

EBOOK

# Reimagining web development teams

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*Introduction*

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# Reimagining web development teams

Enabling cross-functional collaboration for success

Introduction

“You’re only taking so many bets.”

This stark honesty, [shared by Joe Spector](#) — founder and CEO of online pet care provider Dutch and co-founder of telehealth company Hims and Hers — highlights the importance of strategic decision-making at organizations of all sizes and industries amidst economic downturn.

[Nearly 20% of U.S.-based firms expect to reduce their headcount this year](#), and as they work with limited talent and scrutinized budgets, they still need to deliver quality, engaging experiences to their customers to start conversations, drive product adoption, and generate new business. Successfully meeting evolving consumer needs starts with creating digital experiences that are personal, address pain points, and capture attention. And the ability to effectively deliver these experiences while keeping up with the rapid pace of digital transformation all starts with the website.

The website is a business's most important marketing asset. That means it requires plenty of maintenance, experimentation, and optimization. Traditionally, this responsibility of managing and running an enterprise website has fallen to developers, with support from marketing and design. However, developers shouldn't be stuck making minor site changes and spending weeks and months on lengthy review cycles. To maximize the potential of your talent, you have to leverage their skills efficiently. For technical leaders, this means finding a way to free up developers' time who, at large organizations, **spend as little as 50% of their time on actual development**. For marketing leaders, this means reimagining the scope of responsibility their non-technical team members can have when armed with the right technology.

Now, as companies continue to feel the pressure to not just stay afloat but thrive, leaders need to rethink how they operate — starting with how they structure and empower their teams to do their best work. Only then can companies set themselves up for long-term, sustainable success and growth.

In this ebook, we'll take a closer look at why web team structure is critical to business success, why traditional team structures and approaches to web development might be hurting your business, and how companies can rethink their web team operating model to best serve their growth goals.

# Business success hinges on a well-run website

Your marketing website is the digital front door to your business, so it's probably no shock that an estimated 1 billion [websites exist online](#) today. At the basic level, websites drive brand awareness, generate leads and conversions, and serve as a home base for forging relationships with your audience.

However, the most powerful websites:

- ◆ **Display a business's voice, tone, and visual identity**
- ◆ **Educate target audiences on available products, services, and offerings**
- ◆ **Satisfy user intent through accessible design, content, messaging, and positioning**
- ◆ **Deliver reliable and scalable experiences while protecting your business from security risks**

Today, websites are the cornerstone of marketing strategy, and the most effective ones drive conversions and help organizations gain a competitive edge. As a result, businesses need to invest in their website. This includes the talent they bring on to manage it, the tech they use to power it, and the processes that guide how teams use it to deliver business growth.

Let's look at how the success of your website – and customer experiences more generally – are directly influenced by your web team and how they are structured.

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## Web teams are the backbone of powerful websites

Before your website can deliver on the promise of becoming your most important marketing asset, you need the right team in place to build, design, develop, and protect it. Having the right talent and team structure supporting web projects is instrumental because it creates alignment, divides responsibilities, defines workflows and processes, and clearly outlines methods for close-knit collaboration — both internally and with any outside partners. Best of all, having this solid foundation to operate from sets organizations up for scale and long-term success.

## Web teams are tasked with delivering stellar site experiences

The team behind your website has a massive responsibility: to ensure the website is always providing an enjoyable and engaging user experience. These roles — from IT and developers to marketers and designers, as well as any external agencies you work with — must work together to identify problems with the site and address them.



From ticket prioritization to actual web development, the key roles running point on the website come together to make content updates, run experiments, integrate security protocols, maximize performance, optimize SEO, and ensure designs are up to brand standards. As a result, how these team members collaborate on web initiatives is as critical to the business as the website itself.

