

PANTHEON

IF YOU KILL THE RELAUNCH, WHAT'S NEXT?
TIME TO SET YOUR TEAM UP FOR TRUE DIGITAL AGILITY

How to Scope, Build, and Grow Your WebOps Practice



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By now, you've mastered **How to Kill the Website Relaunch**. Congratulations on sidestepping the inherent traps of a full-blown website relaunch by embracing the WebOps philosophy of unparalleled adaptability and iteration in both web design and delivery system.

But that's just the start. Now that you've phased out the website relaunch, the time has come to scope and build a WebOps mindset keyed toward iteration. With a philosophy focused on rapid, real-time updates, your website can be a relevant, fluid, and user-focused marketing asset that can be modified or improved at a moment's notice.



THE **‘WHY’** BEHIND WEBOPS

Traditional website upkeep follows the waterfall approach. The waterfall strategy dulls your team's ability to react to fast-changing marketplace conditions, instead forcing experts to focus on tedious technicalities and pre-ordained tasks.

Waterfall principles can stunt how effective your website is in four notable ways:



FLATTENED INNOVATION:

Every time you postpone maintenance or innovation until a later date, you stunt the value of real-time experimentation.



ANNOYED CUSTOMERS:

Do you want to make your customers and prospects trudge through a clunky website? Making website updates all in one scheduled swoop risks losing leads and sales who's respond positively to up-to-the-minute tweaks.



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES:

When you wait until a future date to make fixes, your website can't function at full capacity in the present. Every time you wait to take advantage of the chance to improve your site, you steer farther away from opportunities to disrupt, compete, and shine.



CONFLICTING REQUESTS:

By the time scheduled maintenance arrives, the number of requested changes you've received may contradict with each other, causing friction and a poorly conceived result.

It's time to scrap website maintenance and upkeep as a “kick the can down the road” experience. In its place, why not go with WebOps, an agile process that gives you a big, beautiful site owned by a team with a penchant for on-the-fly adjustments?

But WebOps doesn't just happen overnight. It requires an investment in the skills, expertise, and tools needed to attain the kinds of KPIs that show the true merit of a WebOps commitment. That's a sizable investment, but it's not the beginning and end of WebOps — there are less-costly measures that can be taken immediately, ones we'll discuss later.

Just remember: Your website remains your most visible sales and marketing branding, messaging, and communication asset. An Adobe study found that 38% of potential customers will stop engaging with a website if its layout and content are unattractive. Keep it humming along by building a team of people committed to the WebOps process and put an end to frustrating and inadequate days of scheduled maintenance.



The Power of a Fully Functioning WebOps Team

If you're eager to move forward with a WebOps system that makes website maintenance intuitive and iterative, you need a dream team to make magic happen. Ideally, this unit will include iterative thinkers ready to contribute and use outside-the-box thinking to bring about truly innovative updates.

Amassing a high-performing WebOps team requires that you put a few measures into motion:

1

Cultivate new mindsets and employee expertise. Introduce your people to agile processes and offer training so they understand what's expected of them and how that intertwines with agile's basic premises.

2

Move away from siloed thinking. If you have any "us versus them" mentality among your crew, get rid of it. Instead, foster regular cross-departmental pollination that maximizes the expertise each individual brings to the team.

3

Amass a team with strategic and technical experience and ability. Seek out team members with T-shaped experience: deep specialties in niche arenas and basic knowledge in several others. Focus on adding developers, designers, and marketers to every team who understand how the three areas work with one another.

4

Speak of your website as a digital asset. Hand ownership of your site to one general-purpose team, or give portfolios of the site to specialized teams within your organization. For instance, your B2C e-commerce pages might be owned by a team with deep expertise in digital retail, and your blog and corporate communications pages would be owned by another team focused exclusively on engaging editorial experiences.

When your dream team is in place, members can begin to apply their skills and function from a product-oriented viewpoint. Not only will they work together as marketers, designers, and developers, but they'll understand how to take and prioritize requests from outside stakeholders.

Because a solid WebOps team sees success on a continuum, not as a destination. The members are open to identifying and building upon small achievements. Plus, they know those achievements when they see them because they've put objective measurements into place.



Finding Your North Star & Establishing Clear KPIs

Agile processes can include some allowances for gut instincts or feelings. For example, a stakeholder may want to test the tone of a headline or call to action based on intuition backed by a degree of research. However, the true success of any iteration must be shown and backed by measurable results.

Measurements and data don't just indicate what's working against a baseline. They also help teams agree on the purpose behind a change; give teams a common language to discuss iterations; and, most of all, assist teams in moving toward agreed-upon North Star metrics.

What are North Star Metrics?

What are North Star metrics? They represent the overall purpose and point of all initiatives. A website might have one or several North Stars — depending on its vastness and the company's goals — and these metrics should point toward long-term, sustainable KPIs.

Clear goals define any path forward, and WebOps is no exception. By taking the time to define what success looks like for your website and applying appropriate benchmark measurements to it, you build a blueprint for your team to follow.

WebOps teams who define their sites' North Stars know what they need to achieve. They also understand the value of making small real-time iterations. After all, isolated changes tweak one variable at a time, increasing the opportunity to single out successes—and repeat those successes later.

Useful Tools for Measuring Iterations

The yardsticks available to WebOps teams to measure iterations come in varying shapes and sizes, with some inexpensive or free options (e.g., Google Analytics and Google Optimize). That means that if you're looking for software, you don't have to steal profits to pad your tech stack.

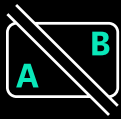
Of course, navigating the enormous martech landscape looking for software can be daunting. It's like a "Choose Your Own Adventure" book, and your team might not be quite sure where to go next.

