

A better site experience

Your guide to tackling website redesigns

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Introduction

**First impressions
are everything.**

We often define our perceptions of people according to how we feel during our very first interaction. Our senses are constantly at work — tracking body language and analyzing the conversation to assess how we feel. And while there's more to a person than what we learn and observe in a matter of seconds or minutes, humans are conditioned to make judgments or arrive at conclusions quickly.

First impressions aren't solely reserved for human-to-human interactions. They extend into how we perceive everything — a whiff of dinner in the oven, the first few notes of a song, or the cover of a book. These first touchpoints are so crucial because they're sticky — they're what people remember.

But how do you make something memorable?

With good design. Good design ties everything together with intention and purpose. For composers, it's how you string notes together to create a melody. For architects, it's the details in a blueprint. For companies, it's how a vision is shared with the world.

For today's businesses, websites serve as the central nervous system of your marketing operation. It's where your brand comes to life through design and where you can create a guided experience for visitors. It's also your digital home, creating necessary space to connect directly with customers.

In our extremely online world, simply having a website is no longer enough. No matter how someone ends up on your site, it should impress visitors and tell your story. It should be designed with your audience's needs in mind; It also needs to bring your visual identity to life as your business and brand evolves — and it needs to be optimized for performance to ensure long-term success.

But the truth is, as a company grows, your customers' behavior often changes, too. You might find new ones or your current customers' needs might shift, which often prompts the need for a website redesign. Businesses who are forced to deal with restrictive templates, hard-coded websites, or limited engineering resources, however, lack the flexibility and speed they need to continuously adapt and deliver relevant experiences. And if you can't make changes or updates in near real-time, your customers will grow frustrated — and fast-moving competitors will catch their eye instead.

In order to deliver successful redesigns today, companies must find paths to better cross-departmental collaboration and trust without putting their business at risk. And with the proper tools, teams, and processes in place, businesses can start taking the legwork out of site design and maintenance and start using their websites to their full potential.

Chapter 1

The power of defining and refining your brand presence

When you think of iconic brands, what names instantly come to mind? Perhaps Coca-Cola or Nike. Maybe Google or Apple. Just from reading these words, you're likely visualizing a soda can or a swoosh; a rainbow Google logo or an apple with a bite missing. That's the power of a strong brand identity — just saying a company name brings images or memories to mind.

But not every brand has the legacy advantage Nike or Apple does — decades of marketing campaigns have helped these companies plant roots deep in consumer culture. Meanwhile, today's businesses are more competitive than ever — they race to hit the market first, activate on more channels, and figure out how to consistently (and quickly) capture consumer attention.

The ability to successfully do so starts with how you present your business to the world. This means nailing your visual designs, your messaging, and your website — which together make up your brand identity. Let's dig a bit deeper into why organizations should carefully define and regularly refine their brand and how they can more readily bring their visions to life on the web.

The importance of strong, emotional connections

As the world has become digital-first, we've seen shifts in how consumers think and interact with businesses, as well. People have more options than ever at their disposal when making any given decision, whether it be the rug they purchase, the events they register for, or the project management software they onboard for their team. This plethora of options means the average person — scrolling aimlessly on their phone or researching what

product, service, or solution to choose — needs to be wowed, and quickly. Meeting potential customers where they are is important groundwork that will help you effectively forge meaningful relationships with them.

Reach your target audience

If you want your target audience to find you online, you need to have a strong search presence. Search engines essentially act as filters for the wealth of information available on the internet. They allow users to quickly and easily find information, without the need to wade through endless irrelevant web pages.

The goal of any high value Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy is to establish a strong foundation for a beautiful website with a clean, effective user experience that is easily discoverable in search, thanks to the trust and credibility of the brand and its digital properties.

Once you drive people to your website, your ability to hold their attention is dependent on how the words on the page, the color palette, the motion, the navigation, and more come together to create an experience that resonates with them immediately. So, while your brand identity should still be an accurate reflection of your company, your values, and what you offer, it's important to first consider your target audience to further research and refine how you portray your organization externally.

Pro tip

Google Analytics is a great tool for tracking acquisition, behavioral, and conversion data – all of which can help you get to know your audience. Here's a quick rundown on what you can dig into with Google Analytics to achieve the most from your website data.

