



Your Last Comprehensive Website Redesign!

Planning for Iterative Website Evolution

The Pitch

In the past: To evolve, higher education websites needed to be burned down with each iteration — largely because the design, content and technology were so closely intertwined, and to adapt to mobile.

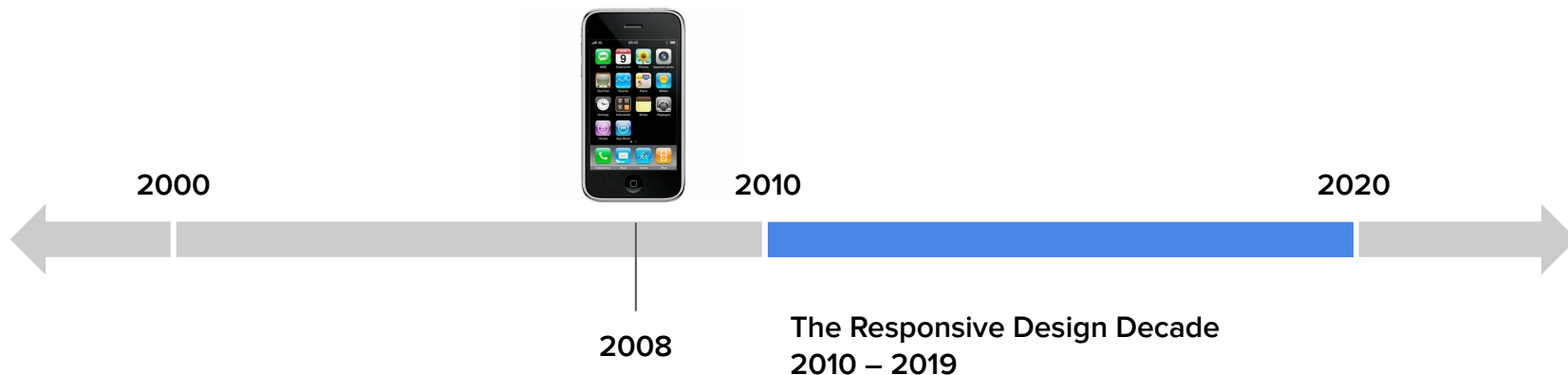
Today: The separation of content, design, and technology makes it possible to establish a firm foundation and move the site forward to achieve the institutional objectives. In addition, external changes in content delivery have stabilized.

The opportunity: If a solid website foundation is established, your school can shift from burning down your website with each iteration to building on top of it.

Let's Look Back

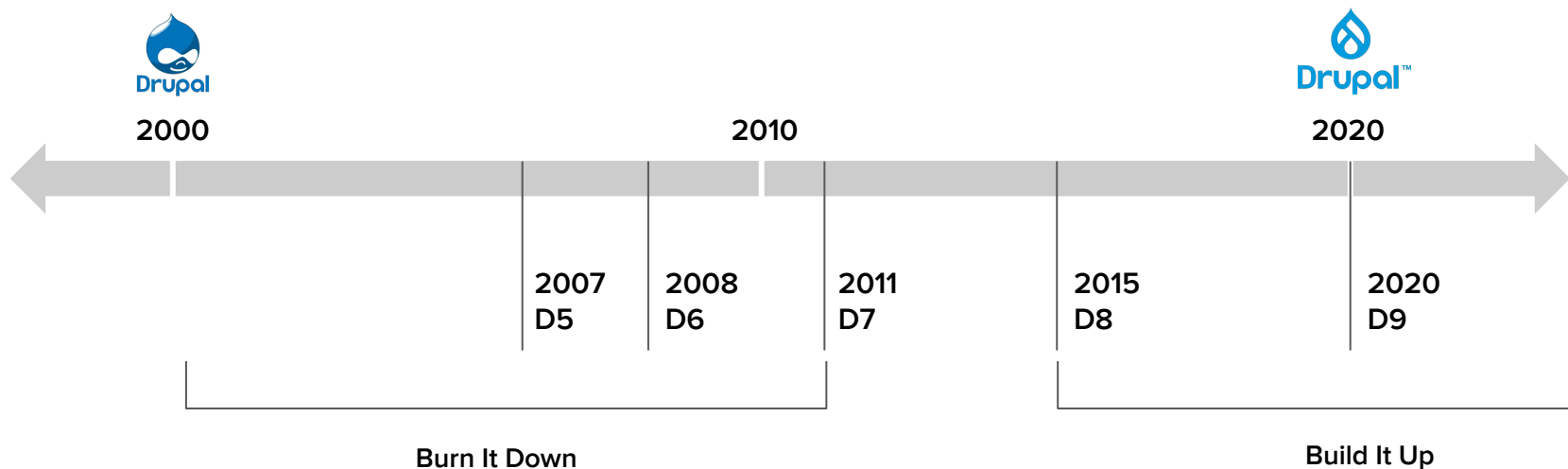
Mobile Design

2008 iPhone 3G launches, pushing the need for websites designed for the mobile web and forcing full-scale rethinking of web design and content presentation. Burn down those websites.



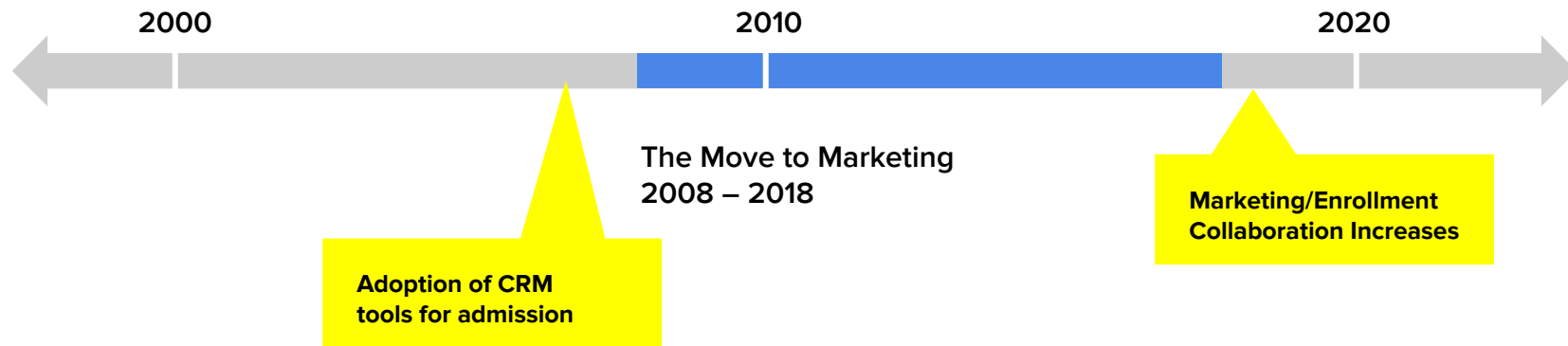
Evolving CMS Platforms

2015 Before 2015, all Drupal sites needed to be rebuilt with every redesign. After 2015, the core can be updated to maintain the content structures.