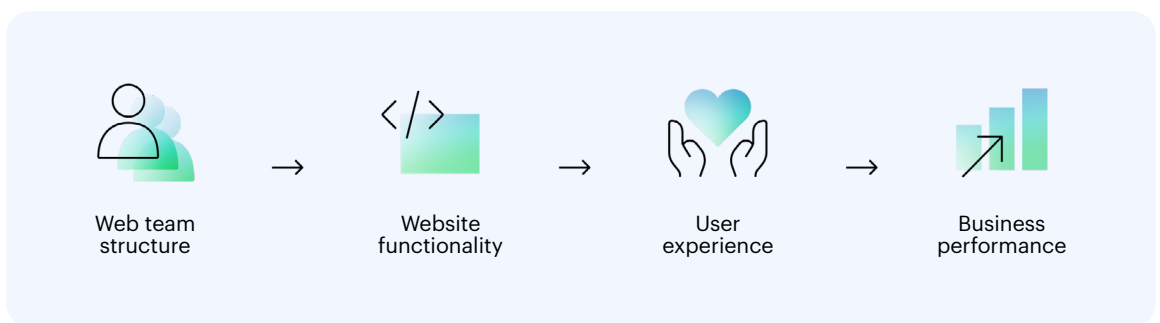
## Website decisions impact the entire customer experience

Far too often, teams measure the success of their campaigns solely against a single or a few key business KPIs: how many times a piece of content was downloaded, how many people converted from an ad, how many people complete a form submission. But the reality is, several variables are at play that impact a campaign's performance before it even launches. For many companies, the website experience is the customer experience. As a result, every site element, from navigation and site forms to how content is organized and how accessible it is, affects the end-user experience.

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# Investments in team structure pay dividends for your business

Managing and optimizing an effective marketing website is an always-on program; one that requires cross-team collaboration, executive buy-in and sponsorship – and for some companies, external agency support. The reality, however, is that as your business grows, your ability to continue leveraging your website as a powerful marketing tool becomes more complicated.



That’s why, now more than ever, decision-makers need to prioritize effective team structure that enables stronger collaboration within web teams. In our experience supporting large-scale enterprises, we’ve seen how a siloed team structure dissolves cross-functional communication, slows down development, and results in misaligned business priorities. For leaders no longer willing to leave money on the table, the path toward building more successful web experiences at scale starts with assessing how marketers, designers, and developers can work better together.

# The traditional web operating model is broken

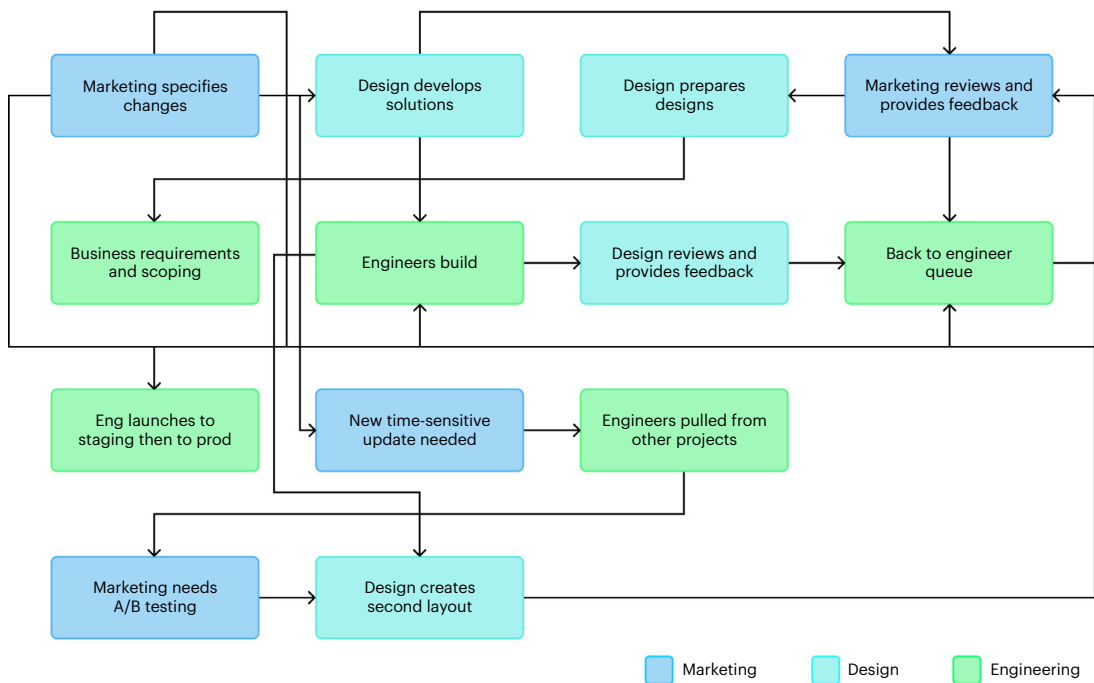
When different members of an organization operate in complete silos, it's nearly impossible to work together toward shared goals. The website should be an enablement tool for a business, but with traditional web development processes (and even with more “modern” headless approaches), ownership and control are often exclusively in the hands of developers. As a result, marketers, developers, and designers are unable to deliver on their goals at their desired pace, compromising efficiency and slowing down their pace of innovation.