1

Demographics

Breaks down audiences by age, gender, language, and location, providing you with a clear snapshot of how well you're reaching your target audience

2

Interests

Presents information about your users based on past searches and other online behavior to help you better understand unaddressed concerns your audience may have

3

Behavior

Provides a graphical representation of where users enter your site, where they go next, and where they eventually leave

4

Acquisition

Points you to where visitors find you – social media, organic search, Google Ads, or through a third-party referral – and what's working best to bring users to your website

5

Conversions

Tracks conversions – product sign ups, downloads, contact form submissions – and allows you to set goals and monitor important data, such as product performance, transactions, and time to purchase

Connect with the digitally savvy buyer

There's another key consideration marketing teams must consider when refining their brand identity: the reality that today's consumers and decision-makers are more digitally savvy than ever.

Technology is core to the customer experience, and the average consumer is spending an increasing amount of time online researching and analyzing products and services on their own. As a result, sales and marketing need to cater to this digital-first approach. In addition to building a high-functioning website, putting systems and tools in place that help identify and analyze user behavior is an essential tactic for generating brand awareness. Doing so will give teams the ability to extract rich consumer data they can use to make sophisticated business decisions and personalize more digital interactions, setting them up for long-term success.

Organizations should also aim to educate their target audience in order to position themselves as leaders in their industry. The ability to provide real value from the very first interaction with a potential customer can be the key to creating strong, associative connections that will keep your organization top of mind.

Communicate your brand online, *your way*

There's no perfect roadmap to bringing your brand identity to life on your website. It's a delicate balance of design, content, and page structure all working together to convey your purpose and generate positive return on investment (ROI). Let's dig into the moving parts that must come together cohesively on your site and the objectives they fulfill.

Messaging

This is the words, the voice, and the tone that tells your brand story. Everything from your tagline, your homepage headline, and the content you display throughout your site is considered messaging. You need to ensure it authentically reflects your organization's mission and resonates with your target audience — consider this an essential part of your branding.

Visual design

The look and feel of your brand is one of the most — if not the most — important part of your brand image. This is everything from the layout of your site pages, the colors you use, the combination of fonts you employ, the illustrations or photography placed thoughtfully across your website, and more. Your designs should feel authentic to your brand but also be eye-catching — drawing site visitors in with your unique look and

encouraging them to scroll and browse. For more product-driven businesses, this may mean displaying product user interfaces (UIs) front and center. For organizations providing services, displaying logos, illustrations, or photography of your team in action may be more suitable. Well-executed design requires reflecting on what you want to communicate visually to your audience, and when done well, it can become the anchor of your brand.

▶ Interactions and navigation

To keep users engaged, it's important to carefully design the flow of your website. This means creating moments across the site that can influence people and direct them to the content they're looking for. Motion, interactions, and user-friendly navigation are must-have elements of a well-designed site, and they should cater to the needs of your customers while simultaneously helping you hit the mark on the performance metrics you're chasing.

Take stock of your brand

Whether you're looking to make minor updates to your website or refresh your entire visual aesthetic, setting aside time to reflect on where your brand is and define where you want it to go is crucial for sustainable success. And setting key benchmarks and measuring performance against them can ultimately help marketing teams make more informed brand decisions.

At the end of the day, you're not just building a brand — you're building a legacy. And to construct a legacy, you need solid footing. Take stock of what you're doing well and consider what you're trying to accomplish through design — such as whether your site, messaging, and visual design cater to users' needs. Set aside time to also assess whether your overarching brand identity is an accurate reflection of your organization's growth. Hitting pause to look at what's working, what's not, and how to fix it will present your team with an invaluable opportunity to refine and evolve both your brand and your business.

Chapter 2

Five reasons to consider a website redesign

Websites are live assets that often change and evolve. For some organizations, making minor changes to a site page may be the quick fix your team needs to meet the mark on a business goal. However, at certain inflection points, a redesign may be the best option. It's an undertaking that requires way more than a fresh coat of paint — it's a major project designed to solve key problems and requires ample planning, time, people, and resources. Let's dive into a few of the most common reasons today's organizations decide to take on a website redesign project.

