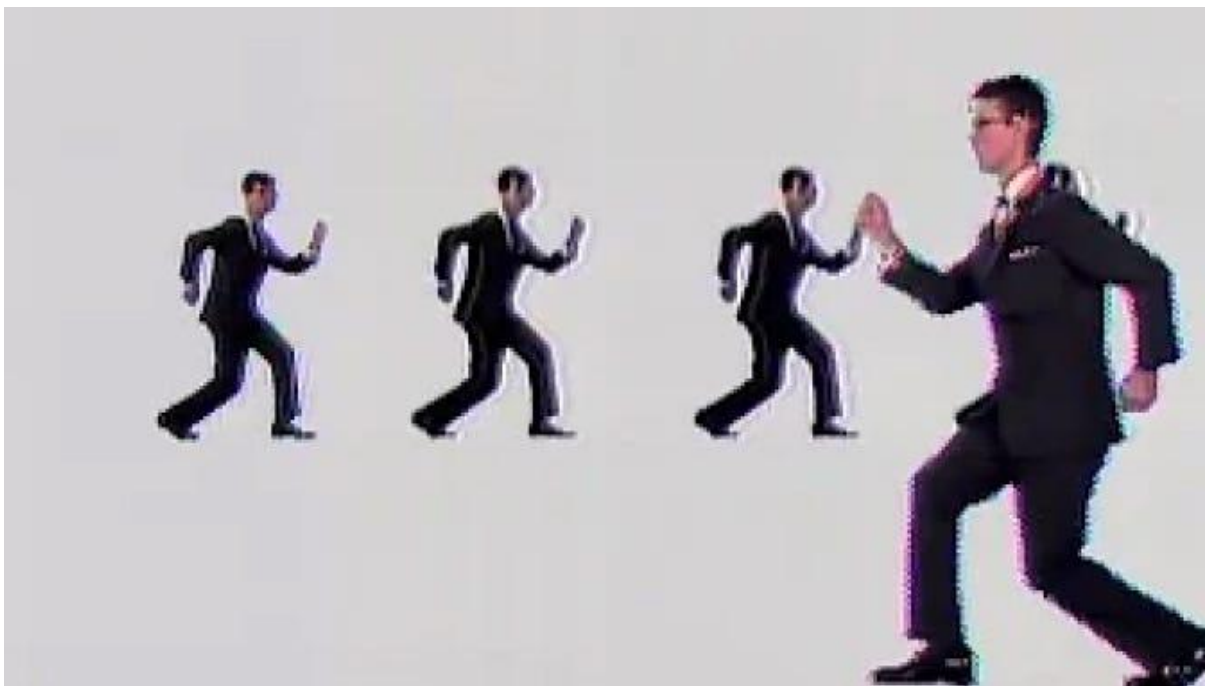# Well, how did I get here?

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I started out writing about our marketing site's content management tools. As I got feedback on my first draft, I realized that my fellow Klaviyos were less interested in how we configured, for example, the WordPress Advanced Custom Fields plugin, and more interested in where my opinions came from. So as I revised the post, reflecting on the last two years, and listening to the [Talking Heads](#) I asked myself, "Well, how did I get here?" This is that story.

Talking Heads: Once in a Lifetime

My recruitment

I was born and raised in rural Louisiana and I still live here today with my wife and two sons. So how did I end up working for a Boston-based unicorn like Klaviyo? I've been working in the tech industry for about 18 years now. Most of that time was spent working remotely for agencies building marketing and ecommerce websites. Shortly after COVID hit, I lost my job. It was a scary time, but in a strange way I was a beneficiary of the COVID pandemic. The global shift toward remote work during COVID enabled me to compete for jobs that I previously would not have been considered for. I got my opportunity in September of 2021, when I was messaged by a Klaviyo recruiter on LinkedIn. They were looking for software engineers to build and maintain a new marketing site for [Klaviyo.com](#).