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## Disjointed workflows break down collaboration

For far too long, traditional web development has forced companies to put their website solely in the hands of engineering and technical talent who can deliver custom code. This lack of flexibility not only slows organizations down but also results in overly complex development processes. Building new web experiences or even minor site changes becomes a complicated maze of project handoffs, trapping cross-functional teams in back-and-forths and extensive QA cycles.

The result of this outdated way of building for the web is disjointed workflows and misaligned priorities, stripping marketers and designers of autonomy and control, and leaving developers bogged down by low-impact tasks.



*With traditional web development, bottlenecks and handoffs slow down the time it takes to implement marketing changes, and engineering backlogs grow*

## A disconnected team leads to misaligned priorities

Traditional web development traps teams in silos, which often forces developers, marketers, and designers to march to the beat of different drums when it comes to web projects. Each of these roles accounts for different areas of expertise and vouch for different sets of priorities. As a result, cross-functional teams tend to butt heads, making team alignment a common challenge facing today's web teams.

When folks involved with the website prioritize tasks and tickets differently, they often end up opting for small-scale maintenance projects over higher-impact initiatives that can drive innovation and better position the business. This is especially true when organizations are dependent on developer resources because the ability to make incremental improvements to web experiences becomes an overly-involved, time-consuming effort. As a result, tackling projects and delivering on goals and deadlines becomes unattainable — a lose-lose for all.

When teams are anchored around outdated ways of building for the web — ones that are entirely owned by developers — businesses are unable to effectively collaborate, hindering cross-functional team members from doing their best work.

*“When our site was owned by engineering, any requests would have to go through engineering sprints, which dictated how they were prioritized. That just does not work for minor requests or urgent campaigns.”*

**Justin Johnson**  
Web developer

 **Dropbox Sign**

*“Our engineering team was spending far too much time on trivial changes to static marketing pages, which slowed down our sprints and meant more code to manage.”*

**Karan Gupta**  
Chief Technology Officer

**SHIFT**

## Developers want the freedom to focus on what matters most

Oftentimes, companies centralize website ownership around engineering and IT: folks equipped to be the first line of defense against security threats, understand website architecture, and can code. However, putting the brunt of web responsibilities on technical talent does them — and your business — a major disservice.

When developers hold the keys to the website, every single ticket and task now must flow through them. Content edit? Development resources. New landing page? Development resources. This diminishes the value of highly-skilled engineering talent, reducing them to pixel pushers when they could be focusing on the most engaging and challenging aspects of their work.

*“We had to change the copy on a button, and that alone took 3–4 days. We couldn’t experiment or test things out with the design in an agile way with those timeframes.”*

**Michal Pechardo**  
Senior Designer

**SmugMug** 

## Marketers and designers crave agility

It’s not just developers who are at a disadvantage when web development is predominantly in their hands.

