GROWTH-DRIVEN DESIGN
WEBSITE RETAINER SELLING TIPS FROM THE PROS

Learn how the top growth-driven design agencies are packaging, pricing, and selling GDD website retainers to clients.

HubSpot

FOREWORD

So you're convinced that growth-driven design (GDD) is the next big service offering for your agency.

Now the question is ... how do you sell GDD to prospects?

It's actually an easier conversation than you may think, and we have a bunch of great resources to help you sell your first retainer.

Your first step is to make sure you check out all of the great sales resources (training, templates, proposal examples, etc.) in the **Growth-Driven Design Agency Blueprint course.**

In addition to that content, I recently had the opportunity to sit down and chat with some of the top growth-driven design agencies about what they've found to be successful when pitching GDD to prospects.
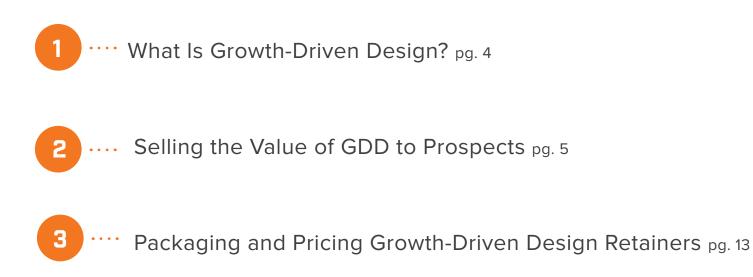
Hope you enjoy!

Luke Summerfield

Growth-Driven Design Evangelist
@SavvyLuke

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. What Is Growth-Driven Design?

The old, outbound model of marketing is out, so shouldn't that mean the old model of website design should change too?

Traditionally, websites have two phases: First, there is a two-to-three month planning, design, and development phase that results in a website relaunch where the company has no idea if the site will resonate with its prospects or drive lead generation and conversions. The second phase is when the site remains fairly static for the next two or three years, and its use to the site's audience slowly declines.

This process stinks. It stinks for the marketer, who has to take time away from daily projects to focus on the website redesign during the planning stage. It also stinks for the customer, whose user experience worsens as the website becomes more and more outdated.

This brings us to the alternative: growth-driven design.

Growth-driven design is a process of continuous website design. It focuses on fusing marketing goals with website design and development, and it allows the marketer to test theories and run experiments to find out what actually works best for the customer.

GDD starts with a shorter design period prior to launch date. After launch date, usability testing, A/B tests, and improvements are made over time. You are constantly improving the site based on data and feedback from people who are using it.

From an agency perspective, GDD works as it creates a retainer-based agreement that leads to more predictable revenue. While a traditional website redesign might cost your customer a one-time $15,000 to $100,000 launch fee, GDD is priced on a month-to-month retainer basis.

In the long term, it's easy to see how this works for you, but it's a new way of looking at designing and maintaining a website from both your agency's and your client's point of view. Luckily, there are plenty of pro tips in this ebook to help you convince your prospects of the value of GDD.

You can learn more at www.GrowthDrivenDesign.com

2. Selling the Value of GDD to Prospects

What is the value of using growth-driven design over the traditional web design process?

This is the question your prospects will have moving through the back of their minds. They may understand the GDD process, but they may also be wondering how this will bring more value to their business.

We asked the top growth-driven design agencies for tips on how to communicate the value of GDD to prospects in the sales process. Here's what they had to say:

> " *Inbound marketing without GDD is going to limit the results from your investment in inbound marketing. There are three phases to an inbound marketing engagement: strategy and planning, foundation and building, and optimization and growth.*
>
> *That final stage is where GDD comes into play. Once you have all the tools, those tools have to be put into action -- tested, tracked, monitored and adjusted over time. GDD gives you the approach you need to optimize your inbound marketing plan over time so that your results improve month over month -- forever.*
>
> *One piece of GDD is conversion rate optimization, which we outlined in detail in our recent webinar, 'Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) and SEO techniques to Drive Leads.' Check it out."*

Mike Lieberman | Co-Founder
Square 2 Marketing

" *The health and fitness of your website is much like your personal health and fitness. If you work hard to get in great shape, you (and everyone else) will see the benefits. But if you stop all efforts once you hit your goal, your fitness will start to decline until you end up back where you started.*

Your website ages in a similar way. You're either working to keep it in shape and advance it continuously to keep up with your marketing and the pace of change on the internet, or your website receives no advancement and soon becomes an anchor that limits your brand and marketing.