Your team may want to consider a redesign if:

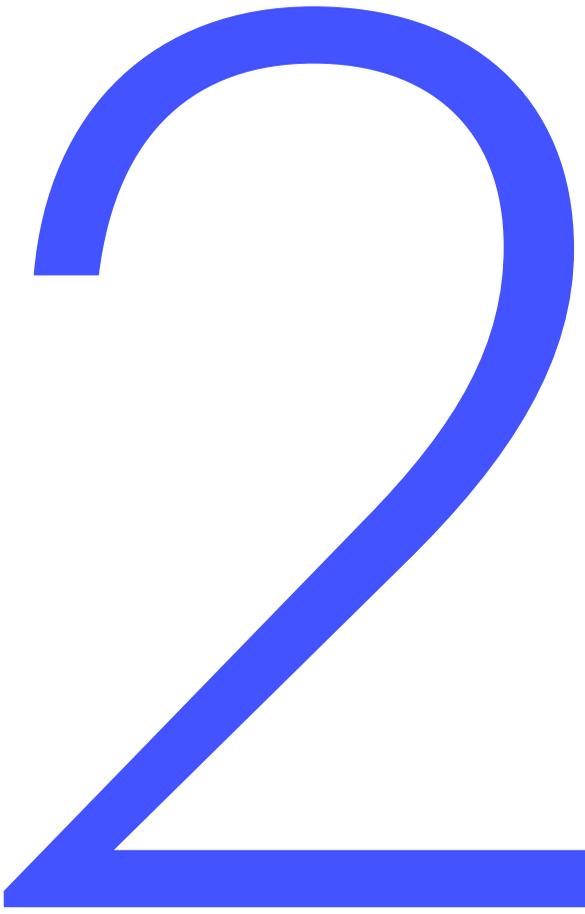


Your team may want to consider a redesign if

You're planning a rebrand

Your visual identity is how your brand comes to life — what your audience sees. The purpose of your visual identity is to convey the values and principles of your brand in a clear, digestible way. Branding, meanwhile, seeps into every part of your organization's marketing efforts and is present on every channel you activate on — ads, social, events, and more. It's the product of the tangible (colors, fonts, logo) and the intangible (attributes, values), which come together to speak to your target audience. And once this audience changes, it's probably time to put some heads together.

Rebranding is an entirely separate project from redesigning a website, but organizations tackling one need to consider how it will take form on the website and when. Rapidly growing companies also often aim to tie a rebrand to a major milestone — a public offering, a new fundraising round, a new product offering — in order to drum up additional momentum and execute a rollout that aligns with a natural next step toward growth. So if your company is expecting an influx in web traffic or updating its look, feel, and tone, it might also be an opportunity to assess how you can better cater to your users' needs on the website.



Your team may want to consider a redesign if

You want to improve the onsite user experience

Often, teams embark on a website redesign either because their target audience has changed, or their target audience is unable to find the information they're seeking out on your site. The user experience is an essential part of the website – one that requires research, testing, customer journey mapping, and more. While UX teams usually implement small updates and optimizations regularly, organizations need to think more holistically about function, navigation, accessibility, and layouts that help direct users to what they're looking for and results in a more pleasant overall experience for site visitors.