Marketers are unable to move quickly and are reduced to ticket filers. Designers are wholly reliant on developers executing their creative vision, trapping them in a cycle of back-and-forth reviews.

Not only does this team structure hinder individuals from working on the most important tasks and business problems; it also slows down your organization’s ability to improve your existing products, services, and experiences. By the time a marketing request is delivered by developers, consumer needs or market conditions often shift, forcing marketers to revise or revisit their original ticket. Not only does this restart the entire development process for an initiative, but this can also slow down your organization’s momentum.

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## Organizational silos come with a hefty price tag

With traditional web development models, organizations solely anchored around developers deal with detrimental consequences. Developers are siloed from marketers and designers, which means teams move slowly and often compromise deadlines and efficiency. And when these roles are not in sync, this can affect your company's bottom line.

### Inefficiency trickles down

A slow pace of web operations impacts the business at large. According to a recent executive survey, **72% of IT leaders** say project backlogs prevent them from embarking on strategic, business-critical projects. So not only does ineffective team structure slow teams down; it also wastes precious time that could've been better spent on higher-impact work.

During a period where, **per Gartner**, “customer strategy must continue to be a central chair at the organizational strategy table,” your ability to move quickly and accelerate your time-to-market can make or break your business. That's why now more than ever, it's on leaders to make strategic decisions and investments that catalyze growth.



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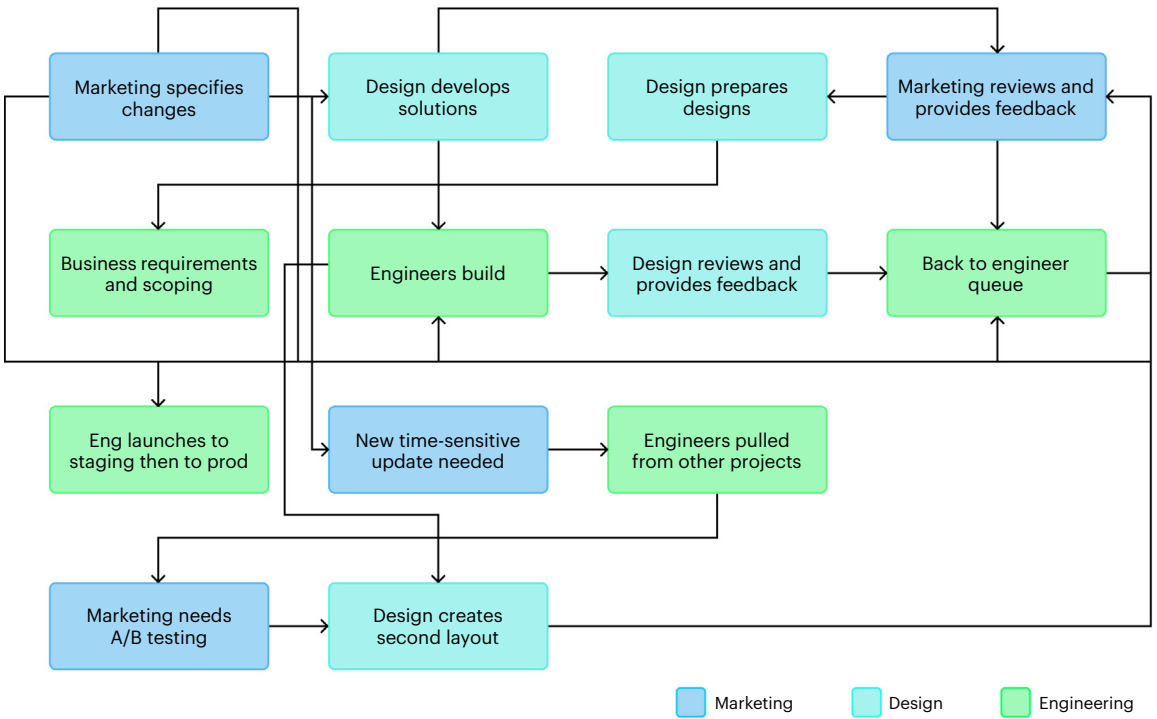
## Create time and space for your organization's most important work

To create a stronger web team foundation, your organization doesn't need to remove developers from the web development process — in fact, you shouldn't. Instead, decision-makers should think more holistically about how their web team operates and tackles shared goals.