The internet is always advancing, so if you're not moving forward, you're moving backwards. Failure to continuously improve your website is a key reason why brands often feel their brand experience is trailing behind their competitors. It's also a key reason why brands feel they need to totally redesign their website every few years."

Kevin Barber | Founder

⌗ LEAN LABS

" *Risk mitigation seems to resonate -- there's a general acceptance that the traditional approach to building websites is built upon an amalgamation of trends and assumptions. GDD mitigates risk by taking a user-centric, data-driven approach to optimizing web presence -- letting the metrics dictate the evolution of the site. In this sense, the site is never truly finished and stays aligned with offline business realities. With GDD, a site should never need to be retired."*

Mike Skeehan | Managing Partner

SaltedStone

" *Prospects, for the most part, still think of web design in linear, finite terms. One question you can always count on is, 'When do you think we'll wrap up the project?' That's a great opportunity to express value in the growth-driven design methodology.*

You should emphasize that websites are never really 'done.' Growth and adaptation over time is a must to stay competitive in today's market. If they treat a website like it's a one-and-done project, they won't see any long-term positive impact."

Chip Stevens | Web Designer & Developer
Rick Whittington Consulting

Whittington
Consulting

" *Selling the value of GDD over a traditional website project has been fairly easy for us thus far. Although it may be a new concept for your prospect, the idea of having a website that continuously evolves to meet their needs, as well as their visitors needs, is something everyone can see value in.*

In addition, the 'cost savings' that GDD provides by spreading out the typical large upfront costs of a traditional project is extremely beneficial to businesses who may not have the required budget up front."

Josh Ames | Founder & CEO

SR | SPARKREACTION
M A R K E T I N G

" *A good way to position growth-driven design is as a comparison to hiring a full time or part time employee. It's a number most business owners can easily relate to. When you're having the conversation about the value of GDD, ask, 'What would be the cost to your company to have a website strategist, designer, and developer on staff for a year? And how can you guarantee those employees could achieve the same outcomes our agency has a proven track record of producing?'"*

Trish Lessard | Founder & CEO
mediajunction®

"*It's important to uncover the prospect's pain. Typically you'll hear about the cost/time/ROI pain of a past redesign or the pain they're experiencing because the site needs a redesign so badly (no leads, missed sales opportunities, diminished professional credibility, embarrassment over appearance, etc.). GDD is a total no-brainer with MANY selling points, so once you uncover the prospect's pain, it's easy to tailor the conversation to the specific ways GDD eliminates and overcomes those pains.*

For example, we often hear people say they paid a lot of money to build the site, and it hasn't resulted in any new business. It's so common that people think a redesign alone will get them more clients. That's a gold mine for us to hear. Not only can we explain how using data to improve the site optimizes the user experience and conversion opportunities, but we can also upsell that to an inbound retainer.

Prospects all have pain points, and if you can uncover them, you can capitalize on the opportunity to provide solutions and build trust from the first call."

Lisa McDermott | VP of Sales & Marketing

Stratus Interactive

"*Most companies are looking for a modern, cool redesign. What that often amounts to is a new homepage. Using GDD, you can design a beautiful, sexy homepage with all the bells and whistles that will impress your friends and links to all your most important content (or at least the content that you think is most important). Then you can build information-driven sub-pages that give visitors the information they NEED without struggling with design.*

After a short period of time, you'll be able to see what content people are most interested in, and focus your design efforts around making your useful content more beautiful."