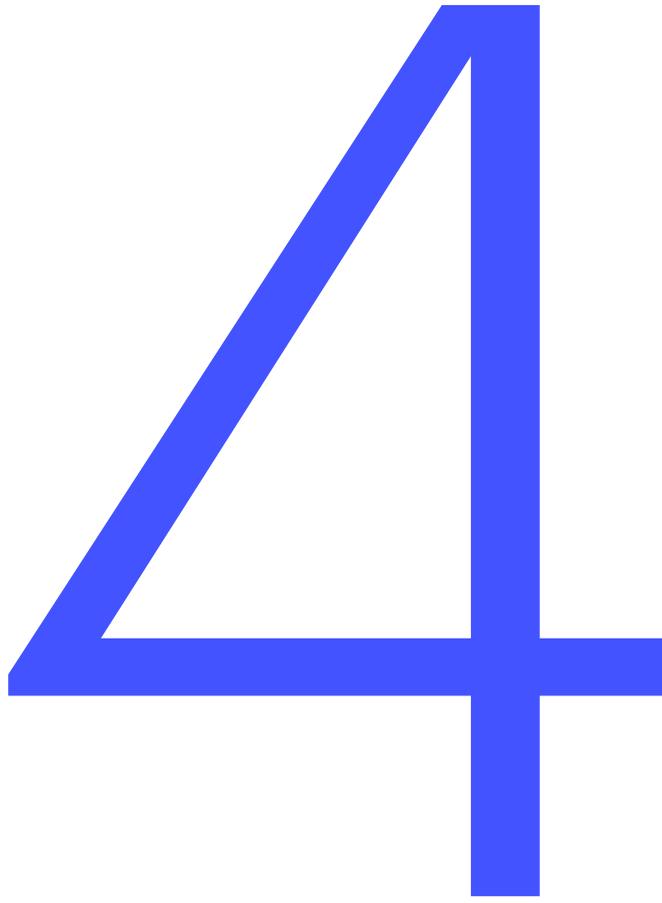


Your team may want to consider a redesign if

You want to increase site engagement

The objective of any website redesign should be the ability to solve a key business problem, and one of the most common objectives marketing teams establish is to improve a business metric that the website is responsible for. These metrics may look at the big picture, such as improving the website to generate more leads – but some teams may choose to focus on more granular goals first, like increasing the time users spend on-site or the number of pages they visit. Consider the following data-driven objectives for your own website:

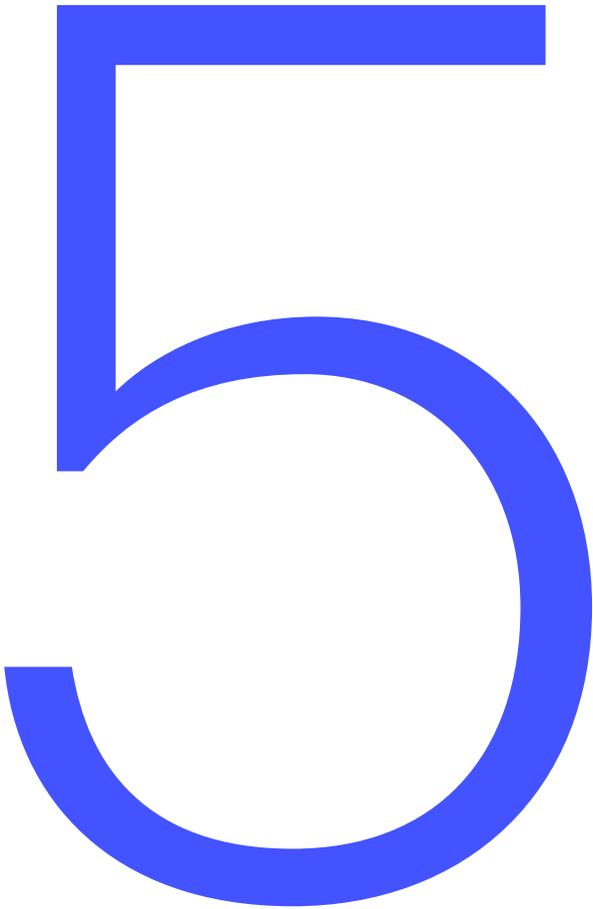
- ✓ To increase the number of site visits and site visitors
- ✓ To reduce your bounce rate
- ✓ To increase time spent on site
- ✓ To improve your domain authority
- ✓ To increase conversions and/or leads generated
- ✓ To increase total sales generated
- ✓ To enhance current SEO rankings for core keywords



Your team may want to consider a redesign if

You want to increase site performance

Similar to increasing site engagement, the problem at hand might begin with how your website is operating in the first place. A website redesign may be the solution for teams looking to incorporate design best practices that improve site speed or optimize the mobile experience. For others, site performance may be rooted in a deeper issue, such as the tools used to manage content or plugins and trackers that slow down load times. If this is where your problems with site speed and function stem from, migrating your website may also become part of your website redesign plans.



Your team may want to consider a redesign if

You want more control over your website

The ability to control the site and how it functions is one of the most common reasons businesses redesign their websites. Often, the tools or platforms growing organizations use to build and host their websites restrict who can make changes or add content — slowing people down and creating bottlenecks between teams. Companies looking to bring power and autonomy to marketing and design teams may explore replatforming to a visual development tool that can accelerate production timelines and make it easier to make small updates and edits on the fly. This creates an ideal window of opportunity to tackle a much-needed site redesign, which will also lay the groundwork teams need to improve the overall website user and management experience as they scale the business.

Redesign your website to solve a core business problem

A website redesign is ultimately an opportunity to start fresh and address a business problem or need. It's not just about how your site looks — but rather how it works, who your audience is, how your team manages the site, and how easy it is to make changes. It's also an opportunity to introduce necessary change to how your website functions — change that the entire organization can then shift toward and align around.