Start your journey by including tech stack solutions that fall under a few critical categories:



USER DATA TRACKING:

You should be able to figure out a baseline for how users respond to your site over time as well as between iterations. **Data tracking** helps you quantify how changes to your website impact visitors' reactions, such as bounce rates, page views, dwell time, and clicks. With the right reporting structure in place, you'll quickly uncover trends and opportunities for improvement.



A/B TESTING:

When you test one iteration of your digital experience against another in real-time, you can make data-driven decisions about the impact of those modifications to your website. Not only will this drive growth, it will also increase the pace of innovation for your business.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

When stakeholders have a centralized source of truth for processes, status updates, and communication among team members around projects (not to mention accountability for their own piece of the puzzle) your team and corporate website win.



WEB DESIGN & PROTOTYPING SOFTWARE:

Web design and prototyping tools enable your team to design experiences using digital sketch tools. Those experiences can then be passed along with clearly defined specs to a development team to bring them to fruition.



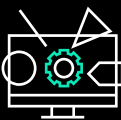
CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

Once a web developer has brought forth both custom and reusable components, the content management system can build out the messaging and imagery. This software should be intuitive enough to make iterative changes effortless.



LEAD CAPTURE, EMAIL AUTOMATION, & CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:

Marketing and sales tools can showcase how revenue and communications are being affected by meaningful iterations at every stage of the customer journey.



WEBOPS PLATFORM:

A WebOps platform will pull everything together in one place, automating redundant tasks, encouraging experimentation, and making it easier for cross-functional teams to collaborate on their digital experience.

Together, the pieces of a vibrant tech stack will give your digital experience team peace of mind as they move forward with new initiatives in a cycle of constant improvement.



3 Benefits of Measuring Success Iteratively

Think of iteration as making negligible ripples along the surface of your site, rather than uprooting it with seismic changes. Those ripples will help you attain long-term website success, thanks to iteration's intrinsic advantages.



Iteration uncovers growth levers that aid North Star metrics.

When you have a North Star metric (e.g., page conversion) you want to make progress toward it, though it can sometimes be hard to see. Measured iterations help you see which changes, or growth levers, will lead to — or away from — your North star.

At Pantheon, iterations keep us getting closer to where we want to be. For instance, we continuously iterate on our homepage by triggering growth levers. Because the homepage draws a heavy volume of traffic, we have amassed a great deal of statistically significant data points from that experience. When we make changes to high traffic pages or sections of the site, we can quickly work from our baseline to see what kind of impact is occurring.

For example, our experimentation team wanted to test the hypothesis that adding a second CTA (or call to action) on our homepage hero would increase our conversion rates for the page. The first test saw a +53.5% improvement on our demo CTA and +10.8% improvement on our Free Trial CTA. Since then, we have run numerous iterations with different messages for the CTAs, colors for the buttons, and adjacent content swaps. With each iteration, we learn more about our audience and apply those learnings to other areas of our website, scaling the impact to move our North Star metric.

Your growth levers will be unique to your business, of course; they could be your page layout, UX, or communication strategy. However, all growth levers should directly point you toward a distinctive North Star.

02

Iteration removes the fear of failing.

For many teams, failure is seen in a negative light, which deters members from iterating. WebOps teams know that losses can be positive and even reveal new directions.

The concept of positive failure takes the sting and uncertainty out of making adjustments and moving forward. At Pantheon, we've run plenty of unsuccessful but highly revealing tests that ultimately led to smarter website decisions. Being able to learn from unexpected results allows you to commit to doubling down on experimentation. After all, your first iteration isn't statistically likely to be your winner, and that's OK.

To improve, you have to do things that won't necessarily work. As long as you learn from them, you won't get discouraged. Iteration isn't about winning, but about getting it right. Commit to making mistakes and practicing. Agile involves progress, but it doesn't promise results on the first go-round.

03

Iteration necessitates bringing in outside perspectives.

Testing programs will inevitably stall if you work with the same group of people all the time. Iterating encourages your teams to solicit voices from other places to consider different perspectives. You'll be amazed at the ideas your team comes up with when they get an infusion of thought and vantage points from outsiders.

Who should you bring into your digital experimentation meetings? It ultimately depends on your organization's needs and size. In addition to our core WebOps people, we regularly invite product marketing personnel, sales staff, product team members, and other colleagues to share their thoughts. By facilitating a changing mix of insights, we are able to make the most of each experiment.



What It Looks Like When You're Working With WebOps

Your dream team is in place, and it has the measuring software needed to track success. Best of all, they're no longer thinking of website maintenance and upkeep in terms of one-and-done events.

In other words, everyone's poised to iterate.

What once worked in terms of website design, development, and enhancement no longer makes sense. Our world changes rapidly, which means it's essential for your site to follow suit. And the key to making your website an ever-evolving asset is to focus on creating and supporting a WebOps team.

If you're intrigued by the thought of not just killing the need for website relaunches but retiring waterfall-driven site upkeep practices, contact Pantheon. We welcome the chance to show you the advantages that come from WebOps and its cross-functional, collaborative, iterative practices.

Spend Time Iterating, Not Waiting for Scheduled Website Maintenance Days

Your website is a living, breathing marketing entity that can never afford to be static. It needs to be taken care of, kept current, and something potential customers can always come back to as a viable resource for education and information.

How does that happen? By embracing, buying, and scoping a WebOps mindset into your operations. How does that happen? By illustrating the benefits of WebOps to financial decision makers, then using that investment to purchase the tools and team needed, then put that change into action. Do that, and iteration won't just be a step in the process — it'll be a mindset.

Are you ready to make WebOps a reality for your team? Contact Pantheon right now.