Jamie Troia | Managing Partner

GREYSTACK
DIGITAL MARKETING

" *Prospects, especially those who have recently been through a website redesign, completely understand the pain of the traditional web design process. We have a client who had spent 15 months in the redesign of a site that never launched because the information was out of date before the redesign was complete.*

Not every client has had that particular nightmare, but they've probably experienced something close. Explaining the goal of getting a small site up quickly that's based on proven strategy instead of a premium site based on subjective aesthetic appeal in three or four months will resonate with most prospects."

Rebecca Graves | Principle
Spot On

" *First, to make a good case for GDD, it's important to understand your customer's current state of affairs. Offer a free audit of their website and analytics; you'll find a treasure trove of optimization opportunities. You'll gain their trust in the process.*

Second, ask about your prospects' experiences with past website projects. You'll hear the same pain points repeatedly: project took too long, spent too much time in design, the last agency was hired because of their design experience so our website wasn't built for lead generation, etc. When you explain why GDD is better, you can relate to their past experiences."

Daniel Lynton | Founder & CEO

JW LYNTON

❝ *What we are beginning to find is that businesses are concerned with the constant upkeep of a website. They don't want to drop $30k on a website today only to turn around and have to do the same thing in a couple of years.*

This concern alone has helped us bring up the option of GDD projects. When a prospect knows they will get ongoing 'touch-ups' and design changes that will keep them ahead of the competition, they are thrilled!"

Abby Stearns | Director of Business Development

◉ SPINWEB

❝ *In many cases, a large number of website pages are not directly correlated to the customer's goals. By focusing on a launch pad site -- a site that has the minimum pages required to aggressively pursue the customer's marketing goals -- you can dramatically reduce the scope of the initial website design. Focus on what REALLY matters to drive goals."*

Ryan Malone | Founder & CEO

✿ SmartBug
MEDIA

❝ *The best selling point I can see for a prospect is the breaking up of financial commitment. Even large companies (who typically have larger websites) can benefit from broken up payments that allow the financial commitment to be addressed over time.*

GDD also provides opportunity to adjust the scope of work at different stages, which could mean adjusting your quote throughout the process. Having multiple opportunities for changes allows those changes to be less impactful to the overall project, which could sometimes cause extensive rework."

Mike Del Cuore | Digital Marketing Specialist

🌀 revenueriver
MARKETING

> **"** *Many customers want things to be done yesterday ... or the day before that. Leverage that. Focus your pitch on the fact that GDD produces the first deliverable faster. Faster to start measuring and testing. Faster to show something to their bosses, board, or investors. Launch first. Then deal with the headaches."*

Tim Delhaes | InboundLabs

Have questions or your own tips about selling the value of GDD?

The Growth-Driven Design (For Agencies) group on Inbound.org is the perfect place to ask any questions, post ideas, and collaborate with hundreds of other GDD agencies.

All of the experts in this ebook are regulars on the group.

Join the Group and Start Collaborating Today!

3. PACKAGING AND PRICING GROWTH-DRIVEN DESIGN RETAINERS

After you've educated the prospect on growth-driven design and why it's a better process than traditional web design, he or she will likely ask you for pricing information or a proposal. You may be wondering to yourself, "How should I package and price a GDD website retainer?"

You're in luck! I was able to chat with the pros about insights and tips on how they approach GDD pricing and packaging. Here's what they had to say:

" *We are still working on the best way to package and price GDD retainers. Right now, it's mostly based off of hours, but just like inbound marketing, we'd like to eventually move away from hours and base it more on the value the client is receiving.*

We do like the idea of having a partial lump sum upfront to cover the initial costs of building out a launchpad website, and then moving into a retainer from there for the ongoing work."

Josh Ames | Founder & CEO

We price the launchpad site as an initial project fee. The initial project fee covers the information architecture, website strategy, design, and coding of the template.