A website redesign is no small task

— it's one that requires ample planning, resources, and alignment. So before you dive in, be sure to give yourself the space you need to consider the why and the what — why you should take one on, and what your business will accomplish by effectively doing so.

Chapter 3

The designer's perspective on approaching a website redesign

Why should we do a redesign? Who outside of design should be involved, and how do we tackle planning? How do we set a proper timeline?

These are just a handful of the questions creative teams might ask themselves ahead of a website redesign.

In-house creative teams play such a crucial role in the design, planning, and execution of a modern website redesign project — so we chatted with Dani Balenson, an independent creative director who's worked with brands like Oscar Health and Vox Media (and helped Webflow with our homepage refresh in 2021!), Michael Rossi, Senior UX/UI Designer at Hubilo, and Webflow's Principal Brand Designer, Kyle Benson, on the complexities, must-dos, and processes they stick to when approaching a website redesign.

A website redesign should solve a problem

The modern website is much different and more involved than web development was during the early ages of the internet. It's often a — if not the — primary marketing asset for any company. “The web has changed so drastically in the last decade, it's pushed everyone to come to the realization that rethinking how their website looks and functions is a necessity,” Michael explained. “I've worked on a few projects where a team thought redesigning their site meant they had to rebrand, but I was slowly able to help them understand that just because you need to redesign your website doesn't mean you need to completely change every aspect of it.”

Dani echoed this sentiment and sees a redesign as a type of site refresh, which means certain elements of your look, feel, or functionality can remain consistent. “[A website refresh] is a different lipstick, a different eyeliner, a different brow pencil — something you use to look fresher and more modern,” she explains. As a result, a redesign doesn't need to be grounded in something as large as a rebrand. It simply needs to address a shift in your business or target audience.

Dani added that design is a “service of communication” — one that allows you to either speak to a new audience or fix something that's not working the way you want it to. Once a team comes to this realization, it must take a step back to reorient goals, define desired outcomes, and begin identifying next steps.

“The web has changed so drastically in the last decade, it's pushed everyone to come to the realization that rethinking how their website looks and functions is a necessity.”



Michael Rossi

Senior UX/UI Designer,
Hubilo

Ensure all key stakeholders are aligned on the objective

In order to effectively pull off a proper website redesign, all involved parties must align on the reason for doing one, the plan of attack, and the desired outcome of the project.

Kyle breaks down design into two camps. The first — “capital ‘D’ design” — focuses on strategy and the why. “Lowercase ‘d’ design”, on the other hand, is the look and feel. Capital ‘D’ design is the label for a redesign, and therefore involves many stakeholders — which, depending on the goal and company size, can include a marketing team, a design or creative team, product marketing, growth, UX, engineering, and more.

Michael, Kyle, and Dani have different experiences when it comes to who actually owns and drives a redesign. At some organizations, they’ve seen it be designers, but at others, it could be someone in Marketing who either identifies the issue they need to solve or defines the target business outcomes for the redesign. They all agree, however, that whoever is driving a redesign as a cross-functional effort needs to own scoping, planning, deadlines, and getting executive level buy-in before teams can get the ball rolling.

Create a project plan that sets the team up for success

Once teams are on the same page about goals and responsibilities, planning begins. In Dani’s experience, planning typically starts with a creative brief. This is a document that defines the background of a project,

why the team is doing it, what they want to accomplish, who they're talking to, how they want to communicate, and references for inspiration. Michael echoed this sentiment by explaining that a thorough analysis and plan is part of his creative process. "I will probably ask too many questions when I'm approaching a redesign because I want to know every aspect of what we're trying to accomplish," he said.

In addition to a creative brief, "Make stakeholder hierarchy clear, define who is involved and what their roles are, and develop a workback plan to ensure there's ample resourcing in place," Dani said. A workback plan should set dates for key milestones that lead up to an agreed-upon launch date. And while most designers are typically focused on the nuts and bolts of a redesign project, Kyle explained that some teams might have a senior design team member, like a VP or executive, who will be involved in this process and need to advocate for the creative team to ensure they are set up for success.

For in-house teams working with an agency, Kyle recommends bringing them in during this planning phase in order to get their suggestions from the get-go — especially on infrastructure and the bigger picture — because they're often aware of industry best practices for different objectives.