The recruiter told me Klaviyo's mission was to "Enable creators to own their destiny." Having helped many small businesses navigate the online marketing and ecommerce spaces, this really connected with me. The way Klaviyo enables people to collect, review and engage with their first party data through flows and analytics with a UI were features customers I worked with

wanted for years. None of the businesses I built custom ecommerce shops for had their own engineering teams. Often their whole budget would go to site design, build, and SEO/PPC advertising. Simply put, most small ecommerce shops could not afford the engineering hours it took to build, in code, similar functionality to what Klaviyo offers, let alone maintain that code over time. To me, Klaviyo was leveling the playing field by giving smaller players access to the sort of tools that only larger companies could afford.

The benefits and culture of the company definitely piqued my interest, but what really got me excited was the work. The hiring manager explained to me that they wanted to build a marketing site for Klaviyo that would be statically generated using React and GatsbyJS. We were going to be coding a reusable component system designed by an incredible creative team. I would get the opportunity to work with some great people, using a modern stack.

In my previous work, I was always seeking the right balance between enabling designers to create engaging layouts, and making life efficient for content managers. I used different content management systems such as Drupal, WordPress, and Expression Engine and even built my own. I learned innumerable lessons building sites on these platforms, the most important of which is that maintaining software over time is harder than writing it in the first place. Keeping up to date with the latest libraries, trends, and updates is endless. It takes a team of dedicated and knowledgeable engineers to keep code up to date. With Klaviyo, I wouldn't need to go it alone. Instead I could work with other engineers on a modern stack, learn new skills, and work with new technologies. I decided to go for it. After multiple code tests, interviews, an offer, and two weeks of onboarding, I was ready to get to work!

Getting to work!

I was the third hire for a new engineering team focussed on the marketing site. Before this team, marketing engineering work was done ad hoc by whoever was available. This resulted in a great deal of poorly documented, disorganized code formatted according to no particular style. We had copious amounts of outdated zombie code, tooling, plugins, and libraries. Our local development environment operated off a poorly configured Docker container that would frequently fail. Fixing bugs and building new features, even small ones, could take a long time to complete and test. It was evident we had a lot of work to do.

Within a few months we had the first version of our statically generated Gatsby site out. During that time we kept up our legacy site and grew our team from three to six. Work on the new site was fast-paced and collaborative. We had regular check-ins with the design team where they would show what they were working on and we would provide technical insights. When the designers felt like a component was ready to be built it would be handed off to us as a Figma mockup.

Although it wouldn't have been my first choice since there are headless-first CMSs out there like Strapi, Contentful, and Sanity, we settled on using headless Wordpress with the Advanced Custom Fields (ACF) plugin. Content managers could fill out forms we built with ACF to provide structured data to our front end component library. Our content managers were already familiar with this combination as it was used a great deal on the legacy website. Sticking with these options allowed our editors to rapidly build out pages with minimal training. Using ACF in this way did result in some challenges for the engineering team though. When accessing the ACF values through Gatsby's GraphQL layer, we were often missing data. Through trial and error, we came up with a set of best practices that enabled us to overcome the problems. In early 2022, we launched the new site.

In the time since, we've expanded the scope. Our marketing repository is now a monorepo housing not just our primary marketing site, but also a growing list of internationalized sites and our [help center](). These sites all share the same design system and component library.

Joining Klaviyo fulfilled my goal of finding an employer that enables and encourages employee learning and professional growth. Although I'm a fully remote employee, I've built relationships with my co-workers, and even traveled to Boston to spend time in person. I've gotten to meet incredible people and work on fun, interesting projects that I never would have been exposed to in my previous roles. In this time I've also learned Typescript, GraphQL, Python, PostgreSQL, and many more libraries, tools, and processes that I had no prior experience with. I was even given the resources to file my first patent application. As I reach my two year anniversary with Klaviyo and reflect on my time here, I've come to believe joining this company has been one of my best career decisions.