When teams aren't trapped in silos, they can move in the same direction together, work more efficiently, and uncover better solutions to business problems. Designers and developers aren't wasting time going back and forth on which hex code to use for a button, and marketers don't need to wait a month whenever they want to make minor site edits. Instead, these three core web team functions can work together to define and create more powerful web experiences that speak to customers' needs. And best of all, when all aspects of web development are no longer the core responsibility of developers, they can work on more impactful code and builds.

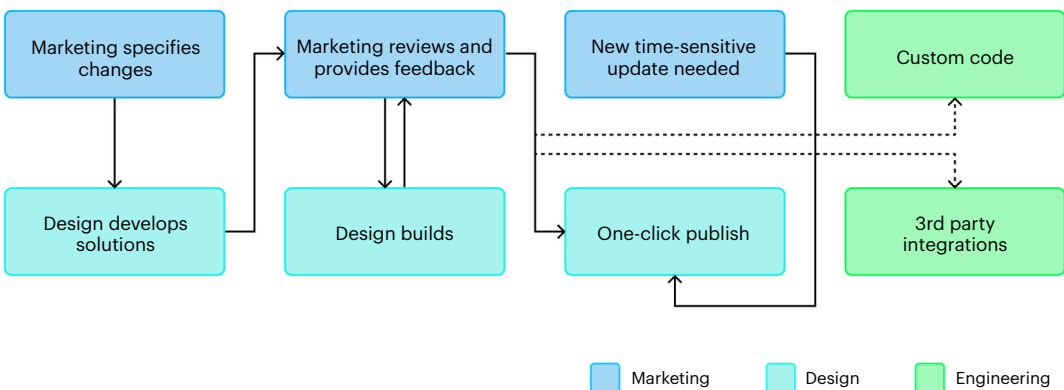
A modern, more effective team structure empowers businesses to work successfully together and massively shrink development timelines. And to harness the true power of collaboration when building for the web, organizations need to properly structure their web team around tools that help them unlock their true potential.

# Before



*With traditional web development, marketing is on the line to create engaging, converting experiences but to get anything done they need to involve a lot of people and engage in long, slow rollout processes.*

# After



*When organizations give marketing and design autonomy to create, edit, and launch content all on their own, teams spend significantly less time stuck in review cycles and engineers can focus on business critical projects.*

# Rethinking your web team structure

Shifting how your web team works isn't simply an organizational shake up; it's a shift in how you operate, how you collaborate, and what tools you center your team around. And for today's teams — especially ones chasing growth with limited business resources — these changes are interconnected.

With traditional web development, teams have no choice but to center their workflows around developers, which can weaken cross-functional collaboration. But with modern ways of building for the web, teams have the power to establish ways of working that best serve their specific needs without compromising site performance, security, or scalability. Teams can finally work as a unit and create processes that set them up for long-term success.

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## Embracing a new way of working

For organizations with more flexible web development tools in place, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to web team structure. However, businesses today can no longer afford to rally around technology and processes that:

- ◆ **Create bottlenecks and slow down time-to-launch**
- ◆ **Generate engineering backlogs that result in heavy operational costs**
- ◆ **Compromise site performance and customer engagement**

Your business objectives, goals, existing headcount, and priorities should influence how you structure your team. Companies with more complex projects or heightened security protocols may choose to have web projects sit close to engineering or have a designated developer working alongside marketing. Others that want to move hard and fast or produce large amounts of content may opt for a marketing or design-led web team.