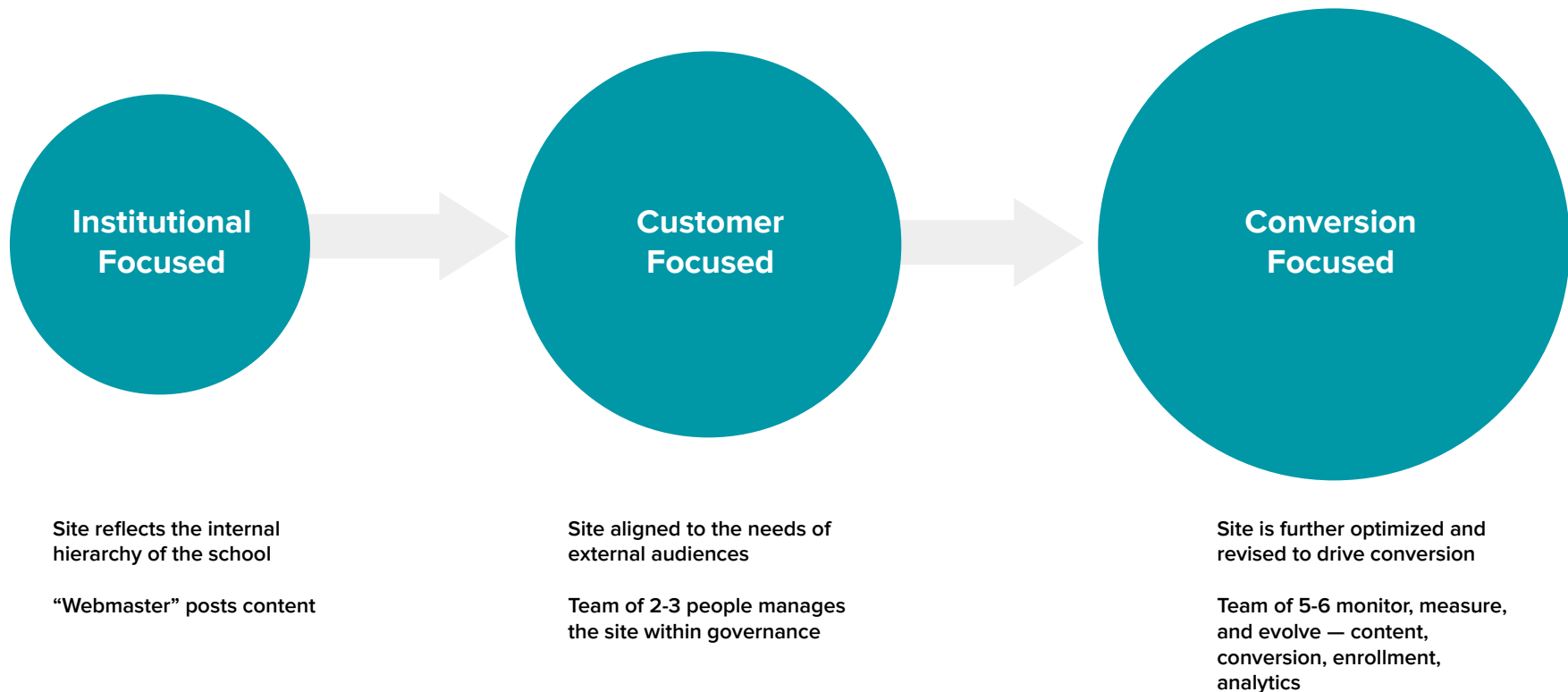


Website Moves from IT to Marketing

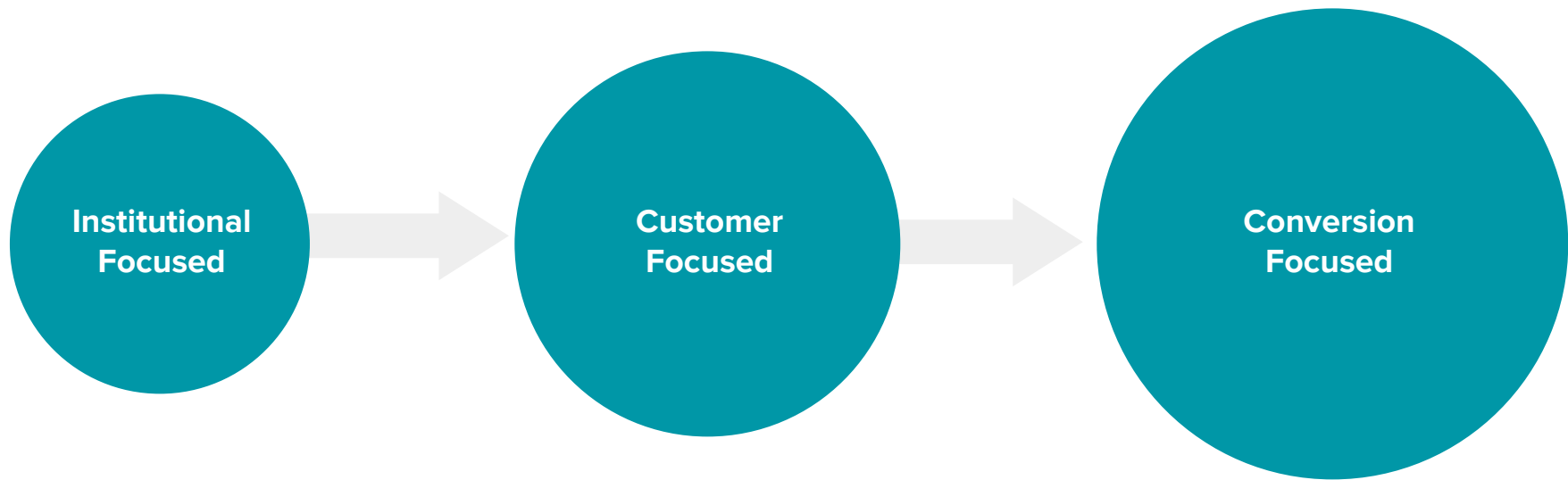
2008 The move from the website being a “technical” project to a “marketing” project occurs with the expansion of more specialized marketing tools.



Website Evolution



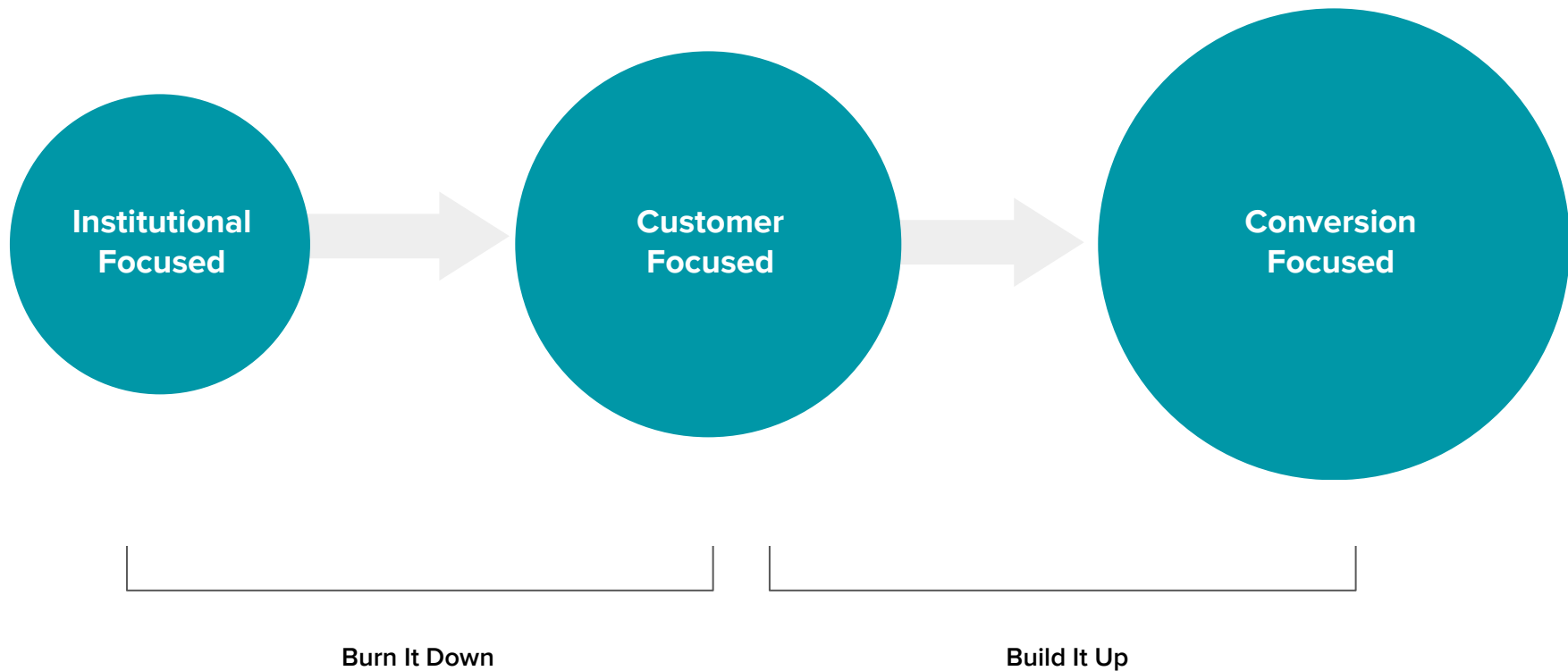
Website Evolution



Resumé of the school.

Achieves the business goals of the school.

Website Evolution



Setting the Foundation



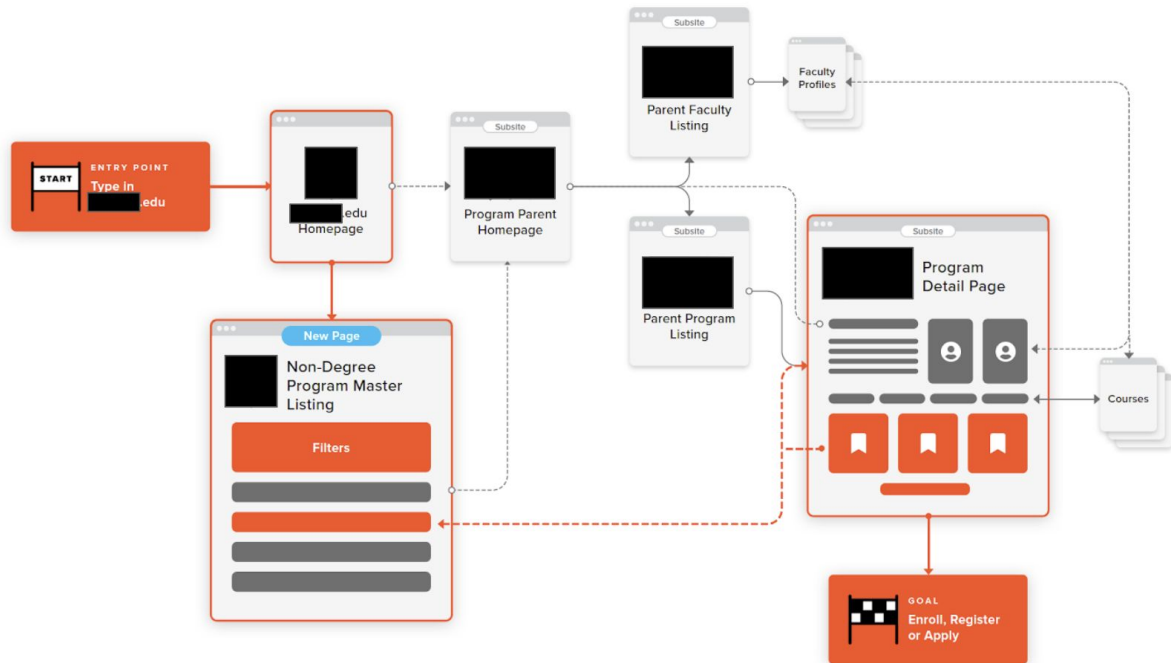
Building a Solid Foundation

- A user-centered website focused on audience needs (not institutional needs)
- A digital content strategy
- A governance strategy to maintain site quality
- Component-driven design
- CMS that is able to evolve and be upgraded without having to rebuild
- A site that you can edit and publish without the help of a developer
- The staff to support and execute on the strategy

