving by measuring, learning, experimenting, refining and repeating.

### Thank You

We at LevelTen hope you have enjoyed this book and have gained some new ideas that will help you on your online journey.

We would really appreciate any thoughts you have on this book. Feel free to [submit any opinions or questions via this feedback form](#).

### Learn more

Find us on the web: [leveltendesign.com](http://leveltendesign.com)

Read the Blog: [leveltendesign.com/blog](http://leveltendesign.com/blog)

Follow us on Twitter: [twitter.com/levelten](https://twitter.com/levelten)

## SOURCES

---

- <sup>i</sup> HubSpot, State of Inbound Marketing Lead Generation Report, 2010
- <sup>ii</sup> Pew Internet 2012 Smartphone Update
- <sup>iii</sup> Pew Internet 2012 Cell Internet Use report