

6 INSIGHTS

INTO ONE OF NZ'S BIGGEST WEBSITE UPGRADES.

Westpac had a challenge many companies recognise – bringing a website up to speed and future-proofing it for an environment of constant change.

THIS WASN'T JUST ANY website upgrade. The Westpac site is one of New Zealand's most frequented, with more than 200,000 visits per day by customers. And this wasn't a tidy-up job – while the site had been updated over the years the navigation and architecture was 12 years old.

A complete information overhaul was needed, shifting from a product focus of 'what does it do' to a customer-driven focus: 'what does it do for you'.

WHERE DO YOU EVEN BEGIN?

"The new website wasn't a 'nice to have', it was an absolute must-do," says Martine Jager, Westpac General Manager Marketing & Customer Experience.

"At Westpac 'Help is what we do', so we charged the team to truly put the customer experience at the heart of the website and be bold."

This direction helped energise the team – because this wasn't just a digital exercise. It was a full-on, cross-departmental project. And there was only one way to do it. Fast.

"To maintain a sense of focus and momentum, we set a seemingly impossible deadline of three months to beta-launch." The clock started ticking...

1 *The strategy was simple. Bring the best people to the party to create one team with one goal.*

To accomplish this task, one tight team (OTT) was created from five specialist companies: Westpac Digital, SilverStripe content management system,

Cactuslab web app developers, Infinity IA/designers, and Indiego's team of strategists/digital writers.

A war room was set up. Fighting broke out over whose Mac cord was whose. Pages were posted over walls and windows. By the end of the project there was more paper than room.

Yet out of enforced proximity emerged a shared sense of energy – creating new ways of working such as eight concurrent work streams to compress timeframes and agile one week deliveries so the team could test new developments regularly.

2 *Paying more than lip service to the user experience.*

There's an expression that usability experts know well: "Any darn fool can make something complex; it takes a genius to make something simple."

For Westpac, usability meant making the site easy for customers to navigate, research and compare products, then take action.

The hard part for Infinity designers was making this appear effortless. Through corridor spontaneity – running into someone around the office and cracking a problem – the team pushed themselves to think of the user experience in terms of navigation, design and content.

For example, Infinity created over 200 different icons as 'road signs' so that users can quickly orientate themselves. Mega menus fast-forwarded users to the most important services in just one click.

And at a page level the use of tabs, icons, action buttons, calculators, design and words helped users navigate the page quickly and easily.

3 *Sell it like the teller. And tell it with attitude.*

Open the home page and the new brand hits you with emotive brand imagery. From a copy perspective, there's a fresh, jargon-free tone. But the website is also a lean, mean conversion machine.

"Good sales people help customers find what they want," says Westpac Senior Digital Manager, Cameron Jardine. "Some users want information. Others want to compare products and buy. So we structured information and built tools enabling both customer types to get answers and take action."

The elephant in the room was the content. Outdated but compliant copy was a huge task to change. But Indiego's team of writers took the beast on – all 800 pages. Westpac's product managers tamed it, their legal experts trained it, and the writers transformed it!

Page by page all bank products were broken down to their core difference and re-written from the customer perspective. Whenever the writers got stuck they considered the best source of practical help – what would a bank teller tell you? That became the project mantra: Sell it like a teller.

4 *With innovation as a core belief, we had a license to thrill.*

To be a leader you also need to innovate. "The 'rent as a mortgage' calculator is a star of the site," says Cameron, "People don't buy a mortgage – they buy a house. So Cactuslab created a

calculator to help customers realise the possibility that owning their own home could happen sooner than they thought."

The current rent is entered into the calculator and it figures out how much the customer might be able to afford as a mortgage. Then - here's the clever bit - the calculator detects their location (based on IP or GPS) and brings up three houses for sale on Trade Me today in the same price range and in their neighbourhood.



5 *Three letters we need to talk about: CMS.*

"The speed at which digital is changing, and the pace at which Westpac brings new products to market means we need to adapt quickly," says

Callum Wilson, Westpac General Manager Strategy, Productivity & Innovation.

This website wasn't a one shot wonder; choosing a dynamic Content Management System (CMS) was critical to allow the business to continually evolve the site and stay relevant.

But what CMS? "For a bank, it has to be future-proof, able to handle complexity, flexible, secure, reliable and mobile ready. We searched the world and found what we were looking for right under our noses - the SilverStripe CMS.

The SilverStripe CMS is one of the most powerful platforms available for sophisticated websites and because it's created right here in New Zealand, it's fully supported."

6 *It isn't finished until it's finished.*

Turning a good job into a great one comes down to adding the last 5% – or over 5,000 Westpac staffers to be more precise.

In a bold move, the entire company was given three months to proof the beta-site and provide feedback on the user experience.

"We had hundreds of responses and tweaks and came out stronger for it. It lived as a tight team project but the final touches were added by consulting with the wider Westpac team," concludes Cameron.

On April 1st (seriously, that was actually the date) the site was launched to customers. On April 2nd, the same team started evolving the site with a whole new section for Westpac Institutional Bank. But that's another story.

HOW DO YOU GROW NEW ZEALAND? BY CHOOSING KIWI SUPPLIERS.

Grow NZ is central to the Westpac culture. This project saw this philosophy in action with all partners being New Zealand SMEs. Here is what each partner contributed to the project.

Indiego DIGITAL WRITERS

This was a total re-write. Indiego's digital strategist and five specialist writers understood Westpac's tone of voice and the complexities of financial products. They nailed the job in record time.

INFINITY – WEB DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Westpac wanted to do IA & design in-house and Infinity had a strong reputation – design is everything when you're building at speed with an evolving new brand identity. Infinity were integral to the success of the project.

INNOVATIVE WEB APP COMPANY

Cactuslab created simple visual representations of immensely complex calculators. No mean feat.

CMS & WEB DEVELOPMENT

SilverStripe brought everything together, developing and launching the site. They're global players in the content management scene, with the SilverStripe CMS a great choice for the complex website, apps and mobile functionality.

PLUS 6
INSIGHTFUL STATISTICS

7%
Increase in unique visits after launch.

40%
Increase in customers' time spent per page.

8 Minutes
On average spent using new online calculators.

7%
Of all pages viewed are to a calculator.

16,000 Hours
Spent developing the new site.

300,000
Jargon-free words spread over 800 pages.