User-Centric Website

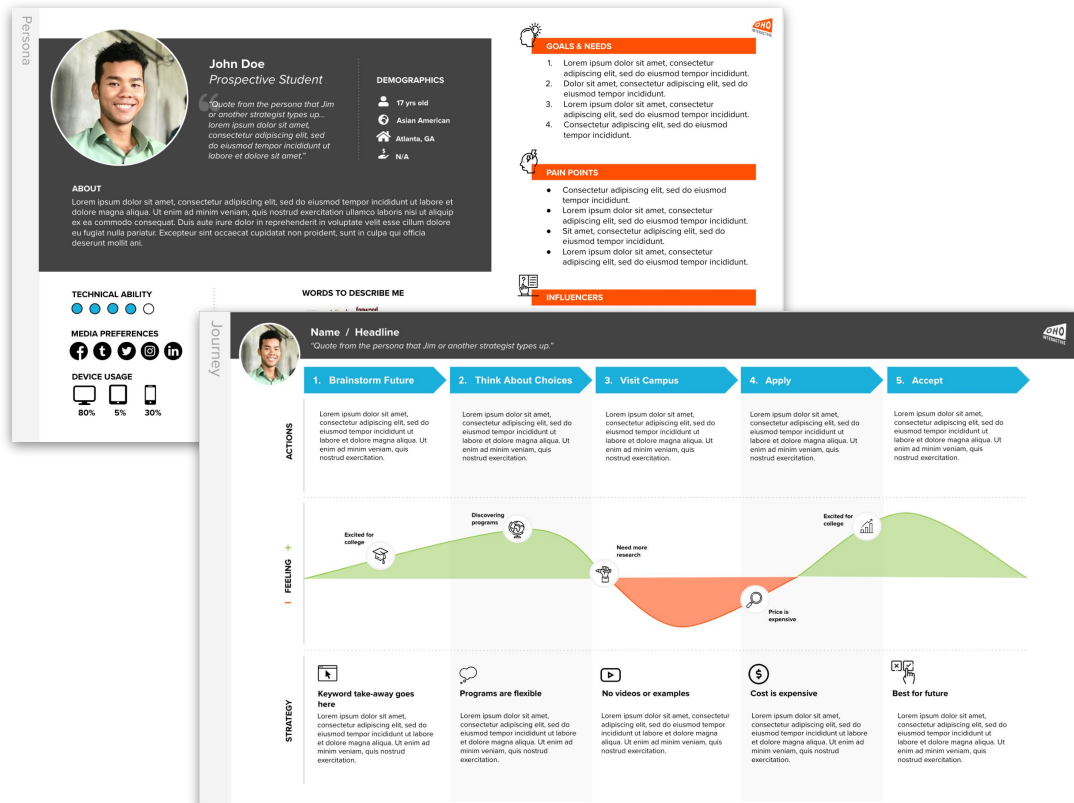
By rooting site navigation in key user flows — not your institutional structure — you extend the relevance and value of the website.

As user needs change, site flows can evolve, with changes confirmed by user testing.

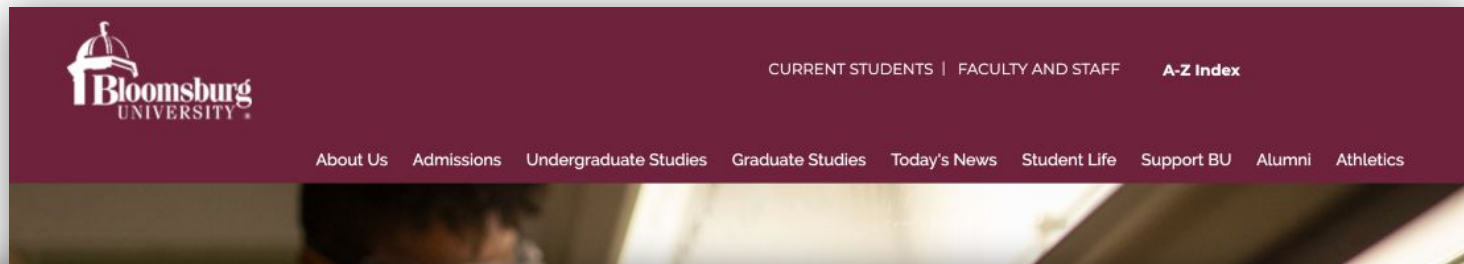


User-Centric Website

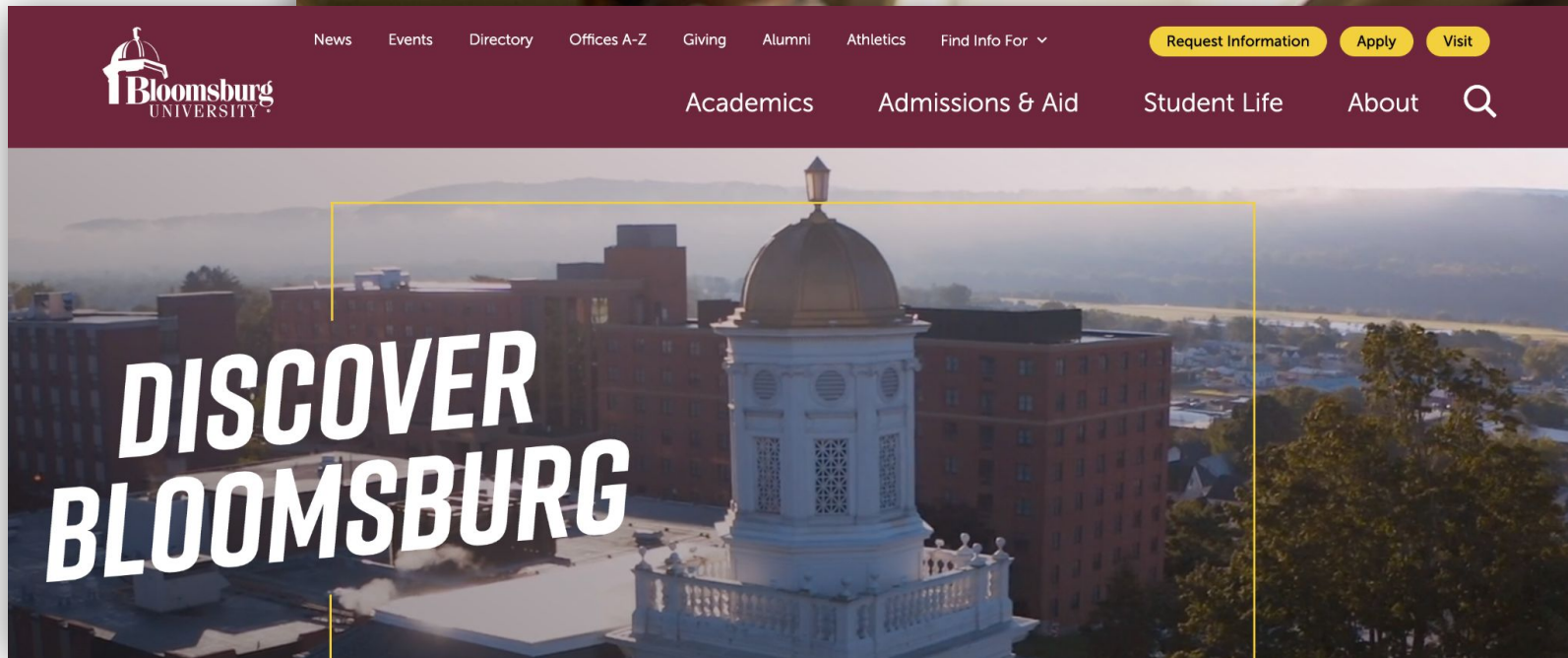
The more you can learn and understand about what your audience's preferences and behaviors, the better you'll be able to engage and convert them. User needs heavily influence navigation, nomenclature, and content.



Before



After



ABOUT

ACADEMICS

ADMISSIONS

GALLERY

CAMPUS LIFE

ATHLETICS

CONTACT

University Calendar

Who Are We

Mission & Values

University History

Board of Trustees

University
Administration

Accreditation

Title IX

Distance Education

Dual Degree Programs

Library

Pathway to Nursing

Office of the Registrar

School of Graduate
Studies

School of Humanities
& Behavioral Social
Sciences

School of Natural
Sciences
Mathematics &
Business

Deposit NOW

Admission Staff

Campus Visit

Four-Ever Pledge

How To Apply

P.A.W.S. Orientation
and One-Stop-Shop

Office of Financial Aid

Office of Veteran Affairs

Scholarship

Tuition & Fees

Academic Excellence
& Student Performance
(AESP)