Part of planning also means having the right tools in place

Another crucial element of the planning process is enablement from an execution standpoint. For Michael, Hubilo had two and a half months to make a redesign happen. Being able to use a web development tool like Webflow for their redesign meant the team would be able to build pages quickly, develop interactions and

"Make stakeholder hierarchy clear, define who is involved and what their roles are, and develop a work back plan before setting up a project kickoff to ensure there's ample resourcing in place."



Dani Balenson
Freelance creative director

animations, access a built-in CMS, and know that any tweaks or edits down the road would be simple to do.

Time is often one of the biggest reasons organizations delay doing a website redesign, but teams that use tools to visually design and develop can make smaller changes more regularly – requiring noticeably less time overall. For Michael and the team at Hubilo, migrating to Webflow gave them the speed and flexibility they were looking for.

For Dani, the power of a tool like Webflow is how it enables collaboration. “It’s so fast and so easy for designers to go from an improved design to build. It’s also just really easy to edit something, look at a live link, and discuss any changes we want to make together,” she said.

Words of wisdom for designers approaching their first redesign project

While Dani, Michael, and Kyle all share the sentiment that redesigns are complex and involved, they each had parting words of advice for designers and marketers at hypergrowth companies with a redesign on the horizon.



“It’s a big project with a lot of little moving pieces, so be as methodical as possible. And no project is ever your last, so make it as good as you can, and apply learnings to the next one.”

| Dani Balenson, Freelance creative director



“Be open to changes, and make sure you have solid rationale for why you want to redesign something. And stagger a rebrand and redesign rather than doing them simultaneously.”

| Michael Rossi, Senior UI/UX Designer, Hubilo



“Doing your homework always pays off. The crucial work you do during planning is what ends up as the anchor at the very end.”

| Kyle Benson, Principal Brand Designer, Webflow

Chapter 4

Six weeks to launch:

The story of Ramp's website
redesign with Webflow

Powering over **\$5 billion** of annualized payments, Ramp is building the next generation of finance tools to help businesses save money and time. Named Fast Company's most innovative finance company of 2022, Ramp automates practically every aspect of finance — from corporate cards to expense management, billing, and reimbursements — saving companies an average of **3.3%** in their first year of use.

With some ambitious growth goals on the horizon, Ramp began to take a hard look at how they could free up developer time, how they could empower their marketing team, and how they could build a web presence that accurately told the story of who Ramp was and what they're building toward.

Laying the foundation for more scalable content creation

Prior to using Webflow, the Ramp website was hard-coded. As a result, engineers were needed for even minor site changes, like swapping out an image.

The team built out their initial website with just a handful of landing pages. However, as the company took off, they began focusing on — and investing more heavily in — their web presence.

To start, the Ramp team was looking to grow organic traffic by building a blog with an emphasis on SEO. When sketching out their must-haves, they wanted to build something they could maintain without relying on developers. They also wanted to give designers and

content writers the freedom to edit and publish site content. Finally, they needed an easy way to build their own templates so they could scale the content creation process as their company grows. After evaluating a number of web development solutions, the team decided

Addressing business needs with a redesign

Since its inception in 2019, Ramp has experienced hypergrowth, which in turn has put pressure on the team to optimize for speed on all fronts. For their redesign, they wanted:

- ✓ A visual look and feel that could accurately present them as the multi-billion dollar valued company that they are
- ✓ The opportunity to reframe and redefine its messaging and positioning as the fintech industry continues to shift
- ✓ To develop a new visual narrative rooted in its existing identity system that was both authentic and could better differentiate their brand in the fintech space

Together, these objectives became the “why” for tackling a redesign.

A narrow window of opportunity

Timing is often a defining factor for organizations considering a website redesign. The Ramp team knew the redesign needed to take place ahead of a funding announcement that was just six weeks away – a tight timeline for tackling such an ambitious project. But they also knew this was the perfect opportunity

for the company to roll out a fresh look and feel, as well as build a scalable design system and infrastructure. This meant the team needed to be thorough during the planning process, communicate goals and dependencies with all involved, and ensure there was true stakeholder alignment before jumping in.