But no matter the setup or company size, leaders looking to empower their team to do their best work need to trade traditional development for more modern, collaborative ways of working at their organization.

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## Technology that enables stronger team collaboration helps leading businesses:

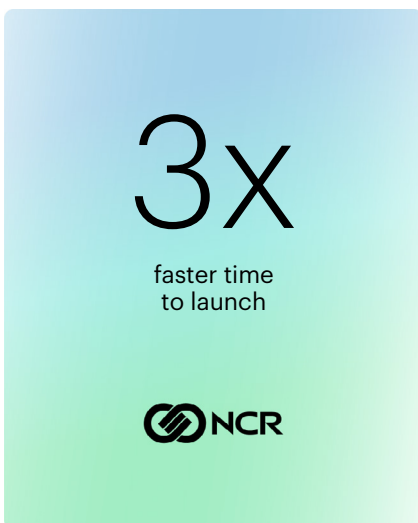
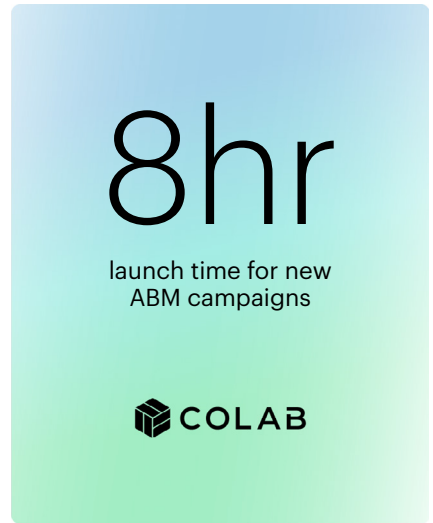


### 1. Free up precious developer resources

When rallying behind more collaborative web development tools, cross-functional team members can play more impactful roles when it comes to the website. Relinquishing total site control from the hands of developers means marketers can edit and publish new content to the site on their own, and giving designers greater autonomy allows them to play a non-technical developer role for site builds. This gives your engineering talent the ability to focus on larger initiatives that require code, and organizations no longer have to squander these resources on simple site upkeep.

## 2. Experiment at a greater velocity

With time saved and responsibilities better distributed among web team members, businesses have greater opportunities to identify new ways to optimize customer experiences. Learning and tracking existing performance and implementing new solutions is a critical part of web development that can become an afterthought when organizations have limited time and headcount. But when more people at your company have the autonomy to build for the web, businesses can prioritize revenue-generating campaigns and experiments that can drive better business performance.



## 3. Deliver more web experiences

Greater collaboration between marketing, design, and developers means companies can be more agile. What once took weeks or months with traditional web development can now be achieved in days — or even hours — with a web team leveraging technology that allows more people to create new site experiences. This accelerates speed to market, gives organizations the ability to quickly adjust to rapidly changing market conditions, and enables teams to get through web tickets faster — freeing up time teams can use to iterate more frequently on digital experiences.

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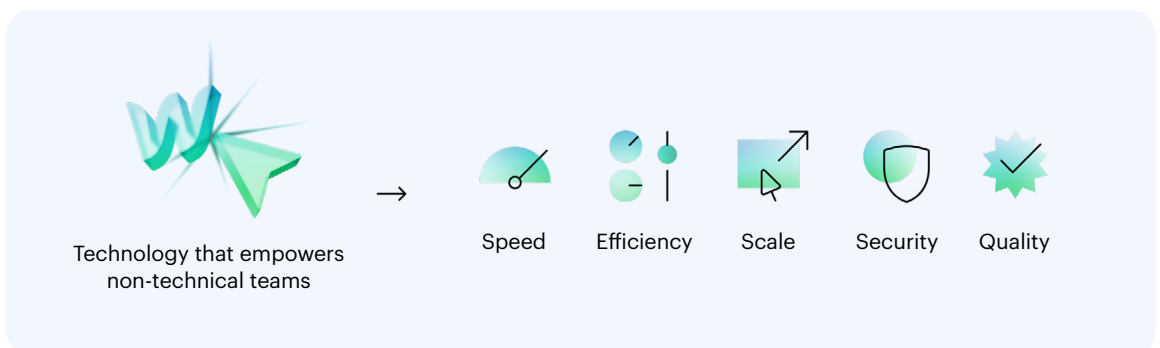
# Restructure your web team with visual development