P.A.W.S. Orientation
and One-Stop-Shop

Living Like A Bulldog

Get Involved

Fitness Center

University Jubilee
Singers

University
Marching Band

Jubilee Singers
Store

Spirit Store



Widener University

The Widener Advantage

Academics

Admissions & Aid

Student Experience

About



› Career Inside Track

› Faculty Mentorship

› Research & Innovation

› Leadership Development

› Location Matters

› Pride Perspectives

› Explore All Degree Programs

› Undergraduate Programs

› Graduate Studies

› Online Programs

› Adult & Continuing Studies

› Colleges & Schools

› Academic Calendar

› Catalogs

› Vibrant Community

› Our Campus

› Housing & Dining

› Get Involved

› Athletics & Recreation

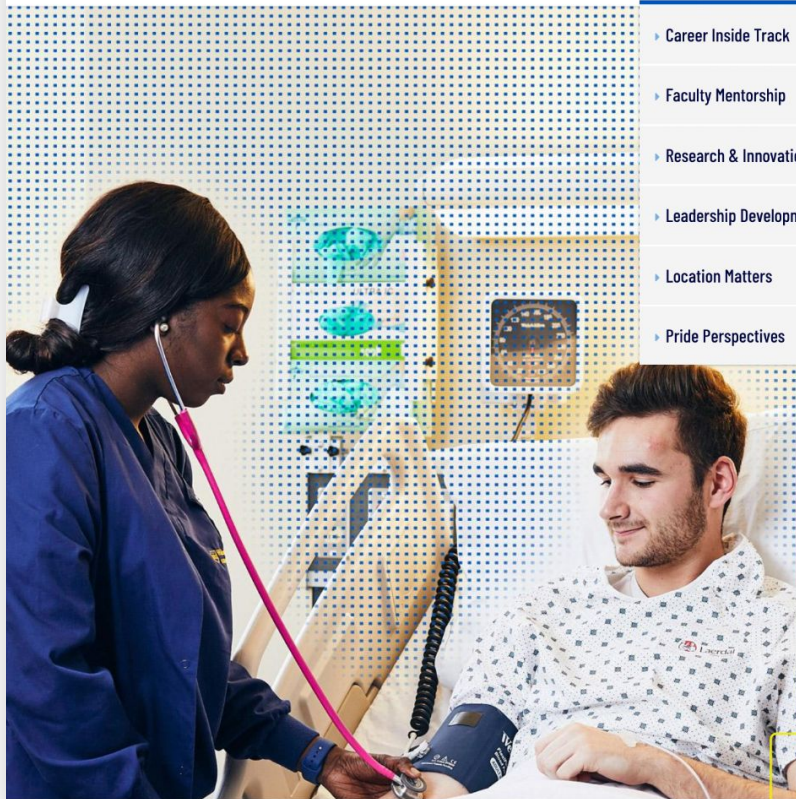
› Student Success & Support

› Study Abroad

PRACTICE YOUR PROFESSION

Unlock your future with a hands-on degree.

APPLY NOW



Content Strategy

Ensure purposeful publishing through an editorial process that helps align ongoing content efforts to overarching strategy, extending the value of website.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
STORY TITLE	STATUS	DEADLINES			KEY MESSAGES			AUDIENCE			ASSIGNMENTS			CONTENT NEEDS			PLATFORMS			TAXONOMY			
		PUBLISH	DRAFT	REVIEW	THEME 1	THEME 2	THEME 3	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	WRITER	PHOTO/VIDEO	EDITOR	MEDIA	SOURCE	CROSS PROMO	WEBSITE	NEWSLETTER	FACEBOOK	TWITTER	TAG 1	TAG 2	TAG 3
Lorem ipsum dolor sit ame	published	4/15/2021	4/12/2021	4/13/21	TRUE			TRUE	TRUE		Jane	Rob	Barbara	portrait	n/a	n/a	TRUE		TRUE		TRUE		
Consectetur adipiscing elit	published	4/16/2021	4/13/2021	4/14/21		TRUE			TRUE		Alicia	Matt	Barbara	portrait	n/a	department	TRUE		TRUE	TRUE		TRUE	
Sed do eiusmod tempor	published	4/17/2021	4/14/2021	4/15/21			TRUE	TRUE		TRUE	Fred	Courtney	Kimiko	portrait and candids	Wall Street Journal	major	TRUE	TRUE					TRUE
Incididunt ut labore	ready	4/18/2021	4/15/2021	4/16/21					TRUE		Alicia	Courtney	Fred	video		major	TRUE			TRUE		TRUE	
Dolore magna aliqua	ready	4/19/2021	4/16/2021	4/17/21	TRUE			TRUE			Fred	Matt	Barbara	subject to provide	n/a	n/a	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE		
Ut enim ad minim veniam	review	4/20/2021	4/17/2021	4/18/21		TRUE				TRUE	Jane	n/a	Fred	candids	n/a	n/a	TRUE					TRUE	
Duis aute irure dolor	review	4/21/2021	4/18/2021	4/19/21	TRUE			TRUE			Jane	Rob	Kimiko	subject to provide	n/a	n/a	TRUE						
Excepteur sint occaecat	review	4/22/2021	4/19/2021	4/20/21		TRUE			TRUE		Fred	n/a	Barbara	candids, video	n/a	center	TRUE	TRUE		TRUE	TRUE		TRUE
Sed ut perspiciatis unde omi	draft	4/23/2021	4/20/2021	4/21/21			TRUE		TRUE		Jane	Courtney	Alicia	archival video	n/a	giving opp			TRUE	TRUE			
Neque porro quisquam	draft	4/24/2021	4/21/2021	4/22/21			TRUE			TRUE	Barbara	Courtney	Barbara	portrait and candids	n/a	previous story	TRUE	TRUE				TRUE	
Ut enim ad minima veniam	assigned	4/25/2021	4/22/2021	4/23/21	TRUE		TRUE	TRUE			Kimiko	Matt	Barbara	subject to provide	n/a	previous story	TRUE					TRUE	
Quis autem vel eum	assigned	4/26/2021	4/23/2021	4/24/21	TRUE			TRUE			Will	Rob	Fred	portrait	n/a	center	TRUE			TRUE			

TITLE/TOPIC

STATUS

WORKFLOW DEADLINES

BRAND MESSAGES

AUDIENCES

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

CONTENT/MEDIA NEEDS AND/OR SOURCE

CROSS-PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY

PLATFORMS

TAXONOMY TAGS

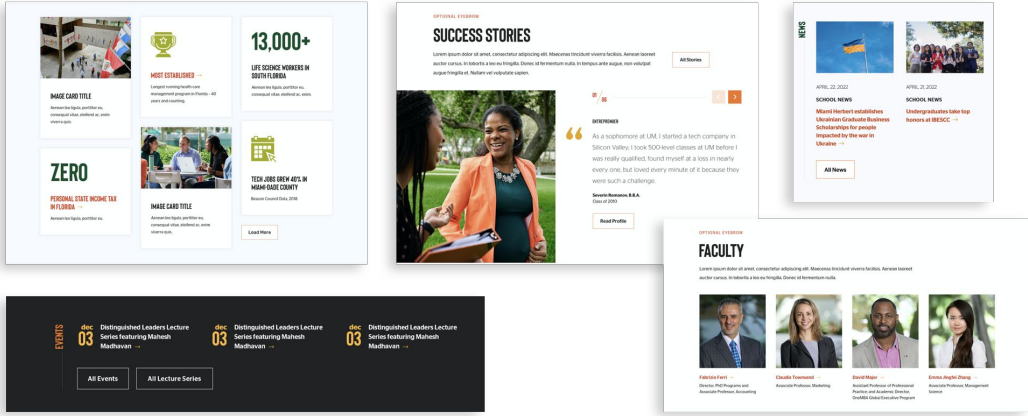
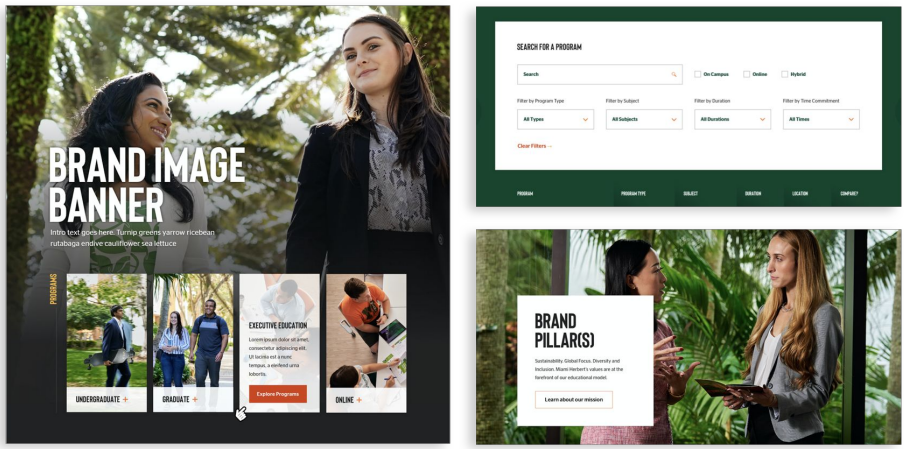
Build A Solid Foundation

Component-Driven Design System

Creating a modular design system, existing separately from the site structure, can refresh and evolve as new needs and requirements emerge.