A GDD retainer always starts with a budget discussion. We price based on our time estimates for the blocks of time that we allocate towards the client every month. We have found that using a combination of time and value to come to a monthly/yearly contract amount seems to be a fair approach for both sides."

Trish Lessard | Founder & CEO

Make sure the upfront cost is enough to cover the budget for the launchpad project. Your GDD retainer is not a vehicle to finance a website redesign project.

Don't price your retainers based on hours.

Avoid jargon that may alienate clients or make them feel like they're your next science experiment. Unless you catch them 'nerding out' with you, focus the GDD retainer conversation on business results."

Daniel Lynton | Founder & CEO

Need Help Putting Together a Quote?

Use the GDD Retainer Quoting Tool!

I've created a growth-driven design retainer quoting tool to help guide you along the path to creating your own retainer packages and putting together quotes for prospects.

You can access the retainer quoting tool after you join the **GDD Agency Blueprint course**. It's part of the many resources you will have access to.

Note: This is simply a template, and it is highly recommended that you take the time to customize it to reflect your own agency's processes, timelines, and skillsets. Additionally, you'll likely have to adapt it for each specific client based on their needs.

Join the Course, and Download the GDD Retainer Quoting Tool

*Already signed up for the course? You can always re-fill out the form to be taken to the resource section

"*Know that you're going to perform more work in months one through three, and structure your contracts accordingly. There's an ease to the sales process when you're offering standardized monthly payments. One tactic that we use is to establish a dedicated price for the launchpad site that reflects the front-loaded nature of the work. Then we amortize the cost of the launchpad over the full term of the agreement.*

We include contract language that specifies payments due based on the unamortized fee schedule in the event that the client terminates the agreement early."

Mike Skeehan | Managing Partner

SaltedStone

"*Even though you're launching what is called a launchpad, there's still a significant amount of work to do in the beginning of a re-design project.*

The first month should be higher than the monthly retainer itself as you're developing buyer personas, researching current/historical data, and developing the strategy/story of the homepage design. A monthly progress report will be delivered that will include analytical data on how visitors/users are interacting with the site. This should be included in the packaging, with details on how many phases are necessary. We determine phases based upon the length of the contract. Phases should be in quarters, so if it's a yearly contract, it should be 4 phases.

Then we calculate price based on hours spent on each phase, including analytical data research, progress reports, status meetings, and any other assets that need to be developed, designed, etc."

Lisa McDermott | VP of Sales & Marketing

Stratus Interactive

" *Whether your agency or your client does GDD, someone has to do it. An inbound marketing engagement without an optimization or GDD phase is never going to deliver the results your clients are likely expecting from inbound marketing. Make this phase mandatory, and make it a 12-month engagement. At Square 2 Marketing, we have two months for strategy and planning, four to six months to build the foundation assets and 12 months of optimization or GDD.*

To price out your GDD retainer, take a look at the hours required to deliver the ongoing, monthly GDD work. Before you provide the estimate to your clients, value engineer the engagement based on the expected results. If you're going to be delivering $100,000 worth of value to your client, there's no reason why you can't charge $5,000 a month regardless of what it costs you to provide the service."

Mike Lieberman | Co-Founder
Square 2 Marketing

" *Every company has different needs based upon how they're using their website, how their customers interact with their site, and their velocity of marketing. By matching a GDD program to their marketing velocity, some clients may find a $2,500 GDD monthly retainer as overkill while another company may find a $6,000 monthly GDD retainer less than adequate.*

The trick is to balance your GDD program so that it's continuously producing positive ROI. As long as you can prove the value, you can make the case for increasing the velocity of your work as needed."

Kevin Barber | Founder
LEAN LABS

Want to Learn More about Pricing, Packaging & Selling GDD?

I've recorded a webinar that digs into the specifics of how to package, price and sell Growth-Driven Design retainers. The webinar can be watched once you've joined our GDD Agency Blueprint Course!

Join the GDD Agency Blueprint & Watch the Sales Training

*Already signed up for the course? You can always re-fill out the form to be taken to the resource section