Once your organization begins rethinking how they develop new web experiences, you'll need to structure your web team in a way that enables stronger cross-functional processes for building and managing web experiences.

No two companies are identical, which is why teams must assess their resources before making any drastic changes. But to maximize efficiency, increase speed, and deliver secure web experiences at scale, your team needs web development tools that:

- ◆ **Put the keys to the website in the hands of your non-technical talent**
- ◆ **Reduce the burden on your highly-specialized, technical team members**

With visual development tools like Webflow, marketing and design can have full autonomy in creating, editing, and launching content on the website. As a result, businesses can amplify and scale the impact everyone at an organization can have, so that the entire organization itself is set up for long-term success.





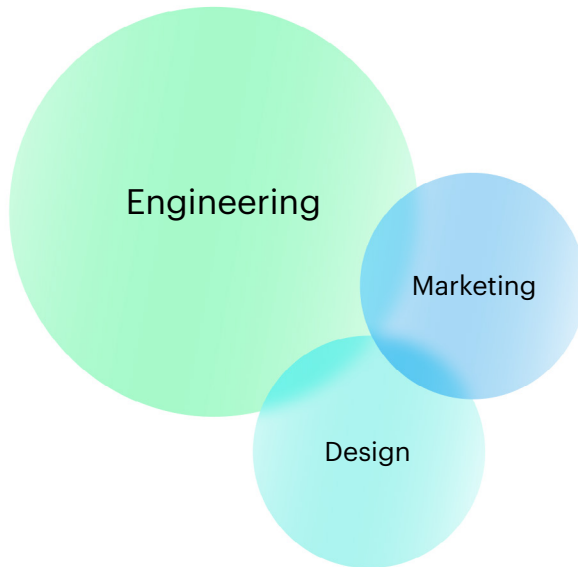
## Putting your website safely in the hands of marketers and designers

At the core of visual development is the ability for anyone to build for the web. However, for larger organizations with complex business needs, as well as security concerns, completely removing engineering from the equation of your web team is likely a non-starter.

A business' success hinges on an ability to move quickly and deliver engaging customer experiences, which is why your website needs to transform from an engineering burden into a marketing asset.

**With visual-first tools like Webflow**, marketers can take ownership of the website and launch new campaigns and content with ease, and designers can bring their web visions to life by building new experiences in a visual canvas, without code. Marketers and designers transform into “citizen developers” when tools like Webflow sit in their corner, shifting a significant amount of website responsibility into their hands in the process. Best of all, publishing safeguards and permission controls allow key site owners to dictate what level of control different team members can have over the website, so everyone can rest easy knowing that publishing controls are always in the right hands.

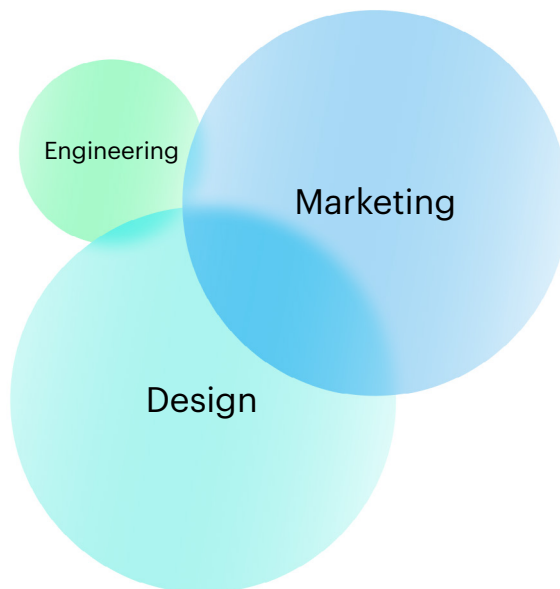
## Traditional web development



*With modern ways of building for the web, organizations can shift more website-related responsibilities to marketing and design*