UNIQUE

RECURRING



Build A Solid Foundation

Website Governance Process

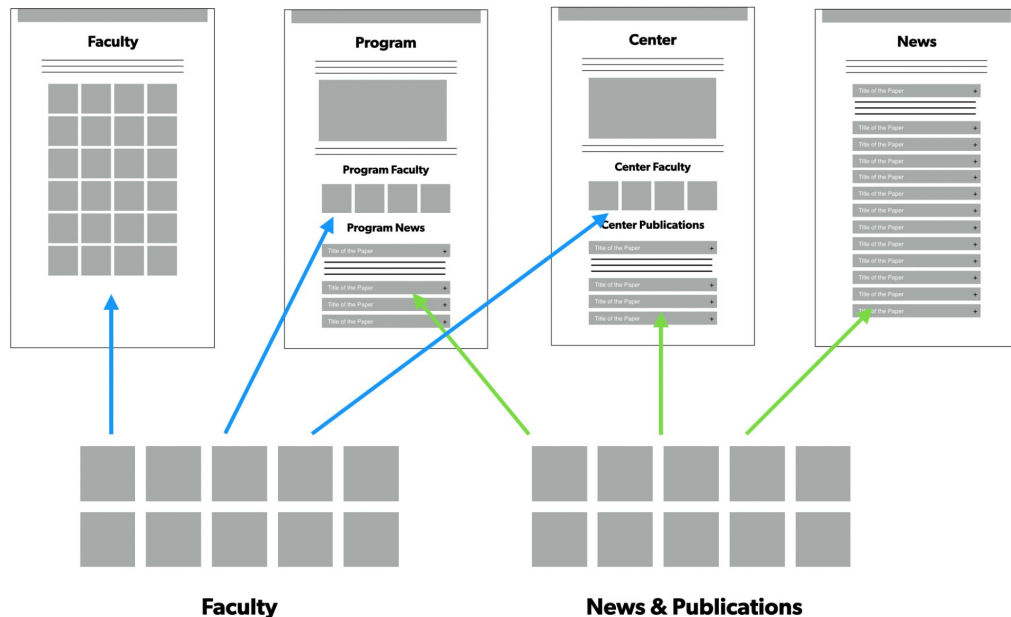
Governance is an insurance policy for the investment you make in your digital platforms, ensuring ongoing maintenance of site quality and alignment to strategy via process and support.



Flexible Technology Platform

Key requirements include:

- Ease of upgrade and iterative evolution without major overhaul
- Ability to manage content day-to-day without developer support
- Ongoing documentation of functional spec as site evolves



Staffing & Resource Plan

Invest in growing the skill set of your team

- Digital strategy
- Content strategy and writing
- SEO best practice
- User testing
- Understanding analytics

Find partners to complement your team with key functions

- Web development
- Digital marketing
- User research
- SEO strategy

Poll Question

**Which area do you
need to build up
the foundation of
your website?**

Poll Question

**What is the
biggest barrier to
evolving your
website?**

— **Build It Up**

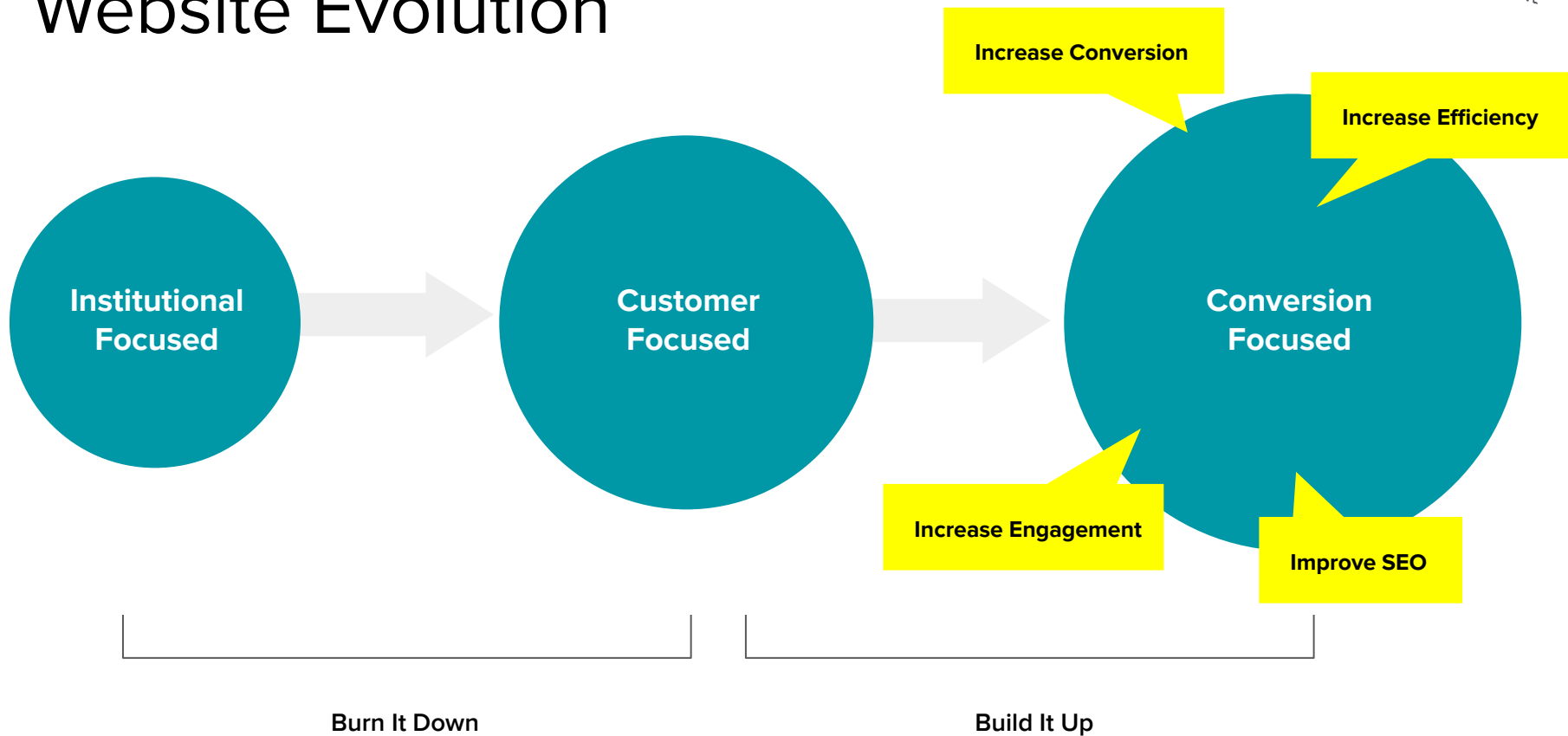




Your Foundation Is Set. What Does Building Look Like?



Website Evolution



Your New Identity

Shift your thinking from “webmaster” mindset to “digital expert” and “lead investigator” — you’re looking to always be measuring, learning, and improving.

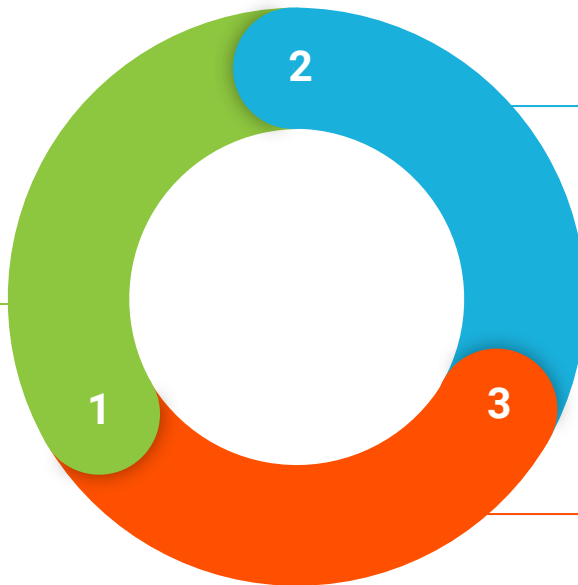
Conversion Rate Optimization

A shift from thinking about the website in basic health and publishing terms to thinking about the site in terms of reaching the business goals of the organization:
make money, save money, increase brand awareness.

Improvement Cycle

Step 1: Focus on Goals & Conversions

Tie your site activity to the business goals of your school.



Step 2: Develop and Test a Hypothesis

What's working? What's not working? Where and why are conversions happening? How can I best get more information?