Ramp brought their brand to life through a redesign

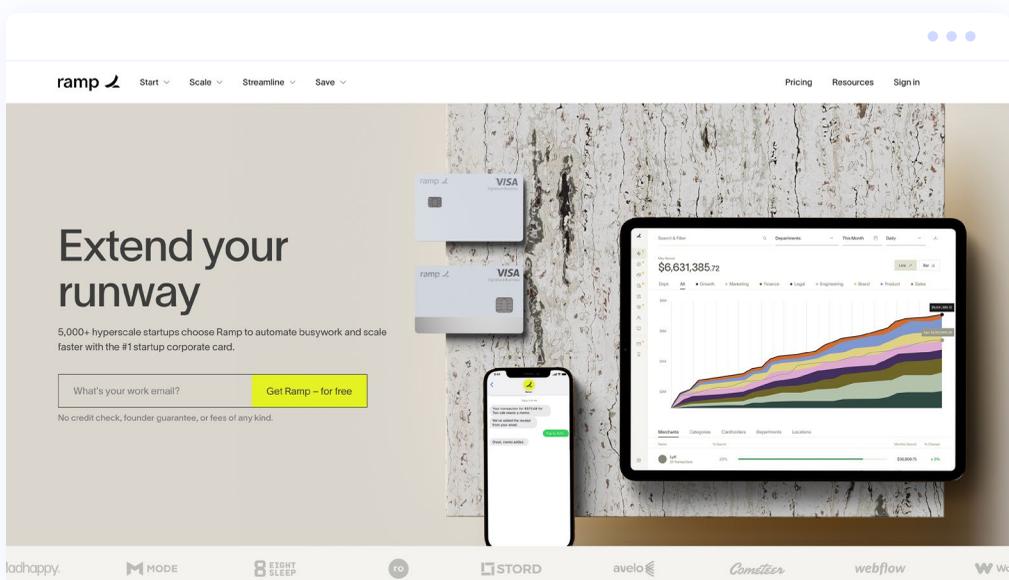
Ramp's marketing, design, and engineering teams worked together to bring their vision to life on the website in just six weeks. Their core design goals included:

- Tactility through motion, interaction, and spatial design
- A stronger sense of voice through its messaging and copy
- Using high-quality photography and illustration language that accurately reflected their brand
- Featuring premium renderings of physical products
- Creating consistency and patterns that scale to set the team up for long-term success
- Communicating breadth and social proof through a well-designed customer page

With Webflow, the team could operate at a speed of execution they've never experienced before, even as they balanced so many moving parts and complicated design elements — like animations — on a tight timeline.

Webflow also gave all involved members of the redesign project at Ramp the ability to collaborate and contribute

to the site. This meant marketing, design, and engineering could work in parallel as they tackled their respective portions of the redesign. And now, as different teams express the need to spin up new landing pages or edit content on the site, they're able to jump in without being held back by lengthy development timelines.



Ramp's redesigned homepage

A design foundation built for scale

In just two months, Ramp saw page views increase by **26%** and pages viewed per-session increase by nearly **6%** — signaling almost instantaneous positive effects that the redesign had on user engagement. And today, updating pages or making tweaks to styles is a breeze. Because Ramp took the time to build a strong design foundation in Webflow, the website has become a truly powerful marketing asset that they can continue to develop and grow as they reach new heights.

Visual development is the secret to more scalable, powerful websites

The average marketing and design teams understand how important a high-functioning website is for brand awareness, lead generation, and conversion. They also are rarely short on ideas for how to improve their site — whether it necessitates a redesign or even just a minor refresh. Making those improvements actually happen, however, is often a technological and organizational nightmare that's more hassle than it's worth.

As organizations continue to compete on the basis of customer experiences, scale and speed to market are non-negotiable. That means businesses need the right solutions in place — ones designed to scale with them and ones that give teams the freedom to focus on what interactions and site experiences will resonate best with their audience instead of how they will be able to bring their vision to life.

With visual development tools, growing teams have the freedom and flexibility to experiment and optimize the website in real-time, visually. That's why having a tool like Webflow in your corner is the difference maker. It gives design and marketing teams the autonomy to build stunning web experiences and make changes in a fraction of the time — without relying on engineers or compromising performance, security, SEO, or customization.

So if you're ready to wave goodbye to lengthy development timelines and restrictive templates and say hello to creating a beautiful website that will connect with your customers, we're here to help.

webflow

Ready to build the website of your dreams?

Get in touch with our team of experts to learn how Webflow Enterprise can help you build a better website, faster.

Learn more today

Need help or have a question?

You can always check our [forums](#) or our [University](#), and you can always contact us at contact@webflow.com