## Modern web development



## Case Study

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# TED

# How TED's product team shares ideas worth spreading

With a growing library of content and ever-evolving initiatives, the team at TED often found themselves stalled or using up valuable engineering resources on simple site changes, updates to event details, and general upkeep of their campaign information. They knew their designers and internal stakeholders needed more control over site content, and set out to find the technology and expertise to make it happen.








After onboarding Webflow and collaborating with Webflow Enterprise Partner, Whiteboard, the team at TED outlined their clear priorities for how their internal team would ideally manage website updates and what they wanted to deliver for their end users. With clear objectives in mind, Whiteboard determined the best path forward to deliver on TED's more complex setup needs, such as custom templates their team could use moving forward and maintain on their own.

Using the Webflow CMS, content editors can now easily manage blog and video content autonomously, the marketing team can quickly iterate and test their web strategies, and the events team can create beautifully branded conference pages, all without development resources. Today, marketers, designers, and content editors at TED, backed by powerful editing and authoring capabilities, are empowered to continue to produce impactful content without technology roadblocks.

*Special thanks to our collaborators at [Whiteboard](#), a Webflow Enterprise Partner.*

## The new web operating model cheat sheet

Restructuring your web teams is not as simple as moving talent around or onboarding new technology. The best teams are the ones who thoughtfully assess their resources and budgets, define their priorities, and create processes that future-proof their organization. So for any leaders embarking on this journey of reimagining how to set up your web team, here are a few considerations to keep top of mind.

-  **Document and define individual roles and responsibilities**
-  **Clearly define and communicate overarching web team goals**
-  **Determine KPIs for measuring operational success**
-  **Create a framework to inform how teams prioritize web tasks**
-  **Set up workflow processes for tackling web projects (i.e. sprint model, processes for handoffs)**
-  **Align cross-functional stakeholders before onboarding new technology (i.e. IT, security)**
-  **Assess if any outside agency support is needed**

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## Unlock your team's true potential

Today, with the right tools in place, teams can work in tandem toward common goals in a fraction of the time. Visual-first development tools like Webflow break down silos and allow for more seamless collaboration between web team members. Marketing and design can unlock business speed when they have more autonomy to create, edit, and publish content and web experiences with little-to-no engineering resources. Meanwhile, developers can use the time they saved to focus on more strategic projects for the business.

Taking the time to rethink your web team structure and how your team approaches building for the web can pay dividends, especially for teams figuring out how to deliver more customer experiences with significantly less budget and headcount. By structuring your team around technology designed to amplify and scale the impact every web team member has at your company, your organization inherently becomes more resilient.

The companies best positioned for long-term success are the ones with strong operational foundations, and taking the time to consider where and how your team can work better together can become your competitive differentiator. Best of all, not only will this result in cost savings and revenue generation; it will also help create a highly-engaged, highly-empowered team.

*“Building for the web is no longer rigid — it’s a more fluid, collaborative process that allows for faster, better output. Our design and development teams are much more integrated during the build process. Designers have more autonomy, and engineers can focus on the most impactful work — allowing us to deliver new web pages faster.”*

**Dan Dawson**

Sr. Manager of  
Digital Properties





## Ready to transform how your teams build for the web?

Trusted by teams at over 200,000 of the world's leading organizations, Webflow Enterprise gives your teams the power to build, ship, and manage secure, scalable websites — without relying on precious developer resources.

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