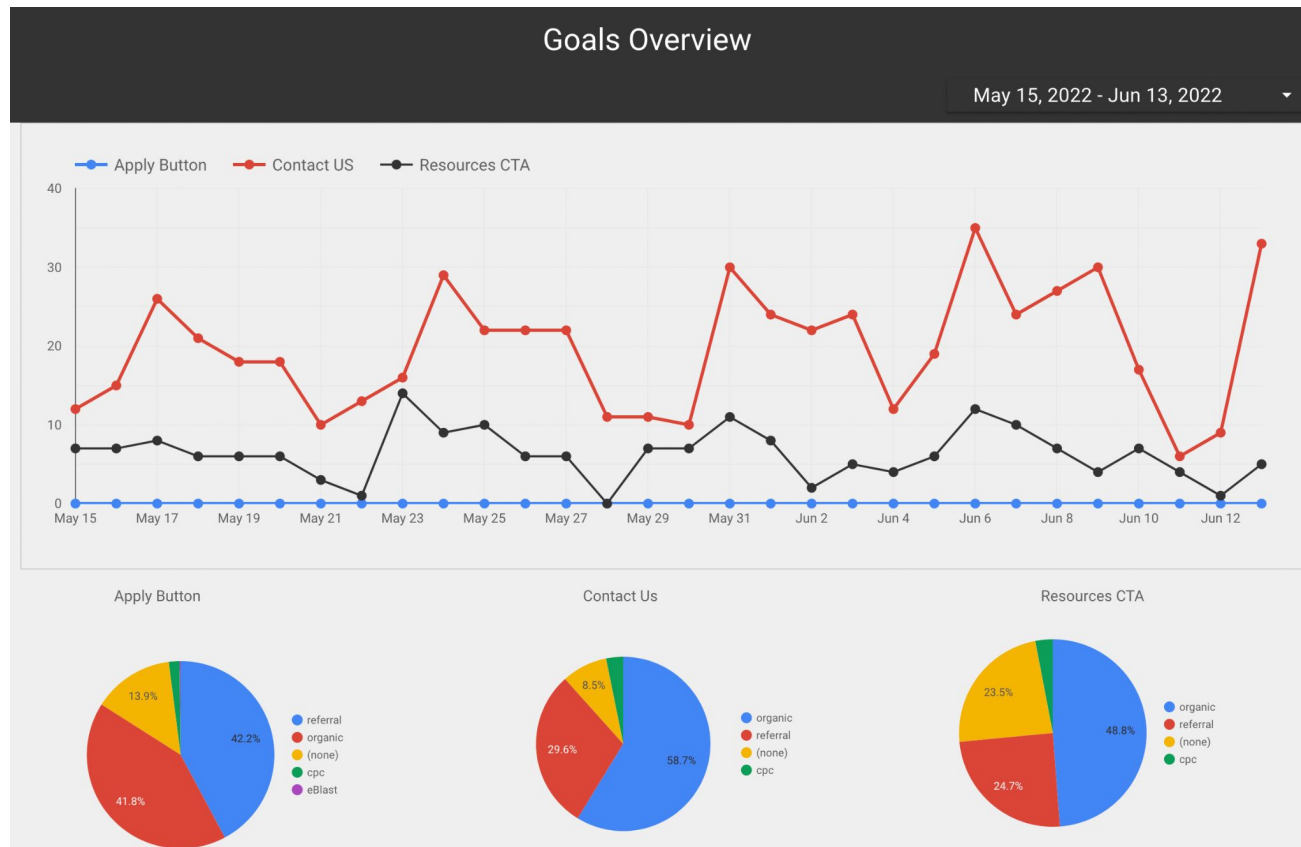
Step 3: Make Updates Based on Findings

Make UX, design or content updates to solve the problem and increase conversions. Measure your results.

Report on Conversion & Goals

Change the Conversation

Establish and report on conversions and demonstrate how the website is increasing conversions.

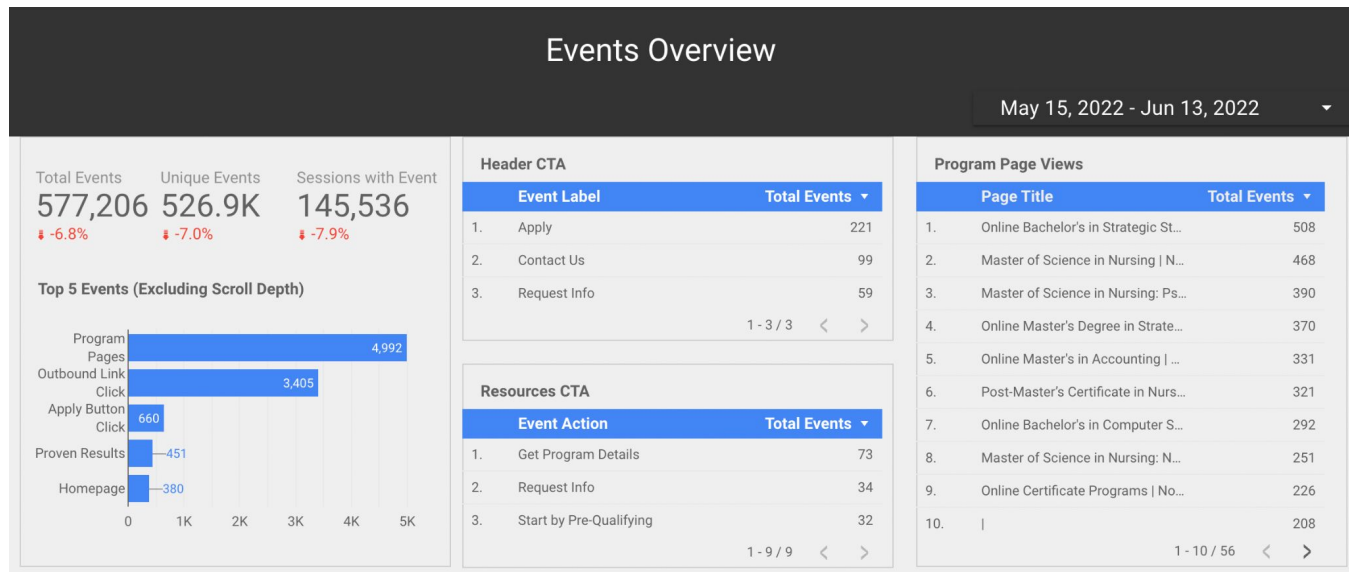


Gather Ideas from Analytics

Where are people converting?

Understand which parts of the site are working well. Set up events to track content engagement.

Review analytics with a conversion mindset.



The Measurement & Testing Cycle

Testing Cycles. Pick the proper test to collect input, to answer the questions that you have, or to test a hypothesis that you think will help increase conversions or increase your brand.

- A/B testing
- Focus groups and 1:1 sessions
- Think aloud user testing
- Heatmaps
- Analytics
- Navigation treejacking

Example: Focus Group & One-on-One

Get Immediate Feedback. Get a quick reaction to concepts or collect additional information through exercises and workshops.



Task:

#

How easy was this task to complete?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Impossible

Extremely Easy

Which parts were difficult?

Which parts were easy?

What is missing from the prototype?

How would you improve the prototype?

Start:

 :

Complete:

 :

Abandon:

 :

Duration:

 :

Success Rating

Complete: ☐Partial: ☐Failure: ☐

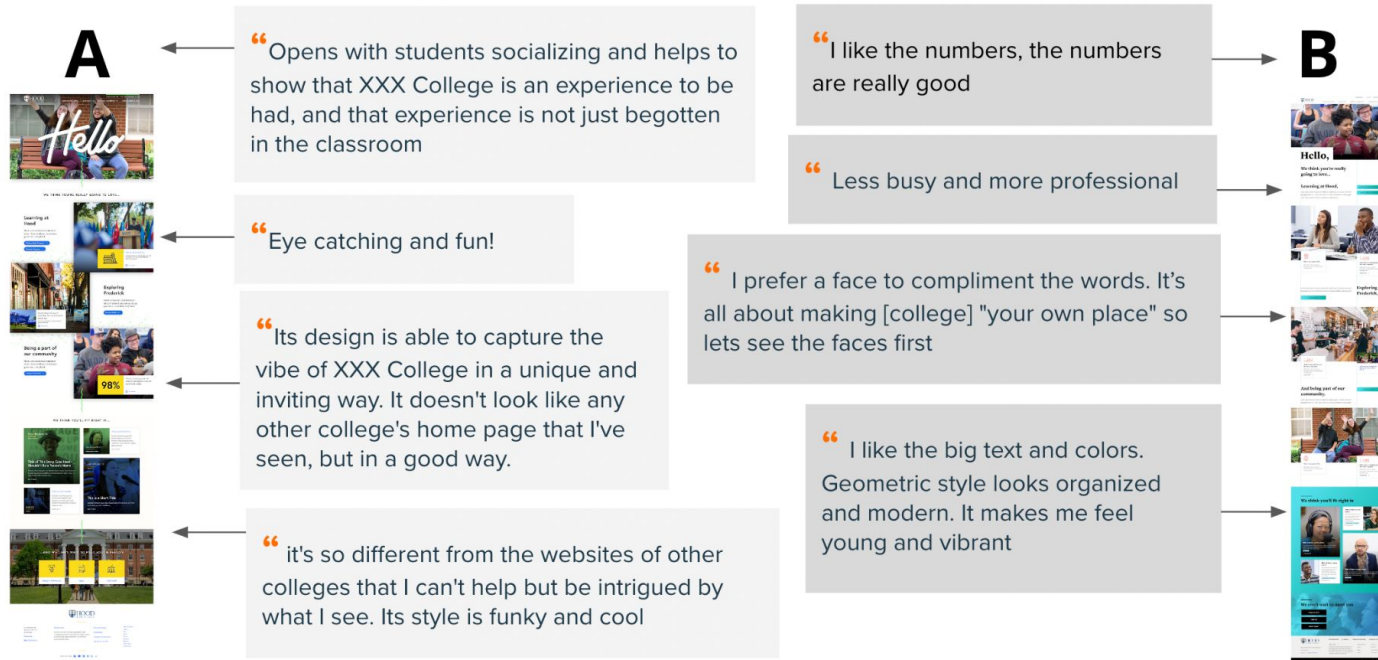
Trouble Spots:

 : : :

Moderator notes:

Example: A/B Testing

Good for Design or Content Feedback. Use A/B tests to gather an impression of current or proposed designs or content updates.



Example: User Test with Heat Maps

FIND A PROGRAM

Discover your passion, then turn it into a career that's personally and professionally rewarding.

SEARCH UNDERGRADUATE SEARCH GRADUATE

e.g. Business

Showing sample results for "Business," start a new search above.

[VIEW ALL UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS →](#)



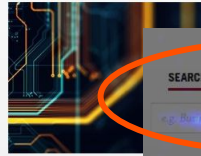
Quantitative Finance
B.S.



Marketing Innovation &
Analytics
B.S.



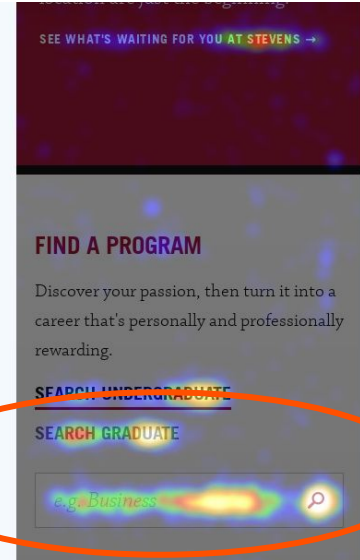
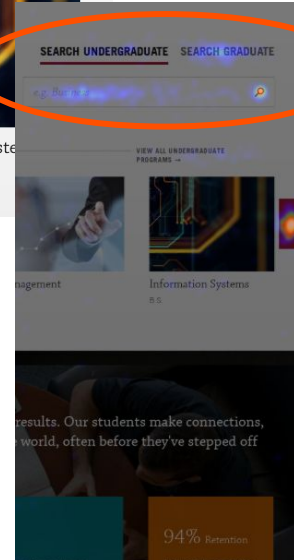
Management
B.S.



Information Systems
B.S.

- 1.9% of users who visited the page engaged with any feature of the program finder on desktop
- 10.6% of mobile users engaged with the finder

Desktop users overlook the toggle between degree level



Example: User Test with Heat Maps

The image displays two versions of the Tulane University School of Social Work website during a user test. The left version shows positive engagement (green thumbs-up), while the right version shows negative engagement (red thumbs-down). A central 'Audience Filters' overlay is visible between the two.

Audience Filters

- Gender**
 - Female ☒
 - Male ☒
 - Select All | None
- Age**
 - 18 - 24 ☒
 - 25 - 34 ☒
 - 35 - 44 ☒
 - 45 - 54 ☒
 - 55+ ☒
 - Select All | None
- Income**
 - 0 - 50k ☒
 - 50k - 100k ☒
 - 100k - 150k ☒
 - 150k+ ☒
 - Select All | None
- Education**
 - Some HS ☒
 - HS/GED ☒
 - Some College ☒
 - AA/AS ☒
 - BA/BS+ ☒
 - Select All | None

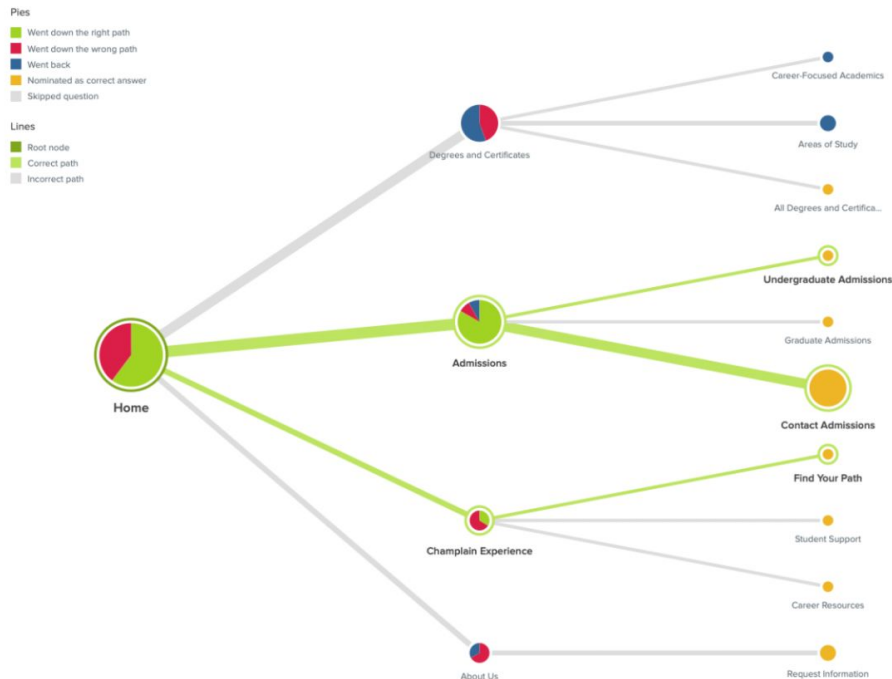
Website Content (Left Side - Green Feedback):

- Support individuals. Strengthen families. Serve communities.**
- Clinical and community-based practice**
- Focus on People Within Their Environments**
- Explore Your Area of Interest**
- Diverse Faculty, Comprehensive Experience**
- One of the Top Schools for Social Work**

Website Content (Right Side - Red Feedback):

- Support individuals. Strengthen families. Serve communities.**
- Clinical and community-based practice**
- Focus on People Within Their Environments**
- Explore Your Area of Interest**
- Diverse Faculty, Comprehensive Experience**
- One of the Top Schools for Social Work**

Example: Navigation Structure



✓ Admissions > **Undergraduate Admissions**

✓ Admissions > **Contact Admissions**

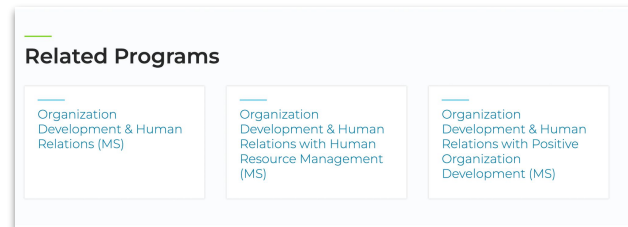
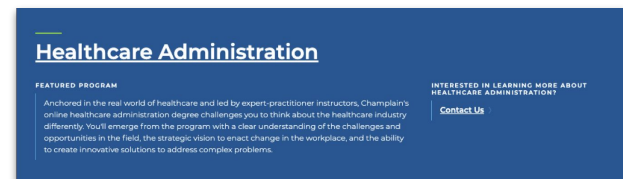
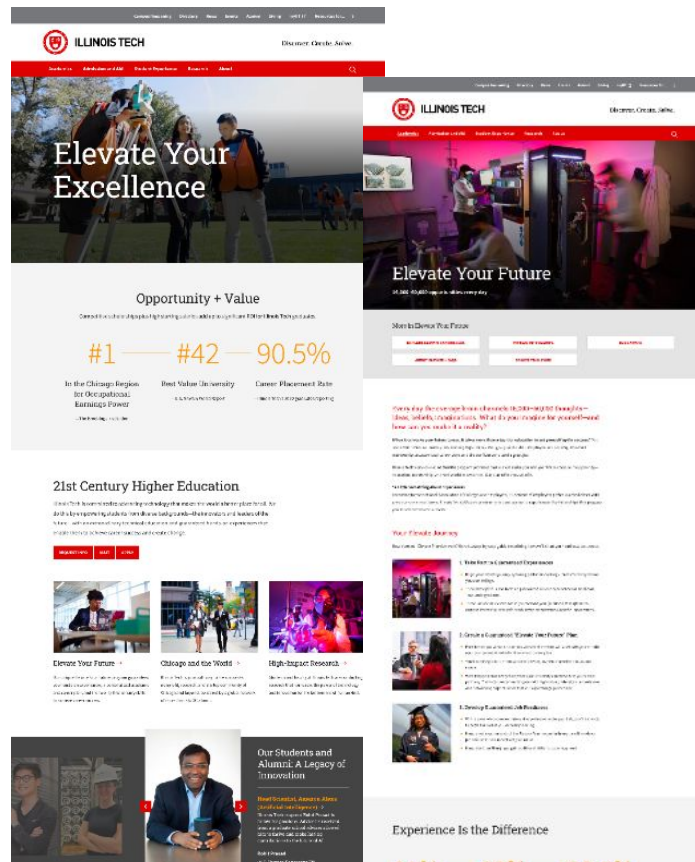
✓ Champlain Experience > **Find Your Path**

- Successes:
 - 9 **Contact Admissions**
 - 1 **Undergraduate Admissions**
 - 1 **Find Your Path**
- Failures:
 - 2 **Request Information**
 - 1 **All Degrees & Certificates**
 - 1 **Graduate Admissions**
 - 1 **Student Support**
 - 1 **Career Resources**

What Does Evolution Look Like

Make
Data-Informed
Decisions

UX changes,
language, content,
images, new
components,
improve mobile or
desktop experience.



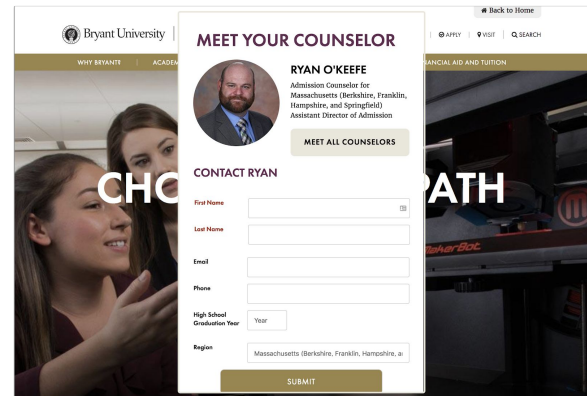
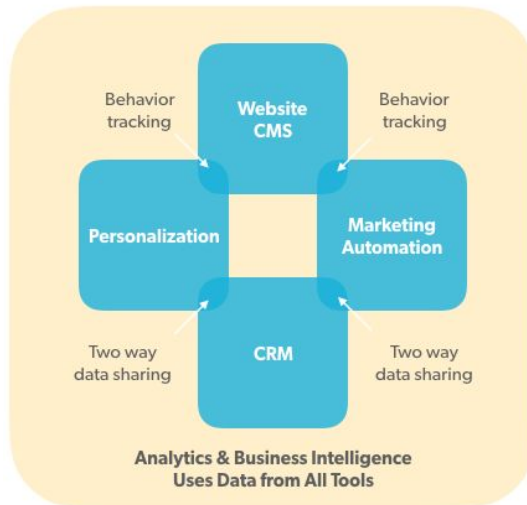
Increase Efficiency & Engagement

Connect with Data Sources

Integrate the site with the marketing stack to improve the user experience.

Test New Marketing Tools

Using chat or personalized calls to action to increase conversions.



Improve SEO & Social

Show How Small Changes Make an Impact

Track how SEO and social media lead to website engagement.

Demonstrate increases in search visibility and website traffic.

22 Keywords Showing 251 Currently Tracked Keywords

Search Visibility ⁱ

19.63%

▲ 0.07%

Rankings

#1-3 15 ▼ 1 #4-10 1 ▼ 1

#11-20 3 ▼ 1 #21-50 3

0 tracked keywords are not in the top 50

Movement

7 **7**

Moved up Moved down

Organic rankings on Google en-US

Featured Snippets

13

Rankings

Engines

Competition

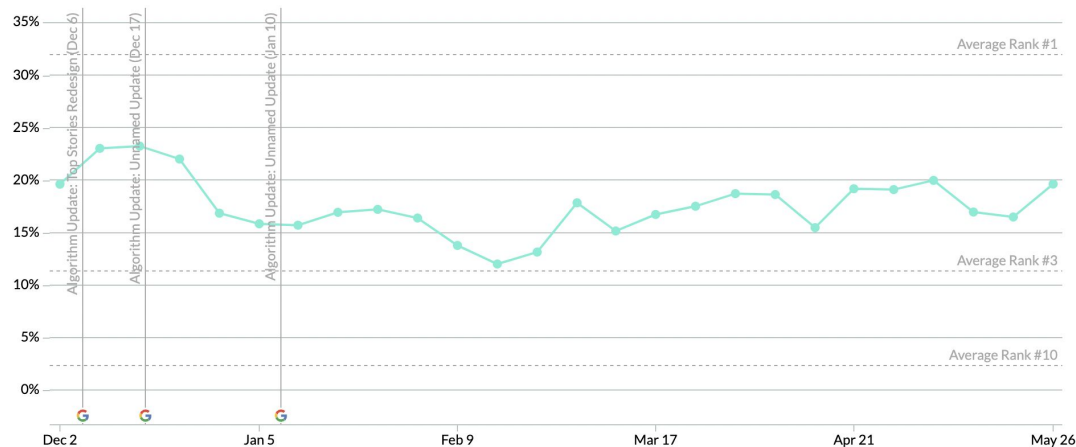
Opportunities

Search Visibility ▼

Weekly

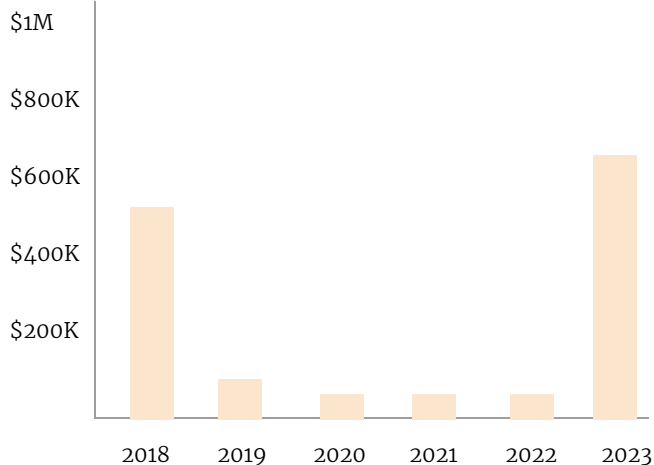
Monthly

Estimated percentage of clicks based on your keyword rankings

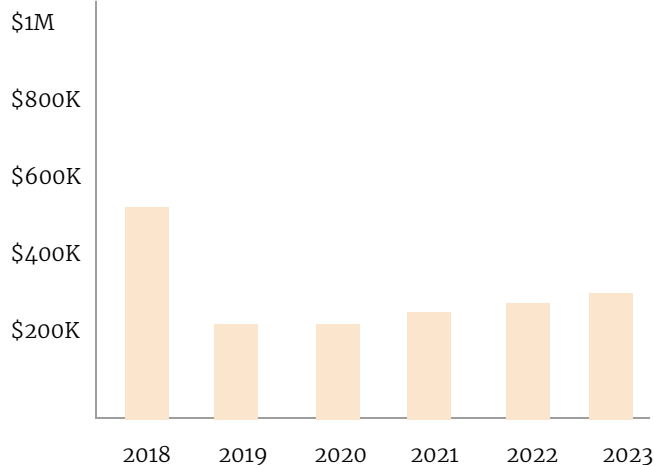


Budget Planning

Always Burning It Down



Consistently Building It Up



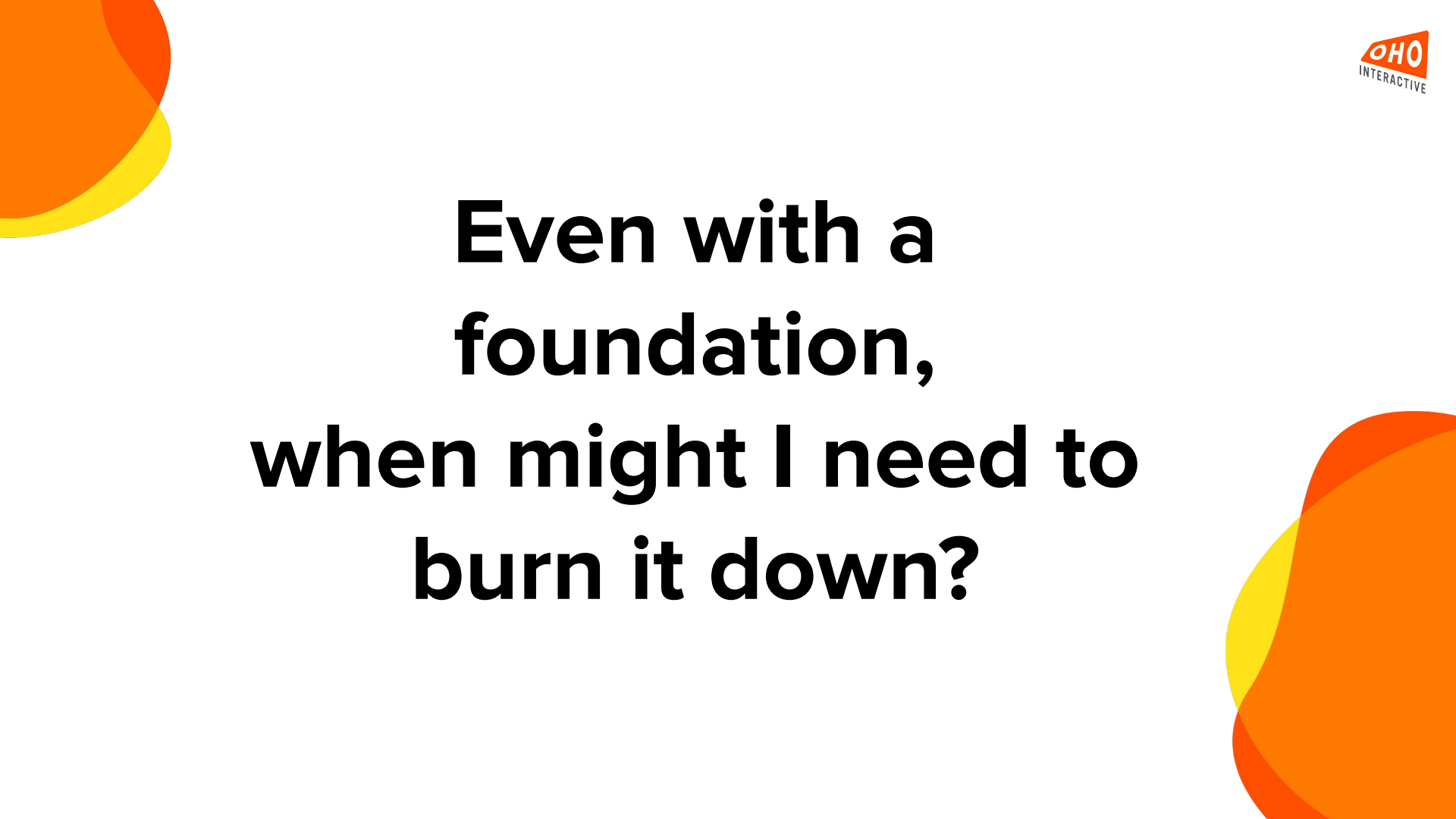
An ongoing annual investment vs. a major investment every 4-6 years

Challenge: Making the case for what you'll need to spend every year

Staffing & Resource Plan

This stage requires different skill sets or partners:

- Online marketing — Conversion Rate Optimization
- Content strategy and writing
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Testing skills
- Web Analytics, Marketing Analyst — focused on conversions



**Even with a
foundation,
when might I need to
burn it down?**

Controlled Burn

- Significant overhaul in the “product” offers or “delivery” mode — online course or adding lots of campus locations
- Drastic new brand or visual designs
 - Should be able to reuse existing assets (news, events, faculty)
 - May require just homepage or adding new components
- Major strategic shift — combining two universities together



Next steps

Questions to Consider

- Is your site Institutional, Customer-Focused, Conversion Focused?
- Have you moved out of the “webmaster” mindset?
- Do you have clear business goals and a defined way to track?
- Do you have ongoing practices in place for assessing site effectiveness?
- Do you understand your audiences, and does your site meet their needs?
- Is your team staffed and skilled for tomorrow, or yesterday?
- Do you have the processes, documentation, and support in place to empower effective and efficient website stewardship?
- Can your design system and CMS flexibly accommodate change?
- Are digital resources a fixed budget priority or an infrequent special request?